

9 October 2020

Dear all,

Many thanks for your time and feedback last week. Following our meeting with some of you, I am writing to share the scope of the review in a bit more detail. I can confirm that our engagement calls with schools involve some discussion of broad areas and then a more detailed consideration of either support for learners or vulnerable learners. In a few schools, where asked, we have also had conversations with other members of staff in addition to the headteacher.

I can confirm, as discussed, that the agreed aim of this thematic survey is to reflect on local authorities, regional consortia and schools' current approaches to teaching and learning and pupil wellbeing. We will focus on two distinct periods:

- Part 1 (March – July) – remote learning and the partial reopening of schools in July 2020
- Part 2 (September onwards) – full reopening from September 2020

The review is expected to support the Welsh Government and local authorities/regional consortia by achieving the following objectives:

- provide Welsh Government and individual local authorities and regional consortia with a report reflecting their work and approaches during the lock-down period and at the start of the period when schools return to full operation. The reports will enable Welsh Government to understand the broad strengths and lesson learnt in the way local authorities and regions are operating during this period. It will also enable us to celebrate effective practice as well as sign-posting local authorities and regional consortia to consider other ways of approaching these new challenges. The national report will look at learning and remaining challenges for the education system as a whole.
- Identify how learning from before the summer is being used to support planning for and delivery of blended learning approaches and support for vulnerable learners in the Autumn term.
- learn lessons from the most effective practice about capacity, collaboration, future planning and change management. This will support planned reforms in education and local government over the next few years.

## **Focus**

Part 2 of the work will be the substantial focus and includes two aspects:

- Promoting learning – what quality assurance work has been done to improve the quality of the learning offer and how has this been used to develop further guidance and professional learning?
- Supporting vulnerable learners – how has the local authority targeted services and support to vulnerable learners to support them to engage in learning, what barriers

still exist? We will also consider the early planning and implementation of the Recruit, Recover and Raise Standards funded learning programmes across schools and the next steps for this work.

## **Key themes that will be explored**

### **Learning**

- **Learning from September** - Support for schools to plan learning
- **Planning for progress** – support for school leaders to identify specific groups or cohorts of learners that have been disproportionately affected by school closures
- **Recruit, Recover, Raise standards – accelerated learning programme** - work with your schools to plan work under the Recruit, Recover and Raise standards grant funding.
- **Professional learning** - developing the expertise of practitioners in pedagogies/approaches that maximise the potential of blended learning

### **Vulnerable learners**

- **Promoting wellbeing** – work to identify and respond to the wellbeing needs of vulnerable learners.
- **Curriculum** – work to ensure that all vulnerable learners have access to a curriculum that is appropriate to their learning needs.
- **Health and Safety** – support for schools to implement relevant guidance in relation to health and safety.
- **Specialist services and multi-agency working** - engagement with partners and how will this inform and strengthen future collaborative working.
- **Statutory processes and referrals** - meeting statutory duties and responding to any changes in demand for services.
- **Professional learning** – support for the professional learning of staff to support vulnerable learners.

Following your feedback, we will ensure that we seek feedback from a wider range of professionals in relation to the ongoing work to support vulnerable learners.

## **Surveys**

We are committed to ensuring that a range of views are captured to help inform the ongoing advice we are providing to Welsh Government, as well as this review. Today, we will launch a set of surveys on our website for a range of stakeholders. All the surveys are short and will take no more than ten minutes to complete and there is no requirement for anyone to complete if they don't want to. You can find the [surveys on our website](#).

## Key documents

You identified that it would be helpful to list some key documents that we would find helpful. I attach an initial list below, based on work with some of you so far. I know that our link inspectors have appreciated that many of you have continued to share key updates and documents with them throughout the last few months. We have arranged that the documents shared by regional consortia will be available to all link inspectors in the area, which may also help.

## Documents to support discussions with local authorities and regional consortia

- Recent and relevant reports to scrutiny/joint committees on response to COVID-19
- Operational guidance documents provided by the local authority to schools
- Documents that outline processes and procedures for supporting vulnerable learners
- Analysis of surveys of stakeholders/schools
- Recovery plans or strategic plans that include recovery planning
- Guidance to support blended learning and distance learning
- Professional learning opportunities offered to schools including support for improving teachers' digital competence
- Support for schools to plan for use of grants including Recruit, Recover, Raise Standards
- Evaluations and learning from work carried out to date
- Any other documentation that the local authority/regional consortia feels that it would be useful to discuss with LALIs

Link inspectors will be in touch to arrange convenient opportunities to have discussions over the next month or so. We'll provide more updates and feedback at our next meeting, but please do not hesitate to contact us before that point if you have any questions or concerns.

Regards,



**Jassa Scott**  
Strategic Director