

Self-evaluation Cycle

GWYNEDD EDUCATION SERVICE

2024 – 2025



Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set a direction and explain the self-evaluation cycle in the Education Department.

Developing a culture of continuous self-evaluation is essential to ensure that the department achieves its purpose, namely;

"Promote the attainment and welfare of Gwynedd children and young people by ensuring effective governance, leadership and management of our schools"

The Education Department is committed to improve our self-evaluation arrangements and is continuously looking for opportunities to ensure an effective and efficient infrastructure.

Principles

To ensure that the process is effective, the Education Department has adopted the following principles;

Collaboration

Self-evaluation leads to improving services when all key stakeholders contribute to the process, are aware of the findings, and act in accordance with them.

The Education Department has a number of key stakeholders, such as key services across the Council, the services commissioned regionally, such as GwE or joint services with other authorities, such as the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Service.

All key stakeholders commit to the Education Department's self-evaluation process, and adhere to the agreed planning, monitoring and evaluation requirements, in line with the agreed timetable.

Open and Honest

Effective self-evaluation demands that stakeholders are open and honest as they report and contribute to the process. In the absence of quantitative data and evidence of progress in some fields, it is key that we trust in the professional opinions of our colleagues.

Learners' experiences is a main focus

In accordance with the principles of Ffordd Gwynedd, it is key that we address the experiences of learners throughout the self-evaluation process. Each of our stakeholders considers how the service provided directly or indirectly affects the experiences of our learners and thus on our learners' progress.

Seeking the voice of service users

In accordance with the principles of Ffordd Gwynedd, we are seeking the views of our citizens and are looking at our services through the eyes of our citizens. We will ascertain the views of pupils, parents, school staff and headteachers regularly and ensure feedback for them on our findings. The findings will feed into the department's improvement plans as required.

Influence the strategic plans of the Education Department, the rest of the Council and beyond

Where appropriate, the self-evaluation process forms a key part of the strategic plans of the Education Department and the rest of the Council. The findings of our self-evaluation processes, where appropriate, feed into the improvement plan considerations of other Council departments and key stakeholders, such as GwE.

Making judgement

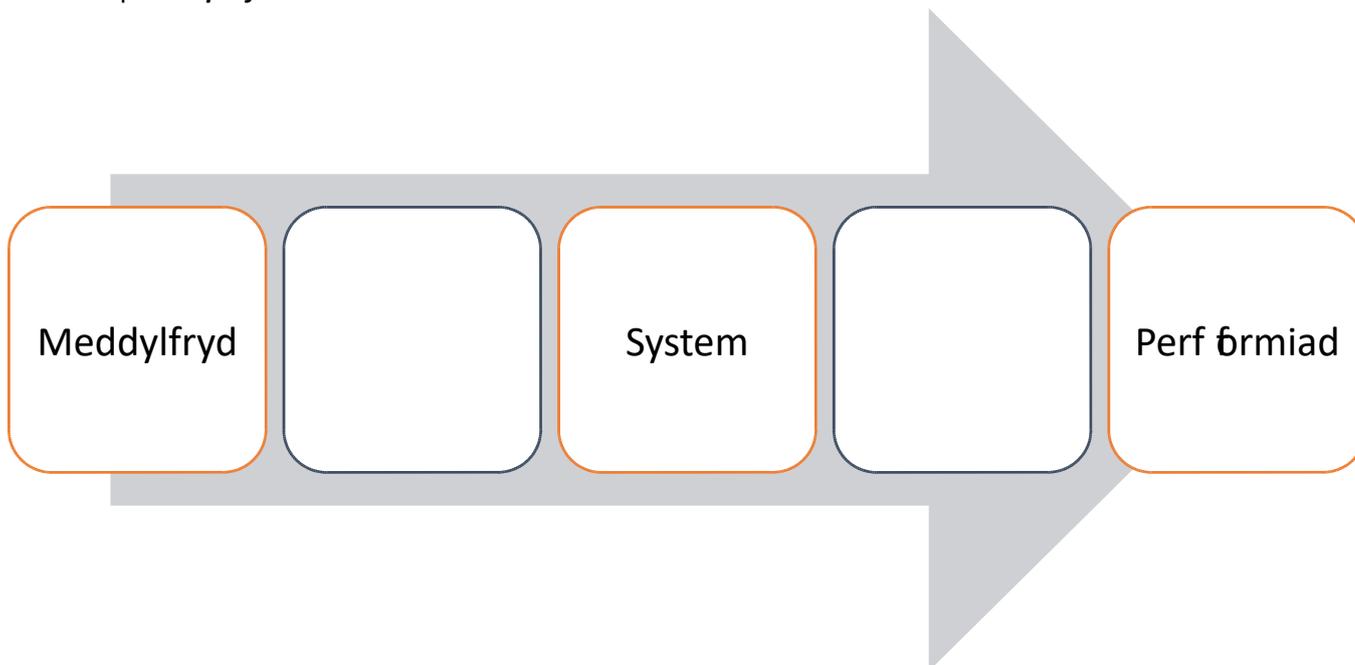
Where it is possible to consider managerial / performance measures or data as measurable and that it is possible to note trends over time, we will seek to come to an opinion and make judgements based on that judgement.





How does Ffordd Gwynedd influence the self-evaluation process?

In accordance with the principles of Ffordd Gwynedd we acknowledge that the ***mindset*** behind any system or service drives the ***performance***. We understand that doing the right things leads to improving ***systems*** and doing things better improves ***performance***.



When self-evaluating, the Education Department moves from a traditional way of thinking towards the Ffordd Gwynedd way of thinking.

Every service commences their self-evaluation journey by understanding *what matters to the people of Gwynedd*. They reflect on the ***demand on their service*** and reflect on the demand which adds value or reflects failure.

Every service ***defines their purpose in the citizen's terms***. This means giving a concise explanation of the unit's purpose and what service they provide.

Every service has a set of ***specific measures*** and these measure how well they achieve their purpose. Any other information that is used to help run the service will be referred to as ***managerial data***.

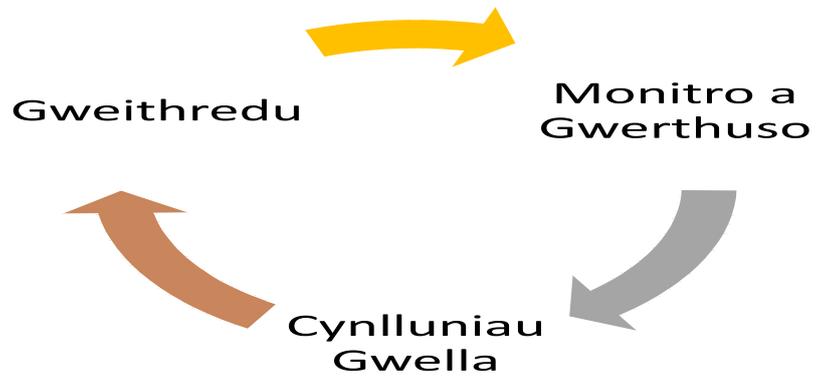
The Education Department is fostering a workforce that is confident in order to ***deliver for the people of Gwynedd***. *We do not want our staff to work on tasks automatically without any consideration to whether what they are achieving makes a difference to the people of Gwynedd*. To enable our workforce to do so, every service ***draws up operating principles*** that will prevent individuals from diverting from Ffordd Gwynedd and creating a risk to the authority.



Self-evaluation Cycle

Self-evaluation is not a purpose in itself. The information from the self-evaluation should be used to plan for improvements and ensure a regular cyclical process of monitoring, evaluating, and planning improvement. This is a continuous process and each of our stakeholders will fully commit to it.

The cycle itself encompasses three main parts.



Evaluation

Although it is an ongoing process, the Education Management Team will hold an annual exercise to self-evaluate strengths and areas requiring attention. A broad range of factors will feed into this annual self-evaluation, including;

- Progress against improvement plans
- Measures of individual services
- Specific managerial data
- Surveys from external bodies
- Reports from external bodies
- Outcomes of scrutiny processes
- Discussions and findings of the Cabinet Member for Education
- Discussions and findings of our strategic groups
- Questionnaires of children, parents, staff and headteachers



A report will be published at the end of the exercise in the form of the Annual Report of the Education Department.

Monitoring

All key stakeholders will monitor progress against their improvement plans on an ongoing basis and will formally report every quarter through an acknowledged reporting procedure.

All Departments will report on specific measures every month and will escalate specific challenges for the attention of the education management team, based on risk.

Challenging Performance

Progress against improvement plans and shortcomings in specific measures will be escalated to the attention of the Cabinet Member for Education and the Chief Executive based on risk, by means of monthly performance challenging meetings.

The performance challenging meetings will be an opportunity to highlight risks and, if appropriate, highlight the need to adapt improvement plans or amend our measures.



Progress of Commissioned Services

The Education Department commissions services such as the schools improvement services. Although the constitution and services management models varies, there is an expectation for commissioned services to monitor progress against improvement plans and agreed specific measures.



It is understandable that there may be variations in terms of monitoring and evaluation methods. However, the expectation in terms of reporting in accordance with the Education Department's timetable is consistent and applies to all.

Challenging the Performance of Council Plan Projects

Progress against the main projects of the Education Department will be discussed at Project Boards with challenges being escalated to the attention of the Cabinet Member for Education and the Chief Executive, based on risk, through the termly Programme Board.

Twice a year, the Cabinet Member for Education, the Chief Executive, and Chair and Vice-chair of the Education Scrutiny Committee, will hold a specific session to challenge performance and the progress of these projects specifically.

Education Services' Annual Questionnaire

In accordance with the principles of Ffordd Gwynedd, the Education Department understands the importance of looking at our services and their effectiveness through the eyes of the citizen. In order to do this, the department will publish an annual questionnaire that will seek the views of pupils, parents, staff and headteachers of Gwynedd schools. The findings of these questionnaires will be published on our website and will form the basis, where appropriate, to our services' improvement plans.

Monitoring Questionnaires

In addition to the annual questionnaire, our services will monitor progress against their specific measures by means of monthly monitoring questionnaires. These will be short questionnaires that will assist our services to ascertain views and obtain regular feedback on the performance of services.

Responsibilities

There is a responsibility on all key stakeholders to monitor and evaluate the progress of services regularly. However, some specific roles shoulder specific responsibilities and ensure accountability on every level.

The Head of Education ensures that the annual evaluation is completed on time and verifies the accuracy and validity of any views presented therein.

The Education Corporate Services Manager ensures that quarterly monitoring is completed on time and verifies any measures submitted.

The Cabinet Member for Education and the Chief Executive is responsible for challenging progress against measures every month, as well as challenging progress against the main projects of the Education Department.

In accordance with the constitution of the commissioned entity, the Head of Education and the Cabinet Member for Education monitors and evaluates progress on behalf of the Authority. This includes the GwE schools improvement service.



Appraisal and Monitoring Model

Evaluating and Monitoring Steps	Whom?	Responsibility
Continuous Appraisal	Managers / Key stakeholders	Managers / Key stakeholders
Continuous Monitoring	Managers / Key stakeholders	Education Corporate Services Manager
Annual Appraisal	Managers / Key stakeholders	Head of Education



Quarterly Monitoring - Performance Challenging	Managers / Key stakeholders	Education Corporate Services Manager
Monitoring the Progress of Main Projects	Managers / Key stakeholders	Education Corporate Services Manager
Education Services' Annual Questionnaire	Managers / Key stakeholders	
Monitoring Questionnaires of Individuals Services	Managers / Key stakeholders	



Improvement Plans

In accordance with the principles of Ffordd Gwynedd, it is key that we trust in our managers and that they have the freedom to plan in order to deliver for the people of Gwynedd. The ***mindset*** behind any system or service drives performance. ***Doing the correct things lead to improving systems and doing things better improves performance.***

How do we foster the mindset that will drive performance?

Fostering the correct mindset will begin by ensuring that what we are seeking to improve is genuinely a priority for the people of Gwynedd and influences our purpose.

Defining Purpose

Every service has defined their purpose in the citizens' terms. This means giving a concise explanation of the unit's purpose and what service they provide. The purpose is clear on every planning document and is a way of ensuring that delivering for the people of Gwynedd will be central to everything we do.

Measures

Every service has specific measures which is a way of measuring progress against the purpose. The progress against the measures will be monitored every month and will be escalated based on risk to monthly performance challenging meetings.

Regulatory Data

Managerial data does not necessarily measure progress against purpose. We use managerial data as a source of information which helps us run our services better. It can help us see how we can improve the measures and it enables us to measure a problem or barrier (which is something that prevents us from improving on the measures).



Setting Improvement Priorities

There are a number of considerations for managers as they set improvement priorities. If the purpose and measure is clearly defined, one should begin by considering carefully and try and identify the obstacles which prevent us from reaching the aim.

Every manager begins by understanding the system. There are many different ways to do this, however it is suggested that everyone looks carefully at the demand, the value of each step in any procedure, as well as the flow of any process.

Consideration should be given to whether the priorities will do one of two things, create value for the citizen or support others to do so. Within the education system, some will support children at the schools or support others to support the children. If the priority does not do one of these two things, it is not a valid priority.

Finally, it is key that our managers ensure the ownership of stakeholders when introducing any change. Any improvement plan should identify key stakeholders and identify how any change will be conveyed to them.





Creating Improvement Plans



Managers' Responsibilities

Every manager ensures that the purpose of the service is reviewed regularly. The purpose will be visible at the beginning of every improvement plan. In order to remind everyone of it and ensure that it is central to everything we do, every service will include the purpose of the Education Department and the purpose of their service on all departmental documentation, this will include the e-mail footer.

Every manager will ensure that suitable measures have been determined for the service and that progress against these measures is

reviewed on a monthly basis.

Every manager will consider any specific reports, publications, legislative changes, and managerial data, when drawing up improvement priorities.

Every manager considers the feedback from the annual education services questionnaires as well as any service monitoring questionnaire when considering improvement priorities.

Every manager sets up to three improvement priorities for the service annually. The priorities may extend for more than a year but everyone is expected to set a completion date for them.

Every manager reports on progress against priorities every quarter. Any slippage will be escalated to the attention of the performance challenging system based on risk.

Managers draw up their improvement plans in whatever way is most convenient for them. There is no necessity to submit detailed step-by-step improvement plans but the Head of Education may ask to see such plans should there be a lack of progress against a priority. A template is available for those who wish to follow it.

Every manager has a good awareness of key questions relating to their areas of responsibility. Managers submit evidence against these key questions on an ongoing basis.

Responsibilities of the Education Corporate Services Manager

The Education Corporate Services Manager ensures an annual timetable to review purpose and measures and verify that every manager has submitted this on time.

The Education Corporate Services Manager runs an annual report that will highlight the measures that managers have noted that are at risk of under-performing.

Responsibilities of the Head of Education

The Head of Education ensures that every manager sets suitable improvement priorities. He also ensures that there is a robust logic as to why they set the priorities. Every manager submits their improvement priorities for the attention of the education management team and a specific annual meeting is held to verify the priorities.

The Head of Education ensures that feedback from the annual questionnaires of services has been addressed by all managers.

The Head of Education ensures that every manager has considered any specific reports, publications, legislative or managerial data when drawing up improvement priorities.

The Head of Education ensures that every manager presents evidence against key questions in their fields of expertise on an ongoing basis. This enables the Head of Education to review progress against the key questions every year.



Practical Procedure

The discipline of managers and key stakeholders is essential in order to ensure that the self-improvement cycle is effective and efficient. If managers do not take ownership of the self-evaluation procedure then the procedure will be ineffective.

To promote the ownership of managers and key stakeholders, the Education Department has developed a simple system that sustains the self-evaluation cycle. The system has been planned to ask for the minimum possible input in order to release their time to be doing the important things.

The electronic system is available for managers and key stakeholders at any time and it can be adapted at any time. This promotes the use of the system as an everyday component.

Timetable

Please find below an annual timetable of the requirements of the improvement planning process.

Steps for Drawing Up an Improvement Plan	Whom?	When?
Reviewing Purpose	Managers / Key stakeholders	January
Reviewing Measures	Managers / Key stakeholders	January
Analysing Questionnaires	Managers / Key stakeholders	February
Analyse specific reports, publications, legislative changes or managerial data.	Managers / Key stakeholders	February
Final review of progress against the priorities of the previous year.	Managers / Key stakeholders	March
Setting Improvement Priorities	Managers / Key stakeholders	March
Reviewing and Authorising Better Priorities	Head of Education	March

Action

The Education Department equips our staff to act flexibly to achieve the needs of the people of Gwynedd and encourages them to identify solutions. In order to do this, the department trusts in our managers, key stakeholders and staff and they understand that with this comes accountability.

Our managers have a thorough understanding of the work and know what is going on and empower their teams to meet the needs of the people of Gwynedd by removing any obstacles.

The Education Department encourages our managers to spend time at our schools in order to better understand how we can act more effectively. In addition, the department encourages managers to spend time in our offices observing the workforce completing tasks, in order to learn how to support others to support the needs of our children.

Support

Supervision is provided to managers in the Education Department by the Head of Education, one of the Assistant Heads of Education or Senior Education Manager. Supervision is not provided to staff in commissioned services; however, the services are expected to have agreed arrangements in place.



Professional Development

The Education Department encourages all members of staff to take full advantage of the learning and development opportunities that are available to them. Learning and development is a key part of all jobs within the department.

In accordance with the principles of Ffordd Gwynedd, the responsibility to develop professionally and take advantage of appropriate opportunities falls on the individual.

Every member of staff has access to a comprehensive learning and development programme and every member of staff has a personal record.

Individuals' performance

In order to assist the performance and behaviours of an individual, line managers need to agree to the following with a member of staff:

- That there should be regular meetings held between managers and staff members to discuss performance and conduct.
- To ensure an environment of trust and accountability.
- To equip the team to consider what measures indicate performance against the purpose and to take ownership of these measures and make them measurable.
- To encourage individuals to be innovative, enterprising and to learn from experience to improve performance.
- To keep a record of performance.
- Assess the staff member against the performance measure and the expected conduct.

Performance management helps us achieve the aims of the Council, by supporting and improving the performance of staff and ensuring that our staff are developed to their full potential. The Council has moved towards an emphasis on undertaking continuous evaluation meetings rather than a single annual meeting. The aim with this is to assist with improving our performance and productivity, and to increase engagement within teams.

The regular meetings should be based on open and supportive conversations, providing feedback, and discussing progress towards the aim. The evaluation process should facilitate the discussion regarding how to continuously improve performance and develop the staff member.

These arrangements are kept simple and are a part of day-to-day management. Nevertheless, there are specific arrangements for the beginning of every year to ensure that the department's priorities are reflected in some way in individuals' professional development and performance.

Timetable

Please find below an annual timetable of the requirements of the professional development procedure.

Actions	Whom?	When?
Annual Review Meeting with Assistant Heads and Senior Managers	Head of Education	April
Managers' Annual Review Meeting	Assistant Heads and Senior Managers	April
Officers' Annual Review Meeting	Managers	April
Annual review	All	Ongoing

Record

The individual being reviewed is asked to keep a record of the meeting. The record will include:

- What has worked well in terms of their professional development since the last meeting.
- What has not worked well and why?
- At least one priority that is associated with the service's priority, or the progress made against it.



- Any training or experiences that the individual will arrange or has arranged to support their professional development.

