



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

GUIDANCE, DOCUMENT

# Annex 5: developing multi-agency engagement in Community Focused Schools

Information to help schools develop their multi-agency engagement provision.

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# Introduction

Community Focused Schools are a key element of our roadmap **Our National Mission: high standards and aspirations for all.** (<https://www.gov.wales/our-national-mission-high-standards-and-aspirations-all-html>)

This roadmap brings together our policies and ambitions for:

- education
- tackling the impact of poverty on attainment
- providing all learners with the knowledge, skills and experiences to be healthy, educated and enterprising citizens of Wales and the world

Community Focused Schools are part of this sustained and whole systems approach that supports children and young people from pre-school through to post-16. **Annex 1 of the Community Focused Schools guidance gives more information on how Community Focused Schools link to other policy areas** (<https://www.gov.wales/annex-1-links-between-community-focused-schools-and-other-policies-html>).

We want all schools in Wales to be Community Focused Schools, building strong partnerships with families, engaging with the wider community and collaborating effectively with other sectors and services. This is not about schools doing more, it is about understanding the partnerships that can:

- impact on children's attainment, aspirations and wellbeing
- develop collaboration and integration across different sectors to improve effectiveness

Schools have a unique relationship with their learners and school community. This means they are ideally positioned to identify and address individual and collective need. They serve as natural hubs for integrating and providing a range

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of information, support and services. Senior leaders in schools and school governors should have a clear plan for how they are developing as a Community Focused School. This should include how they intend to participate in meaningful multi-agency collaboration within their school and across school clusters and communities of practice.

This guidance details how schools can develop their multi-agency engagement and work with a variety of sectors and services. It can support both schools and other agencies to develop more effective partnership working.

The guidance sets out:

- what multi-agency engagement is and why it is important
- the principles of effective multi-agency working
- service directories for schools in 4 key sectors
- case studies and further resources

This guidance supplements:

- **the Community Focused Schools guidance** (<https://www.gov.wales/community-focused-schools-html>)
- **Annex 3: developing family engagement in Community Focused Schools** (<https://www.gov.wales/annex-3-developing-family-engagement-community-focused-schools-html>)
- **Annex 4: developing community engagement in Community Focused Schools** (<https://www.gov.wales/annex-4-developing-community-engagement-community-focused-schools-html>)

## Definition of multi-agency working

Multi-agency engagement refers to organisations, agencies and stakeholders

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working together to meet the diverse needs of children and young people. This approach recognises that education extends beyond the classroom and involves partnerships between:

- schools
- agencies
- community organisations
- families
- other relevant parties

The goal of multi-agency engagement is to enhance the quality of education and support holistic development by pooling resources, expertise, and services to meet the academic, social, emotional, physical and relational needs of all children and young people.

## **Key policies that require multi-agency engagement**

Research has shown that learning does not happen in isolation. There is a close link between health, well-being, poverty and attainment. Children and young people with better health, wellbeing and access to resources are more likely to achieve. This is because they are not faced with challenges which impact their ability to learn, explore or develop to their greatest potential.

Multi-agency engagement is necessary for the effective implementation of:

- whole-school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing
- the Additional Learning Needs Code

# Whole-school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing

Recognising and supporting all learners' wellbeing and mental health needs is key to supporting them to:

- be fully engaged with education
- participate actively in education
- succeed

The Welsh Government published a **framework on embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing** (<https://www.gov.wales/framework-embedding-whole-school-approach-emotional-and-mental-wellbeing>). The aim of this statutory guidance is to support schools, pupil referral units (PRUs) and other education settings in reviewing their own wellbeing landscape. Schools and local authorities are required to consider this framework when developing action plans, strategies and other policies for the wellbeing of learners, staff and others working in the school environment.

The Framework recognises that learner well-being is impacted by their surroundings and the adults they have contact with. It therefore provides direction and a clear pathway to developing and embedding consistent policies and practice within schools and the wider community. This includes strengthening the relationships of schools with parents and carers to support learners. This should help learners to thrive and fulfil their personal and academic potential. The Whole School Approach should always be taken into consideration when schools and other agencies and organisations are working together to support learners.

# The Additional Learning Needs Code

The **Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Code for Wales 2021**

(<https://www.gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-code>) adopts a person-centred approach. It places children and their families at the heart of the decision-making process. The Code ensures all sectors and services work together for a child or young person with ALN.

It is important that families and carers are able to access the right support and understand the options available to them and their child. Adopting multi-agency engagement and partnerships will allow schools to work alongside the Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) and early years ALNCo and other agencies to co-ordinate and deliver school-based support.

## Principles of effective multi-agency working

The following principles apply to strategic- and service-level delivery and are embedded in the wider Community Focused School model:

- adopting a whole-systems approach
- focus on person-centred practice
- prevention through high-quality provision
- collaborative leadership
- easy access to expertise
- trusting relationships
- effective communication

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## Adopting a whole-systems approach

It is recognised that educational achievement is the result of complex pathways. Good health and mental well-being are intrinsically connected to learning. Addressing factors outside of school are fundamental to improving educational attainment. Public Health Wales have produced a systems map. This map helps to build an understanding of the connections across systems and how these factors affect educational attainment. The systems map along with more information on the factors affecting educational achievement in Wales can be found on the **NHS Wales website** (<https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/wider-determinants-of-health-unit/good-education-and-skills/>).

Greater multi-agency engagement will ensure that wider systems, including education, are able to support children, young people and families. For schools to optimise their role within these systems they need to understand what support is available and be able to access that with ease. The systems themselves need sufficient capacity to be able to respond and offer that support.

The wider systems around the school, including health, social care and the voluntary sector are working to the **NEST framework** (<https://www.gov.wales/nest-framework-mental-health-and-wellbeing-introduction>) for children's mental health and wellbeing services. The capacity and responsiveness of the wider system is key to children's attainment, aspirations and well-being. NEST enables the wider system to best support schools and their learners.

More information can be found in Appendix 1: Examples of systems approaches in Wales.

## Person-centred practice

Person-centred practice puts the child, their parents, or the young person at the

centre of decisions. A range of resources to support practitioners in using person-centred practice approaches is available online. One of these resources is our **person-centred practice in education: a guide for early years, schools and colleges in Wales**. (<https://www.gov.wales/person-centred-practice-education>)

Supporting children, their parents and young people to participate meaningfully will help them to:

- feel confident that their views, wishes and feelings are listened to and valued, even if they find it difficult to get these across
- have an awareness of their rights and of the support and services available to them
- develop a sense of responsibility for, and control over, their learning

## Prevention through high-quality provision

High quality universal provision should be provided for all children and young people. Sometimes children and young people will need support over and above universal provision. This provision however, will need the support of various agencies working together.

Targeted provision can be provided both by the school and outside agencies. Additional specialist provision is provided to children and young people and families with needs that are addressed by specialist services and qualified professionals. This graduated approach highlights the importance of both preventing difficulties occurring in the first place and of providing support or intervention as early as possible to prevent escalation.

For children with additional learning needs a more graduated response is needed. For more information on this please see the Additional Learning Needs Code.

## Collaborative leadership

Collaborative leadership sees a shared model of leadership as being more creative and effective than a leader or group of staff working alone. For it to succeed, it needs committed leadership at a local, regional, and national level with a focus on collaboration. This ensures shared voice, decision-making and goals.

An important aspect of any partnership working is to understand the expectation from each other at the start. There are many times when schools will be collaborating with different sectors and services.

It is important that leaders consider:

- the purpose of this collaboration
- the members and stakeholders who are key to the collaboration
- the roles and responsibilities of those involved
- how the work is being shared and recognised
- whether there is shared accountability

Collaborative leadership can:

- be supported by professional development and training
- be supported by clear communication ensuring that all stakeholders have key knowledge on service areas and of partner organisations
- enable resources and funding to align across agencies
- ensure that services are not duplicated

## Trusting relationships

Leaders should create a culture in their organisations where multi-agency

working is valued and celebrated. They should also invest in building relationships and trust.

Challenges will arise when collaborating with partners. These may relate to:

- relationships between individuals
- power imbalances
- constrained resources or changes in staffing
- structures
- priorities
- pressures within individual organisations

Such challenges can be overcome by:

- maintaining a focus on common core values and objectives
- building trusted relationships through honest communication across all parties

The **NEST framework** (<https://www.gov.wales/nest-framework-full-report-html#117932>) has more information on trusted relationships and how these support change.

## Easy access to expertise

Ensuring children, young people and their families access the appropriate services is paramount. Locating services in one place (co-location) can ensure a range of services can be accessed in one place. This may be within an existing community hub. However, some schools offer co-located services on the school site depending on the needs of their children and young people. Case studies by Queensferry Learning Campus and Ysgol Gogarth highlight this approach.

Within the capital funding grant £40 million has been allocated for the financial years 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025 for specific changes to school buildings for

to them to become Community Focused Schools. The allocation of spaces for multi-agency use and the co-location of services are considered as part of this grant.

More information can be found in '**Sustainable Communities for Learning rolling programme** (<https://www.gov.wales/sustainable-communities-learning-rolling-programme-html>)'.

## Effective communication

### Agencies schools can engage with

There are 4 main sectors which schools can engage with:

- education (including childcare, playwork and youth support services)
- health
- family support
- community safety

Each of these sectors has:

- an existing structure
- existing frameworks
- specific staffing roles

Being aware of these structures, frameworks and staffing roles can help schools access the support available via appropriate pathways. More information on this can be found in the appendices.

The service directories included in this guidance are not a comprehensive list. The agencies schools engage with should reflect their priorities or needs. The

voluntary or third sector offer services across all 4 sectors and have a significant positive impact on communities in Wales. Information including contact details for third sector organisations that can work with schools and settings can be found in the [directory of organisations supporting equity and inclusion](https://hwb.gov.wales/repository/resource/af6f579b-60de-4669-8130-8e31954bb504/overview) (<https://hwb.gov.wales/repository/resource/af6f579b-60de-4669-8130-8e31954bb504/overview>) or by contacting the relevant County Voluntary Council.

## Developing multi-agency engagement in education

There are distinct roles in schools which can support and facilitate the development of multi-agency engagement. The following information details some of these roles and what they cover.

### Headteacher and senior leaders

Headteachers and senior leaders within the school need to value:

- collaboration
- equity
- family and community wellbeing

They must be able to build strong relationships with families, community organisations, and agencies to work in partnership.

### Health and wellbeing lead

The Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience (AOLE) provides a holistic structure for understanding health and wellbeing. A health and wellbeing

lead will co-ordinate the areas of:

- physical health and development
- mental health
- emotional and social well-being

## **Family engagement officer (FEO)**

An FEO works closely with families and the school community. An important aspect of an FEO role is to be a key and consistent point of contact for families, school staff and staff from outside agencies.

## **Community focused school manager (CFSM)**

Each local authority has at least one CFSM. CFSMs have strategic links to many wider agencies and can help broker support for schools.

## **Designated lead for looked after children**

There is a statutory responsibility for schools to have this designated lead. They will work closely with local authority social services and also often the third sector to access services for these children.

## **Careers lead**

A careers lead within schools should develop a whole-school approach to embed careers and work-related experiences (CWRE) across the school curriculum. A CWRE programme should cover a wide range of learning experiences and contributions from a variety of stakeholders. It should include opportunities to

learn from a diverse range of role models.

## **Additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo)**

All mainstream maintained schools and FEIs in Wales must designate a person, or more than one person, who will have responsibility for co ordinating provision for learners with ALN. That person (or persons) will be known as an additional learning needs co-ordinator, or ALNCo. The ALNCo will be the key point of contact with a variety of people, sectors and services, including:

- the relevant local authority's inclusion and support services
- external agencies
- independent and voluntary organisations
- health and social care professionals
- educational psychologists

## **Education services directory**

There are a broad range of education services to support learners of all ages. These services are delivered both within and out of schools, depending on the service, need and type of learner. A number of these services are included in the education services directory.

## **ALN support**

Each local authority is required to designate an Early Years ALN Lead Officer (ALNLO). The ALNLO co-ordinates the local authority's functions under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (the ALN Act) in relation to children under compulsory school age who are not attending



maintained schools or pupil referral units (PRUs).

In addition, all local health boards are required to designate an officer to have responsibility for co-ordinating the health board's functions in relation to children and young people with ALN. That person is known as the Designated Education Clinical Lead Officer (DECLO). The DECLO has a key function to collaborate with others and to raise awareness of the ALN system across the local health board.

More information on ALN support can be found in '**The Additional Learning Needs Code** (<https://www.gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-code>)'.

## Careers Wales

**Careers Wales** (<https://careerswales.gov.wales/>) offers support to learners to help them to better understand the:

- world of work
- skills they need
- opportunities available to them

In addition, Careers Wales also offers support to schools and settings in the delivery of the Curriculum for Wales, with some initiatives beginning in primary schools.

They also offer a professional bespoke consultancy service for schools. This includes a calendar of professional learning opportunities to:

- support schools working towards the Quality Award
- provide teachers with practical support to develop their CWRE curriculum, including the opportunity to complete a Level 6 careers leader qualification

## Childcare Wales learning and working mutually (CWLWM) childcare consortium

The **CWLWM** (<https://www.cwlwm.org.uk/>) childcare consortium can help schools to look at how to develop close school and childcare partnership arrangements to support working parents.

## Educational psychology

Educational psychologists collaborate with children, families, and other stakeholders. They use psychology to develop formulations and hypotheses that help to make sense of the systems within which children live and learn. From these formulations, they can offer support and guidance to stakeholders to help them create positive change for the child.

More information can be found on '[educational psychologists in Wales](https://www.gov.wales/educational-psychologist-guidance)' (<https://www.gov.wales/educational-psychologist-guidance>).

## Education Welfare Service (EWS)

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) works closely with schools, learners and their families to identify problems, personal issues, and social issues that may affect the attendance, progress, and wellbeing of children and young people.

The Education Welfare Service is made up of education welfare officers (EWOs). EWOs have a dual role to play. They:

- provide a service to the school
- act as a mediator between home and school

Schools will normally have a named education welfare officer (EWO) who visits the school regularly.

EWOs undertake a range of tasks, such as register consultations to discuss how they can best support the child, family and school in improving attendance and in reducing persistent absence.

More information on the Education Welfare Service can be found on '**belonging, engaging and participating** (<https://www.gov.wales/improving-school-attendance>)'.

## **Meic: information, advice and advocacy helpline for children and young people**

The Welsh Government funds **Meic: the information, advice and advocacy helpline for children and young people** (<https://www.meiccymru.org/>). This helpline is for children and young people up to the age of 25 in Wales. The service offers a telephone and text chat line, as well as a website providing advice and guidance relating to any matters that could affect children and young people.

## **Play Wales**

Play Wales is the national charity in Wales that supports children's play. They can support schools to encourage the link between play and wellbeing. They have developed a bank of resources for schools.

More information can be found on '**a play friendly school: guidance for a whole school approach** (<https://play.wales/publication-library/research/a-play-friendly-school/>)'.

## Youth Justice Service

The youth justice system in Wales works to prevent offending and reoffending by children. All local authorities have a **youth offending team**.

(<http://www.justice.gov.uk/global/contacts/yjb/yots/index.htm>) Youth Justice Board Cymru oversee the youth justice system in Wales.

More information on the youth justice service can be found on '**youth justice services: Wales on GOV.UK** (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/youth-offending-teams-wales>)'.

## Youth work and youth engagement and progression services

This service is a universal entitlement for all young people. Youth services include services provided in partnership with other agencies such as schools and voluntary sector organisations.

The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF), for 11 to 18 year olds, outlines how local authorities can bring together schools and other partner organisations to identify young people at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET) or homeless. They work to put appropriate preventative support in place. Multi-agency working is a key feature of the YEPF.

Under the YEPF, each local authority has an engagement progression co-ordinator. They have a critical and strategic role in overseeing the YEPF at a local authority level, to prevent young people becoming NEET.

Each local authority also has a youth homelessness co-ordinator. The aim of this role is to ensure young people at risk of becoming homeless are identified

earlier, and that preventative action is put in place to support them.

## Further resources on youth work and youth engagement and progression services

- **Youth Work Strategy for Wales** (<https://www.gov.wales/youth-work-strategy-2019>).
- **Interim Youth Work Board: final report** (<https://www.gov.wales/interim-youth-work-board-report-time-deliver-young-people-wales-final-report>).
- **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: Overview** (<https://www.gov.wales/youth-engagement-and-progression-framework-overview>).
- **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: Handbook** (<https://www.gov.wales/youth-engagement-and-progression-framework-handbook-html>).
- **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: early identification** (<https://www.gov.wales/youth-engagement-and-progression-framework-early-identification>).

## Young Person's Guarantee

**The Young Person's Guarantee (YPG)** (<https://www.gov.wales/young-persons-guarantee-html>) supports young people aged 16 to 24 living in Wales to:

- gain a place in education or training
- get into work or self-employment

## Health services directory

The health service has a fundamental role in supporting children and families, so

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that children can realise their potential with their learning. The **Healthy Child Wales Programme** (<https://www.gov.wales/healthy-child-wales-programme-0>) (HCWP) sets out how the health and welfare of all children up to the age of 7 will be supported by:

- the Welsh Government
- partnerships with local authorities
- communities
- education
- the third sector

**Part 2 of the HCWP programme** (<https://www.gov.wales/healthy-child-wales-programme-school-aged-children-introduction-html>) details the planned contacts children, young people and their families can expect from their health boards. This contact starts when they start compulsory education at 5 years old and ends in their final year of compulsory schooling (when they are 16 years old). Every child and family will be offered the HCWP with a minimum of key interventions irrespective of need. For some families there will be a need to increase intervention to facilitate more intensive support.

Services will be delivered:

- through the local authority, in partnership with other agencies
- in partnership between the local authority and the health board
- via the health board

# Statutory services which local authorities and health boards deliver

## Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)

Local health boards and local authorities have a duty to work together to establish local primary mental health support services. CAMHS help children and young people from birth to 18 years who experience emotional, behavioural and other psychological difficulties. They also offer support to their families. A GP or any professional working with children, young people and families, for example schools, social services, health visitors or children's centres, can make a CAMHS request.

CAMHS also offer an in-reach service to schools to help develop their capacity to support children and young people who may not reach the threshold for CAMHS direct work. This service supports schools to:

- understand when a referral is required
- manage low-level wellbeing issues, which would not meet the thresholds for specialist services
- signpost to other, more appropriate, sources of support and advice

**Health boards** (<https://www.gov.wales/nhs-wales-health-boards-and-trusts>) provide more information on the CAMHS services and locations in their area.

## Counselling service

Local authorities have to provide a counselling service for:

- children and young people aged between 11 and 18 in their area

- learners in Year 6 of primary school

In recent years the Welsh Government has asked local authorities to offer counselling support to children below the Year 6 threshold, given that children are presenting with wellbeing needs at younger ages. There should be collaboration between CAMHS and the counselling service to provide the most appropriate treatment.

More information on the counselling service can be found on the **collaboration between CAMHS and counselling** (<https://www.gov.wales/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-services-camhs-and-counselling-service>) page.

## Health visitors

Health visitors are trained to identify families that require enhanced or intensive support. They use their clinical and professional skills and judgment with the wider multi-disciplinary team and families to develop individual plans.

Further information on health visitors can be found in the '**Healthy Child Wales Programme** (<https://www.gov.wales/healthy-child-wales-programme-0>)'.

## School specialist community public health nurses (school nurses)

School nurses are autonomous practitioners. They support the rights of school-aged children and young people at all times. Working across health, education and other agencies, and as an integral part of a broader public health service, school nurses aim to ensure optimum health for all school-aged children and young people. They try to make sure that services are:

- fair
- inclusive



- equitable
- anti-discriminatory
- a positive influence on health and wellbeing

More information on school nurses can be found in the '**School Nursing Framework for Wales** (<https://www.gov.wales/school-nursing-framework>)'.

## **Specialist support services**

All local authorities will provide specialist services to ensure appropriate support for schools, children and young people. These services may include support related to:

- sensory impairment
- autism spectrum disorders
- physical and medical needs
- cognition and learning needs

## **Speech, language and communication (SLC) support**

Speech and language therapists and other practitioners work with children, their families and health and education professionals to support speech, language and communication development. This work is done in a variety of settings including:

- community clinics
- hospitals
- mainstream and special schools
- nurseries
- family homes

**'Talk with Me'** (<https://www.gov.wales/talk-with-me>) is the speech, language and communication (SLC) delivery plan. It aims to improve how children in Wales are supported to develop their SLC skills.

More information can be found on **'Flying Start speech, language and communication: guidance'** (<https://www.gov.wales/flying-start-speech-language-and-communication-guidance>).

## National programmes which support the development of health and education provision

### A whole-school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing

The **framework for embedding a whole school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing** (<https://www.gov.wales/framework-embedding-whole-school-approach-emotional-and-mental-wellbeing>) gives schools the opportunity, through a continuous improvement approach, to:

- promote positive mental wellbeing
- prevent mental ill health
- take action to support individuals where needed

**A Whole School Approach to emotional and mental wellbeing self evaluation tool** ([https://phw.nhs.wales/search-results/?searchFilter=&Keywords=Whole+School+Approach+to+Emotional+and+Mental+Well-being++Self-Evaluation+Tool&strippedKeywords=School+Approach+Emotional+Mental+-+-Evaluation+Tool&display=search&newSearch=true&noCache=1&csrf\\_token=A316E35D7F37303EDCC3BD8819D93A4C&csrf\\_token\\_expires=250131144353300](https://phw.nhs.wales/search-results/?searchFilter=&Keywords=Whole+School+Approach+to+Emotional+and+Mental+Well-being++Self-Evaluation+Tool&strippedKeywords=School+Approach+Emotional+Mental+-+-Evaluation+Tool&display=search&newSearch=true&noCache=1&csrf_token=A316E35D7F37303EDCC3BD8819D93A4C&csrf_token_expires=250131144353300)) has been developed. It helps schools to audit and plan for improvement as part of their self-evaluation process. Each regional area or local health board has a

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designated whole-school approach implementation lead who can support with this process.

## Adverse Childhood Experiences Hub Wales (ACE Hub Wales)

**ACE Hub Wales** (<https://acehubwales.com/>) was set up to help create an ACE Aware Wales and make Wales a leader in tackling, preventing and mitigating ACEs. The Hub's website provides a range of information and resources on ACEs and trauma-informed practices.

## Designed to Smile

**'Designed to smile'** (<https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/designed-to-smile/>) is the dental health programme to tackle child tooth decay. It works with families and young children aged 0 to 7. It encourages good oral-hygiene by:

- giving advice to families
- providing toothbrushes and fluoride toothpaste
- encouraging a visit to the dentist before a child's first birthday

More information on Designed to smile can be found on the '**designed to smile oral health improvement programme**' (<https://www.gov.wales/designed-smile-child-oral-health-improvement-programme-whc201723>).

## Flying Start

Flying Start is the Welsh Government's targeted early years programme for families with children under 4 years of age who live in low-income areas. The programme consists of 4 entitlements which provide:

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- free quality, part-time childcare for children aged 2 and 3 years
- an intensive health-visiting service
- access to parenting support
- support for SLC development

Your local **Family Information Service** (<https://www.gov.wales/find-your-local-family-information-service>) can provide advice on which areas Flying Start cover and what help may be available for families and children.

More information on Flying Start can be found in the '**Flying Start childcare: guidance** (<https://www.gov.wales/flying-start-childcare-guidance-html>)'.

## JustB

### **JustB is a school-based smoking prevention programme**

(<https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/justb/>) for Year 8 learners (aged 12 and 13 years). It gives them an opportunity to discuss the risks of smoking and the benefits of being smoke-free. It has been developed by Public Health Wales.

## NEST (mental health and wellbeing)

The **NEST framework** (<https://www.gov.wales/nest-framework-mental-health-and-wellbeing-introduction>) shows:

- a whole-system approach for improving mental health and wellbeing services for babies, children, young people and their families
- how the whole-school approach aligns with wider agencies within the health, social care and voluntary sectors

The NEST framework is a planning tool for:

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- Welsh Government
- regional partnership boards
- local authorities
- health boards
- the voluntary sector

As part of the implementation of NEST, mental health and wellbeing services are asked to complete the NEST self-assessment. Schools do not need to undertake the NEST self-assessment. Schools are expected only to undertake the whole-school approach to emotional health and wellbeing self-assessment and action plan. In doing so schools fulfil the key principles of NEST.

It is recommended that staff with a responsibility for working with external agencies (such as CAMHS, charities working with the school, school nurses, health and well-being leads) have an understanding of the NEST framework. In order to support this understanding we have developed a short **NEST and children's rights awareness training online video**. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WuDMq0zyAll>) School staff can access this training video when it is suitable for them.

## Trauma-Informed Wales Framework

This framework provides:

- a Wales definition of a trauma-informed approach
- a set of 5 principles, under 4 practice levels, describing the roles people and organisations may have when supporting people affected by trauma

Further information on ACEs and trauma-informed working, including training for schools, is available on **Hwb** (<https://hwb.gov.wales/repository/discovery?query=trauma+informed+&showBackButton=1&sort=relevance&strict=1?lang=en>).

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More information can be found on the '[Trauma-Informed Wales Framework](https://traumaframeworkcymru.com/)' (<https://traumaframeworkcymru.com/>).

## Welsh Network of Health and Wellbeing Promoting Schools scheme

The '[Welsh Network of Health and Wellbeing Promoting Schools](https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/welsh-network-of-healthy-school-schemes/)' (<https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/welsh-network-of-healthy-school-schemes/>) is delivered nationally by **Public Health Wales and locally by local authorities or health boards.** (<https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/welsh-network-of-healthy-school-schemes/>) A health and wellbeing promoting school makes a constant and consistent effort to ensure a safe and healthy setting for teaching, learning and working.

Each local health board has a healthy schools scheme co-ordinator and team which offer support for school-based activities. Healthy school teams:

- co-ordinate delivery of the programme locally
- provide advice and support to schools
- facilitate access to training and materials

More information on the Welsh Network of Health and Well-being Promoting Schools.

## Family support services directory

Local authorities provide a broad range of family support services. Engaging with these services ensures comprehensive support for children, young people and their families. A number of these services are included in this family support services directory.

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Local authorities, schools and governing bodies must adhere to the national safeguarding requirements as set out in '**Keeping Learners Safe** (<https://www.gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe>)'.

## Adoption UK Cymru

Through their free helpline, Adoption UK Cymru give advice and support to adopted children and young people and their families. Information, help and support is also available on the **Adoption UK website** (<https://www.adoptionuk.org/information-and-support-service>).

## Corporate Parenting Charter

**The Corporate Parenting Charter** (<https://www.gov.wales/corporate-parenting-introduction>) sets out 11 principles that all public bodies and their leaders should follow to ensure care experienced children and young people have the same life chances as every other child or young person in Wales. Their rights must be equally respected, and their voice heard, listened to and reflected in action.

Any public body, third sector organisation or business can sign up to the Charter.

## Families First

**'Families First'** (<https://www.gov.wales/families-first>) promotes the development of multi-agency systems of support for families experiencing difficult times, including those living in poverty. The programme focuses on early intervention and prevention and on bringing organisations together to work with the whole family. The aim of this is to identify and understand the underlying reasons for any issues, including problems with school and education, and to stop problems

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escalating. Support provided by the Families First programme is bespoke, intensive and based on need. The programme has strategic links with a range of agencies exemplified in the delivery of the Team Around the Family model.

More information on Families First can be found in the **Families First programme guidance** (<https://www.gov.wales/families-first-guidance-local-authorities>) page.

## Family information service

In every local authority, **family information services** (<https://www.gov.wales/find-your-local-family-information-service>) are the first point of contact for help or information about family matters. They provide free impartial help, support, guidance and advice on a range of family issues including:

- childcare and its costs
- training
- family programmes
- education
- Health
- financial matters
- recreation

## Parenting. Give it time.

'**Parenting. Give it time** (<https://www.gov.wales/parenting-give-it-time>)'. provides positive parenting information, advice and support for parents with children up to the age of 18 years. Advice, information and resources are available through:

- a dedicated bilingual website
- digital advertising



- social media (through **Teulu Cymru** (<https://www.gov.wales/teulu-cymru>), the Welsh Government's family and parenting campaign)

## The Fostering Network

The **Fostering Network** (<https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/advice-information>) provides advice and information to prospective and approved foster carers and those who support them. Their support covers a range of issues which affect the foster care role, including:

- allegations
- approvals
- finance legislation
- relationships with fostering services

## Wales safeguarding procedures

The procedures detail essential roles and responsibilities for practitioners to ensure that they safeguard and protect children and adults who are at risk of abuse and neglect. They are intended to guide safeguarding practice for all in:

- the statutory, third (voluntary) and private sectors
- the health sector
- social care
- education
- the police
- the justice system
- other services

More information on the Wales safeguarding procedures can be found in '**Safeguarding Wales** (<https://safeguarding.wales/en/>)'.

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# Community safety services directory

Engaging with community safety teams, such as police, fire, and transport services, is vital for schools to ensure a secure and supportive environment for children and young people. These collaborations help schools:

- address safety concerns
- prepare for emergencies
- promote awareness about safety procedures

By working closely with these teams, schools can create a proactive approach to safety, fostering a sense of security and wellbeing within the school community.

## A Shared Framework for Preventing Violence among Children and Young People

This Framework by Wales without violence (WWV) outlines the key elements needed to successfully develop primary prevention and early intervention strategies to end violence among children and young people through a public health, whole-system approach.

More information on the framework can be found in '[a Shared Framework for Preventing Violence among Children and Young People](https://waleswithoutviolence.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/WWV-Framework-Digital-English.pdf)

(<https://waleswithoutviolence.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/WWV-Framework-Digital-English.pdf>)'.

## Crucial Crew

Crucial Crew offers children and young people a chance to access critical safety advice from a selection of agencies in one location.

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## Housing

Local authorities have statutory duties set out in core homelessness legislation. These duties prevent and alleviate homelessness for individuals in Wales who are at risk of or are currently experiencing homelessness.

Housing associations are independent, not-for-profit, organisations. Their core purpose is to provide affordable housing for those who need it.

More information on housing:

- **Support if you are homeless or about to become homeless** (<https://www.gov.wales/support-if-you-are-homeless-or-about-become-homeless>).
- **Annex 4: Developing community engagement in Community Focused Schools** (<https://www.gov.wales/annex-4-developing-community-engagement-community-focused-schools-html>) gives examples of how housing associations have supported schools and wider community development.
- **Community Housing Cymru** (<https://chcymru.org.uk/membership/housing-associations>).

## Income maximisation

It is important that families can access benefits which they are entitled to. These may include:

- free school meals
- Schools Essentials Grant: support for families to buy things like school uniform and equipment
- Education Maintenance Allowance: a payment for those aged 16 to 18 years who stay in education

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Free training is accessible for all public sector workers to help understand the support and advice that is available for families and where this can be accessed.

More information on income maximisation:

- **Child Poverty Strategy for Wales 2024** (<https://www.gov.wales/child-poverty-strategy-wales-2024-html#137302>).
- **Welsh Benefits Charter** (<https://www.gov.wales/welsh-benefits-charter>).

## Money and Pensions Service (MaPS)

The **Money and Pensions Service (MaPS)** (<https://maps.org.uk/en>) is an arm's-length body sponsored by the Department for Work and Pensions. Their aim is to help people, particularly those most in need, to improve their financial wellbeing.

## Police

Close partnership working between the police and schools is important. Local officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) provide advice to schools and support them with safeguarding issues, such as crimes in schools. PCSOs work to identify and understand local issues, adopting a **child-centred approach** (<https://www.npcc.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/publications/publications-log/local-policing-coordination-committee/child-centred-policing-best-practice-framework.pdf>). They enable a focus on early intervention, ensuring that local support services can link up and deliver for communities.

'**Operation Encompass** (<https://www.operationencompass.org/>)' is a partnership between police and schools and is in place in all 4 police forces in Wales. The programme aim is to ensure all children experiencing domestic abuse receive

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timely support in their school.

Some forces operate a Heddlu Bach programme. The children and schools who become part of the programme help to tackle issues, highlighted by the children, in their own community.

For more information **contact your local police** (<https://www.gov.wales/find-your-local-police-force>).

## Prevent duty

The **prevent duty** (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance/prevent-duty-guidance-for-england-and-wales-accessible>) requires specified authorities such as education, health, local authorities, police and criminal justice agencies (prisons and probation) to help prevent the risk of people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It sits alongside long-established safeguarding duties on professionals to protect people from a range of other harms. These harms include:

- substance abuse
- involvement in gangs
- physical and sexual exploitation

## Supporting the development of multi-agency engagement

All schools will be part of some multi-agency engagement. The following questions can support schools to evaluate the effectiveness of that engagement and plan for further development. This should form a part of the school's wider self-evaluation and support the Whole-school approach to emotional and mental

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wellbeing, Healthy Schools Scheme minimum standards and Estyn Inspection Framework.

## Questions to support self-evaluation

- Have management prepared guidance on the use of external services and if so, have they shared with all staff?
- From who can we get help?
- Is input from support agencies monitored for effectiveness?
- Is everyone clear on the purpose of the engagement?
- How does the engagement ensure that difference is celebrated and no one organisation or group dominates?
- How well does the school promote and support each agencies' programmes and services?
- Are all leaders able to look at issues from perspectives beyond their own?
- How well are the views and priorities of children and families fed into multi-agency engagement?
- How effective is the school in ensuring that parents and carers are actively involved in multi-agency engagement?
- Are all agencies clear about the communication platforms being used?
- Has there been agreement between agencies of the common language used?
- To what extent have the resources available, including financial, been used to support the engagement?
- Are there opportunities for practitioners to listen and learn from each other?
- Are meetings focused?
- Are agendas shared in advance?
- Are remits and pathways clear?
- Is working in clusters or learning communities with other schools or settings considered when delivering courses, programmes and so on?

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# The role of local authorities in developing multi-agency links

To develop a whole-systems approach, it is important that all services:

- understand the key role that they play
- avoid working in isolation

At a national level, **our national mission** (<https://www.gov.wales/our-national-mission>) acknowledges a commitment to working together. However, much can be achieved at a local level as well.

Local authorities bring together the key services and have responsibility for strategic direction and service delivery. They have a key role to play in ensuring a more joined up approach.

Estyn's thematic review, '**community schools: families and communities at the heart of school life**' (<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2021-08/Community%2520Schools%2520en.pdf>) highlighted the benefits of multi-agency engagement.

It:

- looked specifically at working with health, housing and social services
- acknowledged the role that local authorities can have to support this engagement, such as supporting schools to understand the key partners that they can work with locally

To help local authorities' support multi-agency engagement Estyn developed a list of recommendations for them.

These are:

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- Ensure strategic planning includes actions on how they will develop authority-wide initiatives to support schools to be effective community schools.
- Strengthen cross-directorate working to plan ways of locating a range of services in schools.
- Ensure that 21st Century Schools planning considers the need for spaces and base-rooms for family and community access.
- Support schools to appoint family and community engagement staff, including developing a role description for these staff.
- Provide professional learning opportunities for school support staff, governing bodies, and strategic partners to develop community schools.

Some local authorities have supported schools by developing a directory of services (portals) for their locality. These portals give information on the range of support and links available. An example of this approach is included in the case study by Wrexham Local Authority.

## Additional resources and further reading

- **Reaching out to all learners: a resource pack for supporting inclusion and equity in education'** (<https://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/node/103>).
- **Changing local systems to improve early learning outcomes** (<https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/content/dam/gb/reports/elc-learning-resource-sep-23.pdf>).
- **The Early learning Community Toolkit and Evidence Review** (<https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/content/dam/gb/reports/learning-toolkit.pdf>).

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# Case studies

These case studies highlight schools and local authorities who have developed multi-agency engagement.

## Ysgol Morgan Llwyd

Case study by Estyn on **supporting the development of pupils' learning and well-being through support from the Pastoral Hub and Learning Hub** (<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/effective-practice/supporting-development-pupils-learning-and-well-being-through-support-pastoral>).

## Ysgol Golwg Y Cwm, Powys

Case study by Estyn on **working in partnership with a range of agencies to support families and promote pupils' well-being.** (<https://estyn.gov.wales/improvement-resources/working-in-partnership-with-a-range-of-agencies-to-support-families-and-promote-pupils-well-being/>)

## Gwent SPACE-Wellbeing

**Case study by the Children's Commissioner for Wales.**

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# Ysgol Gynradd Groes-Wen

**Case study by Clybiau Plant Cymru.** (<https://www.clybiauplantcymru.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Case-Study-Groes-Wen.pdf>)

## CAMHS in-reach work

The case study on page 55 of **a framework for embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being** (<https://www.gov.wales/framework-embedding-whole-school-approach-emotional-and-mental-wellbeing>) highlights the CAMHS in-reach work and how it supports prevention.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Examples of systems approaches in Wales

#### Early learning communities

Save the Children have established 2 Early Learning Communities in Wales. The aim of the ELC programme is to:

- convene and coordinate key partners from across the local early learning system
- develop a shared and local vision for how early learning systems need to change to create better outcomes for children
- work together to create change

**Bettws early learning community** (<https://bettwselc.org.uk/>) is an example of an

early learning community in Wales.

## The Early Years Integration Transformation Programme

The Early Years Integration Transformation programme is a time-limited, piloting programme, which will formally end in March 2025. The programme focusses on developing a more joined-up, responsive early years system that covers the period of life from pre-birth to 7 years. Between 2017 and 2024 Public Service Boards across Wales who joined the programme as pathfinders have been exploring how to deliver early years services in a more systematic way. This has ensured that children and families receive the support they need at the right time, right place and in the right way. Pathfinders have been testing what the core components of an early year's system should look like and piloting different multi-agency delivery models and approaches.

Further information can be found in the following reports and resources:

- **Getting it Right for Families** (<https://www.eif.org.uk/report/getting-it-right-for-families-a-review-of-integrated-systems-and-promising-practice-in-the-early-years>).
- **The EIF maternity and maturity matrix workbook** (<https://foundations.org.uk/our-work/tools/eif-maturity-matrix-maternity-and-early-years/>).
- **Ten insights from twenty places across England and Wales report** (<https://www.eif.org.uk/report/leading-and-delivering-early-childhood-services-10-insights-from-20-places-across-england-and-wales>).

## Appendix 2: The governance structure of each sector

### Health

There are 7 **local health boards** (<https://www.gov.wales/nhs-wales-health-boards->

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[and-trusts](#)) in Wales and 3 NHS trusts. They are responsible for planning and delivering NHS services in their area.

## Education

The **Association of Directors of Education in Wales** (<https://www.wlga.wales/adew>) (ADEW) is the professional group of local authority officers accountable for statutory education functions in each of the Local Authorities in Wales.

## Community

**Community safety partnerships** (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-safety-partnerships/community-safety-partnerships>) bring together local partners to formulate and deliver strategies to tackle crime and disorder in their communities.

## Social services

All local authorities, local health boards, chief officers of police, probation and youth offending services in Wales are statutory partners of the Safeguarding Children Board for their area. These may be combined with the Safeguarding Adult Board for that area, to form what are known as **regional safeguarding boards** (<https://safeguardingboard.wales/find-your-board/>).

## Cross-cutting sector structures

There are 2 cross-cutting service structures which improve joint working at a strategic level across all public services in Wales. While schools would not engage in these boards on an individual basis, as existing structures they offer

the opportunity for education representatives to align strategy with other key services.

## **Public service boards**

There are 13 **public service boards** (<https://www.gov.wales/public-services-boards>) (PSBs) that:

- conduct a well-being assessment
- publish a local well-being plan
- publish an annual report

The plan sets out how they will meet their responsibilities under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

Statutory members of each PSB are:

- local authority
- local health board
- fire and rescue authority
- Natural Resources Wales

In addition, the following are invited to participate:

- Welsh ministers
- chief constables
- police and crime commissioner
- relevant probation services
- at least one body representing voluntary organisations

## Examples of how public service boards have facilitated multi-agency engagement

### Children First

The Children First programme was delivered in 11 locations across Wales. One of these, Neath Port Talbot worked with its PSB in Sandfields West to secure more coordinated ways of delivering supportive, preventative, and early intervention strategies in a specific locality. A report was commissioned to reflect the views of stakeholders and the community. This drew on evidence of best practice in 'Children's Community' models externally. The model taken forward was based on a Multi-Agency Front Line Teams model, with agencies working together to support children and families in a specific community.

### The Early Years Integration Transformation Programme

This programme is designed to bring a more coherent and joined-up approach to the delivery of support for young children and families. Nine Public Service Boards, known as pathfinders, participated in the initial programme. They participated in developing and piloting integrated ways of working. **More information can be found in the evaluation report.** (<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2022-03/evaluation-of-the-early-years-integration-transformation-programme.pdf>)

### Regional partnership boards

There are 7 **Regional Partnership Boards** (<https://www.gov.wales/regional-partnership-boards-rpbs>) which were established as part of the **Social Services and Well Being Act** (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/contents>) to improve

how health and care services are delivered.

Membership is different for each region but can include:

- an elected member from one local authority in the region
- a member of the local health board
- a Director of Social Services from each local authority in the region
- a local authority housing representative
- a registered social landlord
- a local authority education representative
- at least one person from the third sector who collaborates with the local authority and local health board
- a member of the public
- a carer

### **Example of how regional partnership boards has supported multi-agency engagement**

**NYTH/NEST ‘in action’: Good Practice Examples of the implementation of the NYTH/NEST framework 2023** ([https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-10/nyth-nest-in-action\\_0.pdf](https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-10/nyth-nest-in-action_0.pdf))

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