



## REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

11 NOVEMBER 2020

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**Report by:** Arwyn Thomas, GwE Managing Director

**Subject:** Estyn Thematic Review

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### 1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To update Joint Committee members in relation to the Estyn Thematic Review.

### 2.0 Background

2.1 Estyn has been requested to undertake a thematic review of local authority and regional consortia approaches to supporting learning and vulnerable learners during the COVID-19 period.

2.2 The aim of this thematic review (See Appendix 1 - Estyn letter) was to reflect on current local authority, regional consortia and school approaches to teaching and learning and pupils' wellbeing, with a focus on two specific phases:

- Phase 1 (March - July) - distance learning and the partial reopening of schools in July 2020
- Phase 2 (September onward) - reopening schools fully from September 2020

### 3.0 Matters for consideration

3.1 As part of the preparations for the review, a number of documents were shared with Estyn via the Virtual Inspection Room (VIR), based on the following themes:

- General overview
  - Guidance and resources
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- Professional Learning
- Communication
- Review, reflect and create direction

These documents were also shared to be included on Local Authority VIRs.

**3.2** A series of interviews took place with members of the GwE team on 16 October 2020, to give an overview of the work undertaken between March and now. GwE officers were also part of LA interviews. The work was split into specific phases:

- Step 1: Before lockdown
- Step 2: Supporting schools at the beginning of lockdown
- Step 3: Distance Learning
- Step 4: Supporting schools to reopen
- Step 5: Blended Learning
- Step 6: Accelerated Learning
- Step 7: Blended support for schools and LAs

3.3. Appendix 2 is a summary of what was presented to Estyn, outlining the work programme, the main outcomes and impact. How the service in its entirety has changed course several times during this period is noted, so as to meet the needs of the range of stakeholders.

3.4 No formal feedback has been received from Estyn to date. A concise national report will be published in December, and local authorities and regional consortia will receive written feedback on their work, which will highlight effective practice as well as aspects for further development. Observations on the work of the regional consortia will also be included in each individual local authority letter, where relevant. We will update members as soon as the report is published.

#### **4.0 Recommendations**

4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to note the content of the report and to agree to hold further discussions following publication 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 with GwE Management Board.

**9.0 Appendices**

9.1 Appendix 1 - Estyn letter

9.2 Appendix 2 - Overview - Estyn Thematic Review - October 2020

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**OPINION OF STATUTORY OFFICERS**

**Monitoring Officer:**

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

**Statutory Finance Officer:**

I note that part 5.1 of the report above confirms that there are no financial implications arising from this report, hence I presume that this thematic review is to be prioritised from within GwE's existing resources.