

# Assessing the Impact on Protected Characteristics, the Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Disadvantage

For help to complete this form see the *How to Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment* leaflet. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Gadlys Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext. 32708 or [DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru](mailto:DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru) for further assistance.

The Council is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the effect any change in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), has on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has a general duty to ensure fairness and foster good relations. A timely Equality Impact Assessment must be undertaken before making any decision on any relevant change (i.e. which has an effect on people with protected characteristics).

The Council is also required, under the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011) to consider the effect of a change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), in its opportunities for people to use Welsh and to ensure that Welsh is not treated less favourably than English. This document therefore ensures that these decisions protect and promote the use of the Welsh language.

From April 1st, 2021, it is the Council's duty to give its due attention to tackling socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decisions.

## 1) Details

### 1.1. What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Education Strategy (draft)

### 1.2 What is the purpose of the policy / service that is being created or amended? What changes are being considered?

The original strategy - *Strategic Programme "Towards 2025": The Future of Education and Training for Children and Young People in Gwynedd* was published in 2010 to establish the way for education and training in Gwynedd up to 2025. The Education Strategy's new draft is built on the foundations of the Strategic Programme for the next decade up to 2032.

### 1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Garem Jackson, Head of Education

#### **1.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?**

Version 1 – August 2023

## **2) Action**

### **2.1 Who are the stakeholders or partners you need to work with to undertake this assessment?**

The initial draft has been drawn up by officers from the Education Department. This document will be updated regularly, and it is anticipated that it will be necessary to work with the stakeholders/partners such as the public (e.g. learners, parents, staff, governors), Secondary Strategic Planning Group, Primary and Special Catchment Advisory Group, GwE, Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee and the Council's Cabinet Members.

### **2.2 What measures have you taken to engage with people with equality characteristics, regarding the Welsh language or with communities (either of place or of need) that live with socio-economic disadvantage?**

As part of the work to develop the draft strategy it is intended to hold a public consultation - there will be an opportunity at that time to engage with people with protected characteristics, regarding the Welsh language or communities (whether due to location or need) who live with socio-economic disadvantage.

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
GwE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Seek input from GwE to include the draft Education Strategy</li></ul>	4 September 2023
Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Presenting a draft Education Strategy</li><li>Present an outline timetable for the public consultation</li></ul>	14 September 2023
Secondary Strategic Planning Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Engaging with Gwynedd secondary school headteachers on the content of the Draft Education Strategy</li></ul>	September/ October 2023
Primary and Special Recyclable Advisory Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Engaging with Gwynedd secondary school headteachers on the content of the Draft Education Strategy</li></ul>	September/ October 2023

Youth Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaging with children and young people</li> </ul>	September/ October 2023
Cabinet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek permission to consult on the draft Education Strategy</li> </ul>	7 November 2023
Public Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation seeking opinion on the content of the draft education strategy and sharing information about the challenges facing the current system.</li> <li>As part of the consultation, it is intended to hold a drop-in session in each secondary catchment area.</li> </ul>	20 November – 12 January 2023
Cabinet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reporting back following the consultation.</li> <li>Dependent on the outcome of the consultation, ask the Cabinet to adopt the final Education Strategy and related Prioritisation Plan.</li> </ul>	20 February 2024
Welsh Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit a Strategic Outline Program to the Welsh Government (based on the content of the Prioritisation Plan)</li> </ul>	31 March 2024

### 2.3 What was the result of the engagement?

Not relevant at present

### 2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you operating?

There are considerations and local drivers that influence the education system, the vision and objectives of the Education Strategy for the future, and we need to ensure that we maintain and support what is good and unique about the education system in Gwynedd, together with and identifying opportunities to respond to challenges that the system is likely to face now and in the future, such as:

- Maintain and strengthen our education and training provision to enable the children and young people of Gwynedd to reach their full potential and to nurture the qualifications and skills that enable them to live and thrive.
- Maintain and strengthen the Welsh language in every aspect of school life and the communities served as a result of the 2021 census.
- Ensure excellent welfare support services for Gwynedd's children and young people to help them overcome obstacles and reach their full potential.
- Strengthen leadership at all levels and respond to the challenge of recruiting teachers and assistants in our schools.
- Ensure the viability and resilience of our school when there is a reduction in learner numbers due to low birth rates, an aging population and rural depopulation.

- Improving our school estate to ensure the best possible learning environment for our children and young people whilst having many buildings to maintain, and an expectation for the school estate to be carbon-free over the next period.
- Responding to the challenge of maintaining the education system in an unprecedented period of cuts to Local Authority budgets.

## 2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be collected?

Not at present, but perhaps gaps will become evident following the draft strategy consultation.

## 3) Identifying the Impact

### 3.1 The Council must give due regard to the effect any changes will have on people with the equality characteristics noted below. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes in the policy or service have on people with these characteristics?

Characteristics	What type of impact? *	In what way? What is the evidence?
<b>Race (including nationality)</b>	Positive	<p>Gwynedd schools have relevant policies in place to protect individuals from any discrimination based on race, such as Equality, Inclusion and Anti-Bullying Policies. The Anti-Bullying Policy provided by Gwynedd Council sets out anti-bullying guidelines and procedures based on factors such as race in the school. In addition, it is stated in the Equality policy which is implemented by Gwynedd's primary schools that the schools</p> <p><i>"...oppose all forms of prejudice and discrimination and recognise that pupils have different needs, requirements and objectives."</i></p> <p>Objective 1 of the Draft Education Strategy aims to improve outcomes for our most vulnerable learners, and groups of learners who often face barriers to engaging with education. Examples of some of these <b>ethnic minority</b> groups include Gypsy and Traveller <b>children/young people</b> and <b>Black children/young people as data shows</b> that they do not tend to make as good progress as their peers in terms of race.</p>
<b>Disability</b>	Positive	<p>Objective 1 of the Draft Education Strategy aims to improve outcomes for our most vulnerable learners, and groups of learners who often face barriers to engaging with education. From the point of view of children and young people with Additional Learning Needs, we will continue the work of implementing the requirements of</p>

		<p>the new Additional Learning Needs Act, as well as the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Strategy (Gwynedd). The aim of the ALN Strategy is to ensure that children and young people (between the ages of 0 and 25) who have additional learning needs take advantage of education and training opportunities and experiences that have been appropriately designed for them, to enable them to make progress and achieve their potential in education settings that suit their needs.</p> <p>It is anticipated that Objective 3 will contribute positively to this characteristic also by incorporating positive well-being in Gwynedd schools; creating a supportive atmosphere where children and young people are encouraged to realise their personal and academic potential, where they thrive, learn, and develop emotionally, with the help of teachers and staff who operate in a culture that value their well-being too. Ensuring that regular physical activity is a lifelong habit will be a means of improving the health of children and young people now and as they grow older, contributing to improving general happiness and resilience.</p> <p>Furthermore, it is anticipated that Objective 5 will contribute positively to this feature, as school buildings and new learning environments will be flexible and accessible in terms of space, time, people, and technology - responding to today's needs, but which can be easily adapted to meet future needs.</p>
<b>Sex</b>	-	Too early to recognise any impact at this point.
<b>Age</b>	-	Too early to recognise any impact at this point.
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<p>Relationship and sexuality education (RSE) is a statutory requirement in the framework of the Curriculum for Wales and is published under section 71 of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 and is mandatory for all learners between the ages of 3 and 16. RSE has a positive and empowering role to play in the education of learners and it is essential to form and maintain a range of relationships, which are all based on mutual trust and respect, at the core of relationship and sexuality education. These relationships are crucial to develop emotional well-being, resilience, and empathy. An understanding of sexuality with an emphasis on rights, health, equality, and fairness empowers learners to understand themselves, take responsibility for their own decisions and behaviours and form relationships. We believe that learners will receive more opportunities to develop relationships and</p>

		<p>learn collaboratively as part of a larger class in an alternative school.</p> <p>It is stated in the Equality Policy which is implemented by Gwynedd's primary schools that the schools "...oppose all forms of prejudice and discrimination and recognise that pupils have different needs, requirements and objectives."</p>
<b>Religion or belief (or non-belief)</b>	-	Too early to recognise any impact at this point.
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	Positive	It is stated in the Equality policy which is implemented by Gwynedd schools that the schools "...oppose all forms of prejudice and discrimination and recognise that pupils have different needs, requirements and objectives."
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	-	Too early to recognise any impact at this point.
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	-	Too early to recognise any impact at this point.
<b>The Welsh language</b>	Positive	<p>The aim of Gwynedd's Language Education Policy is the same for all schools in the county, and all schools (except for 3 schools) fall into category 3 in accordance with the Welsh Government's guide for categorising schools according to Welsh-medium provision.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the second objective of the draft strategy (Expanding and strengthening our Welsh and bilingual provision) will contribute positively to this aim by ensuring that all children and young people benefit from first class Welsh and bilingual education provision, together with access to specialist support and services through the medium of Welsh which enable them to succeed, thrive and realise their aspirations for the future.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the second objective of the draft strategy will also contribute to supporting staff to improve their skills in the Welsh language or to increase their confidence in using the language together with promoting the benefits of Welsh and bilingual education among parents. The second objective will also promote employment through the medium of Welsh in Gwynedd schools and within the Department of Education.</p>
<b>Socio-Economic Disadvantage</b>	Positive	It is anticipated that the first objective of the draft strategy (the Right to education and training) will contribute positively to this aim by ensuring that all children and young people can have access to education and training of

		<p>the highest possible quality that enable them to flourish and fulfil their potential.</p> <p>Further expansion of the existing Flying Start provision areas and the childcare offer will ensure the best start for children from the early years onwards and contribute positively to this aim by ensuring access to childcare and early years services early for families in disadvantaged areas of the county.</p> <p>Objective 3 also recognises the impact of the increase in current living costs, including the costs of daily materials such as school uniforms, food, transport and writing materials on increasing and affecting the well-being of children, young people, and families. The free school meals scheme for all primary learners will be of great help to families in terms of reducing socio-economic disadvantage, and the commitment to re-examine the costs involved in sending children to school with the intention of reducing them is also likely to reduce socio-economic disadvantage.</p>
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\* Delete as appropriate

**3.2 The Council has a duty under the 2010 Equality Act to contribute positively to a fairer society by promoting equality and good relations in its activities regarding the following characteristics – age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, gender reassignment, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must give due attention to the way any change affects these duties.**

<b>General Duties of the Equality Act</b>	<b>Does it have an impact?*</b>	<b>In what way? What is the evidence?</b>
<b>Abolishing illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation</b>	-	Too early to recognise any impact at this point.
<b>Promoting equal opportunities</b>	Positive	<p>It is anticipated that the first objective will have a positive impact on this duty by ensuring that all children and young people can access education and training of the highest possible quality which enables them to flourish and fulfil their potential.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the second objective will have a positive impact on this duty by ensuring that all children</p>

		and young people can benefit fully from the Welsh and bilingual provision found in Gwynedd schools.
<b>Encouraging good relationships</b>	-	<p>Relationship and sexuality education (RSE) is a statutory requirement in the framework of the Curriculum for Wales and is published under section 71 of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 and is mandatory for all learners between the ages of 3 and 16. RSE has a positive and empowering role to play in the education of learners and it is essential to form and maintain a range of relationships, which are all based on mutual trust and respect, at the core of relationship and sexuality education. These relationships are crucial to develop emotional well-being, resilience, and empathy. An understanding of sexuality with an emphasis on rights, health, equality, and fairness empowers learners to understand themselves, take responsibility for their own decisions and behaviours and form relationships.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the third objective of the draft strategy will contribute to fostering good relationships as the children and young people of Gwynedd are aware of the importance of well-being and are aware of various problems, they often face in terms of keeping safe, keeping healthy, managing relationships, and dealing with the challenges of growing older in such a changing society.</p>

\* to be deleted as appropriate

**3.3 How does your proposal ensure that you work in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English and that you seize every opportunity to promote the Welsh language (beyond providing services bilingually) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?**

It is anticipated that the second objective of the draft strategy (Expanding and strengthening our Welsh and bilingual provision) will contribute positively to this goal by ensuring that all children and young people benefit from first class Welsh and bilingual education provision, together with have access to specialist support and services through the medium of Welsh which enables them to succeed, thrive and realise their aspirations for the future.

**3.4 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice in order to have a positive impact on people's opportunities to use the Welsh language, and to reduce or prevent any**



**adverse effects that the policy / practice may have on the Welsh language?**

It is anticipated that the second objective of the draft strategy (Expanding and strengthening our Welsh and bilingual provision) will contribute positively to this goal by ensuring that all children and young people benefit from first class Welsh and bilingual education provision, together with have access to specialist support and services through the medium of Welsh which enables them to succeed, thrive and realise their aspirations for the future.

**3.5 How does the proposal show that you have had due regard to the need to address inequality caused by socio-economic disadvantage? (Note that this is about closing inequality gaps rather than just improving outcomes for everyone)?**

It is anticipated that the second objective of the draft strategy (Expanding and strengthening our Welsh and bilingual provision) will contribute positively to this goal by ensuring that all children and young people benefit from first class Welsh and bilingual education provision, together with have access to specialist support and services through the medium of Welsh which enables them to succeed, thrive and realise their aspirations for the future.

**3.6 What other measures or changes might you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to show that you have had due regard to the need to reduce disproportionate outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, in accordance with the Socio-Economic Act?**

We will consider any other relevant changes to further reduce any socio-economic disadvantage when we engage and consult.

**4) Analysing the Results**

**4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the above and what is the reason for this?**

Even though it is early days and this assessment is not final, it is anticipated that the policy is likely to positively impact on the above.  
We will update the assessment as the direction of work becomes apparent.

**4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the above and what is the reason for this?**

Even though it is early days, it is not anticipated at present that the policy will negatively impact on any of the above characteristics.

**4.3 What should be done?**

Choose one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service as it is robust	✓
Adapt the policy to delete any barriers	-
Suspend and delete the policy as the detrimental impacts are too big	-
Continue with the policy as any detrimental impact can be justified	-
No further action at this time because it is too soon to decide, or there is insufficient evidence	-

**4.4 If continuing with the project, what steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?**

No negative impacts have been identified at present.

**4.5 If you are not taking any further action to delete or reduce the negative impacts, explain why here.**

No negative impacts have been identified at present.

**5) Monitoring**

**5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?**

This assessment will be updated regularly as this field of work develops.