



Ariennir yn Rhannol gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Part Funded by
Welsh Government



How partnership working across further education institutions and specialist further education colleges can benefit learners with additional learning needs

A Report on the Welsh Government and Natspec further education partnership project

Overview

Jointly funded by Welsh Government and Natspec, this further education (FE) partnership project facilitated staff from mainstream further education colleges (FEIs) and specialist colleges coming together to explore how collaborative working can support the achievement of Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (ALNET) Act (Wales) goals to:

- ensure that all learners with complex ALN are supported to overcome barriers to learning and achieve their full potential
- put in place timely and effective interventions that are monitored and adapted to ensure they deliver desired outcomes
- focus on skills development for the education workforce.

During 2022 and the first quarter of 2023, five partnerships between different FEIs and specialist colleges were supported to identify emerging best practice in collaborative working as well as barriers to colleges working together.

The core purposes were to:

- assess what needs to be in place to make true partnerships really effective, particularly in terms of having a positive impact on learner outcomes
- explore how these partnerships can support FEIs and local authorities (LAs) to meet statutory responsibilities under the ALNET Act.

Each participating college was able to draw on £2000 to support their engagement with the project. To access the funding, the partnerships were required to produce an action plan outlining their objectives (see appendices). All the partnerships were facilitated by Natspec's Policy Officer (Wales).

This report summarises the work of each of the partnerships. It provides exemplars of transferable practice and emerging recommendations for stakeholders including Welsh Government, FEIs, specialist colleges and local authorities.

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Context

The post-16 further education and training landscape for learners with additional learning needs and particularly those with complex needs is changing. Prior to ALN reform, Welsh Government have used what they describe as 'discretionary powers' to ensure that all special school leavers who stay in school until they are 19 years old can access the further education they need whether that be at a mainstream further education college, or a specialist college. Careers Wales Advisors have supported learners' routes to FE and where necessary, have facilitated applications to the Welsh Government Support for Learners Division for learners requiring specialist college provision. This central government department has served learners across Wales and acted as lead commissioner when funding from different budgets is required.

ALN Transformation is devolving decision making on whether a learner requires a specialist college to local authorities and increasing expectations on LAs to meet the needs of learners within their own jurisdiction. FEIs are required to become more inclusive by increasing the breadth of ALN they can meet and are therefore expected to be able to meet the education and training needs of the majority of young people. In the small number of circumstances where an FEI states they cannot meet a learner's ALN, responsibility for learners Individual Development Plans (IDPs) will transfer from a learner's school to their LA. The LA is then required to assess 'a reasonable need' for education and training and arrange placements at specialist colleges as required.

Outside the expectation that FEIs should be able to meet most learners' needs, the ALN Code is ambiguous about entitlement to post-school education and training and does not include any expectation that the discretionary powers used to date that ensure special school leavers can go to college should maintain. Instead, the Code is vague about what constitutes further education and whether a two-year entitlement should be understood as being post-school or post-16 years of age (Chapter 17, para:17.75).

This project was implemented as post-16 elements of the reforms were commencing. The primary goal was to bring colleges together to consider opportunities for new ways of working and how collaborative working can improve learner outcomes. A secondary aim was to include LA Post-16 ALN and health officials to inform and help shape the priorities of the partnerships.

Initial partnership meetings were set up by the project facilitator and it was clear that the move to the new system and uncertainty about how the ALN Code would be translated into practice were motivators for engagement. Questions the colleges identified that shaped how they planned to work together included:

- 1) How can the localism agenda meet the needs of young people with low incidence and complex needs?
- 2) How will FEIs meet the education and training needs of learners with increasingly complex ALN and how can outcomes be improved through collaboration with specialist colleges?
- 3) How will FEIs and LAs share an understanding of when a FEI is unable to meet the needs of learners with ALN and a specialist college is a learner's additional learning provision (ALP)?
- 4) If an FEI cannot meet need, what happens? In what circumstances should an IDP be ceased and in what circumstances should it be maintained and specialist provision sought?
- 5) Can joint commissioning, co-location and/or co-delivery be achieved?
- 6) How can a reasonable need for education and training be assessed and who by?

The partnerships

Five partnerships were established, all with a different focus.

Partnership	Focus	summary
Coleg Cambria and Aspris College (North)	Improving FE outcomes for learners with ALN through increased collaboration	Appendix 1 Page 10
Coleg Gwent and National Star College	Exploring how co-location could support person-centred planning	Appendix 2 Page 12
Coleg SirGar and Coleg Elidyr	Improving pre-entry assessment processes	Appendix 3 Page 15
Coleg Y Cymoedd and Beechwood College	Sharing understanding of when an FEI or specialist college may be learners' ALP	Appendix 4 Page 18
Neath Port Talbot College (NPTC) Group and the Royal National College for the Blind (RNC)	Supporting learners with VI to thrive in FEIs	Appendix 5 Page 20

The breadth of wider stakeholder involvement in the partnerships, and the degree to which learners and senior college leaders have been involved has varied. The Coleg SirGar and Coleg Elidyr partnership benefited from the widest engagement of stakeholders with members of the project including Carmarthenshire LA post-16 ALN lead, Schools ALN Advisor, DECLO and senior OT staff from Hywel Dda Health Board working with the FEI ALNCo and specialist college. Their focus has been on strengthening pre-entry assessment processes to identify learners' ALP and support timely transition planning. Coleg Gwent and National Star College have involved the senior strategic leadership of both colleges in their plans for co-location in Newport City Centre. The Coleg Cambria and Aspris College project has had the highest level of learner engagement where learners from both colleges are sharing their experiences of transition through a collaborative art project with an exhibition of their work planned for June 2023. Both the Coleg Y Cymoedd and Beechwood College and the NPTC Group and RNC projects have had a focus on the development of the FEI workforce and are now seeking to involve LA officials as their partnership working develops.

What has been learned?

Despite adverse circumstances including stakeholders dealing with the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and unprecedented staffing challenges, engagement with the projects has been strong and sustained. All five of the individual partnerships are planning ongoing collaborative working despite the funding period having ended (see appendices).

Across all the partnerships, headway has been made in addressing how, at a local level, a shared interpretation of the ALN Code¹ can be used to shape planning and as a basis for collaborative working.

¹ See the [Third Sector Additional Learning Needs Alliance \(TSANA\) statement on post-16 ALN reform](#) that outlines risks associated with ambiguity in the ALN Code.

Stakeholder priorities

FEIs have been keen to agree transition planning protocols for learners with complex ALN and have stressed the importance of managing the expectations of school ALNCoS, LAs, learners and their families through sharing an understanding of their curriculum offers and the ALN they can and cannot meet. They wanted to talk about the circumstances, protocols and timelines for the transferring of IDPs from schools to LAs when it has been established that the FEI is not a learner's ALP. This area of pre-entry assessment processes to establish a learner's ALP has been a focus of the Coleg SirGar and Coleg Elidyr partnership.

FEIs also spoke about not wanting to fail young people who 'could maybe just about cope with physically being in a FEI environment', but for whom it may not be the most conducive learning environment. The work of the NPTC and RNC (appendix 5) and Beechwood and Coleg Y Cymoedd (appendix 4) partnerships are relevant here where the specialist colleges are sharing their expertise through providing continuing professional development opportunities for FEI staff on specialist support for learners with low incidence and complex ALN.

LA representatives expressed some uncertainty about their responsibilities, and they thought that this has resulted in them being slow to develop and share their post-16 ALN protocols for learners whose needs may not be able to be met by a regional FEI. Having had no prior responsibility for FE they were keen to understand what FE means for learners with complex needs. They were also keen to avoid circumstances where learners and parents may of their own volition, visit a specialist college to request pre-entry assessments when a regional FEI may be able to meet a learner's ALN. Apart from the NPTC & RNC partnership, all the other partnerships were established based on their geographical proximity however, LAs talked about scenarios where neither their regional FEIs or nearest specialist colleges may meet the ALP they want for learners for whom they are/will be responsible. For example, when LAs are seeking specialist provision that either isn't available or suitable. For example, in Carmarthenshire, Coleg Elidyr is in a remote location and does not currently offer college day service provision and Plas Dwbl in neighbouring Pembrokeshire is similarly geographically remote. They therefore welcomed the prospect of FE colleges working in partnership to broaden curriculum offers and the prospect of existing specialist colleges diversifying to meet identified needs.

Health officials involved in the partnerships wanted to be involved in the development of transparent and shared processes. The new ALN system raises questions about who will identify a learner's therapeutic needs in an FE environment, how health services will be involved and how funding decisions will be made. They could see potential pitfalls with learners' transitions from school to FE coinciding with a move from children to adult services at the time when learners' therapeutic needs may need to be assessed. The Coleg Gwent and National Star partnership that is exploring how the specialist college could provide therapeutic interventions for FEI learners who need them.

Specialist colleges were similarly keen to understand how the new arrangements will manifest in practice. They fear that the loss of Welsh Government as a lead commissioner may result in internecine disagreements within LAs holding up transition planning and the securing of placements at specialist colleges. They were concerned that the additional decision making, assessments and multi-disciplinary funding arrangements that will need to be in place for learners whose ALP is a specialist college would result in IDPs being ended rather than learners ALP secured.

Shared priorities

By bringing stakeholders together, there was a clear appetite to develop a shared understanding of what FE means for a learner with complex ALN and the kind of outcomes that can be expected. Project participants were keen to understand curriculum offers at both providers, assessment processes, how study programmes were mapped, learner progress recorded, and specialist support provided. As the partnership action plans and objectives were developed the stakeholders visited each other and unanimously agreed that doing so had increased their understanding of where one provision ended and the other started.

Benefits for learners

Crucially, as the partnerships progressed, they all identified ways that learners can benefit from a combination of the services, opportunities, and expertise that each type of college can offer to meet the person-centred aspirations of the ALNET Act.

The benefits for learners of mainstream and specialist colleges working together have been mirrored in Wales with those identified in a comparable project also facilitated by Natspec in England² and include extending or enriching learning opportunities, enabling learners to progress further, upskilling workforces to better meet learner need and enabling inclusion.

Extending or enriching learning opportunities

For example:

- Aspris College and Coleg Cambria are supporting positive transitions to further education through engaging learners in both colleges in art-based collaborative projects.
- The Royal National College for the Blind in Hereford are working with Neath Port Talbot College Group to introduce peer mentors for learners with VI accessing the FEI. Mentors will be final year RNC learners.
- National Star learners are accessing Coleg Gwent Usk campus and plans are in place for Coleg Gwent mainstream health and social care learners to undertake work experience placements at National Star College.

Enabling learners to progress further

For example:

- RNC and NPTC are exploring the potential of RNC providing short courses or summer schools for learners with VI to prepare them for the demands of accessing a mainstream FEI.
- Beechwood College and Coleg Y Cymoedd have exemplified how learners can benefit from starting their FE journey at a specialist college to prepare and progress learners to access their regional FEI.
- Coleg Elidyr and Coleg SirGar are working together to improve pre-entry assessment processes to ensure the right ALP can be identified and timely transitions supported.

Upskilling the workforce to better meet learner need

For example:

² Read the project report [Breaking down the binary system](#)

- Coleg Elidyr has shared with Coleg SirGar its comprehensive pre-entry assessment processes used to decide if the college is able to meet an individual's ALN.
- Beechwood college's clinical team provided free CPD workshops to all Coleg Y Cymoedd staff as part of their Inclusion Fest in February and the two colleges are planning further collaborative CPD opportunities for staff.
- RNC are providing access to their own pedagogical inhouse training to NPTC Group staff working with learners with VI.

Supporting greater inclusion

For example:

- Aspris College and Coleg Cambria are focusing on how learners with high support needs including those with poor school attendance can be supported to access the FEI.
- National Star learners are accessing Coleg Gwent's Usk campus as part of their study programmes.
- RNC are sharing a wealth of specialist expertise with NPTC to support learners with VI to access a FEI environment.

Conclusion and recommendations

This project was limited to five FE partnerships but nonetheless had good geographical spread across Wales. Furthermore, the issues identified are congruent with those raised by other groups in which Natspec is involved including the FEI independent learning skills (ILS) Leads Group, Natspec member colleges and engagement with the LA Post-16 Group. By working together stakeholders can deal with the inherent ambiguity in the ALN Code and work towards pan-Wales approaches that will avoid learners with ALN experiencing post-code lotteries of access to FE.

FEIs and specialist colleges responsibilities for ensuring they have workforces with the requisite skills to support learners with complex ALN have never been more closely aligned. The sharing of best practice to improve outcomes for learners with low incidence and complex ALN was a common theme across all the projects. This ranged from pre-entry assessments (Coleg SirGar & Coleg Elidyr) through to delivering different aspects of curriculum (Coleg Gwent & National Star) and specialist pedagogy (NPTC & RNC, Coleg Y Cymoedd & Beechwood College) to supporting positive post college transitions (Coleg Cambria & Aspris College). The project has demonstrated a clear appetite for knowledge sharing and there is much scope to further develop best practice in teaching and learning for Wales' learners with ALN attending FEI ILS or specialist college study programmes.

For learners with complex ALN in Wales to have equitable access to FE, the colleges involved in the this project were able to go so far in reaching a shared interpretation of when a specialist college and when an FEI would best meet need, but they are hampered by a lack of a clear steer from the ALN Code and Welsh Government on expectations for continuing education for 19 year old special school leavers. To fully develop complementary provision, colleges need Welsh Government to provide guidance that ensures that assessments of a reasonable need are consistent nationally. Professionals from within both college types need to be involved in drawing up protocols for assessments. Equally, IDPs must be informed by person-centred, ambitious, and adult orientated IDP outcomes written by individuals who have a full

understanding of what FE means for a learner with complex ALN and the kind of outcomes that can be expected from FEIs and specialist colleges.

This project exemplifies how partnership working can more effectively meet the person-centred aspirations at the heart of ALN reform. Funding arrangements should be developed that allow learners who need them to benefit from the expertise of both FEIs and specialist colleges.

More fully meeting the needs of more young people with ALN through partnership working is likely to be a more efficient way of spending public money in the medium to long term, with more young people better equipped to gain employment, live as independently as possible and access their wider communities. The more FEIs, specialist colleges and local authorities can work collaboratively, the greater the likelihood of effectively managing expectations and minimising the allocation of scarce resources for placement breakdowns and tribunals.

As LAs start to engage more proactively in planning they will be identifying gaps in their FE provision. They should share where they see gaps and FEIs and specialist colleges should be supported to identify how they can work together to meet LA requirements.

This should allow for more funding to be re-directed towards improved provision for young people and further education colleges and strengthen their role roles in preparing learners for their long-term destinations so reducing overall costs on the public purse of meeting the long term needs of adults with complex needs.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Natspec, Welsh Government and other stakeholders including Colegau Cymru and individual local authorities, should promote the work of the partners who engaged in this project and encourage more specialist and FE colleges to consider ways in which they could work in partnership to benefit learners with ALN.

Recommendation 2: Welsh Government should commit funding for partnership working between FEIs, specialist colleges and local authorities to develop transparent post-16 ALN protocols that will support timely transitions and manage the expectations of learners and their families.

Recommendation 3: Funding arrangements should support FEIs and specialist providers working together to provide truly person-centred study FE programmes. Welsh Government should work with LAs to develop appropriate, proportionate sub-contracting rules to facilitate ALP for those learners needing both a FEI and a specialist college.

Recommendation 4: Welsh Government should clarify ambiguities in the ALN code that could result in learners with ALN having IDPs ended because of the ALP they need. They should state what inclusion in education means for learners with complex ALN and an expectation of the maintenance of the discretionary powers that have ensured all 19-year-old special school leavers can access an FE they need.

Recommendation 5: Welsh Government should encourage LAs and FEIs to agree and share pre-entry assessment protocols including how assessments of reasonable need for education will be made, by whom and the circumstances when it is reasonable to end the IDP of learner whose needs cannot be met by a FEI.

Recommendation 6: Natspec, regional specialist colleges and FEIs should work with local authorities to identify gaps in provision and assess how existing colleges can adapt their provision and work in partnership to meet identified needs.

Recommendation 7: Welsh Government should build on the resource and information sharing between different college types which has benefited colleges and learners in this project and consider the development of a Post-16 ALN virtual academy to serve as a stakeholder resource and repository for information, guidance, CPD and cross ALP development of best pedagogic practice. This would maximise long-term benefits and positive learner FE outcomes for learners with complex ALN in Wales.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Coleg Cambria and Aspris College (North)

March 2023

Project Leads

Names of lead staff involved in the project	Maria Gianassi & Maryanne Evans, Coleg Cambria Jane Plant, Aspris College (North)
Names of senior staff supporting the project	Lizzie Stevens, Head of Inclusion, Coleg Cambria Kath Lawler, Principal, Aspris College

Project summary

Coleg Cambria's Yale campus and Aspris College (North) are in very close proximity. The colleges have a long-standing arrangement where learners from Aspris have accessed Coleg Cambria curriculum and facilities as part of their study programmes. This project is building on existing practice to develop a model for person-centred provision planning. It is premised on the view of both providers that there are learners enrolled at one college who will benefit from aspects of provision in the other and that more can be done to ensure successful transitions to and within further education. The project is using a shared collaborative art project to encourage learners to think creatively about what transition means to them and as a vehicle for increasing pan-college learner and staff interactions and understanding. An Art Exhibition on Coleg Cambria's Yale campus planned for June 2023 to showcase the learners' work.

Examples of transferable practice

- cross-provider learner projects as a vehicle for supporting positive transitions
- exemplar of person-centred provision planning
- learners from a specialist college access non-accredited experiential learning at an FEI and FEI learners access specialist support from specialist college.

Project objectives, achievements and plans

Objectives	Achievements	Plans
<p>High functioning learners in Coleg Cambria benefit from specialist support from Aspris North around the lifeskills needed to access Coleg Cambria</p>	<p>Staff from Coleg Cambria are identifying learners who may be benefit from Aspris' specialist support for learners needing focused therapeutic life skills development.</p>	<p>Colleges will pilot how they can offer complementary curriculum to support improved outcomes for learners with ALN who would benefit from aspects of the offers of both providers.</p> <p>A particular focus has been identified as how collaborative working can improve access to FE and outcomes for learners with poor school attendance records.</p>
<p>Aspris College and Coleg Cambria will share resources to provide person-centred curriculum to support improved outcomes for learners with complex ALN</p>	<p>Aspris College are providing CPD workshops for Coleg Cambria on supporting learners to manage anxieties and supporting learners to manage change and cope with the demands of a busy FEI environment</p> <p>Staff from Aspris are identifying learners who may be benefit from experiential learning on Coleg Cambria's vocational curriculum offers.</p>	<p>In May 2023, the colleges are working with a local artist on the theme of 'transition' Coleg Cambria will host a week long art exhibition on their Yale campus in June 2023</p>
<p>Key stakeholders Careers Wales, Local Authority and school ALNCOs have shared understanding and approaches of learners FE needs.</p>	<p>The two providers are seeking to use their experiences of the collaborative working above to offer a model for person-centred provision planning.</p>	<p>Both providers are reaching out seeking to engage the involvement of regional post-16 ALN officials in developing shared and transparent assessment processes for identifying ALP for learners with ALN leaving special schools.</p>

Appendix 2

Coleg Gwent and National Star College in Wales

March 2023

Project Leads

Names of lead staff involved in the project	Gary Handley, Faculty Director, Care and Community Studies, Coleg Gwent John Mann, Director of Services National Star
Names of senior staff supporting the project	Guy Lacey, Principal, Coleg Gwent Lynette Barrett, CEO National Star

Project summary

This project is exploring how close collaborative working would allow both colleges to meet the person-centred aspirations of the ALN reforms through learner access to aspects of both providers' provision. While existing policy and practice restricts learners to accessing teaching and learning from one further education provider (i.e. an FEI or a specialist provider), Coleg Gwent and National Star College in Wales have implemented co-location activities and are discussing longer term strategic planning that will see their joint working grow to include dual Newport city centres campuses and shared social enterprises.

Examples of transferable practice

- a memorandum of understanding between partner colleges
- FEI providing access to vocational learning facilities for learners at specialist college
- specialist college providing focused professional learning for FEI staff
- FEI learners accessing specialist college environments for work experience placements.

Project objectives, achievements and plans

Objectives	Achievements	Plans
<p>Understand how collaboration between FEI and specialist post-16 provision in southeast Wales can improve the range of programmes available for young people with a range of additional learning needs.</p>	<p>Staff from both providers have visited each other's campuses to understand curriculum offers and facilities for learners with ALN</p> <p>National Star has been engaged by Coleg Gwent to review ILS curriculum offers and RARPA processes.</p> <p>National Star has been working as a critical friend to Coleg Gwent in the development of its independent learning skills (ILS) provision for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities including the development of Coleg Gwent's RARPA (recognising and recording progress and achievement) processes.</p>	<p>Develop local authority and wider stakeholder understanding of both colleges offers and when Coleg Gwent may not be appropriate ALP for learners with ALN.</p> <p>Develop agreed pre-entry assessment processes to include a methodology for managing joint assessment and quality assurance measures to support timely transitions to identified ALP.</p> <p>Data sharing to map post-college destinations for learners with ALN on ILS courses at both providers to identify best practice and areas for development.</p>
<p>National Star being co-located on Coleg Gwent Usk site as a satellite site to the National Star in Wales site, providing students from both sites with the chance to mix, curriculum to be shared, and opportunities for sharing staff expertise and facilities.</p>	<p>National Star learners are currently accessing Coleg Gwent's Usk campus</p> <p>The colleges are developing a memorandum of understanding including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased exposure and opportunities for informal mixing of learners from both providers work experience opportunities for learners from both providers advanced skills development for staff how National Star can support Coleg Gwent to meet ALN reform statutory obligations and offer local authorities and other stakeholders including young people and parent, transparency on curriculum 	<p>Piloting how Nat Star specialist expertise may benefit Coleg Gwent learners (e.g. behavioural or other therapeutic support)</p> <p>Piloting how Nat Star learners can benefit from Coleg Gwent vocational facilities (e.g. taster sessions). Where appropriate, this will facilitate learner progression from National Star to Coleg Gwent.</p> <p>Use the findings of pilot studies to inform proposals for joint delivery offers.</p>

	offers for learners with complex ALN in the region	
Scope out long term sustainable partnership opportunities	Senior staff from both college are involved in the project and are committed to sustained collaborative working to improve outcomes for learners with complex ALN in SE Wales. See the next column for examples of emergent pans.	

Appendix 3

Coleg SirGar and Coleg Elidyr

March 2023

Project Leads

Names of lead staff involved in the project	Julia Green, ALNCO, Coleg SirGar Geraint Wadley, Head of Education, Coleg Elidyr
Names of senior staff supporting the project	Julia Green, ALNCO, Coleg SirGar David Sibbons, CEO, Elidyr Communities Trust

Project summary

The focus of the project is on processes supporting the identification of additional learning provision (ALP) to meet a young person's additional learning needs and how colleges can work collaboratively to support transparent and high quality assessments and transitions.

It has involved collaborative working between Coleg Sir Gar, Ceredigion, Coleg Elidyr and local authority and Health ALN representatives and is aimed at timely transition planning for special school leavers.

Examples of transferable practice

- planning for collaborative and shared pre-entry assessments for learners with complex ALN
- joint information events for regional stakeholders

Project objectives, achievements and plans

Objectives	Achievements	Plans
Improved collaborative working between Coleg Sir Gar, Ceredigion, Coleg Elidyr and local authority ALN representatives.	Multi-disciplinary engagement in this project has been excellent. The project has benefitted from the sustained engagement of the regional DECLO, Head of Occupational Therapy for Hywel Dda Health Board and two LA officials with responsibility for	See below.
Shared understanding of FE offers for young people with complex ALN in Coleg Sir Gar, Ceredigion, Coleg Elidyr	<p>Both colleges have repeatedly visited each other campuses and reported they both have developed a clear understanding of '<i>where one provision stops and another one starts</i>'.</p> <p>The colleges are engaged in shared CPD events including peer mentoring and teaching and learning observations of Coleg SirGar staff in Coleg Elidyr and vice versa.</p>	<p>The colleges are planning to co-deliver an information event for LA officials, Careers Wales, Health Service Leads and ALNCoS. The aim of the event is provide clarity on the curriculum offers in Coleg SirGar and Coleg Elidyr for learners with complex ALN. The colleges will explore the potential of including learner speakers so attendees can hear about what further education has meant to them. The event will include a physical tour of Coleg Elidyr and an overview of Coleg Sir Gar's provision.</p>
Integrated assessment processes are agreed to determine when an FEI and/or a specialist college are appropriate ALP	Colleges have shared their pre-entry assessment processes to inform their understanding of if their provision is able to meet the education and training needs of potential learners.	<p>The colleges are seeking to propose a future model of working where their expertise could be combined when assessing the education and training needs of special school leavers with complex ALN.</p> <p>Benefits will include: more detailed information for Coleg SirGar's MDT Admissions Team; an expanded pool of expertise in assessing learners' education and training needs;</p>

		<p>more detailed information on learners' needs for LA officials likely to be taking responsibility for IDPS when Coleg SirGar is not able to meet a learner's reasonable needs for education and training;</p> <p>smoother transition planning with ALNCOs, learners and parents not needing to go through repeated assessments to ascertain a learner's ALP.</p>
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Appendix 4

Coleg Y Cymoedd and Beechwood College

March 2023

Project Leads

Names of lead staff involved in the project	Dorian Adkins, Head of Inclusion, Coleg Y Cymoedd Rachel Beechwood, Director of Services, Beechwood College
Names of senior staff supporting the project	Dorian Adkins, Head of Inclusion, Coleg Y Cymoedd Rachel Beechwood, Director of Services, Beechwood College

Project summary

The project seeks to work collaboratively to develop a shared understanding between the colleges and with local authority officials on when a learners ALP is their regional FEI and when it may be a specialist college. It is also considering how working together can support the person-centred aspirations of the ALN reforms through supporting transitions from Beechwood College to Coleg Y Cymoedd when/if learners are able to develop the skills they need to cope with the demands of an FEI environment. The project has included the provision of continuing professional development opportunities for Coleg Y Cymoedd staff by Beechwood College's clinical staff.

Examples of transferable practice

- sharing best practice on making the best use of learning support staff and supporting learners with autism
- working with ALNCos to share understanding of further education ALP for learners with complex ALN.

Project objectives, achievements and plans

Objectives	Achievements	Plans
Collaboration with local authorities and other colleges. E.g.	Local authority representatives and Coleg Y Cymoedd Transition Officers have attended project meetings.	Both colleges are seeking further involvement of LA officials
Promote understanding of different provision for young people with complex ALN in Coleg Y CyCmoedd and Beechwood College.	<p>The Principal of Beechwood has joined an established Coleg Y Cymoedd ALNCo group.</p> <p>The Principal of Beechwood has been invited by Coleg Y Cymoedd to join breakfast meetings with special schools.</p> <p>Clinical staff from Beechwood College presented workshops at Coleg Y Cymoedd 'Inclusion Fest' on 17 February. Both workshops were fully booked by Coleg Y Cymoedd start</p>	The need for ALNCoS to have a shared understanding of FE offers in both colleges and what further education means for young people with complex ALN was highlighted.
Share and develop best practice in baseline assessing.	Colleges have shared their approaches to pre-entry assessments of learners ALN and their suitability to meet individuals' ALN	The colleges are seeking the engagement of post-16 ALN local authority officials to develop shared approaches to understanding a learners ALN and ALP
Creation of an exemplar model for post-16 transition planning for young people with complex ALN.	The colleges are using a case study approach to evidence how collaborative working is supporting person-centred practice.	As above, the colleges are seeking the engagement of post-16 ALN local authority officials.

Appendix 5

Neath Port Talbot College Group and the Royal National College for the Blind

March 2023

Project Leads

Names of lead staff involved in the project	Julie Mercer and Natalie Joseph: Neath Port Talbot College (NPTC) Group Lucy Procter and Nicola Smith: Royal National College for the Blind (RNC)
Names of senior staff supporting the project	Julie Mercer, Head of School, NPTC Lucy Proctor, CEO, RNC

Project summary

This project is responding to the expectation within the ALN reforms that regional FEIs meet the education and training needs of learners with more complex low incidence ALN by developing a shared understanding of the support learners with vision impairment (VI) need to thrive in further education. RNC's expertise is being drawn on by NPTC and the partnership is exploring how longer-term collaborative working can improve outcomes for learners with VI.

A primary focus has been on the advanced skills development of NPTC staff including increasing knowledge and understanding of assistive technologies, and more widely, how the wellbeing of learners with VI can be enhanced and social isolation reduced.

Concurrently, the partnership plans to use an evidence-based case study approach to seek to work with local authority officials to develop a shared understanding of when joint commissioning may be appropriate as well as when NPTC may be unable to meet the needs of learners and a specialist college such as RNC is a learners additional learning provision (ALP).

Examples of transferable practice

- using the partnership with a specialist college for FEI advanced skills development on meeting specific ALN
- peer mentoring of FEI learners with low incidence ALN by final year specialist college learners
- using an evidence-based case study approach to work with LAs to identify when an FEI is not able to meet a learners' ALN.

Project objectives, achievements, and plans

Objectives	Achievements	Plans
To understand the curriculum and support for learners with VI at both colleges and share good practice.	<p>College visits have developed an understanding of each other's offers for learners with VI</p> <p>A range of staff opportunities for sharing good practice have taken place or are scheduled including regular project meetings, college visits by different staff, teaching and learning observations, (e.g. NPTC staff going to RNC to observe the teaching of A-level maths) and planned joint CPD days.</p>	<p>To share understanding with LA officials of each colleges' offers for learners with VI</p> <p>To share understanding of when curriculum and support should be tailored for learners with degenerative sight loss</p> <p>To explore the potential, where appropriate for staged progression from RNC to NPTC for learners who may require the initial dedicated expertise of RNC to allow them to access NPTC.</p>
To share knowledge and understanding of the most appropriate assistive technologies and adaptations for learners with vision impairment	<p>Assistive Technologies have been a focus of visits and discussions between the partner colleges.</p> <p>Forthcoming visits by RNC staff to NPTC will identify appropriate AT NPTC could be utilising for learners with VI.</p>	<p>RNC involvement in NPTC inset cpd days in July 2023</p> <p>LA officials to be brought into discussions on how case studies of learners can be used to develop pre-entry assessment processes for the identification of learners with VI whose needs could not be met by NPTC and for whom, a placement at RNC may be appropriate.</p>
Sharing specialist expertise	<p>RNC have to date shared a breadth of specialist expertise including details of internal and externally sourced workforce CPD for staff; inviting NPTC to undertake teaching observations; pre-entry assessment processes; bespoke timetable development, learner progress monitoring.</p>	<p>NPTC staff to undertake relevant modules of RNC's internal CPD offers on teaching learners with VI.</p> <p>Final year learners from RNC to take on a peer mentoring role for learners at NPTC.</p>

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