

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2017-2018

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Agenda Item No. 5

25th OCTOBER 2017

**REPORT OF:
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND
LIFELONG LEARNING**

**YOUNG PEOPLE'S ENGAGEMENT IN
RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

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**YOUNG PEOPLE'S ENGAGEMENT - RHONDDA CYNON TAF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
AND PARTICIPATION SERVICE**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee with information on young people's engagement with the Youth Engagement and Participation Service.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Scrutinise and comment on the information contained within this report.
- 2.2 Consider whether they wish to scrutinise in greater depth any matters contained in the report.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

3.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide youth services for 11 – 25 year olds as prescribed in section 123 of the *Learning and Skills Act (2000)*. This Act is in force in Wales under the *Youth Support Services Direction (Wales) 2002* which directs local authorities in Wales to:

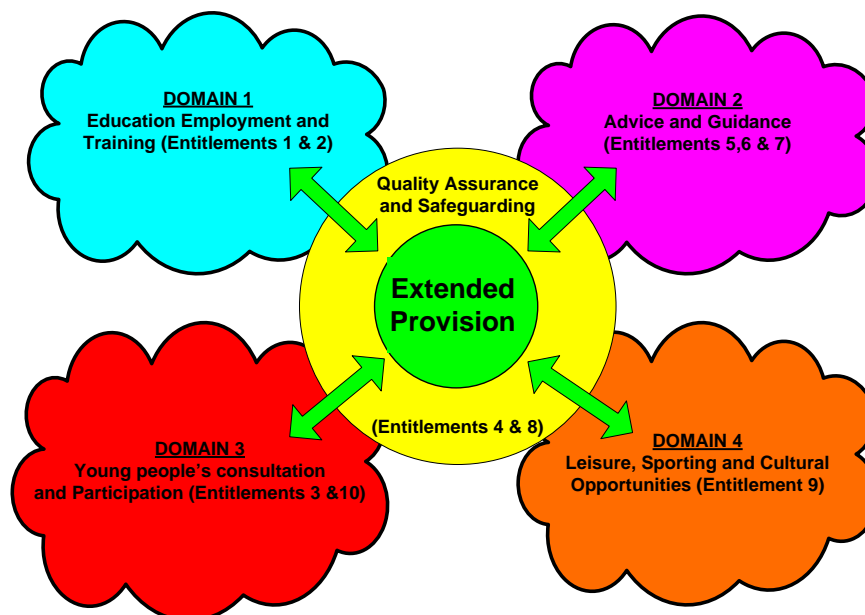
- a) Provide youth support services;
- b) Secure the provision of youth support services, or
- c) Participate in the provision of youth support services, having regard to guidance issued by the National Assembly.

3.2 In RCT the above statutory duties are the responsibility of the Youth Engagement and Participation Service with provision subject to inspection by ESTYN under the inspection of Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People.

- 3.3 The Youth Engagement and Participation Service has been subject to two service changes as part of the Council's Medium Term Service Planning arrangements; the first in 2014 delivering a saving of £2.2M (50% budget reduction) and the second in 2016, delivering a saving of £0.346M (16% budget reduction). Members will recall that the need for a series of service changes across a number of areas, including those implemented within the Youth Engagement and Participation Service, were due to the Council needing to bridge a significant 'budget gap' primarily as a result of material reductions in funding levels.
- 3.4 The Youth Engagement and Participation Service sits within the wider Engagement and Participation Service alongside the Attendance and Wellbeing Service, the Supporting Education Employment and Training (SEET) Service and the ESF Projects Team.
- 3.5 The aim of the Youth Engagement and Participation Service is to support young people aged 11-25yrs to achieve their full potential and overcome barriers to learning and progression. To achieve this aim, the early identification of young people through Vulnerability Profiling is the foundation of the Service.
- 3.6 Vulnerability profiling is the Council's agreed single approach to the early identification of those individuals at risk of disengaging from learning as a result of socio-economic barriers they face outside of the school environment. It provides the Youth Engagement and Participation Service with the means to target and allocate resources; plan provision; and evaluate its impact to ensure that young people are receiving the support they need.

4. SERVICE DELIVERY

- 4.1 Service delivery is focused on the following key activities:
- Provide targeted support that is driven and directed by vulnerability profiling data to young people aged 11-25yrs at risk of disengagement
 - Prevent young people becoming NEET and support those who are NEET
 - Contribute to the early intervention agenda by reducing the number of young people entering statutory services
 - Ensure young people have equitable access to their entitlements
 - Provide activities and one to one support for young people to engage and participate in all aspects of learning to secure positive outcomes
 - Work closely with community based partners to ensure a comprehensive youth offer to young people at a local level.
- 4.2 In order to deliver our statutory duty to secure the provision of Youth Support Services, two evenings of extended provision is delivered from each of the 17 secondary school sites. This ensures equitable service provision across the whole of RCT. Each cluster area is allocated an enrichment budget, which is a flexible budget for activities and casual support staff.
- 4.3 Extended provision is planned and delivered within the domains set out in the RCT Youth Support Services Strategy in order to ensure that young people have appropriate access to their ten entitlements as set out in the Welsh Government document Extending Entitlement: Supporting Young People in Wales (2002) .



4.4 The Youth Engagement and Participation Service also provides one to one support for young people referred to the Service for the following reasons:

- Attendance rates of between 86%-90% for pupils in Key Stage 4
- Pupils experiencing multiple in-year transfers
- Young people aged 16+ in Tier 1 (Education, Employment or Training destination unknown)
- Vulnerable young people in need of support (Identified as Amber through Vulnerability Profiling)
- Young people with low participation levels who are socially isolated
- Specialist support for young people who attend Pupil Referral Units and are accessing Education Other Than At Schools (EOTAS) provision.

4.5 The Youth Engagement and Participation Service clearly sets out the contribution it makes to the priorities of schools and the wider Education department through the referral criteria as outlined in section 4.4 of this report. The referral process is set up to align with the Attendance and Wellbeing Service and the SEETs Team referral processes to simplify procedures by providing a single point of referral for schools.

4.6 The establishment of a formal service agreement between the Youth Engagement and Participation Service and each individual secondary school clearly sets out their respective functions in relation to the local authority's statutory duty to provide youth support services.

5. **DOMAIN 3: YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION**

5.1 The Youth Engagement and Participation Service recognises the importance of involving young people in decisions that affect them in order to improve their wellbeing, as well as aid service planning and development. As part of the service restructure in June 2016 a new team leader post was established with a thematic lead for Community Engagement and Rights. The service also has a designated Entitlements Officer to ensure young people have access to their statutory entitlements and rights as set out by Welsh Government Policy and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The service has representation on the National Participation Workers' Panel and therefore have been involved in the review and launch of the updated Children and

Young People's National Participation Standards. These standards are promoted to young people in RCT through secondary schools, extra-curricular activities, voluntary organisations and social media platforms.

- 5.2 The service has a Youth Inspection Team; the Inspectors use the new participation standards to complete their local inspections on youth provisions throughout RCT. Over the past year, six inspections have taken place. Following each inspection a written report is completed by the team, highlighting the strengths of the provision and areas to develop. A further inspection is then carried out three months later to ensure the actions have been complete. The service recently underwent a 48-hour external assessment in order to gain the Silver Level Quality Mark Award. As part of the assessment the Youth Inspectors were interviewed and given the opportunity to share their reports, the assessors commented that 'the work of the Youth Inspectors is impressive and involves young people effectively in the quality assurance of the service with a strong per led approach'.
- 5.3 The bi-annual RCT Extending Entitlement viewpoint survey is used to capture young people's voice. In 2015 the survey was redesigned to better align to the RCT Youth support services strategy, with more focussed questions and a reduced time taken to complete. Over 5,500 young people aged 11-25 years old completed the survey sharing their views on what is important to them, this provided information, which is used to aid service planning and development. The results of the survey have been presented to Senior Leadership Team, Strategic Partnership Board, Generating Wealth Board and the Community Safety Partnership. The results of the survey were also shared with young people during extended provision; key information was collated and presented to the young people in a poster format, which allowed further discussions to be had during restorative circle time sessions.
- 5.4 One of the key findings from the survey indicated that there was a lack of knowledge and awareness of schools councils and youth forums with regards to what they were and what they did. In order to address this issue the RCT County Youth Forum was established and held its first meeting at the Cabinet Council Chambers in December 2016. The County Youth Forum is made up of 70 seats; 42 seats for school councils (2 per school), 21 for local youth forums (7 per area), 5 seats for the voluntary sector and 2 seats for the currently elected Members of Youth Parliament. A participation flow chart was produced to show young people how the County Youth Forum feeds into the European Youth Parliament; this is shown in Appendix A. The County Youth Forum meets every quarter in the Council chambers, meetings are young people led, involving responsibilities such as chair and secretary. Consultation events that have been brought to the County Youth Forum have included the development of a Welsh Parliament with the National Assembly and a consultation regarding Dog Fouling in RCT. The forum has recently developed two sub groups, which will focus on Bullying and Mental Health, which are both young people led.
- 5.5 The local authority has recently updated the Education Anti-bullying Policy and guidance for schools, in collaboration with key partners. The new policy contains sections aimed at school staff, young people and parents, and has been written with a holistic approach towards tackling and accurately recording bullying incidences. The young people's section of the Anti-Bullying Policy will be shared with the County Youth Forum's Bullying sub group, in order to gain their views on this section before the policy is launched.

6. REACH AND IMPACT OF THE SERVICE

- 6.1 The table below shows the Youth Engagement and Participation Service's 'reach' (number of individual young people engaged in open access activities organised by the service) since September 2014.

Annual reach (academic year)		
2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
11,321	10,233	9,537

In 2014–2015, the Service engaged with 45% of young people aged 11-19yrs, performing 14% above the National Welsh Average.

In 2015-2016, the Service engaged with 45% of young people aged 11-19yrs, performing 17% above the National Welsh Average.

National benchmarking data for 2016 ranks RCT 4th in Wales for 11-19yrs reach and 5th in Wales for 11-25yrs reach. This is an improvement from 7th for 11-19yrs reach and joint 5th for 11-25yrs in 2015.

- 6.2 The table below shows the Youth Engagement and Participation Service 'reach' in terms of the vulnerability profiling status of young people, which seeks to identify those at risk of disengaging from learning as a result of socio-economic factors they face outside of the school environment.

Engagement by VP status (academic year)								
2014-2015			2015-2016			2016-2017		
VP status	% of cohort	No. individuals	VP status	% of cohort	No. individuals	VP status	% of cohort	No. individuals
Red	64%	732	Red	73%	831	Red	74%	1082
Amber	71%	1274	Amber	67%	1195	Amber	69%	1450
Green	69%	3267	Green	65%	3168	Green	65%	2920
White	67%	3718	White	63%	3238	White	57%	3025

- 6.3 A detailed breakdown of young people's engagement in open access provision with the Youth Engagement and Participation Service by school and vulnerability profiling status for the academic year 2016-2017 can be found in Appendix B. Please note this data does not include those young people accessing the Service for one to one support.

6.4 The table below shows the performance of the Youth Engagement and Participation Service in relation to supporting young people in Key Stage 4 to improve their school attendance rates.

Attendance	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017
Number of referrals received	127	125	177
Number of cases closed as a result of improved attendance	88	81	93
% of cases closed as a result of improved attendance	69%	65%	53%
Number of young people prevented from entering statutory services	88	81	93

6.5 Of 429 attendance referrals received by the Service from secondary schools in RCT, since September 2014, 61% of those referrals were closed as a result of improved attendance. Where improved attendance was not secured, referrals were made to the Attendance and Wellbeing Service for specialist intervention.

6.6 The table below shows the performance of the Youth Engagement and Participation Service in relation to young people engaging in positive activities to reduce their social isolation.

Engagement	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017
Number of referrals received for young people identified as 'amber' by vulnerability profiling in need of support to engage	385	218	488
Number of cases closed as a result of improved engagement	226	115	341
% of cases closed as a result of improved engagement	59%	53%	70%

6.7 Of 1,091 referrals received by the Service from secondary schools in RCT, since September 2014, 63% of those referrals were closed due to improved engagement.

6.8 The table below shows the performance of the Youth Engagement and Participation Service in relation to locating young people aged 16-18yrs not known to services and supporting them to engage in education, employment and training.

TIER 1	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017
Number of referrals received	156	236	190
Number of young people supported into Education, Employment and Training	93	114	50
Percentage of young people engaged in Education, Employment and Training	60%	48%	26%

- 6.8.1 Of the 582 Tier 1 referrals received by the Service since September 2014, 83% of those referrals were successfully located, with 53% of the young people supported into Education, Employment and Training.

7 IMPACT ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 7.2 Over the past three years since September 2014, the Service has engaged with a total of 20,608 young people and 82% of the young people identified as amber on vulnerability profiling. This provides evidence that the Service has been successful in targeting those young people at significant risk of disengagement from learning. Combined with the outcome data for young people that have received one to one support from the Service it is possible to conclude that the Service has had a direct positive impact on Council priorities, namely increasing school attendance rates and reducing the NEET rates in RCT.
- 7.3 Between the academic years 2013-2014 and 2016-2017 the Youth Engagement and Participation Service has prevented 262 young people aged 14-16yrs from entering statutory education services. During the same period of time secondary school attendance rates in RCT have improved by 0.4%.
- 7.4 Between the academic years 2013-2014 and 2016-2017 the Youth Engagement and Participation Service has supported 257 young people aged 16-18yrs who were unknown to any service following leaving statutory education into Education, Employment or Training. During the same period, the NEETs rate in RCT has decreased by 4.67%.

8 EXTERNAL REGULATION AND RECOGNITION

- 8.1 The Welsh Government launched the Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales in October 2015 to provide a robust, independent, external assessment for the quality and performance of organisations that deliver youth work in Wales. RCT were the first organisation in Wales to have been awarded the Bronze Level Quality Mark Award last year, the Youth Engagement and Participation Service was judged by external assessors to have met all standards with the highest level of competence.

In September 2017, the service received a 48 hour external self assessment in order to gain the Silver Level Quality Mark Award. The service has been informed that they have achieved the award and met all standards with the highest competence subject to external verification by Welsh Government.

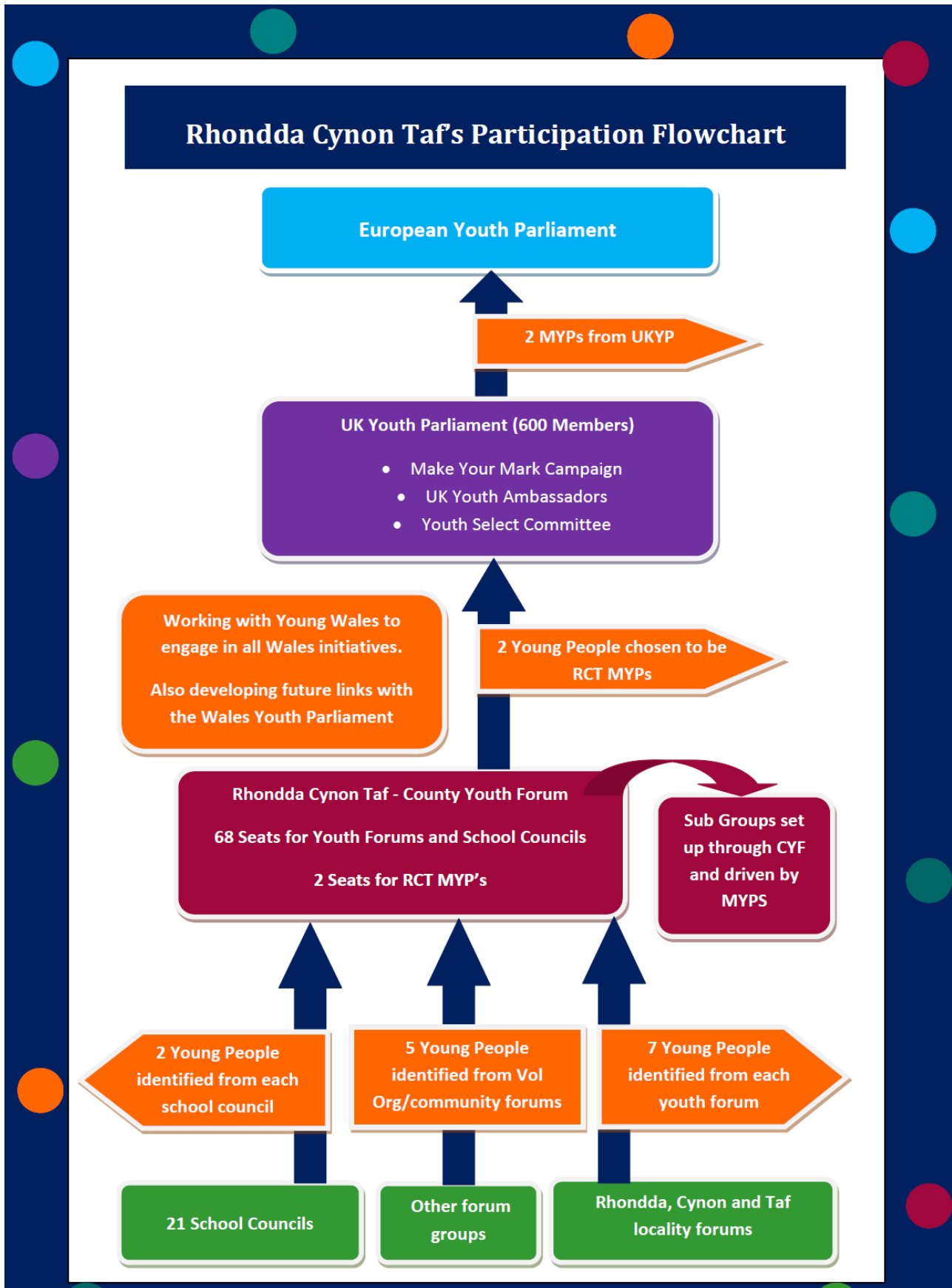
- 8.2 The Youth Engagement and Participation Service was shortlisted for three awards in the 2016 National Youth Work Excellence Awards. Runners up in the 'Outstanding Arts and Media Youth Work Project' and the 'Making a Difference' categories; the Service won the Award for 'Outstanding Youth Work Project which Supports Young People's Engagement with Formal Education'. The service were also shortlisted for two awards in the 2017 National Youth Work Awards gaining runners up for projects in 'Promoting an active lifestyle' and 'Arts and Media'.
- 8.3 As the only Local Authority in Wales to be invited to speak at the 2016 National Youth Work Conference, the Head of Engagement and Participation for RCT delivered a keynote speech on the unique contribution youth work makes to improving attendance, attainment and behaviour alongside the Head of Ferndale Community School who

outlined how the Youth Engagement and Participation Service added value within the school environment.

9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 This report sets out the impact of the Youth Engagement and Participation Service and the outcomes for young people as the beneficiaries of the Service.
- 9.2 Despite two service changes in close succession the Youth Engagement and Participation Service continues to reach a significant proportion of young people in RCT and delivers positive outcomes that directly contribute to Council priorities.
- 9.3 By working in partnership with schools, parents, external organisations and the wider community the Youth Engagement and Participation Service will continue to deliver positive outcomes for young people across the County Borough.

RCT Participation Flow Chart



APPENDIX B

YEPS Engagement rates for Open Access provision by school and by Vulnerability Profiling status
September 2016 to August 2017

SCHOOL_NAME	Engaged with YEPS	School Role	% Engaged	Red School Roll	Red Engaged	% Engaged	Amber School Roll	Amber Engaged	% Engaged	School Role Green	Green Engaged	% Engaged	School Roll White	White	% Engaged
Aberdare Community School	865	1341	64.50%	187	139	74.33%	175	130	74.29%	408	286	70.10%	337	237	70.33%
Bryncelynog Comprehensive School	636	1088	58.46%	65	44	67.69%	134	90	67.16%	280	175	62.50%	472	272	57.63%
Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School	363	790	45.95%	44	30	68.18%	80	48	60.00%	216	130	60.19%	301	145	48.17%
Ferndale Community School	495	555	89.19%	73	69	94.52%	146	122	83.56%	203	175	86.21%	110	98	89.09%
Hawthorn High School	523	729	71.74%	60	47	78.33%	129	99	76.74%	233	190	81.55%	190	136	71.58%
Maesgwyn Special School	73	132	55.30%	62	36	58.06%	29	16	55.17%	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0.00%
Mountain Ash Comprehensive School	620	862	71.93%	107	78	72.90%	171	133	77.78%	252	200	79.37%	226	178	78.76%
Pontypridd High School	526	945	55.66%	78	68	87.18%	96	75	78.13%	265	165	62.26%	370	179	48.38%
Porth County Community School	538	789	68.19%	121	94	77.69%	130	92	70.77%	256	170	66.41%	230	139	60.43%
St John Baptist C in W High School	497	1031	48.21%	45	33	73.33%	109	68	62.39%	347	216	62.25%	292	165	56.51%
Tonypandy Community College	430	619	69.47%	70	55	78.57%	88	69	78.41%	202	155	76.73%	171	122	71.35%
Tonyrefail School	570	985	57.87%	102	73	71.57%	138	96	69.57%	247	157	63.56%	334	201	60.18%
Treorchy Comprehensive School	759	1648	46.06%	125	74	59.20%	193	104	53.89%	457	249	54.49%	504	239	47.42%
Ty Gwyn Education Centre	83	90	92.22%	88	71	80.68%	2	2	100.00%	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0.00%
Y Pant Comprehensive School	636	1288	49.38%	48	36	75.00%	124	73	58.87%	275	149	54.18%	645	337	52.25%
Ysgol Gyfun Cymer Rhondda	397	728	54.53%	38	28	73.68%	82	61	74.39%	216	136	62.96%	235	133	56.60%
Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg	480	803	59.78%	37	26	70.27%	111	91	81.98%	223	140	62.78%	305	185	60.66%
Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun	406	957	42.42%	30	21	70.00%	81	32	39.51%	295	140	47.46%	375	164	43.73%
Ysgol Hen Felin	59	83	71.08%	41	33	80.49%	17	10	58.82%	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0.00%
Ysgol Llanhari	248	447	55.48%	19	12	63.16%	54	34	62.96%	143	87	60.84%	169	95	56.21%
Ysgol Ty Coch	29	70	41.43%	33	15	45.45%	6	5	83.33%	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0.00%
Total	9233	15980	57.78%	1473	1082	73.46%	2095	1450	69.21%	4518	2920	64.63%	5266	3025	57.44%