



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.