

SUBJECT:	The Use of Exclusions in Monmouthshire Schools in the Academic Year 2024/25
MEETING:	Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	27th January 2026
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the use of exclusions, both permanent (PEX) and fixed term (FTE), in Monmouthshire Schools during the last academic year 2024/25.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the committee note the rates of exclusions that have taken place across Monmouthshire, and
- consider the factors that are driving the use of exclusions by schools,
 - consider the wider interventions that are used to promote inclusive practice in schools, and to reduce the need for exclusions,
 - consider the adequacy of actions to support schools and reduce the number of exclusions.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Data shows that both FTEs (see table 1 below) and PEXs (see table 2) continue to increase within schools along with a growing prevalence of behaviours of concern. It should be noted that these trends are also being observed regionally and across Wales.
- 3.2 It is a core ambition of Monmouthshire¹²³ to reduce the number of 'days lost' by learners to exclusions, especially for those from vulnerable groups including those who are eligible to free school meals (eFSM), those who are Children Looked after (CLA) and those who have additional learning needs (ALN).
- 3.3 Data indicates that, despite ongoing efforts to promote positive attendance and inclusion, exclusion rates for learners with ALN and those who are eFSM remain a concern.
- 3.4 It should be noted that the end of term data for summer term 2025 demonstrates that the levels of fixed term exclusions are beginning to reduce within our secondary schools.
- 3.5 A further consideration is the increased engagement of Local Authority officers within schools, which has contributed to a deeper understanding of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and their potential association with social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs. Consequently, ALN data may be influenced by this heightened awareness of SEMH-related issues.

¹ [Monmouthshire's Community and Corporate Plan \(2022-28\)](#)

² [Inspection report Monmouthshire County Council \(Estyn, 2020\)](#)

³ [Equality Act 2010: Guidance \(Gov UK\)](#)

4. BACKGROUND:

- 4.1 In May 2025, Estyn's thematic review⁴ into promoting positive behaviour in secondary schools noted the national increase in fixed-term and permanent exclusions. Common behaviour issues identified by schools included persistent low-level disruption, acts of defiance and, to a lesser extent, physical confrontations. The report outlined how external factors such as the influence of social media and community-related issues have led to more complicated behaviours seen in schools.
- 4.2 In a survey⁵ completed prior to the National Behaviour Summit held by Welsh Government in May 2025 nearly all respondents reported that the variety, range, magnitude and frequency of challenging or disruptive behaviours had increased since the pandemic. During the Summit it was recognised that there is a noticeable rise in behavioural issues nationally, post pandemic.
- 4.3 Since spring 2023 the Data Officer facilitates continued improvements in the capture and use of data around exclusions. This analysis of exclusion data enhances the dialogue of challenge and support with schools as well as the Inclusion Service planning and priorities.
- 4.4 The analysis of the reasons for exclusions and monitoring of pupil behaviour has led to themes being identified as priority areas, for example there has been a particular focus on improving understanding, awareness and confidence of school staff to recognise and respond to harmful sexual behaviour to improve timely and appropriate responses to enable pupils to return to school safely.
- 4.5 The use of exclusion frequently overlaps with the use of reduced timetables through Pastoral Support Plans (PSPs) and risk management processes. As part of the ongoing professional learning offer to all schools is a focus on enhancing the understanding of how to safely support learners where they present behaviours of concern that potentially put others at risk of harm, to seek to reduce exclusion.
- 4.6 ALNET⁶ gives enhanced clarity that learners presenting with behaviours that challenge/ of distress may often need to be identified and supported as learners who have ALN relating to their social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs and therefore require additional learning provision (ALP). At times, schools and settings struggle to provide the ALP required to meet these needs, while keeping children and staff safe.
- 4.7 Financial pressures continue within our schools and settings, which can impact on the availability of support staff to meet the needs of pupils who present with behaviours that place them at risk of exclusion.

5. CURRENT SITUATION:

5.1 Fixed Term Exclusions (FTE):

- 5.2 The use of FTE continues to increase. For this academic year, school FTE were higher than in the previous two years.

Instance of FTE & days lost						
	2022-23		2023-24		2024-25	
	Instances	Days	Instances	Days	Instances	Days
Primary	109	163.25	161	307.5	242	550
Secondary	930	1154.5	1649	2483	1956	2884.5
Total	1039	1317.25	1810	2790.5	2198	3434.5

Table 1 Instance of Fixed Term Exclusions (FTE) and Days Lost

⁴ [Fostering mutual respect - promoting positive behaviours in secondary schools \(Estyn, 2025\)](#)

⁵ [Behaviour Summit: Survey \(Welsh Gov, May 2025\)](#)

⁶ [Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal \(Wales\) Act 2018](#)

- 5.3 578 learners were excluded from Monmouthshire schools during the last academic year. Of these 95 were primary learners and 483 were secondary learners.
- 5.4 There was an increased number of learners 343 (59%) who received repeat exclusions (285 secondary learners and 58 primary learners).
- 5.5 Nearly all exclusions (97%) were for 5 days or fewer, with an average length of 1.5 days.
- 5.6 Whilst 40% of schools issued more exclusions in 2023/24 than the previous academic year, of our 31 primary schools, 14 (45%) issued no exclusions. It should be noted that 7 primary schools have not issued any exclusions over the three-year period.
- 5.7 However, within the primary schools that have issued FTEs, there is a similar emerging trend of an increase of FTEs over a three-year period. The table above highlights that during 2022/23; there were 109 FTEs gradually increasing to 242 during 2024/25.
- 5.8 In primary schools a significant rise in the number of FTEs relates to 'actual violence' against either an adult or a child. This is also reflected in the violence at work forms submitted to the local authority from our schools.
- 5.9 There is a significant increase in FTE over time within secondary schools. This is linked to the rise in persistent disruptive behaviour. An analysis of the data has identified that two of our secondary schools use fixed term exclusions to a greater extent than others.
- 5.10 One secondary school's use of 'other' as a reason disguises overall themes. In this one school, the use of 'other' appears to be linked to the high use of short-term FTEs for a range of incidents, such as dangerous behaviour, defiance, detention and lesson refusals.
- 5.11 **Permanent Exclusions (PEX):**
- 5.12 The table below shows the data relating to PEX in Monmouthshire schools. There has been a significant increase in incidents where the thresholds for PEX have been met over the last two years.

Instances where threshold for PEX has been reached and issued			
	2022 -23	2023-24 <i>(rescinded PEX)</i>	2024-25 <i>(rescinded PEX)</i>
Primary	1	2 (1)	0 (9)
Secondary	9	20 (14)	0 (14)
Total	10	22 (15)	0 (23)

Table 2 Instances of Permanent Exclusions (PEX) being issued

- 5.13 All permanent exclusions come through Inclusion Panel which allows for multi-agency decision making about next steps and monitoring. The interests of the learner are held central to ensure the appropriate support and intervention is in place for learners who have been issued with a PEX. The increased use of managed moves to another school or the use of the Pupil Referral Service (PRS) for a period of intervention can mean that the PEX is rescinded.
- 5.14 During the academic year of 2024-25 there was a reduction in the number of PEX issued and all 23 PEX issued were rescinded. Of these nine were in the primary phase and 14 in our secondary schools. This highlights the increase in behaviours of challenge/ distress presented by younger pupils.
- 5.15 Where a learner with ALN has been permanently excluded, Headteacher's have worked closely with the LA to see whether more support can be made available or whether the additional learning provision outlined in the Individual Development Plan (IDP) can be changed and provided in a new school. Where this was possible the headteacher has rescinded the PEX.

- 5.16 The permanent exclusions referred to in this report were issued for reasons including serious actual or threatened violence against another learner or a member of staff, racist abuse, damage and drug and alcohol related offences.

6. THE INCLUSION SERVICE APPROACH TO MANAGING EXCLUSIONS:

- 6.1 The threshold for formal exclusion is set by Welsh Government⁷. The LA has a role to ensure the process for, and threshold of exclusions is upheld, and to monitor of the use of exclusion to ensuring that there is a parity of approach for schools and learners.
- 6.2 The decision to exclude a learner (for a fixed term or permanently) rests with the Headteacher, however there are often considerations including those relating to safeguarding, health and safety as well as individual learner needs in each instance. The Inclusion service offers support and challenge to schools about how they manage pupils' presenting with behaviour of challenge/ distress, and associated exclusions.
- 6.3 The improved understanding of the social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs of learners supports schools and officers to ensure early identification of barriers to learning and the application of a graduated response, and where appropriate to secure suitable additional learning provision.
- 6.4 Inclusion Panel ensure monitoring of learners where SEMH and exclusion is a factor. This is ensuring appropriate provision is in place for individual learners as well as greater awareness of the needs across our schools and the LA.
- 6.5 There is an enhanced focus on the use of managed moves as a potential alternative to permanent exclusion, where appropriate. This includes the support of the Inclusion service and monitoring by, the Inclusion Panel which, if appropriate, can provide some financial support through contingency funding.
- 6.6 Estyn highlighted⁸ that the most successful schools have strong leadership of well-being and have a consistency in behaviour management practice and regular professional learning for teachers. Effective schools may also implement trauma-informed approaches to support pupils' emotional needs and carry out regular restorative practices.
- 6.7 In Monmouthshire, our support for schools aligns with this with a continued focus on preventative work which includes extensive multi-agency work around the development of trauma informed practice. This aims to increase the capacity of staff to build good relationships with all pupils, including those from vulnerable groups, to promote positive engagement and reduce the need/ risk of using exclusion by improving the reasonable adjustments to create enabling learning environments that better meet the needs of those learners with barriers to learning and ALN. For example, the Autism in Schools and Setting programme and other professional learning such as, managing exclusions; risk management planning; developing nurture provision; and exploring behaviour and managing distress, there is a focus on preventing issues from escalating.
- 6.8 There is Education Support Team (EST) and/ or Educational Psychology Service (EPS) support for primary learners with fixed term exclusions where there is a potential SEMH need. The co-constructed graduated response for learners with SEMH needs supports schools and the Pupil Referral Service (PRS) to address concerns around learner behaviour and ensures a more timely and appropriate response to pupil needs that aims to reduce the need for exclusion.
- 6.9 Despite this broad professional learning offer and support, the level of fixed term exclusion used in Monmouthshire schools continues to increase.
- 6.10 The Pupil Referral Service (PRS) continues to improve and has increased capacity. There is an enhanced staffing structure and improved learning environments across two Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) in the north and the south of the county. This has enabled the PRS

⁷ [Exclusion from schools and pupil referral units \(PRU\) \(Welsh Gov, 2024\)](#)

⁸ [Fostering mutual respect - promoting positive behaviours in secondary schools \(Estyn, 2025\)](#)

to respond in more cases earlier to prevent permanent exclusion, by allowing for some pupils to receive input and interventions prior to a permanent exclusion, with the aim of successfully returning them to school. The renewed focus of the PRS on reintegration into mainstream school led to eight pupils returning to school during this academic year.

- 6.11 For learners who have been permanently excluded or spent time in the PRS, there is Inclusion service support to enable positive transitions, to ensure any risk reduction planning or additional learning provision is in place.
- 6.12 The development of a new collaborative Inclusion Network, between LA and secondary schools, in response to the recommendations of the PRS review completed in 2023-24, will shape and monitor each school's own alternative provisions to meet the needs of pupils at risk of exclusion. The LA invested in the four secondary schools to enable schools to respond in line with their cohort and contextual needs from September 2025.
- 6.13 Continued partnership working with health, children's services, the Youth Offending Service, the police and community partnership team continue to seek to address broader issues that may impact on learners' behaviour and exclusion from schools. For example, the Home Office Grant to reduce serious violence in schools has been focused on intervention for learners who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours.

7. KEY CONCERNS:

- 7.1 Reducing the level of exclusion and reducing barriers to learning for vulnerable pupils are key ambitions for Monmouthshire. This involves LA officers continuing to work with schools and settings to ensure they meet the wide range of individual pupil needs, including those vulnerable pupils who present with barriers to learning and ALN.
- 7.2 The continued increasing levels of exclusions from schools has a direct impact on the LA officers and services who support our schools, families and the pupils themselves. The capacity to respond in a timely and appropriate way is impacted as the numbers of pupils excluded rise.
- 7.3 Maintaining the correct balance between the management of learner behaviours in school and the use of formal exclusion is a key aspect of the broad safeguarding obligations towards its staff, as well as the pupils, in schools.
- 7.4 School is a protective factor for many vulnerable learners, so the use of exclusion always needs careful consideration to ensure learners are not potentially at greater risk of harm when it is used. For example, for some children who are looked after, the use of exclusion can place additional pressure on their home circumstances.
- 7.5 Learners who are excluded are more likely to be at risk of becoming Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET) at the end of compulsory schooling. Through the Inclusion Network established during this academic year across the secondary schools and the PRS, there is an increasing level of collaboration with the Inspire service who support these learners.

8. MOVING FORWARD:

- 8.1 The Inclusion Service will continue to offer professional learning opportunities in line with the expectation that schools should strive to meet educational, emotional, and developmental needs of learners, through inclusive practices and trauma-informed approaches⁹.
- 8.2 There are many levels to the support and challenge to our schools and settings around exclusions. This may include a meeting with the headteacher and chair of governors to review exclusion practices alongside other factors such as engagement with professional learning, exploration of the use of internal sanctions, reduced timetables, and Pastoral

⁹ [National Behaviour Summit: Behaviour in schools and colleges in Wales \(Welsh Gov, 2025\)](#)

Support Plans. It could also involve analysing behaviour logs and risk assessments to evaluate current approaches and identify opportunities for improvement. In certain cases, the use of exclusion is a theme during the Team Around the School approach to supporting schools where concerns are identified, and improvements are not evident within a reasonable period.

- 8.3 Ongoing collaboration with multi-agency partners will continue to focus on preventing and managing exclusions in schools and settings. This will include continued representation, support, and challenge at school-based multi-agency meetings, as well as involvement in potential grant applications that could help schools strengthen early intervention and preventative strategies.

9 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 9.1 This report is for scrutiny only and does not make any requests for additional resource. It is worth noting that working in a responsive manner to support schools to manage the increased levels of behaviours of challenge/ concern impacts across the Inclusion service.
- 9.2 LA officer capacity is increasingly under pressure due to rising demand for tasks such as supporting managed moves, the development of risk assessments, monitoring PSPs, and attending pupil disciplinary committee meetings. More recently our schools are reaching out for additional LA officer support in a proactive manner to ensure early intervention to prevent behaviours of concern escalating to the threshold for an exclusion. A substantial amount of LA officer time is allocated to support schools with risk management planning to support with complex behaviours of concern.

10 WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

- 10.1 The Inclusion Service has a particular focus on the needs of learners from vulnerable groups. They aim to work working preventatively, proactively and responsively, with others, to ensure inclusive, safe education for all learners as well as ensuring suitable education other than at school (EOTAS) for those who have been permanently excluded.

11 CONSULTEES:

Inclusion Team – 15th January 2026
CLSE DMT – 25th November 2025
Monmouthshire Headteachers

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- See links in document.
- Previous paper for Performance and Overview Select Committee on 19th November 2024: 'The Use of Exclusions in Monmouthshire Schools in the Academic Year 2023/24'.

13 AUTHORS:

Rachael Roach-Rooke, Vulnerable Learner Lead
RachaelRoach-Rooke@monmouthshire.gov.uk
Dr Morwenna Wagstaff, Head of Service: Inclusion,
MorwennaWagstaff@Monmouthshire.gov.uk

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
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
FTE	Fixed Term Exclusion
IDP	Individual Development Plan
LA	Local Authority
NEET	Not In Employment Education or Training
PEX	Permanently Excluded
PHP	Positive Handling Plan
PRS	Pupil Referral Service
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
PSP	Pastoral Support Plan
RA	Risk Assessment
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SRB	Specialist Resource Base
TA	Teaching Assistant
TAS	Team Around the School
VLL	Vulnerable Learner Lead
YOS	Youth Offending Service