



SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

Date Written	21 st November 2017
Report Author	Chris Hole / Diane Jones
Service Area	Social Services/Community Wellbeing
Committee Date	4 th December 2017

To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

NEETS STRATEGY 2018-2021

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Scrutiny Committee of the Not in Education, Employment or Training Strategy (2018-21) (NEET) and the progress that has been made against this agenda in line with the previous strategy. The NEET strategy identifies some critical areas to be progressed if the authority is to continue its progress.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Scrutiny Committee debates the contents of this report and identifies any further information they would like to receive.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following on from the success of the Merthyr Tydfil NEET Strategy (2013-16) the Not in Education, Employment or Training Strategy (2018-21) has been developed to ensure that mechanisms and systems continue to be improved or developed. This strategy is focused on ensuring that young people who are at risk of not engaging in education, employment or training (NEET) or who have become NEET, are supported appropriately to reintegrate into education and/or the labour market.
- 3.2 The Scrutiny Committee are being asked to consider and debate the key priorities of the Not in Education, Employment or Training Strategy (2018-21)

4.0 WHERE WE WERE

4.1 The approach to the implementation of the NEET Strategy 2013 -16 has seen significant success achieved across the County Borough **Figure 4.2**. This success has been built upon a preventative approach to NEETs. Identifying young people who need support early in their school years through a vulnerability profiling tool. In conjunction with this support for post 16 has been provided which enables individuals to re-train and reintegrate into the labour market and/or education. Each of these unique areas requires effective multi-agency working at both a strategic and an operational level and is led by the local authorities NEET Coordinator.

4.2

NEET %: Year 11 Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council - Trends			
2012	2013	2014	2015
6.2% (44 young people)	1.87% (13 young people)	2.6% (16 young people)	1.6% (10 young people)
All Wales: 4.2%	All Wales: 3.7%	All Wales: 3.1%	All Wales: 3.1%
NEET 16-24yrs MTCBC Unemployment Rate Trends			
33.4%	26.3%	20%	18.5%
All Wales: 23.7%	All Wales: 22%	All Wales: 19.2%	All Wales: 15.9%

5.0 WHERE WE ARE NOW

5.1 NEET Data Year 11

5.1.1 For 2016, the published Welsh Government NEET figure for Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council was 1.3%, equating to six young people, which placed the local authority joint first with two other Local Authorities, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Ceredigion County Borough Council.

5.1.2 However, during early 2017 data discrepancies were identified and through the NEETs Steering Group strategic partnership it was confirmed that at a national level young people educated other than at school are not included in the national destination survey results. Prior to the 2016 destination survey, within Merthyr Tydfil, the NEETs figure had accounted for all year 11 leavers including those educated other than at school. Therefore for 2016 there are two sets of data, unverified local NEETS figure of 1.9% and a nationally published figure of 1.03%.

5.2 NEETs Data 16-24 Years

5.2.1 There are numerous data sets collected and analysed through Stats Wales pertaining to unemployed young people aged 16-24 and. The two which are identified as headline measures are the unemployment rate and the economic inactivity rate. It is however also useful to monitor the claimant count (JSA) within the local authority area. The progress against each of these areas is identified in the table below

	MTCBC 2012	MTCBC 2017	Wales Av 2017
Unemployment Rate %	33.4%	19.6%	13.1%
Economically Inactive	26.4%	14.6%	19%
JSA Claimants	34.3%	16.4% (2016)	16.4% (2016)

5.2.2 The rate of improvement across Merthyr Tydfil has been at an accelerated pace in comparison to the rest of Wales. The unemployment rate improving by 13.8% compared to the Wales improvement of 10.6%, the economically inactive improving by 4.1% compared to the Wales improvement of 2.2%. In relation to the Claimant count the improvement has been by 17.9% and brings Merthyr Tydfil as of December 2016 in line with the Wales Average.

5.2.3 When analysing the claimant count data it is able to be evidenced that individuals between 16-24yrs are for the majority spending shorter periods of time unemployed. However those with significant barriers preventing reintegration into employment or training are whilst small in number are becoming more visible.

Claimant Count	MTCBC 2012	MTCBC 2016	MTCBC 2016 (individuals)
Over 6 months %	14.8%	7.5%	60
Over 12 months	7.4%	5.0%	40
Over 18 Months	2.3%	3.1%	25
Over 24months	0.4%	1.9%	15

5.2.4 The small numbers within the population of the 16-24 cohort can have a significant bearing on the headline figures especially when % are utilised. In 2012 the 16-24 population excluding students was 4,800 according to Stats Wales and in 2017 this has decreased to 4,200 in 2017. There was a notable rise in the population (4700) in 2016 before returning to 4,200 in 2017.

5.3 There has been significant work and investment across the County Borough to reduce young people becoming NEET and reduce the unemployment rates and increase employability skills. This has resulted in the securing of European programmes to address both pre 16 and post 16 support for NEETs. This has resulted in a range of programmes being available at post 16 including Inspire to Work (I2W) and Communities for Work (C4W) plus at pre 16 the Inspire to Achieve (I2A) programme. The Inspire to Achieve and Work projects are currently funded until June 2019 and Communities for Work until 2020.

6.0 The NEETS Strategy - Development and Consultation

6.1 The Not in Education, Employment or Training Strategy (**Appendix A**) identifies the critical priorities within this agenda for the period 2018 to 2021 that will be taken forward through the well-established NEETS Steering Group. This group has, and continues to provide, an appropriate strategic partnership approach that is now linked into the Tackling Poverty Structure. The development of this strategy has been influenced by the partners, national policy drivers and through the learning gained from critical pieces of research outlined below. Critical within the Wavehill research especially that of the NEETs Life Journey research has been the voice and experiences gained from the young people that were the first to experience the introduction of the lead worker approach.

6.2 NEETS Research & Evaluation

6.2.1 In March 2015 Merthyr Tydfil through grant funding commissioned a research study to establish the current and future needs of training and learning provision, and to identify patterns of local employment and skills gaps in relation to the key sector industries in Merthyr Tydfil.

6.2.2 The findings identified that a number of local employers have difficulties in filling vacancies, with specific challenges around job skills such as welding, painting and decorating, and customer services. The research also indicated the need for more generic employability skills training in communication, problem solving, and planning and organizing. The research also identified the need to develop a more collaborative approach to curriculum planning across the post 16 sector to ensure learning provision meets the needs of young people as gaps and duplication were identified across partners

6.2.3 Working collaboratively with the Economic Growth Partnership key recommendations of the Business Skills research will be embedded into a future economic growth strategy, with this being reflected in the Not in Education, Employment or Training Strategy (2018-21).

6.2.4 In 2016/17 Merthyr Tydfil and its strategic partners commissioned an independent review of the lead worker approach to NEETs. The purpose of which was to identify the impact of the introduction of this model, if any, and to evaluate the priority areas for improvement or refocusing of support. The review was ground breaking in that our main strategic partner, Careers Wales, provided unlimited access to its database which enabled the research to look at the life journey of young people who were classified as high risk on leaving school in 2014 until they were 18 and compared their experiences against a randomly sampled cohort of the same size from the same year group.

6.2.5 The key outcomes of the research were that the Lead worker approach whilst requiring further development had made a significant impact on those identified as high risk on leaving school and influenced their future involvement in provision post 16. Whilst they had more periods of unemployment than the control group only a small number became entrenched in continuous unemployment or disengagement

from education. Therefore this research has evidenced that the approach will help to prevent the costs associated to the longer term impacts of being NEET and the likelihood of sustained unemployment as an adult, eventually reducing the need for more costly interventions.

6.2.6 There are several key issues impacting on our young people between 16-18 yrs which are contributing to multiple periods of being NEET, and which potentially establish the trend of their future access in or out of employment and learning. These areas are identified as mental health and well-being and substance misuse which is compounded by a lack of information sharing between services to support the individual and the services themselves

6.2.7 Through the research identified above, the engagement of partners and from the learning gained through the implementation of this agenda the following key strategic aims have been identified as critical to taking forward the 2018-21 strategy.

- Aim 1 effective early Identification at pre and post 16
- Aim 2 Maintain and Improve the Brokerage and Co-ordination of Support:
- Aim 3 Ensure Provision Meets the Needs of Young People
- Aim 4 Strengthen Employability Skills and Opportunities for Employment and Training

7.0 WHERE WE WANT TO BE & CRITICAL PRIORITIES

7.1 Critical to the success of the above will be the further development of the Capita one education database to include:

- Developing a vulnerability profile for young people down to key stage two
- Utilising the capita one data to measure the impact of lead working and interventions across families first to compliment distance travelled tools
- Developing electronic case management systems where possible to centralise data

7.2 Work with Strategic partners to address the concerns highlighted by the recent research which identified young people with mental health and wellbeing as a priority group as well as young people who are within or have formerly been looked after especially where these are out of county placements.

7.3 An increasing number of partners involved in the delivery of the NEETS agenda which now means there is a need to enhance the existing quality frameworks into a more formalised approach for the delivery of lead working both at pre 16 and post 18. This will enable the services involved to combine the best practice previously witnessed. Included in this priority is also the need to work across partners in developing a more collaborative approach to the learning offer in partnership with economic development.

7.4 A focus on these areas will enable Merthyr Tydfil to continue to be at the forefront of mitigating the impacts of unemployment on our young people (16-24) and their families. It is believed that this approach will enable the partnership and services responsible for keeping Merthyr Tydfil in the top quartile since 2012 to maintain its

current performance levels within the top quartile over the coming 3 years whilst addressing some critical issues identified.

8.0 WHAT WE NEED TO DO NEXT

- 8.1 Review the feedback from the Scrutiny Committee
- 8.2 Gain Cabinet approval on the NEETS Strategy

9.0 CONTRIBUTION TO WELLBEING OBJECTIVES

- 9.1 The councils Neets strategy has historically contributed to the Employability agenda across the council but is now reflected in the Wellbeing Statement
 - Best Start to life - Children and young people develop the knowledge and skills and attributes they need to flourish in life learning and work

Lisa Curtis Jones
Chief Officer Social Services

Cllr David Hughes
CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
List the Background documents which have been relied on in preparing the report. E.g. previous minutes of relevant committees	Wavehill Research- 2015 and 2016	ICS Fileserver
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		NO

Not in Education, Employment or Training Strategy (2018-21)



Lead Officer:

- **Chris Hole** (Head of Community Wellbeing– MTCBC)

Key Strategic Partners & Authors:

- **C. Hole, D. Jones, S. Morgan** (Social Services– MTCBC)
- **P. Lipian** (Children Social Services – MTCBC)
- **S. Bowen, D. Swallow** (Education & Inclusion Services-MTCBC)
- **A. Jones** (Careers Wales),
- **J. Martin** (Coleg Merthyr Tydfil)
- **S. Davies** (Partnership Planning-MTCBC)
- **C. Griffiths** (Youth Offending)
- **C. Pritchard** (JCP)

This document can be provided on CD, electronically or in large print and can be translated into other languages.

For more information contact:

NEET Steering Group
C /O Diane Jones
MTCBC Unit 5
Triangle Business Park
Pentrebach
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 4TQ

Email: diane.jones@merthyr.gov.uk

Phone: 01685 727305

Date NEETS Plan Approved:

Date NEETS Plan to be formally reviewed: April 2018

Images: www.mwlp.com.au, sufforkworkexperience.com, www.dreamstime.com

Foreword by Chief Officers & Portfolio Lead

The Vision for children and young people who are at risk of not engaging in education, employment or training (NEET) within Merthyr Tydfil is that they will be given the opportunity to reach their full potential through coordinated support enabling them to take advantage of high quality learning environments and effective interventions that assists their transition between education and work.

Following on from the success of the Merthyr Tydfil NEET Strategy (2013-16), the Not in Education, Employment or Training Strategy (2018-21) has been developed to ensure that mechanisms and systems continue to be in place to support young people who are at risk of not engaging in education, employment or training (NEET) or who have become NEET, and need help to reintegrate into education and/or the labour market.

With the success that have been already achieved, it is clear that successfully identifying young people who need support early in their school years, or helping them post compulsory education to re-train and reintegrate into the labour market and/or education, requires effective multi-agency working at both a strategic and an operational level.

It is acknowledged that no single agency can address this issue on its own because of the range of factors that impact on a young person's ability to engage with education, employment and training. It is clear that this strategy will only succeed if we have the continued strong multi agency input and cooperation that has been already developed, and that I know exists within Merthyr Tydfil.

Within Merthyr Tydfil there is a clear commitment to ensuring every young person can live a rewarding, productive and independent life. It is for this reason that all organisations who have a key role in supporting young people come together to support the implementation of the Not in Education, Employment or Training Strategy (2018-21) and create innovative ways to ensure we achieve this goal

Thank you for your cooperation and ongoing support

Chief Officer Social Services

Cllr David Hughes Portfolio Lead

Chief Officer Education Services

Cllr Lisa Mytton Portfolio Lead

Section	Contents	Page
1	INTRODUCTION	5
2	BACKGROUND	6
3	MERTHYR TYDFIL 2050	7
4	DEFINING SUCCESS 2018-21	8
5	THE BASELINE IN 2016	9-10
6	STORY BEHIND THE BASELINE	10-12
7	ACHIEVING THE PRIORITIES	12-14
8	YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICES MEASURES & TARGETS 2016-19	15-17
9	MAPPING THE MEASURES	18-20

1 INTRODUCTION

This plan sets out Merthyr Tydfil's long term vision for the ongoing coordination of preventative services to reduce young people's likelihood of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), and to reduce the occasions and duration they experience being NEET between the ages of 16 -24. This plan identifies the critical priorities within this agenda for the 2018-21 periods that will be taken forward through a partnership approach with organisations across the County Borough. These priorities are influenced through a range of national policy drivers including:

1. Well Being of Future Generations Act 2015
2. Social Services And Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
3. Child Poverty Strategy for Wales
4. Rights to Action 2004
5. Extending Entitlement
6. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
7. Youth Engagement and Progression Framework

The priorities identified within this plan provide a foundation for the further development and coordination of the NEETS agenda and contribute to the longer term vision and achievement of the national wellbeing indicators within the Wales we Want framework.

In addition to the above policy context local strategic influences have been identified that have helped to shape this plan and are detailed within:

- Well Being Plan and needs assessment
- Estyn Inspection of the Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People
- Tackling Poverty Strategy, which is currently in development

This Strategy has been developed through bringing together key partners within both the Local Authority and the third as well as private sector to ensure a joined up approach to the future strategic development of the agenda. This plan reinforces the commitment between all partners to ensure that the young people of Merthyr Tydfil are able to access a range of NEETS prevention support appropriate to their needs. In so doing this approach will help to prevent the costs associated to the longer term impacts of being NEET and the likelihood of sustained unemployment as an adult.

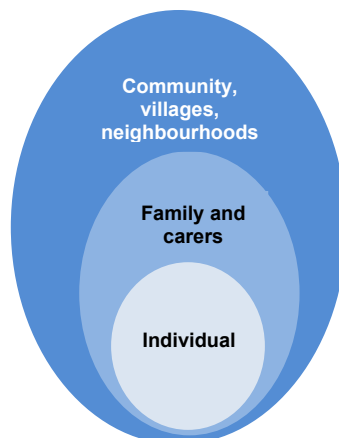
Underpinning this approach is the need for all services to achieve improved outcomes for service users and the wider community, whilst developing active citizens that not only have the skills to fulfil their potential but which develop greater independence and resilience within the communities of Merthyr Tydfil.

2. BACKGROUND

In the past, planning for public services has often been too responsive to demand rather than need. This has meant public services have provided services which treat problems after they have arisen, rather than preventing their occurrence in the first place. As a local authority, we support the principle of early intervention and prevention and acknowledge the need to work differently in order to better serve the needs of our communities across the County Borough with a specific focus on those who are disadvantaged; vulnerable or at risk of becoming vulnerable.

A huge amount of preventative work has been done over many years with notable successes, however too many services continue to treat problems after they have arisen. In order to break the cycles of dependency and the intergenerational transfer of poor outcomes, we must focus greater efforts and resources on services that deliver early intervention and prevention.

The majority of people in Merthyr Tydfil are surrounded by a network of family, friends and neighbours that influences their quality of life. They in turn contribute to the community in which they live. There is a need to complement these networks by supporting people to live fulfilled lives, and when they need it to tackle life problems. This is important not only for the individuals concerned but for the resilience, well-being and development of our community as a whole. To do this we need to make the right services available at the right time, and ensure they are efficient and well-coordinated. This is about managing the needs of our community.



The Programme for Government emphasises the importance of all parts of Wales providing multi-agency support for families who need it, tailored to the particular issues they face, bringing together help from social services, health services, education, justice and voluntary services.

By improving our ability to respond quickly through prevention and early intervention, public services and partners aim to help more people to live fulfilled lives in the community, reducing the need for specialist services in the future.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and its statutory partners including the third sector are committed to working together to improve the health and wellbeing of those who live, work and visit Merthyr Tydfil. This vision is:

“To strengthen Merthyr Tydfil’s position as the regional centre for the Heads of the Valleys and be a place to be proud of where:

- People learn and develop skills to fulfil their ambitions;
- People live, work have a safe, healthy and fulfilled life; and
- People visit, enjoy and return”.

3. MERTHYR TYDFIL 2050

All children and young people have access to a range of services, appropriate to individuals' level of needs which improve skills and attainment, develop resilience and promote independence, creating active citizens that take responsibility for their own health and well being and builds more cohesive and caring communities for all.

Developing a cohesive and safe community, with Merthyr Tydfil as the regional centre for the heads of the Valleys and where diversity is welcomed.

This vision is underpinned by implementing an approach in partnership with the people of Merthyr Tydfil to ensure services meet their needs and which contribute towards the future sustainability of these services. The following principles are considered by the Council as the foundation blocks for all service developments:



Long-term

The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet need in the long term



Prevention

How to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives



Integration

Considering how the PSB's objectives impact on each other, on the objectives of partner organisations etc.



Collaboration

Acting in collaboration with any other person that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives



Involvement

The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving common goals and ensuring those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves

4 Defining Success for 2018 -21 for young people in Merthyr Tydfil.

Priority 1 - Raising Attainment - Improving Skills and Qualification levels

Early identification of young people at risk is a critical factor in ensuring that young people who require additional support (pre 16) in line with their needs. In partnership with education and schools across the County Borough, interventions coordinated through a team around the child approach will assist in reducing unauthorised absences and improving performance of those young people most at risk of becoming NEET.

Priority 2 - NEETS - Reducing risk of becoming or remaining NEET

Merthyr Tydfil aims to have all young people leave school and progress into a post 16 destination of employment or further learning, providing a solid foundation for the individual's future career choices. These foundations and aspirations contribute towards developing a skilled and motivated workforce which assists in attracting future inward investment and the future sustainability of the economy of the County Borough.

Priority 3 - Employability – Reducing the number of 16-24yrs unemployed

Improving the information sharing for young people at post 18 is critical to ensuring that the right young people are being targeted for support. Alongside this there is a need to review and strengthen the partnership arrangements in order to work towards partners having shared ownership over a local 'joint' curriculum which meets the needs of young people promotes progression and meets employer's needs.

Priority 4 – Vulnerable Groups – Improving access to support services

Identifying the needs of our most vulnerable groups and of how the services on offer support these groups to succeed is critical to ensuring our most vulnerable succeed. Recent research identifies young people with mental health and wellbeing concerns as a priority group as well as young people who are within or have formerly been looked after especially where these are out of county placements.

Priority 5 – Quality and Safeguarding – Strengthening and maintaining a quality framework across partners

An increasing number of partners involved in the delivery of the NEETS agenda now mean there is a need to enhance the existing quality frameworks into a more formalised approach for the delivery of lead working both at pre 16 and post 18. This will enable the services involved to combine the best practice previously witnessed and the

5 BASELINE Indicators 2016/17

In order to measure future progress there is a need to have an agreed baseline on key data sets, this baseline will be utilised annually to review future target setting. Where available specific data sets have been used for the 11-25 age group however where these are not available wider population data has been utilised.

Attainment:

- 52% achieving level 2 inclusive
- 85.4% achieving level 2
- 93.1% Attendance in Secondary
- Permanent Exclusions (secondary) 3
- Fixed Term exclusions (5 days or less) for secondary 32.4 – per 1000 pupils
- 1.6 % identified by Year group as at highest risk of NEETs

NEETS 16-18

- 1.03% of young people identified as NEET – Year 11 (2016)
- 0% no response to survey (unknown)
- 88.7% of young people progress into further education (full time)
- 5.9% progress into Work based learning
- 0.63% of young people take up apprenticeships
- Establish Baseline - % of **care leavers** were in education, training or employment at 12 and 24 months - no baseline available new measure

NEETS 16-24

- 19.6% of young people unemployed aged 16-24 (June 17)
- 14.6% of 16-24 yrs (excluding Students) are economically inactive (June 17)
- 80% of ESA claims for young people 16-24 are for Mental health
- Establish Baseline - % of young people successfully completing FE programmes
- Establish Baseline - % of young people from Merthyr College securing a place on higher education
- Establish Baseline - % of young people from Merthyr college and work based learning moving into an apprenticeship
- Establish Baseline - % of young people from Merthyr Tydfil achieving a degree

Employability

- 40.8% of Merthyr Residents work outside the County Borough
- 29% of employers in Merthyr Tydfil say they are unable to recruit staff with the required skills
- 20% of employers in Merthyr Tydfil say they have 1 or more staff that are not proficient in their role
- 15% report problems in retaining staff
- 62% of employers want to see better access to apprenticeships for under 25's

6 STORY BEHIND THE BASELINE DATA

Attainment

An enhanced focus and drive to improving outcomes for children of all ages within formal education has resulted in outcomes for children in Merthyr Tydfil improving at a faster rate than the rest of Wales. However it is recognised that this focus and commitment needs to continue to ensure Merthyr Tydfil achieves improvements which will place them in the top quartile in Wales. In tandem with this there have been improvements in both school attendance and the rate of exclusions across the secondary education sector.

These improved outcomes and improved targeting of support for those young people most at risk of becoming NEET has had a substantial and sustained impact on the NEETs figures within recent years.

Alongside this the local authority has seen a trend of high performance from the Youth Service in relation to both the voluntary engagement of young people and the achievement of informal and recognised qualifications however more needs to be achieved to understand how the voluntary sector delivery also contributes to this agenda.

NEETs 16-18 yrs

The responsibilities placed on Local Authorities through the introduction of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework resulted in Merthyr Tydfil establishing a strategic partnership to address the NEETS issue across the county borough. This partnership has since 2012 been extremely successful in reducing the NEETS figure and ensuring that no young people became 'unknown, to the support agencies and providers.

During this period significant change to the education system has also been implemented with the introduction of a tertiary college system, which has contributed to an increased number of young people remaining in full time education post 16. It is unclear how this translates into the securing of higher education or employment outcomes for these individuals at present and is an area for development.

A significantly higher percentage of young people in Merthyr Tydfil take up work based learning compared to the Welsh average and too few young people secure apprenticeships. It is also recognised from previous data available that young people which are resident outside Merthyr Tydfil but have previously been supported by statutory services are disproportionately represented in the NEETs figures for their respective areas and through previous data available from social services, including looked after care leavers.

Recent research has identified that there are several key issues impacting on our young people between 16-18 which are contributing to multiple periods of being NEET, and which potentially establish the trend of their future access in or out of employment and learning. These areas are identified as mental health and well-being and substance abuse which is compounded by a lack of information sharing between services to support the individual and the services themselves

NEETs 18-24 yrs

Youth unemployment has been decreasing since 2012; however, during 2015 this rose sharply and will continue to be a focus for improvement through the range of employability programmes recently secured within the County Borough. Key to future success will be ensuring young people who progress into further learning also successfully transition into apprenticeships and Higher Education. Providing these young people with these opportunities will enable better access to well paid employment that not only provides an identified career path but also raises the prosperity of the community as a whole.

Throughout the post 16 learning environment greater partnership working needs to be developed to ensure that the 'curriculum offer' meets the needs of employers both locally and more widely as a large % of Merthyr residents travel outside of the county borough for work, in fact more so than in neighbouring authorities. Ensuring greater collaboration and progression routes are available will enable employers to recruit more easily from the local population and develop a more productive, cohesive workforce.

Employability

There has been significant work and investment across the County Borough to reduce unemployment rates and increase employability skills.

In March 2015 Wavehill Ltd were commissioned by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) and its partners to undertake a research study to establish the current and future needs of training and learning provision, and to identify patterns of local employment and skills gaps in relation to the key sector industries in Merthyr Tydfil.

The research findings indicate that unemployment and worklessness remains a significant issue in the borough. Employers indicate that there are difficulties in filling vacancies, with specific challenges around job skills such as welding, painting and decorating, and customer services. The research also indicates the need for more generic employability skills training in communication, problem solving, and planning and organizing.

Working collaboratively with the Economic Growth Partnership key recommendations of the Business Skills research will be embedded to improve and better coordinate services to young people.

7. Achieving the Priorities

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council cannot meet the needs of the young people of the borough in isolation and is therefore committed to developing support for NEETS in partnership with the wider community. This includes ensuring that the wider community, including organisations delivering these services increase their knowledge about the needs of both the County Borough and individual communities as well as improve their ability to target resources appropriately. Through this collaborative and informed approach the community can become more involved in the development and delivery of services in response to the current and future priorities. This will also serve to increase the sustainability and effectiveness of organisations whilst maximising the impact of valuable resources on the life chances of individuals within the community. This approach will also contribute to a range of national priorities including improving individuals well being and the tackling of poverty across the community, developing more cohesive communities.

Aims and Objectives; *How we are going to get there.....*

Aim 1 Continue to ensure effective early Identification at pre and post 16

Objectives

- 1.1) *Implement and review the Early Identification Capita One assessment toolkit for young people aged 11-16 yrs after pilot year has been completed*
- 1.2) *Review outcomes of the Careers Wales review of the Career Checker & Piloting a diagnostic tool.*
- 1.3) *Ensure that families supported through MIA and other vulnerable groups are identified and recorded termly as part of the Capita One system*
- 1.4) *Agree indicators and Pilot Early Identification toolkit for years 5 and 6 to inform transition planning into high schools*
- 1.5) *Review Merthyr College vulnerability tool for 16-18yrs and identify recommendations for implementation across wider networks.*
- 1.6) *Develop further the partnership with Further Education Colleges to identify and track the destinations of young people after completing their education at 18 and beyond*
- 1.7) *Develop further data management systems to establish baseline information on the churn figure for Merthyr Tydfil and how this reflects in lower super output areas.*
- 1.8) *Development robust systems of analysis of the Career Wales 5 tier Data Key Task for -Careers Wales Data Hub*
- 1.9) *Review with partners the information sharing approach to young people aged 19-24yrs as they transition into Job Centre Plus (JCP) to improve tracking and progression, developing improved targeting of resources*
- 1.10) *Identify with Further Education (FE) establishments those young people with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) that require additional support upon exit from FE 16 to under 19yrs, and the progression into Higher Education (HE) for 18yrs plus (WAO R3)*

Aim 2 Maintain and Improve the Brokerage and Co-ordination of Support:

Objectives

- 2.1) *Review the current paper based systems to track the post 16 plans of young people in Year 11 ragged red and amber in securing a place in education, employment or training (EET)*

- 2.2) *Review/ update provision mapping, and explore alternative and collaborative links with the Dewis information service to support public and professionals*
- 2.3) *Education and training providers to ensure course availability is on Careers Wales online to maximise take up*
- 2.4) *Review expenditure on NEETs services to better understand the resources required to deliver the Framework (WAO R1).*
- 2.5) *Explore how to increase the long term sustainability of the reduction in NEETs by enabling the third sector to deliver lead working approach with young people*
- 2.6) *To gain a further understanding of the impact of the [‘A curriculum for Wales, a curriculum for life’](#) review as piloted by identified schools*
- 2.7) *Careers Wales to support schools to deliver the Careers World of Work of the Donaldson Curriculum for Life*
- 2.8) *Review the information sharing agreements and update annually*
- 2.9) *Ensure a standardisation of practise through the implementation of an agreed Lead Worker Framework/Manual*
- 2.10) *Review the training for lead workers to identify good practice and minimum standards*
- 2.11) *Review current meeting arrangements in partnership with schools at Pre 16 and identify leads for Key Stage 3 & 4*
- 2.12) *Review current tracking arrangements at pre 16 to streamline the process and improve the use of capita one to capture and measure interventions*

Aim 3 Ensure Provision Meets the Needs of Young People

Objectives

- 3.1) *Develop systems with partners to provide termly data analysis to measure the impact of interventions ‘risk reduction’ to young people identified as ‘high risk’ (Red ragged) particularly in relation to key measures*
- 3.2) *Establish the range of interventions being utilised by lead workers to address specific risk factors, including mental health, and analyse effectiveness and value for money to inform best/future practice*
- 3.3) *Review with partners the impact of targeted programmes impacting on NEET’s annually, to inform future delivery particularly with the rise in youth unemployment 16-24 yrs in 2015 ensuring value for money is identified.*

- 3.4) *Explore and develop transition arrangements for young people exiting statutory orders in partnership with Youth Offending Service (YOS)*
- 3.5) *Review current systems of tracking the post 16 plans of children who are looked after (CLA), pilot a Year 11 CLA focus review meeting format to confirm post 16 plans and identify potential barriers*
- 3.6) *Review the NEETs' transition & tracking of CLA young people placed out of county, develop and pilot a handover system with other LA NEET Coordinators to routinely exchange information (reciprocally) on progress and destinations within the Careers Wales 5 Tier Model.*
- 3.7) *Identify how local services that aim to reduce unemployment can support the Re-Connect to Care requirements and promote independence as community members.*
- 3.8) *Identify and develop systems (Capita 1) to collate and track young people who are looked after, including at post 16*
- 3.9) *Review current systems to collate and measure the wellbeing of young people*

Aim 4 Strengthen Employability Skills and Opportunities for Employment and Training

Objectives

- 4.1) *Evaluate the impact of the policy for supporting vulnerable young people to access employment within the local authority.*
- 4.2) *Review and identify why the take up of apprenticeships in Merthyr Tydfil is low and make recommendations to take forward*
- 4.3) *Through the Economic Growth Partnership implement the recommendations of the Business Skills research to improve and better coordinate the local training offer to young people*
- 4.4) *In partnership secure additional support for NEETs aged 18-25 yrs – to reduce youth unemployment*
- 4.5) *Improve access to training for young people in employment*
- 4.6) *Increase awareness and promote access to targeted provision for the most vulnerable young people with a learning disability and / or learning difficulty*

8 NEETS Measures & Targets - 3 Year Forecast (reviewed annually)

Critical Key Performance Measures	Targets		
	2018 - 19	2019-20	2020-21
<u>Priority 1 Attainment</u>			
% Young people achieving level 2 inclusive - <u>Education Strategic Plan</u> - DH	62	To be established	To be established
% Young people achieving level 2 - <u>Education Strategic Plan</u> - DH	90	To be established	To be established
% Attendance in High School - <u>Education Strategic Plan</u> - DH	96	To be established	To be established
% of high risk pupils having a post 16 plan in place prior to leaving school	100%	100%	100%
<u>Priority 2 NEETS</u>			
% of young people who become NEET (end of Year 11)	1.03%	1%	0.8%
% of young people who progress into Further Education (end of Year 11)	89%	90%	90%
% young people taking up Apprenticeships (yr 11 leavers)	1.7	2%	2.2%
% churn figure - via Careers Wales Data Hub, establish baseline figures (Post 16)	Establish a baseline	-1%	-1%
<u>Priority 3 - Employability</u>			
% Youth Unemployment (16-24yrs)	19%	18.5%	18%
% Economic inactive (16-24yrs excluding students)	14%	13.5%	13%
% young people progressing into higher education	Establish Baseline	+1%	+1%
<u>Priority 4 – Vulnerable Groups</u>			
% of children looked after (CLA) who become NEET (16-24yrs) in county	Establish	-1%	-1%

	Baseline		
% of children looked after (CLA) who become NEET (16-24yrs) out of county	Establish Baseline	-1%	-1%
Additional Local Measurers	Targets		
% identified as at risk of NEET (Pre 16 / EI Toolkit)	1.5%	1%	1%
% of young people identified as NEET closed to support with a positive destinations (Post 16 Lead Worker Support 16-24yrs)	Establish Baseline	+2%	+2%
% of young people identified as NEET and closed to support and/or refusing support (Post 16 Lead Worker Support 16-24yrs)	Establish Baseline	-1%	-1%

9 Mapping of measures of success

It is important that all stakeholders understand not only the outcomes that need to be achieved but of how the range of NEETs Outcomes contributes to a number of identified population measures. The contribution to these population measures will not be made by all services but more often by a range of services contributing to multi agency partnerships. The Merthyr Tydfil Priority Measures that will be reported on are at a population level and are able to be benchmarked against other local authorities in Wales as identified below. These measures directly contribute to the national well being indicators and the seven well being goals for Wales. Some of these population measures are corporate priorities and are therefore reported and monitored through the Corporate Plan:

Merthyr Tydfil Priority Measures	Corporate Plan	Single Integrated Plan	Seven Core Aims	Well being Indicator	Well being Goals
Priority 1					
% Young people achieving level 2 inclusive	CP-PA1	SP-P1		5	1,3,4,6
% Young people achieving level 2	CP-PA1	SP-P1		5	1,3,4,6
% Attendance in High School	CP-PA1	SP-P1		5	1,3,4,6
% of high risk pupils having a post 16 plan in place prior to leaving school	CP-PA2	SP-P2		7	1,3,4,5
Priority 2					
% of young people who become NEET (end of Year 11)	CP-PA2	SP-P2		7	1,3,4,5
% of young people who progress into Further Education (end of Year 11)	CP-PA1	SP-P1		5,6	1,3,4,6
% young people taking up Apprenticeships	CP-PA2	SP-P2		5,6	1,3,4,6
% churn figure - via Careers Wales Data Hub, establish baseline figures (Post 16)	CP-PA2	SP-P2		7	1,3,4,5
Priority 3					
% Youth Unemployment (16-24yrs)	CP-PA2	SP-P2		7	1,3,4,5
% Economic inactive (16-24yrs)	CP-PA2	SP-P2		7	1,3,4,5
% young people progressing into higher education	CP-PA2	SP-P2		5,6	1,3,4,6
Priority 4					
% of children looked after (CLA) who become NEET (16-24yrs) in county	CP-PA6	SP-P6		7	1,3,4,5
% of children looked after (CLA) who become NEET (16-24yrs) out of county	CP-PA6	SP-P6		7	1,3,4,5

These measures will be further underpinned by a range of local measures some of which may be particular to groups of services, where applicable these will be brought together to analyse performance trends on a borough wide basis and benchmarked against other local authorities where possible. These measures have been mapped against the priorities of both the corporate plan and the single integrated plans priority areas but most are not considered critical to these plans and generally therefore are not reported through these existing mechanisms except for some participation measures.

Additional Local Measures	Corporate	Single	Seven Core	Well being	Well being
----------------------------------	------------------	---------------	-------------------	-------------------	-------------------

	<i>Plan</i>	<i>Integrated Plan</i>	<i>Aims</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Goals</i>
Attainment					
% identified as at risk of NEET (Pre 16 / Early Identification Toolkit)	CP-PA2	SP-P2		7	1,3,4,5
% of young people identified as NEET closed to support with a positive destinations (Post 16 Lead Worker Support 16-24yrs)	CP-PA2	SP-P2		6	1,3,4,
% of young people identified as NEET and closed to support and/or refusing support (Post 16 Lead Worker Support 16-24yrs)	CP-PA2	SP-P2		7	1,3,4,5
Employment					
% of young people remaining in education post 16	CP-PA1	SP-P1		6	1,3,4,
% of young people taking up apprenticeships	CP-PA2	SP-P2		5,6	1,3,4,6