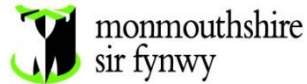


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Monday, 1 June 2026

Notice of Reports Received following Publication of Agenda.

Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 9th June, 2026 at 10.00 am,
The Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA

Attached are reports that the committee will consider as part of the original agenda but were submitted to democratic services following publication of the agenda.

Item No	Item	Pages
7.	Update on the Pupil Referral Service (PRS) - Discussion on significant changes that have occurred in the service and the risks around increasing demand.	1 - 8
8.	Specialist Resource Bases & Additional Learning Provision (including progress with ALN implementation) - To review progress at 12-month stage and include reviewing progress with ALN following the implementation of new legislation.	9 - 18
9.	Supporting Vulnerable Learners - To follow up from June 25 – annual.	19 - 24

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive

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SUBJECT: Cysgod Y Coed (formerly the Monmouthshire Pupil Referral Service)

MEETING: Performance and Overview Committee

DATE: 9th June 2026

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. **PURPOSE:**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the significant development and potential risks of the Monmouthshire Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) service, now called Cysgod y Coed.
- 1.2. Over the last couple of years Cysgod y Coed, previously known as the Pupil Referral Service (PRS), has undergone significant transformation, alongside a marked and sustained increase in demand. This growth reflects both increased complexity of need and greater reliance on EOTAS provision across the county.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

This report seeks to:

- 2.1. Provide Members with an overview of the service's current operating model, pressures, and improvements.
- 2.2. Enable effective scrutiny of the existing arrangements.

3. **KEY ISSUES:**

3.1. Context: Cysgod y Coed provides Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) for learners who have been permanently excluded, or who are unable to attend school due to medical or related needs. For some learners and for a range of reasons, education at a mainstream school may not be appropriate. Therefore, section 19(1) of the Education Act (the 1996 Act) gives local authorities the power to make 'arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school (EOTAS) for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them.'

3.2. The provision is delivered through three strands:

3.2.1. Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) are a statutory function of a local authority for pupils who reside in Monmouthshire who do not have a school place. Most pupils have been Permanently Excluded (PEX) from school on arrival or present with individual risk assessments that mean mainstream provision is currently unsuitable. The nature of this provision can require a rapid response at short notice. We have two PRUs in Monmouthshire currently educating 39 pupils.

3.2.2. EOTAS Medical provision is a statutory function and provides education for pupils too ill to currently attend school. Monmouthshire EOTAS policy requires health or Educational Psychology Service evidence to access provision. There is currently a combination of online and in person teaching for 59 pupils, who are dual registered with their school.

3.2.3. ALN Bespoke provision is for pupils typically with complex Additional Learning Needs (ALN) who do not have a school place. Almost all will have experienced failed out of county specialist placement or the local authority has been unable to secure suitable specialist placements. Currently 21 pupils receive ALN Bespoke provision.

3.3. Progress since the Pupil Referral Service (PRS) Review

3.3.1. The LA undertook a review of the Pupil Referral Service (PRS) between November 2023 and March 2024. Since then, the LA has undertaken significant improvements to ensure it can be an effective, impactful and sustainable service that meets the needs of an increasingly complex and growing cohort.

3.3.2. There were two main, initial priorities following the Review. The first was to maximise the benefits of the two new learning facilities (Pupil Referral Units) for the service. Ty Onnen is in Abergavenny. It opened in November 2024 and currently runs with three classes (6-8 pupils). The other, Ty Pinwydd, is just outside Chepstow. Following significant redevelopment, this site opened in March 2025, it also has capacity for three classes.

3.3.3. The second main priority was to ensure a skilled and sustainable, permanent, staffing structure is established to ensure the effective development of skilled staff able to impact learner outcomes. Jake Parkinson was appointed Head of the PRS (now Cysgod y Coed) in June 2025 and has established an appropriately skilled, senior leadership team and a more robust, staffing capacity covering all areas of the service.

3.4. Development of service identity

3.4.1. The service has recently adopted a new name, Cysgod y Coed, following consultation with both staff and learners. The intention was to establish a Welsh-medium identity aligned with the service's ethos and to provide learners with a positive and meaningful reference point as they transition beyond Key Stage 4.

3.4.2. The name, meaning "*the shelter or shade of the trees*", reflects the service's core values:

- Providing a safe and protective environment
- Supporting nurture, growth, and development
- Offering a restorative space for learners to re-engage with education
- Promoting a sense of belonging and community

3.5 Leadership and Governance

3.5.1 Cysgod y Coed is supported by a Management Committee that is responsible for providing governance and strategic oversight to the service. The recent Estyn¹ inspection identified the effectiveness of the Management Committee as an area requiring improvement, particularly in relation to the level of challenge, clarity of roles, and impact on service development.

¹ [Inspection report Monmouthshire Pupil Referral Service 2025](#)

- 3.5.2 In response, a number of actions have been implemented through the Post-Inspection Action Plan. Early indications suggest that these changes are beginning to strengthen the effectiveness of the committee, with improved structures, clearer lines of accountability, and more focused engagement in key areas of service performance.
- 3.5.3 However, while initial progress is positive, the impact of these changes is at an early stage and will require sustained focus to ensure that governance arrangements are both robust and effective in driving improvement. Ongoing scrutiny should consider the extent to which the Management Committee is providing appropriate challenge, supporting strategic decision-making, and contributing to measurable improvements in outcomes for learners.

3.6 Learner Outcomes (academic year 2024-25)

- 3.6.1 Overall outcomes indicate moderate attainment in Level 1 qualifications (GCSE D to G grades), with more limited performance at higher levels. Just over two-thirds of pupils (67.7%) achieved at least Level 1 in Maths and English, with stronger outcomes in the PRU (60.0%) compared to EOTAS Medical (43.8%) and ALN Bespoke provision (40.0%).
- 3.6.2 Achievement of Level 2 qualifications (GCSE A*-C grades) remains lower overall, with 35.5% of pupils attaining at least one Level 2 qualification. Performance varies across provisions, with PRU (40.0%) and EOTAS Medical (37.5%) showing stronger outcomes than ALN Bespoke provision, where no pupils achieved this measure.
- 3.6.3 Attainment in Level 2 Maths and English is notably low overall (12.9%), though outcomes are comparatively higher within EOTAS Medical provision (18.8%) than PRU (10.0%), with no pupils in ALN Bespoke provision achieving this measure.
- 3.6.4 In terms of wider qualification outcomes, 25.8% of pupils achieved four Level 1 equivalent qualifications, with strongest performance in the PRU (40.0%). However, attainment of four or more Level 2 equivalents is very limited (3.2% overall), achieved only within the PRU (10.0%).
- 3.6.5 Overall, the outcomes highlight relatively stronger attainment at Level 1, particularly within PRU provision, but more limited progression to Level 2, especially within ALN Bespoke provision—indicating a need for continued focus on raising higher-level outcomes across the service.

3.7 Pupil Numbers and Increased Demand

- 3.7.1 As of 11th May 2026, there are 119 learners on roll, with an additional 3 admissions pending.
- 3.7.2 This represents:
- A 61% increase since September 2025 from 74 pupils to 119 in May 2026.
 - An average growth of 142% over a three-year period
- 3.7.3 The most significant growth has occurred within the EOTAS Medical provision, where current numbers are more than double those anticipated in the Local Authority's PRS Review in 2024.
- 3.7.4 In addition, increasing numbers of permanent exclusions from both primary and secondary sectors have contributed to broader service expansion.
- 3.7.5 While there have been improvements in processes to support reintegration - there have been 12 returns to school up until Easter this academic year, in comparison to eight in the previous academic year. A further two managed moves to mainstream

schools are pending, with the service supporting three additional learners in Year 6 engage in some transition activities in the hope that they can make successful supported transitions into mainstream secondary schools in September 2026.

- 3.7.6 The service is now supporting more younger learners with increasingly complex needs, for whom a return to mainstream provision is not always achievable in the short term. This places significant operational pressure on the service.

3.8 Estyn Inspection

3.8.1 The service was inspected by Estyn in October 2025, early in the tenure of the current Head. The inspection outcome identified the service as requiring significant improvement, reflecting Estyn's confidence in the leadership's capacity to improve and the accurate nature of the existing School Development Plan.

3.8.2 The report identified:

- Strengths in safeguarding and relationships
- Early-stage improvements in leadership systems and processes

3.8.3 Four key recommendations were made relating to:

- Teaching and learning
- Self-evaluation and pupil progress
- Attendance
- Governance (Management Committee)

3.8.4 The service developed a Post-Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) setting out the key actions required to address the inspection recommendations. This plan was formally approved by Estyn in March 2026.

3.8.5 Estyn noted that the PIAP was comprehensive and well-structured, clearly addressing all four core inspection recommendations with an appropriate level of detail. The limited amendments suggested by Estyn further indicate a high level of confidence in the service's capacity to deliver sustained improvement.

3.9 Teaching and Learning

3.9.1 In response to Estyn's first recommendation, the service has:

- Established a Professional Learning programme
- Introduced a structured self-evaluation cycle, including three formal Review Points annually

3.9.2 Strengthened collaboration with:

- The Local Authority School Improvement Service
- Mainstream schools
- The Bridge Achievement Centre (Newport EOTAS provision)

3.9.3 Early evidence from Review Points indicates positive progress in improving teaching and learning.

3.10 Curriculum and provision

3.10.1 The service has adapted its curriculum in line with the Curriculum for Wales reforms and feedback from learners and families.

3.10.2 At Key Stage 3 the curriculum is rooted in Health and Wellbeing, focuses on Literacy and Numeracy development and incorporates wider Areas of Learning and Experience through thematic work (e.g. "Big Questions")

3.10.3 At Key Stage 4, the offer has broadened significantly. There is a greater emphasis on practical and vocational pathways, and the new VCSE qualifications are being introduced.

3.10.4 This approach reflects a commitment to providing relevant, engaging, and accessible learning opportunities.

3.10.5 Below is an outline of the curriculum pathways and offer currently in place for pupils accessing Cysgod y Coed. There will be some individual differences in what can be accessed based on pupil pathways and need.

Years R-9	Entry Level Pathways Level 1 Qualifications		Level 2 Qualifications	
Our KS3 Curriculum is rooted in the Health and Wellbeing AOLE. RSE is a core part of our offer. The Cross-Curricular skills, Four Purposes, Integral skills and wider AOLEs are mapped throughout each Unit	<i>Language Literacy and Communication</i>	Entry Level English ESW Communication	<i>Language Literacy and Communication</i>	GCSE English Language and Literature
	<i>Maths and Numeracy</i>	Entry Level Maths Financial Literacy ESW Application of Number	<i>Maths and Numeracy</i>	GCSE Maths and Numeracy Financial Literacy
	<i>Science and Technology</i>	Health and Social Care NCFE	<i>Science and Technology</i>	Health and Social Care NCFE
	<i>Health and Wellbeing</i>	SWEET Personal Growth and Wellbeing (PGW) BTEC Home Cooking BTEC Vocational Level 1 BTEC First in Sport	<i>Health and Wellbeing</i>	SWEET PGW BTEC Home Cooking
	<i>Humanities</i>	BTEC Vocational Level 1 Equality and Diversity	<i>Humanities</i>	Equality and Diversity
	<i>Expressive Arts</i>	King's Trust	<i>Expressive Arts</i>	King's Trust

3.11 Attendance

3.11.1 The service has seen improvements to attendance made consistently within this academic year.

3.11.2 Attendance across the service remains variable but shows improvement in specific areas:

- Attendance across the service is 47% with attendance in PRU settings at 61%.
- PRU attendance has increased by 10% since leadership changes
- For ALN Bespoke attendance is 69%.
- Attendance within EOTAS Medical remains significantly lower at 31% (out of a possible 50%).

3.11.3 This reflects:

- The nature of learners' medical and anxiety-based needs
- A historically predominantly online delivery model

3.11.4 The service has identified that online provision has presented a barrier to engagement for many EOTAS Medical learners. As a result, a transition to a more face-to-face, group-based model of provision is planned from June 2026, with the aim of improving attendance and engagement.

3.12 Behaviour, Exclusions and Inclusion Pathways

- 3.12.1 There has been a marked reduction in the number of fixed term exclusions since the start of this academic year, with data indicating a sustained downward trend over successive reporting periods.
- 3.12.2 Fixed term exclusions in the last reporting period (December 2025 to May 2026) have reduced to 12 (82.5 total exclusions overall, compared to 70.5 previously). This represents a significant decrease from the last reported figure of 30. During this academic year, the overtime trend shows a consistent reduction from 45 exclusions at the initial reporting point, to 30 at the second review, and now to 12 in the current period.
- 3.12.3 While this trajectory is positive, it is important to consider the extent to which this reflects sustained improvement in behaviour and engagement, rather than short-term variation. The service attributes this reduction to several contributory factors, including:
- Improved relationships between staff and pupils
 - Strengthened engagement with parents and carers
 - The development of a more positive and engaging learning environment
 - Increased pupil sense of belonging
- 3.12.4 Whilst early indications are positive, the data set remains relatively short-term. Ongoing scrutiny will be required to ensure that reductions in exclusions are sustained over time and are underpinned by improvements in behaviour, engagement, and attendance, rather than changes in practice alone.

3.13 ALN and vulnerable learners

- 3.13.1 One Page profiles (OPPs) are reviewed and updated on a termly basis and to support consistency in practice; additional professional learning has been delivered to staff. These are now more precise, working documents that support pupils' progress and recognise their diverse needs. The development and refinement of OPPs remains ongoing.
- 3.13.2 A comprehensive audit of Individual Development Plans (IDPs) has been conducted across both PRU centres. Reviews are ongoing to ensure all plans remain current, accurate and responsive to individual pupil needs.
- 3.13.3 EOTAS Medical IDP reviews are carried out in collaboration with Local Authority and the pupil's dual registered school to maintain relevance and consistency.
- 3.13.4 As of May 2026, the following numbers of pupils have an IDP:
- PRU – 18
 - EOTAS Medical – 16
 - ALN Bespoke – 21
- 3.13.5 It is forecast that in the coming year, nearly all pupils accessing Cysgod y Coed will have an IDP.

3.14 Safeguarding

- 3.14.1 Safeguarding remains a central priority within the service.
- 3.14.2 Estyn identified safeguarding as a strength, supported by:
- A strong safeguarding culture
 - Appropriate staff training
 - Effective use of recording systems (e.g. MyConcern)
- Given the complexity of learners' needs, safeguarding in an EOTAS context is:
- Contextual and dynamic
 - Closely linked to attendance, wellbeing, and engagement

- Monitoring data indicates ongoing need but also evidence of robust processes and oversight.

4 REASONS:

4.1 This report is intended to support Members in developing a clear understanding of the current scale, complexity, and trajectory of the service, and the implications for future planning and resourcing.

4.2 The growth in demand, combined with increased complexity of need, means that the service must continue to evolve to meet its statutory duties effectively.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 The level of growth in demand and complexity of need represents a significant change in the service provided by Cysgod Y Coed. Members are asked to note both the scale of this increase and the ongoing variability in demand, as these factors have significant implications for the sustainability and future development of the service.

5.2 Historically the service has been funded for staffing and not pupil numbers, the current funding is £506,834 and this has not grown at the same levels as pupil numbers. The LA is currently considering a new funding model, and this will be fully consulted on once proposals have been agreed. Consideration will need to be given both to addressing the now significant and increasing deficit; and the structural deficit being addressed through a sustainable funding model and approach.

6 CONSULTEES:

This report has been developed in consultation with:

- Monmouthshire County Council Inclusion Team
- Cysgod Y Coed Senior Leadership Team and Management Committee
- Children, Learning, Skills and Economy (CLSE) Directorate Management Team

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- [MCC Inclusion Strategy](#)
- [MCC EOTAS Policy](#)
- [Welsh Government EOTAS Framework](#)
- [Estyn report MCC Pupil Referral Service](#)

8 AUTHOR/S:

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SUBJECT:	Statutory Review of Additional Learning Provision (ALP)
MEETING:	Performance and Overview Committee
DATE:	9th June 2026
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1. To report to members the development of the Local Authority Additional Learning Provision (ALP) review in line with the expectations of the Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021, the outcomes of the reviews to date and associated recommendations.
- 1.2. This review process supports key priorities within the Community and Corporate Plan¹
 - to achieve a truly inclusive educational system that recognises learners starting points, strengths and educational needs, and
 - to ensure education provision meets the needs of a wide range of learners including vulnerable groups and those with additional learning needs (ALN).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1. Members are asked to scrutinise and comment on the effectiveness of current Additional Learning Provision (ALP), including the consistency and impact of provision across mainstream schools, Specialist Resource Bases (SRBs), and commissioned placements.
- 2.2. Members are asked to provide challenge on whether the LA has a coherent and sustainable model of provision that meets current and projected need, and to consider the adequacy of plans to continue to reduce reliance on out-of-county placements and ensure learners can be educated within their local communities where appropriate.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1. Additional Learning Provision (ALP) Review – Background and Context

Nearly all Monmouthshire learners with additional learning needs (ALN) access their local mainstream school where their needs are met successfully. The ALN delegated budget is used by mainstream schools to develop ALP for those learners with ALN, supporting our model of inclusive practice. The funding amount utilised to formulate the ALN delegation has been reviewed based on need and numbers during the transformation period, this has resulted in an increase in the overall amount delegated.

Monmouthshire does not have a discrete special school catering for learners with significant and complex additional learning needs (ALN). An effective model of specialist provision has been developed and was reflected in the recent LA Estyn report² - *The authority's specialist resource bases (SRBs) provide valuable specialist teaching within mainstream settings, enabling many pupils with complex ALN to remain in their locality and maintain strong community relationships.*

¹ [MCC Community and Corporate Plan](#)

² [A report on education services in Monmouthshire County Council 2026](#)

There are two primary (with an additional satellite class), two secondary and one all-through SRBs:

SRB Host School	Pupil Admission Number	Number on Roll Sept 2024	Number on Roll Sept 2025	Projected Number on Roll Sept 2026
Caldicot School	55	46	49	55
Castle Park Primary (Satellite)	8	n/a	4	9
King Henry VIII 3-19 School	71	16	24	36
Monmouth Comprehensive	55	65	63	57
Overmonnow Primary	24	23	21	23
Pembroke Primary	24	32	30	27
TOTAL	237	182	191	207

Whilst nearly all learners with complex ALN have their needs met in Monmouthshire schools or SRBs, there remains a requirement for the use of maintained and independent out of county special schools. This is for the few and reducing cases of learners with highly complex ALN, typically with neuro divergence and social, emotional and mental health needs. These learners require a specified environment and therapeutic input which is not currently possible in our SRBs. There are currently 37 pupils accessing maintained and independent out of county special schools.

Through the ongoing work of the Additional Learning Provision and Partnership Lead, we have developed and are embedding ALP review frameworks and processes around:

- Monmouthshire SRBs
- Monmouthshire clusters of mainstream primary schools and secondary schools
- Out of county special schools and alternative providers.

3.2 Purpose

The purpose of the ALP Review and associated quality assurance cycle is to ensure that there is a consistent and equitable approach to meeting the needs and ensuring progress of Monmouthshire learners with ALN. The review process contributes to future planning and development of provision to ensure Monmouthshire learners are educated as close to their local communities as possible.

3.4 Process

A supported self-evaluation model of ALP review has been developed and refined with school-based colleagues to ensure a robust evaluation of provision, alongside a clear opportunity to share best practice and strive for continuous improvement. This allows for a collaborative approach to the ALP review, where local authority officers join school colleagues to complete the review with a clear framework.

A bi-annual ALP review takes place across the SRBs. Each SRB has an annual action plan, with termly update/ monitoring points with SRB Lead Teachers, alongside the Additional Learning Provision and Partnership Lead. Monitoring activities (for example learning walks, work scrutiny, learner voice sessions) further support the evidence capture for review points.

Each of our mainstream clusters have an ALN Cluster Lead and meet half termly, with a calendar of quality assurance activities. In addition, secondary ALNCoS meet half termly with a focus on secondary practice and provision. Within a two-year cycle, each school has an ALP Review through a supported self-evaluation visit.

For providers outside of Monmouthshire, including Out of County special schools and alternative providers, a framework has been developed which explores fundamental areas of provision and meeting need.

3.5 Additional Learning Provision (ALP) Review

3.5.1 Specialist Resource Bases

The last review of SRBs took place in Spring Term 2025 and outcomes reported to the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee on 3rd June 2025. The outcomes are monitored through our SPOT (specialist provision and outreach team) and through individual SRB action plans and monitoring visits.

Following our recent LA Estyn inspection, it was reported that: *‘as a result of strengthened quality assurance processes, the consistency and quality of provision across the SRBs have improved.’*

Updates:

- Ongoing collaboration with local authority officers has strengthened action planning, monitoring, and quality assurance, ensuring evidence is triangulated and focused on pupil progress.
- The Inclusion Service continues to manage projected SRB placements, supported by the opening of a satellite class at Castle Park Primary, with monitoring showing a more equitable provision across the model.
- SRBs have continuously refined their curricula to meet cohort needs, with consistent tracking systems in place showing most pupils make suitable progress from their baselines.
- A working group is developing an evidence-based approach to literacy, supported by trialled resources and secured grant funding.
- Moderation sessions have improved assessment consistency and best practice sharing, though further work is needed to standardise how progress is communicated to parents/carers and to align annotation codes.
- Draft guidance for health-based therapies exists, but agreement with NHS partners on oversight is still pending.
- Staff are progressing well through the standards developed through the Monmouthshire Autism in Schools and Settings³ work with the Autism Education Trust, with notable improvements in learning environments.
- Secondary SRBs have strengthened 14–19 pathways, including formal, informal, community-based, and work placement opportunities.
- Effective buddy and mentoring systems are established across most SRBs.
- Recruitment processes are consistent, with ongoing refinement of professional development systems.

³ [Monmouthshire Autism in Schools and Settings - Monmouthshire](#)

3.5.2 Primary Clusters

Nearly all schools have participated in the ALP review process, with two remaining this term. Where cluster colleagues have been part of the supported self-evaluation approach, reflections have been positive around the opportunities to identify and share best practice to embed within their own schools.

Estyn reported that – *‘Schools are increasingly able to meet a broader range of ALN within mainstream environments, fostering a culture where pupils with ALN remain within their communities’.*

Supported Self Evaluation Outcomes to Date:

- Schools have effectively implemented the new legislation, supported by Welsh Government and LA guidance.
- ALNCos are in place in all schools, mostly within leadership teams, though time allocated to the role varies.
- Most schools have processes to support early identification of barriers to learning through effective tracking and monitoring.
- Provision mapping is generally effective and responsive, though intervention quality varies due to budget constraints.
- One Page Profiles are widely used and support learning well.
- Individual Development Plans are appropriate but inconsistent in quality and thresholds.
- Staff demonstrate a strong understanding of pupil needs and provide appropriate adjustments in teaching and within the learning environment.

Update on the recommendations shared in June 2025:

- Full implementation of the ALNET Act is reflected in PLASC data (January 2026).
- A comprehensive review of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs provision has been completed and shared.
- Training on evidence-based interventions and measuring impact has been delivered, alongside ongoing IDP moderation and support for writing effective outcomes.
- Schools are embedding ALN within whole-school improvement, supported by collaboration with school improvement services.
- Schools are prioritising literacy and numeracy interventions within budget constraints, aiming for high-quality evidence-based provision.
- There is a continued strong focus on good autism practice, supported by the Monmouthshire Autism in Schools and Settings programme, frameworks and Autism Champion roles.

3.5.3 Secondary ALP Review

All secondary schools (including the all-through school) participated in an ALP review during the Spring Term 2024. Three of the four schools have been part of a further ALP Review during Spring/ Summer 2026 and one remaining to be completed before the end of term. A focus during the second visit has been progress towards the original recommendations.

The updates demonstrate that ALNCos are strengthening consistency across schools through shared policies and practices, and clear links to senior leadership. There is a stronger focus on ALN-related professional learning, alongside more consistent approaches to provision mapping, intervention, and IDP development. Schools are continuing to refine

systems for tracking and monitoring impact using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data.

Schools are prioritising high-quality inclusive teaching to enhance pupil engagement and progress, alongside restructuring support staff to promote independence and resilience. There is a strong emphasis on skills development and evidence-based interventions, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Most classrooms demonstrate calm, purposeful environments with high levels of participation, while schools are continuing to develop and refine alternative provision.

3.6 Recommendation Updates and Future Planning

3.6.1 Recommendations June 2025

In the paper written in June 2026, key recommendations were made in order to meet the priorities of the Community and Corporate Plan and address the insufficiencies identified in the ALP Review process, progress has been made towards these recommendations:

- Primary SRB provision in the south of the county has been expanded to improve local access, with a satellite class established at Castle Park Primary. This provision has supported five pupils to make positive progress and is expected to grow to accommodate nine pupils by September 2026.
- A review of SRB funding is in progress to ensure staffing and resources are effective and consistent. Initial decisions on base staffing will improve consistency from September 2026, with further work underway to refine resourcing and inform funding options to be presented to the Budget Forum in Autumn 2026.
- Post-16 processes and systems have been reviewed and strengthened to meet ALNET Act requirements, with a formally approved Post-16 Strategy now in place. Ongoing work continues to develop provision across key areas of the Inclusion Service.
- Efforts to reduce out-of-county placements have continued, with numbers decreasing to 37 pupils (including six in post-16 specialist colleges). However, progress in developing suitable local therapeutic provision has been limited due to ongoing challenges in securing necessary health-based therapies and support.
- A proposal has been developed to establish appropriate SEMH provision for primary pupils, with the aim of reducing reliance on alternative and out-of-county placements. If implemented, this is expected to enable more pupils to remain within Monmouthshire.

3.6.2 Future Planning

As a result of the ALP reviews completed key priorities include:

- Further reducing out-of-county placements through strengthened local specialist provision.
- Developing and monitoring SEMH specialist provision to keep pupils within their local communities.
- Completing and implementing the SRB funding review.
- Continuing to refine processes and support for children and young people with ALN, including embedding the Monmouthshire Autism in Schools and Settings programme.

3.7 Risks

Across the UK, the number of children and young people with complex ALN is increasing, resulting in greater demand on specialist placements. Regional South East Wales Special Schools are at full capacity. Alternative options are independent specialist provisions which are at high cost.

There is an increase in the number of learners with ALN in the area of SEMH needs, both those who demonstrate their distressed/ dysregulated behaviours internally and externally. These needs are placing significant demand on school settings. Whilst the SRB model of provision has developed, it does not currently provide for learners with SEMH needs. This is a future consideration for the extension of Monmouthshire's model of specialist provision.

4. REASONS:

- 4.1. This report is intended to update Members on the ongoing duty of the LA (as outlined in Chapter 7 of the ALN Code) to keep ALP under review. This expectation relates to the arrangements made both by the authority, and by the governing bodies of the maintained schools in its area, for learners who have ALN.
- 4.2. As part of the review process the ALN Code indicates that a LA should also review data and evidence on the effectiveness of current provision in meeting learners' needs and improving the outcomes they achieve.
- 4.3. Keeping ALP and other arrangements under review, is a key part of local strategic planning and decision making which enables the LA to assess current and likely future needs and secure sufficient provision and services to meet those needs.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1. The Inclusion Service structure is under review to ensure it is fit for purpose in meeting the needs of vulnerable learners, including those with ALN, and to support full implementation of the ALNET Act (2018). This will consider the key functions of the current seconded post of Additional Learning Provision (ALP) and Partnership Lead going forward. As this ongoing strategic oversight of key Inclusion Service priorities is required, including SRB development, quality assurance, monitoring of ALP across Monmouthshire and commissioned provision, and post-16 ALN in line with LA duties.
- 5.2. In order to maintain high quality specialist provision within Monmouthshire, that can continue to respond to our local forecasts of the increasing complexity of additional learning needs, there will continue to be a need for investment in local additional learning provision. Quality assurance activities demonstrate the positive impact of in-county specialist provision, which has far lower average costs per pupil than out of county and independent specialist provision.
- 5.3. ALN Capital Grant funding from Welsh Government is currently being used to address capacity pressures within the SRB model, including expanding and enhancing provision. While effective in the short term, this approach presents a sustainability risk for future demand.
- 5.4. The ALP review has identified inequities in the SRB funding model, particularly in staffing and resourcing. A funding review will present options to achieve greater consistency and sustainability, supporting improved learner outcomes within local communities.

6. CONSULTEES:

Inclusion Team

Children, Learning, Skills and Economy Directorate DMT

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- [The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021 \(gov.wales\)](#)
- [MCC Inclusion Strategy](#)
- Performance and Overview Scrutiny Paper – ‘Additional Learning Provision/ Specialist Resource Bases’ - 14th May 2024
- Members Seminar – ‘Additional Learning Needs & Specialist Resource Bases’ – 9th October 2024
- Performance and Overview Scrutiny Paper - ‘Additional Learning Provision/ Specialist Resource Bases’ – 3rd June 2025

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Monmouthshire Inclusion Service Acronym Guide

ALNET	Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018
ALN	Additional Learning Needs
ALNCo	Additional Learning Needs Coordinator
ALP	Additional Learning Provision
AOLE	Area of Learning Experience
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CLA	Child /Children Looked After
CLSE	Children Learning Skills and Economy directorate
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DMT	Directorate Management Committee
EBSA	Emotionally Based School Avoidance
eFSM	Eligible for Free School Meals
EHE	Elective Home Education
ELSA	Emotional Literacy Support Assistant
EOTAS	Education Other than at School
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
EST	Education Support Team
ESW	Essential Skills Wales
EY	Early Years
FTE	Fixed Term Exclusion
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
IDP	Individual Development Plan
LA	Local Authority
MASS	Monmouthshire Autism in Schools and Settings programme
MoSTS	Monmouthshire Specialist Teaching Service
NEET	Not In Employment Education or Training
NCFE	Northern Council for Further Education
OASIS	Outreach And Support Inclusion Service
OPP	One Page Profile
PEX	Permanently Excluded
PIAP	Post Inspection Action Plan
PLASC	Pupil Level Annual School Census
PRS	Pupil Referral Service
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
PSP	Pastoral Support Plan
RSE	Relationships and Sexuality Education
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SPOT	Specialist Provision and Outreach Team
SRB	Specialist Resource Base
TA	Teaching Assistant
TIPSS	Trauma Informed Practice Skills and Strategies
VCSE	Vocational Certificates of Secondary Education
VLL	Vulnerable Learner Lead
YOS	Youth Offending Service

Monmouthshire Inclusion Service Acronym Guide

SUBJECT:	Support for Vulnerable Learners
MEETING:	Performance and Overview Committee
DATE:	9th The June 2026
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide an update to members with an evaluative assessment of the effectiveness and impact of key inclusion services and approaches in improving outcomes vulnerable learners, including:
- The development of Trauma Informed approaches.
 - The Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA) programme.
 - The Monmouthshire's Specialist Teaching Service (MoSTS).
 - OASIS (Outreach And Support Inclusion Service) including The Education Support Team (EST).
 - The Educational Psychology Service (EPS).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

We would welcome members of this committee to:

- 2.1 Scrutinise the extent to which current approaches are delivering measurable improvements in outcomes for vulnerable learners.
- 2.2 Assess whether existing provision represents effective use of resources, including evidence of prevention and demand reduction.
- 2.3 Challenge areas where impact is variable or risks remain, particularly around capacity and sustainability.
- 2.4 Note the planned strengthening of evaluation frameworks to better evidence of long-term impact.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The areas of work highlighted in this report support the aim of the Community and Corporate Plan, reflected in Inclusion Strategy, to develop a truly inclusive educational system that recognises learners' starting points, strengths and educational needs; to improve school attendance; and reduce levels of exclusion.
- 3.2 Across the broad range of Inclusion services, there is consistent evidence of positive impact on inclusion, attendance, and prevention of escalation, including:
 - High rates of pupils maintained in mainstream placements.
 - Improved attendance and engagement for targeted cohorts
 - Increased workforce capability, reducing reliance on external provision.
- 3.3 Following the recent LA inspection, Estyn¹ reported that *'the inclusion team, educational psychology service and specialist advisory teachers offer a valuable range of*

¹ [A report on education services in Monmouthshire County Council 2026](#)

professional guidance that strengthens the capacity of schools and settings to meet pupils' needs effectively'.

3.4 However, the demand for Inclusion services continues to increase, which stretches the capacity and can limit the reach and consistency of support. Also, the capacity of schools to release staff for professional learning, to provide school-based interventions and support, presents a risk to the sustainability and the impact of the support offered.

3.5 Trauma Informed Approaches

3.5.1 According to Estyn, Monmouthshire *'has embedded a clear vision for a trauma-informed approach which is underpinned by strong and trusting relationships. This shared understanding underpins the authority's inclusive ethos.'*

3.5.2 The continued focus on Trauma Informed approaches as core to the universal, whole-school, preventative approach, continues to be led by the Educational Psychology Service (EPS). The development of a Monmouthshire specific tiered Trauma-Informed Professional Learning programme (Trauma Informed Practice Skills and Strategies - TIPSS)² and supervision, is now offered and delivered to schools, services and early years settings. This has provided sustainability and flexibility to meet longer-term need, in line with local and national contexts and priorities.

3.5.3 Eight primary schools, Cysgod Y Coed (formally the Pupil Referral Service) and the Education Welfare Service have engaged with whole school/ service TIPSS 'Trauma Skilled' Professional Learning.

3.5.4 The impact is that whole-school and workforce professional learning has led to demonstrable improvements in staff confidence, knowledge, and consistency of response.

3.5.5 Adoption of relational and trauma-informed approaches is contributing to:

- Reduced need for reactive behavioural responses
- Increased alignment between policy (e.g. Behaviour/ Relationships) and inclusive practice

3.5.6 Our evidence of this includes:

- Evaluation feedback is consistently positive, indicating improvements in practitioner capability.
- Expansion across schools and services demonstrates scalable model with growing reach.

3.5.7 There is emerging impact on pupil outcomes, though this is not yet consistently quantified or tracked across the system.

3.6 Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA)

3.6.1 ELSA is a school-based targeted, evidence-based intervention designed to build capacity of school staff to support the emotional needs of their learners.

3.6.2 The ELSA programme continues to offer a high reaching and strong preventative model, led and delivered by Educational Psychologists.

3.6.3 Currently Monmouthshire has approximately 80 active ELSAs across schools, settings and services. In Autumn 2025, ELSA Initial Training course trained fourteen new ELSAs. Currently all primary and secondary schools, and Cysgod Y Coed have at least one active ELSA, however this can change due to staff turnover.

3.6.4 The ELSA programme contributes to:

² [Home - ACE Hub Wales](#)

- Early intervention in emotional and mental health needs
- Reduced escalation to specialist services

3.6.5 This is evidence through positive stakeholder feedback across schools, settings and families.

3.6.6 The Risks to Impact include:

- Support staff (teaching assistants) turnover and challenges facing schools to consistently release staff, leading to possible reduction in continuity and quality.
- The capacity of the Educational Psychology Service to maintain the levels of training and supervision required for high numbers of ELSAs across the LA.

3.7 Monmouthshire Specialist Teaching Service (MoSTS)

3.7.1 MoSTS aims to improve outcomes for pupils with literacy difficulties in primary schools in Monmouthshire. The service has a high perceived value illustrated by the high demand.

3.7.2 During the academic year 2024-25, MoSTS received 114 individual requests for involvement from primary schools. They provided blocks of intervention to approximately 66 pupils in primary schools and assessed and provided advice to schools in relation to a further 4 pupils. *It is worth noting that due to pupils/requests panning academic years these numbers don't align.*

3.7.3 Pupils receiving intervention show:

- Measurable improvements in literacy (reading, spelling, comprehension)
- Increased confidence and independent learning strategies

3.7.4 This is evidenced by quantitative and qualitative evaluation which confirms positive progress for pupils. Parent/carer and school evaluations were also very positive.

3.7.5 To support manage the reduction in the capacity of the team, a robust approach to managing, tracking and prioritising workflow and waiting list has been developed.

3.7.6 There is an emerging model of support and associated resources, with the aim to increase system-level impact through school-led delivery, this shift toward school-delivered interventions supported by MoSTS is likely to:

- Increase reach.
- Improve efficiency.
- Reduce reliance on specialist input.

3.7.7 The risks to impact currently include

- Reduced capacity of MoSTS limits number of pupils supported directly.
- Potential increased reliance on schools to deliver interventions consistently.
- Workforce pressures in LA and schools affecting scalability.

3.8 OASIS (Outreach and Support Inclusion Service)

The Outreach And Support Inclusion Service (OASIS) is a co-ordinated team of specialist staff from the Education Support Team (EST) and Monmouthshire's Specialist Resource Bases (SRBs). OASIS aims to support the inclusion of pupils with complex needs in mainstream schools by offering collaborative specialist support to mainstream schools, to develop and enhance good inclusive practice, and build capacity.

3.9 SRB Led Outreach

3.9.1 In academic year 2024-25, 24 pieces of Outreach work were allocated to SRB leads and 15 pieces of work were jointly allocated with EST.

3.9.2 SRB Leads supported the Enhanced Transition Process with Early Years Educational Psychologists.

3.10 Education Support Team (EST)

3.10.1 The EST support schools to meet the needs of primary aged pupils presenting with behaviours that challenge, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), neurodevelopmental conditions, and those of risk of exclusion. They also support schools to meet the needs of Children Looked After (CLA).

3.10.2 Across 2024-25 EST supported 80 pupils in primary schools across Monmouthshire. Of the 80 pupils supported:

- 95% (76 pupils) remained in their mainstream placement
- 79% increased attendance
- 58% returned to full-time education (from a reduced hours Pastoral Support Plan)

3.10.3 There is clear evidence of

- Prevention of exclusion
- Improved attendance outcomes
- Reduced demand for specialist placements

3.10.4 Therefore, the EST represents significant cost avoidance.

3.10.5 The evidence of this impact is through strong quantitative data supported by extremely positive qualitative feedback from school staff, pupils, and parents/carers.

3.10.6 The principal risk to this service arises from sustained and increasing demand from schools. Maintaining a high-quality, responsive service will depend on ensuring that there is sufficient capacity through the recruitment and retention of appropriately skilled and experienced staff.

3.11 Educational Psychology Service (EPS)

3.11.1 The EPS represents a critical enabler of system-wide inclusion, with strong strategic impact. It aims to support the capacity of schools and settings to provide consistent, high quality inclusive practice that reduces barriers to learning. The EPS maintains a focus on long-term, preventive, sustainable models of working, in collaboration with others.

3.11.2 The EPS leads on a responsive, comprehensive and evaluated professional learning focused on workforce development.

3.11.3 In addition to leading on key areas already outlined in this report (TIPSS and ELSA), the EPS continue to support the Monmouthshire Autism in Schools and Settings (MASS) programme. Which was recognised by Estyn as a 'spotlight' of best practice in the LA recent Estyn inspection report (February 2026).

3.11.4 Every school and Cysgod Y Coed has a school link Educational Psychologist (EP). As part of their EP link role, EPs engage in individual casework. During academic year 2024-25, there were 263 requests for involvement for individual pupils representing high levels of demand and perceived value.

3.11.5 The EPS has a robust Early Years model of support and in 2024-25, 35 children were accepted at the EYs ALN Panel for EP involvement for school entry planning supporting pre-school children with complex ALN to have a successful transition into school.

3.11.6 Feedback and data gathered for 2024-25, from school staff and parent/carers is positive and reflects that the EPS supports schools to understand and meet the needs of the children and young people.

3.11.7 A potential risk to the ongoing provision of a high-quality service and impact include the increasing, high demand, at an individual pupil level which could impact on the service's capacity to maintain a systemic, preventative focus.

4. REASONS:

4.1 To provide the committee with an update on progress being made with regards to delivering the commitments set out in the Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28, alongside compliance with ALN legislation and the Principles of the Code.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 ELSA. Schools and settings currently pay towards Initial ELSA training and ongoing supervision and professional learning, which allows the continued commitment and use of EPs to deliver the programme.

5.2 MoSTS, EPS and EST. EPS, MoSTS and EST have individual budgets, and are supported the Principal Educational Psychologist, with oversight of the Head of Service for Inclusion. EST is now line managed by the Vulnerable Learner Lead.

6. CONSULTEES:

- Inclusion Team
- Children, Learning, Skills and Economy DMT

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- Performance and Overview Scrutiny Paper – 6th June 2025
- EST Annual Report 2024-25
- MoSTS Annual Report 2024-25
- EPS Annual Report 2024-25

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