

Easy Read



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Youth Engagement Strategy 2024 to 2034

Our plan to support young people in Neath Port Talbot



This document was written by **Neath Port Talbot Council and partners**. It is an easy read version of 'Neath Port Talbot Youth Engagement Strategy 2024 – 2034'.

January 2025

How to use this document



This is an easy read document. You may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 39**.



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About this plan



We have made this plan to support young people in Neath Port Talbot.

Our plan is about:



- Bringing together groups and services that work with young people.



- Helping young people grow into adults.



- Making sure young people in Neath Port Talbot have the support they need to do well.

Who this plan is for

This plan is for:



- Organisations that help young people.
- Other groups, charities, and service providers.



- Young people who live in Neath Port Talbot.

This plan aims to:



- Help young people stay in education, jobs, and training.



- Stop young people from becoming homeless. Make sure they have a safe home.

How we made this plan



We made this plan with the help of different people and organisations.



Thank you to the young people in Neath Port Talbot who shared their experiences and ideas.



We used the Welsh Government's **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework** to write the plan.



The Welsh Government's **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework** is a guide to help young people who need extra support. It is for young people who:

- Might leave education or training.
- Do not have a job or find it hard to get one.
- Might become homeless.



We wrote the plan by looking at:

- The Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board Well-Being Plan 2023–28.
- Other plans and policies.



We also looked at information to understand:

- What young people in Neath Port Talbot need.
- The challenges they face when growing up.

What young people said



Young people were a big part of making this plan.



More than 100 young people shared their ideas and experiences in group chats and face to face meetings.



We spoke to young people aged 11 to 25. They talked about many things that were important to them.

Knowing about choices for the future

Young people said it is important to:



- Know what choices they have for their future.



- Feel confident and able to make decisions about their own lives.

Young people feel that in Neath Port Talbot:



- There are not enough choices in education and training.



- The system does not focus on what each person needs or wants.

Mental health



Young people said that **mental health** is a big issue for them.

Mental health is how you feel and think and how that affects your wellbeing.



Cardiff University did research. They found that many secondary school students in Wales had poor **mental health** after COVID-19.



Young people said that **mental health** affects:

- Their home life.
- Taking part in education or training.
- Getting a job.
- How they feel about their future.



They feel that the support for **mental health** is not good enough.

Education and training



In Neath Port Talbot:

- School attendance is lower than in other areas.
- Many young people miss school without permission.

We asked young people why they did not stay in education or training. Here is what they told us:



- **Mental health** problems make it hard for them.



- They do not get enough support.



- Staff need more training to help people with **additional learning needs**. These are young people who may need extra help in learning.



- Schools focus too much on grades and results.



- Schools do not do enough to stop **bullying**. **Bullying** is when someone or a group of people treats another person badly.

Getting support



Young people told us there are many reasons they cannot get the help they need.



Some young people like to help themselves instead of asking for support. Others feel people will not help them.



Transport is a big problem, especially for those living in villages. This makes it hard to travel to where help is available.



Many young people do not know:

- What support they can get.
- How to get support.



Young people often depend on professionals, like teachers or social workers, to help them get the support they need.

What services and organisations said



We also had a workshop with different services and organisations. They worked together to find better ways to:

- Find young people who need help.
- Provide the right support to help young people have a better future.



People said there are problems that stop organisations and services from working together. For example:

- How services are funded.
- Separate working instead of together.
- No easy way to share information.



There are not enough programmes to help young people early enough.



Professionals need to listen to young people to find out who needs support.



There are many kinds of support for young people, but there is no clear list of options.



Young people and professionals do not always know who can provide the help, or how to get it.



Each young person has their own needs, goals, and challenges.



We need to focus on putting young people's needs first.



It is important to involve young people in:

- Designing services.
- Making decisions about their future.

Our goals



We want all young people to get the support they need to grow into adults in the best way for them.

By working together, we will:



- Help young people stay in education, job, and training.



- Stop young people from becoming homeless. Make sure they have a safe home.

We will focus on 5 goals.



1. Find young people who are at risk early. For example, at risk of not being in education, work, or training, or becoming homeless.



2. Different services will work together to provide support to meet the needs of each young person.



3. Check if the support is meeting the needs of young people.



4. Have the right chances for young people to get a job, skills, or training.



5. Have people in charge to make sure everything is working well.

1. Find young people who are at risk early



This goal will help:

- Find young people who need support early.
- Stop things like becoming homeless from happening.
- Help young people do well in school and find work.



Early help can:

- Improve results for young people.
- Stop problems from getting worse and needing more help later.
- Reduce the need for more serious or specialist services.

What we are doing



Schools, social workers, youth workers, and other professionals find young people who need help. They refer them to services that can support them.



Young people can ask for help themselves through the **Neath Port Talbot Single Point of Contact**.



Family members can also refer young people to services.



Young people can go to the **Opportunity Hub in Port Talbot Shopping Centre** for support.



The **Vulnerability Assessment Profile** helps find young people who might need extra support.

What we will do next

We will:



- Work with different services to improve how we find young people at risk.



- Make sure people know about the services and support available.



- Bring information from different services together.



- Make it easier for young people to ask for help.



- Give training to professionals who work with young people.



- Have meetings between different services in schools. This will help find young people who need support.

2. Different services will work together to provide support to meet the needs of each young person



Services need to work together better to meet the needs of young people. It will make the process easier for young people.



Young people have said they do not like having to say the same things to different services.

What we are doing



- Housing teams work with social services to help young people aged 16 to 18. They help find a safe place to stay while they decide what other help the person needs.



- Housing and Children's Services teams support young people who are becoming adults. They offer services like **When I'm Ready** and **Supported Lodgings**.



The Welsh Government gives money such as the **Youth Support Grant** and the **Housing Support Grant** to help prevent homelessness.



- Neath Port Talbot Youth Service helps young people aged 14 to 18 who are at risk of becoming homeless. The service runs sessions in schools, colleges, and youth groups about housing and homelessness.



- Dewis Housing helps young people with housing problems. They provide shared flats and houses for young people who are homeless. They also help young people live on their own and keep their homes.



- The Welsh Government's Youth Engagement plan says that each young person should have a lead worker. This person helps the young person build skills and support to do well in education, training, or work.



- Schools and youth workers help students at risk of not being in education, job, or training. They have support for students in Year 11, both in and out of the classroom. They continue support after students leave school.



- Neath Port Talbot Youth Service helps young people aged 16 to 18. They offer support to help them move into education, job, or training.



- Careers Wales helps young people plan their careers and find jobs and training. They offer extra help to young people who are at high risk of not being in education, work, or training.



- The **Third Sector** gives important community support for young people. They offer programmes for those with extra needs.

The **third sector** is charities, voluntary groups, and non-profit organisations. They are not part of the government or businesses.

What we will do next

We will:



- Make sure staff have the right understanding and training to help young people.



- Use tools that help services work together.



- Make sure the **Youth Engagement Strategy group** shares information and makes decisions together.



- Make a list of services available to young people.
Create shared pathways across different services.



- Look at ways to use the Curriculum for Wales to offer support.



- Work with schools and the **third sector** to provide support for young people.



- Encourage schools to work with the community to prevent homelessness.



- Find ways to provide wellbeing support for young people.



- Continue to improve links between services and housing teams for young people.

3. Check if the support is meeting the needs of young people



It is important to check how services are working. This helps us make sure the support is right for young people.



Checking services will help us make changes so young people get better support and more chances.



This helps build confidence and trust with young people and their families.

What we are doing



- We collect information to check how well things are going.



- Careers Wales, schools, and the local authority work together to check how young people are doing.



- Coordinators meet with schools to find out which students need support.



- They update this information is regularly to help identify those at risk.



- Meetings between services continue during school holidays to make sure young people get support.



- We check how we are doing with support for young people over 16 years.

What we will do next

We will:



- Improve the Youth Engagement Strategy Group. Look at how well the systems are working.



- Involve young people in checking services.



- Use different ways to get results and make better choices for each young person.



- Create a pathway for young people who are at higher risk of being homeless. Or at risk of not being in education, work and training.



- Create a guide for services working with young people.

4. Have right chances for young people



Young people want to choose their own job, skills, and training. They want to control their future and choose what is right for them.

What we are doing



The **Neath Port Talbot Employability and Skills Strategy** helps us work with local businesses.



Many business forums have been set up to talk with local businesses. They share what changes and needs are important.

What we will do next

We will:



- Make sure young people have the right help to find a job, training, or develop new skills.



- Work together to create programmes that help young people for work.



- Let young people help design the services that support them.



- Share information about different paths to work or training. Show how to access these options.



- Make sure young people get fair advice and support.



- Work with schools and education places to help young people move from one stage to the next.



- Make sure young people know where to go for more support if they need it.

5. Have people in charge



The Welsh Government's **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework** says everyone must help make the plan work.



People said partner groups should share the responsibility more.



It is important for us and our partners to talk about what is working and what is not.

What we are doing



Our **Neath Port Talbot Youth Support Multi Agency Group** brings together public, private, and **third sectors** to support young people.



The **Neath Port Talbot Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector** forum helps groups talk about what they need and plan together.



The **Neath Port Talbot Youth Providers' Network** focuses on issues that affect young people aged 11 to 25.



The **Children and Young People's Leadership Group** has leaders from local government, health, education, the **third sector**, and emergency services. They work together to meet the needs of young people.

What we will do next

We will:



- Set up a system to help organisations working across different groups.



- Get support from leaders in all the partner groups to improve services.



- Update the **Neath Port Talbot Youth Engagement Strategy Group**. Make sure it follows the goals of the Welsh Government's **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework**.



- Make sure young people know who is in charge of the support they get.

Hard words

Mental health

Mental health is how you feel and think and how that affects your wellbeing.

Third sector

The third sector is charities, voluntary groups, and non-profit organisations. They are not part of the government or businesses.