



REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

26 MAY 2021

Report by: Arwyn Thomas, GwE Managing Director

Subject: Estyn Thematic Review - progress report on the recommendations

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 Present a progress report on the Estyn thematic review recommendations 'Local authority and regional consortia support for schools and PRUs in response to COVID-19' to Joint Committee members.

2.0 Background

2.1 In response to a request from the Minister for Education, Estyn was asked 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 report focuses on the period from the end of the summer term to the end of October 2020. An overview is given of how local authorities and regional consortia have worked with schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) to promote learning and support vulnerable learners during COVID-19 between June and November 2020, which is the period when schools re-opened following lockdown. It captures how local authorities and regional consortia have adapted their work in response to challenges as a result of COVID-19.

3.0 Matters for consideration

3.1 The scope of this thematic report includes the extent of the support provided to schools and PRUs by local authorities and regional consortia during this period. The report focuses on two specific aspects:

- Promoting learning – the quality of the learning offer and how has this been supported through further guidance and professional learning?
- Supporting vulnerable pupils – how did the local authority targeted services and support to vulnerable pupils to support them to engage in learning? What barriers still exist?

3.2 The report (Appendix 1) outlines the main findings and recommendations for Welsh Government to work with regional consortia, local authorities and other partners and providers.

3.3 Appendix 2 outlines the outcome of review in GwE. The content is based on virtual meetings with officers, as well as information from a sample of schools and PRUs in the local authorities across the GwE region.

3.4 Attached (Appendix 3) is a progress report outlining GwE’s contribution in responding to the recommendations, detailing the Action, Impact and Growth Points for the period January 2021 to April 2021.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to note and accept the content of the report.

5.0 Financial implications

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. GwE will operate within current financial resources.

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 took place with GwE Management Board and the Joint Committee.

9.0 Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 - Estyn Thematic Review
Appendix 2 – GwE Letter
Appendix 3 – Progress report on recommendations

OPINION OF STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

Statutory Finance Officer:

There are a number of findings and recommendations made by Estyn to the Welsh Government on pages 4-6 of Appendix 1, while part 5.1 of the covering report confirms that there are no financial implications arising from this report. Therefore, I assume that any further response from GwE to the recommendations of this thematic review will be prioritised within their existing resources, as these aspects become part of the day-to-day work.