

Report of the Learning and Inclusion Team

Subject: First 1,000 Days Project

Purpose of Report

To provide members with a review of the work of the 1st 1,000 Days Project and how present and planned activity in this area is being developed to meet the needs of children and those involved in providing care for this age group.

Introduction/Background

The First 1,000 Days Project was launched in February of 2022, initially delivering 10–12-week programmes of activity in the Pembroke and Pembroke Dock areas for parents and pre-school children. Additional funding through Pembrokeshire County Council's Early Years Team has enabled the project to expand and deliver work to nursery settings and Flying Start across Pembrokeshire with the aim of getting more pre-school children outdoors and engaged with the natural world. The project has also worked with nursery and pre-school teams, providing support and developing new resources to enable them to explore their outdoor spaces with children.

Additional external funding enabled the project to continue and deliver additional programmes of activity for parents and pre-school children in Milford Haven (based at Meads Schools), with plans for a similar 10–12-week programme for Haverfordwest (based at Fenton School Nursery) set for the summer.

The First 1,000 Days Project continues to deliver support for pre-school settings across Pembrokeshire in relation to outdoor activity and has for the last two years run a programme of events for multiple groups (nurseries, cylch meithrin, Flying Start) at locations including Castell Henllys, Colby Woodland Gardens, St. Brides Orchard, Broadhaven, and Scolton Manor.

The project has secured external funding until March 2025 and is delivered by a part-time (2.5 days /week) Outdoor Play Worker supported by a part-time Play Assistant (7 hours/week).

Activity undertaken

Since the project was launched early in 2022, the First 1,000 Days team has worked with 35 local nursery settings including Flying Starts across the County, delivering 50 sessions. Around 500 children have taken part. The project has delivered three 10-12-week programmes for parents/carers and pre-school children and 8 'Early Years Outdoor Activity Days' at various locations with a further 350 pre-school age children joining in. The project has also completed resources for settings and is preparing good practice case studies for Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools and the Early Years Team at Pembrokeshire County Council.

Comparisons

This project was inspired by Wales's First 1000 days initiative: [Every Child – Health and Wellbeing Information for Parents \(senedd.wales\)](#), which recognises that the early years of a child's life have a long-lasting impact on individuals and families, shaping the future for children as they grow up.

A range of organisations and initiatives have sought to re-engage young families with opportunities for outdoor play as there is good evidence to suggest that spending time outdoors is becoming much less of a feature in the lives of young children across the United Kingdom. Whilst outdoor play is very much part of the Early Years Curriculum in Wales ([Early childhood play, learning and care: Developmental pathways 0 to 3 \(gov.wales\)](#)), good practice in this area is variable, as is the support and resources available to settings. First 1,000 Days aims to provide this support to Early Years settings in Pembrokeshire.

In addition, the project supports parents/carers and children to experience and build confidence in their use of the outdoors, learn new skills and visit different locations in and around the National Park. However, given that the project aims to provide opportunities that are sustainable (and embed behaviour change) a different model for delivery might evolve following a review of these programmes in the future.

Financial considerations

The First 1,000 Days Project has received funding from Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Trust (PCNPT), Welsh Government, Early Years Intervention Grant (Pembrokeshire County Council) and various charitable trusts. The project is fully funded from external sources until the end of March 2025.

Risk considerations

The First 1,000 Days Project relies on external funding to support its activity. The project works collaboratively with the Early Years Team at Pembrokeshire County Council and Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools to engage with a target audience of early years settings and their staff together with children and parents. The project provides support and experiences which address key issues around child poverty, an issue which has an impact across communities in Pembrokeshire.

Compliance

The project supports the NPA's duty to 'foster the social and economic well-being of local communities' and the National Park Authority's Corporate Wellbeing Objectives relating to Connection and Communities. The project also supports PCNPA's commitments with regard to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, whilst contributing to measures identified in the Child Poverty Strategy for Wales (2024).

Human Rights/Equality issues

The First 1,000 Days project activity address key equality issues in terms of access to the natural heritage of Wales and contributes to the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's own Equality Plan.

Biodiversity implications/Sustainability appraisal

The First 1,000 Days project has no discernible negative impact on biodiversity in the National Park. However, the content of activity programmes, training for staff and parents/carers contribute to increased awareness of biodiversity in Pembrokeshire (amongst new audiences) and nature recovery in practice.

Welsh Language statement

The work of First 1000 Days project is fully bilingual with resources, training and support for settings all delivered bilingually. The project has been delivered at both Welsh and English-speaking settings in the County.

Recommendation

Receive the report and note for future consideration.

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