



Report of the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning

Cabinet – 18 May 2023

Vulnerable Learners Service Inclusion Strategy

Purpose:	To consider and approve the Vulnerable Learners Service Inclusion Strategy 2023 – 2028.
Policy Framework:	Human Rights Act 1998 The Children’s Act 2004 Equality Act 2010 Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 The School Admission Code 2013 Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 Curriculum for Wales Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 Education Otherwise than at School (EOTAS) framework for action, Welsh Government 2017.
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) This report is approved and that the Vulnerable Learners Service Inclusion Strategy 2023 – 2028 is agreed as the formal mechanism for the Education Directorate to identify the key priorities for supporting vulnerable learners and the strategies to address those priorities. 2) The impact tracker is used to monitor progress and impact and reported via the Vulnerable Learners Service Plan. This will not remove other reporting mechanisms but rather provide an additional mechanism to draw all strands of support together.
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The hallmark of Swansea Council's Education Directorate's approach to inclusion as evidenced in the 2022 Estyn report is rooted in the ambition to provide the best education for every child. Learner wellbeing and welfare is critical to supporting this aspiration which can only be achieved if every child is included.
- 1.2 In order to support this aspiration, it has been considered helpful to draw together all of the strategies which promote inclusion into a single overarching document for promoting inclusion. This has resulted in the Vulnerable Learners Service Inclusion Strategy.

2. Vulnerable Learners Service and inclusion focus

- 2.1 The Vulnerable Learner Service covers a range of services for vulnerable learners which include Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Team, Maes Derw Pupil Referral Unit, services for pupils Educated Other than at School, Home Tuition Team, Pupil Engagement (promoting inclusion/reducing exclusion), School Admissions Team, Looked After Children Education, Education Welfare Service and Education Safeguarding and Child Protection.
- 2.2 Some learners are identified as vulnerable due to a specific additional learning need or personal situation for example children who are looked after. In addition, all children and young people can potentially experience periods of vulnerability at different points in time.
- 2.3 Creating an education system which is inclusive and responsive to need is critical in meeting needs and ensuring all children and young people have the best chance to access education opportunities and progression. This will contribute to achieving the Education Directorate aim of creating an ***Excellent Education for All by Working Together.***
- 2.4 Swansea Council have established Swansea as a UNESCO City of Learning and have also embedded the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into the way policy is set. Swansea Council became the first Human Rights city in Wales in 2022 embracing a vision of vibrant, diverse, fair and safe communities built on the foundations of universal human rights. Our school communities will be a critical part of this.
- 2.5 The Vulnerable Learners Service Inclusion Strategy aims to bring together the key priorities across all areas of the Vulnerable Learners Service which will support us to meet the needs of vulnerable learners to achieve the aims of the Education Directorate and Swansea Council. The document also includes an impact tracker to ensure progress and impact is measured.

3. Inclusion Strategy and Key priorities.

- 3.1 Each area of the Vulnerable Learners Service works within required legislation and local and national strategies, policies and procedures. However, there has not been an overarching, local strategy to bring all of these strands together.
- 3.2 The need for an inclusion strategy was considered as part of the Education Corporate Delivery Committee and suggestions emerging from that work strengthened the rationale for producing an overarching strategy to encompass all of the activity needed to meet the key priorities.
- 3.3 Many of the learners receiving support from one area of the service will also be supported elsewhere. There is a risk of duplication but more importantly there are opportunities to build capacity and resilience.
- 3.4 There is also a need to put learners at the centre of services and build support around them rather than attempt to fit them into existing services or provision. This approach mirrors that of our key partners, most notably Child and Family Services. We have also used child centred approaches advocated in the Nyth/Nest framework used by Regional Partnership Boards.
- 3.5 There is emerging and changing need in Swansea. This is reflected nationally, and we must flex and respond to meet the changing needs of vulnerable learners.
- 3.6 The Vulnerable Learners Service Inclusion Strategy identifies five key priorities to meet the aims and expectations outlined above alongside meeting our legal, corporate and moral obligations to provide the best educational opportunities for vulnerable learners. These are:
 - Promoting attendance
 - Promoting inclusion
 - Embedding effective universal (whole school) provision while supporting sufficient specialist places
 - Embedding a shared inclusion ethos
 - Emotional health and psychological wellbeing (EHPW) whole school approach
- 3.7 For each of these priorities the strategy document outlines what we will do and what we want the impact to be. Appendix A of the Inclusion Strategy outlines our vision which places the child at the heart of our decision making.
- 3.8 In order to measure the progress and assess the impact of the strategies there is an impact tracker attached as Appendix B to the document. This tracker identified lead officers and milestones for key actions. It is important to note that while Education Officers are identified as the lead

officers the strategy advocated multi agency and partnership approaches. Our joint working with Child and Family Services and other partners will be critical to success. We will not be effective unless we work in partnership.

- 3.9 The tracker will also require progress updates along with evidence and detail of the outcome required.
- 3.10 The progress of the strategy as identified in the tracker will be measured via the Vulnerable Learners Service Plan and updates and review provided as part of the corporate process. The strategy is referenced in the service plan.
- 3.11 The strategy runs from 2023 to 2028. The work of the strategy has begun but the document and tracker provides cohesion and visibility along with a requirement to measure progress and impact.
- 3.12 The strategy, particularly the impact tracker, is designed as a live document to respond appropriately when needed but also to ensure clear priorities and vision are articulated.

4. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 4.1 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.
- 4.1.1 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'.
- 4.1.2 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.

4.1.3 An IIA Screening Form has been completed with the agreed outcome that a full IIA report was not required. The reason a full IIA report is not required is that the strategy is intended to have a wholly positive impact in terms of supporting Swansea Council to meet the requirements of the Equality Act, Wellbeing of Future Generations and also the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure.

4.1.4 The IIA process takes into account the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which the Council has embedded into the Authority's Policy Framework.

4.1.5 The strategy complies with Welsh Language Standards and prioritises support for Welsh Medium schools within the priority to support sufficient specialist places.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Background Papers:

None.

Appendices:

Appendix A - Vulnerable Learners Service Inclusion Strategy

Appendix B - IIA Screening Form