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Well-being of Future Generations: An examination of improving take up of the Flying Start Programme – **Caerphilly County Borough Council**

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Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is also available in Welsh.

The team who delivered the work comprised Gareth Jones and Ian Phillips under the direction of Non Jenkins.

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Summary report

Summary

Why we undertook the Examination

- 1 In accordance with the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act) the Auditor General for Wales (the Auditor General) is statutorily required to examine public bodies to assess the extent to which they have acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when:
 - a. setting their well-being objectives; and
 - b. taking steps to meet them.The Act defines the sustainable development principle as acting in a manner: ‘...which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’
- 2 The Auditor General must provide a report on his examinations to the National Assembly for Wales at least a year before each Assembly election. The first such report must be published by 2020, before the 2021 Assembly election.
- 3 During 2018-19 the Auditor General is undertaking examinations across the 44 bodies covered by the Act to inform his report to the National Assembly.
- 4 In May 2018, the Auditor General published his report, ‘Reflecting on Year One – How have public bodies responded to the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015)’. He concluded that, public bodies support the principles of the Act and are taking steps to change how they work.
- 5 In developing our approach to undertaking the examinations during 2018-19 we engaged with a range of stakeholders including through our pilot work during 2017-18. We also worked closely with the Future Generations Commissioner.
- 6 As the preliminary work in year one included a consideration of how public bodies had set their Well-being Objectives the principal focus of this work is the way in which public bodies are taking steps to meet their well-being objectives.
- 7 The findings in this report are based on fieldwork that we undertook during the period September 2018 to December 2018. We held an initial fieldwork scoping workshop in September 2018 with Council officers and representatives of the Local Health Board and Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO). In that workshop we explored how the five ways of working had been applied.
- 8 We then reviewed documents and undertook eight interviews with senior officers, partner organisations and the Cabinet member for Education. We also held a focus group with parents at a group run by the Parent Network, a voluntary sector organisation that supports parents across the County Borough to have their say on decisions that affect them and their families.
- 9 This report sets out our findings from our examination of improving take up of the Flying Start programme a step the Council is taking to meet its Wellbeing Objectives.

10 It also sets out the Council's initial response to our findings.

What we examined

- 11 We examined the extent to which the Council is acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle in continuing to deliver the Flying Start programme to help improve access, take up and attendance towards meeting its well-being objectives.
- 12 Over the last few years the Council has focused on improving young people's outcomes and non-vocational qualifications to provide more opportunities for further education or employment. This remains a priority outcome for the Council but it has now decided there is a greater need to take a more holistic view of education. Such a view involves understanding issues in children's early years and how issues such as poverty can affect attainment. Much has been done to develop a multi-agency approach and learn from relevant research, such as work on 'Adverse Childhood Experiences' (ACES).
- 13 The Welsh Government's grant funded Flying Start programme is based on research evidence drawn from a range of interventions across the UK and internationally. It provides support for early years (0-3 years of age) and aims to establish positive behaviours in children and families, through healthy lifestyles, positive parenting, attendance, child development and raising aspirations. The programme is targeted at families living in areas of disadvantage. The programme provides the following services to families:
- a universal health visiting entitlement
 - speech and language provision
 - parenting programmes to support parenting skills
 - childcare
- 14 Research shows that parents' qualifications and work experience are likely to lead to improved attendance/ attainment for their children and that is why some of the Flying Start programme helps to build confidence in parents and promote aspiration.
- 15 The Council's Flying Start programme started in 2008 and was based on school catchment areas and had a reach to 1269 children aged 0-3 of which 12 families enrolled on parenting programmes and support. The programme has now expanded and families from 26 geographical areas (defined by Lower Super Output Areas) benefit from the programme. There is a caseload of circa 2600 children, with 333 families participating annually in parenting programmes and support. In 2017-18, the Council received a £5.2 million grant from the Welsh Government to deliver the Flying Start Programme, however, that funding reduced by 1.8% in 2018-19.
- 16 As part of its work to meet its Well-being Objective, 'improve Education opportunities for all', the Council has identified the need to increase the reach and take up and attendance for childcare, parenting and speech and language groups.

It seeks to improve child outcomes as children enter school and parental resilience as their child grows up.

- 17 In order to act in accordance with the sustainable development principle public bodies must take account of the following 'ways of working':

Exhibit 1: the 'five ways of working'

The table below sets out the 'five ways of working' as defined in the Welsh Government's 'Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 The Essentials'¹ document.

The Five Ways of Working
Long-term The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.
Prevention How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.
Integration Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.
Collaboration Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.
Involvement The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

- 18 Our examination found that: **In taking this step and acting in accordance with the Flying Start Programme, the Council has a number of positive examples of how it has taken account of the sustainable development principle, particularly in collaboration and prevention. However, the Council recognises that there is more to do to consistently embed all five ways of working and could strengthen its involvement to secure increased take up and attendance and ensure that it is working in a fully integrated way.**

¹ Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 The Essentials, Welsh Government (2015)

Detailed report

Part One: Examination Findings

The Council can identify longer-term benefits for individual families who engage with the Flying Start programme, but the Council could consider ways to track and evidence longer-term impacts for all families eligible for the programme

What we looked for

- 20 We looked for evidence of:
- a thorough understanding of current and long-term needs and the associated challenges and opportunities;
 - planning over an appropriate timescale;
 - resources allocated to ensure long-term benefits; and
 - appropriate monitoring and review.
- 21 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for the 'long-term' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.²

What we found

- 22 We identified the following strengths:
- The step is clearly designed to help contribute to the Council's objective of improving educational opportunities for all in the longer term
 - The Welsh Government's Flying Start programme is based on research and designed to deliver a range of long-term impacts through positive parental engagement on children's outcomes and parenting
 - The Flying Start programme can lead to early identification of support needs for children and families
 - The Flying Start team can identify individual families who have benefited from engaging with the programme
 - The Flying Start team show strong commitment to the long-term benefits of the programme and have recently taken some innovative approaches to engaging families, through the 'Golden Ticket' events
- 23 We identified the following areas for development:
- While the Council has started to track data on outcomes for children within education, consideration is needed for tracking parental outcomes

² See Appendix 1

- The Council has recently started to analyse attendance data to understand any barriers to access and develop alternative approaches to securing access, take up and attendance

Prevention is an inherent part of the Flying Start Programme, and the Council has tailored its approach to the local population, but it should consider different ways to maximise the preventative benefits the programme could bring

What we looked for

- 24 We looked for evidence of:
- a thorough understanding of the nature and type of problem the step could help prevent from occurring or getting worse;
 - resources allocated to ensure preventative benefits will be delivered; and
 - monitoring and review of how effectively the step is preventing problems from occurring or getting worse.
- 25 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for 'prevention' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.³

What we found

- 26 We identified the following strengths:
- Enhanced ante-natal parent engagement programme
 - Parenting programmes now offered to all families not just those families identified in need
 - Specific tailored programme to support vulnerable teenagers with clear preventative impacts
 - Changes to session timings have removed barriers to take up and attendance for some parents
 - Strong emphasis on early language development
 - Health visitors deliver their services at Flying Start sessions
- 27 We identified the following areas for development:
- Consideration of the approach to engaging those parents who are not currently taking up or attending Flying Start
 - Consideration of the approach to re-engaging parents who are unable to attend regularly

³ See Appendix 1

The Council demonstrates a good understanding of integration and is making progress towards a more integrated approach to delivering its Flying Start Programme

What we looked for

- 28 We looked for evidence of consideration of:
- how this step could contribute to the seven national well-being goals;
 - how delivery of this step will impact on the Council's well-being objectives and wider priorities; and
 - how delivery of this step will impact on other public bodies' well-being objectives.

What we found

- 29 We identified the following strengths:
- The Council's Wellbeing Objective of 'Improve Education Opportunities for All' aligns clearly with Health Board and PSB objectives around early years
 - The Flying Start team demonstrate a clear understanding of how the Flying Start Programme will contribute clearly to the national Well-being Goals
- 30 We identified the following areas for development:
- Consideration of how increasing take up and attendance could impact positively and negatively on the demand for, and capacity of, other Council and non-Council services (both public bodies and voluntary sector)
 - Consideration as to whether all step leads are fully conversant with the definition of Integration as set out in the Act
- 31 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for 'integration' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.⁴

⁴ See Appendix 1

Collaboration is an inherent part of the Flying Start programme and the Flying Start team are collaborating well internally and externally

What we looked for

- 32 We looked for evidence that the Council:
- has considered how it could work with others to deliver the step (to meet its well-being objectives, or assist another body to meet its well-being objectives);
 - is collaborating effectively to deliver the step; and
 - is monitoring and reviewing whether the collaboration is helping it or its stakeholders meet well-being objectives.

What we found

- 33 We identified the following strengths:
- Positive collaboration with:
 - other services in the Council, including Families First and Supporting People, that ensures alignment of programmes and funding and prevents duplication of service provision
 - the Local Health Board both strategically and operationally
 - the Parent Network
 - Joint Assessment Form helps to drive collaboration within the Council
 - Health Visitors hold weigh in sessions at Flying Start (Tiny Talkers) sessions to increase attendance and the Flying Start Family Support team attend those sessions
- 34 We identified the following area for development:
- Consideration of how collaborating in different ways may help to engage those parents who are not taking up the Flying Start offer, for example, health visitors, Parent Champions.
- 35 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for 'collaboration' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.⁵

⁵ See Appendix 1

The Flying Start team has a well-developed approach to using views of parents to inform the design of services and has established a positive working relationship with the local Parent Network

What we looked for

- 36 We looked for evidence that the Council has:
- identified who it needs to involve in designing and delivering the step;
 - effectively involved key stakeholders in designing and delivering the step;
 - used the results of involvement to shape the development and delivery of the step; and
 - sought to learn lessons and improve its approach to involvement.

What we found

- 37 We identified the following strengths:
- parents are involved, including by providing feedback during programme sessions, the Flying Start Facebook page and being involved in interview panels for staff appointments;
 - subject to the requirements of the Welsh Government's Flying Start guidance, the Flying Start team has responded to parents' views by changing session times, providing weekend and evening parenting sessions to increase take up and attendance and increasing the number of day nursery places for working parents; and
 - the Council has recently developed the volunteer 'Parent Champion' role to engage parents in the communities through a peer advocacy model.
- 38 We identified the following areas for development:
- development of innovative ways of reaching and engaging those families who do not take up their entitlement or do not consistently attend sessions to secure long-term benefits;
 - consideration of the impact of the 'parent champions';
 - consistent provision of feedback across all Council services to people who engage in consultations so they are made aware of the impact of their contributions; and
 - further exploration of how digital technologies could increase take up and attendance (eg text reminders).

Part Two: Council's response

39 Following the conclusion of our fieldwork we presented our findings to the Council at a workshop in January 2019 that was attended by the Council's Performance Manager, the Council's Early Years Manager, and team managers across Flying Start and team managers of the Flying Start health visitors. The workshop was also attended by representatives of:

- the Council's legacy team
- Parent Network
- Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations

At this workshop the Council and partners began to consider their response to our findings and as a result of discussions at the workshop and further reflection on our findings the Council has developed the following actions.

Early Years Operational Plan 2019-20

Early Years Operational Plan 2019-20	
Corporate Wellbeing Objectives	Improve Education Outcomes for All
Step	Continue to deliver the Flying Start programme to help improve access, take up and attendance
Lead Officer:	Sarah Mutch, Early Years Manager
Analysis of application of the sustainable development principles	There were significant strengths identified and some areas for development or consolidation of newly implemented approaches to improve access, take up and attendance.

Improvement Actions	Success Criteria	Timescale	Person responsible	Finance
Long term				
Develop a consistent system to link to the employability/legacy programmes to track parental outcomes in tackling poverty	Flying Start can analyse how many parents have moved on to employability / legacy programmes	April 2019 – March 2020	Angharad Phenis & Andrew Griffiths Sarah Mutch	N/A
Deliver training on and explore the use of the family resilience tool by frontline staff to track family outcomes	Family Outcomes are identified and used in analysis	Feb 2019 – July 2020	Angharad Phenis & Andrew Griffiths Sarah Mutch	£8,500

Improvement Actions	Success Criteria	Timescale	Person responsible	Finance
Integration				
Consider the use of the resilience framework to identify barriers to attendance across provision	Barriers are identified for individual families as well as solutions to meet family needs	Feb 2019 – March 2020	Sarah Mutch	N/A
Explore the development of the My Journey booklet into an electronic all for families	My Journey booklet is developed and also available electronically	Feb 2019 – March 2020	Angharad Phenis	N/A
Develop case studies to demonstrate the added value of integration of early intervention prevention services with statutory provision	Case studies and research show the added value of early intervention provision	Feb 2019 – March 2020	Sarah Mutch	N/A
The Leadership Development Programme for the Council (as part of Caerphilly 2022) will include further learning on the 5 WOW	Leadership will be familiar in the use of the 5 WOW.	March 2019 – March 2022	Paul Cooke and Ros Roberts	N/A
Planning Workshops to determine service priorities will include the 5 ways of working as part of the Council's new Performance Framework	Priority setting will embed the use of the 5 ways of working which in turn will help with action planning.	March – May 2019	Ros Roberts	N/A
Service Review methodology is being developed and will include the 5ways way of working as part of the reviews	Improvement actions from the reviews will be informed by or checked using 5 WOW	April 2019 – April 2020	Ros Roberts	N/A
Planned Member training and development will include use of the FGA produced 'scrutinising and questioning' framework. Evaluation of training will identify how well this is understood and whether further support is needed	Member's ability to scrutinise will show understanding of the thinking of the 5 WOW	July 2019	Cath Forbes-Thompson Kathryn Peters	N/A
Involvement				
Explore text reminder systems for feasibility	Attendance shows improvement	April – August 2019	Lisa Williams	N/A

Improvement Actions	Success Criteria	Timescale	Person responsible	Finance
Closer working between childcare and parenting teams for families who are struggling with attendance to offer support proactively	Child attendance improves	April – August 2019	Ceri Anne Lovell	N/A
Evaluate the impact of Parent Champions in the community	Evaluation demonstrates added value	April – March 2020	Michelle Jones	N/A
Collaboration				
Implement the use of the My Journey booklets antenatal to ensure families understand the whole programme and all the delivery partners involved	All parents have a My Journey booklet before the birth of the child and understand the support available	April – March 2020	Angela Lewis	N/A
Continue development of wider collaboration work through the Children First task groups	Greater collaboration across early intervention and statutory services	April – March 2020	Sarah Mutch	N/A
Prevention				
Explore the initial data from Parent Champions to identify parental issues during 2018/19 and consider how this data could be used to shape future delivery	Data used to shape future delivery and increase engagement	April – March 2020	Sarah Mutch and Michelle Jones	N/A

40 We will continue to monitor the Council's progress in implementing these actions, and the extent to which they address the issues we have identified in our findings.

Appendix 1

Positive Indicators of the Five Ways of Working

The table below sets out 'positive indicators' for each of the five ways of working that we have identified and will use to help inform our assessments of the extent to which bodies may be applying the SDP. We do not intend to use the indicators as a 'checklist'. They should be viewed as 'indicators' that will help us to form conclusions, rather than 'determinants' of the extent to which a body is acting in accordance with the SDP in taking steps to meet its wellbeing objectives.

Exhibit 2: Positive Indicators of the Five Ways of Working

What would show a body is fully applying the long-term way of working?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear understanding of 'long term' in the context of the Act• Step designed to deliver well-being objective/s and contribute to long-term vision• Step designed to deliver short or medium term benefits, balanced with long-term impact• Step design based on deep understanding of current and future need, trends and pressures• Comprehensive understanding of current and future risks and opportunities• Resources allocated to ensure long-term as well as short-term benefits• Focus on delivering outcomes – and where this is long-term, milestone steps identified• Open to new ways of doing things which could help deliver benefits over the longer term• Value intelligence and pursue evidence-based approaches
What would show a body is fully applying the preventative way of working?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seeks to understand root causes of problems so that negative cycles and intergenerational challenges can be tackled• Sees challenges from a system-wide perspective, recognising and valuing long-term benefits they can deliver for people and places• Allocates resources to preventative action likely to contribute to better outcomes and use of resources even where this may limit ability to meet some short-term needs• Decision-making and accountability arrangements recognise the value of preventative action and accept short-term reductions in performance and resources in the pursuit of improved outcomes and use of resources

What would show a body is taking an 'integrated' approach?

- Everyone understands their contribution to delivering vision and well-being objectives
- Everyone understands what different parts of the organisation do and seeks opportunities to work across organisational and public sector boundaries
- Everyone recognises that achieving the vision and objectives depends on working together
- There is an open culture where information is shared
- There is a well-developed understanding of how the well-being objectives and steps to meet them impact on other public sector bodies
- Individuals proactively work across organisational boundaries to maximise their contribution across the well-being goals and minimise negative impacts
- Governance, structures and processes support this, as do behaviours

What would show a body is collaborating effectively?

- Focus on place, community and outcomes not organisational boundaries
- Understands partners' objectives and their responsibilities, which helps to drive collaborative activity
- Has positive and mature relationships with stakeholders, where information is shared in an open and transparent way
- Recognises and values the contributions that all partners can make
- Seeks to establish shared processes and ways of working, where appropriate

What would show a body is involving people effectively?

- Understands who needs to be involved and why
- Reflects on how well the needs and challenges facing those people are currently understood
- Works co-productively with stakeholders to design and deliver
- Sees views of stakeholders as vital information to help deliver better outcomes
- Ensures full diversity of stakeholders is represented and they are able to take part
- Mature and trusting relationships with its stakeholders
- Information is shared with stakeholders in an open and transparent way
- Ensures stakeholders understand the impact of their contribution
- Seeks feedback from key stakeholders which is used to help learn and improve

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