

Complete Agenda



Tuag at Ragoriaeth
Towards Excellence



Meeting

GWE JOINT COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.30 am, WEDNESDAY, 20TH MAY, 2020

Location

Virtual Meeting

Contact Point

Annes Sion

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(DISTRIBUTED 14/05/20)

GWE JOINT COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

Voting Members

Councillors

Councillor Julie Fallon	Conwy County Borough Council
Councillor Meirion Jones	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts	Denbighshire County Council
Councillor Ian Roberts	Flintshire County Council
Councillor Phil Wynn	Wrexham County Borough Council
Councillor Cemlyn Rees Williams	Gwynedd Council

Co-opted Non-voting Members

Rosalind Williams	Church of Wales
Haf Williams	Primary Schools Representative
Claire Armitstead	Secondary School Representative
Jonathan Morgan	Special Schools Representative
Alison Fisher	Governor Representative

Non-voting Officers

Rhys Howard Hughes	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Dr Lowri Brown	Conwy County Borough Council
Karen Evans	Denbighshire County Council
Claire Homard	Flintshire County Council
Ian Roberts	Wrexham County Borough Council
Garem Jackson	Gwynedd Council

Officers in Attendance

Arwyn Thomas	GwE Managing Director
Dafydd L. Edwards	Host Authority
Sion Huws	Host Authority
Susan Owen Jones	GwE Business Manager
Annwen Morgan	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Alwyn Jones	GwE Assistant Director
Gareth Williams	GwE Advisory Board Chairman

Observer

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declaration of personal interest.

3. URGENT MATTERS

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chairman for consideration.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING - 26 FEBRUARY 2020 4 - 9

(copy enclosed)

5. GWE ACCOUNTS 2019/2020 - REVENUE OUT-TURN 10 - 14

GwE Managing Director and Gwynedd Council Head of Finance to update the Joint Committee of the final financial review of the GwE Budget for the 2019/20 financial year.

6. WELSH GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO COVID-19 : CUTS TO REGIONAL GRANTS 15 - 17

GwE Managing Director to update the Joint Committee on the situation regarding regional grants for the 2020/21 financial year.

7. QUALIFICATIONS 18 - 28

GwE Assistant Director to consider the consequences of the decision to close schools and to cancel the summer 2020 exam series.

8. TRANSITION BACK INTO SCHOOLS 29 - 40

GwE Managing Director to present a report which considers the transition of learners back to school when instructed by Welsh Government.

GWE JOINT COMMITTEE WEDNESDAY 26 FEBRUARY 2020

Present:

Councillors: Phil Wynn (Chair - Wrexham County Borough Council), Meirion Jones (Anglesey County Council), Julie Fallon (Conwy County Borough Council), Huw Hilditch-Roberts (Denbighshire County Council), Ian Roberts (Flintshire County Council) and Cemlyn Williams (Gwynedd Council).

Co-opted non-voting Members: Haf Williams (Primary Schools' Representative) and Claire Armitstead (Secondary Schools' Representative).

Non-voting Officers: Rhys Howard Hughes (Anglesey County Council), Jenny Williams (Conwy Borough County Council), Karen Evans (Denbighshire County Council), Claire Homard (Flintshire County Council) and Garem Jackson (Gwynedd Council)

Officers present: Arwyn Thomas (Managing Director, GwE), Sion Huws (on behalf of Gwynedd Council Monitoring Officer, Host Authority), Dafydd Edwards (Gwynedd Council Head of Finance, Host Authority), Hywyn Jones (Gwynedd Council Senior Accountant, Host Authority), Susan Owen (Business Manager, GwE), Annwen Morgan (Chief Executive, Anglesey Council), Alwyn Jones (Assistant Director, GwE), Gareth Williams (Chair of GwE Advisory Board), Annes Sion (Gwynedd Council Democracy Team Lead, Host Authority), Sioned Mai Jones (Gwynedd Council Democracy Team Officer, Host Authority) and Bethan Roberts (Performance Management Manager, GwE).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Dr Lowri Brown (Conwy County Borough Council) and Ian Roberts (Wrexham County Borough Council).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declaration of personal interest was received by any member present.

3. URGENT MATTERS

There were no urgent matters.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 November 2019 as correct.

5. NATIONAL CATEGORISATION

DECISION

To note the information in the report, expressing concern about the arrangement nationally. Joint Committee members were asked to raise their concerns with the Education Minister in the Welsh Local Government Association meeting. The Management Board was also asked to undertake a review of arrangements locally.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented and the process explained, expressing that it is a continuous process. It was noted that schools can appeal, but that no schools have done so this year.

It was stated that regional moderation has taken place and that regional samples have been sent for moderation nationally. It was added there were no amendments following national moderation. It was explained there is no national analysis, but, overall, there is an increase in green category schools, with 10% of schools in the red category. It was added that the primary profile is positive overall.

Comments arising from the discussion

- Concern was raised about the arrangement nationally. It was noted that it is difficult to understand and the need for consistency was emphasised.
- It was noted that parents and the press misinterpret the colours associated with the support category when the categorisation is published on 'My Local School'.
- It was emphasised that it is the Local Authority that determines the colours.

6. GWE BUDGET 2019/20 - 3RD QUARTER REVIEW

DECISION

The report was accepted.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, noting that the 3rd quarter review estimates a net overspend of £27,000, which is a fairly neutral situation in the context of total expenditure. It was added there is no significant change to what was reported in quarter 3 - which highlighted an overspend of £36,000. It was emphasised there is no need to worry about the overspend as it is under control.

Attention was drawn to the financial variances. In terms of employees overspend, the reduction in Supporting Improvement Advisers has been implemented since 1 September 2019; consequently, there is a one-off overspend in 2019-20. The budget was not perused as there is not much change since the previous report.

7. 2020/21 BASELINE BUDGET

DECISION

It was decided to adopt the baseline budget for 2020/21, as presented in

Appendix 1 of the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, noting that the contribution of Local Authorities is central to the baseline budget. It was expressed that the budget reflects the decision of the chief executives to add inflation in full and to not implement a cut in 2020/21. It was added that this is due to a better financial settlement for Local Authorities than that received in recent years. It was noted that as a result of this there is no savings column in the budget. In recent years, GwE has received significant cuts.

Comments arising from the discussion

- It was asked where the decision was made that Local Authorities will add inflation in full and not implement a cut. It was explained that a discussion took place between the Chief Executives in January. The discussion was a fair one, looking at the implications of this. It was noted that all Chief Executives were unanimous on this.
- It was noted that some schools are facing a financial deficit. It was expressed that decisions regarding school budgets are made by the Local Authorities.

8. EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT GRANT - REVIEW

DECISION

It was decided to:

1. Delay review of allocation of FPh element of EIG until Welsh Government has made its situation clearer on whether to ultimately transfer the FPh grant, or not.
2. Undertake a review of EIG School Effectiveness finance groups
3. Review current use of Grant elements that are not delegated.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, noting how the Education Improvement Grant is allocated within the region. So as to have regional consistency, how the EIG is used and delegated will need to be looked at. Specific elements and the financial conditions were scrutinised. It was noted there have been significant cuts to the core budget and the grant budget in the past. The recommendations of the report were summarised, and permission sought to undertake a review of this grant in its entirety.

Comments arising from the discussion

- It was agreed that the person undertaking the review must be independent of GwE and skilful in terms of understanding complex budgets.
- Concern was expressed that we are still running an old system, and that it is timely to look at this matter and have consistency and equity.
- It was noted that the review is welcomed. It is believed there has been inconsistency historically in delegation rates to Local Authorities, and that the review will bring about greater clarity across the region.

9. EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT GRANT 2020/21

DECISION

It was decided to delay the decision so as to have guidance from the region's Chief Executives on financing additional resources for Wrexham PIAP. An urgent meeting will then be held to make a decision on the matter.

DISCUSSION

Councillor Meirion Jones chaired this item. Thanks were expressed to Hefin Owen, Gwynedd Council, for his work and good wishes extended for his retirement.

It was noted that in the last Management Board meeting it was agreed for the Education Improvement Grant to be distributed in the same way as last year and to undertake a review as we go. An increase of £560k in the grant was noted for the Foundation Phase this year. It was discussed whether to use this additional resource to finance the additional resources for implementing the Wrexham PIAP. It was expressed that the estimate for support is £300k. The recommendations and the 5 options were described.

Comments arising from the discussion

- It was noted that 3 Local Authorities have already been reviewed by Estyn, but that 3 are awaiting this review. Concern was expressed that the other Local Authorities will require additional support after the Estyn review.
- There was consensus to assist Wrexham, but it was questioned whether this is the appropriate financial source for this as it is intended for the Foundation Phase.
- The preferred option was 3.4.4, but it was noted that the Joint Committee will need further guidance on what is meant by partial funding i.e. what percentage or amount. It was suggested that Wrexham will have to find most of the money required.
- It was explained that Wrexham is meeting with Estyn at the end of March. It was noted that the Joint Committee should not delay its decision in fairness to Wrexham and that it should reconvene before 25 March, so as to give clarification to Estyn on the way forward.
- The need for a special meeting following the discussions of the Chief Executives was noted.

10. 2019-20 BUSINESS PLAN - QUARTER 3 MONITORING REPORT

DECISION

The monitoring report for quarter 3 was accepted.

DISCUSSION

The recommendation was noted and the report was accepted.

11. GWE BUSINESS PLAN 2020-2023 - REGIONAL PRIORITIES

DECISION

The draft Business Plan and the regional priorities for 2020-2023 were approved.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, and it was noted that this year is the last year of the current 3-year business plan, and that this draft notes the direction of travel for the next 3 years. The priorities were outlined: it was noted that the priorities are a combination of improving provision, leadership and outcomes in schools, along with implementing the reform journey. It was noted that the strategic objectives align with national priorities and that GwE has a central role.

It was noted that discussions had taken place with schools regarding the priorities and challenges. It was emphasised that the main priority is the reform journey.

Comments arising from the discussion

- The need to conduct discussions with school Governors was noted.

12. GwE RISK REGISTER

Decision

The Risk Register was noted and accepted.

13. WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE SCHOOLS

Decision

It was decided to undertake a review of the current GwE Core Lead role and of information sharing systems between Local Authorities and GwE.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented. It was noted that in a recent GwE Management Board meeting a recommendation was made to review the GwE Core Lead role and the structure across the region together with information sharing systems between Local Authorities and GwE.

It was added that Welsh Government is piloting a scheme, in conjunction with stakeholders, so as to have a holistic view of the provision for schools.

Comments arising from the discussion

- It was expressed that discussions between Welsh Government, Local Authorities and GwE have matured.
- In terms of information sharing between Local Authorities and GwE, it was expressed that G6 is available but that Authorities also have systems. The need for a review was emphasised, as there is inconsistency across the region. The need for a clear protocol was noted, a protocol on how information will be shared and the risks arising from this.
- It was decided that a further discussion on information sharing is needed in the next meeting.

14. MEETINGS CALENDAR

DECISION

The meetings calendar was approved, and authority given to the Chair to make changes as required.

The meeting started at 10:30am and concluded at 12:15pm.

CHAIR

Agenda Item 5

GwE: Joint Committee 20/05/20



MEETING	GwE Joint Committee
DATE	20 May 2020
TITLE	GwE Final Accounts 2019/20 – Revenue Out-turn
PURPOSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To update Joint Committee Members on the final financial review of GwE' budget for the financial year 2019/20.• The report focuses on the significant financial variances, with Appendix 1 containing the full financial information.
RECOMMENDATION	To accept the report.
AUTHOR	GwE Managing Director and Gwynedd Council Head of Finance.

1. DECISION

- 1.1 **Consider and note the Revenue Income and Expenditure Account for 2019/20 presented as Appendix 1**, as well as the information on the main differences between the budget and expenditure presented in the Out-turn report as per normal practice.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A final net underspend position of (£189,618) is reported against the budget, mainly due to an underspend on employees along with the Brokerage budget.
- 2.2 A change of (£217,253) to what was reported in quarter 3, which was an estimated overspend of £27,635, with the following section of the report explaining the reasons for the main variances.

3. FINANCIAL VARIANCES

3.1 **Employees:**

Final Position: Underspend (£135,191) Quarter 3: overspend £39,249.

In the 3rd quarter review, an overspend of £39,249 was expected for 2019/20, but with staff secondments and contributions of core staff to new programs and projects, funded through grants, this led to an underspend. Due to timetables and prioritising, as a one-time exercise, core resources were used to complete the grant work, which led to a one-off underspend

3.2 **Property:**

Final Position: Overspend £15,108 Quarter 3 : Neutral.

Overspend due to increased costs for the use of services, along with a reduction in income from specific projects for the use of GwE rooms.

The Covid 19 situation by the end of March 2020, meant that a large number of meetings and events were not held, leading to a decrease in income

3.3 **Transport:**

Final Position: Underspend (£2,250) Quarter 3: underspend (£9,017).

No substantive change to the 3rd quarter review, The actual travelling costs for the year are slightly lower than the budget.

3.4 **Brokerage:**

Final Position: Underspend (£58,467) Quarter 3 : Neutral.

Specific projects, including some financed by specific grants, have been prioritised by the service, which has led to an underspend on this heading in 2019/20.

3.5 **Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG)**

Final Position: Neutral Quarter 3 : Neutral

The RCSIG includes a specific heading for Assistant Director Secondment for one year. As the secondment came to an end on 31 August 2019, and Welsh Government conditions note that funding is specifically for this purpose, the remaining balance is reclaimed.

Analysis of full grant below:

Delegated*	£26,064,004
Non-delegated	<u>£ 8,706,919</u>
Total	<u>£34,770,923</u>
Grant	£32,284,643
Match Funding	<u>£ 2,486,280</u>
Total	<u>£34,770,923</u>

* GwE accounts do not include grants distributed directly to schools.

4. UNDERSPEND FUND

- 4.1 At the beginning of the 2019/20 financial year, the fund (GwE 'general balances') totalled (£290,586)
- 4.2 The net underspend of (£189,618) has increased the underspend fund to (£480,204) at the end of 2019/20. A report to a subsequent meeting will consider the possible use of the fund, after the current crisis.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Revenue Income and Expenditure Account 2019/20.

VIEW OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from the perspective of propriety.

Statutory Finance Officer:

Co-author of report.

GwE JOINT COMMITTEE

REVENUE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT 2019/20

	Budget	Expenditure	Over / (Under)
	£	£	Spend Net £
Expenditure			
Employees			
Salaries			
- Management, Brokerage, Standards and Administration	844,062	821,058	(23,003)
- Supporting Improvement Advisers	3,540,778	3,374,128	(166,650)
- Staff on Secondment	46,080	46,080	0
- Transferred against 'Specific Projects'	(1,688,385)	(1,633,923)	54,462
Training, advertising and other employee costs	40,897	38,059	(2,838)
Building			
Rent (includes services)	166,363	175,610	9,247
'Specific Projects' usage of offices recharge	(45,611)	(39,750)	5,861
Travel			
Travel Costs	131,811	129,561	(2,250)
Supplies and Services			
Furniture, equipment, printing, postage, telephone, room hire etc	70,080	74,059	3,979
Information Technology (contribution to renewal fund)	15,841	15,841	0
Audit Fees	11,000	11,000	0
Brokerage	277,230	218,763	(58,467)
Gwynedd Council Host Authority Support Service Costs			
Legal	5,498	5,498	0
Human Resources	9,428	9,428	0
Finance	40,770	40,770	0
Information Technology	45,092	45,092	0
Savings to be found - 2018/19	0	0	0
Savings to be found - Rent Budget	0	0	0
Savings to be found - Supplies and Services deficiency	0	0	0
Savings to be found - 2019/20	0	0	0
National Model Commitments	469,948	469,948	0
Contribution to Pension Requirements Fund	165,287	165,287	0
Specific Projects			
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant	8,913,912	8,913,912	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Looked After Children	973,100	973,100	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Strategic Advisor	100,000	100,000	0
Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT)	251,184	251,184	0
ALN System Transformation	148,404	148,404	0
North Wales School Management Review System	8,703	8,703	0
Total Expenditure	14,541,472	14,361,813	(179,659)

	Budget	Income	Over / (Under) Spend Net
	£	£	£
Income			
Core Service Contributions			
- Anglesey Council (10.20%)	(416,697)	(416,697)	0
- Gwynedd Council (17.64%)	(720,531)	(720,531)	0
- Conwy Council (15.30%)	(624,919)	(624,919)	0
- Denbighshire Council (15.26%)	(623,132)	(623,132)	0
- Flintshire Council (22.71%)	(927,504)	(927,504)	0
- Wrexham Council (18.89%)	(771,761)	(771,761)	0
Income from Secondments	(46,080)	(46,080)	0
General Income	(15,545)	(18,680)	(3,135)
Specific Projects			
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant	(8,913,912)	(8,913,912)	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Looked After Children	(973,100)	(973,100)	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Strategic Advisor	(100,000)	(100,000)	0
Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT)	(251,184)	(251,184)	0
ALN System Transformation	(148,404)	(148,404)	0
North Wales School Management Review System	(8,703)	(8,703)	0
Interest on Balances	0	(6,824)	(6,824)
Total Income	(14,541,473)	(14,551,431)	(9,959)
Total Income over Expenditure	(0)	(189,618)	(189,618)
Memorandum -			
The GwE Surplus Fund			
	Fund balance as at 1 April 2019		(290,586)
	Add/Less - (Under)/Overspend 2019/20		(189,618)
	Less - Use of the Fund		0
	Fund balance as at 31 March 2020		(480,204)
Information Technology Renewal Fund			
	Fund balance as at 1 April 2019		(55,479)
	Add - Contribution 2019/20		(15,841)
	Less - Use of the Fund		0
	Fund balance as at 31 March 2020		(71,320)
Pension Requirements Fund			
	Fund balance as at 1 April 2019		5,498
	Add - Contribution 2019/20		(165,287)
	Less - Use of the Fund		0
	Fund balance as at 31 March 2020		(159,789)



REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

20 May 2020

Report by: GwE Managing Director

Subject: Welsh Government response to Covid-19: Cuts to Regional Grants

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To update Joint Committee members on the situation regarding regional grants for the financial year 2020/21.

2.0 Background

2.1 As a result of the Welsh Government's response to Covid-19, GwE were asked (8 April 2020) to identify cost savings of 3% (£950,000) from the total indicative allocations of the Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant for the period 2020/2021. This includes the Education Improvement Grant.

2.2 A further email was received on the 6th of May 2020, detailing further savings that Ministers have agreed. In addition to the 3% (£4.2m) reduction overall, Ministers have also decided to make the following savings:

- £150,000 saving from Higher Level Teaching Assistants budget
- £454,000 saving from budget for 'Core Consortia Support for Design & Development of the new Curriculum'
- £5m reduction in Professional Learning budget.

2.3 Welsh Government have also indicated the possibility of further support and funds required for the Covid-19 response. The Joint Committee will be kept updated as & when information and requests are received.

3.0 Considerations

3.1 In order to be able to facilitate the 3% cuts, a number of assumptions were made & are outlined below:

- Cost savings only apply to the financial year 2020/2021 (one off savings have been identified due to the consequences of schools being closed until at least Sept 2020 and therefore school to school working and professional learning will be limited during this period). These savings are not sustainable in future years
- Local Authority match funding will remain at 2019/2020 funding levels (If this were to be reduced / removed then there would be a further £2.5m of savings to be identified.
- PDG Grant and the PDG LAC element of the grants continue as previously published.
- All staff salaries will be funded
- There will be no additional cuts to the core budget for 2020/2021 from the Local Authorities

3.2 The additional cuts communicated on the 6th of May 2020 equate to £1,263,019* for the region.

3.3 The table below provides a summary of the cuts impacting on the region as of 12/05/20.

	Amount (£)
3% Cut	950,000
Additional Cut – communicated 06/05/20*	1,263,019
Total	2,213,019

**Indicative figures provided by GwE – breakdown per region not yet provided by WG*

3.4 In making the decisions regarding cuts, Ministers were expectant that the majority of savings can be made through natural savings resulting from schools being closed and professional learning and school to school working being limited, lessening their impact.

3.5 Realising these savings will however be challenging, particularly given the uncertainty that we all currently face. GwE & local authority officers are working closely to manage these savings & assess the impact.

4.0 Recommendation

4.1 To note the content of the report & be mindful of the impact of such cuts.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 GwE and local authority officers are working closely together to manage these savings & assess the impact of these cuts.

6.0 Equalities Impact

6.1 There are no new equalities implications arising from this report.

7.0 Personnel Implications

7.1 There are no new personnel implications arising from this report.

8.0 Consultation Undertaken

8.1 The GwE Management Board has been consulted & are working closely with the GwE team to manage these cuts.

OPINION OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from the perspective of propriety

Statutory Finance Officer:

Finance officers will be working closely with GwE over the coming months to assist them to operate within the resources available to them, and to mitigate the impact of Welsh Government cuts to regional grants.



REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

20 MAY 2020

Report by: Alwyn Jones - GwE Assistant Director

Subject: Qualifications – summer 2020 and 2021 examination series

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 For Joint Committee to consider the consequences of the ministerial decision to close schools and the consequential decision to cancel the summer 2020 exam series for awarding of grades for GCSEs, AS, A levels, Skills Challenge Certificate and other vocational qualifications; and also

1.2 To consider the potential implications for the summer 2021 exam series.

2.0 Background

2.1 Following the ministerial decision on 18 March 2020 to close schools and the consequential decision to cancel the summer 2020 exam series, progression of learners to sixth form, college, higher education, training or employment must be facilitated. Schools, colleges and other exam centres will be asked to submit **centre assessment grades**, together with a **rank order** of learners to enable the award of GCSE, AS, A level and Skills Challenge Certificate (SCC) qualifications.

The centre assessment grades submitted to WJEC must reflect a fair, reasonable and carefully considered judgement of **the most likely grade a learner would have achieved if they had sat their exams this summer and completed any non-exam assessment**. The deadline **for submission** of the data will be **no earlier than 29 May 2020**, and the actual date for submission will be communicated by WJEC as part of the detailed instructions they will issue.

In the interests of fairness for learners, judgements made by centres across Wales should be consistent. However, it is unreasonable to expect that teachers in different centres across

the country will make judgements that are precisely consistent with one another. So that the final grades awarded are as fair as possible, WJEC will standardise the centre judgements once they have been submitted, using a method developed in conjunction with Qualifications Wales.

Welsh Government has confirmed that centres will not be held to account for their performance on the basis of these grades and will expect Estyn, local authorities and regional consortia to adopt a similar approach. Key Stage 4 and post-16 school performance measures will not be calculated for the 2019/20 academic year.

For every GCSE, AS, A level and Skills Challenge Certificate qualification, each centre will be required to submit:

- A **centre assessment grade** for each learner – the professional judgement of the subject teachers, including the Head of Department, about the grade that each learner is most likely to have achieved if they had sat their exams this summer
- The **rank order** of learners within each grade – for example, for all those learners with a B grade in GCSE Mathematics, a rank order where 1 is the learner at the top of that grade (and so closest to the grade above), and so on.

The same information is being required of centres in England for GCSEs, AS and A Levels regulated by Ofqual.

- 2.2 As yet, no guidance have been published by Qualifications Wales regarding those learners preparing for the 2021 examination series. Headteachers, through their Strategic Head teacher Forums, have noted an urgent necessity for advice and guidance from Qualifications Wales and WJEC regarding syllabus and examination content for the current Year 10 and Year 12. GwE have been actively supporting them with this work. This is essential to ensure schools are fully informed when planning and delivering distance learning strategies and transition back to schools.

3.0 Considerations

- 3.1 The Chairs of the six regional Secondary Headteacher Strategic Forums have written to Qualifications Wales asking for exegesis and clarification on the following areas:

- an urgent necessity for advice and guidance regarding syllabus and examination content for the current Year 10 and Year 12. This is essential to ensure schools are fully informed when planning and delivering distance learning strategies and models;
- by adhering to the use of comparable outcomes, there are mounting concerns that the GCSE brand is being protected to the detriment of individual pupil achievement;
- current lack of transparency around the statistical model being used for standardisation;
- an urgent requirement to effectively engage in professional dialogue with head teachers around the application of ‘historical data’ within the statistical model for standardisation;
- requirement for further guidance to stakeholders to fully understand the process of ‘grade awarding’ and the ‘standardisation model’; and
- significant concerns that schools will be unduly exposed by the appeals process where standardised assessment grades are different to those initially awarded by the school.

A copy of the letter and response from Qualification Wales is attached in Appendix 1.

3.2 Qualifications Wales have undertaken consultation on how the standardisation and appeals process will work for this year’s GCSE, AS and A level grades, following the cancellation of exams. The deadline for responding is 5pm on Wednesday, 13 May 2020. GwE have been actively supporting schools and Local Authorities with their responses to the consultation, and have also completed an online regional response based on the views and advice from Headteachers and LA Officers.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to consider the report and any subsequent action needed in light of the report.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6.0 Equalities Impact

6.1 There are no new equalities implications arising from this report.

7.0 Personnel Implications

7.1 There are no new personnel implications arising from this report.

8.0 Consultation Undertaken

8.1 Consultation undertaken with the GwE Management Board and Secondary Headteacher Strategic Forums.

9.0 Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 – Letter sent to Qualification Wales by the Chairs of the Regional Headteachers Forums and response from Qualification Wales

OPINION OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from the propriety perspective.

Statutory Finance Officer:

Nothing to add to the report from a financial propriety perspective.

Qualifications Wales
Q2 Building
Pencarn Lane
Imperial Park
Coedkernew
Newport
NP10 8AR

April 14th, 2020

Dear Mr Phillip Blaker

We are writing to you on behalf of our regional headteachers strategic forums.

Further to the recent Qualification Wales communication with secondary schools dated 3 April 2020, please note the following areas/aspects identified by head teacher colleagues from Ynys Mon, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham for exegesis and clarification:

- an urgent necessity for advice and guidance regarding syllabus and examination content for the current Year 10 and Year 12. This is essential to ensure schools are fully informed when planning and delivering distance learning strategies and models;
- by adhering to the use of comparable outcomes, there are mounting concerns that the GCSE brand is being protected to the detriment of individual pupil achievement;
- current lack of transparency around the statistical model being used for standardisation;
- an urgent requirement to effectively engage in professional dialogue with head teachers around the application of 'historical data' within the statistical model for standardisation;
- requirement for further guidance to stakeholders to fully understand the process of 'grade awarding' and the 'standardisation model'; and
- significant concerns that schools will be unduly exposed by the appeals process where standardised assessment grades are different to those initially awarded by the school.

We look forward with anticipation to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Aaron Bayley (Ynys Môn)
Ellen Williams (Gwynedd)
Trefor Jones (Conwy)
Claire Armitstead (Denbighshire)
Jane Cooper (Flintshire)
Chris Wilkinson (Wrexham)

Chairs of the North Wales Secondary Headteacher Strategic Forums

By email

21 April 2020

Dear Chris

Many thanks for your letter on behalf of Heads in the GwE, which raises several matters in relation to Summer 2020 awards and also the issue of the impact on to next academic year for those learners currently in Years 10 and 12.

Let me start with this summer before moving on to next.

Firstly, I have been clear in the briefings that I gave to the Headteachers Reference Group and to Regional Consortia that we are not applying a comparable outcome approach this year, that is adhering to strict predicted outcomes. Indeed, there are many misconceptions about the role that the comparable outcomes approach plays in normal years, but now is not the time to dwell on that.

We do, however, expect that results will be 'broadly similar' this year to previous years. This is in the interest of fairness. It would be unfair for this year's cohort to be advantaged or disadvantaged relative to previous or future cohorts because of this year's exceptional and unprecedented circumstances, which are the consequence of a national public health emergency.

Results at a national cohort level are relatively stable over time, so we expect that they will remain 'broadly similar' this year. By broadly similar we expect that results at a national cohort will be sufficiently close to previous years for the results to be plausible within the education sector and wider society. There is no fixed margin of tolerance over previous years, but we do need to ensure that the unusual basis for awards this summer does not inflate outcomes artificially or unfairly.

The standardisation model will be designed by WJEC and agreed by us so that there can be confidence that schools and colleges are applying a similar standard when generating Centre Assessment Grades. This is essential as individual schools and colleges may be relatively harsh or lenient, in which case it may be necessary for the Centre Assessment Grades to be adjusted in the award of the final calculated grade.

Qualifications Wales

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Imperial Park,
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NP10 8AR
☎ 01633 373 222



Cymwysterau Cymru

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Parc Imperial,
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We hope that this process will not need to make significant adjustments, and that all schools and colleges provide accurate Centre Assessment Grades, that is the grade most likely to be achieved by each candidate in each subject had they sat the examination. However, the process of standardisation is needed to ensure fairness to all.

The model for standardisation is currently being designed by WJEC, working alongside other GQ awarding bodies in England to ensure similarity across nations.

We expect that several models will be trialled with previous years and live data once this is available before the final model is agreed. Therefore, we do not expect the model to be finalised and agreed until the end of June or early July, once data has been submitted by schools and the various models checked with this data. Details of the model will be published at this point. We are also considering providing some information about the 'fit' of Centre Assessment Grades to predictions at the same time, so that there is public understanding of the degree of change that the standardisation model is likely to have to make.

We are currently working on details of the appeals process and will be consulting on this soon – we plan to launch a consultation that will run for two weeks from 28 April that will cover the aims that will underpin the award of grades this summer and the appeals process. We expect that the appeals process will be very similar to that currently being consulted on by Ofqual. We and Welsh Government are aware of the concerns that you have raised about exposure to the appeals process should Centre Assessment Grades and rank order be subject to individual subject access data requests. I cannot say more at the moment, but governments across the UK are investigating options that could put in place to protect schools post-results. You will see more about the proposals for appeals in the consultation.

Returning to your first point about the impact on current Year 10 and 12 learners. Work has started to look at the impact on next summer's examinations and clearly there are many unknowns, so multiple scenarios will need to be developed. We are currently working with WJEC to agreed principles that will underpin a subject by subject analysis of the options for change. These are likely to relate to the assessment model for next year. For example, recognising the significant time required for non-examination assessment, such as fieldwork or oral assessments, it is possible that revised arrangements will be put in place for these aspects of next year's examinations. I know that there is some call for a restricted syllabus for next year, reducing the content that needs to be delivered. Whilst not ruling this out at this early point, this seems less viable as schools and colleges will all deliver their local curriculum in slightly different ways, so there is no set order for content delivery and therefore no obvious way to make a change without there being significant disadvantage for some.

This is all early work as the priority has obviously been to establish arrangements for this summer. More information will come from WJEC as it is available and, in the meantime, we have asked Regional Consortia to help us identify a sense of priority by subject.

I am sorry that I have not been able to provide more direct answers to some of your questions, but please be assured that more information will be published as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,



Philip Blaker

Dear Mrs Williams, Mr Blaker, Mr Morgan

As the headteachers of the North Wales region, we felt it important to share with you our concerns and the questions we have about our current situation. It is vitally important to us that our children gain the qualifications they deserve and that no child is disadvantaged this year.

As you know, we are a moral workforce whose primary concern is the well-being of children. We are a purposeful workforce driven by a desire to support children to the next level of their learning and the future they deserve. We feel a deep responsibility to support our children in the next steps of their lives and to ensure no child is left behind or forgotten.

We ask for your trust to allow us to lead and drive the allocation of grades this year; to give us a voice in this process and not leave the future of our children to an algorithm alone. Too often our profession is degraded, sometimes even by our own, and we are perceived as gaming, as self-driven, as a profession of numbers and performance tables, and not as a moral, just and trustworthy profession we are, who have dedicated our lives to enabling our children to thrive.

We would like to thank you for your clarity to date and reiterate how much more secure and supported we feel working in Wales than our colleagues across the border. We do, however, have a number of questions which, when clarified, will allow us to plan more effectively for the education, the emotional and social support of all our children.

1. We have been informed, by our heads of subject, that Unit 7 GCSE science and other NEA qualification returned to WJEC will be marked but no mark returned to schools. Instead, this data will be used to standardise school performance. This has caused huge concern and also raised questions as to why this process is being carried out. How can data be withheld from a school and then used to “check” their rank is correct? If this is correct, it creates mistrust and undermines the joint working for the right outcome. Could we please ask for clarification as to whether this is the case?

Furthermore,

- i. Are NEAs being marked?
 - ii. Is data being withheld?
 - iii. Is this data being held by WJEC to standardise schools?
 - iv. If so why?
2. The use of comparative data generated and underpinned by national testing causes real concern; when this is done by an unknown algorithm in isolation, and without a conversation with professionals, extreme concern is created. We would ask, if this algorithm is driven on already known data and comparative data, what role do we actually play? What difference do we make? We therefore ask for clarification on how children will not be disadvantaged by the following situations
 - a. Significant cohort differences
 - i. In cognitive ability
 - ii. School improvement processes
 - iii. Cohort sizes
 - iv. Collaborative provision
 - b. The use of national data
 - i. Where children develop at different rates within the system
 - ii. Where schools translate grades at different rates
 - iii. Where schools add value at different times

3. As I am sure you are aware, the level of anxiety in our exam cohort is extremely high. Our children and their parents are frightened of the unknown and angry that their outcomes are beyond their control. Every year we have children who surprise us and disappoint us and we have a real concern about disadvantaging those who achieve beyond our predictions. The support we need to give this year is significantly more than previous years and our knowledge and understanding of the system less so. We would therefore request that:
 - a. Results are issued to schools earlier than in normal circumstances to allow us to process them and prepare the support we will need to provide for our children.
 - b. We are kinder in our allocation of grades to ensure we capture the 1 or 2 % annually that outperform their estimate. We need to remember that this year, unlike every other year, no child has been given the opportunity to reach for a grade.

4. We would ask for clarification of fees
 - a. Will exam fees be reduced as exam board costs have been?
 - b. Will appeal fees be the same as previous years?

5. We believe a number of our colleagues are advising our government, our exam board and QW. We are not, however, aware of who these leaders are. As leaders of our profession, we do not know who to contact to share our thoughts. We believe that by identifying links in each area, the views of all headteachers can be heard and the wellbeing of all children in all areas can be represented. We therefore ask:
 - a. Who are our profession-based advisors?
 - b. How can we contact them?
 - c. Are the voices of all sectors represented?
 - d. Is the voice of each region of Wales represented?
 - e. Are all types of school represented?

6. Our year 10 and year 12 cohorts are also becoming increasingly stressed and concerned as we remain, for the right reasons, outside formal learning. We would ask, as they are unlikely to return to the full structure and rigour of learning for a significant amount of time that a decision is made about their assessment methodology and programme of study soon. This will allow schools to plan effectively and responsibly for our children. We would ask that you also consider that on a phased, socially distanced return learning will continue to be lost and the emotional ability of our children on return will be significantly diminished. On return our children will need to be nurtured and recovered before they can be taught and effectively learn, therefore our exams cohorts 2020/21 are likely to have lost almost half of their program.

Mrs Williams, as our Minister, we would like you to know how important and valuable your clarity, support and care for our children, our school and our profession, has been. You have never allowed our children to become statistics; they have never been just a number and we are genuinely grateful for this. Our government has been a kind government during these most difficult times and we are asking, with the greatest of respect, that this continues as our children are assessed and the assessment methodology of our next cohort is identified. We are asking that our children are not disadvantaged by comparative data, statistical analysis or their lack of opportunity to try and fail, we are asking that their ability to learn on return is factored into our future planning but mostly we ask that the kindness and generosity of spirit our children have been shown already continues as it is the

Appendix 1

moral and right thing to do. This is a year when we need to be kinder and driven by the opinion of our moral and trustworthy profession.

Many thanks

Claire Armitstead – Chair of Denbighshire Secondary Heads

Aaron Bayley – Chair of Ynys Mon Secondary Head

Elen Williams – Chair of Wrexham Secondary Head

Jane Cooper – Chair of Flintshire Secondary Head

Trefor Jones – Chair of Conwy Secondary Head



REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

20 MAY 2020

Report by: Arwyn Thomas, GwE Managing Director

Subject: Transition of learners back into schools

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To allow Local Authorities, GwE and schools to prepare and respond quickly when Welsh Government instruct schools to re-open for more learners

2.0 Background

2.1 The Minister has made it clear that any decision on the re-opening of schools in Wales will be guided by the very latest scientific advice and will be based on the determined five key principles being met:

1. The safety and mental, emotional and physical wellbeing of students and staff
2. Continuing contribution to the national effort and strategy to fight the spread of COVID-19
3. Having the confidence of parents, staff and students – based on evidence and information – so that they can plan ahead
4. Ability to prioritise learners at key points, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds
5. Consistency with the Welsh Government's framework for decision making, to have guidance in place to support measures such as distancing, managing attendance and wider protective actions

The Minister has also emphasised that any announcement about the re-opening of schools would be undertaken by herself and that it would be communicated well in advance to stakeholders to allow everyone time to plan for the next stage. **As it currently stands, the**

situation in Wales has not changed and schools are not expected to reopen on June 1st as stipulated in England.

However, when instructions to reopen schools for more learners are delivered by Welsh Government it is important that schools are prepared to ensure as smooth a transition as possible.

3.0 Considerations

3.1 The paper presented in Appendix 1 outlines how GwE, the Local Authorities and schools can work in partnership to develop a regional framework for planning the transition of learners back into school. This is to ensure that schools are comprehensively supported with the task of re-opening. The Framework will consist of risk assessments and draft policies/guidance covering a range of areas for consideration and development by schools. An example of a draft risk assessment is included in Appendix 2. A regional approach will also give staff, pupils and parents confidence that there will be consistency and equity in how the next repurposing of schools will be managed.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to endorse a regional approach, with GwE, Local Authorities and schools working in partnership, for the next repurposing phase of education in Wales.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6.0 Equalities Impact

6.1 There are no new equalities implications arising from this report.

7.0 Personnel Implications

7.1 There are no new personnel implications arising from this report.

8.0 Consultation Undertaken

8.1 Consultation undertaken with the GwE Management Board and a sample of Headteachers from the different sectors.

9.0 Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 – Draft paper ‘Transition of Learners Back into Schools - Working Together to Plan Well’.

Appendix 2 – Draft secondary school risk assessment.

OPINION OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from the perspective of propriety.

Statutory Finance Officer:

I note that part 5.1 of the report above confirms that there are no financial implications arising from this report.

TRANSITION OF LEARNERS BACK INTO SCHOOLS

Working Together to Plan Well

This is the first draft of a document which aims to support school leaders, local authorities and the consortium in working together at a time of unprecedented challenge and complexity.

The Minister has made it clear that any decision on the re-opening of schools in Wales will be guided by the very latest scientific advice and will be based on the determined five key principles being met:

1. The safety and mental, emotional and physical wellbeing of students and staff.
2. Continuing contribution to the national effort and strategy to fight the spread of COVID-19.
3. Having the confidence of parents, staff and students – based on evidence and information – so that they can plan ahead.
4. Ability to prioritise learners at key points, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
5. Consistency with the Welsh Government’s framework for decision making, to have guidance in place to support measures such as distancing, managing attendance and wider protective actions.

Welsh Government has also indicated a phased approach to reopening and promised schools a (three week) lead in period. This paper considers some of the key issues that need to be addressed for the re-opening of schools for more learners.

Key responsibilities

Some of the key responsibilities for guiding the re-opening of schools for more learners are outlined in the table below:

Table 1: Key responsibilities for guiding the re-opening of schools for more learners

Tier	Responsibility
Welsh Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set a clear purpose and rationale for re-opening • Set out a Framework and guidance that define the roles of LAs and schools to re-open schools
Local Authorities in partnership with GwE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement national purpose and rationale for opening • Adopt National Framework and guidance • Produce a suite of policies to underpin the safe re-opening of schools • Identify the logistics and infrastructure around key areas such as transport and capacity to deliver safe re-opening • Undertake a risk assessment for each sector to mitigate and manage safe re-opening
Schools in partnership with LAs and GwE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement national purpose and rationale for opening • Adopt National Framework and guidance • Adopt Local authority policies • Create own risk assessments • Create scenarios and plans to implement national purpose and rationale for opening • Inform parents and pupils

Key areas to be addressed to inform the re-opening of schools for more learners

There are key areas that need to be considered and defined to inform models for the re-opening of schools for more learners.

If we begin with what is the purpose of re-opening schools:

Is it to offer one or a combination from the list identified below?

- Childcare to key workers and some vulnerable groups;
- child-care to parents who can support the re-opening of the economy;
- education to vulnerable learners to close the attainment gap;
- a more positive dialogue and engagement around maintaining distance learning strategies over an extended period of time (possibly until January 2021); or
- full time education to all learners?

Once we have clarity around the purpose we then need to assess the possible options for re-opening having considered the following:

- Capacity – of building to accommodate learning, to cater at lunch times and to transport to and from schools. This is school level detail that is needed to plan - which options are schools able to implement?
- Economic impact – which options allow for most families to return to work?
- Impact on children – which options have the most beneficial impact on learning and well-being?
- Impact on staffing – how to support all staff with safety and wellbeing? What is the staff profile of the school available to support learners in school and through continued distance learning?
- Practicalities – How practical is the option? Is the infrastructure in place to support it?
- School specific – should any phases or schools be dealt with differently?

Having considered all of the above, some of the possible options for reintegrating learners back to school include:

- Disadvantaged learners - Schools could be open full time to the most disadvantaged learners. This will vary from school to school depending on agreed definition of vulnerable. Special schools and PRUs sectors most affected. These sectors would probably have to create a rota or a prioritisation list.
- Transition year groups - Schools could be open to focus on specific year groups who are about to make a key transition in learning. This would include nursery to school, Years 6, 10 and 12, but could also include Years 2 or 9.
- Transition year groups – Schools may consider that transition does not take place under the current circumstances.

- All learners at a reduced time – Defining continuity and communication around Distance learning strategies. Schools would be open for all learners who would attend for a limited time, depending on maximum safe capacity: for example, a week a month, fortnightly pattern or one day a week. Staff would similarly rotate.
- Earlier years - schools could open for earlier year groups first.
- Children of parents who need to leave home to work – this would prioritise children whose parents need to leave home to work.
- Should children in the same families attend at the same time?

In addressing the above, schools will also have to consider that some parents will not think it is safe to let their children attend school and will have to adapt their plans accordingly. Communication with parents will be crucial to explain the rationale behind the chosen option.

Schools working with their Local Authority will then have to consider adopting different models to best accommodate their learners:

Welsh Government will state the purpose of re-opening schools. A one size fits all approach will not work as the variables are numerous and very pertinent to each individual school context. Decisions will have to be made at Local Authority level within a National Framework or/and by individual schools to best accommodate the preferred option.

- Preferred option – schools would adopt one of the options and then roll out to add or remove other options as capacity allows.
- Options targeting different school groups according to need over an extended period - would adopt different options over time at different points, to support different groups of learners at key points. This would then expand/contract to combine options at any given point as capacity allows.
- Combination of options at reduced times – schools would combine different options above but at reduced time for each. The time given to each option would then expand/contract as capacity allows.
- Consider extending the school day to include more capacity – 4 hour morning and afternoon blocks with an hour turnover

Factors and risks that will need to be considered in assessing options and models:

- Schools pattern and behaviour do not lend themselves to social distancing.
- Making a call too early and increasing spreading the virus.
- Is the present health data re Covid 19 supporting opening to larger groups?
- How long will furlough remain?
- Will the 2 meter social distancing guidance remain?
- Parental anxiety about the scientific evidence to decide on opening schools.
- Workforce health, anxiety and stress.
- Getting to and from school.
- Composition of families.
- Quality of school buildings and capacity.

- Guidance for schools and staff.
- Qualifications Wales deciding on how qualifications will be assessed in 2021.

Aspects for consideration when reopening schools

These aspects for consideration when reopening schools aim to provide a practical framework to help schools to plan the specific actions and decisions they will need to take in the period before reopening and to provide the basis for schools to open further as required. To make it more manageable these are divided into six areas: safety; site and facilities; staffing; teaching and learning; pupil support and other key management tasks.

Individual schools can use the framework to build their own more detailed, bespoke plans to reflect school phase, type and local context.

This agreed key actions and decisions will help to clarify the role of local authorities and GwE in supporting schools to reopen.

A common basic framework will also enable schools to collaborate in sharing ideas and documentation.

This initial document was drafted by a GwE working group consisting of representatives from all phases of education and types of school. The next step will be to consult widely with school leaders and local authorities to further improve the quality and usefulness of the final agreed checklist

This is done in the belief that the surest way to win the confidence of parents, pupils and colleagues is to work together to plan well.

Table 2: Considerations when reopening schools

ASPECTS FOR CONSIDERATION WHEN REOPENING SCHOOLS		
SAFETY	LA / GwE	School
Update Safeguarding Policy and procedures eg distance learning		
Update Health and Safety Policy		
Complete Covid 19 and other risk assessments eg high risk vulnerable pupils and staff		
Clear plan for managing Covid 19 cases on premises		
PPE – identify needs/early order/procedures for distribution, collection and disposal/guidance on use		
Travel – impact of social distancing/supervision of arrival and exit/parent drop off and collection		

Review school day timings – start and finish times/break and lunch/lesson times		
Preparation of teaching spaces		
Visitors – who and how		
Management of routine school maintenance eg equipment testing, grass cutting		
SITE and FACILITIES	LA / GwE	School
Social distancing protocols – measure site and spaces to calculate capacity/match to class sizes and subject requirements/use of larger and outside spaces/entry and exit/break and lunch/movement around school/levels of staff supervision/signage		
Hygiene protocols – handwashing/wiping surfaces/use of PPE/safe food preparation/early order materials eg hand sanitisers		
Review cleaning – staff capacity and availability/extra hours/early order and storage cleaning products/reorganise cleaning procedures for social areas, classrooms ,toilets		
Site adaptations eg to ensure safe entry and exit		
Lettings and shared use of site		
TEACHING and LEARNING	LA / GwE	School
Decide reasonable adapted in school curriculum offer – subject by subject review/staff availability/facilities/exam requirements/blending with distance learning		
Develop models of how distance learning could be approached taking into consideration the different options of contact with groups of learners		
Updated guidance on distance learning to support all staff and to continue to develop digital skills where needed		

Appendix 1

Consider evidence based and international best practice to ensure local approaches are well informed		
Review timetable and provide individual daily timetables		
Assess and address gaps in skills and knowledge particularly vulnerable pupils		
Assess and address impact on learning of issues linked to pupil wellbeing		
Alterations to the whole school approach to teaching eg TA support, group work, sharing resources		
Pupil transition between schools and key stages and within school from class to class		
Extra-curricular and off site provision		
STAFFING		
	LA / GwE	School
Consult on and provide guidance to staff on all aspects of returning to school eg update staff handbook		
Establish current staff availability eg health related absences		
Clear support for staff wellbeing including absent staff		
Calculate in school staffing requirements and provide daily rotas – safeguarding/SEN support/supervision/subject expertise/include continued provision for vulnerable pupils and children of key workers/staff workload eg balance of on site and distance learning commitments		
Review staff roles to support new arrangements eg key pastoral staff, redeployment of some support staff		
How will staff absence be covered and managed		
Staff training – how		
Other staffing recruitment/performance management/additional NQT support		
PUPIL SUPPORT		
	LA / GwE	School
How will pupils be supported in preparing and returning to in-school learning – clear guidance and expectations/evaluation of their		

Appendix 1

readiness/wellbeing support/pupil voice/siblings		
How will pupil attendance be managed		
Pupil transition (see teaching and learning)		
Communication with parents – inform, guide and reassure/management of parent concerns/use of social media		
OTHER KEY MANAGEMENT TASKS	LA / GwE	School
Support required from LA and GwE		
How can schools collaborate eg template letters, shared risk assessments		
Governance – role in planning, monitoring and decision making/policy changes/meetings		
Revisit School Improvement Plan priorities and timescales		
School budget – recalculate projections to include additional costs and savings on day to day expenditure		
Review existing calendar of events eg parents evenings		

Alongside these aspects for consideration, each school will need to conduct their own risk assessment against the guidance to inform Local Authority decision making.

See Appendix 1 for Risk Assessment Example

COVID-19 Secondary School Exit Strategy

- The five principles for returning to school
1. The safety and mental, emotional and physical wellbeing of students and staff
 2. Continuing contribution to the national effort and strategy to fight the spread of Covid-19
 3. Having the confidence of parents, staff and students - based on evidence and information - so that they can plan ahead
 4. Ability to prioritise learners at key points, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds
 5. Having guidance in place to support measures such as distancing, managing attendance and wider protective actions.


Questions to consider: On the assumption that there will need to be fewer pupils in school at first, what is your preferred model for achieving this? Is it better to have all students in on a rota basis, or specific year groups? How far should government mandate who should be in school and how much should schools be able to decide for themselves? If there were an announcement about some kind of return for more pupils to schools and a three-week lead-in period given, what are the specific actions and decisions schools/trusts would have to take in that time? *Purpose and expectations, Timescale, Safety Policies, Risk assessments and regulations, Site and facilities, Transport, Staffing, Teaching and learning*

What pre-requisites need to be in place before schools can open further? In particular, if schools were required to plan for the return of more pupils, how might social distancing be implemented, and how might this vary from school-to-school? Are there any situations that schools might be facing that would make it impossible for them to expand their opening in 3 weeks (e.g. contractors having gone bust), and would necessitate a 'window' of re-opening (i.e. between date A and date B)?

The following may be a starting point to scope your risk assessment and strategic response

Conduct a staffing profile → profile your accommodation capacity under current social distancing requirements → profile accommodation health and safety requirements → profile staffing deployment in relation to school based activity and distance learning requirements → profile transport implications → profile daily routines

Area of Concern	Existing Measures	Likelihood x Severity	Additional Controls	Likelihood x Severity	Additional Comments
Accommodation	School capacity calculation	4 x 3 = 12	Capacity calculations suggest that a standard 56 m ² could accommodate 8 pupils under 2 m social distancing. For a typical school with a variety of accommodation this would suggest a potential capacity of 35% of normal usage. The modal average classroom, with furniture and additional staff is 6 pupils. Schools may wish to apply other constraining factors or look to phase capacity from a range of 20% to 40% dependent on their individual constraints. Schools may wish to start at the lower range and on the basis of experience adjust capacity over subsequent weeks.	3 x 3 = 9	LAs have capacity data and it may be possible to run a variety of models as the advice on social distancing matures with the prevailing scientific advice.
Accommodation function	Health and safety requirements related to school classroom and infrastructure usage	4 x 4 = 16	Schools will need to conduct an audit of controls related to cleaning, hand washing, toilets, catering and social space usage.	4 x 4 = 16	Schools need to ensure that all the necessary health and safety checks have been undertaken after period of close down such as Legionnaires' disease, sprinkler and fire alarm testing, dust extraction etc. (please note this is not an exhaustive list and schools will need to liaise with their Health and Safety advisers for a comprehensive assessment)
Identification of pupils to reintegrate	Currently working on WG definition of vulnerable and key workers- current numbers requiring support increasing	4 x 3 = 12	Needs led reintegration. No mix of needs/ phases. Individual risk assessments of all pupils with care plans. Begin with 20% capacity and increase as successful. Unless managed very carefully this could cause the school to be closed for a long period.	3 x 3 = 9	Support required from all LA services to manage parent/ carer expectations. This could depend on why schools are re-opening - education, well-being or economy. In secondary schools - curriculum may be project based dependent on staffing availability. Consideration may need to be given to families with siblings in the school. Are Year 10, Year 12, Year 6 priorities for example or is it families in need, working families? Welsh language? Has to be clear national directive on who is prioritised based on the reason for re-opening schools. School then have find the local solutions. 3 identifiable groups - 1st in school but in unfamiliar circumstances, 2nd not able to come in (vulnerable etc) 3rd group not willing to come (suggested link with SE and 3rd group) - Schools would be unwise to force anyone to come to school - schools may need an interim attendance policy. Schools may wish to consider if a priority is vulnerable then digitally disadvantages then SEND.
Staff availability	Due to rota system, staff availability is currently appropriate. Around 10% are shielding and 5% unavailable for work for other reasons.	3 x 3 = 9	As contact with more pupils increase risk of staff requiring self-isolation increases. Staff with asthma are less likely to attend work- national guidance required. Staff who suffer with anxiety may find it difficult to attend work without reassurances.	4 x 2 = 8	National/local guidance on asthma required. Therefore identify staff who are at home working and staff available at school. Additional issue is staff who have school age children, this needs to be identified and worked into the rota. Schools should give consideration to the deployment of staff - staff working at school will not be able to undertake the same distance learning functions. A redeployment of groups may need to be considered to ensure equity and balance amongst staff.
Transport	Very school specific, ranging from minimal requirements with the majority living within 3 miles with safe travel to school to schools who require the majority of their pupils to be transported to school. In addition, consideration needs to be given to vulnerable students requiring bespoke arrangements.	3 x 4 = 12	Liaise with LA over transport related to revised school day and volume required. Continue to reduce numbers in transport.	4 x 4 = 16	All gates other than front gate will be closed. SLT on gate to let buses and taxis in and out once safe. This has to be relevant to each site - should be flexible for each school. Children on buses will need to be on a rota as well. Drop off zones created - nearby car parks etc
Arrival at school	All transport arrive at school and drop off in one central point. Parents requested not to bring children onto the school site or restrict access to school accommodation.	3 x 3 = 9	Schools may wish to consider staggered start times or phase Year Groups over separate morning and afternoon sessions. All pupils to remain in taxis until staff come to pick them up. Pupils to enter through one designated door and to wash hands prior to going to class. Schools may wish to consider that pupils to remain in designated classes and staff move to these classes.	4 x 4 = 16	Pupils not required in school may be drawn to meet friends outside of school and thereby posing additional risks. Parent/carer contact should still be done remotely.
Arrival in class	Accommodation constraints may mean very few pupils per class. If operating the policy of static pupils and mobile staff this would have to be on the basis of project based work.	3 x 2 = 6	Desks to be moved to ensure social distancing is abided to. Each pupil to have a designated workspace and equipment. Timetabling will need to consider time for phased toilet breaks.	3 x 4 = 12	Are there sufficient toilets / washing facilities in the restricted teaching block? Is there sufficient hand washing facilities? Consideration of a one way system inside and outside school. Doors (apart from fire doors) left open so need to touch handles etc

Break times/Lunchtimes	These post a significant risk to the social distancing requirement and for staff's ability to police requirements safely.	4 x 3 = 12	Consideration should be given to truncating the day to minimise mass groupings at breaktime. Further consideration should be given to removing the requirement for lunchtimes by truncating the day and phasing year groups between mornings and afternoons. Current arrangement for FSMs could remain enforce.	4 x 3 = 12	This would be dependent on number of pupils and size of grounds available - possible zoning of areas etc - rules of play / engagement etc - done with pupils
Catching / Spreading. Unable to remain social distancing whilst carrying out first aid.	Does the school follow PHW guidance around gloves and aprons. Face masks should also be available for staff.	4 x 3 = 12	Follow guidance re PPE, including face masks, aprons and gloves. Double bagging for waste. Ensure that waste bins are emptied daily by caretaking team. Increase cleaning hours to ensure that all surfaces are deep cleaned at the end of the day/ shift.	3 x 3 = 9	Review cleaning hours/ routines to build public confidence. Strategy required for any member of the school exhibiting Covid 19 symptoms. Policy in place for informing school community of any confirmed cases and the ability to track, where reasonable, others who may have come into contact with the confirmed case.
Visitors at school	Only essential visitors present at main reception and wait for staff to meet them. No visitors allowed in school unless pre-arranged.	3 x 3 = 9	All visitors will be pre-arranged. No external visitors other than key visitors e.g. school nurse, child protection social workers. All non-statutory visits/ contact to be cancelled or done through virtual meetings.	4 x 3 = 12	LA support to manage external agencies and parental expectations of schools running 'as normal' immediately. No unnecessary visits or meetings - can be via telephone or Teams etc. A balance has to be maintained between site security and the policy of all doors apart from fire doors and toilet doors to be kept open.
Cleaning routines	Cleaning routines changed to focus on surfaces, doors and communal areas. All staff requested to be mindful of supporting cleaning routines.	4 x 3 = 12	Focus cleaning on the restricted blocks and develop a policy for deep cleaning	3 x 3 = 9	Associated costs due to risk assessment response.
Review of Key Policies	Evaluate current policies to ensure that they will stand-up to scrutiny under the current demands	3 x 3 = 9	Set a policy review structure to ensure scrutiny and approval of Governing body	4 x 3 = 12	Liaise with LA to share best practice and compliance
Create New School Guidance	The current working practices have evolved during the school re-purposing period. Schools should consider setting down new guidance for this next phase of re-engagement	3 x 3 = 9	Develop a set of expectations and guidance principles for all school stakeholders	3 x 3 = 9	Check with HR that any revised guidance complies with agreements reached with Unions and Association. Schools may wish to consider developing a handbook (hard copy and/or on-line) to act as an easy reference point for the new operating procedures
Review distance learning approach to include more learners having school contact	Many schools operating are engaging with approximately 2% of their school population. Any re-engagement will significantly impact on these current arrangements	4 x 3 = 12	Capacity calculations and modelled expectations suggest that initial re-engagement could be between 15% and 40%	4 x 3 = 12	Operating procedures should look at the logistical impact of re-engagement starting initially at 15% and phasing up in 10% increments .
Induction day for staff to new processes	As part of the planning programme schools should look to have professional development programmes based around the new operating procedures	3 x 3 = 9	Schools may wish to consider phasing this training to ensure the appropriate social distancing guidance	3 x 3 = 9	A phased programme consisting of training and guidance on the new operating practices, procedures and policies and time for staff to undertake personal preparation. Time should also be given to adjusting their classroom bases in-line with the new operating practices.
Reviewing curriculum offer	It is unlikely that the standard curriculum offer that the pupils experienced in the Autumn Term (2019) could be replicated under the revised constraints	3 x 3 = 9	Schools should give consideration to restructuring their curriculum offer either on a core offer, core + offer or a project based offer	4 x 3 = 12	Guidance to curriculum re-design has been shared across the region in the curriculum design training run by Ian Gerrard. This is a link to his PowerPoint presentation 
Clarifying purpose of educational attendance on school sites	Standard attendance demands will be difficult to enforce as the wishes of parents/carers will vary significantly in relation to their expectations about the safety and security of their children under a re-engagement programme	4 x 4 = 16	Schools will need to liaise with their LA to determine the guidance and expectations to be shared with parent/carers and to create the checking and follow-up procedures if they feel that pupils are falling outside of these expectations.	4 x 4 = 16	Any revised guidance needs to be shared well in advance with all stakeholders to ensure consistency of expectation and the right to ask schools and LAs to consider individual circumstances. This should be a process of encouragement rather than enforcement, unless it falls under a safeguarding concern.
Risk assessing vulnerable staff and learners	Schools will need to develop a register of staff and pupils who are defined as 'vulnerable' under the prevailing demands	4 x 4 = 16	This will need to be updated as this dynamic situation changes and any adjustment to status will need to be communicated in advance of the new status taking effect.	4 x 4 = 16	This should be done in partnership with the LA to ensure consistency and appropriate consultation with all stakeholders.

GUIDANCE NOTES						
SEVERITY	5	5	10	15	20	25
	4	4	8	12	16	20
	3	3	6	9	12	15
	2	2	4	6	8	10
	1	1	2	3	4	5
		1	2	3	4	5
LIKELIHOOD						
1 - 4 LOW		5 - 9 MEDIUM		10 - 15 HIGH		16 - 25 VERY HIGH
Continue with existing control, however monitor for changes. Implement any additional control measures required, within the timescales given in the risk assessment.		Requires attention to reduce the rating as well as regular ongoing monitoring. Implement any additional control measures required, within the timescales given in the risk assessment.		Requires immediate attention to bring the risk down to an acceptable level. Implement the control measures required, within the timescales given in the risk assessment and continue to review working practices to reduce the probability of an accident to the lowest possible level.		Stop immediately – the risk is too high. Take immediate action to reduce the risk to the lowest level possible.