

1. Reasons for and support available for children and young people at risk of EOTAS, including through their exclusion from mainstream provision

- 1.1 In recognition of the needs of all learners, our expectation in Swansea Council is that all children and young people will experience a safe, nurturing, positive and engaging learning environment. They will be encouraged to become ambitious learners, through a responsive and empowering curriculum; and a supportive ethos built on partnership and strong relationships. For some of our young people, we recognise that the key to achieving those ambitions requires a collaborative focus across all of our public services.
- 1.2 Many children or young people may require additional support, at some or all stages of their school careers, to ensure that barriers to learning and achievement are addressed.
- 1.3 We recognise that barriers to learning are many and complex and can include:
- The learning environment
 - Family circumstances
 - Disability or health needs
 - Social and emotional factors
 - Additional learning needs (ALN)
- 1.4 Early identification of these needs and intervention at the earliest opportunity, through where appropriate, a co-ordinated approach by education, social services and health services are essential to address these barriers, thus allowing the most vulnerable children, young people and their families in particular, more choices and chances to achieve. Parents and their children will benefit from a multi-agency approach, which is person centred, where professionals work in partnership to develop one integrated plan to meet the needs of the child and family. Planning to meet needs is based on the simple cycle of identifying and assessing, planning together, taking action, reviewing and identifying points for action.

1.5 Swansea Council places a strong focus on prevention and early identification and intervention. The development of the universal provision in schools is key to becoming more inclusive. This entails enhancing the capacity of all staff working with children and young people and underpins the strategy to support the continuum of need across the spectrum of young people who exhibit social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. This is supported through the development of a tiered staged intervention model.

1.6 In Swansea, the staged intervention model provides a continuum of support based on need. The levels of support are summarised below:

Stage 1- Universal Provision: Our commitment is to developing the universal provision and to build the capacity across all of our schools, to provide an inclusive education to meet the needs of nearly all pupils, within the classroom, by the class teacher. Swansea offers a range of training and support to schools including centre based training, on-line training, school based training and specialist training in addition to support to work through a self-evaluation toolkit to provide information to support whole school planning and improvement in the area of supporting young people with SEBD/SEMH needs.

Stage 2 -Targeted Provision: Where additional school planning is required to fully meet the needs of children and young people, and support schools in building their own capacity, and targeting areas for development identified through their self-evaluation processes, Swansea provides a range of training and support via the Behaviour Support Unit (BSU) where each school is provided with dedicated hours of support and advice. Plans are underway to extend the existing provision to include support to schools from a Prevention and Early Intervention Team offering specialist phone/ on-line/drop in shop support to further improve schools' identification/intervention/sign-posting when working with young people exhibiting early signs of SEBD/SEMH. Additionally plans are in place to introduce ELSA in schools in Swansea to provide at least one key person in every school that has the skills and access to bespoke advice and support to work with young people demonstrating social and emotional difficulties.

Stage 3 - Additional Specialist Support: Where the child/young person's additional support needs require input from external agencies. This is accessed through the termly planning meeting process with the BSU or the Educational Psychology Service. This can include support from the following services: Educational Psychology Service, TAF in schools, Evolve – youth work support team for pupils in secondary schools, the Behaviour support team, CAMHS, the

Additional Learning Team, (ALN)/Social Services Early Intervention Services, the Half-Way House team targeted at supporting pupils at immediate risk of being referred to the PRU or transitioning back from the PRU to mainstream, support from the Managed Moves coordinator and/or support provided through bespoke Secondary based specialist provision funded directly to schools through an agreed memorandum based on reducing numbers of young people referred to EOTAS panel.

Stage 4 - Specialist Support: This support is developed for the very small minority of children and young people, where their SEBD needs cannot be met within mainstream provision, and where access to a PRU or special school/base or home tuition on either a full or part time basis is required. Swansea's Education Other than at School (EOTAS) provision makes appropriate educational provision for children with social, emotional behavioural, medical or other issues who, without its provision, cannot access suitable education. It allows children who have been excluded from, or have otherwise disengaged from, their registered school to participate in education until they are prepared for re-entry to an existing school place, achieve a new school place or to maintain their education until compulsory school leaving age.

Planning for this is undertaken via the relevant statutory panel process. For a very few pupils who have complex needs requiring a bespoke package of individualised support to enable them to be able to access an education offer, a multi-agency package is agreed at 'The Hard to Place' panel led by senior officers from Education and Child and Family Services.

Stage 5 – Out of County Specialist Support: On the rare occasion where Swansea Council is unable to meet the needs of a child or young person, they may need to access out of county specialist provision. Planning for this is undertaken via the relevant statutory panel process.

2. How effectively parents are engaged and supported throughout the EOTAS process?

- 2.1 The Council recognises that it is essential that all services work together as part of an integrated strategy to recognise and endorse the same core values and principles. Its aims are to promote, nurture and support the development of children and young people's well-being, through building the skills and capabilities for resilience, in addition to promoting and supporting the wellbeing of parents and carers. Work is currently on-going to strengthen the multi-agency

early intervention support that is provided to schools, young people and their families to provide a more timely and localised offer.

- 2.2 Where a young person is referred to the EOTAS panel, the consent of parents must first be gained, and the voice of parents and pupils are gathered and included throughout the process. Where EOTAS provision is offered, parents and pupils are invited to attend an initial admission meeting to discuss needs and expectations. This information is then used in the planning of support and intervention for that young person.

3. The variation in rates of EOTAS for children and young people with particular characteristics (such as learners with special educational needs or who are eligible for free school meals) and the consequences of this

- 3.1 Whilst the rates of children and young people with specific characteristics such as SEN, e-FSM and LAC vary from year to year and within year as the EOTAS cohort is a changing cohort. This is due to a number of factors including:

- Pupils being re-integrated back to mainstream
- Monthly panels placing offering places to learners throughout the year
- LAC learners being placed in Swansea etc.

However, the percentage of these groups of learners are generally higher than the overall percentage for Swansea or Wales. As such, multi-agency work is given a high priority to ensure effective communication and joint working around the needs of each young person to support their additional needs and mitigate against the potential barriers that could arise as part of these needs. Additionally, pupil outcomes in terms of attendance and attainment outcomes are also tracked to inform planning at an organisational, cohort and individual level.

4. The levels of financial support available to support EOTAS and children and young people at risk of becoming EOTAS and whether this represents value for money

- 4.1 Despite significant challenges faced by local authorities in relation to funding, in 2016 a decision was agreed by Swansea Cabinet to overhaul its entire EOTAS service to provide sector-leading practice. As part of this proposal, enhanced funding was agreed to support the planned outcomes:

- Swansea PRU reduces capacity in recognition of increased devolution of funding and responsibility to schools. The needs of the majority of learners with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) are met through mainstream education, with central provision only being made for those learners with the most severe SEBD needs;
- a multi-agency support team is developed to provide support for young people, their schools and their families;
- Swansea's behaviour and wellbeing strategy is overhauled to support the needs of the majority learners with SEBD through mainstream education;
- Swansea PRU is restructured into three strands (including a 'halfway house') educated in fit-for-purpose learning environments;
- permanent senior leadership positions are secured for the Head of Swansea PRU, Deputy Head of PRU
- a new 'early move' protocol is included in an overhaul of the existing 'managed move' protocol;
- additional corporate capital funding is approved in relation to the development of new accommodation; and
- additional corporate revenue funding is approved (at least for the next ten years) to support additional staff, devolved funding to schools and "managed move" transport costs.

4.2 In order to oversee the process of change in relation to the above, an EOTAS Steering group was convened. Membership of this group include representation from senior officers from Education, Social Services, Early Intervention Services, Schools, Cabinet and Trade Unions. The group plays a pivotal role in implementing the planned changes and holding officers responsible for the operational delivery of the actions to account. To date, very good progress has been made towards most of the planned outcomes

5. Responsibility and accountability for the education of pupils who become EOTAS

- 5.1 In Swansea as part of the overhaul of EOTAS Services, a new Headteacher has been appointed with responsibility for the PRU and for the Home Tuition service. Since appointment, she has unified the leadership across the PRU and Home Tuition Service and implemented a greater focus at a strategic and operational level on the use of data to inform planning and support accountability.
- 5.2 The local authority takes its responsibility for the standards and discharging its strategic responsibilities in relation to EOTAS provision very seriously and demonstrates a clear vision for the overall provision of EOTAS in Swansea. In order that there are clear lines of responsibility and accountability, and that the local authority is able to

monitor the progress and outcomes of EOTAS provision in Swansea, there are well defined tiers to support, challenge and monitor outcomes.

- 5.3 The PRU has a Management Committee which is responsible for the conduct and standards of the PRU. The composition of the Management Committee is set out by the local authority, in an "instrument of government" and ensures that all key stakeholder groups are represented. The Management Committee provides a good level of challenge and support to the leadership of the PRU. Members demonstrate a strong commitment to their role. The Headteacher informs members of the committee suitably on developments and areas for improvement at the school. Members contribute appropriately to the self-evaluation process through regular visits to the PRU
- 5.4 Direct line management of the Headteacher of the PRU is provided by the Head of Vulnerable Learners Service, and the Headteacher forms part of the senior leadership team of the Education Directorate in Swansea. As such, improvement planning for EOTAS provision, evaluation of progress and assessment of risks all form part of the overall Council self-evaluation processes and there is a direct link between this and the processes, self-evaluation reports and improvement planning for the PRU and Home Tuition Service.
- 5.5 The local authority has also convened a multi-agency steering group to oversee the process of overhauling the EOTAS provision in Swansea. Representatives are from a range of stakeholders and partner agencies, and the Headteacher reports to them on a monthly basis against the action points agreed as part of the planned outcomes of the overhaul of the service.
- 5.6 There is a dedicated Cabinet Member for Education that sits on the EOTAS Steering Group as well as the PRU Management Committee. In addition, the Headteacher of the PRU presents reports as requested to the Council Cabinet and to Corporate Management Team as part of their monitoring of progress against defined outcomes.
- 5.7 In terms of accountability and responsibility for the individual pupils, all pupils with the exception of the very few who have been permanently excluded are dual registered with their referring school and the PRU or Home Tuition Service. As such, the school retains a key element of the accountability and responsibility for the pupils including ensuring appropriate access to Educational Psychology time, conducting reviews of Statements of SEN, provision of appropriate support when re-integrating back to school and regular attendance at progress meetings about the pupils.

- 5.8 Information regarding the attainment, achievement and well-being is routinely shared with the PRU Management Committee, the Education Senior Leadership Team, the EOTAS steering group and the Cabinet member for Education Improvement, Learning and Skills.

6. Attainment of children and young people EOTAS

- 6.1 On entry to the PRU or the Home Tuition Service there is considerable variation in pupils' individual starting points, motivation and learning ability. For this reason, it is not appropriate to compare and report on the standards that pupils achieve with national averages or to analyse trends in overall performance over time. However, in relation to their starting points, by the end of key stage 4 many pupils make strong progress in attaining a range of appropriate qualifications to support their future pathways. These include GCSEs in mathematics, science, art and English. In addition, pupils focus and develop their individual skills through the Welsh Baccalaureate Foundation and Skills Challenge and a range of vocational accreditations. Most older pupils undertake suitable placements to extend their experiences of the world of work. Nearly all pupils continue to build on their learning in colleges of further education or work-based learning providers at post-16. Most pupils who leave the PRU at the end of Key Stage 4 have a clear destination in terms of Further Education or employment.

7. Outcomes and wellbeing of children and young people EOTAS

- 7.1 During their time in the PRU, most pupils develop strong and trusting working relationships with staff. They feel safe and know what to do and whom to turn to if they feel anxious or upset. These aspects contribute positively to the standards of wellbeing that pupils achieve enabling most to improve their attitude to learning and to make good progress against their personal targets.
- 7.2 Almost all pupils make strong progress in their engagement in lessons and activities, and improving their motivation. They settle to tasks appropriately and persevere in sessions to complete their activities. Most pupils develop resilience and have positive attitudes to their work.
- 7.3 A majority of pupils attend the unit regularly and make strong progress overall when compared to their starting points. Over time, with effective support, many pupils learn how to manage their behaviour and emotional health more appropriately. They conduct themselves well, follow the rules in lessons and around the PRU, and respond courteously and positively to visitors.

- 7.4 Many pupils who have disengaged from education prior to admission at the PRU make good progress and their attendance and engagement improves from their admission date.
- 7.5 There are a minority of pupils who present with highly challenging behaviour. These contribute to a relatively high number of exclusions across the PRU. These are very carefully monitored and additional support for pupils is provided through a key worker from the PRU who works closely with the young person, their family and partner agencies such as Social Services, the police, Youth Offending Service, drug support agencies, etc.

8. The quality of support provided to children and young people in the range of EOTAS provision

- 8.1 The curriculum is broad and balanced and is relevant to the needs and abilities of pupils. It consists of a combination of National Curriculum core subjects supplemented with appropriate further learning experiences, such as health and wellbeing sessions, expressive arts and outdoor education experiences. Older pupils follow the Welsh Baccalaureate, GCSE courses and a suitable range of vocational qualifications. Wherever possible, pupils who retain part-time mainstream placements continue with their mainstream curriculum to ensure continuity in their learning.
- 8.2 Staff provide a safe and supportive learning environment in which pupils develop an important range of life skills. Staff focus successfully on establishing positive behaviours and working relationships and improving pupils' wellbeing. This is a consistently strong feature across the PRU and is central to the work of all staff.
- 8.3 The PRU's family engagement team maintains valuable links with families and the community to improve and encourage pupil engagement.
- 8.4 Arrangements to promote positive behaviour are clear and well understood. Staff track and analyse records of incidents relating to challenging behaviour robustly. They identify patterns and plan strategies to help pupils to learn to manage their behaviours more successfully. This monitoring makes an important contribution to driving improvements in behaviour across the PRU, which is at the heart of its success in delivering effective teaching and learning.
- 8.5 On entry to the PRU, staff undertake a range of useful assessments to determine the starting points of pupils. They use this entry assessment data purposefully to plan an appropriate range of interventions and catch-up programmes for literacy, numeracy, ICT and emotional and

social wellbeing. These programmes enable pupils to make suitable progress against set targets.

- 8.6 There is an effective programme of personal, social education. This valuable support meets pupils' emotional, behavioural, health and social needs well. All staff display considerable commitment and sensitivity in supporting pupils to help them access learning effectively. This level of support helps pupils to feel safe and develops a great sense of belonging to the PRU and the wider community.

9. Professional development support for Pupil Referral Unit staff, including those who provide home tuition

- 9.1 The Headteacher has ensured that there are valuable and useful professional development opportunities for the staff in both the PRU and Home Tuition Service and that this is closely aligned to the development areas identified through the self-evaluation processes in addition to local and National priorities. Areas for development over the last 2 years have included amongst others:

- Supporting Employee Health and Well-being
- Mental Health
- Resilience
- Mindfulness
- Well-being
- Critical incident training
- Curriculum Reform Training
- English/Literacy
- Maths/Numeracy
- ALN Reform
- Developing a strategy for promoting positive behaviour and managing challenging behaviour
- Managing Aggression
- Emotion Coaching

- 9.2 In addition to the access to training, the Headteacher has developed and takes a lead role in co-ordinating a network of PRUs across the region. This enables staff at all levels to visit other PRUs and share good practice as well as opportunities to work together on joint projects such as planning for the implementation of the Well-being Area of Learning across the PRU sector. The work of this professional network has culminated in the organisation of a conference to support the professional development of all staff in PRU and staff from the Home Tuition Service on the subject of supporting well-being on 4 November 2019.

9.3 The recent Professional Development Grant has supported the ability to access valuable and specialist professional development opportunities for staff across the EOTAS services. Specific use of this funding has enabled staff to be released to work with mainstream colleagues to support their understanding of planning for the new curriculum and observing good practice in mainstream schools. This has led to useful partnerships being developed that are mutually beneficial to all concerned.

10. The potential risks for children and young people EOTAS such as increased barriers to accessing mental health support, increased risk of involvement with crime and the criminal justice system such as 'county lines'

10.1 Risks associated with children and young people who are EOTAS are not per se because they are EOTAS, but are often linked to the factors that result in them being referred to EOTAS provision in the first place. Factors such as those linked to deprivation, attachment issues, experience of ACEs and being LAC have a well-documented impact on young people's mental health, ability to focus and engage in learning, build positive relationships with others, regulate their behaviour, or manage risk appropriately. As such, the cohort of pupils who are EOTAS whilst often challenging, are particularly vulnerable and at significant risk. Reduction in funding for mental health services and difficulties in accessing timely support for young people is detrimental to their overall chances of success and a barrier to their positive engagement in education. Involvement in crime, drug use and involvement in drug dealing at a local or county line level offers many young people a sense of belonging to a group or notoriety within their peer group and a source of money or sought after items such as branded trainers or sportswear. Providing an alternative in an educational context to compete with what can be seen as instant gratification from drug use or the money/goods derived from drugs or crime is a huge challenge.

10.2 Many of the issues identified in young people who are involved in criminal or drug activity or who are exhibiting mental health difficulties can be traced back to a much earlier identification of need linked to child protection, parental drug use, domestic violence etc. Where these issues are still on-going at home, it is difficult to break the cycle for a young person who has observed their primary care givers exhibiting such behaviours.

10.3 In addition to the externalised behaviours that result in engagement in criminal/drug activity etc., there is also the risks related to the internalised behaviours, with what appears to be an increased

number of young people who are managing their anxieties or mental health issues by self-harming or those who become suicidal.

- 10.4 In Swansea, we are working closely with partners from the police, social services prevention services, youth offending service, counselling services etc. to try to mitigate against these risks. In tandem, we are constantly seeking ways to enhance and enrich the curriculum offer and the level of support offered to the young person and their family to engage young people who are disaffected.

11. Other issues closely linked to EOTAS, for example managed moves, and the 'off-rolling' of pupils

- 11.1 Swansea has appointed an officer to work with schools to support them, the pupil and their family when it is felt that a fresh start is required and a managed move may provide this. The policy for managed moves has been revised in consultation with schools and funding from the EOTAS budget has been allocated to financially support families with any additional costs involved in a managed move where needed. Where appropriate, the EOTAS Panel which is a multi-agency panel who consider all requests for an EOTAS placement will look to see if this is an avenue that has been explored prior to a referral to EOTAS.
- 11.2 Challenge Advisers in conjunction with data officers in Swansea routinely monitor school data carefully to ensure that off-rolling is not tolerated or permitted and where there is evidence to suggest that this practice is occurring, it is quickly challenged and monitored. Estyn currently considers that the monitoring work of education services, in respect of off-rolling, is an example of good practice.