



EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 12TH SEPTEMBER 2023

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON PROGRESS AGAINST NEETS-REDUCTION
ACTIONS AND CURRENT ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE**

REPORT BY: SENIOR YOUTH SERVICE MANAGER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update members on progress regarding Caerphilly's 2021/22 NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) results (published April 2023) in the context of the current 5-year target schedule.
- 1.2 Acknowledge the operational improvements contributing to the reduction of the number of NEET young people.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 NEETs performance is on track against the projected targets for the current five year period and the results for 2021/22 have met the stated target. The figures represent the total percentage of year 11 school leavers in July that do not have a formalised EET (Education, Employment or Training) destination by October 31st of that year.
5 year target schedule -

Year	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27
Target %	3.0 (result = 2.8/54 individuals)	2.8	2.5	2.0	1.7	1.5

- 2.2 Education and other services combine well to identify those at risk of becoming NEET and Caerphilly is in the top three highest performing authorities in Wales in this regard.
- 2.3 CCBC's NEETs-reduction actions now require review and amendment to best meet the authority's ambitions and associated targets for the coming year(s)

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That members consider the content of the report.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To keep the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee updated on the progress regarding the Caerphilly's 2021/22 NEET results and the operational improvements contributing to the reduction of the number of NEET young people.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 Caerphilly's Engagement and Progression Framework partnership, hosted by Caerphilly Youth Service, oversees cross-authority NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) reduction and NEETs-resolution activity. The framework partnership is coordinated centrally and brokers support to those young people identified with NEETs-related vulnerabilities via school/LA RAG assessment – those logged as Red are deemed most at risk and are prioritised for intervention. The subsequent progress of individuals (to Amber or Green categories or into employment, other education or training at the point of leaving compulsory education) is tracked, as is the incidence of those with NEET vulnerabilities across all secondary schools.

5.2 The out-turn NEETs result for the year 2021/22 is 2.8% and therefore within the target of 3%. To provide context, the table below shows NEETs performance over the previous 5 years – an overall improving trend until 2020/21, including for the initial pandemic period, when young people were more easily contactable due to being locked down at home.

Year	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Result	1.9%	2.6%	2.2%	1.7 %	2.2%
Number NEET	38	51	40	33	41

5.3 Overall conditions for the identification and engagement of those potentially NEET have become more challenging since 2020/21 due to the consequences of Covid 19 and high levels of absenteeism.

5.4 The authority's Engagement and Progression Framework and associated structures is actively addressing the current challenges, including for example by recruiting the number of associated organisations to work together to reduce NEETs.

5.5 The Youth Service's NEETs activity directly links with and supports the current education strategy objectives –

- *Accelerate the progress of vulnerable learners - Reduce the number of young people post-16 without access to education, employment or training (NEETS).*
- *Further improve provision and support for young people (post-16).*

5.6 The proportion of Year 11 leavers recorded as not having a destination (and are therefore characterised as being NEET) has been increasing and Caerphilly's figures are slightly above the Welsh average. However, the NEET figure for Caerphilly in real terms is low due to the Progression and Engagement framework's ability to reach out and identify those whose NEET status would otherwise be unknown - the accuracy of each authority's NEETs figures is contingent upon being able to verify the NEETs status of young people. The increased number of young people with unknown status at the data cut-off date of 31st October each year, the less reliable any overall NEETs performance result at authority level becomes. Caerphilly's reporting is therefore considered to be reliable by stakeholders, including Welsh Government. With NEETs performance adjusted to accommodate the number of 'unknowns', Caerphilly is one of the highest performing (third best) authorities.

5.7 The low level of 'unknown' young people may be considered to be a direct outcome of the combined efforts of CCBC's Youth Engagement and Progression Officer and associated framework of external services, Education's Inspire team (now enjoying an extension and refinement of operations due to successfully attracting financial support via the Shared Prosperity Fund until 31st March 2025), Education Welfare and family liaison officers and other colleagues working hard to track down and account for as many Year 11 pupils (at risk of becoming NEET) as possible. Much time, effort, commitment and perseverance is required to follow through and finally make contact with young people who have not been engaging with school or other relevant services.

An important contribution to the reduction of NEETS via engagement at Key Stage 3 has been by the Inspire2Achieve (from now on known simply as Inspire) team. This team has worked with a cohort of identified pupils to help regain their focus on attendance, attainment and behaviour by offering bespoke one to one or small group support. From September 2023, this team will have a dedicated support officer based in each secondary school. During the 2023 school summer break, Inspire officers supported Year 11 leavers to secure appropriate destinations in employment or training.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 None

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Should any proposal requiring a decision go forward as a consequence of this report, an IIA will be available at that time.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no financial implications with respect to this report, though it can be noted that the continuation of the Inspire team's contribution to NEETs reduction in the coming year has come about by the securing of Shared Prosperity Funding.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no personnel implications with respect to this report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 All responses from the consultations have been incorporated in the report. consultee

11. STRATEGY POWERS

11.1 N/A

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Services
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