



Report of the Cabinet Member for Education Improvement Learning and Skills

Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 15 March 2022

Update on Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) Provision in Swansea

Purpose:	To update the Scrutiny Panel on EOTAS provision in Swansea.
Content:	An update on the current position, emerging issues and a proposed way forward.
Councillors are being asked to:	Consider the information provided and give views
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1. Background

- 1.1 In 2016, Swansea Cabinet agreed a report proposing a complete overhaul of EOTAS services in Swansea. This included agreement for a purpose built PRU that has now been completed and is fully operational, known as Maes Derw.
- 1.2 The intention of the proposals agreed from the 2016 report were that Swansea Council extensively overhauled its entire EOTAS service and that the PRU significantly reduced capacity in recognition of increased devolution of funding and responsibility to schools. The needs of the majority of learners with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) should be met through mainstream education, with central provision only being made for those learners with the most severe SEBD needs.
- 1.3 The current EOTAS provision in Swansea currently includes Maes Derw PRU, independent special schools, home tuition delivered via the Home Tuition Service and Tŷ Fedw provision. The Local Authority also devolves £700k annually to secondary schools to focus on providing SEBD provision for learners in Key Stage 4 to remain in mainstream during this critical point in education.

1.4 The largest central provision is Maes Derw with 158 available places and a budget of £2,673,659.

2. Current EOTAS provision

2.1 **The Home Tuition Service** currently has a caseload of approximately 67.

These pupils will be in receipt of home tuition because they are too unwell to attend school. This will often be due to mental health needs and this has been exacerbated by the pandemic. A few children and young people receive home tuition after a permanent exclusion but this is a temporary arrangement while appropriate provision is sought (often a new start at an alternative mainstream school).

2.2 **Tŷ Fedw** is a specialist provision for CYP who have a Statement of Special Educational Need along with Social Emotional Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) and who may be on the Autistic Spectrum (ASD). There are four part time places. This provision is currently full and considered very effective in meeting the needs of the CYP who attend.

2.3 Approximately 47 CYP living in Swansea receive an education from **independent special schools**. This provision is allocated and monitored via the Additional Learning Needs Panel and monitored and reviewed on an annual basis via the Statement review process. We believe the provision offered by Swansea Council maintained schools is amongst the best in Wales and we would like to consider further the opportunities for all children to receive an offer of education within their local community. However, these are complex considerations and there is no intention to disrupt the education of any learner currently attending an independent special school.

2.4 There are currently 117 pupils on roll at **Maes Derw**. Most will be dual registered with a mainstream school although some, including those who have been permanently excluded, may only be registered at Maes Derw. Of these 117, we are aware that a proportion of learners attend on a part time basis. Maes Derw has been established on the premise that pupils who access the provision do so for an agreed period with the aim of reintegrating in to mainstream provision. This is in line with Welsh Government expectations of Pupil Referral Units. The purpose of Maes Derw is to support the individual needs of pupils and to develop their skills and abilities to be able to re-integrate back into school or successfully transition to further education or employment. For pupils who are dually registered, the aim is to support their re-integration back to school. To support this process, wherever possible, time in their mainstream provision is maintained from the outset. For some pupils, their time in school will increase on a weekly basis; others may never re-integrate back to school depending on the level of their needs. The reintegration rate has been low. Around 7% of learners have reintegrated to mainstream over the last 5 years.

2.5 Maes Derw also offers a Tŷ Canol provision that has an agreed remit that pupils referred to, or recommended placement, at Tŷ Canol, will continue to attend their mainstream provision for at least 50% of their time in education. For pupils in Tŷ Canol, the placement is a short-term placement for two to three

terms to support pupils with identified needs that are creating barriers to engagement in mainstream provision. All parties (Maes Derw, School, parent/carers) agree the pace of re-integration jointly. Where pupils are not making expected progress the school and the Phase Leader for Tŷ Canol may agree that a longer term more intensive level of support is required and the case will be taken back to EOTAS panel for consideration to be dual registered with the main PRU. For all cases, when a pupil successfully reaches a position where they have fully re-integrated back to mainstream provision, the PRU will continue to provide support for up to a term and the pupil will remain on roll at the PRU so that sessions can still be provided where needed. The Maes Derw curriculum is designed to support this re-integration model.

2.6 Current issues:

- A new EOTAS policy is being finalised by a task and finish group. A refinement to recommendations made to Cabinet in 2016 is needed as five years have now passed. During the intervening years, it has been recognised that only referring children and young people with the most severe SEBD needs to EOTAS provision may not be sufficient to meet the needs of Swansea. The effectiveness of prevention and early intervention by Swansea schools and central services mean that there are less CYP requiring PRU provision. However, there are a greater number of CYP with long-term SEBD needs and an increase in pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) presenting with challenging behaviours. The new EOTAS task and finish group has identified the need to develop provision to meet the needs of this complex cohort above and beyond the current curriculum offer which is tailored to a reintegration model.
- Both senior officers and the Cabinet Member are committed to deliver improved outcomes within Maes Derw and to evaluate the effectiveness of the provision on a continual basis. Attendance, exclusions and part time provision at Maes Derw are all areas that can be improved. The need to ensure all pupil placements at Maes Derw are appropriate in order for learners' needs to be met has also been highlighted. As a central provision of the local authority, the PRU requires team of officers working together to make efficient and effective use of this central non-delegated resource to the benefit of CYP in Swansea. An open dialogue and holistic, local authority evaluation of the provision has been paused due to the transformation period. Now that we have a whole year since the opening of Maes Derw, it is appropriate to consider how well the changes are in meeting the needs of Swansea children and young people.
- There is a continual need to ensure that the funding available for EOTAS provision in Swansea is targeted at need. Currently the majority of the funding for EOTAS provision is with Maes Derw PRU however, as needs change and those learners who meet the remit of Maes Derw reduce, there is a need to look at bespoke, multi agency packages of support which do not currently have dedicated funding. It would also be beneficial to target resource at earlier intervention and prevention. The effectiveness of the devolved money to secondary schools suggests targeting resource early is effective in reducing the number of learners requiring EOTAS provision.

2.7 Steps to address current issues:

- To help address emerging issues a Team Around the PRU has been established in order to innovate and evolve provision for this aspect of EOTAS. The recommendations of the 2016 Cabinet report sets the direction of travel for Maes Derw, if the needs of CYP have changed then we must adapt and flex our provision. The Team Around the PRU meets fortnightly and is a cross Council working group with an action plan to address key issues and to move forward to develop the provision into something that will meet the changing needs of CYP.
- In the interim, while this work is ongoing, Child and Family Services are providing an extensive package of support for Maes Derw. Support for curriculum design has also been offered and work is being undertaken by Education Directorate officers to analyse incidents leading to exclusion to consider any additional support that could be offered. Progress is reported to Team Around the PRU.
- The Education Directorate is in the process of undertaking a resetting and rebalancing exercise in relation to Specialist Teaching Facilities. This work will support schools further to create inclusive learning environments meeting the needs of all learners wherever possible. The work should also increase and enhance provision for learners with ASD and we aim to include increased specialist support for SEBD within the remit.
- Following the success of Tŷ Fedw there are plans to provide similar provision in the primary sector from September 2022 and we have increased the special school places in Ysgol Pen y Bryn to provide additional resource.
- Next steps will be to finalise proposals to ensure Maes Derw meets the changing needs of learners and to make fresh recommendations to Cabinet.

3. Summary

- 3.1 In Swansea, we have a whole school approach to promoting inclusion with many schools demonstrating innovative approaches to supporting CYP with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Despite this, and following a national trend, exclusions are increasing and some CYP need to access even more bespoke EOTAS provision.
- 3.2 We have good offers of EOTAS provision in Swansea and central to this is the local authority provision of Maes Derw. Notwithstanding significant investment, the needs of CYP are changing and we must always adapt and improve. The CYP who need to access this provision are amongst the most vulnerable and we must not miss the opportunity to offer them the best opportunities by sticking rigidly to a provision model designed at a time when the presenting need was different.

3.3 We can offer assurance that improvements have already been made. However, a more comprehensive review and redesign is needed and will be undertaken. In the meantime, individual learners are supported on a case-by-case basis to ensure they have the best provision available for them.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 There are no legal implications from this report. It is for an update only.

5. Finance Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications from this report. It is for an update only.

6. Integrated Assessment Implications

6.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

6.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

6.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

6.4 An IIA Screening Form has been completed with the agreed outcome that a full IIA report was not required for the following reasons:

- This is a report to share information. The summary of impacts is low. No mitigation is required.
- This is a report to share information regarding the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales, which is linked to the corporate objective of improving education and skills.

- This is a report to share information. No risks have been identified and no impact is envisaged.

Background papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A – IIA Screening Form

Glossary of terms:

EOTAS – Education other than at School

PRU – pupil referral unit

CYP – children and young people

SEBD – social, emotional and behavioural difficulties

STF – specialist teaching facility