



Education & Youth Portfolio

Self-Evaluation Report

April 2019

Local Government Education Services Inspection Framework



Flintshire Healthy Schools and Primary School Games Association Celebration Event 2018

Flintshire County Council

Contextual Information

Formed in 1996 following local government reorganisation, Flintshire is a well governed and high performing unitary local authority in the north east corner of Wales bordering Cheshire, Wrexham and Denbighshire. Flintshire has a strong track record of being a direct provider of local services from Education to Streetscene to Housing. Whilst direct provision is at the core of its model, Flintshire is also a creative and flexible council and operates both as a provider and a commissioner of services. It has been instrumental in developing collaborative arrangements such as a regional school improvement service, an employee-owned mutual in leisure, libraries and cultural services and a local social housing trading company. Continuing to develop sustainable models of delivery and maintaining high quality services continues to be a priority for the Council.

Flintshire provides local public services for 155,155 people who live in 65,489 households. It has the largest population of the North Wales authorities and is the sixth largest in Wales. With 5,831 staff the Council is the second largest employer in the County and provide services including, education, housing, leisure, libraries, planning, refuse collection, environmental health, recycling, roads, social services, trading standards, transport and tourism. Flintshire has seven libraries, ten sports and leisure centres, three country parks and maintains 754.78 miles of County roads. Flintshire has 78 schools (64 Primary, 11 Secondary, 2 Specialist & 1 PRU) providing education for 23,562 pupils, including those educated other than at school. 15.3% of the total population are of school age.

Based on the 2011 Census, the Welsh language is spoken by 14.4% of the population in Flintshire compared to 19% across Wales. The County has 5 Welsh medium primary schools and 1 Welsh medium secondary school. There are no dual stream or bilingual schools presently in the County. The County also has a mixed provision of faith based education with 7 Church in Wales Voluntary Aided primary schools, 5 Roman Catholic primary schools and 1 Roman Catholic secondary school.

Flintshire has a strong tradition of supporting a local infrastructure of non-maintained early years' provision through both English and Welsh, which supports the Council in its delivery of childcare and early years' education. Flintshire is an early adopter of the Welsh Government's flagship childcare policy of 30 hours free provision for working parents and there is a strong network of childminders, playgroups and private day nurseries delivering this combination of childcare and early education prior to children transitioning into schools.

The current (2018) population of school aged pupils entitled to Free School Meals (e-FSM) is 13.47% compared to a Wales average of 15.96%. The County has a mix of affluent and deprived areas. 19.99% of school aged pupils are designated as having a Special Educational Need in Flintshire compared to a Welsh average of 22.61%.



Ysgol Treffynnon & Ysgol Maes-y-Felin



Young MC's - Celebration Event

Structure of the Council

Flintshire County Council has 70 Councillors that are normally democratically elected every 4 years. It is currently run by a minority Labour administration with a political make up of: Labour 33, Independent Alliance 13, Conservative 6, Independents 3, Liberal Democrats 6 and New Independents 9.



Leader of the Council – Cllr Ian Roberts



Chief Executive – Colin Everett

The Council has a Cabinet and a Scrutiny function. Decisions are usually made by the Cabinet for all issues including major policy matters. The role of Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to hold the Cabinet to account and to assist in the improvement and development of the Council's policies and services. Flintshire has six Overview and Scrutiny Committees covering: Corporate Resources, Community & Enterprise, Education & Youth, Environment, Organisational Change and Social and Health.

Flintshire's Corporate Plan 2017-23

The Council has a good track record of being a high performing authority. The Council Plan 2017-23 was adopted by the Council in September 2017 and is reviewed on an annual cycle. The year-end Council Plan report for 2017/18 is largely positive with 83% of activities being assessed as having made good progress and 71% having achieved the desired outcome. Performance indicators show good progress with 57% meeting or near to period target. Risks are also successfully managed.

Flintshire County Council was the most improved authority for performance in Wales across all Public Accountability Measures in 2016/17 and continues to perform well at a national level.

The Corporate Improvement Plan is closely aligned to the plan of the Public Service Board and has 6 themes:

- Supportive Council
- Ambitious Council
- Learning Council
- Green Council
- Connected Council
- Serving Council

Working in Partnership

Flintshire County Council has a longstanding and proud track record of partnership working. The communities it serves rightly expect statutory and third sector partners to work together to manage shared priorities through collaboration. The Flintshire Public Services Board (PSB) is at the heart of

promoting a positive culture of working together and concentrates energy, effort and resources on providing efficient and effective services to local communities.

The priorities of the Public Service Board are:

- Independent Living
- Integrated Community Social and Health Service
- Developing and Inspiring Resilient Communities
- Safeguarding

Public Services Board partners include: Natural Resources Wales, Public Health Wales, North Wales Police, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, National Probation, Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Coleg Cambria, Glyndwr University and Welsh Government.

National recognition

The Council ranks highly not only against its peers, but also other public sector companies, for its achievements. This is recognised by a number of regional and national awards e.g.

2018 CIPD Wales Awards finalists - Best Change Management Initiative

With significant financial challenges the Council needed to create sustainability for its Leisure and Library Services. Early HR involvement, partnership working, professional expertise, business focus, passion and teamwork were key to transformational change, as we spun out services forming an employee owned community benefit society, Aura Leisure and Libraries Limited, in September 2017.

2018 Municipal Journal Awards and 2018 APSE Awards - SHARP

Finalist - MJ (Municipal Journal) Awards 2018 – Best Social Housing Initiative category

Finalist - APSE Service Awards 2018 – Best Housing, Regeneration or New Build Initiative category

Flintshire SHARP will deliver 500 social and affordable homes over five years. This landmark programme is delivering the county's first council house building activity in 30 years, addressing an ever increasing need for high quality homes across the county. The SHARP programme is the first of its kind in Wales and is setting a national benchmark for quality and design. It is an innovative model and a number of other Councils are looking to Flintshire to see how they can replicate it.

2018 Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Wales - Planning Award for Excellence

The Walks in Flint, the first site to be re-developed as part of Flintshire County Council's Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP), comprises 92 new council and affordable, energy-efficient homes which have been built in the heart of Flint by programme partner Wates Residential North.

Delivery of this scheme has been a collaborative process, from the early involvement of the Town Council and local residents, to more formal liaison with the Design Commission through to collaborative working with the Archaeological Trust to address site issues.

2018 APSE Service Awards and 2018 Social Care Accolades

FINALIST - APSE Service Awards 2018 – Best Public/Private Partnership Working Initiative - Creating a Place called home: Delivering what matters

WINNER - Social Care Accolades 2018 – Excellent outcomes for people of all ages by investing in the learning and development of staff – Progress for providers

This ambitious programme working in partnership with private sector residential care providers works to improve services and quality of life for residents. The accreditation scheme supports sector development whilst improving well-being outcomes for residents and contributing to staff development at a particularly challenging time for private sector partners. The programme of cultural change uses person-centred tools/practices to improve outcomes for individuals and enhance overall service quality.

2018 North Wales Police Problem Oriented Partnerships (POP) Awards - Early Help Hub

Runner up - North Wales Police Problem Oriented Partnerships (POP) Awards 2018

A cross organisational multi-agency project celebrating proactive partnerships to develop solutions to underlying conditions contributing to public safety problems. This ground breaking initiative delivers more timely and coordinated support to families with greater needs, working together to reach families that would benefit from early help.

Self-Evaluation of Education Services

1.0 OUTCOMES

1:1 Standards and progress overall

Inspection and follow up profile

Inspection performance across the schools sectors is generally good and compares well against the national profile as reported in the Estyn Annual Report. There is a strong record of close correlation between the Local Authority's pre-inspection reports and Estyn findings. The Authority has an overall good track record in effectively supporting schools being removed from categories. Powers of intervention are used effectively where schools cause concern to ensure challenge and support is timely and effective. Interim Executive Boards provide successful challenge and intervention to schools in serious categories of concern. This has helped to increase the pace of change and ensure robust accountability for standards and progress.

The primary school inspection profile for Flintshire has been continuously strong. The profile compares well with the Estyn primary profile for schools across Wales. Between September 2017 and January 2019, 15 primary schools in Flintshire were inspected. All of the primary schools inspected provided a good standard of care, support and guidance for pupils (100% judged to be Excellent or Good). The majority of primary schools also effectively promote pupil wellbeing and positive attitudes to learning (93.3% judged to be Excellent or Good). Standards of Teaching and Learning were judged to be excellent or good in 86.7% of these schools. The Local Authority is continuing to focus its support to increase the number of schools achieving Excellent. During this period no school was judged to be unsatisfactory in any inspection area.

All primary schools placed in a category over the past three years have been removed promptly. At present, there are three Flintshire primary schools in Estyn follow-up, all of which are being effectively supported in order to fully address identified areas for improvement.

Progress in skills reported in primary schools is generally judged to be good or better. Evidence from Estyn inspections demonstrate that in many schools the standards in literacy, numeracy and ICT are good or better.

The primary special school profile is strong with all judgements either good or excellent.

Overall, the inspection profile for Flintshire secondary schools is generally strong and improving. Schools causing concern are subject to robust monitoring. There are clear action plans in place and highly focused support. This has effectively ensured the removal of these schools from follow up in the shortest possible timescales. For example, in 2016-2017, one school was placed in a statutory category requiring Significant Improvement and one school placed in Estyn Review. There is clear evidence to demonstrate that the Local Authority's support for these two schools causing concern has been effective in accelerating their improvement with neither remaining in a category. However, improvement is required to increase the number of good and excellent judgements awarded in the key inspection areas within the new framework within secondary schools.

One school is currently in statutory category of Special Measures and one school has just recently been placed in Estyn Review. The initial pace of improvement was too slow in the school in a statutory category. However, the school has recently demonstrated more rapid improvement following the

appointment of key staff to core subject departments. Ensuring the necessary improvements to remove the school from Special Measures remains a high priority for the Local Authority.

Standards in Foundation Phase

Overall, standards in the Foundation Phase are good and the Local Authority demonstrates a highly effective and sustained approach to early identification and intervention to support pupils to make progress. When benchmarked against national averages, the performance of Flintshire pupils has been strong, with outcomes in all core subjects, at both the expected and higher levels, above the national averages. The percentage of pupils achieving the Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator (FPOI) is consistently in line with or above the national average. As widely anticipated, following the implementation of the new Foundation Phase Framework, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected outcomes across Wales dipped in 2017-18 with the Wales average for FPOI reducing to 82.6% (-4.7%). The Flintshire average however for the FPOI was 3% above the national average and down by only 3.8% compared to the larger national decrease.

The percentage of more able pupils achieving the higher outcomes has steadily risen over a three year period for English (LCE), Mathematical Development (MD) and Personal & Social Development (PSD). In 2017-18 the percentage of pupils achieving Outcome 6+ increased in PSD and Welsh first language (LCW), and although English (LCE) and mathematics (MD) decreased slightly, all remained above the national average. The Local Authority remains focused on supporting schools to improve the percentage of pupils achieving the higher outcomes.

Table 1: Performance at Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator FP

FPOI	2016		2017		2018	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
Flintshire	86.9	13	89.5	5	85.6	n/a
Wales	87.0		87.3		82.6	

Table 2: Breakdown of Areas of Learning performance in Foundation Phase at expected level

Area of Learning Outcome 5+	LA2016		LA 2017		LA 2018		Wales 2018
	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%
LCE	88.4	11	90.3	6	86.8	n/a	84.0
LCW	88.1	20	94.1	7	86.6	n/a	86.1
MD	90.2	12	92.2	5	89.1	n/a	86.6
PSD	94.5	14	96.1	3	94.6	n/a	93.4

Table 3: Breakdown of Areas of Learning performance in Foundation Phase at above expected level

Area of Learning Outcome 6+	LA 2016		LA 2017		LA 2018		Wales 2018
	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%	N/A	%
LCE	36.7	9	40	7	36.8		33.5
LCW	33.9	15	32.2	21	33.9		33.2
MD	36.4	10	40.6	7	38.4		33.9
PSD	57.6	13	63.1	9	65.6		59.4

Standards in Key Stage 2

Overall, standards in Key Stage 2 are good and the Local Authority demonstrates a highly effective and sustained approach to early identification and intervention to support pupils to make progress.

The Core Subject Indicator (CSI) has shown a continued trend of improvement which is above the Wales average year on year. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected and higher levels was above the national average for all core subjects. The percentage of pupils achieving one level above the expected is good and has steadily risen over a three year period for English, mathematics and science. At the expected and higher levels, there was a significant increase in the percentage of pupils achieving Welsh First Language (+4.4% at the expected level and 14.9% at the higher level).

The improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 in the core subjects had been identified as a priority in 2017-18, and in particular, there was a focus on improving Flintshire's outcomes for the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 Welsh First Language. This improvement is testimony to the intervention and support provided by the Local Authority.

In 2018, only 8 matched pupils who were not identified on the SEN register did not attain the CSI. In 2014, these pupils were in Foundation Phase and there were 71 pupils who did not achieve the FPOI. This demonstrates that successful pupil progress has been made from one phase to the next.

Standards of attainment in Welsh second language are good and show a continuous trend of improvement from 61.2% in 2013 to 83.2% in 2018.

Table 4: Performance at Core Subject Indicator KS2

CSI	2016		2017		2018	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	N/A
Flintshire	90.1	5	91.0	6	91.4	
Wales	88.6		89.5		89.5	

Table 5: Breakdown of core subject performance in KS2 at expected level

Subject Level 4+	LA 2016		LA 2017		LA 2018	Wales 2018
	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%	
English	91.2	6	92.6	7	92.5	91.1
Welsh 1 st Lang	84.3	21	86.6	22	91.0	89.7
Mathematics	92.3	3	93.0	5	92.8	91.8
Science	92.8	9	93.2	8	92.7	92.1

Table 6: Breakdown of core subject performance in KS2 at above expected level

Subject Level 5+	LA 2016		LA 2017		LA 2018		Wales 2018
	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%	N/A	%
English	41.7	9	45.8	9	47.7	n/a	45.9
Welsh 1 st Lang	37.3	12	32.3	20	47.2	n/a	40.4
Mathematics	42.3	13	49.4	7	49.8	n/a	47.8
Science	42.1	11	47.0	11	48.4	n/a	46.5

Standards in Key Stage 3

Performance across KS3 is consistently strong. In 2018, there was an increase in performance at the expected level in mathematics, science and more significantly in Welsh First Language. The slight dip in the CSI was underpinned by a slight fall in English performance (-0.3%).

Performance at one level above expected is strong and has shown a steady trend of improvement in all core subjects. In 2018, performance further improved in mathematics, science and Welsh First Language, with a slight decrease in English Language (-0.7%).

The percentage of pupils achieving the expected levels in the core subjects was again above the national average and the performance at the higher levels was higher than the national average for science and mathematics but was slightly down for Welsh first language and English.

Standards of attainment in Welsh second language are good and although the % achieving the expected level dropped from 87.9% in 2017 to 86.0% in 2018, performance has remained relatively consistent since 2015.

Table 7: Performance at Core Subject Indicator KS3

CSI	2016		2018		2018	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
Flintshire	88.4	6	89.5	5	89.4	n/a
Wales	85.9		87.4		88.1	n/a

Table 8: Breakdown of core subject performance in KS3 at expected level

Subject Level 5+	LA 2016		LA 2017		LA 2018		Wales 2018
	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%
English	91.1	6	92.5	6	92.2%	n/a	91.2%
Welsh 1 st Lang	96.8	4	95.1	7	96.6%	n/a	93.8%
Mathematics	92.7	5	92.7	5	93.1%	n/a	91.6%
Science	94.8	7	95.1	10	95.6%	n/a	93.7%

Table 9: Breakdown of core subject performance in KS3 at above expected level

Subject Level 6+	LA 2016		LA 2017		LA 2018		Wales 2018
	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%
English	61.2	7	61.5	8	60.8	n/a	61.6
Welsh 1 st Lang	63.5	4	61.0	11	62.9	n/a	63.8
Mathematics	67.1	6	67.9	7	68.7	n/a	66.3
Science	64.6	10	67.4	10	68.5	n/a	67.1

Standards in Key Stage 4

Many GCSE qualifications changed in 2017, and as stipulated by Welsh Government a result based comparison with previous years is inappropriate. There remains significant volatility in GCSE outcomes and significant changes to the pattern and numbers of pupils sitting exams in the summer 2018 which has had an impact on results as demonstrated in the proportion of grades across all subjects in the A*- C range in Wales decreasing by 1.2% to 61.6%.

Issues with the changes to WJEC grade boundaries and access to early entry opportunities have impacted on performance in GCSE English Language. Flintshire schools' outcomes in English have been significantly influenced by individual schools' entry decisions. This has also had an impact on performance at level 2+, where English is a key component of the measure. Performance in GCSE English Language decreased this year in the Local Authority from 66.5% to 62.8% A* to C. There were significant changes to grade boundaries between the summer and November 2017 examinations and those in the summer of 2018.

Overall performance in 2018 generally improved and the outcomes compare favourably with those achieved in 2017 and with national averages. Performance at Level 2+ decreased by 0.3%, which given the more significant decrease in English language outcomes was not unexpected, and is still above national averages. A decrease in outcomes in English Language (-3.8%) is directly reflective of the issues outlined above with a number of schools who registered pupils for early entry performing well and in line with projections.

Outcomes at L1 (by 0.1%) and L2 (by 3.5%) both improved and both exceed national averages. Mathematics and numeracy outcomes are both strong, above the Wales averages, and improved on 2017. 'Best of mathematics' improved by 1% and is 5% ahead of the national average. Science continues to be a local strength, 63% of pupils achieving at least one C grade or better in the subject, 6% ahead of national averages. The percentage achieving A*-C in Welsh First Language improved significantly from 71.9% to 77.4%.

There was an improvement in the % of pupils achieving five A*/A grades (+2.0%) and a closing of the gap with national performance. There was also an improvement in performance in the Capped 9 points score which increased to above the national average. Performance on the new Welsh Baccalaureate measure is above Wales averages at National level and below at Foundation.

The percentage of pupils achieving no qualifications remains below Wales averages and reduced further to 0.6% (from 1% in 2017).

Further improving the performance of learners in the main indicators, and especially English Language, remains a key priority for the Local Authority.

Table 10: Performance in main KS4 indicators and core subjects at KS4

Indicator	Flintshire 2017	Flintshire 2018	Wales 2018
L2+	57.0	56.6	55.1
L2	65.8	69.2	67.0
L1	94.6	94.7	93.7
Capped Points	346.8	352.2	349.5
English	66.5	62.8	66.5
Welsh First	71.9	77.4	74.3
Numeracy	62.9	64.1	58.0
Maths	62.4	64.6	59.4
Best of maths	67.5	68.5	63.6
Science*	-	69.0	63.0
5 A*/A	14.5	16.6	18.0
Welsh Bac National	-	53.5	51.4
Welsh Bac Foundation	-	83.6	85.3

Standards in Key Stage 5

Six out of eleven secondary schools in Flintshire offer post-16 provision. The Local Authority has also developed a joint delivery model with Coleg Cambria, called Deeside 6th to provide a more sustainable post-16 model for the northern area of the County but which also now attracts students from across the Authority and beyond.

Demographic changes meant the entry number for 18 year olds in Flintshire and across the region was lower than in 2017. There is an improvement in performance against most measures in the core data sets in 2018.

Performance in the 3 A*/A grades measure continued to improve to 11.6% (from 4.1% in 2016) further narrowing the gap with national averages. At 3 A*-C grades performance also rose again, following increases in both previous years narrowing against the gap in performance with national averages. Performance on the level 3 measure increased to above the national average in 2018, following a decline in 2017. The average points score for Flintshire schools remains an area for improvement and is below the national average.

An evaluation based on ALPS A Level Data based on 2,580 providers and 240,000 students is strong with a local authority average 3 year T Score of 4.89, within the ALPS descriptors this would be between the 40th and 59th percentile and judged as 'satisfactory to good'. No provider has a three year average T grade lower than 5. History, psychology and WBQ are all strong performing subjects at grade 3 or better (top 25 percentile).

Welsh Language Skills

The cohort of pupils within Flintshire being assessed through Welsh medium is relatively small with only 5 Welsh medium primary schools and one secondary school which means the performance of cohorts year on year can vary. In addition, a very high proportion of the pupils in Flintshire's Welsh medium schools come from homes where Welsh is not the language of the home.

The improvement in Welsh 2nd Language (W2L) standards at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 over the last few years is a positive trend.

Table 11a: Key Stage 2

ALI / LA		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Flintshire	Level 4+	61.2	68.2	75.6	79.4	81.7	83.2
Flintshire	Level 5+	8.4	13.4	16.0	20.2	24.6	25.4

Table 11b: Key Stage 3

ALI / LA		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Flintshire	Level 5+	74.3	80.4	85.7	86.4	87.9	86.0
Flintshire	Level 6+	35.5	42.8	50.1	48.7	54.0	53.5
Flintshire	Level 7+	7.2	9.1	13.9	15.0	17.2	18.0

The take up of the full GCSE Welsh course in Flintshire's secondary schools has been disappointing in the past. In 2016, the percentage of pupils in the Authority's English medium schools entered was 71% with 25% full course and 75% short course.

In 2017, the percentage of pupils in the Authority's English medium schools undertaking a Welsh Second Language qualification was 67%, of which 33% were full course GCSE and 67% short course GCSE. In 2018 73% of pupils in the Authority's English medium schools were undertaking Welsh Second Language qualifications; of which 39% were full course GCSE, and 61% short course GCSE.

In the full course GCSE in 2018, 67% of pupils achieved grades A*-C, compared to 89.8% in 2017. In the short course GCSE in 2018, 62% of pupils achieved grades A*-C, compared to 57% in 2017. The change to the WJEC examination structure for Welsh GCSE from 2017 onwards where only the full course will be offered should improve participation rates but schools are already reporting concerns about staffing expertise and curriculum time. These issues are referenced in the Local Authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

1.2 Standards and Progress of Specific Groups

Gender

Overall, over a three year period, with a few exceptions, the gap between boys and girls performance is better in Flintshire than the national gap across all key stages.

At Key Stage 4, the gap between boys and girls performance at L2+ increased slightly in 2018 and is larger than the national gap. Girls' performance is, however, higher than national averages by 2.9% and further increased in 2018 whereas boys' performance decreased by 1.6% this year and fell below national averages by 0.3%.

In the Capped 9 Points Score, both boys and girls performance improved in 2018. The gap between boys and girls narrowed and the performance of both is above national averages.

In 2018, the performance at 5 A*/A grades improved for both boys and girls. The performance of both genders is below national averages but the gap has narrowed.

Both boys and girls continue to perform better than the national average in the FPOI and the girls continue to perform better than the boys. However the gap between the performance of the girls and boys has continuously decreased from 8.8% in 2013 to 5.7% in 2018 which compares favourably with the national gap of 8.5% in 2018.

At Key Stage 2, performance in the CSI of both boys and girls showed a steady improvement between 2013 and 2018. Over a five-year period, the girls have consistently performed better than the boys but the gap has closed from 5.7% in 2017 to 4.8% in 2018 which is slightly below the national gap of 5.2%.

At Key Stage 3, the gap between boys and girls performance in the CSI in 2018 increased after five years of closing. After 5 years of continuous improvement the performance of the boys fell from 86.8% in 2017 to 85.1% in 2018. The girls' performance continued to improve which resulted in the gap increasing above the national gap of 7.1% to 8.7%.

Performance of eFSM pupils

Overall performance of eFSM pupils is generally good although the performance of eFSM pupils needs to further improve at KS4.

There had been a general improvement in the performance of eFSM pupils attaining the Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator over the last 5 years but with the implementation of the new Foundation Phase Framework the overall % of eFSM pupils achieving the FPOI fell by 4.2% in 2018 to 71.4%. However the percentage achieving was substantially above the national average of 67.9% and the gap between eFSM and non-FSM learners was 1.1% lower than the national gap.

In Key Stage 2, the percentage of FSM pupils achieving the core subject indicator improved slightly in 2018, up 0.7% to 78.7%. The gap between eFSM and non-FSM pupils reduced slightly and was 0.9% above the national gap. However the Key Stage 2 eFSM pupils in Flintshire have performed consistently better than the Wales average for the last three years.

In Key Stage 3, the percentage of FSM pupils achieving the core subject indicator improved in 2018, up 1.9% to 73.7%. The gap between eFSM and non-FSM pupils also reduced following an increase the previous year. At Key Stage 3, eFSM pupils in Flintshire have performed consistently better than the Wales average and have generally maintained a smaller gap in attainment between the eFSM and non-FSM pupils than the Wales average.

In Key Stage 4, schools have been challenged on their effective use of PDG funding and especially where eFSM numbers are high. Schools identified with areas of weakness have been given access to support strategies that are clearly articulated within support plans. As a result the percentage of pupils achieving the Level 2 Inclusive increased to 29.1% compared to 25.2% in 2017. The gap between the achievement of eFSM and non-FSM pupils decreased by 4.2% and is now in line with the national gap. The performance of eFSM pupils also improved in the Capped 9, 5A*-A, L2, L1, Mathematics and Maths Numeracy. The performance of eFSM pupils in English, Welsh First Language and Science has decreased, although the performance in Science at A*-C is significantly above the national average. The performance of eFSM pupils needs to further improve at KS4.

More Able and Talented (MAT)

Overall across the key stages performance of MAT pupils is consistently higher than the national average. The percentage of pupils gaining a minimum 5A*-A at KS4 has improved and increased by 2% in 2018. However, it remains below the national average and requires further improvement.

In the Foundation Phase, the percentage of more able pupils achieving the higher outcomes for English, mathematics and PSD had improved over a three year period before the implementation of the new Foundation Phase Framework. In 2018, the percentage of pupils achieving Outcome 6+ increased in PSD and Welsh First Language but decreased in English and mathematics. All remained above the national average. The Local Authority remains focused on supporting schools to improve the percentage of pupils achieving the higher outcomes in each subject, particularly Outcome 6+ Welsh First Language.

At Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels for all core subjects increased compared to 2017 and all were well above the national average. There was significant increase in the percentage of pupils achieving Welsh First Language, up 14.9% to 47.2%.

At Key Stage 3, the performance at L6+ for science and mathematics increased compared to 2017 and were again higher than the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 6+ in English decreased slightly and fell below the national average. Although the performance in Welsh First Language increased by nearly 2%, it remained below the national average. Performance at Level 7+ in core subjects compares well with national comparisons. All subject have shown a consistent improvement trend and are above the national averages, except for science which fell slightly in 2018 to just below the national average.

The performance of MAT pupils at KS4 indicated by the percentage of pupils gaining a minimum 5A*-A increased in 2018 to 16.6%, up 2% from 2017. However, the outcome remains below the national average and requires further improvement. As a result, the Local Authority is working with all schools to ensure they have effective intervention programmes in place for ensuring higher attainers achieve the best possible grades and that good and excellent practice is identified and shared.

Pupils Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

Through its effective partnership working, the Local Authority has maintained a very low level of Year 11 NEET which is below the Welsh average and in 2014 and 2015 was the lowest level in Wales. An increase in the number of young people at Tier 2 (unable to engage) accounted for the rise in 2016. The provisional data for 2017 shows a slight year on year reduction. Similarly, the levels of NEET for Year 12 and 13 also compare positively in the main with the national average. Data for 2018 is yet to be published.

Table 12a: Year 11 Leavers (%) from schools in Wales known to be not in education, employment or training

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Flintshire	3.6	1.3	1.3	1.7	1.6
Wales	3.7	3.1	2.8	2.0	N/A

Source: Careers Wales

Table 12b: Year 12 and 13 Leavers (%) in Flintshire known not to be in education, employment or training

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Flintshire					
Year 12	1.1	1.4	0.9	1.7	1.01
Wales Yr 12	2.1	1.9	1.6	1.2	N/K
Year 13	3.8	3.05	2.6	2.3	3.09
Wales Yr 13	4.7	4.9	3.76	3.11	N/K

Education Other than at school (EOTAS) and Excluded Pupils

Flintshire has worked in partnership with schools to target a reduction in the levels of pupils being educated other than at school (EOTAS) particularly at KS4. The overall levels of EOTAS across Flintshire have seen a decrease from a higher base level against an increasing national trend as outlined in Table 13.

Table 13: Number/Rate of EOTAS across Flintshire

	Number					Rate per 1000 pupils				
	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18
Flintshire	137	145	119	95	111	5.7	6.1	5.0	4.0	4.7
Wales	1,225	1,387	1,512	1,402	1,609	2.6	3.0	3.2	3.0	3.4

The majority of Flintshire pupils who are EOTAS access their education through the Authority's Portfolio of Pupil Referral Units (PPRU), known locally at Plas Derwen. There was an increase in the number of pupils accessing tuition in 2017/18. This related to an increase in the number of pupils who required individualised tailored packages to enable them to engage with any form of education.

Table 14: Percentage of pupils in different forms of EOTAS provision

Year	PPRU %	Tuition %	Specialist Provision %	Other %
2017/18	61	22	10	7
2016/17	69	7	19	5
2015/16	72	8	18	2

Flintshire pupils accessing EOTAS have a range of significant additional learning needs, necessitating the provision of targeted, specialist intervention. This is reflected in the attainment of these pupils at end of key stage assessments as demonstrated in the table below. In 2017/18, 28% of the eligible EOTAS cohort did not undergo formal end of key stage assessment due to their level of need. Similarly, 23% of the overall total were not assessed in 2016/17.

Table 15: End of Key Stage Outcomes for Pupils accessing EOTAS

	2016/17		2017/18	
	PPRU %	All EOTAS %	PPRU %	All EOTAS %
Foundation Phase Indicator	0	0	0	0
KS2 CSI	0	0	25	25
KS3 CSI	15	23	13	13
KS4 CSI	0	0	6	6
KS4 L1	13	24	17	17
KS4 L2	0	0	6	6
KS4 L2+	0	0	6	6

The cohorts undergoing assessment are very small at each key stage making year on year comparisons difficult. The end of Key Stage 4 assessments within the PPRU have shown a slight improvement over the last 3 years. The percentage of pupils having attended the PPRU in the year prior to the end of key stage assessment reduced from 53% in 2016/17 to 20% in 2017/18 demonstrating the volatility of this particular cohort.

Table 16: Outcomes at Key Stage 4 within the PPRU

Year	No. on Roll (January)	Entered at Least 1 Qualification (%)	Achieved L1 Threshold (%)	Achieved L2 Threshold (%)	English A*-C (%)	Maths A*-C (%)	Science A*-C (%)
2017/18	18	94	17	6	11	6	11
2016/17	16	81	13	0	19	0	6
2015/16	32	94	6	0	6	6	3

*SSSP data

Pupils attending the PPRU generally make good progress in the areas of literacy and numeracy against their baseline assessments on entry. Most pupils progress by 2 levels within a key stage. Of the 19 KS4 pupils who completed entry level assessments, 100% achieved success in Mathematics, with 42% achieving success in English.

Destination data for the PPRU for 2017/18 shows that 3 have gone on to study A levels, 9 have entered FE, 4 are engaged with ADTRAC and 2 are known to be NEET.

Attainment and Achievement of Pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

In line within the national picture, Flintshire has seen an increase in the number of pupils identified as having Special Educational Needs (SEN); since 2014 there has been an overall increase of 4%. In 2017/18 there was a higher percentage of pupils with Statements of SEN undergoing end of Key Stage assessments. This was particularly significant at Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 and 3 where outcomes show a reduction compared with 2016/17. Outcomes at Key Stage 4 for statemented pupils show an improvement however this is not replicated across the pupils at School Action Plus. The majority of these pupils were identified as having behavioural, emotional and social difficulties which is likely to have impacted on the overall outcomes for this group.

Table 17: End of Key Stage Outcomes for Pupils at School Action Plus or Statemented Attending Mainstream Schools in Flintshire

Outcome	2015/16 (%)		2016/17 (%)		2017/18 (%)	
	SAP %	S %	SAP %	S %	SAP %	S %
FPI	42.6	10.0	49.5	26.7	45.9	13.8
KS2 CSI	53.1	11.6	60.6	30.0	56.6	25.6
KS3 CSI	59.4	27.1	57.3	30.0	54.2	30.2
KS4 CSI	17.9	11.8	17.9	6.9	18.1	14.3
KS4 Level 1	94.6	88.2	74.4	79.3	63.9	85.7
KS4 Level 2	51.8	29.4	25.6	17.2	23.6	21.4
KS4 Level 2+	17.9	11.8	17.9	10.3	18.1	14.3

Outcomes for pupils attending the Authority's specialist schools are good. This was verified through the recent inspections of the schools where it was reported that outcomes for pupils were good with the majority making strong progress in their learning from their starting points and in relation to their individual needs and abilities. It was also noted that nearly all pupils make strong progress in their literacy, numeracy, personal and social education and information and communication technology (ICT) skills with progress being in line with individual targets.

All of the 25 pupils who left the secondary specialist school Ysgol Maes Hyfryd in 2018 went on to access local FE provision. Between them, the students achieved a total of 71 accredited qualifications or awards with all pupils achieving at least 1 qualification. The accreditation covered a range of relevant academic and life skills areas such as Science, Literacy, numeracy, employability skills and personal social development.

Pupils with ALN attending non-Flintshire provision

In 2018, there were 18 learners accessing non-Flintshire maintained specialist provision or 'out of county' placements. Of these, 9 attended maintained special schools in neighbouring authorities with 7 accessing the regional specialist provision for Autism at Ysgol Plas Brondyfryn in Denbighshire. All learners were identified as having severe learning difficulties.

The remaining 9 learners accessed independent, specialist placements in response to their significant and complex needs in the areas of sensory impairment, Autism and behaviour, social and emotional difficulties.

Of the 18, 5 pupils achieved formal accreditation, 2 at GCSE level. Of the overall total, 83% of the pupils were deemed to have made good progress in line with their complex needs. Of the pupils who did not progress as expected, 1 had significant behavioural difficulties and refused to engage with the education provision within the residential setting. The remaining 2 pupils had diagnoses of Autism and struggled to engage in their educational provision impacting on their overall academic achievement.

Learners with sensory impairment

Pupils with sensory impairments access additional support through the Authority's specialist sensory staff. The cohorts are generally small in number although there is an increase in the number of pupils with a hearing impairment (HI) requiring additional input. Pupils make good progress in line with their expected outcomes and overall group comparisons compare favourably against the LA's end of key stage outcomes, e.g. 66% of pupils with a hearing impairment achieving L2.

Ethnic Minority Pupils

The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups across Flintshire remains fairly low as a percentage of the total school population. In 2017/18, there were 148 Year 2 pupils identified as being from minority ethnic groups. Of these, 84.8% achieved the FPI, which was a reduction of 1.5% on 2017 but was higher than the 2016 value. The pupils not from minority ethnic groups continue to perform better than those from minority groups at Foundation Phase but the gap narrowed from 6.5% in 2016 to 2.1% in 2018.

The percentage of pupils achieving the KS2 CSI increased in 2018 by 3.3% to 87.6%, with the gap between the attainments of non-ethnic minority narrowing from 8.5% in 2016 to 4.2% in 2018. In year 9, the percentage of pupils achieving the KS3 CSI increased in 2018 by 5.5% to 92.2% with pupils from minority ethnic groups performing better than those not from minority groups. The percentage of Year 11 pupils achieving the L2+ fell in 2018 by 15.7% to 41.0% and the capped 9 points score also fell by 10 points to 354.4. Generally the pupils not from minority ethnic groups perform better than those from minority groups.

English/Welsh as an Additional Language

Flintshire has seen a significant rise in the number of pupils with English/Welsh as an additional language (EAL) as demonstrated by Table 18 where the % values relate to the percentage of the regional and national total numbers.

Table 18: Number of pupils with English/Welsh as an Additional Language

	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
Flintshire	547		655		753		864		1201	
North Wales	2,840	19.2%	3,052	21.5%	3,229	23.3%	3,485	24.8%	3,712	32.6%
Wales	21,931	2.3%	23,453	2.8%	25,189	3.0%	26,606	3.2%	27,836	4.31%

As of January 2018, there were 43 different languages (plus English and Welsh) being spoken in Flintshire schools.

Table 19: Largest number of pupils speaking different language in Flintshire

Language	Polish	Romanian	Lithuanian	Bulgarian	Cantonese	Portuguese	Bengali	Hungarian
2017/18	543	119	90	53	30	38	25	29
2016/17	502	92	74	52	48	32	27	0

The support provided by the Local Authority and by schools for pupils with EAL has a positive impact. The outcomes for pupils with EAL generally show an increasing trend of improvement as shown in table 20 below.

Table 20: Outcome data (%) for Pupils with English/Welsh as an Additional Language (EAL)

Outcome	2013/14 %	2014/15 %	2015/16 %	2016/17 %	2017/18 %
Foundation Phase Indicator	77	80	81	88	86
Key Stage 2 CSI	79	78	86	89	87
Key Stage 3 CSI	73	77	66	78	98
Key Stage 4 CSI	35	57	43	45	43
Level 1 Indicator	86	100	100	95	98

There was an increase in the number of pupils with EAL entering the Foundation Phase in 2017/18. There was a slight dip in the FPI however outcomes were significantly higher than in 2016. Similarly, a slight reduction occurred at KS2. This related to 2 individuals who had arrived in Flintshire in the Summer Term 2016 and were just outside of the NEWBE category. At KS3, 1 pupil with SEN did not achieve the CSI. Of the 52 pupils completing Year 11, 46% arrived in the UK part way through their secondary education. A number of these were also identified as having additional learning and/or behavioural difficulties. Whilst the Level 1 indicator shows a slight improvement on last year, KS4 CSI and Level 2 outcomes show a reduction as a result of the factors outlined.

Gypsy & Traveller Pupils

The outcomes for Traveller children saw a significant increase in 2017/18 against a backdrop on increased numbers and levels of transience.

Table 21: Outcome data (%) for pupils from the Traveller Community

Outcome	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Foundation Phase Indicator	57	60	47	40	73
Key Stage 2 CSI	50	77	45	64	82
Key Stage 3 CSI	50	66	33	50	75

There were 4 Traveller pupils who completed Year 11 in 2017/18. Of the 4, 1 achieved L1, 1 achieved L2 and 3 have gone on into employment or training. This also represents a significant improvement on previous years.

Looked After Children

Overall, outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC) are good. The number of children who are looked after in Flintshire has remained fairly static over the last 4 years, approximately 220 per year however, the number of those of statutory school age has shown an increase; the number of children undergoing an end of key stage assessment however is extremely low making year on year comparison difficult. Pupils undergoing end of key stage assessment in 2017/18 achieved a good level of individual attainment despite in excess of 60% being identified as having SEN.

Table 22: Outcomes for Children who are Looked After

Year	Foundation Phase		Key Stage 2		Key Stage 3		Key Stage 4				
	% FPI	% SEN	% CSI	% SEN	% CSI	% SEN	No. of Pupils	% SEN	% L1	% L2	% L2+
2017/18	100	62.5	61.5	61.5	62.5	75.0	8	62.5	71	29	13
2016/17	63.6	63.6	46.7	73.3	100	58.3	15	66.7	7	0	0
2015/16	50	57.1	36	75.0	100	75.0	9	58.5	7	0	0

Young People within the Youth Justice System – NEET

The Youth Justice Service (YJS) has a rolling cohort figure of around 70-80 young people that they are working with at any one time. Around 40% of these young people are on Statutory Orders from Court or the Police, the majority are working with the service on a pre-court order or on a voluntary, prevention basis. The latest (2011) age 10-17 population figure for Flintshire was 14,711 so at any one time the YJS is working with 0.54% of the population of children and young people age 10-17 in Flintshire.

Whilst the YJS does not have a statutory obligation to provide ETE (Education, Training, and Employment) provision, the service facilitates access to education through assessment and signposting/referral, and will provide cohort information to Education colleagues in order for them to report NEET figures in the cohort.

The YJS monitors those young people who are assessed as not receiving an appropriate level of ETE once they become involved in the criminal justice system. The service does not assess young people in terms of literacy, numeracy or digital competence and therefore this information is not available.

As part of any YJS assessment, young people's education, training and employment needs are assessed. Those assessed as NEET are automatically referred to the YJS Education Officer to explore possible provision and to consult with colleagues in Education. NEETs are monitored on a monthly basis by the YJS Education Panel and YJS Management Team.

Apr – Dec 2018 - 52% of young people who were age 16-18 were offered 16 hours ETE provision.
(Source: CAMMS performance framework)

The YJB National Performance indicator looks at those young people whose Statutory Court Orders have closed in the reporting period and therefore is a much smaller cohort than that reported upon locally. Due to the low numbers, the Youth Justice Board is reconsidering its criteria and is planning to include young people on prevention programmes for future reporting.

The YJS utilise the Junior Attendance Centre to increase accredited outcomes and skills through the Agored framework. Young people undertaking Unpaid Work projects are also encouraged to complete vocational qualifications in a variety of areas – Health and Safety, Construction, First Aid, Basic Skills

etc in order to improve their future employability. In addition, young people are given the opportunity to obtain a Construction Skills Card, as well as taking part in other projects such as Toyota Drive.

The Integrated Youth Provision (IYP) Participation Officer is currently undertaking a project where young people known to the YJS are invited to openly discuss their own experiences with education. This will be presented to the Executive Management Board and it is hoped that this can be used as a blueprint for improving services for this historically difficult to engage cohort of young people.

Early Education Funded Provision for 3 year olds (Early Entitlement)

Over the last three years Flintshire has averaged 847 three year olds accessing early education, known locally as Early Entitlement through a mixed provision of mostly playgroups and private day nurseries. Some schools offer early education as part of their nursery/reception class if there is a lack of non-maintained provision in the area. Pupil level data on standards achieved by three year olds is not collected by the Local Authority. Quality of provision in the non-maintained sector is monitored regularly by the Early Entitlement Advisory Team and a number of partner schools and is quality assured by Estyn and CIW. The Local Authority uses Estyn inspections as the main source of data on standards and progress in funded non-maintained settings.

Over recent years there have been mostly positive outcomes from Estyn inspections of non-maintained settings funded to deliver Foundation Phase education to eligible 3 year-olds. The turnover of staff in the non-maintained sector can make securing consistency of standards and provision challenging and the Local Authority Advisory team often find themselves having to train staff with no prior knowledge about how to meet the additional demands of educational provision rather than childcare. Whilst a very small number of settings have been placed in Estyn Review or Focused Improvement over the last three years, those that require some form of monitoring are generally in the light touch 'Local Authority Monitoring' category and the LA has a very positive track record in supporting these settings to be removed in 12 months.

From 2016 onwards, Advisory Teachers have been required to write pre-inspection reports under the revised Estyn framework, rather than just provide a verbal report to the Inspector. The Advisory Teachers' reports clearly identify a setting's strengths as well as areas for development. Teachers have undertaken this task with integrity and objectivity and the match between their judgement in the reports and the final inspection outcomes match closely. No concerns have been raised by the Inspectors undertaking an individual visit or through the Local Area Inspection visits to the Local Authority that these reports are not accurately reflecting the standards and quality of provision in the non-maintained settings.

2015 - 2016: 8 core inspections resulted in 1 report with aspects of Excellent/Good, 4 others as Good; 1 in LA Monitoring, 2 in Estyn Monitoring, and 1 re-visit resulted in a setting being moved down from Estyn Monitoring into Focused Improvement.

2016 - 2017: 13 inspections and 3 re-visits were undertaken. Of the 13 inspections in 2017, 4 settings were deemed to be 'Good', 6 required Local Authority Monitoring for minor aspects of provision and 3 were judged to require Estyn Monitoring.

Inspection re-visits during 2016-17 (related to the 2015-16 cycle) resulted in 3 settings (2 in 'Estyn Monitoring' category and 1 in 'Focused Improvement' category) being removed from their 'follow-up' category because they had made good progress against the recommendations in their reports. An

additional setting requiring 'Local Authority Monitoring' following an inspection in 2016 was also removed from this category during 2017.

2017-18: 13 settings received a core Estyn inspection and 7 had no follow up required. One setting received Excellent for partnership working. The other 6 settings were placed in Local Authority monitoring, mainly for receiving 'Adequate' judgements for Key Question 2 (Learning Experiences). 6 settings placed under Local Authority monitoring during 2016-17 were successfully removed from follow up in 2017-18. 3 settings placed in a follow-up category during 2015-16 were removed from their Estyn/Focused Improvement category during 2017-18. 3 settings placed under Estyn monitoring during 2016-17 have been removed from follow up (autumn '18, spring '19) following good progress made against recommendations. Three settings placed in Local Authority monitoring during the academic year 2017-18 have also been removed in Spring 2019.

Other specific learner groups identified in the Estyn framework

The numbers of refugee and asylum seekers resettled in Flintshire is extremely low and the children in these family groups have not yet undertaken any end of key stage educational assessments.

In Flintshire, children and families in difficult circumstances have been identified as those suffering from 'Adverse Childhood Experiences' (ACEs) and the work of the recently established Early Help Hub will provide the opportunity to cross reference those children to their educational outputs and monitor their performance.

Performance data on children of service families has not been captured by the Local Authority in the past as there are no military bases within the County. The Council however, has adopted the Armed Forces Covenant and in addition, the Welsh Government (WG) is considering capturing appropriate data from schools using PLASC. This proposal is supported by the Royal British Legion and Supporting Service Children in Education in Wales (SSCE). In addition, as part of their current review of the School Admissions Code, WG have confirmed that consideration will be given to amending the guidance so that the children of families transitioning out of the armed forces are still classed as children of armed forces personnel for a set period, to assist families moving back to Wales. This will then be reflected in the Local Authority's admissions policy and allow the monitoring of this group over time.

The Local Authority expects that School Improvement Advisers will challenge Head Teachers on the performance of pupils who do not meet the expected attainment level. Concerns about the robustness of these processes at school level are discussed with the Local Authority through the regular meetings between the Primary and Secondary Core Leads and the LA Senior Manager for School Improvement.

1.3 Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

Analysis of the inspection outcomes across Flintshire schools over the last three years demonstrate that the majority of schools receive good or excellent judgements on aspects of pupil wellbeing and pupil attitudes to learning. These reports indicate that there is a theme of pupils feeling safe in schools and confident that the school will deal effectively with any issues. In these schools pupil behaviour is noted as good with children and young people being polite and courteous to each other, to staff and to visitors. The majority of reports note that pupils engage very well in lessons, show great pride in their work and are curious, inquisitive and enthusiastic learners, working in a range of learning contexts appropriate to their age and stage of learning.

Attendance

Pupil attendance within the primary sector has remained fairly static however, in 2017/18 the percentage attendance was in excess of the Welsh average for the first time since 2013/14. Attendance across secondary schools has seen a dip to below the Welsh average for the first time in 2016/17 and 2017/18; in line with the national trend, illness is the main reason cited for absence. Girls in both sectors account for the highest percentage attendance although attendance of girls in the secondary sector has dropped below the Welsh average for the first time in 2017/18.

Schools have maintained very low levels of unauthorised absence, with the figure for primary schools sitting at 0.4% (second lowest value) and 0.9% (fifth lowest value) across secondary schools.

Table 23: Flintshire Schools' Attendance in comparison with Welsh Averages

	Attendance (%)				Unauthorised absence (%)			
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
FCC Primary Schools	94.7	94.7	94.8	94.6	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5
Wales Average	94.9	94.9	94.9	94.5	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.3
Best in Wales	95.8	95.7	95.6	95.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3
FCC Secondary Schools	94.2	94.3	93.9	93.7	0.3	0.4	0.8	0.9
Wales Average	93.8	94.2	94.1	93.8	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.6
Best in Wales	94.7	95.0	95.2	94.8	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6

The table below shows the spread of attendance figures across the primary and secondary sectors in 2017/18. This demonstrates that the majority of primary schools have attendance figures in a tighter cluster around or in excess of the Welsh average. Those schools showing lower percentages include the areas with a more transient population. Attendance in all Flintshire secondary schools is above 91%, an improvement on 2016/17 however, the number of schools with attendance in excess of 95% had seen a reduction compared with 2015/16.

Table 24: Spread of attendance figures

Attendance (%)	<90	90.0-90.9	91.0-91.9	92.0-92.9	93.0-93.9	94.0-94.9	95.0-95.9	96.0-96.9	97.0-97.9	98.0-98.9	99.0-100
Primary 2017/18	1	0	0	6	7	21	23	5	1	0	0
Primary 2016/17	1	0	0	2	11	10	30	9	1	0	0
Primary 2015/16	1	0	1	3	6	15	19	17	4	1	0
Secondary 2017/18	0	0	2	1	2	5	1	0	0	0	0
Secondary 2016/17	1	1	1	1	3	5	0	0	0	0	0
Secondary 2015/16	0	0	1	1	1	5	4	0	0	0	0

Whilst levels of unauthorised absence are very low across the county, the percentage of persistent absence, i.e. attendance less than 80% is in both primary and secondary schools is higher than the Welsh averages. Illness accounts for the highest proportion of absences. Despite the broadening of the curriculum offer and development of bespoke packages in the secondary sector, there are a number of pupils who are increasingly finding it difficult to engage, with increasing levels of severe anxiety contributing to this. The Authority has established a multi-agency steering group to oversee and direct its provision around mental health. The initial focus for the group was around self-harm prevention. The brief for the group has now extended and partners are exploring and reviewing a range of strategies under the '5 Ways to Wellbeing' framework to recommend for implementation across schools with a view to supporting an increase in attendance.

Table 25: Persistent Absence

	Primary Schools			Secondary Schools		
	No. of Pupils	% Persistent Absence FCC	% Persistent Absence Wales	No. of Pupils	% Persistent Absence FCC	% Persistent Absence Wales
2017/18	216	11.3	9.2	410	28.0	23.0
2016/17	211	11.5	8.4	366	26.8	22.8
2015/16	215	11.2	8.2	331	24.5	21.9

Exclusions – Permanent and Fixed Term

Flintshire has traditionally had extremely low levels of permanent exclusion in both the primary and secondary sector. The reasons for exclusion are predominantly violence/aggression towards another pupil or adult.

Table 26: Number of Permanent Exclusions from Flintshire Schools

	2014-15	2015-16	2016/17
Primary	1	1	4
Secondary	3	2	8

Flintshire has seen an increase in the level of fixed-term exclusions, specifically in the secondary sector; primary schools have seen a downward trend since 2015/6 with the overall number of exclusions reducing from 240 to 176. The Local Authority focus on reducing the number of exclusions of 6 days or more since 2013 had, in the main, supported an overall reduction which has been sustained with the exception of 2016/17.

Table 27: Fixed-Term Exclusions

Year	Exclusion Type	Number of Exclusions		Rate of Exclusion*
		Primary	Secondary	
2016 - 2017	5 Days or Less	1080		46.3
	Wales	2590	11198	30.6
	Over 5 days	64		2.7
	Wales	148	469	1.4
2015 - 2016	5 Days or Less	838		35.3
	Wales	2810	10110	30.9

2014 - 2015	Over 5 days	44		1.9
	Wales	126	469	1.4
	5 Days or Less	712		30
	Wales	2188	10096	29.9
	Over 5 days	40		1.7
	Wales	138	612	1.7

*Rate per 1000 pupils

Healthy Schools (WNHSS) & Healthy Pre-Schools (HSPSS)

All maintained nursery, primary, secondary, special schools and pupil referral units in Flintshire, in addition to Bryn Tirion Hall School, participate in the Healthy Schools Scheme which equates to 79 settings. This is a very positive reflection of the quality of support for the scheme in Flintshire and the engagement of its schools in the health agenda. Flintshire is consistently achieving above the targets set by Public Health Wales.

As of March 2019 there are 45 settings participating in the Flintshire Healthy Pre -School Scheme, which is at capacity. Settings targeted prioritise those within the lower two fifths of deprivation, as measured by the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation in order to reduce inequalities in health.

Currently 13 schools have achieved the National Quality Award for Healthy Schools and 15 pre-school settings have completed the HSPSS.

Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS): Performance

The following rolling targets from PHW are in place:

Target 1: 95% schools to achieve the Phase 3 award (or higher)

As of March 2019, 96% of Flintshire schools have achieved Phase 3 or higher in their participation of the Healthy Schools Scheme. This equates to 76 schools. This figure remains the same as in 2018 and is above the national target.

Target 2: 10% of schools to achieve the National Quality Award (NQA) Phase 6

As of March 2019, 16% of Flintshire schools have achieved the NQA which equates to 13 schools. This figure has increased by 3 over the year and is above the national target.

Target 3: 20% of schools working towards the NQA (achieved Phase 5)

As of March 2019, 40% of Flintshire schools have achieved Phase 5 and are working towards the NQA, which equates to 32 schools. This figure has increased by 5 over the year and is above the national target.

Healthy & Sustainable Pre Schools Scheme (HSPSS): Performance

HSPSS Target (general): 20–30 settings per local authority should be supported to work toward agreed achievement criteria.

As of March 2019 there are 45 settings registered to participate in the Flintshire Healthy pre-school scheme. This figure has increased by 1 in 12 months and remains above the national target.

HSPSS Target (local): increase the number of settings that complete the HSPSS in full.

3 settings have completed the HSPSS in 18-19, bringing the total to complete the scheme in full to 15 settings; of those, 5 have also been successfully reassessed this year. This has increased the number of settings to complete the scheme from 27% to 33% within 12months.

Obesity Target (General): *Increase in the number of Early Years Settings achieving the Physical Activity/Play and Nutrition and Oral Health benchmarks within the Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Scheme.*

As of March 2019, 80% of settings participating in the scheme (36 settings) have completed the Physical Activity and Active Play criteria. This is an increase of 4% in 12 months. 82% of settings have completed the Nutritional and Oral health criteria, which is an increase of 7% during 18-19.

Outcome 1: Standards and Progress Overall

Areas for ongoing improvement & sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Further improve learner performance across a range of indicators in the secondary sector• Continue to improve performance of EOTAS pupils , learners entitled to FSM and those who are Looked After.• Improve attendance rates and reduce the number of fixed and permanent exclusions• Continue to reduce the number of schools in follow up category and improve the good and excellent judgements by continuing to share effective practice.• Improve the quality of leadership in a very few schools

2.0 Quality of Education Services

2.1 Support for School Improvement

The Local Authority knows its schools very well. There are clear strategies, policies and processes that are well understood and give a clear shape and direction to the service.

The relationship and collaboration between Flintshire and the Regional School Improvement Service (GwE) is very good and similarly, relationships between GwE and schools in Flintshire are very positive. Through this relationship, the Local Authority knows its schools very well and provides them with robust and appropriate challenge, support and intervention. As a result, schools benefit from a diverse regional professional learning offer and bespoke support at individual school and cluster level. This can be evidenced by the improvement dialogue with schools and the strong inspection profile and increased excellence across the sectors.

The Local Authority has benefited from the establishment of a Regional School Improvement Team that has ensured greater consistency in its challenge and support to schools. The strength of the service's revised strategy in using the expertise and experience of service staff and school senior leaders to provide high quality guidance and support to schools has contributed to improved consistency in the quality of school improvement activity within the Local Authority.

Improving performance in Key Stage 4 continuous to be a priority. As a result, each secondary school has an agreed programme of support that helps deliver the identified priorities within a school's improvement plan. The school support plan clearly defines how school improvement resources ensure targeted improvements in key priority areas.

A particular strength of the challenge and support in the Local Authority is the role and influence of the Core Subject Supporting Improvement Advisers in supporting core departments in schools. They work in close collaboration with link School Improvement Advisers and the secondary Core Leads to challenge and support underperforming secondary school departments. The quality of work of the Core Subject Improvement Support Advisers is excellent. They respond sensibly, and often innovatively to the needs of individual schools and provide very clear and beneficial guidance for core subject leaders. This has had a very positive effect on standards in specific schools, in addition to strengthening and ensuring consistency in the quality of planning, learning and teaching. Robust data analysis and wider performance has also led to more effective targeting of resources such as the tiered 'wave' approach adopted in all core subjects at Key Stage 4.

The Authority, in partnership with GwE, has effective procedures to support schools in their self-evaluation and improvement planning. Schools are robustly challenged on the quality of their self-evaluation processes. The impact of this can be seen in the improving leadership profile in Estyn inspections and the reduction in schools categorised as red and an increase in the number of schools categorised yellow and green.

The G6 management information system is used comprehensively by schools in Flintshire. It provides a structure to capture school improvement processes and priorities and collates quantitative evidence of a school's improvement journey. Schools make effective use of the milestones provided in the Curriculum for Wales and Additional Learning needs modules. This allows schools to reflect on their current position with regards to the reform journey and provides clear next steps for their consideration. The system also captures and shares best practice within and between schools. Cluster work is enhanced through sharing of priorities on G6 and dialogue helps capture the level of support required

by schools and collaborations of schools. Schools access LA Professional Learning through the system and can identify links between whole school priorities and professional learning needs.

In partnership with GwE, the Local Authority has taken very positive steps to improve its data-handling system from the Foundation Phase to Key Stage 5. The regional support service has provided support and training for schools to ensure that they use data effectively. This has led to greater consistency in the data considered and the way in which it is used. The primary data tracking system has been identified as good practice in a number of schools and has recently been used as a case study of best practice following an Estyn inspection.

Senior Leaders within the service use a range of data effectively to ensure areas of improvement are identified quickly and addressed robustly through detailed business planning. Data and information is scrutinised more robustly to monitor progress against agreed actions. As a result, data is used much more effectively to challenge and allocate specific support for schools.

Support for school leaders in the Local Authority has improved through access to a range of developmental programmes. The feedback from those who have completed the development programmes is generally very good with nearly all indicating that it has impacted positively on aspects of their work. GwE is working closely with Bangor University on the 'Collaborative Institute for Education Research, Evidence and Impact' (CIEREI) Project to ensure robust evaluation systems for their development programmes; to measure their impact in schools as part of a regional approach. The project contributes to the research and development of improved effective leadership.

Provision and plans to improve standards in the Foundation Phase, literacy and numeracy and digital competency are well developed in the Local Authority. A Foundation Phase support programme, targeting planning, teaching, assessment and leadership is in place. As a result, headteachers, teachers and assistants have a deeper understanding of effective provision and improved standards within the Foundation Phase. The Literacy and Numeracy Supporting Improvement Advisers provide an extensive range of programmes across the Local Authority to support improvement of planning and provision in the primary sector. This has had a positive effect on quality of provision and improving standards especially at higher levels.

The Local Authority has developed a number of effective strategies to support all learners, with additional focus on vulnerable learners such as children who are looked after and learners who are eligible for free school meals. Through reports, officers are able to identify good practice across the Authority in both primary and secondary schools. In April 2018 a sample audit of all secondary and primary schools in FSM family groups 4 and 5 looked at FSM grant spending against Welsh Government framework criteria. The findings of this report has been used to disseminate best practice and to identify areas for development. In light of this, training has been delivered to identified schools in regard to the Designated LAC / PDG Person role.

Local Authority support for the two special schools and PRU provision is very strong. The LA has facilitated an improved and developing dialogue across the special schools catalysing the sharing of best practice, continuing professional development and collaborative working with CEIREI at Bangor University. The Local Authority has been a full and active partner with these initiatives. The Local Authority is highly supportive of the Pupil Portfolio Referral Unit, Plas Derwen, with the facility being highly organised in strategic planning, self-evaluation, monitoring procedures and curriculum provision.

The Local Authority has a strong and improving inspection profile. There is clear evidence to demonstrate that the Authority's support for primary and secondary schools causing concern or who

were placed in an Estyn category, has been a determining factor in accelerating their improvement journey. For the three secondary schools placed in a statutory category, tailored support plans were agreed and progress monitored on a termly basis via an Improvement Board. This led to significant improvements. Of the three secondary schools placed in an Estyn statutory category over the past three years, two have been removed. One school remains in statutory category. Progress has been initially slow but there has been recent improvement. This is due to the increase in the intensity of support and challenge which has also led to personnel changes at senior and middle leadership in this school, thus further accelerating progress. Two schools have been successfully removed from Estyn review during the past two years. One school has recently been placed in Estyn review following a recent inspection.

The very small number of primary schools placed in an Estyn category over the past three years have been removed promptly. Three schools are currently in Estyn review. Effective support is now in place supporting the identified areas of improvement.

The Local Authority exercises effective managerial oversight of schools that are in an amber / red support category or in an Estyn category. This is in the form of meetings between the Senior Manager for School Improvement with Core Leads for Primary and Secondary which update on progress on a fortnightly basis. Where schools are in a statutory category, an Accelerated Improvement Board is established. The Local Authority contributes to the understanding of the schools progress via reports and updates.

The categorisation process is accurate and robust and is supported by a clear and transparent process. This gives schools appropriate support to improve and is reflected in the strong inspection outcomes and the close correlation between Local Authority reports and Estyn findings. There has been an increase in the number of green and yellow schools and a reduction in amber and red schools across the Local Authority.

Feedback from Local Authority Link Inspectors demonstrate that there is a strong correlation between the judgments made in inspections and the pre-inspection and re-inspection reports provided by the LA. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the quality assurance work undertaken and that Flintshire knows its schools well.

There has been a clear focus on improving teaching in Flintshire schools. Many schools have been part of teaching and learning professional learning opportunities such as the regional Shirley Clarke Assessment for Learning project, the OLEVI Outstanding teacher programme and the CLEAR effective pedagogy project. The impact of this focus can be evidenced in the evaluation of practice at school and regional level and through the continued improvement in Inspection Area 3 of the Flintshire Estyn profile (Teaching).

There is a comprehensive Professional Learning offer for all schools in Flintshire and this is enhanced by what is being offered at local level by schools and between schools. The professional learning offer supports school leadership at all levels across the Authority and has been strengthened by a range of strategies. The Local Authority has supported the development of leadership in Flintshire schools on a number of levels. Subscription to the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) and Aspiring Heads course is strong while existing and recently appointed headteachers are very well supported through the Newly Appointed headteacher programme and through the Excellence and Innovation programme.

Primary and Secondary networks and peer-to-peer work has strengthened collaboration and led to a stronger shared understanding of effective practice. The Middle Leadership professional development programmes have been successful in improving the quality of leaders in core subjects, literacy and numeracy and Foundation Phase through development of skills and knowledge. Bespoke approaches have been tailored to meet the requirements of individual schools; coaching programmes for groups and individuals have been delivered in a number of schools and had a clear impact on the work of leaders. Shortages in key personnel have also been supported through the deployment of expertise from neighbouring schools.

Collaborative practice amongst leaders is reinforced through strategic forums, at both headteacher and deputy level. The Local Authority supports strong and effective communication and a mutual sense of common responsibility for the development of responses and actions to local and national challenges. Good practice is shared and local expertise nurtured.

Flintshire schools are well prepared to undertake peer validation work. They are positively engaged in developing various peer engagement models, promoting collaborative working and mutual-accountability. Following consultation with the Local Authority, school leaders have established a set of principles and clearly defined parameters to work collaboratively within. Many Flintshire schools are involved in the development of meaningful peer engagement models through a pilot peer engagement programme.

Schools in Flintshire are generally well prepared for the National Reform Journey. The regional national reform strategy gives clear direction on how GwE works with all local authority schools to ensure a clear and systematic approach to support and reflect on their engagement with all aspects of the reform journey. Schools in Flintshire are well prepared for the new curriculum including work to develop the Digital Competency Framework. Each school cluster has two designated leads to facilitate the change management process and planning, that schools have undertaken when developing the new curriculum and implementing new professional standards.

Flintshire schools are positively engaged with developing themselves as Schools as Learning Organisations. The Local Authority has facilitated SLO questionnaires with pilot schools and, as a result, schools have been able to identify their development needs. Three Flintshire schools have been integral in the development of a community version of the SLO dimensions that will be available and shared nationally.

Flintshire schools have accessed the Small and Rural Schools grant. The Local Authority facilitated a group of small schools to work collaboratively on shared priorities. This facilitation included reviewing and evaluating the impact of their strategies on standards in these schools. The impact was positive and the schools involved valued the opportunity to reflect on their practice and share successful practice with others.

The readiness of schools in preparing for the ALN transformational reform journey is very good. The necessary changes are very well supported by a collaborative cluster model. Schools readiness and progress in these areas are tracked through the regional management information system.

A comprehensive regional and local approach is impacting positively upon the development of the Welsh language across all sectors.

Supporting Improvement Advisers (SIAs) effectively disseminate consistent key messages, including examples of successful practice regarding the National reform agenda with all schools. The National

reform journey is embedded in regional and local authority priorities where SIAs provide thorough and informed support to all clusters in the authority on key aspects of the reform journey.

Welsh Language Advisory Service

The Welsh Advisory Service currently consists of a service manager, 1.6 FTE advisory teachers and a part time administrative assistant. These posts are funded by the Education Improvement Grant (EIG). A full time seconded post for Wrexham and Flintshire to lead the Siarter Iaith in Welsh medium schools is funded regionally.

The primary aim of the Service is to work in partnership with all primary schools within the Authority to raise standards of Welsh. This is carried out via a range of strategies and a targeted approach to achieve the best outcomes for learners and includes the direct training of teachers and teaching assistants through intensive language and methodology course as well as working collaboratively with other key partners e.g. GwE, Canolfan Bedwyr (providers of the Sabbatical courses), Urdd and Coleg Cambria. Members of the team represent the Authority on local, regional and national panels, ensuring that Flintshire schools receive up to date information regarding broader priorities pertaining to the development of Welsh in schools.

The informal use of Welsh in all schools is very much a priority and is delivered by an appointed coordinator for Siarter Iaith and PCAI in Welsh medium primary and secondary schools and a designated person leading and coordinating Cymraeg Campus in English primary schools. The only school in Flintshire and Wrexham schools in 2018 to gain the Gold award for Siarter Iaith was from Flintshire. The other 4 Welsh medium primary schools have achieved their Silver award and have indicated their readiness to be verified for the Gold award during the summer of 2019. All English medium primary schools in Flintshire have embarked on their journey with Cymraeg Campus and 7 schools have gained the Bronze award in 2018/2019.

151 primary teachers or teaching assistants have received training delivered by a member of the team during this academic year. Evaluation forms of the training courses note their effectiveness. Teachers working in English primary schools attending the intensive language and methodology receive post-course support back at school. This is tailored to the needs of each individual attending. 71 other teaching assistants have been involved in consortia-based training. This will lead on to a second phase using a digital platform as a means of delivering language training. A number of support staff have also been involved in projects initiating language training. Funding for the last two forms of training has been sourced regionally.

Flintshire schools have consistently sought opportunities to further their language training through the WG funded Sabbatical courses. Numbers attending from Flintshire have been consistently high on nearly all courses across the North Wales region. The Welsh Advisory Service work closely with the course providers, deliver methodology sessions during the courses and provide support to staff on their return to school.

Members of the team support schools during KS2/KS3 moderation.

One member of the team is designated to work with Welsh medium primary schools should any latecomers arrive at KS2. A programme of intervention is prepared by the Advisory Service and delivered by the school when the need arises. A member of the team also works closely with the Welsh secondary school supporting the 'Trochi' programme for Year 6 learners who transfer from English medium primary school into Welsh medium secondary. Numbers for 2018 opting to receive their secondary education through Welsh showed a positive increase.

The team continually evaluates its work to ensure schools receive a high quality service, refining its methods accordingly, e.g. results from 2018 Welsh language skills survey were used to identify clusters for Teacher Assistant training, plan language training for Headteachers /senior leaders, create working parties of teachers refining curriculum planning for schools and for identifying schools to share good practice.

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and Forum

The Flintshire Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for 2017-2020 was accepted by the Welsh Government in April 2018 and an Implementation Plan adopted by the Forum. The implementation of the WESP is driven and monitored by the Flintshire Welsh Strategic Forum made up of officers, elected members, school representatives and other organisations linked to the development of the Welsh language and Welsh medium education. It is known locally as the WESP Forum. Representatives from Welsh Government regularly attend meetings of the Forum. The Forum is currently chaired by the Leader of Flintshire County Council who is also the Cabinet Member for Education & Youth.

The Forum works very effectively as a multi-agency platform for delivering and monitoring the WESP. All members bring high levels of knowledge and expertise to the Forum which are freely shared to achieve the common vision of promoting Welsh-medium education and the Welsh language. Most members of the Forum sit on one or more of the three sub-committees – Provision, Standards and Workforce. These meet at least once a term to work on their specific targets and then feed back their progress in the following termly Forum meeting. These sub-groups have each produced a highly focused action plan to support the overall WESP.

The Forum is very robust in holding the Local Authority to account in its delivery of the Plan and achieving the targets contained within it. The forum membership is regularly reviewed. Reports on the progress of the WESP are routinely presented to the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

School Governor Support

The Authority is compliant with the statutory duty to provide the regulatory school governor training programme. The wider governor training programme also aims to reflect changing national, regional and local priorities and with appropriate emphasis on key training requirements, such as safeguarding. The Authority provides the mandatory training requirements, including an eLearning programme co-developed by the six North Wales authorities and also commissions statutory training from Governors Cymru. Attendance at and evaluation of the face to face development sessions offered are good. Use of the on-line portal is very good with a rolling programme of 661 governors completing the four statutory courses on-line during the last 4 years. Experienced governors are also commissioned to deliver bespoke development sessions to groups of governors and individual governing bodies.

Regional Authority Governor Support Officers meet termly with GWE leads for Governor Support and there is a regional shared delivery of the mandatory governor training programme. The Authority works with its school improvement partner, GwE, in delivering governor training with GwE's professional learning offer for 2019/21 including development support for school governors specifically around the reform journey and bespoke presentations including *How to be an effective critical friend* and *Estyn Calling (Preparing for Estyn)*. Sharing governor development programmes regionally and the on-line portal provides some cost-resilience in meeting mandatory training requirements and offers governors' choice in accessing mandatory training. No governors have been dismissed in Flintshire for non-compliance with statutory training requirements.

Although the Authority currently has around 1200 governors, it does not seek data from schools to monitor the level of representation of minority or under-represented groups. However, the Authority in seeking to fill its LA governor positions asks ward members/schools to consider nominating from minority or unrepresented groups where a school has identified a specific issue.

The Local Authority supports the termly meeting of the Flintshire Governors Association which provides an effective, regular consultative platform and updates on key national and local issues with over a third of schools regularly represented at the meetings. There is consistent representation by governors on the Schools Budget Forum and the Welsh Education Strategic Forum. The Authority has funded schools the subscription for 2018/19 to the Governors Cymru service which replaces the former Wales Government funded Governors Wales. To support the Governor support Officer role within the Authority, access to Governors Cymru helpline and resources provides an effective additional resource for governors.

2.2 Support for Vulnerable Learners

Flintshire provides a suitable range of services to promote social inclusion and support for learners with ALN through a combination of internal and externally commissioned services and provision. The Local Authority meets its statutory duties well as demonstrated by the improving outcomes for vulnerable learners, low levels of appeal to the SEN Tribunal and the low levels of young people becoming NEET.

Whilst it has been necessary to make reductions to central services in light of the financial climate, the changes undertaken across the Education Portfolio's services have been predicated on the corporate principles of protecting front-line services through the rationalisation of management roles, along with the ability to deliver against the Council's priorities, e.g. *Engagement, Well-Being & Performance of Vulnerable Groups*. The weekly Portfolio senior leadership meetings, bi-monthly manager workshops and targeted focused challenge sessions have further served to inform decision making around the service changes to ensure that the wider Portfolio resources can be targeted effectively to support vulnerable learners.

The delegation of ALN funding previously held centrally to fund 1:1 provision for learners has been distributed to schools to facilitate local decision making around provision. Delegation of the funding has provided schools and parents/carers the opportunity to look at the individual needs of their pupils and to build an appropriate package of support which supports improvement whilst encouraging independence. In response, schools are focused on developing local expertise and provision to meet the needs of those within their school community. As a result of this, the provision varies from school to school, ranging from the establishment of in-house nurture provision, to the commissioning of therapeutic interventions such as play therapy and pet therapy in response to individual need.

The range of training offered through the LA's central services, e.g. Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) training and Touchbase training has supported the development of in-house expertise and provision particularly in relation to nurture provision. A few schools are offering intervention and support in their particular areas of expertise to children and families from other settings. A separate delegated pot provides for access to additional high level individual support where this is required.

Learner voice is developing across the Portfolio and is particularly evident in some areas affecting vulnerable learners. Pupils are becoming more involved in appointments to central services, e.g. the PPRU, counselling service and Progression services. Young people are also offered an interface with Members through the Youth Council and Children's Forum where they can raise matters which are then channeled back to officers. The views of children and young people are an integral part of the statutory SEN process and many services request feedback from pupils and their parents to inform future development. Young people who are at significant risk of, or who have disengaged, are interviewed

on an individual basis to determine the best provision going forward and also to inform how services could be altered to better serve them.

Social Inclusion

In terms of percentage expenditure, the services and provision to support children with a range of behavioural, emotional and social difficulties is comparatively higher than other areas of service under the learning inclusion umbrella. This is in direct response to Council priorities and presenting need. Where possible, services provide individual intervention to pupils however, in many cases, the delivery model now focuses on providing advice, guidance and training. This change in direction helps develop and build capacity across settings and supports the development of self-sustaining schools.

The promotion of good behaviour in schools is key to the work of a number of central services in particular, the Behaviour Support Team, Education Psychology Service and Plas Derwen, the LA's PRU facility. Training (internal and external) is offered and accessed both at individual school level and county wide to develop awareness, skill and empathy. The well-attended Secondary Pastoral Leads Group provides the opportunity for discussion and sharing of effective practice between school staff and officers in relation to this area along with the identification of training needs. A focus for this group this year has been on improving pupil engagement, with information feeding into the 14-19 Network to inform the decision making on the range of alternative provision to be offered.

The Authority has a policy on De-escalation/Physical Intervention with the focus being on de-escalation. Schools record incidents in bound & numbered books. Flintshire has traditionally used the 'Team Teach' approach and training for school-based staff is offered through the secondary specialist school and 348 staff have been trained over the last 3 years. The PRICE approach has recently been introduced as an alternative approach, suited to children and young people with more extreme behaviours and is currently being used in the PPRU and the primary BESD Resource who deliver county-wide training. Schools are supported to identify the most appropriate approach for their school. A review of the Authority's policy is being undertaken through the development of a regional policy as recommended by the Regional Safeguarding Board.

Flintshire is increasing its focus on supporting families affected by imprisonment. Over 30 members of staff from various settings have completed the 'Hidden Sentence - supporting children with an imprisoned family member'. Training has been delivered by Barnados and a working group has been established to disseminate good practice across services and to increase awareness and support for schools. A member of the Behaviour Support Team leads on this initiative and sits on the multi-agency Programme Steering Group for Families Affected by Imprisonment.

Education Welfare Service

Flintshire has retained a relatively large Education Welfare Service (EWS) to support its focus on the welfare of learners. These officers are based within secondary schools and linked to school clusters, supporting the team to develop productive working relationships with schools, pupils and families which is particularly important at times of transition. Education Welfare Officers (EWO) provide a challenge to schools on pupil attendance through regular pastoral meetings, register checks and attendance at the termly school-based multi-agency Youth Engagement Progression Framework (YEPF) meetings.

Schools are challenged to improve their internal processes around attendance and the majority now have internal staff who provide an immediate response and target a reduction in the non-persistent absenteeism. Schools are encouraged to make referrals to the EWS if attendance drops to 85% or below, following which the EWO will work in partnership with the school and other relevant agencies to improve attendance for that individual pupil.

The input from the service has helped Flintshire schools to maintain the comparatively low levels of unauthorised absence. Illness accounts for the majority of authorised absences across Flintshire schools with factors such as mental health increasing in prominence. Where appropriate, the LA uses its powers in terms of issuing Fixed Penalty Notices and prosecutions to improve the attendance of individual pupils. In 2017/18, there were 6 prosecutions, resulting in 3 fines, 2 Parenting Orders and 1 Conditional Discharge.

The Education Welfare Service along with other key services such as Admissions, actively engage with queries from other authorities to help find children missing in education. Internal systems to support the identification of Flintshire children missing from education have been reviewed to ensure they are robust and a provision base has been established under the umbrella of Plas Derwen to allocate to pupils whilst alternative provision is implemented. Monitoring of the pupils on this provision list is undertaken by key operational leads and senior Inclusion service managers through the fortnightly EOTAS panel. This ensures that concerns can be flagged and escalated appropriately.

Flintshire engages with a project with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs to improve the procedures for tracking and identifying children missing in education.

Managed Moves

The Authority revised its policy on Managed Moves in 2016/17, consulting with Headteachers through the Federation Meetings. The process is used predominantly in the secondary sector although there have been successful moves within the primary sector. During the year 2017/18 there were 23 managed moves, 70% of which resulted in a successful transfer to a new school. Of the unsuccessful moves, 3 pupils went on to transfer to alternative schools, 2 returned to their original school and 2 pupils entered the PPRU.

The Authority contributed towards the Estyn thematic review of Managed Moves in October 2017 which identified a number of positive aspects of the practice being undertaken. During the interviews, the transfer of funding as part of a managed move was identified as a key barrier to the successful implementation of the process. In response, the LA undertook consultation with schools and it has now been agreed through the Schools' Budget Forum that money will transfer for successful managed moves; this will be implemented from April 2019.

Elective Home Education

The designated officer with responsibility for Elective Home Education (EHE) provides information and advice to parents who wish their child to be educated at home. An information pack is circulated and annual visits are undertaken as part of the monitoring process. Officers work closely with colleagues across Social Services as required where safeguarding is deemed to be a concern; EHE is now a standing item at the joint Education and Social Services Portfolio meetings to ensure any issues are raised and addressed. In line with other authorities, Flintshire has seen an increase in the numbers with 91 children now being identified as EHE in January 2018 compared to 72 in 2016. Officers across the Education & Youth Portfolio work in collaboration with colleagues in Social Services to challenge and support a reintegration back into school where this is deemed in the best interests of the children; 13 children returned to school education in 2017/18. The Local Authority lead for EHE is actively engaging in the national meetings and is working in collaboration with other regional leads to develop a shared coordinated approach across North Wales.

Young Person's Counselling Service

The Young Person's Counselling Service is an integral part of the Authority's support mechanism to prevent young people from becoming vulnerable. All secondary schools, including the specialist school and Plas Derwen are allocated designated counsellor time with referrals also being taken for Year 6 pupils. The list of pupils wishing to engage with the service is increasing and where possible/appropriate, the use of the counselling service within TRAC is utilised to offset the waiting list. Schools have also been encouraged to take advantage of other funding sources, e.g. LAC PDG, delegated ALN funding etc to broaden the range of pastoral systems so that counselling is directed at those who require this specific intervention.

All young people engaging with the Counselling service undertake an initial assessment (YP-Core) and this is repeated at the end of the intervention to measure impact. Table 28 below shows that on average, those that did engage tended to see a positive outcome following the sessions. The most common reason for accessing the service has remained consistent and is family related matters. Increasingly, anxiety is overtaking the previously more prevalent reasons such as anger/behaviour. This information has fed into the Emotional Wellbeing Steering Group. The Counselling service is also providing support and advice around exam stress and anxiety to schools and young people to help alleviate this area of pressure.

Levels of self-referral to the service are low with the majority of referrals coming from school-based staff or through the multi-agency Youth Engagement Progression Framework (YEPF) meetings. Despite this, young people engage positively in the process with the majority achieving a reduction in their self-assessment scores following completion of the intervention.

Table 28: Impact of the Young Person's Counselling Service

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
No of Clients	397	401	351	345
Male YP Core Average Initial Value	15.10	14.88	14.70	17
Male YP Core Average Exit Value	7.60	7.58	6.70	7.15
Female YP Core Average Initial Value	19.50	18.33	16.50	17.3
Female YP Core Average Exit Value	11.80	11.09	8.10	7.59
% Self-Referral	14%	10%	12%	9%

Wellbeing

The Local Authority is committed to supporting the wellbeing of children and young people, school staff and officers. Data from Estyn inspections of Flintshire schools demonstrates the positive impact that schools are having on the areas of wellbeing, care and support. A range of support is available through the LA for staff and officers under the Care First Programme. In 2018/19 Flintshire have adopted the '5 Ways to Wellbeing' approach in partnership with Healthy Schools and CAMHS. Following a successful pilot, 45 schools have attended the 5 Ways to Wellbeing training held in March 2019, with a view to implementing the programme.

One of the Local Authority's priorities has been to raise awareness across schools of pupils who may be experiencing relationship trauma, particularly in relation to attachment. The Education Psychology Service have facilitated Touchbase Training to build capacity of staff in schools. Following the launch in 2015-16, schools wishing to further develop their practice in this area have continued to meet with Education Psychologists and Behaviour Support Teachers to review and share effective practice. To date, 14 practitioners have undertaken the Attachment Lead in Schools Training: *Understanding how to support adopted, fostered and troubled pupils to settle and learn*, accredited by University of Brighton.

Feedback from the practitioners indicate that attachment aware and trauma informed practice is evident in the schools that undertook the training. Sufficient capacity and resources (human and monetary) have been cited as barriers to full implementation. In response to this, the LA has worked with GwE lead officers to explore the use of Pupil Development Grant across settings to support the implementation of 'nurture' provision; Plas Derwen is currently trialling a pilot project on the Schools' Nurturing Programme in collaboration with 2 high schools. The outcome of this will be used to inform future practice.

TRAC/ADTRAC

Flintshire works effectively in partnership with Wrexham County Borough Council to deliver the European Social Funded projects TRAC and ADTRAC. These target young people at risk of disengagement or those post-16 who are no longer engaging. These projects are enhanced by the work of the Engagement Progression Coordinator (EPC) who has developed effective links with local third sector providers. Through the termly school-based Youth Engagement Progression (YEPF) meetings, referrals to TRAC are considered and the range of alternative provision is discussed. Analysis of data to date since the start of the project in 2016 shows that of the 360 pupils who have been allocated intervention via the service, 163 have been exited with 40% now having a reduced risk level of becoming NEET as measured by progress on the Learner Profiling Tool.

Plas Derwen (PPRU)

The Portfolio Pupil Referral Unit (PPRU), collectively known as Plas Derwen, offers a range of short term and longer term provision to pupils with behaviour, social and emotional difficulties through provision across its 5 centres and also home tuition. In response to the outcome of inspection in 2015, a restructure of the provision was implemented and completed in 2017/18. This has improved the strategic approach to managing the PPRU as a single organisation (Recommendation 5), and also the rationalisation of resources to support the development of its preventative outreach services. The management of the LA's Behaviour Support Service was also placed under the PPRU at this time to facilitate a coordinated approach.

The co-location of the provision was identified as a requirement alongside the staffing restructure and given the Council's priority for supporting vulnerable learners, plans for a potential new build for Plas Derwen was included within the LA's 21st Century Strategic Outline Plan for Band B funding. A feasibility study was completed in 2018 on the Queensferry Campus to support a temporary co-location of 3 of the 5 centres however, given the positive intervention rates offered by WG for PRUs, the Council has taken the decision to prioritise the new build and work is underway to progress to the design stage.

Through its 5 centres, Plas Derwen offers a range of short and longer term provision, having in the range of 80 pupils accessing its provision. There has been a noticeable increase in the number of pupils with social and emotional difficulties across KS3 and KS4 and strong links have been established with services such as CAMHS and Action for Children to provide a suitable level of intervention to pupils and their families. As outlined in Section 1.2, 67% of individuals leaving Plas Derwen have successfully accessed an appropriate learning pathway post 16 demonstrating the success of the provision in securing suitable accreditation and engagement for a cohort of pupils with complex needs. Of the remaining 6 individuals, 4 engaged with the LA's post 16 support services to further develop their ability to engage in a positive outcome, whilst 2 were identified as being NEET.

Education Other Than At School (EOTAS)

The Local Authority has worked with schools to secure a reduction in the number of learners who are EOTAS. The majority of placements are fulfilled via the PPRU. The LA commissions additional provision for a small number of pupils who require a more bespoke or specialist provision. Requests

for independent school placements are made to the multi-agency Joint Commissioning Panel. Officers undergo due diligence prior to naming a provision, and once placed, the placement is monitored by the relevant officers and also through the Panel. Placements/provision has been ceased where this has not been deemed effective. Transition planning is undertaken at key points in a pupil's academic career. Currently there are 9 Year 11 pupils accessing non-Flintshire specialist provision, 4 of which due to their significant and complex needs, will continue to access their post 16 education through their existing provision. There are secure plans in place to support the remaining pupils to re-engage with post compulsory education through the local FE providers.

Flintshire is experiencing an increase in the number of young people who are struggling to engage with education, particularly at Key Stage 4. Officers are working with schools and Plas Derwen to build bespoke packages of intervention to maintain the levels of engagement in the local school where possible. These issues are discussed at the LA's 14-19 Network meeting and there has been consensus around the need to prioritise funding to support this particular group of individuals. Officers are working with local providers to commission a menu of more flexible provision. A directory of providers has been developed and shared with schools to facilitate access. In March 2019 an event was held providing schools and officers with the opportunity to explore the provision on offer by 30+ local providers.

The Table below provides a summary of the outcomes achieved by the Key Stage 4 pupils who accessed alternative education provision.

Table 29: Outcomes for Pupils accessing Alternative Education programmes (2017/18)

Provider	No. of Starters	Overall Attendance Rates	Course Completion Rate	% Completers Achieving Qualification
Coleg Cambria	61	70%	64%	93%
North Wales Training (NWT)	11	69%	55%	100%
Motivational Preparation College for Training (MPTC)	26	75%	77%	100%

The programme on offer was revised following analysis of the data for 2016/17 where there had been significant drop out of the Hair and Beauty course. This year's data was impacted on negatively by the dropout rates for the Land Based (Horses) course. It became clear that the pupils opting to study the course hadn't fully appreciated the full range of activity required for the qualification. Other courses such as Forest School were also removed for this academic year given the poor level of engagement in the previous year. Officers are working with schools to further broaden the range of provision available for this particular cohort.

The Authority provides support to young people who have disengaged from school through the 14-19 Personal Support service. The intervention offered has supported young people aged between 16 and 18 has enabled increasing numbers to re-engage with a range of outcomes (education, employment or training) as outlined in the table below.

Table 30: Outcomes following Intervention through the Personal Support Service

	Number of young people	% engaged in EET	% NEET	% Unable to Engage	% Moved Out of Area
2017/18	46	60	15	18	7
2016/17	39	56	21	18	5
2014/15	42	40	24	29	7

The European Social Funded project ADTRAC EAST provides additional intervention with a particular focus on those individuals with mental health difficulties. The project is jointly commissioned by Flintshire and Wrexham and is exceeding its target number of participants with 118 being engaged to date, 65 of which have re-engaged in education, employment or training.

The breadth and range of the curriculum offer, alongside intervention from services such as the Personal Support Service and ADTRAC has served to ensure that the LA has maintained low levels of year 11 pupils who become NEET as evidenced by data in table 12 in Section 1.2.

The LA has strengthened its monitoring of pupils who are accessing alternative bespoke provision and/or home tuition through the implementation of an EOTAS Panel. The membership consists of senior Inclusion managers and operational officers including Youth Justice Service representation. The Panel meets fortnightly to monitor and review the provision in place and to escalate situations where there are potential safeguarding concerns.

Support for Children & Young People with ALN

The Local Authority meets its statutory duties in relation to providing support for children and young people with additional learning needs from 0 to 19. All schools implement the graduated response outlined in the SEN Code of Practice for Wales. The LA hosts an ALN Co-Ordinators Forum which is well attended and provides a valuable opportunity for information sharing, discussion and networking. These were previously separated into primary and secondary events however, in 2017 the decision was taken to merge the meetings into one and this has proved positive in terms of awareness raising across the sectors and supporting the development of the ALN transformation clusters.

The effective partnership working with agencies such as health, social services and other pre-school services ensures that children with SEN are identified in a timely manner ahead of their transition into educational provision. The Pre-school Moderation Panel meets on a termly basis to consider the individual needs of these pupils and ensures that appropriate actions/interventions are in place. In the region of 60 children per year are discussed and a range of interventions implemented to support their effective transition into school.

Flintshire maintains a team of 3 ALN officers who provide advice and guidance to schools and parents as part of the statutory process. Each of the officers have cluster groups of schools and follow the pupils from entry into primary school, transition to secondary and on into post 16. This ensures that they develop a greater awareness of the child's need and build effective relationship with the educational setting and the parents/carers as evidenced by the very low level of appeals to SENTW. All decisions around the statutory assessment process are made through the LA's multi-disciplinary Moderation Panel. School representatives are encouraged to attend the panel to gain greater awareness of the process and also contribute to the decision making. There has been agreement recently through the Primary Headteacher Federation that there will be regular representation on the panel by Primary headteachers to further support this.

Alongside their ALN responsibilities, each officer has an additional area of specialism, i.e. pre-school, Autism and literacy/numeracy. From September 2018, a Senior Learning Adviser post for ALN has been introduced into the service structure with the post holder having lead responsibility for the ALN Transformation alongside the implementation of the existing system.

Statements

Flintshire has an excellent track record of completing the statutory assessment process within the permissible timescales and is consistently above the Welsh averages, significantly so where the process has permissible exceptions.

Table 31: Statutory Assessment Completion Rates (%)

	Completion within 26 weeks without exceptions		Completion within 26 weeks with Exceptions	
	FCC	Wales Average	FCC	Wales Average
2016/17	100	95.4	96.3	77.4
2015/16	98.6	94.5	89.7	68.1
2014/15	100	95.6	87.7	64.5

The LA has experienced a significant increase in the number of requests for statutory assessment (175 in 2017/18 compared to 120 in 2016/17) and subsequent issuing of Statements of SEN (increase from 95 to 136 in 2017/18). This is in response to an increase in the level number of pupils experiencing significant SEN across Flintshire schools along with the impact of the proposed changes to ALN systems across Wales.

The significant increase has necessitated a change in the practice of the ALN Team; officers have prioritised their attendance at the Annual Reviews of children and young people in key transition years, i.e. 2, 6, 9, 11, and Interim Reviews of pupils experiencing difficulties within their placements. Officers also prioritise attendance at reviews for pupils attending educational settings outside of Flintshire. Annual review documentation is scrutinised to ensure learners are making progress towards their Statement objectives. Officers share an understanding of both the need to support and challenge schools regarding their practice.

Special Educational Needs Tribunal Wales (SENTW)

The number of appeals to the SEN Tribunal for Wales remains consistently low; 2 in 2015/16, 1 in 2016/17 and 3 in 2017/18 demonstrating the positive impact of the LA's partnership working with parents, pupils, schools and other professionals and its ongoing commitment to secure positive outcomes for learners with significant SEN. Of the 3 appeals in 2017/18, 1 was withdrawn by the parent following further engagement and negotiation, 1 was found in favour of the LA with the third being upheld in favour of the parent. The LA implemented the recommendations from this judgement within the specified timescales to reduce any further anxiety for the parent and child.

Commissioning arrangements to provide independent advice and guidance to parents of pupils with SEN are strong. The LA's Parent Partnership Service is commissioned and delivered through the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) which facilitates local access to a holistic approach to support for parents and carers. In 2017/18, the service responded to 230 referrals, with the cumulative total for the last 3 years being in the region of 550 referrals. The support and guidance offered through the Parent Partnership service has supported the LA to maintain its low levels of tribunal appeals. CAB personnel regularly attend ALNCo Forum meetings and have also been invited to Portfolio Workshops where relevant to ensure they are up to date with the LA's ALN strategy. Along with the other North Wales authorities, Flintshire commissions a dispute resolution service through Snap Cymru; this has only been requested/utilised on 1 occasion over the past 4 years.

Education Psychology Service

The Education Psychology Service has reviewed its delivery model and operates a consultation model in the primary sector with a time-allocation model for secondary schools. A number of officers have allocated specialisms, e.g. BESD, Early Years, LAC and Parenting to help drive forward the work of the LA in these particular areas.

The increase in number of requests for statutory assessment has resulted in an increase in Appendix D's to be completed. Projects such as ELSA training have also been prioritised in response to the presenting needs. Following an initial pilot, a second cohort has been trained this year and the feedback to date has been extremely positive.

An extension of the Education Psychology Service is the Autism Outreach Service. These officers provide valuable advice and support to pupils, families and schools with a total of 64 pupils accessed this intervention in 2017/18. This intervention has proved successful in supporting individuals with ASD to maintain their mainstream placements.

CLASS

An effective partnership arrangement exists between the LA's language and communication service (CLASS) and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) speech & language therapists. The collaboration combines the specialist professional health knowledge with educational experience offering schools and individuals timely and effective intervention. In 2017/18, the service worked with 51 individuals on rolling programmes. Of these, 23 were exited from the provision, 12 of which were as a result of the good progress made, with the remainder either going on to access specialist language Resource-base provision or being signposted to services targeting social communication difficulties. The effective partnership delivery model has been recognised nationally with the service manager being requested to speak at conferences and provide advice to other LA services. This joint partnership is a particular strength of the service.

Support for English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Gypsy Travellers

The significant increase in the number of pupils with EAL has led to the need for regular service model review. Of the 1201 pupils with EAL in 2017/18, 652 were assessed as being WG stage A (New to English) or B (Early Acquisition). These individuals were supported to achieve the positive outcomes outlined in section 1.2 through a mix of advice and guidance for staff or individual engagement from the EAL team or Language Development Assistants.

Building capacity across schools is recognised as an important part of the LA's role. Examination of Foundation Phase outcomes alongside the increasing number of EAL has led to the regular training on language acquisition, targeted at early years' settings and Foundation Phase settings. To date, this training has been delivered to all Flintshire Early Entitlement settings and 106 members of staff across 46 Flintshire schools. Training reviews have indicated a greater awareness and understanding of language acquisition, development and strategies to support those pupils with difficulties. Feedback from primary headteachers is that this is an effective and much valued service and has contributed to the positive outcomes achieved by Foundation Phase pupils.

The nature of the Traveller community within Flintshire has changed over the last few years with the population becoming far more transient. In 2017/18, the number of pupils on the Traveller Education Service Caseload increased to 153; this is usually in the region of 120. Of the 153, 22% were completely new to the authority, approximately 15% left during the academic year and a significant number travelled in and out, and were in the area for less than half of the school year.

Ensuring children meet their potential within the school system can be challenging and it has been necessary for the Traveller Service to seek alternative methods of engagement and support for schools and pupils. These have included a range of bespoke timetables, alternative curriculum opportunities, Youth Group projects, individually targeted interventions such as Unearthing Boxes and 'Be Smart, Be Cool, Be Positive'. A pilot nurture group is also being implemented in a school with a high percentage of Traveller children. Pupils who accessed these interventions and had attendance rates in excess of 50% tended to make good progress as demonstrated in section 1.2.

Flintshire contributed to the recently published Estyn thematic review on *Provision for secondary school-aged Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils*. The LA is currently reviewing its procedures against the recommendations however, the following example of Flintshire's effective practice was included within the document:

One local authority set up a 'Young People's Council', which includes GRT pupils to operate alongside local councillors to ensure that young people have a voice within the decision-making processes. Additional work with the Children's Commissioner has also resulted in one of the GRT pupils becoming a Community Ambassador. This has helped to ensure that GRT pupils feel valued and that their opinions are considered.

Support for raising the educational achievement of Looked After Children

Good links exist between the Education & Youth and Social Service Portfolios in relation to pupils who are 'looked after'. The LAC Education Coordinator role sits within the Education portfolio and the Integrated Youth Provision (IYP) hosts a joint post between Children's Services and IYP which has a focus on LAC young people. Joint meetings are held regularly and the cross membership of Chief Officers at Portfolio Programme Boards supports greater awareness and joint working. The Authority has an active Children's Forum which includes representation from Members, Officers, and Head Teachers and importantly, looked after children. This provides an opportunity for issues to be regularly raised and considered. Officers also work closely with schools and GwE to identify and source appropriate provision/intervention for looked after children. The LAC Education Steering group comprises of cross service representation along with school representatives and has the function of scrutinizing the LAC PDG expenditure, to inform the LA of the local issues and to identify training needs. Information from this group led to the decision to purchase on-line Boxall licenses for all schools to support the identification of need and the development of suitable interventions for LAC.

Flintshire Members have recently agreed for a cross-portfolio project to audit and review the processes and provision which lead to looked after children having to access their care/education in non-Flintshire provision to see where improvements can be made. The Integrated Youth Provision Participation Team engage the cohort in the Flintshire County Council Youth Council and enable the young persons' voice to be considered.

Sensory Service

Flintshire hosts a sub-regional sensory service offering support for children and young people with a visual or hearing impairment. The service is commissioned by Wrexham and Denbighshire and officers work effectively with health professionals across North Wales and across the border into England and schools to secure positive outcomes for pupils.

The implementation of the sub-regional service has been effective in supporting the development of expertise across this specialist area; since 2017, 4 members of staff have been appointed without the mandatory qualifications due to the lack of a suitably experienced recruitment pool. This option was only viable due to the support and expertise available across the existing members of the service and

2 officers to date have successfully completed their training, with 1 being asked to publish an article on their work. Other benefits of the regional approach include the ability to maintain a level of service across the caseload during staff absence and the ability to recycle equipment across the 3 authorities.

The service model has been adapted this year in response to the presenting pupil needs. There was a noticeable increase in the number of pupils with a hearing impairment and the retirement of the existing manager provided the opportunity to increase capacity in that branch of the service. The service now supports approximately 500 children with either a hearing or visual impairment across the 3 counties. The LA has also been approached recently by Conwy County Council, requesting that the service is extended to cover their schools and this has been agreed by Flintshire's Chief Officer Team.

Specialist Provision

The Local Authority maintains a range of specialist provision to support pupils with ALN across both primary and secondary sectors comprising of mainstream Resource-based provision and specialist schools. Along with their provision for pupils, the settings also offer advice, support and training to other schools on a range of matters to do with ALN. In the last two years, both specialist schools have been inspected, and judges to be providing highly effective provision. The sector has been requested to provide case studies of best practice, currently available on the Estyn website.

A collaborative multi-agency approach is used for the commissioning of non-Flintshire specialist maintained provision and independent specialist placements. All education-only placements are considered firstly by the authority's Moderation Panel at which a recommendation to explore external specialist provision may be issued. Representatives from other agencies, i.e. Health and Social Services are engaged in multi-disciplinary meetings to determine the individual's needs and the type of provision needed. An external review of the Authority's processes around joint commissioning was undertaken in 2015 by the company Red Quadrant and this judged the Joint Commissioning Panel processes to be robust. Since then, the engagement of the LA's Brokerage Service as part of the process has resulted in a further improvement in commissioning and quality assurance processes.

The number of pupils accessing non-Flintshire provision day placements has increased from 61 in 2014/15 to 86 in 2017/18. A significant proportion of these access their provision through the regional Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) specialist maintained school, Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn in Denbighshire. Flintshire also commissioned a range of specialist independent placements to meet the needs of learners with highly challenging and complex needs.

A cross-portfolio project is underway, focused on identifying the reasons for accessing 'out of county' placements with a view to exploring the development of in-house provision to respond effectively to need where appropriate.

ALN Transformation

The Local Authority has been actively involved in the reform process in response to the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018. Flintshire has robust plans to support the implementation of the ALN reforms, working effectively with local authorities across the North to ensure a timely and smooth transition to the new system. Flintshire will lead regionally on many aspects of the transformation including supporting the post 16 agenda and dispute resolution. The joint working with local authorities across the North to support vulnerable learners is a significant strength of the service.

Flintshire officers have contributed to pilot projects on Quality Assurance/Provision Mapping, Person-Centred Planning (PCP) and facilitating/enhancing the role of the ALNCo/SENCo. There are four schools nominated as 'beacon' schools across the County who act as PCP champions and centres of

excellence to provide support and advice. Initial training on PCP was provided to schools and key officers between 2014 and 2016; this foundation is subsequently being built upon through local and regional training. Information on the duties presented by the Act has been shared with headteachers through the Federations and to the Education and Youth Overview and Scrutiny Committee to raise the awareness of elected members.

The LA has designated a lead officer to support the ALN Transformation process and schools have been arranged into clusters to support their information sharing and skill development ahead of the implementation date. Both the LA and schools are in the process of reviewing their progress to date, with the information received so far indicating that both are making headway.

Flintshire along with the other 5 LAs are committed to supporting a regional approach to the implementation of the Act. Currently, Flintshire officers chair both the regional strategic group (Senior Manager – Inclusion & Progression) and operational group (Senior Learning Adviser – ALN).

2.3 Other Education Support Services

Funded Part Time Early Years Provision

Flintshire has a long tradition of supporting early years' education and currently has 77 settings registered to deliver part time, early education for three year olds – 28 playgroups, 21 day nurseries and 28 schools. Provision is for 10 hours of funded education per week. Flintshire has always endeavoured to maintain high levels of teacher advisory support for these funded settings as per the original terms and conditions of the Foundation Phase Grant. A central team of 4.2 fte teachers and 2 specialist learning assistants work across the settings to provide targeted role modelling of teaching, to develop quality learning environments and support setting staff to produce robust self-evaluation reports and improvement action plans as required by the Estyn framework.

The core team is also supported in this delivery by a number of early years' teachers in schools, funded by the LA, where the local playgroup is the main feeder into the school nursery class. Initially developed as a strategy to maintain delivery in the face of reducing budgets and recruitment restrictions, there have been other intended benefits of this approach such as improved transition arrangements for pupils and sharing of best practice. However, the school based teachers have acknowledged their reliance on the core team who are real experts in provision for 3 year olds in the non-maintained sector. All support teachers produce pre-inspection reports on settings and assist with post-inspection action plans. Where settings require follow up after an inspection, particularly in the more significant categories, then the level of support is increased.

With the removal of the grant conditions to provide '10%' teacher time and reducing central resources, the Authority endeavours to maintain appropriate levels of support to funded settings to ensure high quality standards of provision and improve the number of settings being judged as Good or Excellent by Estyn.

Playgroups and Day Nurseries are increasingly reporting concerns about their long term sustainability in the current financial climate and the level of funding provided by the Local Authority to provide early education and in the last twelve months, 7 number of settings have deregistered from the scheme. However, the Local Authority still has sufficient capacity to deliver the number of early education places required. As an early implementer of the Welsh Government's 30 hour Free Childcare Offer, many settings have registered as joint providers so this additional funding provides some mitigation in the sector. The Welsh Government has acknowledged the pressure on settings to maintain a combined delivery of early years' education and childcare with a difference in funding rates so is using Flintshire

as a pilot authority and providing additional funding to equalise the rates of payment to measure the impact on protecting educational provision within the 30 hour offer. This began in January 2019 and will subject to review.

Flintshire extended the number of Welsh medium Early Entitlement providers from five to seven in recent years, although one group has recently been closed, and continues to work closely with Mudiad Meithrin to develop new provision in a key geographical location in the county where there is not yet local provision. There is currently sufficient capacity to deliver Welsh medium early years' education but the aim is to increase this as a stepping stone to more children accessing their full time education in a Welsh medium school and support the WG target of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. A new Cylch developed by Mudiad Meithrin is now ready to open in May 2019 in Buckley and this is part of a longer term strategy through the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and 21st Century Schools Band B programme to create Welsh medium primary school provision in the Buckley area.

Free Childcare Offer – Early Implementer

Flintshire is one of the Early Implementer authorities in Wales, selected in 2016, to work with 6 other authorities and Welsh Government to develop and test the childcare offer. The aim of the 30 hour childcare offer is to mitigate against the effects of poverty on outcomes for children and reduce inequalities. The provision of high-quality early education and childcare is central to the Welsh Government's 'Building a Brighter Future', the 10 year plan which sets out the Government's commitment to improve the life chances and outcomes of all children in Wales. The Welsh Government has committed to offering working parents and registered guardians of three and four year olds in Wales 30 hours of government-funded childcare and early education for 48 weeks of the year.

Regular monitoring by Welsh Government officials has identified Flintshire's approach to the roll out of the Childcare Offer as highly effective and it is now delivered right across the Authority. The method of delivery of the offer and the IT systems developed by Flintshire staff to support the offer have been acknowledged by Welsh Government as exemplary models for other local authorities to follow when they come onto the scheme.

Flintshire now manages the Childcare Offer process for Denbighshire and Wrexham. At March 2019 the numbers of children in Flintshire accessing the Childcare Offer is 1249 across 280 registered settings, including 40 over the border in England. The highly effective joint partnership between a number of key partners e.g. Social Services Early Years & Parenting Team, Childcare Development Team, Early Entitlement Team, Family Information Service, Wales Pre-School Playgroup Association, Mudiad Meithrin, National Day Nurseries Association and PACEY (Childminders) has been integral to the success of the pilot and is an excellent example of partnership working.

Integrated Youth Provision

Provision for young people in Flintshire is delivered through an innovative and integrated model combining the work of the Youth Service and the Youth Justice Service and enhanced collaboration between providers across statutory and voluntary services, utilising various streams of grant funding e.g. Youth Justice Grant, Youth Support Grant and Families First alongside core funding. Alongside a universal service offer of dedicated youth centre provision, the Integrated Youth Provision also offers commissioned projects. These include Young Carers, URDD bilingual provision, Breathing Space Wellbeing (based in Mold Alun High School) and specialist disability provision and targeted work for prevention with Theatre Clwyd Cymru. This mixed menu offers the best opportunity to be reactive to current needs of young people. The Integrated Youth Provision also prioritises young people evidencing at least two Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and deliver with an ACE informed trauma

approach. These services have a very positive impact on the health and wellbeing of young people in the county and contribute significantly to keeping them safe.

The Youth Justice Service has ensured that its 3 year Youth Justice Plan is committed to the following priorities;

- Increasing the number of young people in Education, Training and Employment (ETE)
- Increase the range of ETE opportunities for children and young people
- Equipping the workforce with trauma informed approaches and restorative justice solutions.

All young people involved within the YJS undergo a comprehensive holistic assessment which assesses their likelihood of re-offending, risk of serious harm to others in addition to their safety and wellbeing needs. This also includes issues and concerns relating to education, training and employment, physical health and emotional and mental health.

The YJS has an ETE Panel and a referral process which identifies young people not in receipt of their full ETE entitlement. YJS Case Managers and Education Officers develop Individual Learning Plans and explore alternative provisions to improve ETE attendance. The YJS continues to utilise the Junior Attendance Centre to increase accredited outcomes and skills through the Agored framework. Young people undertaking Unpaid Work projects are also encouraged to complete vocational qualifications in a variety of areas – Health and Safety, Construction, First Aid, Basic Skills etc. in order to improve their future employability. In addition, young people are given the opportunity to obtain a Construction Skills Card, as well as taking part in other projects such as Toyota Drive.

In one secondary school the Outdoor Education worker has been delivering sessions developing skills through outdoor education linked to team work and communication resulting in ASDAN accreditation. These learners have received additional support in basic personal skills. Pupils from the PPRU are also given opportunities to develop team work and listening skills through outdoor learning opportunities.

The YJS reports ETE performance to the Youth Justice Board and local performance frameworks on a quarterly basis. The KPIs are a measure of the education provision a young person is offered and engages in through the lifetime of the Order. If a young person is not being offered appropriate provision, the Education Coordinator seconded into the YJS will liaise with the Education Team to improve provision, and then the YJS case manager will support the young person to ensure that their engagement is maintained.

The YJS has committed to training staff in restorative justice conferencing and the trauma recovery model whilst forging links with schools to provide peer support to staff in utilising restorative justice solutions as part of their disciplinary policy.

The YJS has trained its work force in the Enhanced Case Management Approach which utilises and is informed by the Trauma Recovery Model to assist young people in making positive outcomes and desisting from offending. The approach is supported by a trained Clinical Psychologist.

The five young people Flintshire YJS worked with on the ECM pilot brought with them a total of 92 offences committed over a two year period prior to the pilot. Following the implementation of the ECM pilot the same cohort were responsible for committing 4 offences (including 3 offences as adults) during the exit from the service and transition into National Probation Service. This demonstrates a significant reduction in offending for a persistent cohort.

The Flintshire Integrated Youth Provision (FIYP) Participation Team work with partners to ensure the voices of young people are represented locally and nationally on a wide range of issues.

Flintshire commissions Barnados to deliver support for Young Carer on a three tier model of intervention. The project offers needs assessments, respite group activities, training, peer support, 1-1 support and individual development plans. The project supports over 200 young people annually.

With the recent establishment of the Flintshire Youth Council, the commitment to involving children and young people at the highest strategic level of decision making in the Local Authority is set out as an example and benchmark for all organisations involved. It ensures that the duty of Due Regard under the Right of Children and Young People's Measure 2011 is appropriately discharged. The IYP Participation Team work with Healthy Schools team and Schools Council Leads to ensure that there are strong links to the Youth Council. The Youth Council meets regularly with the Chief Officer for Education & Youth, as well as with the Chief Executive and Leader & Deputy Leader of the Council.

Effective participation work by officers delivers a range of opportunities for young people to be involved in activities and events designed to support their academic, social, physical and emotional development. These include projects on healthy eating, relationships, sexual health, mental health, the effects of pregnancy and child rearing, consent, substance and alcohol misuse, financial literacy etc.

Flintshire Sorted Young Peoples Drug and Alcohol Team aim to prevent substance use and to minimise the impact of substance use on children and young people, families and the community. It provides a Universal, targeted and Specialist service to children and young people up to the age of 20 years. Flintshire Sorted recognises the need to target those most at risk and have least resilience to the misuse of substances and as such provide a targeted prevention programme of support to all secondary schools in Flintshire. The targeted content aims to promote healthy choices, challenge attitudes to drugs, anti-social behaviour and other risky behaviours, and strengthens protective factors. Flintshire Sorted provide universal delivery via awareness raising of the risk of using substances across PSE (Personal, Social, Education) and via outreach delivery within the community. Flintshire Sorted offer a referral based service for more intensive work with young people whose substance misuse is having a negative impact on their lives. A range of therapeutic interventions is offered to meet the individual needs of young people and help them to make changes and lead healthier lifestyles. The service also provides a consultation service for parents and professionals who may have questions about suspected substance use in their children. Between October 2018 and March 2019:

- 208 young people were identified as requiring targeted interventions in the period.
- 45 of these young people were referred due to concerns over drugs.
- 6 were referred due to their use of alcohol.
- 43 were referred because of a combination of cannabis and alcohol.
- 1 was referred following concerns after an A&E visit.
- 22 were referred because of more general concerns over their wellbeing, where substances played a key part.
- 48 were referred because of their challenging behaviour in school where substance misuse was thought to be a contributory factor.
- The remaining young people were made up of self-referrals from young people who wanted more general information, those that wanted signposting to smoking cessation agencies and those young people who felt they needed some emotional support.
- 3743 young people accessed services during schools outreach sessions in 11 schools.

Of the 97 young people who completed targeted interventions in the period, 81 reported that their risk taking behaviour had reduced. One young person stated *"I've cut down on smoking weed for my exams. I don't want to go back on it after the exams. Can I do more lessons with you?"* 83% of young people

reported that they had met their goals i.e. had gained more knowledge of substances, understood the long term effects of drugs, and / or had quit alcohol or smoking.

Integrated Youth Services also provide targeted support for vulnerable groups such as young people from Gypsy and Traveller communities who can often face issues when moving between high schools. The use of a Rights Based Approach has been successful in allowing them to explore who they are and how to integrate successfully in their school communities, improving their chances of engaging successfully in education. Similarly, young people who are carers are provided with dedicated support to facilitate their engagement in youth services commissioned through projects funding by Families First. The Authority supports the attendance of young carers to the Youth Service Annual Camp which has successfully run for four years and participation in this has acted as a springboard to help young carers integrate into mainstream youth provision.

This year 2018/19 the IYP introduced a Young Leader training programme working in partnership with Glyndwr University. This has resulted in ten young leaders completing a year-long training and placement programme. Not only has this programme had a positive impact on the young people involved, it is part of a succession programme to recruit future young staff into the IYP service to ensure its sustainability and effectiveness.

An effective example of work by the Integrated Youth Team to reduce the numbers of young people who are not in education, training or employment (NEET) is The Resilience Project. The project is funded via Families First and designed to add value to the existing provision through programmes such as TRAC. Young people between the ages of 16-25, who are not currently in Education, Employment or training are targeted by the project which offers a bespoke package to engage them and provide a safe learning environment or their first steps into the world of higher education or employment. Resilience takes referrals from other agencies, parents or young people. They meet the young people in their home environment and work to re-engage them into group situations, building on achievements and supporting any setbacks until the young person is able to work independently towards his or her own goals. Of the 247 referrals made to the service, 71 individuals accessed intensive intervention, 57 (80%) of which went on to engage positively with education, employment or training.

The Integrated Youth Service also now manages play provision which includes a focus on the food poverty agenda. IYP now provides other play and sporting opportunities for older young people throughout the year within a partnership approach with other key agencies e.g. the IYP SORTED Drug and Alcohol Team, Aura Sports Development, North Wales Police and Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinators and housing/ supporting people teams. This provides an effective platform to engage young people in a positive way and it enables the IYP providers from all sectors to co-produce a service which shares important messages and access to services which young people may be in need of.

Play Services including Play Sufficiency

As a result of the development of an alternative delivery model for leisure services, the opportunity to bring play into Integrated Youth Services was seized in late 2017. Flintshire has a strong tradition of providing safe spaces and quality play opportunities for young children during summer holidays. This also includes Welsh language provision. The Portfolio has an excellent track record in partnership working with over 30 Town and Community Councils to deliver these quality play schemes. The schemes also offer employment for the young Flintshire workforce and supports workforce development target for the Council.

Flintshire County Council upholds Section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 which places a statutory duty on all local authorities to assess and secure sufficient play opportunities for

children, and to consider the many aspects of community life that affect play opportunities e.g. use of the environment; traffic and transport; play and leisure provision, and parental and community involvement with play. Flintshire is effective in adhering to the statutory guidance, 'Wales – A Play Friendly Country'.

The Portfolio has maximised the impact of the All Wales Play Opportunities Grant from Welsh Government. A key success has been the *Playful Futures* schools project, which has improved opportunities for play across a range of school settings. It has made a major difference to the school day by creating more playful environments, supporting pupil voice and training midday supervisors and there is clear evidence that the projects have impacted positively on the quality of children's play as well as their health and wellbeing.

Lack of capacity within some service areas to deliver some activity agreed in the Play Sufficiency Action Plan was identified as a concern during the most recent audit process. As a result, Flintshire County Council is currently prioritising the reinvigoration of a strategic approach to drive forward local annual action plans and is being supported in this by Play Wales.

The immersion of play staff and IYP staff in to a local secondary school with a range of challenges has demonstrated benefits quickly and effectively. The pupils report increased wellbeing, increased attendance and importantly increased enjoyment of attending school which has had direct benefits on their learning and well-being. The play provision and IYP provision has included Kicks for Kids football, Shed project play, Forest schools and drama project with Theatr Clwyd Cymru.

Healthy Schools & Healthy Pre-Schools

In Flintshire four staff are funded by Public Health Wales to support schools and pre-school settings to actively participate in both the WNHSS and HSPSS. The Flintshire Healthy Schools Scheme works to ensure that health education and promotion becomes an integrated part of the school curriculum, the ethos of the school and community. The Scheme was established in Flintshire in 2002 and works in partnership with local and national organisations to ensure a coordinated and multi-faceted approach to health within schools. The Healthy and Sustainable Pre School Scheme (HSPSS) was launched nationally in 2011 and was developed as an extension of the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools Scheme (WNHSS). The criteria for the HSPSS have clear parallels with the WNHSS National Quality Award to ensure a consistent whole-school / setting approach to health and wellbeing.

The data outlined in section 1.3 provides clear evidence that the Health Schools and Healthy Pre-School Scheme is very well embedded in Flintshire and is having a very positive impact on the health and well-being of Flintshire children and young people.

Pupil Voice

The Healthy Schools team work in partnership with the Integrated Youth Participation Officers to maximise opportunities for pupil voice throughout all schools. The Healthy Schools Scheme requires schools to demonstrate their commitment to pupil participation in core areas of school life which directly affect the health and well-being of children and young people including teaching and learning; environment and pastoral care. Schools can evidence how they meet the requirements of the Welsh Government Guidance for Governing Bodies on the Establishment and Operation of School Councils Circular No: 42/2006 23 October 2006. Schools use a variety of forums to ensure young peoples' views are listened to and that they receive feedback about what has happened to their views. In 2017 a Flintshire Handbook for School Council link teachers in primary schools was issued and contains

sources of information and support for developing effective pupil participation in line with the above guidance.

All schools are encouraged to ensure the policies that directly impact on children and young people are developed in a child friendly version e.g. Anti-bullying, Food and Fitness. Model templates are available for primary and secondary schools and support is provided through the Healthy Schools Team where appropriate.

The Children's Commissioner Super Ambassadors Scheme is promoted annually to all schools and uptake is encouraged in order further raise awareness about children's rights in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Flintshire pupils have been successful in being appointed to these roles.

Healthy Schools have worked in partnership with Newydd Catering and Cleaning to establish and support School Nutrition Action Groups (SNAG) over a number of years in primary and secondary schools. Flintshire also have good links with the Eco Schools Scheme and the maintenance of Eco Committees in both primary and secondary schools is supported in order to progress in the scheme.

The annual Flintshire Healthy Schools and Primary School Games Association Celebration Event has children and young people from Flintshire primary schools as the hosts. Applications are sought from pupils in years 5 and 6 to be a 'young MC' and following shortlisting interviews take place for 4 places. Young MC's work with the Healthy Schools team to develop the script for the event and the young peoples' views are sought throughout the programming.

As part of the 21st Century Schools ongoing work programme, children and young people are consulted on all proposed changes to schools which may include an amalgamation or closure. There are child friendly consultation documents for primary and secondary schools and age appropriate consultation activities which ensures children and young people's views are thoroughly considered at all stages of the legal process. These are delivered in partnership with Healthy Schools and the Participation Officers from the Integrated Youth Service. With the development of new school buildings, contractors as part of the community benefit requirements involve children and young people in the design consultation and onsite visits when appropriate.

The School Health Research Network County report has been shared with the Participation Officers and members of the Flintshire Youth Council have been consulted on the health and well-being 5 year action plan and will have a role monitoring its implementation.

Pupil focus groups have taken place in three secondary schools in order to inform the purchase of products from the period poverty grant funding from Welsh Government in 18-19. Pupils have also been involved in the development of menstrual hygiene lessons (which incorporates period poverty) which have been piloted and evaluated before distribution.

School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP)

The School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP) is a school-based scheme that provides healthy meals, food and nutrition education, physical activity and enrichment sessions to children during the summer holidays. '*Food and Fun*' is the brand identity used at local level to promote the scheme to children and families' which is part funded by WLGA. The aim is to prevent children going hungry in the summer holidays and to improve children's health and promote learning through a programme of enrichment activities.

A SHEP Steering Group was established in autumn 2017 with representation from Healthy Schools, Newydd Catering, Aura, BCUHB, Family Information Service, Play Development and Revenues & Benefits and has been effective in driving forward the programme. This is another excellent example of effective partnership working between teams and external partners to improve the health and well-being of Flintshire children and young people.

Two schools which met the required Free School Meals (FSM) criteria (over 17.5%) agreed to participate in the programme in summer 2018: Ysgol Treffynnon and St David's High School. At both sites, SHEP was open to Year 6 pupils from their feeder primary schools and existing Year 7 pupils. By utilising the transition approach there was a clear objective that children would get to know some of the school staff before the new term started in September and help form relationships with their peers. Participants would also benefit from familiarising themselves with the school site. The activities were designed for pupils to integrate with one another and build on their communication and team work skills. All of these objectives were focused on supporting a more successful start to secondary education and to raise educational performance in the longer term.

Each scheme was open for a total of 12 days over 3 weeks in the school summer holidays, with capacity for up to 40 children at each site. The core daily components involved: a free breakfast, a minimum of one hour physical activity, nutrition education and free lunch. On one day each week, family members were invited to join the children for lunch.

The aim for 2019 is to build on the pupil attendance at the existing two sites and offer a further two schemes at eligible schools, totalling 4 SHEP programmes.

School Health Research Network (SHRN)

The School Health Research Network (SHRN) is a partnership between Welsh Government, Public Health Wales (PHW), Cancer Research UK and the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods. It is led by Cardiff University and brings together secondary schools across Wales and academic researchers, policy-makers and practitioners from health, education and social care. The SHRN aims to improve young people's health and wellbeing in the school setting by providing robust health and wellbeing data for school, regional and national stakeholders.

The survey was completed by 6585 young people from 11 secondary schools in Flintshire, which is 82% of all young people in schools at the time of the survey taking place (between Sept - Dec 2017).

An event for School Council representatives was coordinated for Flintshire schools in March 2018 to help pupils understand how to interpret research data and action plan, ahead of receiving their school SHRN report in April 2018. The aim is for School Councils to take ownership of their school report and support in the development and implementation of a whole school SHRN action plan.

In November 2018 a follow up event for school council representatives was arranged to explore common themes and identify areas for further development. This was in addition to a joint Wrexham and Flintshire workshop for SHRN coordinators from each of the secondary schools in both counties to consider common themes and coordinated interventions.

The survey highlighted a number of positive areas for schools to build on:

41% of all students surveyed reported walking or cycling is the main part of their journey to school, which is above the national average.

20% of all students surveyed reported that they were physically active for 60mins 7 days in the week before the survey, which is above the national average

44% of all students surveyed reported that they exercise vigorously outside of school time at least four times a week, which is higher than the national average.

In relation to body image, 58% of students' responded that they think their body is 'About right' which is higher than the national average.

67% of all students reported that they could count on their friends when things go wrong, which is in line with the national average.

The survey also highlighted a number of areas, which require action and further improvement:

41% of all students surveyed reported they have been bullied at school in the past couple of months, which is higher than the national average.

51% of all students surveyed report that they drink alcohol, which is higher than the national average across all year groups from 7-11.

13% of year 11 students reported they got drunk for the first time age 13, which is higher than the national average. 32% reported they were age 15.

36% of year 11 students reported they were age 14 when they used cannabis for the first time, which is higher than the national average. 14% reported they were age 11 or younger, which is also higher than the national average.

32% of year 11 students reported they had had sexual intercourse which is higher than the national average.

22% of sexually active year 11 students reported that they had sexual intercourse for the first time aged 13 years or younger. 33% reported they were age 14 years – both figures higher than the national average.

38% of sexually active year 11 students reported that they used a condom when they last had sexual intercourse and 22% reported they used birth control (the pill). Usage of all methods of contraception is lower than the national average.

School Councils have been asked to develop whole school action plans in order to prioritise key areas for development over a two year period in their schools. In response to the findings in the county SHRN report, a county health and wellbeing action plan is in development and will be implemented over a five year period. The Flintshire Youth Council have contributed to the development of the county action plan and is ongoing. This work is overseen by the Wellbeing Steering Group.

School Sports Survey

Sport Wales has run surveys of primary and secondary school pupils, in school years 3 to 11, for over 17 years. All schools which collect a sufficient number of survey responses from their pupils receive unweighted results from the survey. In 2015 Flintshire surveyed 5090 pupils and in the most recent survey in 2017, there were 5208 pupils that completed the survey.

Compared with the results for Wales, evidence from the School Sport Survey shows that Flintshire has:

48% of pupils participating in school-based extracurricular sport, or sport with a club outside of school on three or more occasions per week, compared with a national average of 48%.

67% of Flintshire pupils participated at least once in extracurricular sport in the 2017/18 school year. This compares with a national participation rate of 66%.

66% of pupils from Flintshire participate in sport at least once a week in a community club compared with 65% Welsh average.

79% of pupils state that they are either very or quite confident in trying new activities, compared with 80% of pupils in Wales.

Flintshire provides 101 minutes of curricular PE per week, compared to Welsh schools who provide 99 minutes on average.

Flintshire provides 8 extracurricular activities to primary schools and 15 to secondary schools, which is in line with the Welsh average for both primary and secondary respectively.

61% of pupils stated that they enjoy PE 'a lot' and 45% stated that they enjoyed extracurricular activities 'a lot', compared with Welsh pupils in general who reported enjoying PE 'a lot' (63%) and extracurricular activities 'a lot' (48%).

Schools are actively encouraged to use the Sports Survey information to improve the quality of provision for sporting and extra-curricular provision for pupils and there is a good level of engagement through programmes such as 5x60, Young Dragons and Us Girls.

Early Help Hub (EHH)

In early 2017 the Flintshire Public Service Board (PSB) commissioned the establishment of an Early Help Hub to support the delivery of more timely and appropriate early intervention and support for families with greater needs. There were multiple drivers for this including the introduction of the Social Service and Wellbeing Act 2014, the CSSIW inspection report recommendations about prioritising early intervention, intervening earlier at lower cost and for better outcomes and the extent to which so many cases being referred and re-referred to Children's Services did not meet thresholds for a statutory intervention, notwithstanding that the families often presented with persistent challenges.

The Early Help Hub's co-location supports speedier information sharing and decision making to provide more effective support for families in a cost effective joint commissioned model. The IYP Families First commissioning has been a key driver in the development of the EHH and continues to commission and fund a significant element of the delivery. The agencies commissioned into the Hub are:

- **Y Teulu Cyfan (Families First)** who lead on direct interventions with families and draw upon their existing partnerships with Action for Children, Child and Adult Mental Health Services, Active 4-16, Community Parents, CAIS, Drug and Alcohol Team and the Domestic Abuse Safety Unit.
- **Action for Children (Families First – Young People)** who lead on targeted 1-1 working and group work with young people and families and the engagement of young people up to the age of 25 in education, employment, volunteering and work experience through the Resilience Project. They will also draw upon their effective partnerships with the Flintshire Local Voluntary Council and Aura, the local provider of leisure services.
- **Action for Children (Families First) – Disability** who lead on the provision of support and services for families with disabled children/young people to ensure better engagement in social, leisure, play and sporting opportunities to improve physical and mental health and transition into adulthood.

Nominated staff from the Education and Youth Portfolio are an integral part of this Early Help Hub contributing to the assessment of children and families and identifying appropriate mechanisms for support where there is clearly an identified need and there is evidence of two or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's). Staff across the Portfolio and in schools have been briefed on the purpose and operation processes of the EHH and the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences. They are being actively encouraged to make direct referrals to the EHH. The Hub development has been led on behalf of the portfolio by the Senior Manager for Integrated Youth Provision who has responsibility for commissioning Families First and has also been supported strategically by the Chief Officer for Education and Youth and the Senior Manager for Inclusion.

The EHH went through a 'soft launch' pilot phase during the autumn of 2017 and is successfully transitioned into its full operational model. Its outputs are exceeding expectations and has already reduced No Further Action (NFA) referrals from approximately 50 a week to 0 a week. All referrals now receive an action of some sort, whether that be a single service provision, multiple service or voluntary sector information support. This is an innovative and highly effective model of support that is having a tangible impact on children and families.

Schools Music Service

Flintshire has operated its Music Service since the creation of the Local Authority and it has always been valued by schools, pupils and parents. Currently, the Music Service comprises a team of specialist music tutors, an administrative officer and Manager. The service currently delivers 350 hours of group tuition on a weekly basis across the full range of instruments and voice to nearly 2,500 learners. Learners are able to engage from Key Stage 2 upwards and the service provides specialist support for musicians taking GCSE, AS, A2 and BTEC music and performing arts examinations.

The service is currently piloting a range of projects aimed at addressing inclusion and identifying excellence. The service manages its own 'special visit' centres for both Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music and Trinity College London music examinations. Learners are awarded UCAS points for achieving Grade 6 – 8 in these examinations. The service has a strong track record of success - no learners failed the examinations and 22% of learners achieved the highest grade possible in 2017-18.

Alongside weekly lessons the service operates an extra - curricular programme that offers 13 different instrumental and vocal ensembles providing weekly performance opportunities for more than 300 young musicians. These ensembles also provide the training ground for Flintshire's young musicians to achieve regional (North East Wales and North Wales) and national representation. Flintshire's representation in all of these ensemble exceeds the percentage of school population across the region.

School Place Planning & Provision

Flintshire County Council has a strong track record in strategically managing its school estate through both its own resources and through the effective use of grant funding schemes e.g. 21st Century Schools programme in order to manage effective and efficient delivery of school places. It has demonstrated a willingness to take difficult decisions to modernise the school network to improve the quality of the learning environment to underpin teaching and learning and address issues related to condition and suitability within its school estate.

Under its School Modernisation Strategy the Council has undertaken a major programme of school organisational change proposals which have included the closure of one nursery school, three primary schools, one secondary school, the development of four federal arrangements across the primary and secondary sector, the amalgamation of all infant and junior schools, the rationalisation of post 16

provision in the north of the County resulting in a partnership arrangement with Coleg Cambria, the extension of primary Welsh medium provision, the building of two new primary schools and an award winning 3-16 learning campus and other major remodelling projects. Another primary school build is scheduled for the end of the 21st Century Band A programme bringing the total funding envelope for this initial tranche to £64.2m. This programme will be completed on time and within budget.

The Council's Strategic Outline Plan (SOP) for Band B is equally ambitious at £85m and has approval in principle from Welsh Government and the Council's Cabinet. The Council is currently evaluating its programme priorities and how to use the differing forms of funding available e.g. Capital and Revenue based funding under the Mutual Investment Model (MIM).

The proposed programme provides efficient and effective educational infrastructure to meet current and future demand. The programme has potential to remove up to 10 educational buildings from the service portfolio and ensure suitable investment in new facilities. All projects within the programme will be designed to promote, where applicable, early years' provision and community access to school and sports facilities.

The backlog maintenance for projects within the programme is £7,732,996 for secondary and £1,692,356 for primary. For new school projects the Council would expect to achieve 100% reduction in backlog maintenance, for large remodelling projects an 80% reduction and smaller scale projects the aim would be for 50% as a benchmark. The Council has clearly defined arrangements for repairs and maintenance of schools and responds appropriately to emergencies.

The SOP is linked to the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. The Band B programme is focused on 3 of the 6 schools within the Welsh Medium (WM) sector, linking in with the Council's desire to ensure that WM is given priority and linking into the National Welsh Language Strategy.

Voluntary Aided schools are maintained jointly by the County Council and either the Church in Wales or the Roman Catholic Church. Aided schools also have access to separate capital funding streams directly through the Welsh Government. The Council continues to work successfully in partnership with the Diocesan Authorities to ensure that Aided schools are appropriately located and fit for purpose.

In September 2018 the Pupil Level Annual School Census showed the 64 primary schools had a total capacity of 13,997 full time places but only had 12,295 total numbers on roll (NOR), which is a surplus of 16.05%. 11 Schools in the secondary sector had a total capacity of 10,718 with 9314 NOR and 14.74% surplus places. When combined, these figures equate to 12.6% average surplus places across the school network, which is higher than the maximum national target of 10%.

Unfilled places at September 2018 were 3,106, this is an improvement on statistics produced in January 2013, when there were some 4,000 (15.4 per cent) unfilled places in Flintshire schools distributed across primary and secondary schools. The proposals contained within the SOP for the Band B 21st Century schools investment programme should they be implemented, will reduce unfilled places in schools in or near the national target.

Pupil number projections methodology are aligned with other authorities across the region and are completed twice per year, these are linked to school data returns, namely, January PLASC and September returns. The capacity assessments are conducted using the Welsh Government's Measuring the capacity of schools in Wales and are audited once per year.

The Authority has an up-to-date Asset Management system and data from the system is used to influence decision making on capital investment in the school network. Priorities for investment for the schools capital programme are clear, linked to strategy, funded and agreed and based upon up-to-date information. However, despite significant expenditure, the Authority's data shows that the school portfolio still requires significant further investment.

In 2016/17 suitability surveys were commissioned and conducted across the schools' portfolio based on national guidance. Despite the significant investment through 21st Century Schools programme and the Council's own capital programme, it is estimated that an investment in excess of £130m is still required to address suitability issues across the schools network.

Table 32: Suitability of Primary and Secondary School Buildings

Suitability Grade	No of Schools	Percentage %
A	11	14.66%
B	24	32%
C	37	49.34%
D	3	4%

School condition surveys are re-assessed in line with national asset management guidance on a five year cycle, with the repair & maintenance (R&M) backlog estimated in excess of £17m, a substantial improvement from the £35m backlog reported in the 2010 SOP.

Table 33: Condition of Primary and Secondary School Buildings

Condition Grade	No of Schools	Percentage %
A	4	5.34%
B	62	82.66%
C	9	12%
D	0	0.00%

Flintshire County Council has no schools in condition 'D' as this would mean that the school building life would have expired or be at risk of imminent failure.

The Council consults with children and young people, parents, school governors and staff and other relevant stakeholders prior to making proposals for any school modernisation change. The consultation process involves the completion and presentation of impact assessments around community, transport, buildings, equalities and language and includes a financial appraisal.

The responses from each formal consultation process is presented to the Council's Cabinet, along with the impact assessment, options appraisal and officer recommendations. Cabinet then decide on how to progress. For all construction projects the Head teacher or nominated person from School forms part of the "operational team".

Flintshire consults other admission authorities and coordinates admission arrangements with neighbouring authorities, including common dates of return and common offer dates. Flintshire participates in the regional North Wales Admissions Group to coordinate admissions arrangements and develop/deliver joint training. The Council is represented at the ADEW School Admissions Officers' Group and is aware of national and Welsh Government initiatives in the service.

The composite prospectus, "Guide to Education Services" is reviewed and published annually and is made available on line to all parents on 1st September each year, as part of the annual admissions round. Feedback from Welsh Government on the composite prospectus has been incorporated in to the Guide. Flintshire's online admissions process was used by 100% of applicants for Secondary, Reception and Nursery for September 2018.

The vast majority of parental preferences continue to be met (96%). All appeals are held before the end of the academic year and any appeals outside the timetabled admissions process are heard well

within 30 school days in accordance with the School Appeals Code. Panel members are trained in accordance with the Appeals Code, and advertising, recruitment and training of panel members takes place every 3 years jointly with other admission authorities. This is a cost effective way of managing recruitment and training and ensures consistency across the region.

Applications for mid-term transfers are made online and every effort is made to admit pupils within 10 school days. Flintshire’s Managed Moves Protocol has been revised recently and agreed with all head teachers.

2. Quality of Education Services

Areas for ongoing improvement & sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that leadership support improves the standards of leadership, quality of teaching and pupil outcomes at all levels especially in the secondary sector• Further develop, strengthen and embed peer working between schools so that they can support improvement and validate their work• Further support schools to deliver the Reform Journey successfully• Further improve Welsh language skills of school based staff and increase standards in Welsh language in all schools• Consolidate restructuring of Plas Derwen (PPRU) and relocation onto a single site to maximise the impact of service for Plas Derwen learners and those in mainstream• Increase access to education, employment and training for young people in the YJS• Continue to strengthen links between the Portfolio and its secondary schools with the North Wales Economic Ambition Board to maximise learner access to apprenticeships and employment opportunities• Increase take up and standards in STEM subjects• Continue to improve the school estate through school modernisation strategy and capital investment• Continue to reduce the percentage of surplus places through school modernisation programme• Increase provision for Welsh medium school places in urban areas of the Authority and increase take up in rural areas where existing provision is under-subscribed• Evaluate opportunities for pupil voice across all schools in order to share good practice and target support as required.• Continue to develop quality opportunities for participation of young people in activities to keep themselves safe and develop resilience.

Outcome 3 – Leadership and Management

3.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers

The Council benefits from strong leadership with an effective working relationship between professional officers and elected members, led by the Chief Executive and Leader. This is demonstrated through the portfolio structure within the Council where Cabinet Lead Members and Chief Officers work closely together to successfully achieve corporate priorities - as exemplified in key committee documents such as the Council Plan. Cabinet reports, Overview & Scrutiny reports, Performance Monitoring reports and Risk Registers are jointly owned. Programme Boards for each portfolio provide a purposeful platform for informing strategic direction and performance oversight. A robust and transparent Scrutiny process ensures that there is continuous challenge of performance and periodic evaluation of performance and impact.

The leadership structure and hierarchy of accountability within the Council, both from an Elected Member and an Officer perspective is clearly articulated and understood. Roles and responsibilities are clearly documented. The development of senior and middle leadership in the Council since the last inspection of Education Services has contributed to the sustained improvement in many key indicators.

Professional and political leadership is used effectively to manage the Council's core business of providing quality and responsive public services in the face of long-term austerity. This has been clearly demonstrated in recent years by the collective problem solving by senior officers and elected members in managing the Council's financial strategy and achieving legally balanced budgets whilst protecting and sustaining services. Financial planning processes are robust with high levels of scrutiny and assurance. Officer and elected members have a track record of working together constructively and with clear purpose on difficult issues; this has been reflected in decisions taken e.g. the management of the school estate and the 21st Century Schools Capital Programme.

The Council has a good track record of communicating with residents and communities, service users, workforce and stakeholders through external and internal processes. There is a strong working culture of engagement and inclusivity when agreeing priorities, making difficult decisions and working with stakeholders. What matters to communities is integral to priority setting and resource allocation. This can be seen in recent engagement work around the budget settlement for schools and in consultations around school organisational change.

The Council has a track record of identifying and intervening where hurdles to effective working hinder progress. Difficult decisions are responded to proactively. As needed, the professional and political leaderships intervene effectively to overcome obstacles. Systems leadership and the delegation of resources support the efforts to place the learner first and protect the quality of education and support services. This has been exemplified in the recent work by all officers and elected members to set a legally balanced budget for 2019-20 in the face of significant financial challenge. Delegation rates to schools to protect front line services are above the Welsh average and additional funding to protect schools' budgets are channeled in wherever possible. Central education services have made efficiencies of over 30% in three years to shield schools' direct funding and contribute to corporate financial targets.

The Council's approach to strategic leadership is underpinned by public service values. Within the context of delivery of services to children and young people there is a moral commitment to delivery in

an inclusive, nurturing and worthwhile way which enables them to successfully embrace adult life and become responsible, independent, economically active and resilient citizens. The Council actively seeks social value particularly through its commissioning of services and procurement processes.

There is strong corporate and political support for Education and Youth Services across the Council. Political and officer leadership of Education is innovative and pragmatic. Education priorities are exemplified in corporate and portfolio level plans and commitments.

The approach the Council has taken to developing its vision and priorities demonstrates connectivity in plans, policies and strategies, and complies with all legislative requirements. A key feature of the Council's approach to planning is setting aspirational objectives. The positive impact of this approach has been that:

- The needs and priorities of pupils have been consistently supported and challenged both by Officers and Elected Members. Overall this has delivered consistently good outcomes for pupils; and
- The Senior Leadership Team in the Education and Youth Portfolio is committed to securing better outcomes for children and young people not just in the short term but with a longer-term perspective.

Within the context of legislative compliance the Council works to ensure that the learning and support offer is focused on what is appropriate to meet the individual needs of children and young people.

Elected members effectively undertake their statutory duties and make a worthwhile contribution to the development and progress of statutory plans. They also show real commitment to safeguarding the welfare of vulnerable learners. There is strong member engagement in the following areas:

- The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and the Welsh Standards Committee;
- The Corporate Parenting Forum;
- The Corporate Safeguarding Panel;
- The Economic Ambition Board; and
- The Standards Quality Board.

Senior Leaders and managers communicate high expectations for securing improvement and challenge schools to good effect through a range of forums. For school improvement these include regular meetings with the head teacher community, working through nominated representatives on the primary and secondary Head Teacher Federations, School Performance Monitoring Group and other specific groups e.g. ALNCo Forum, County Curriculum Steering Group and Emotional Health and Well-Being Strategy Group. There is also effective monitoring and challenge for other areas of provision through panels such as the Youth Justice Board, Children's Services Forum and Corporate Safeguarding Panel. The key objectives of the Public Service Board are clearly aligned with the Council's and Portfolio's strategic improvement plans.

There are effective performance management arrangements which bring about improvements. They also help ensure that objectives for individual officers link well to operational and strategic priorities. Key plans align at all levels and help elected members to understand and make effective use of performance information. Policies and initiatives are implemented consistently. Progress against the Council's priorities is monitored corporately, and school performance is additionally scrutinised through the GwE Management Board and GwE Joint Committee.

Elected members show determination in challenging and supporting services and taking difficult decisions to bring about necessary improvements, for example, on school organisational change and using statutory powers of intervention in schools causing concern. Members have also made difficult decisions to protect the financing of schools within setting a legally balanced budget at a time of reduced funding for local government.

The Council and its partners have a clear commitment to learners and to developing a learning culture in the County. Senior leaders have very high aspirations for children and young people. They understand the impact of national and regional priorities and how this impacts on decision making locally for services e.g. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act, Education in Wales - Our National Mission, Cymraeg 2050 – Welsh Language Strategy, North Wales Economic Growth Deal.

Senior management restructuring has enabled agility to respond rapidly to changing circumstances. Whilst a lean team in terms of senior personnel, leaders work in a collegiate way with a range of strategic partners across public services to set high level priorities together for the young people of Flintshire. They are well respected by elected members, external partners, regional colleagues and school leaders.

Senior leaders have put structures in place to guide co-operation and lead by example. The extensive use of secondments, joint appointments and collaborative initiatives means that staff at all levels recognise and understand each other's strengths whilst working confidently within their own specialisms to achieve the agreed vision e.g. the development of the Early Help Hub, joint Sensory Service, Families First commissioning, Childcare Offer etc.

The Council works effectively with GwE (Regional School Improvement Service), one of its key partner organisations. Since the inception of the service (in 2013), there has been a good track record of engagement with the service to support its development and robust scrutiny of the service in holding it accountable for the scope of its delivery on behalf of Flintshire. GwE Officers participate fully in Flintshire business and understand and contribute to the vision, aims and objectives of the Council. Roles and responsibilities in contributing to the delivery of the service within Flintshire are clearly articulated.

GwE Officers working in Flintshire understand the vision and priorities of the Council within the school improvement context and work towards supporting this. This is evidenced by the way in which GwE Business Plans support the Portfolio Business Plan and Council. The mutually supportive, yet challenging culture fostered between GwE and Flintshire officers helps the Council maintain its focus on outcomes for learners across all phases.

Through joint working in this way Flintshire schools benefit from a much broader and more connected range of expertise. This is evidenced by the strong profile of Estyn inspection reports in Flintshire, an increasing number of 'Green' and 'Yellow' schools and improving learner outcomes.

Sound arrangements are in place to support and challenge schools through enhanced scrutiny of standards, provision and leadership. Under-performance and risks within schools are identified quickly and addressed at an early stage through the effective joint working of Portfolio officers and Support Improvement Advisers from the regional service. Local Quality Boards monitor and report on the impact of these interventions to senior managers and political leaders. The School Performance Monitoring Group has a clear track record in challenging schools and ensuring they are supported to improve.

Senior GwE and LA officers meet regularly to formally discuss schools. There are frequent informal meetings and discussions (on a weekly basis) further strengthening communication between GwE and the Council.

All schools have had access to regional and bespoke leadership training. Flintshire schools' take up has been one of the highest in the region with many school leaders taking part in the following programmes - Experienced Head Teacher Programme; and Aspiring Leaders; and Middle Leadership Programmes. Evaluations by schools have been extremely positive. There is evidence that these programmes have strengthened and upskilled many school leaders across Flintshire and ensured a succession of future leaders.

All schools have chosen to access the Human Resources, Employment Services and Occupational Health SLA provision which provides for a range of services to assist them in complying with their 'people related' statutory responsibilities and operational/ business obligations.

Customer led solutions manifest themselves in a wide range of service delivery including: model policy and information provision, confidential telephone and face to face support, Heads Federation and cluster group briefings, conference sessions, case conferences and discreet advisory sessions for case-related governor and head teacher development sessions. The take up rates, activity levels and repeat business, support the consistent 'buy back' levels and evidence that services are valued and contribute significantly to school performance.

An ongoing challenge is to successfully maintain stability, morale, attendance, wellbeing and professional effectiveness in schools, against a back drop of financial challenges which necessitate change, reorganisation and redundancies.

Relationships between school leaders and HR service providers are generally excellent – attested by the evidence outlined above. The service ethos is to support school leaders in maintaining their own services.

Relationships between senior Council officers and trade union representatives are good and there is a high degree of engagement on key issues through the Education Consultative Committee and other statutory groups e.g. School Budget Forum. This has been particularly evident in the recent pay structure review undertaken by the Council. There is also a good level of informal interaction between the Portfolio's HR officers and local union representatives in individual school processes e.g. redundancy, absence management etc.

3.2 Self Evaluation processes and improvement planning

The Council has a well-established process of evaluation, review and challenge. Leaders, managers and elected members have an accurate understanding of the Authority's strengths and weaknesses. They routinely make good use of a range of rigorous monitoring activities. The Portfolio undertakes a wide range of self-evaluation activities, analysing data and first-hand evidence well to make accurate evaluations of the quality and impact of services. The arrangements also identify clearly the areas for improvement and help ensure that progress against strategic plans is reviewed effectively and timely interventions made.

Through its joint working with GwE there are detailed Level 2 Business Plan for primary and secondary schools agreed between the Chief Education Officer and the GwE Core Leads Supporting Improvement Advisers (SIA). Agreed priorities in the business plans are based firmly on the findings of the self-evaluation processes. The plans accurately identify key issues within schools in the Local Authority

and include a bespoke improvement plan to address the specific challenges. Progress towards achieving the agreed outcomes is regularly reviewed in meetings between the core lead SIA, the Chief Education Officer and senior Education Officers. The plan is regularly updated to reflect the outcomes of whole school reviews and support visits commissioned by the LA.

A robust accountability framework ensures that ongoing issues are escalated from the Local Authority Quality Board to senior Council leaders and GwE Management Board. Progress is RAG rated appropriately and senior leaders challenge any slippage in expected progress. The regular reviews of the business plans at all levels enables accurate evaluation of the progress towards achieving priorities. This ensures that the business plans remain flexible to incorporate new priorities during the monitoring period if required.

The Portfolio works swiftly and effectively with GwE Officers to address 'Schools Causing Concern'. Where rapid progress is required, Accelerated Improvement Boards have been established to oversee progress. These Boards meet regularly and include key officers of the Portfolio, GwE and school leaders, including governors. Where required, the Chief Officer has used statutory powers of intervention and established Interim Executive Boards to replace the traditional governance models. This has been successful in improving the pace of improvement. GwE senior officers support the IEB alongside senior LA managers.

There is consistent dialogue with key officers of the Portfolio and senior GwE officers with a common focus on school improvement, particularly at secondary school level. The consortium's recent Estyn monitoring Inspection (October 2017) noted:

"GwE responds positively to requests from local authorities to conduct intensive internal reviews in individual schools. Extensive investment in human resources and time ensures that schools receive comprehensive and fair reviews. Reports that derive from these reviews are rigorous and include purposeful recommendations."

Senior leaders in GwE, in partnership with Portfolio officers, use data effectively to ensure areas for improvement are identified quickly and addressed robustly through detailed business planning. Data and information are also scrutinised robustly to monitor progress against agreed actions. The quality of planning at all levels for 2018-19 underlines this step change. As a result, the quality of information shared with the GwE Management Board and Joint Committee has improved significantly, enabling members to scrutinise and challenge progress effectively.

The Authority has strong working partnership with clear lines of accountability with GwE. Fortnightly meetings are held between the GwE Core Leads and senior authority officers. This ensures an ongoing discussion and challenge as to the effectiveness of the work undertaken by GwE. Issues arising are then taken to the LA Quality Boards where elected members and other relevant stakeholders are present. Flintshire discuss schools causing concern regularly, to ensure that much more effective and timely decisions are jointly taken about schools and their leaders where progress is of concern.

The Local Authority undertakes a review and support visit where there are concerns about the performance of one of its schools. This ensures that the Authority has a clear understanding of the specific aspects which need to be addressed in individual schools. Tailored support programmes are put in place for all schools that are reviewed regularly. Monitoring visits ensure timely and appropriate intervention by the LA when progress is too slow. For example, following challenge there has been a significant change in leadership at school level. This has supported the pace of improvement well. A regional protocol for appointing senior school staff is in place. This gives clarity to GwE's role in partnership with the Authority. This ensures that GwE and the Local Authority works effectively together to ensure that all senior appointments are appropriate.

Local Authority officers use data effectively to ensure areas for improvement are identified quickly and addressed robustly through detailed business planning. Data and information is scrutinised robustly to monitor progress against agreed actions. As a result, the quality of information shared with Flintshire is of a high standard, enabling members to scrutinise and challenge progress effectively.

Strong quality assurance policies and processes are in place within GwE to ensure that Flintshire has confidence in the consistency and quality of staff work. Robust internal quality assurance procedures are carried out periodically throughout the year. SIA documentation is scrutinised and joint visits take place. Written feedback is given noting quality of work and any developmental needs. These are discussed in Professional Learning meetings and support provided as part of regular development days for the regional team. Bespoke individual support is also provided in some instances. A quality assurance group effectively oversees the quality of work of staff. This is done through using a range of direct observations including shadowing school visits, sampling reports and demonstrating best use of the G6 platform. Best practice is then shared with all staff.

Education officers with the Council focus well on joint planning and resourcing as well as building capacity for continuous improvement. The Portfolio has strong links with the community, good liaison and communication with schools, parents/carers and works effectively with other agencies enabling officers to deliver joined-up programmes that improve outcomes and wellbeing for learners. The Family Information Service is an important conduit to enable access to relevant up to date information to support these aims.

Senior managers demonstrate significant commitment to developing strategic partnerships across all aspects of the Council's work. Through the Public Service Board (PSB), the Council and its partners have joint ownership of priorities and outcomes. These aims are communicated clearly in the Public Service Board's Well-Being Plan.

The Portfolio engages well with partners, service users and other stakeholders in its evaluation processes and in planning for improvement. For example, the Integrated Youth Strategy "Delivering Together" featured full engagement of young people's representatives in its development. School leaders are regularly consulted directly or through the Federations.

The Council uses a corporate database for the recording of complaints, concerns and requests for services. A senior Manager within the Portfolio is a link officer for complaints. The majority of these have to be re-directed back to the individual school complaints procedures as complainants can believe that the Local Authority should deal with a complaint against a school on their behalf. Complainants are advised of the correct procedure and, as necessary, the Portfolio provides support to schools on its procedures. On-line complaints training is available to all governing bodies.

For the period to March 2019, there were six formal complaints against the Portfolio. Four were not upheld and 2 were partially upheld.

The Council is compliant with the requirement regarding partnership agreements with its schools.

3.3 Professional Learning

Relationships with schools are strong and productive. Regular head teacher meetings and the partnership groups in the consultative structure form an effective mechanism for raising issues and agreeing actions to tackle them. Flintshire benefits from well-established learning networks within and

across schools, and now increasingly across the region, which enables schools to develop and share their professional knowledge.

Flintshire schools are engaging effectively with the range of professional development opportunities provided by GwE and by the Portfolio for staff at all levels. Senior Portfolio officers have contributed significantly to the development of a regional and national school improvement programme. The Council, in partnership with GwE, delivers appropriate training for school leaders, including a regional induction programme for new head teachers. The success of this is evidenced by the fact that many schools have been judged at least 'good' for Key Question 3 over the last five years.

Partnership activities make a strong contribution to widening the range of choices for learners and this has benefits for their standards and wellbeing. The Council takes a leading role in developing joint working practices and promotes trust and good communication between partners. These include effective partnerships between the Council, North Wales Police, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, voluntary agencies, other local education authorities and integrated youth support services. The Council monitors and co-ordinates the work of these partners well.

Partnership working between the Portfolio, further and higher education establishments, employers and secondary schools in developing the work of the 14-19 network is good. They successfully promote co-operation and enable school governors, Coleg Cambria, employers and the Council to plan, monitor and resource an effective 14-19 curriculum that meets the needs of learners. Collaboration in the development and transition into a new post-16 hub on Deeside has been recognised by the Welsh Government through the publication of a national case study.

The Welsh Advisory Team in the Portfolio actively encourage school staff at all levels, including head teachers, to engage in the WG sabbatical training programmes for practitioners who wish to teach through the medium of Welsh or wish to improve their Welsh-language skills. Take up across all four levels of training are good and Flintshire staff represent a sizeable proportion of each cohort. This is extending the number of employees with improved Welsh language skills, which is contributing to the improving quality of provision for learners in both English and Welsh medium schools. The manager of the Welsh Advisory Service is a key member of the Regional Welsh Language Board.

The professional learning offer supports school leaders across the Authority and has been strengthened by a range of strategies. A notable strength of this work is the investment in developing leaders of the future, for example the number of applicants and successful attendees on the NPQH assessment course. Subscription to the NPQH and Aspiring Heads course is strong while existing and recently appointed headteachers are being supported through the Newly Appointed and Acting Headteacher programme and Excellence and Innovation programme. New and Acting head teachers are also allocated mentors and leadership coaches. This contributes to the strong leadership profile in Estyn inspections and the increase in schools categorised green and reducing in red schools. It also ensures that there is a steady supply of future school leaders when vacancies are advertised.

Primary and Secondary headteachers and Deputy Headteacher' networking and peer-to-peer work is strong in Flintshire schools. This collaborative work has led to a shared understanding of what constitutes good leadership. Collaborative practice amongst leaders is reinforced through strategic forums, at both headteacher and deputy level. These forums support strong effective communication and nurture a mutual sense of common responsibility for the development of responses and actions to local and national challenges. This is evidenced by the fact that most schools have been judged as at least good in inspections over the past three years. This is consistently above the national average.

GwE staff undertake a range of professional learning opportunities through internal and external training. These are vitally important in upskilling the workforce and ensuring that all staff are consistent in their messages to schools in a time of significant education change in Wales. As a result, Flintshire schools receive good quality and current advice on how to improve their schools.

In terms of ensuring further improvements to the supporting, challenge and intervention work with schools, GwE Supporting Improvement Advisers have themselves received an intensive programme of support. Ongoing professional development is provided, defining and highlighting expectations, and a more robust induction programme for head teachers and other school SLT members who contribute to supporting school improvement via secondments.

The Council promotes professional learning for its core portfolio team through structured learning opportunities, most visible through the Flintshire Academi Infonet, which provides learning and e-learning modules on Leadership and management, personal development, specific professional development, equality and diversity, Welsh language, health and safety and ICT.

The Council has a strongly developed Flintshire Trainee scheme, with many trainees subsequently gaining employment within the Council. There is an ongoing commitment to apprenticeships with an annual opportunity for services to benefit from the engagement of Modern Apprenticeships. In 2018 the Flintshire IYP senior manager worked with HR management to support a team of apprentices to engage in Young Authority of the Year where they had great success on a national level. The significant capital projects such as the social housing scheme and 21st Century school projects now offer a range of apprenticeship opportunities through the Future Works collaboration. The Portfolio is currently piloting a Junior Apprenticeship programme for Key Stage 4 in collaboration with Coleg Cambria for 2018/19. This offers a fulltime vocational course for students in Hospitality and Catering leading to a potential Level 3 vocational pathway post-16.

All staff benefit from the annual appraisal scheme which ensures personal and professional objectives are linked to the annual corporate service and portfolio plans. Centrally employed teaching staff have statutory performance management. The process enables employees and managers to explore individual strengths and identify wider opportunities for these to be utilised effectively. This has resulted in colleagues taking the lead in opportunities such as WG pilot for the ALN Reforms and Childcare Offer. These opportunities support succession planning at a time where central services are reducing and all employees are encouraged to engage with the range of opportunities available to them.

As part of its People Strategy, the Council takes a proactive approach to talent spotting and succession planning. Senior managers regularly identify officers who have potential and signpost them to learning opportunities to develop their skills. Many officers within the Portfolio have accessed professional development e.g. Institute of Leadership & Management qualifications & NVQs through a partnership arrangement with Coleg Cambria. Senior managers are identified for external learning opportunities through Academi Wales and National Leadership College e.g. Public Service Summer School, Future Directors of Education in Wales. This has resulted in career progression within the organisation and the Council actively promotes from within. The recently appointed Chief Officer for Education and Youth is just one example of how this structured approach to professional development has been successful; the Learning Advisory for Health, Wellbeing and Safeguarding is another.

Senior Managers network and share good practice at monthly Change Exchange sessions with the Chief Executive and Chief Officer Team. Quarterly Academi sessions for managers also provide key updates and contribute to cross-cutting policies and strategies. Specifically within the Portfolio, there are termly workshops for service managers to share updates, future plans and engage in consultation and professional development opportunities. There is a comprehensive online training programme

available for all staff of the Council to access on corporate training priorities e.g. safeguarding, GDPR, leadership and management etc. Networking by senior managers through representation on various groups of the Association of Directors of Education in Wales ensures service planning is informed by current and best practice from across Wales.

3.4 Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a corporate priority set out in the Local Authority's annual Council Plan and Flintshire Council has robust arrangements in place across all areas. The Corporate Safeguarding Policy provides a framework for all Council services to safeguard and protect children and adults, ensuring that all employees including Education & Youth staff, elected members and volunteers are fully aware of their responsibilities. This policy applies to Flintshire County Council employees, Councillors, volunteers and organisations commissioned to provide services on behalf of the Council. Flintshire County Council is a member of the North Wales Safeguarding Children's Board (NWSCB) and North Wales Safeguarding Adults' Board (NWSAB).

A Corporate Safeguarding Panel is well established and includes representation from all portfolios, including Education and Youth, to ensure that all services integrate safeguarding awareness into the way they work. This panel receives information regarding the working practices and procedures of every service in the Council, providing assurance that the services are meeting their duties in accordance with the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines and reports to Cabinet on an annual basis.

The Chief Officer for Education and Youth ensures that all the statutory requirements in terms of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults receive due consideration and that effective safeguarding arrangements operate within the Education and Youth portfolio at the three levels of responsibility of strategic, support and operational.

The Senior Manager for School Improvement has lead strategic responsibility for Safeguarding in the Portfolio and is the designated contact for officers and schools. The Learner Adviser for Health, Wellbeing and Safeguarding is the deputy designated contact who provides operational activity support, including with attendance at national and regional safeguarding meetings, co-ordinates training for schools, governors and portfolio staff and provides model policies for schools. There is effective communication between Education and Youth and other portfolios in the Council as well as with external partners.

The Portfolio has appropriate arrangements for the strategic planning for safeguarding within both the core education service and schools, which includes monitoring. An updated Safeguarding and Child Protection model policy was issued to schools in autumn 2017, following consultation and approval by the Portfolio Senior Management Team which reflects national guidance from Keeping Learners Safe and the All Wales Child Protection Procedures which is currently being reviewed and updated for summer 2019. A structured training programme is in place which includes training for Level 3 Designated Safeguarding Leads training, Level 2 Safeguarding for Managers and Senior Leaders including lead Governor for Safeguarding and Train the Trainer for Level 1. Basic Safeguarding Awareness and responsibilities of individual staff including governors. Safeguarding basic awareness / updates are also incorporated into termly LA headteacher conferences and into planned LA training programmes for NQTs and new and acting headteachers. In addition, key safeguarding themes are addressed on a rolling programme e.g. Child Sexual Exploitation, e-safety, Prevent, County Lines. There are strong partnership relationships with key local partners e.g. North Wales Police, Barnardos, Hafan Cymru, NSPCC, Lucy Faithfull Foundation and E999.

Support materials and model lessons for teachers at secondary level, have been produced to support the delivery of key aspects of Personal & Social Education including Prevent, County Lines and Materials for National Safeguarding Week. Excellent partnership working with Theatr Clwyd has resulted in a powerful drama workshop for Key Stage 3 pupils on the issue of consent, that has proved highly effective in enhancing pupils' knowledge and skills in keeping themselves safe and encouraged some young people to come forward to request individual support.

The Portfolio and schools operate safe recruitment procedures and make sure that all appropriate checks are carried out. All schools are routinely reminded of their responsibilities under section 28 of the Children Act and as outlined in the Welsh Government Guidance *Keeping Learners Safe*. There is regular monitoring activity through audit procedures. Schools have been provided with a model annual monitoring report for school leaders to use to report to their governing bodies and the LA on safeguarding matters. The Strategic Lead for safeguarding works in partnership with managers from Social Services and the Human Resources team effectively in the event of allegations against members of staff from schools.

Feedback from Headteachers confirm the training and support for schools is welcomed and effective. Evaluation forms are completed at the end of each training delivery and the information is reviewed on an individual basis in addition to any immediate response that can be implemented. Feedback is also included in the annual report to the North Wales Regional Safeguarding Children's Board.

(See separate Self Evaluation of Safeguarding)

3.5 Use of resources

Flintshire's response to funding reductions in recent years has been measured and appropriate. The Council has adopted a systematic approach to ensure that efficiencies are gained across all services and the organisation has embraced alternative models of delivery where appropriate. There are plenty of examples of good practice and innovation within the Council.

Education reform and investment has remained a priority for the Council despite the challenging financial climate. The high strategic priority given to the education service is reflected in the Council's allocation of both revenue and capital resources. The schools' delegated budgets have been protected from efficiency reductions in recent years and elected members across the Council have directed additional funding streams to schools when they have become available. Risks related to the impact of poor funding on the quality of education services have been clearly set out and are understood by elected members and head teachers.

The school funding formula is regularly reviewed in consultation with schools and reported to the School Budget Forum. Staffing, accommodation and financial resources are soundly managed and deployed to support learning and improvement. The Council reviews the outcomes of its financial plans to make sure that funding is spent wisely and has a positive impact on standards.

The Council regularly reviews its policies to test their effectiveness and value for money. The Council has identified the review of discretionary Post 16 transport as a key priority for 2019 and a full consultation is underway with the outcome expected in June 2019, with any change to policy implemented from September 2020.

Partnership activity provides good value for money because it contributes to extensive opportunities and improved outcomes for learners in aspects which the Council and its schools alone could not provide.

The Council has been successful in securing grant funding for both revenue and capital projects and has committed to contributing half of 21st Century Band A school modernisation investment in schools from its own resources. It has also an ambitious programme valued at £85m for Band B. It has secured funding through the Small and Rural Schools Grant, Infant Class Size Grant, Welsh Medium and Childcare grants.

The Council currently has an estimated Repair & Maintenance (R&M) of approximately £17m, but this is a substantial improvement from the £35m backlog reported in the 2010 SOP and has been achieved through targeted capital investment. However, the level of R&M remains a risk and is strategically linked to the Band B programme of 21st Century Schools.

School balances are at a low level in the secondary sector and have decreased significantly in the primary phase over recent years, reflecting the budgetary pressures being absorbed by schools. The Council is proactive in providing schools with appropriate support and challenge where surpluses are too high and where there are deficits. There is a robust policy for the management and monitoring of school deficits.

Many externally funded initiatives track the progress of learners and service users and their families effectively, e.g. Families First, Flying Start, TRAC/ADTRAC and Youth Support Grant. In the best examples, early bespoke interventions with families make measurable contributions to improved educational outcomes. More effective use is being made of results-based accountability. However, late notification of grant funding and associated conditions can make it difficult for officers to plan. Nevertheless, there is clear evidence that grant funding is maximised to support strategic priorities and deliver quality services. This year, the Council has prepared its approach to deliver the new WG Flexibilities Funding initiative. This has involved developing a robust co production model led by Chief Officers including the Chief Officer of Education and Youth and delivered by a team of senior managers including the Senior Manager of the Integrated Youth Provision.

There are rigorous processes of financial management across the Council and regular reviews of portfolio budgets to ensure value for money and the identification of efficiencies. Flintshire County Council has achieved £85m efficiencies over the last ten years with one of the Education and Youth Portfolio achieving efficiency targets of 30% over the last three years. Through regular portfolio budget management processes, senior managers take responsibility for their services budgets, well supported by a corporate finance team.

The Council has engaged independent, external experts to review its budget setting and monitoring processes who have concluded that processes are robust, decisions around future spending plans are sound and that the Council has been innovative in the face of significant financial challenge.

“Flintshire’s response to funding reductions in recent years has been measured and appropriate. The Council has adopted a systematic approach to ensure that efficiencies are gained across all services and the organisation has embraced alternative models of delivery where appropriate. There is nothing in Flintshire’s approach which significantly stands out from that of others in the sector, and there are plenty of examples of good practice and innovation within the Council.”

(Independent Financial Review of Flintshire County Council by Alan Gay OBE / LGA Finance Peer Advisor)

With a significant proportion of its budget used to commission the regional school improvement service, it is important that the Council is reassured that GwE has effective financial management processes in

place. Communication and consultation about financial arrangements are effective with both core funding and grant-expenditure kept under regular review by GwE, the host local authority and the Joint Committee. A formal framework has been developed to assess the wider value for money that GwE provides. There is now a consistent view across all stakeholders of how the value for money of GwE’s activities can be measured within the business plan structure and objectives.

Detailed work has been undertaken to align grant allocations with priorities. Supporting Improvement Advisers challenge schools on their use of grant funding, with a clear assessment on the use of this funding. This has closed the inconsistencies between schools around identifying the impact of the use of grant funding on pupil outcomes.

Overall, the Council’s education services, including schools, continue to provide good value for money.

3. Leadership & Management

Areas for ongoing improvement & sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain rigorous budgetary monitoring and management processes to protect the sustainability of Council funding in challenging financial times to ensure the delivery of quality education services• Maintain the effective monitoring and governance of the service to ensure continuous school improvement and the best impact for learners• Continue to strengthen the professional offer to support career development and succession in services and schools• Continue to develop effective partnerships to deliver services in an integrated and cost efficient manner• Continue to manage the school estate through the school modernisation strategy and through the variety of grants from WG e.g. 21st Century Schools, Childcare Grant, Infant Class Size Grant, Welsh Medium Grant.

