

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE CABINET ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 5, GUILDHALL, SWANSEA ON
WEDNESDAY, 6 APRIL 2016 AT 4.00 PM**

PRESENT: Councillor D W W Thomas (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)
C R Doyle

Councillor(s)
C R Evans

Councillor(s)
R V Smith

Officer(s)
Sam Woon
Nick Williams

Democratic Services Officer
Head of Learner Support Service

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): J P Curtice, C Thomas and L V Walton

26 **DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS.**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

27 **MINUTES.**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 March, 2016, be agreed as a correct record.

28 **DISCUSSION WITH CARYN MORGAN (NEET CO-ORDINATOR), GOWER COLLEGE SWANSEA.**

The Chair welcomed Caryn Morgan (NEET Co-ordinator) Gower College, Swansea, to the meeting and outlined the two topics that the CAC were reviewing, namely NEET's and Young People's suitability for employment when leaving school.

Caryn Morgan, NEET Co-ordinator, Gower College, Swansea, provided an overview of her 22 year career within Gower College and detailed her current role.

She stated that young people leave school and enrol on a number of different courses with no idea what they want to do in the future. The key reasons young people drop out of courses were as a result of choosing the wrong course and not having any parental support/guidance. The other reasons were social which included homelessness; substance misuse; mental health issues; young carers; financial issues and being a looked after. It was noted that the reasons for dropping out of courses had nothing to do with what schools were/were not doing.

She outlined the role of the 5 Student Support Officers (SSO's) who link directly with young people who are identified as high risk. The SSO's work closely with colleagues within the College and external organisations, including Careers Wales. Their role is to monitor attendance, behaviour and achievement of young people.

She detailed the process used to identify young people as high risk and the benefit of the VAP data (which is usually received at the end of April and covers the age range of 11 to 16 years) for all young people in Swansea schools who apply to the College. She stated that Schools were generally reluctant to provide information for young people up to the age of 18 years.

She provided details of the pilot course which had been introduced last year specifically to target young learners that had dropped off courses. The pilot consisted of a flexible taster programme which introduced young people to catering; business; art; IT; numeracy; literacy and preparing young people for interviews. It was noted that 13 learners had started the programme in October half term, 9 had completed the full qualification and 3 had transferred to alternative providers. The College had been successful in keeping these young people in College and as a result of its success, the pilot had been expanded this year.

Attendance was identified as a big issue. Letters regarding non-attendance are usually sent to the parents/carers but in this instance that approach is not followed.

Key issues arising from the presentation included:

- The VAP information was not the property of any one school and there was a clear need to the information to be dealt with in an 'all Swansea' approach;
- VAP data is not available for late College applications;
- Support is always available to young people to apply for taster courses although these courses are not publicised in the prospectus;
- The period between May and September was identified as a period where young people could develop bad habits. However, the introduction of taster programmes which are broken down in 3 ten week terms may be beneficial;
- There is a need to focus on young people's strengths and weaknesses and provide individual, tailored support;
- The key to success is attendance;
- The biggest concern is the number of young people who cannot write and there is a urgent need to address this problem;
- Careers advice within schools requires attention;
- There are no minimum entry requirements for taster courses;
- The merger of the College had been beneficial, especially in relation to access to the admissions team;
- Transitional visits to the College take place in October and were beneficial in breaking down barriers for young people, many of whom are intimidated by the prospect of walking into the College;
- The taster courses are not advertised in the College Prospectus;
- Not all schools are engaged in promoting the taster courses;
- Equipment is provided by the College for young people who participate in taster courses;

- Some young people receive daily lunch vouchers and are encouraged to participate in organised trips;
- Primary schools hold a great deal of information which may be useful;
- There is a need to look at best practice in relation to transition arrangements from Primary to Secondary and Secondary to Further Education;
- It would be beneficial to examine the alternative educational establishments across Swansea (e.g. Pathways) for best practice and consistency.

The Chair thanked Caryn Morgan for her informative presentation.

RESOLVED that:

1. The report be noted;
2. The Head of Learning Support Services investigate the process of Schools allocating VAP scores and the supply of this information to Colleges;
3. The Chair organise a visit to Pathways within the next fortnight.

The meeting ended at 5.24 pm

CHAIR