

Cabinet Action Plan (15 June 2017)

Scrutiny Inquiry of School Readiness

How can school readiness be improved in Swansea?

Recommendation		Action already being undertaken	New Action Proposed	Time scale	Responsible Officer
1.	Support those initiatives that are clearly improving school readiness and monitor impact.	As detailed in the Scrutiny Report there are a number of programmes, services and approaches making a considerable impact in relation to the outcomes of young children and their families.	Continue to support and, where possible, build on successful initiatives that promote school readiness through investments made via the Local Authority, Welsh Government and collaboration on a multi-agency basis.	On-going	SB
		There is commitment from the Local Authority to supporting this area of work as well as a clear multi-agency drive via the Healthy City Board and the Public Services Board.	Continue to work with partners to integrate services to meet the identified needs of families.	On-going	SB
		At a national level there is a commitment to the continuation of a number of the major Programmes in the "Taking Wales Forward".	To invest in a Prevention Invest to Save Framework in order to further develop the reporting of impact.	March 2018 and on-going	CS/RM/SB
<p>ACTION 1 is: COMPLETED within the available resources and on-going opportunities will be captured in a new Early Years Action Plan.</p> <p>Progress made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Flying Start Programme service delivery maintained into 2018/19. In November 2017 in collaboration with the Health Board and Public Health Wales Swansea's 1st 1000 Days event was held in order to promote the importance of the earliest days in children's future outcomes as well as to identify good practice and areas for development on a multi-agency basis. A strong commitment to integrated services and approaches came through strongly from the feedback which will form part of the developing action plan for Early Years Swansea wide. Discussions have been held with Social Finance Organisation to seek advice regarding how to evaluate the impact of investments. 					
2.	Support the ethos and practice of Flying Start and use this as a basis for developing early years	This is one of the aims within the Best Start Strategy, initiated via Health City Partnership. Progress has been made over the last few years to achieve this	To continue to develop the Jig-so project in partnership with the Health Board and, should additional resource be available, to extend the criteria to include parents over 25.	On-going	SB

services outside of the designated areas (with the longer term aim of providing coverage across the City and County of Swansea.)	within available resources. Examples include:	To explore the possibilities with the University to start the process of formally evaluating the Jig-so Project.	March 2018	SB
	The Jig-so Project has been established to work Swansea wide with young parents under 25 from pre-birth and throughout their child's infant years. The service draws on the principles of the Flying Start Programme in relation to the provision of support for the family and the child through a multi-disciplinary and agency service including midwifery, parenting and language development.	To discuss with the Health Board and GP Networks how the funding can be maintained and extended for the GP Penderi Network Early Years worker service. This would also include in relation to replicating the good practice in other GP Network areas in the future.	December 2017	SB
	An exemplar Project was initiated and commissioned by the GP Penderi Network to support families and their young children outside Flying Start areas with a focus on improving parenting skills. As the Panel heard, whilst it is early days, the post has been very successful to date and provided a much needed resource in the area.	To share good practice from Flying Start Childcare settings with non Flying Start childcare settings via the implementation of the Free Childcare Pilot.	On-going	SB
	During the last year the Local Authority has been supporting the Health Board's Commissioning processes in relation to developing a proposal to address gaps in speech, language and communication for children of pre-school/nursery age.	Continue to work with the Health Board to develop Speech and Language services in the Early Years prior to Reception.	March 2018 and on-going development	SB/MS

ACTION 2 is: COMPLETED as on-going business as usual.

Progress made:

- The Jig-so Project continues to be developed to support young parents and their young children. The Project's approach was recently recognised nationally via winning the Inequalities Category Award at the National Royal College of Midwifery 2018 Awards.
- The Jig-so Project in partnership with Swansea University has been successful in applying for a £10,000 grant to start the process of evaluating the approach.
- The Primary Care Early Years Pilot has been extended for a further year by the Penderi GP Network and in addition the Llchwyr GP Network has also invested in the project for a 12 month period.
- The Childcare Offer Pilot has been implemented and is now being rolled out on a phase by phase basis Swansea wide. Opportunities for training

are to be incorporated into the Childcare Training Programme available to all providers. Funding from the WG Childcare Offer Grant would be required to further enhance the level of support to non Flying Start Childcare settings.

- The Council working closely with ABMU Health Board secured ALN Innovation Grant funding to purchase Wellcomm packs for all schools, including Welsh medium schools.
 - Additional training scheduled in February and March has been arranged to train those schools who are not already using the resource. The Wellcomm Toolkit screens the receptive and expressive language skills of pupils on entry to Nursery and provides simple interventions to develop language skills in readiness for entry into Year R.
 - A SIMS tracking system is currently live and it is expected that there will be some data from Nursery pupils this academic year (from schools that are currently using Wellcomm) but it is envisaged that 2018/19 data sets will be more reliable as all schools should be up and running by then.
 - The data collated is dependent on diligent recording across all schools and as such it is hoped that Headteachers will agree to ensure that this is in place within their respective school.

3.	<p>Ensure the Early Years Services led by the Flying Start Service in collaboration with the Additional Learning Needs Unit in Education prepare for the changes in the Additional Learning Needs Reform legislation</p>	<p>Two actions have taken place in the Flying Start Service to date to prepare for the changes in the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) reform legislation for the Early Years population.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at conferences led by the Welsh Government to increase understanding of the legislative changes and stage of reform process. • The Additional Learning Needs Strategy Group in the Flying Start Service has engaged in a review of the current processes and provision in relation to children with emerging Additional Learning Needs across the Swansea Flying Start Service. <p>The following section summarises the current processes and provision in the Flying Start Service within Early Years in relation to ALN.</p> <p>A number of tools are available to support the identification of children with emerging Additional Learning Needs within the</p>	<p>It is recognised the second draft of the Additional Learning Needs Code of Practice regarding the legislative reforms for ALN in Wales published by the Welsh Government in February 2017 still provides a substantial lack of clarity. This lack of clarity particularly pertains to the responsibilities of Local Authority services in relation to Early Years populations regarding the ALN legislative reforms in Wales.</p> <p>It is also recognised that the ALN legislative reforms in Wales are not likely to be formally implemented for a number of years. In addition, it is probable that a staged approach to implementation will be advocated by the Welsh Government.</p> <p>However, it is also recognised that it is nevertheless important to begin to interpret the current and future draft guidance prepared by the Welsh Government to begin to prepare for the changes in relation to Early Years populations for children with emerging ALN. Therefore, the following are proposed:</p>		
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		<p>Swansea Flying Start Service. Some of these tools are already embedded; however, it was highlighted and recognised that there are also many tools that are at an early stage of implementation.</p> <p>A number of different processes and services are available to facilitate early intervention to support the needs of children with ALN within the Swansea Flying Start Service. In addition, these processes and services are available to support the further exploration of the needs of children with emerging ALN. These include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Play Plans, • Home based block play sessions by Early Language Development Team and the Speech Therapy Team, • Developmental play sessions in the Stepping Stones Additional Learning Needs Children’s Centre, • Consultation work with the Flying Start Speech and Language Therapy Service to empower childcare staff and parents, • Consultation work with the Flying Start Educational Psychologist to empower childcare staff and parents, • Joint consultation work with the Flying Start Speech and Language Therapy Service and the Flying Start Educational Psychologist for children with emerging or identified social communication difficulties to empower childcare staff and parents, • Informal drop in consultations for 	<p><i>As part of the ALN Commissioning Review:</i> A formal review of the documentation of all of the current processes, provision and structures in relation to the identification and intervention for children with emerging or identified ALN within the Early Years population in Swansea across all Local Authority and Health based services.</p> <p>A working group to be established (or utilising an appropriate alternative existing forum/group) that includes both the Early Years’ Service and the Additional Learning Needs Unit in Education to organise the strategic direction of preparing for the Additional Learning Needs reform legislative changes for the Early Years population.</p> <p>Scoping visits to neighbouring Local Authorities who have piloted implementation of different streams of the legislative changes.</p> <p>Exploration and decision making regarding a system for how Individual Development Plans can reflect the severity level of a child’s ALN within a graduated response within the Early Years population.</p> <p><i>Specifically in relation to Flying Start:</i> An overarching framework to be implemented within the Flying Start Service that defines a graduated response to co-ordinate the identification of and intervention for children with emerging or identified Additional Learning Needs within the Flying Start Early Years population.</p> <p>To establish a Flying Start centralised</p>	<p>March 2018</p> <p>March 2018</p> <p>March 2018 and on-going development</p> <p>December 2017</p>	<p>MS</p> <p>MS/SB</p> <p>MS/SB</p> <p>MS/SB</p> <p>SB</p>
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		<p>advice with the Flying Start Educational Psychologist,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flying Start Additional Learning Needs Panel. This panel provides a decision making mechanism for the provision of Additional Staff Support for children with the most significant and complex levels of Additional Learning Needs in Flying Start childcare settings to provide enhanced learning opportunities, • A number of different services within Flying Start refer to services out of Flying Start (within Health and Education) to further explore a child's underpinning difficulty and to seek decisions regarding provision to meet the needs of children with emerging or identified ALN. 	<p>Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator to support the Flying Start Educational Psychologist to promote the co-ordination and implementation of a graduated response to support the identification/intervention for children with ALN in Flying Start.</p> <p>To explore options to enable individual Flying Start Settings to have capacity to implement the graduated response.</p> <p>Development of a common template for Individual Development Plans for Early Years that will be consistent with the Individual Development Plans used for the school based and further education populations.</p> <p>Central Flying Start services to facilitate training in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Flying Start childcare staff knowledge in utilising and analysing data generated from assessment tools available to identify Additional Learning Needs. • Increase knowledge in person centred planning philosophy across Flying Start services. • Increase knowledge of Flying Start childcare staff and childcare setting based Additional Learning Needs Practitioners in writing Individual Development Plans and One Page Profiles. • Increase knowledge of childcare settings to facilitate Person Centred reviews. 	<p>December 2017</p> <p>December 2017</p> <p>September 2017 and On-going</p>	<p>SB</p> <p>SB</p> <p>SB</p>
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ACTION 3 is: NOT COMPLETED Significant progress made which will be continued to respond to the requirements of the ALN and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 in relation to Early Years.

Progress made:

- Initial discussions have been held regarding responding to the specific requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 in relation to Early Years.
 - By 2020 the Act requires the Local Authority to identify a designated Early Years Additional Learning Needs Officer and to draft and maintain an Individual Development Plan for pre-school children in Early Years settings.
 - It is expected that these requirements relating to Additional Learning Needs in the Early Years will be linked to a broader Council Additional Learning Needs Strategy.
- An ALN multi-agency Pathway Development Group has been established within the FS Programme to progress the system and processes for the requirements of the forthcoming ALN Bill and to ensure liaison with Education so that there is a co-ordinated approach. These developments will also contribute to the shaping of an approach outside Flying Start areas.
- Training has been provided for FS practitioners and is on-going, benchmarking of approach in other LAs has been undertaken, FS ALN documentation has been produced and the recruitment of the FS ALNCO was successful.
- The Council working closely with ABMU Health Board secured ALN Innovation Grant funding to purchase Wellcomm packs for all schools, including Welsh medium schools.
 - Additional training scheduled in February and March has been arranged to train those schools who are not already using the resource. The Wellcomm Toolkit screens the receptive and expressive language skills of pupils on entry to Nursery and provides simple interventions to develop language skills in readiness for entry into Year R.
 - A SIMS tracking system is currently live and it is expected that there will be some data from Nursery pupils this academic year (from schools that are currently using Wellcomm) but it is envisaged that 2018/19 data sets will be more reliable as all schools should be up and running by then.
 - The data collated is dependent on diligent recording across all schools and as such it is hoped that Headteachers will agree to ensure that this is in place within their respective school.

4.	Monitor, use and share the good practice that is emerging in this area.	Considerable monitoring is in place of the services and programmes and approaches relating to school readiness. Good practice is also shared with wider partners as well as other LAs. There have also been many opportunities to showcase the good practice via presentations at national conferences etc.	There will be a continued review and development of services and approaches and links will continue to be maintained and developed with leading academics and researchers with expertise in this area of work.		SB
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ACTION 4 is: COMPLETED as on-going business as usual.

Progress made:

6.	Encourage the use of the Pupil Development Grant by schools and/or clusters to help develop school readiness particularly when working with parents, families and communities.	Currently Challenge Advisers discuss the utilisation and effectiveness of the Pupil Development Grant on a school by school basis. This information has not to date been centrally collated and reported.	<p>The Education Improvement Service will map the utilisation of the Pupil Development Grant during the first term of the 17/18 academic year. This will include the identification of specific expenditure and activities relating to school readiness.</p> <p>Challenge Advisers will be asked to encourage the utilisation of the grant for school readiness purposes citing examples of good practice identified through the mapping process.</p> <p>However it should be noted that the terms and conditions of the Pupil Development Grant have become more restrictive. There is a need therefore to also explore other funding options in relation to Early Years learners with a clear focus on its targeting in relation to “age and stage” appropriate school readiness approaches and models of delivery.</p>	<p>Jan 2018 and on-going development</p> <p>March 2018 and on-going development</p>	<p>HM-R</p> <p>HM-R</p>
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ACTION 6 is: NOT COMPLETED

Progress made:

Progress made: Some progress made to date

A PDG summary document has been collated which contains information on how schools in Swansea are using their PGD grant funding. The analysis has started and early findings show the following:

- Some schools are employing Wellbeing/Pastoral Support Officers whose roles include working with families in deprivation;
- Some schools have employed staff to co-ordinate ‘TAF’ (Team Around the Family);
- Some schools mention productive links with parents through parental workshops, FAST and Families Connect;
- Some schools have the links with parents and families so that they are better informed and equipped to support their children at home whilst another school has developed successful school/home visits for pre-school nursery.

The next step involves further liaison with Challenge Advisers to ensure that their discussions with Headteachers includes ‘school readiness’ which links with the Wellbeing agenda. This is part of the focus for the core visits. Challenge Advisers will discuss current provision and explore the good practice already in place for ‘school readiness’ in order to share more widely with schools across Swansea.

The Challenge Adviser with responsibility for the PDG grants has been consulted and has agreed to work with the Strategic Lead for Foundation

Phase in order to support schools with 'school readiness'.

7.	Ensure that the recently introduced Foundation Phase Profile baseline has more consistency and robustness.	<p>This is a relatively new national assessment which has only been implemented since September 2015. Data is collated during the summer months for analysis.</p> <p>The results produced for year 1 reflected inconsistencies suggesting differences in interpretation and application across all primary schools. It is however acknowledged that it takes a number of years to fully embed a new assessment.</p>	<p>Following the appointment of a new Foundation Phase Performance Specialist who will take up post in September 2017 the data produced during the 2015/16 and 2016/17 academic years will be further analysed.</p> <p>A plan will be developed and implemented to address identified issues arising from the analysis such as including areas for further training and challenge.</p>	<p>Jan 2018 and on-going development</p> <p>Jan 2018 and on-going development</p>	<p>RA-D</p> <p>RA-D</p>
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ACTION 7 is: NOT COMPLETED

Progress made:

A working party comprising of all stakeholders has been established to share recommendations and develop a united understanding of the actions to be undertaken.

Expectations and time scale has been shared and agreed with all primary headteachers and Flying Start representatives.

All clusters have been represented through their Cluster Assessment Leads who have disseminated information, keeping headteachers and reception teachers informed. Areas of learning have been selected and levels allocated to individual schools ensuring a coverage of all subject areas and levels.

Cluster Assessment Leads have taken part in standardisation sessions ensuring consistency and a shared understanding of the compact profile.

All Reception teachers attended a Moderation Training day, comprising of Foundation Phase Profile training, training on the importance of observational comments feeding into assessments, standardisation and moderation.

During Moderation, Cluster Assessment Leads identify good practice within each cluster that will feed into a levelled portfolio at the end of the Summer term.

8.	<p>Develop minimum standards in relation to transition to school for both schools and day care settings.</p>	<p>Within the Flying Start Programme there are very effective examples of good practice relating to Transition from Childcare to Nursery. Swansea's model of locating Flying Start settings on primary school sites has been instrumental in ensuring effective transition.</p> <p>Many examples of good practice within Flying Start schools have been recognised in School Estyn Inspection Reports.</p> <p>During the last year the Local Authority has been supporting the Health Board's Commissioning processes in relation to developing a proposal to address gaps in speech, language and communication for children of pre-school/nursery age. Swansea's Flying Start Programme was selected as 1 of 5 LAs to take part in a national programme to track children from Flying Start and into school and beyond. The purpose of this is to link national datasets between health and education to identify the impact of the Programme on individual children's outcomes.</p> <p>Achieving a consistent approach to transition outside the Flying Start model was identified as an area for development both from a childcare setting to school and between health visiting and school.</p> <p>The Early Years Transition Group led by the previous Foundation Phase Performance Specialist was developed to</p>	<p>The new Foundation Phase Performance Specialist taking up post in September 2017 will be required to implement and monitor this recommendation working closely with partners.</p> <p>In addition transition will need to be re-visited in light of the new Free Childcare Pilot being implemented from September 2017 whereby there will be a greater expectation of close working between schools and childcare providers.</p> <p>Continue to work with the Health Board to develop Speech and Language services in the Early Years prior to Reception.</p> <p>The National Flying Start Data Linking Pilot will be implemented during 2018.</p>	<p>May 2018 and on-going</p> <p>Jan 2018 and on-going development</p> <p>Jan 2018 and on-going development</p>	<p>RA-D</p> <p>MS/SB</p> <p>SB</p>
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		<p>support the progression of the Swansea Early Years Strategy with a particular focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing minimum standards in relation to transition for early years services • Ensuring that each school has an EY Plan in place setting out how children’s holistic needs will continue to be supported during the Foundation Phase in order to build on the momentum gained <p>It recognised that whilst there is a wealth of data collected about children, it was not clear what information schools receive from the perspective of the child and their family, about the individual needs of children to enable smooth and successful transition into school.</p> <p>Recognising children’s right to voice in decisions that affect them, the group explored how children could further contribute to shaping their transition.</p> <p>A common information booklet was drafted and presented to YCA. These standards were agreed by the Swansea Primary Head teachers Association for implementation.</p>			
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ACTION 8 is: NOT COMPLETED

Progress made:

- Foundation Phase Strategic Lead met with Flying start representatives to build a working relationship and share good practice. Cluster Assessment Leads met with flying start personnel including managers to share practise of observational comments that assess using the compact profile, inform

planning and set individual targets.

- To date no issues have emerged from the Childcare Offer Pilot in relation to difficulties encountered in terms of transition between the Childcare entitlement and the Early Years provision.
- Speech and language – as per response to recommendation 3.
- The National Flying Start Data Linking Pilot project has been implemented in Swansea. Results from the data provided is awaited.

9.	Support the “Best Start Swansea Initiative” as a Public Service Board priority for the coming 12 months.	<p>Early Years and specifically the Best Start Messages formed one of the 4 priorities for the PSB during 2016/17.</p> <p>There is support from some members of the PSB for an Early Years focus for the next 12 months particularly given its importance in relation to the Future Generation Act and with drivers such as the Adverse Childhood Experiences.</p> <p>The PSB has organised a process for partners to be involved in selecting its priorities.</p>	That Early Years is identified as a priority in the forthcoming PSB workshop on 11 July and Board meetings.	July 2017 and on-going	SB
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ACTION 9 is: COMPLETED

Progress made:

- The Public Service Board has identified Early Years as one of its 5 priorities for the Well-Being Plan. This was supported via public consultation.
- Steps to achieve the outcomes have been developed. These steps draw from the feedback from the 1st 1000 Days Event and also reflects many of the on-going recommendations in the School Readiness Scrutiny Report which means that they will continued to be developed into the longer term.