

SUBJECT: Building sustainable and resilient provision for learners with Additional Learning Needs in Monmouthshire

MEETING: CYP SELECT COMMITTEE

DATE: 25 November 2020

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide CYP Select Committee with an opportunity to scrutinise a draft document, which describes a proposed strategy to develop additional learning needs (ALN) provision in Monmouthshire.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 For CYP Select Committee to note the content of the draft document and the progress made to date.
- 2.2 For CYP Select Committee to provide comment and feedback to local authority officers.

3. KEY ISSUES:

Background

- 3.1 In the Additional Learning Needs and Tribunal (ALNET) Act [Wales] 2018, the term 'Additional Learning Needs' (ALN) replaces 'Special Educational Needs' (SEN). Whilst SEN remains the correct terminology until the ALNET Act is implemented in 2021, as part of the work Monmouthshire is doing to be 'ALN Act Ready', we are already using the term ALN instead of SEN. Therefore, the term ALN will be used throughout this document instead of SEN.
- 3.2 Following their core inspection of Monmouthshire County Council's Local Government Education Services (LGES) the published report included a recommendation to '**Articulate a clear strategy for SEN provision**'
- 3.3 An ALN working group comprising of LA Officers, Headteachers from schools hosting Special Needs Resource Base (SNRB) provision, SNRB lead teachers / Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinators (ALNCos) and Educational Psychologists, has informed the draft proposals to develop Monmouthshire's ALN provision. This group has reviewed the current provision and identified key issues that need to be addressed. As part of the consultation process, the strategy will be shared more widely with schools, parents groups, voluntary agencies and pupils for their comment and input. This is an early opportunity for Select to comment on the strategy at a formative stage.
- 3.4 The draft document takes into account significant changes to legislation around the education of children and young people with special educational needs and the need to address an increase in the numbers of children experiencing more complex needs in Monmouthshire.

3.5 It aims to set out a framework for action, in partnership with learners, parent / carers, schools, health, social services and voluntary organisations, to develop a distinct strategy, which takes into account current and forecasted need and existing specialist provision in Monmouthshire.

Current Context and Provision

3.6 All local authorities, including Monmouthshire are reporting an increase in the number of children and young people with ALN and an increase in the requests for statutory assessment. The reasons for this include:

- Concerns some parents/carers have regarding the new legislation where statements will be replaced by Individual Development Plan (IDP).
- Perinatal survival rates for children with complex disabilities have improved. This has led to an increase in the number of children and young people who need specialist provision.
- The incidence and identification of neurodevelopmental conditions, including autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and complex mental health needs has increased substantially.
- The number of children and young people moving into Monmouthshire who have complex ALN, requiring specialist provision or high levels of additional support.
- As a border county, Monmouthshire often provides for learners who live in England who have Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs).
- There are a number of children's homes in Monmouthshire. Children and young people placed in these settings often have complex needs, which require specialist support and / or provision.

3.7 The table below shows the current number of children and young people with statements of SEN and with additional funding at school action plus (SAPRA). There are currently 18 children/young people undergoing statutory assessment

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Total Number of Statements | 326 | % of total Statemented |
| No. of pupils in county mainstream | 113 | 34.6 |
| No of pupils in county SNRBs | 98 (+ 13 from OOC) | 30 |
| Other LAs special schools | 53 | 16 |
| Independent special schools | 32 | 9.8 |
| Other LAs mainstream | 21 | 6.4 |
| Independent mainstream | 3 | 0.92 |
| EHE | 3 | 0.92 |
| PRU/EOTAS | 3 | 0.92 |
| Total Number SAPRA | 201 | % of total SAPRA |
| SAPRA pupils - in-county SNRBS | 18 | 8.95 |

- 3.8 The top three categories of primary need for children/young people with statements are
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) - 35%
 - Medical/physical -17%
 - Behaviour, Emotional and Social Needs (BESD) - 17%
- 3.9 Monmouthshire does not have single 'special school' for children with complex learning and neurodevelopmental needs, including autism, within the county. This has been the case since 1996, when local authorities were restructured.
- 3.10 Monmouthshire has developed a model of specialist resource base provision within mainstream schools. This model ensures that children and young people remain close to their communities and have meaningful inclusion opportunities with their mainstream peers, whilst also benefitting from specialist teaching and resources. The advantages of this model of provision are:
- **Opportunities for integration and inclusion:** Students in special schools can only learn and interact with peers with similar special needs. Students in SNRBs have opportunities to be included with mainstream peers in structured and unstructured times and benefit from positive academic learning role-models. Mainstream pupils have the opportunity to become mentors for learners in specialist provision and learn empathy and understanding.
 - **Social relationships:** Students in SNRB provision can be integrated socially with their peers. They can create long-lasting friendships that would not be otherwise possible, and these friendships can give them the skills to navigate social relationships later on in life. Their peers can act as role models for social skills through their interactions with each other, whereas in a special school, their only role models would be students with disabilities who may lack the same social skills that they do.
 - **Reduces Stigma:** The family of a student with ALN benefits by being integrated more easily into the school's society. In a broader sense, students who are taught in a SNRB setting are more likely to build a society that is accepting of differences and able to respect people from diverse backgrounds. Attending a SNRB provision, which shares its space with a mainstream school can reduce the stigma many parents/carers feel about special education.
- 3.11 Monmouthshire has five Special Needs Resource Bases (SNRBs). Two in secondary schools (Caldicot and Monmouth Comprehensive Schools – 55 places in each) and three primary provisions (Pembroke School, Overmonnow and Deri View). All apart from Monmouth and Deri View SNRBs are either full or very close to capacity. The provision in Monmouth Comprehensive School opened in 2018, along with the new school so numbers are increasing year on year. When Monmouth and Deri View are fully operational, the number of specialist places available in county will be 162. In partnership with the host schools, the local authority is currently investing in new specialist resources and equipment (e.g. sensory equipment, specialist IT and specialist play equipment) for SNRBs, which will provide pupils with more stimulating and cutting-edge learning environments.

Proposals to support the development of a clear strategy for ALN provision

- 3.12 Through four distinct and ambitious workstreams the draft document aims to achieve a clear strategy to develop sustainable and resilient ALN provision in Monmouthshire.
- Workstream A - More effective and equitable ALN services;
 - Workstream B - Provision which places a clear emphasis on early intervention, including in the early years;
 - Workstream C - Specialist provision which is appropriately staffed and resourced and has the capacity to meet Monmouthshire's current and projected needs for children with complex neurodevelopmental and learning difficulties.
 - Workstream D - A consistent, high quality, inclusive educational offer that can meet the needs of children and young people including those with ALN in pre-school, mainstream and specialist provision

3.13 The workstream action plans included in the draft document show the significant amount of work that has already taken place. The plan will be updated on a monthly basis and progress reported to CYP DMT and progress will also be captured in the Chief Officer's Report.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

4.1 This will be completed as the programme of work is developed.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1

| Options | Reasons why these were not preferred |
|---|--|
| 1. Do nothing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estyn's recommendation 3 was a clear directive to the local authority that a number of elements around ALN provision needed to improve and that a strategy needed to be developed. |
| 2. To only consider the development of Specialist Provision as the focus for the Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As indicated in point 3.15 the development of a clear strategy for ALN provision is multifaceted. Each workstream has its distinct remit and actions, however they equally contribute to the overarching aim of articulating a clear strategy for ALN provision. They are interrelated and connected and to remove or fail to deliver on one or more of the elements would result in an incomplete, fractured ALN strategy, which would not support excellent service delivery and high quality educational provision for children and young people with ALN in mainstream or specialist provision in Monmouthshire. |
| 3. To commission an external consultant to develop the strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local authority has within its officers and schools, staff with the experience, knowledge and vision to develop and deliver a coherent, cohesive and co-constructed strategy for ALN provision. |

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 As indicated in the draft document the local authority will know if the proposed strategy has been successful, through the following evaluation criteria
- Parent/ carers will have a high level of confidence in the local authority's ability to identify and meet the needs of their children under the new ALN system. This will be evidenced through a programme of annual evaluation.
 - The views, wishes and feelings of children and young people and their families will be at the heart of all education planning and delivery through Monmouthshire' s commitment to Person Centred Planning.
 - Schools and settings will demonstrate an increased ability to meet the needs of learners with ALN through the building capacity initiatives identified in this strategy. Evidence of success could include a reduction in the exclusions for learners with ALN, the number of learners with complex needs maintained in mainstream settings, staff confidence, knowledge and skills to meet a range of ALN.
 - The local authority will have specialist provision with the capacity and infrastructure to meet the current and projected needs of learners through the development of centres of ALN excellence, providing high quality outreach, advice and support to schools across the local authority. Measures of success could include individual learner progress, a more specialist workforce and improved access to targeted specialist resources.
 - The local authority will have improved systems and processes in place and will have successfully begun to implement the requirements of the ALNET Act, 2018.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 The local authority has to respond to the recommendation made in the Estyn Report, which was to articulate a clear strategy for ALN provision and seeks comment and feedback from Select committee on the draft document with regard to progress made to date.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 Resources are within existing school budgets and ALN costs. Additional costs will be determined with the action plan and ad hoc capital funding when required

9. CONSULTEES:

- 9.1 CYP DMT

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- 10.1 Monmouthshire's Estyn report published on 22nd April 2020

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