

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 SEPTEMBER 2015

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND PROGRESSION FRAMEWORK & THE YOUTH SERVICES REVIEW

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an update on progress with implementation of the Youth Engagement and Progression (YE&P) Framework and the Youth Service Review.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The implementation of the YE&P Framework is key in reducing the number of young people in the county who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) which is a key priority for the Council and its partners.
- 2.2 The Youth Service Review contributes to all of the corporate priorities but in particular: -
- Working with children and families to tackle problems early
 - Working Together To Tackle Health Issues And Encourage Healthy Lifestyles
 - Working together to make the best use of our resources.

3. Background

Youth Engagement and Progression Framework

- 3.1 The YE&P Framework aims to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). As part of the Framework, Welsh Government requested each local authority to complete an action plan by the 14th March 2014 (the actions of which were pre-populated by Welsh Government including the Youth Guarantee) outlining how they were going to take forward implementation of the Framework. In Bridgend, this was initially developed by a multi-agency task and finish group; however, responsibility for developing a more focused implementation plan has come under the remit of the Engagement and Progression Coordinator (EPC) and members of a newly formed YE&P Framework Steering Group (Terms of Reference are attached as **Appendix 1** to this report).
- 3.2 In order to assist with implementation of the Framework, Welsh Government allocated each local authority £50,000. Utilising this allocation, Bridgend appointed an EPC in August 2014. Initially employed on a temporary basis, the EPC was tasked with providing operational leadership on the implementation and development of the Framework working closely with Careers Wales and Post-16

education and training providers to develop and formalise partnership working and information sharing links.

Youth Service Review

- 3.3 A staffing re-structure of the local authority's Youth Service, which took effect earlier this year, has seen youth workers deployed to work from a new hub based model as opposed to a dedicated stand-alone service. This has seen Youth Workers working more closely with other practitioners (e.g. family support workers, social workers and Education Welfare Officers) to offer a more joined-up and targeted service to young people.
- 3.4 The local authority has taken steps to work more closely with the Third Sector in relation to the budget reductions that affected the Council's open access youth provision in 2014. Work has been undertaken to commission small grants to Third Sector Youth Services via the Welsh Government Strategy Grant to support and develop open access youth provision across the County Borough.
- 3.5 The current Youth Service consultation exercise, which is being conducted as part of a wider consultation with the South Wales Police and the Local Service Board's 446 project, is intending to seek the views of up to 3000 young people across the County Borough. These views will be used to further target existing resources and to build capacity within the Third Sector to develop additional provision where necessary.

4. Current situation / proposal

Youth Engagement and Progression Framework

- 4.1 In January 2015, Welsh Government (through the Minister for Education and Skills and Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology) agreed to award a second grant payment of £50,000 to each local authority in Wales. As part of the grant requirements each local authority was required to provide a 'progress to date' report against the original YE&P Implementation - Action Plan submission in 2014. In addition, each authority was asked to outline the actions they were planning on taking forward up to 31 March 2016. These were developed jointly between the EPC and members of the YE&P Framework Steering Group, a copy of this submission is attached as **Appendix 2** to this report.
- 4.2 During the restructure of the Integrated Working and Family Support service, and as a demonstration of the Authority's commitment to continue to reduce the number of young people presenting as Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), the EPC post was moved to core funding. This has allowed for the second grant payment to be allocated to support elements of delivery for Lead Workers such as accreditation costs and employment related qualifications.
- 4.3 Substantial progress has also been made towards the key offers to young people through the Framework, namely the appointment of a team of dedicated Lead Workers. During the initial stages of implementation, lead work support was provided by Youth Service staff as an additional responsibility to their substantive

role. However, through the restructure of Integrated Working and Family Support, and utilising funding through the Education Improvement Grant (formally 14 – 19 Network funding) we now have a team of 6 full-time Lead Workers. Allocated to each of the Authority's Secondary, Special schools, these Lead Workers provide young people identified in greatest need through the authority's Early Identification tool, with a single point of contact and targeted support based on identified needs to address barriers to education. Although a smaller team in numbers than previous arrangements, working full-time will enable these dedicated Lead Workers to provide greater capacity and continuity of support to schools and their pupils.

- 4.4 Implementation of the Youth Guarantee, as set by the Welsh Government, presents a unique opportunity to bring together post-16 providers to create a comprehensive offer to learners in Year 11. Training for staff from school, college and work based learner providers to input their respective prospectus of options into the Common Area Prospectus (CAP) is ongoing. Group training for staff that will be supporting young people in Year 11 is also available from Careers Wales, and will be ongoing throughout this coming Autumn Term.
- 4.5 In line with one of the key components of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework, Bridgend has developed an Early Identification system known internally as the Vulnerability Assessment Profile (VAP). Pupils identified as potential NEETs (Red or Amber Status) through the VAP attending Secondary and Special schools, as well as the authorities Elected Home Educated and alternative provisions, are allocated a Lead Worker. For the last academic year (2014-15) the VAP and any subsequent offer of support were focused only on Year 11 pupils; however, from this Autumn term (September 2015) the range and frequency of the VAP will increase to a termly report including Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils. This allows for a more timely and targeted offer of support in identifying and addressing barriers to education, whilst also securing a 'suitable offer' through into post-16 education, employment or training. Pupils still requiring intensive support to maintain their educational placements are highlighted to post-16 Lead Workers based in the relevant provider to ensure a continuity of support through the transition from mainstream to further education.
- 4.6 While the focus of Lead Workers is preventing young people becoming NEET, provision has also been made to support those who fail to make a successful transition from Year 11. From April this year, a team of 3 Engagement and Transition (E&T) workers (funded through the Welsh Government Strategy Grant) have been appointed to provide lead work support for young people 16 – 18 years old, who are NEET. Working closely with colleagues from Careers Wales, the E&T workers track (through information provided from Careers Wales) and provide bespoke packages of support to young people on an individual and group basis, to identify and secure suitable routes back into education, employment or training.
- 4.7 In order to support the regular sharing of personal information for multi-agency services within Bridgend, an Information Sharing Protocol (ISP) has been developed. The ISP covers the exchange of information between the Local Authority, multi-agency services, education providers and Careers Wales. The ISP details the specific purposes for sharing and the personal information being shared, the required operational procedures, consent process and legal justification.

- 4.8 A Placement Agreement has also been developed and signed off with Careers Wales, allowing both the E&T workers, and the EPC, mediated access to Careers Wales' management information system Cognisoft IO. This has enabled a timelier identification and re-engagement of young people without recorded destinations, reclassifying them into the most appropriate Tier (within the Careers Wales 5 Tier Model of Engagement) depending on their individual circumstances and support needs.
- 4.9 The continued success in the reduction of young people who are NEET in Bridgend is corroborated in a recent report compiled by the Welsh Audit Office which highlights Bridgend as the third highest performer in Wales, behind Torfaen and Merthyr Tydfil Councils respectively, in reducing the number of Year 11 school leavers known to be NEET between 2009 and 2014, as outlined in the table below.

| Council | Percentage of Year 11 leavers known to be NEET | | |
|----------------|--|------|----------|
| | 2009 | 2014 | % change |
| Torfaen | 8.2 | 2.2 | -73% |
| Merthyr Tydfil | 4.6 | 2.6 | -57% |
| Bridgend | 7.6 | 3.6 | -53% |
| Cardiff | 8.9 | 4.3 | -52% |
| Newport | 9.1 | 4.7 | -48% |

Youth Service Review

- 4.10 The strategic purpose of the review is to ensure that Statutory and Third Sector youth work provision is aligned and presented to young people as a coherent offer. The review is underpinned by the Welsh Government's Youth Work Strategy 2014 – 2018.
- 4.11 A Third Sector Partnerships Development worker has been employed as part of the restructure of Integrated Working and Family Support services. The post currently supports both sectors in strengthening and maintaining the strategic relationship between youth work organisations'. Within this process, the Third Sector will be supported in developing and delivering services to young people in line with Estyn recommendations.
- 4.12 Work is being undertaken to develop a broad perspective of current provision for young people available through both the Third Sector and Statutory Sector, which use both targeted and universal approaches. This area of work will examine existing partnerships, identifying what is working well in order to capitalise on current opportunities for young people, in addition to the identification of any gaps in provision that will allow us to draw in existing resources and partnerships to promote a coherent approach to the delivery of services. These exercises include: -
- Youth Review Consultation – consultation exercise, in collaboration with the South Wales Police and the Local Service Board, formally named 'The 446 Project' will look at local area statistics relating to current provision, and gaps in provision for young people's services. A copy of the consultation can be found in

Appendix 3. This survey will be supported by other relevant consultation exercises undertaken particularly by the Active Young People's department, which examines the perspectives of young people in relation to services in their area. The Youth Review/446 consultation exercise is being carried out in collaboration with schools, community based services, open access universal services, and by other frontline professionals. The survey is available online through which young people are able to access and complete during their ICT lessons. It is also available as a hard copy through a number of networks supporting the delivery of the survey both on a one-to-one, as well as group work basis.

- Community Mapping – In 2014, Third Sector services were commissioned to undertake community profiles per area (seven areas examined). The results from this exercise will be aligned with the results of the Youth Review consultation, which will demonstrate local area provision gaps.

4.13 The results from these exercises will be analysed and alternative service delivery models will be developed through a number of networks representative of both Statutory and Third Sector services. Results of the review will also inform future planning and will take place initially via the Third Sector Strategy group hosted by BAVO. In addition, the Youth Council have agreed to support the review through the establishment of sub-groups to action many of the core issues identified reflecting young people's responses captured through the consultation exercise. Following the Youth Review, the Youth Council will continue to be supported by staff from Integrated Working and Family Support services with the development of the sub groups reflecting the results illustrated in the report. In addition, strategic support will be provided to each of the issue based sub groups in order to ensure that the Youth Council are effectively directed and supported in achieving change for young people.

4.14 The review of Youth Services will allow the Authority to reinforce existing infrastructures equipped to build on the delivery of frontline services for young people in the absence of universal provisions once available through the Statutory Sector. Both sectors will receive the results from the review and will work together to capitalise on current provision through existing networks.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

5.1 The work of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental wellbeing in the County Borough of Bridgend.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 The YE&P Framework and Careers Wales 5 Tier Model of Engagement are both national policies which will have a positive impact on how the Authority complies with its duties.

6.2 An Equality Impact Assessment linked with the Youth Service Review will be developed once the Review has concluded and any proposed changes are known.

7. Financial Implications

Youth Engagement and Progression Framework

7.1 In the current round of funding (2015-16), £165,000 is allocated to Lead Workers from the 14 - 19 component of the Education Improvement Grant (EIG). It has been proposed within the Central South Consortium to delegate this 14-19 component element of EIG to schools in 2016-17. While this is still only a proposal, the Authority has had assurance during the last Partnership Steering Group (17th June 2015) from Head teachers that it can retain this sum to continue to fund Lead Workers in 2015-16.

7.2 The second £50,000 grant payment will be used to help support Lead Worker delivery such as accreditation costs for informal and work related qualifications.

Youth Service Review

7.3 There are no financial implications as part of the Youth Service review at this point in time as the current consultation is ongoing.

8. Recommendation

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the content of the report.

Contact Officer: Owen Shepherd
Engagement and Progression Co-ordinator

Telephone: (01656) 642697

E-mail: owen.shepherd@bridgend.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Sarah Keefe
Third Sector Partnerships Accreditation and Part-Time Service
Senior Development Worker

Telephone: (01656) 815948

E-mail: sarah.keefe@bridgend.gov.uk

Background documents:

Welsh Government Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Implementation Plan - 2013

Welsh Government's Youth Work Strategy 2014 – 2018.

.....

- Appendix 1** - Bridgend YEPF Steering Group - TOR - FINAL
- Appendix 2** - Action Plan - Bridgend - Update and Grant Application for 2015-16
- Appendix 3** - Youth Review/446 project consultation exercise
- Appendix 4** - Glossary