



Report of the Director of Education

Education and Skills Policy Development Committee - 15 December 2021

Positional Statement for Vocational Education in Swansea

Purpose:	To give the Policy Development Committee a positional statement on vocational education in Swansea for children and young people aged 14-19
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For Information	

1. Background

- 1.1 This report provides an outline of the current vocational education and training provision in Swansea for 14-19 year olds. It covers vocational opportunities in schools and post-16 settings.
- 1.2 Learning provision for 14-19 year olds in schools and colleges in Wales is determined by the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure, 2009; which places a duty on local authorities, 14-19 networks, schools and colleges to work with Welsh ministers to provide local curricula that comprise of a range of courses and options for learners. The Education (Local Curriculum for Pupils in Key Stage 4) Wales Regulations 2009 (the local curriculum regulations) set out that each local curriculum must contain a minimum of 25 courses and consist of a minimum of three vocational courses of study. The local curricula requirements for learners aged 16 contains a minimum of 30 courses of study, which include a minimum of five general courses and five vocational courses.
- 1.3 In April 2014, the Welsh Government issued statutory guidance on how the Learning and Skills Measure 2009 should be implemented (Welsh Government, 2014b). It explained how local curricula for 14-19 year olds should be designed through joint planning with suitable consideration of both vocational and academic routes. Regional partnerships, local authorities, secondary schools and further education institutions have due regard to this statutory guidance. However, this policy has not been updated since the Further and Higher

Education Act 2014 effectively removed the duty to collaborate from FE colleges (National Assembly for Wales, 2014).

- 1.4 The Junior Apprenticeship programme in Wales is aimed at 14-16 year olds and enables them to undertake a level 1 or 2 vocational pathway at a local college, developing practical skills while gaining qualifications. A programme known as the Junior Academy in Swansea has been developed through partnership with Swansea schools and Gower College Swansea since 2019/2020. See 2.6, 2.7 below

2. Current position

14 – 16 Vocational opportunities

- 2.1 All Swansea schools meet the requirements of the learning and skills measure to offer at least three vocational courses at ages 14-16. This is delivered in a number of ways:
- Vocational courses delivered on school site by school staff, for example Health and Social Care
 - Vocational courses delivered on school site by college staff, for example Children's Care and Learning Development
 - Vocational courses delivered off site by college staff, for example Engineering and Construction
 - Full-time vocational course and work-related experience (Junior Academy) delivered off site by college staff and industry links, for example Landscaping & Horticulture and Hair & Beauty
- 2.2 All Swansea schools deliver some vocational courses by staff within their own setting. This is most common for courses such as Travel and Tourism, Health and Social Care, Children's Care and Learning Development (CCLD) and Sport and Coaching. One school uses staff expertise from Gower College to design and deliver a curriculum in CCLD. These courses are typically delivered for three hours per week.
- 2.3 Gower Junior College is a 'paid for' provision offered by the college to all schools. These courses are offered at the college to make best possible use of facilities, equipment, and staff expertise. Some schools use this as part of their options open to all key stage 4 pupils while others use the provision for learners who, for various reasons, are following an alternative curriculum. Courses offered include Construction, Engineering, Landscaping and Horticulture, Hair and Beauty and Catering and Hospitality. For 2021/2022 there are 18 groups of learners completing level 1 and level 2 courses. These are also typically delivered for three hours per week
- 2.4 Coleg Sir Gâr and Neath Port Talbot College deliver vocational programmes to learners who live near county borders. Bryngwyn Vocational Skills Centre (Coleg Sir Gâr) and Llansamlet Construction Centre (NPTC Group of Colleges) deliver courses in construction.
- 2.5 In addition, Gower College and Inspire Training are vocational provisions as part of the framework of providers offered to schools through the Cynnydd programme. The Cynnydd project aims to meet the requirements of Specific Objective 2 (To reduce the number of those at risk of becoming NEET,

amongst 11–24 year-olds) European Social Fund Operational Programme, by providing several interventions targeted at young people who are identified as being at the very greatest risk of becoming NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training). In the case of both these providers, programmes have been developed to introduce learners to a wide range of vocational areas and aid the transition to further vocational training and apprenticeship opportunities within local post-16 settings. The Cynnydd programme will come to an end as of September 2022.

- 2.6 In 2019/2020 a new full time vocational programme was offered to all schools in Swansea as part of Welsh Government's Junior Apprenticeship model. Known as the Junior Academy in Swansea and operating from Gower College's Tŷ Coch campus, this is a four day a week programme for learners. Learners on the programme spend one day a week in their school completing Mathematics, English and other requirements of the statutory curriculum not covered at the college.
- 2.7 The Junior Academy is aimed at young people 14-16 years old who have a very clear idea of the vocational pathway they wish to follow and would benefit from a less traditional route. The programme particularly suits those who are at risk of disengaging with the school system and becoming NEET. There are currently 13 learners from four different secondary schools following vocational pathways in Landscaping & Horticulture and Hair & Beauty. Alongside their studies, each learner takes part in work related opportunities through a range of work readiness activities and sector related experiences. All learners who successfully completed the Junior Academy in 2021 progressed to higher level vocational studies, apprenticeships, or employment. The Junior Academy is very much a partnership project between Gower College and secondary schools with a welfare and progression coordinator responsible for support and progression to suitable pathways upon leaving.
- 2.8 Schools in Swansea have access to and make good use of the 'Have a Go' Welsh Government initiative. This is an initiative that allows schools to access specific industry kits to aid teaching and learning experiences. The kits that can be borrowed for a certain length of time encourage learners to find out about vocational careers and apprenticeships. Industry kits are available across five industry sectors; Construction and Infrastructure, Engineering and Technology, Health, Hospitality and Lifestyle, IT and Enterprise and Media and Creative. A successful element of the Community Renewal Fund bid is to replicate this project on a local level so that both school children and post-16 learners can access similar kits to give an engaging insight into career options.
- 2.9 Careers Wales operates in all Swansea secondary schools to deliver employer engagement. There are dedicated advisers that link schools and pupils with employers from different sectors and industries with the aim of motivating, inspiring and raising awareness of a range of different careers. Employers have visited many schools to give presentations, deliver workshops and mock interviews. Apprenticeship applications for school leavers are completed through Careers Wales.
- 2.10 Careers Education as part of Curriculum for Wales will be called 'careers and work-related experiences' (CWRE) and will be embedded throughout every area of learning and experience. CWRE will start in primary school and be developed throughout their school life.

Post-16 Vocational opportunities

- 2.11 The post-16 landscape in Swansea gives learners a vast range of vocational training opportunities. Learners can continue with vocational options in sixth forms, further education institutions (FEIs), training providers or through apprenticeships with local employers.
- 2.12 Six of seven sixth forms in Swansea offer level 3 vocational qualifications at subsidiary diploma level (the equivalent to one A-level). These qualifications sit alongside A-levels as part of learning programmes with progression into further vocational studies, apprenticeships, and employment. Two Welsh medium sixth schools offer level 3 vocational qualifications through the medium of Welsh at diploma level in Business, IT and Sport. Class sizes are often small for these subjects however there are larger cohorts studying Health and Social Care and Applied Science (Forensics).
- 2.13 Gower College Swansea and neighbouring FEIs offer a vast range of vocational options at levels 1, 2 and 3 for full diploma (two A-level equivalent) and extended diploma (three A-level equivalent). These courses include those that have been identified by the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership (RLSP) as having skills shortages, for example Health and Social care, Construction and the Built Environment, Digital Technology and Advanced Engineering. Apprenticeships are also offered through Gower College Swansea.
- 2.14 Inspire Training offer traineeships and apprenticeships for school leavers in the following vocational areas; Business Administration, Construction, Customer Service, Hair and Beauty, Health and Social Care, ICT, Retail, Motor Mechanics and Sport.

3. Legal implications

- 3.1 There are no legal implications

4. Finance Implications

- 4.1 There are no finance implications.

5. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 5.1 None arising from this information report

Background Papers: None

Appendices: None