

SUBJECT: Inclusion Strategy and Additional Learning Needs Policy

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 19th November 2025

DIVISION/ WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1. The Inclusion Service, within the Children, Learning, Skills and Economy (CLSE) Directorate has developed a new Inclusion Strategy and an updated ALN Policy to shape our work with children and young people in schools and settings in Monmouthshire.
- 1.2. The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with an opportunity to consider the Inclusion Strategy and the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Policy to ensure that they are fit for purpose and meet the local priorities as outlined in the Learning Place section of the Community and Corporate Plan.
 - 1.2.1. The EOTAS (education other than at school) Policy is also included as this was being developed at the time scrutiny. The EOTAS Policy sits as an appendix to the ALN Policy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1. That Cabinet provide their feedback and give permission for publication and wider dissemination.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1. Monmouthshire's last Estyn report published in April 2020, recognised that a number of appropriate actions have been taken by Monmouthshire's Children and Young People's Directorate, to improve the identification and provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and that there was a passion and commitment to further improve this. However, a main recommendation of the Estyn report, stated that Monmouthshire should 'articulate a clear strategy for Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision'.
- 3.2. The implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Tribunal Act (Wales) 2018 and the creation of a broader Inclusion Service, has meant that the articulation of an Inclusion (rather than SEN) strategy, supported by a broader suite of interconnected strategies and related policies, including an Additional Learning Needs Policy, will now provide a response to this recommendation.
- 3.3. The Inclusion Strategy aims to set out Monmouthshire's priorities to improve outcomes for children and young people in vulnerable groups and their families; this directly aligns with Monmouthshire's Community and Corporate Plan which outlines certain key deliverables to shape this Inclusion Strategy within the 'Learning Place', including:
 - Improved school attendance and reduced levels of exclusion which remove barriers to learning for vulnerable pupils.
 - A truly inclusive educational system that recognises learners' starting points, strengths and educational needs.
- 3.4. The Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Policy outlines Monmouthshire's approach to supporting children and young people with barriers to learning and additional learning needs, ensuring they receive the necessary support, resources, and opportunities to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

3.5. The EOTAS Policy outlines how Monmouthshire, through the Pupil Referral Service (PRS), makes arrangements for the provision of suitable education otherwise than at school (EOTAS) for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them. This policy outlines the pathways, provision and support for learners receiving EOTAS in Monmouthshire, ensuring they receive a suitable, high-quality, education that meets their individual needs.

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

4.1. The Integrated Impact Assessment (attached) anticipates that the positive impact of the Inclusion Strategy and ALN Policy are;

- Inclusive and supportive educational settings, support keeping pupils close to their communities,
- High quality local specialist educational provision means there is less reliance on expensive, out of county specialist provision,
- An inclusive culture advances equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not,
- An inclusive and tolerant culture fosters good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
- High quality successful schools, support recruitment and retention of highly qualified staff and the development of best inclusive/ ALN practice across specialist settings,
- Educating vulnerable children, including those with ALN, close to their communities will result in a reduction in travel time and transport costs and associated pollution.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1. There are no options presented.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1. The Inclusion Service will continue to review and monitor the performance of the Inclusion Strategy and the ALN Policy (and the EOTAS Policy) and report regularly and as required to the CLSE Directorate Management Team and appropriate committees.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1. Monmouthshire requires an Inclusion Strategy and associated ALN Policy in order to meet the recommendations included in the 2020 Estyn Inspection.
- 7.2. The EOTAS Policy is required to guide practice.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1. There are no resource implications

9. CONSULTEES:

9.1. The consultation period for the Inclusion Strategy and ALN Policy was from 18th October 2024 to 20th December 2024. The following is a list of consultees for both the Inclusion Strategy and ALN Policy. Consultees were provided with a link to both documents and asked to complete an online response form (MSForms). In addition, parents and carers and school staff were offered on-line feedback discussion sessions with the Head of Inclusion and Principal Officer for ALN.

- Head Teachers all MCC schools
- ALNCOs in all MCC schools
- Inclusion Service Officers
- Learning, Skills and Economy (LSE) Directorate Management Team

- Cabinet Member for Education
- Educational Achievement Service (EAS)
- SNAP Cymru
- Gwent Parent Network Group

- 9.2. All consultation responses were considered and where appropriate, amendments made to the relevant documents.
- 9.3. These documents and associated documents paperwork were taken to People Committee for scrutiny on 18th February 2025.
- 9.4. The consultation for the **EOTAS Policy** took place between 12th February 2025 and 4th April 2025. Consultees were provided with a link to the document and asked to complete an online response form (MSForms). In addition, parents and carers and schools and PRS staff were offered on-line feedback discussion sessions with the Head of Inclusion and Principal Officer for ALN. All consultation responses were considered and amendments made as appropriate.
- 9.5. Consultees included
- Head Teachers in all MCC schools
 - PRS Management Committee
 - PRS staff
 - Parents/Carers of children receiving EOTAS provision,
 - Local Authority Officers
 - CLSE Directorate Management Team
 - Cabinet Member for Education
 - Regional school improvement service (EAS)
 - SNAP Cymru.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

10.1. **Inclusion Strategy, with associated Appendices** (*shared/ common documents are italicised*):

Appendix 1. *Monmouthshire's Participation Guidance*

Appendix 2. *Information about specialist provision in Monmouthshire (SRB Handbook)*

Appendix 3. *Children Looked After Policy*

Appendix 4. *Monmouthshire's ALN Post 16 Strategy*

ALN Policy, with associated Appendices:

Appendix 1. *Monmouthshire's Participation Guidance*

Appendix 2. *ALN Identification Flowchart for Schools*

Appendix 3. *EOTAS Policy*

Appendix 4. *Specialist Resource Base Policy and Handbook*

Appendix 5. *Monmouthshire's ALN Post 16 Strategy*

Appendix 6. *Quality Assurance System and Review Cycle*

Appendix 7. *Information about Outreach and Education Support Team*

Appendix 8. *Dispute Resolution*

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