



Report of the Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning and Skills

Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 15 March 2022

Curriculum for Wales Update

Purpose:	To brief/update the Scrutiny Panel on Curriculum for Wales
Content:	A briefing/update on: 1. CfW 2022 Update
Councillors are being asked to:	Consider the information provided and give views
Lead Councillor:	Councillor R Smith, Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning and Skills
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1. Background

- 1.1 New curriculum and assessment arrangements for Wales are due to come into force for learners up to and including year 6 from September 2022. Providers teaching year 7 learners can opt in to start teaching the new curriculum from that date. All other providers will begin first teaching of the curriculum for both year 7 and year 8 learners in September 2023. The rollout will then be staggered year on year, with implementation for year 11 learners in September 2026.
- 1.2 Schools and settings will be at different points of their reform journey and Welsh Government (WG) have created a range of resources and prompts to:
 - support understanding of curriculum priorities and how to use the Curriculum for Wales (CfW) guidance effectively.
 - support schools to engage in the process of curriculum design.
 - encourage schools to consider the progress they have made so far, their next steps, and where to get further support.
- 1.3 WG recognise that curriculum design is an ongoing, cyclical process of engagement, design, planning, trialling, and evaluation. It is an iterative

process – a school’s curriculum will continue to evolve to meet the needs of their learners and enable progress towards the four purposes.

- 1.4 In July 2021 (and again in January 2022), Estyn highlighted findings from their thematic report that focussed on how schools are preparing for the Curriculum for Wales. Where emerging plans are working well, school leaders have a good understanding of the Curriculum for Wales and have a strong vision for their curriculum. Schools focus on improving teaching and learning, and staff are encouraged to take considered risks to improve curriculum design and planning. Estyn also found that school-to-school collaboration is used effectively to understand what the progression of pupils from 3 to 16 looks like.
- 1.5 Estyn identified barriers that need to be overcome to ensure the successful implementation of the Curriculum for Wales. The barriers include schools finding time to think strategically and providing professional learning opportunities to ensure all staff understand the curriculum design process.

2. Briefing

- 2.1 In February 2022, Jeremy Miles, Minister for Education and Welsh Language spoke at an online event for school leaders entitled ‘Curriculum for Wales – towards September 2022’. The Minister gave information about resources schools can access to support their preparations to implement CfW, how the system would support the realisation of the CfW, and how WG will promote collaboration.
- 2.2 From September, all teaching assistants, teachers, and school leaders in Wales will have access to a ‘National Professional Learning Entitlement’. More details will be published in the summer term.
- 2.3 Resources for teachers and leaders are being developed, underpinned by academic research, which schools can use to support their work. These resources will be available from the summer term.
- 2.4 Collaboration will be promoted through the National Network. The Network is an open platform, with opportunity for all practitioners in Wales to gather and share understanding, co-construct approaches, connect people, and drive change. In spring 2022, the Network will hold conversations on Welsh history, curriculum design, and qualifications reform. In addition to the work of the National Network, there are several networks in Swansea committed to supporting schools. For example, Swansea’s Curriculum and Assessment Network (SCAN) collaborate closely with colleagues from Partneriaeth’s curriculum team, which informs the regional professional learning offer.
- 2.5 School Improvement guidance will be published in the summer term. It will make clear how evaluation and improvement work is separate from accountability. To support school improvement, WG encourage school leaders to use the National Resource for Evaluation and Improvement.
- 2.6 WG consulted on proposed changes to assessment in the autumn term 2021. In January 2022, updated assessment guidance was published. As schools

design a curriculum, they select the knowledge, skills and experiences that best support their learners to progress in the ways described in CfW – they will need to develop assessment arrangements to support each individual learner to progress in relation to their school/setting's curriculum. School leaders are directed to develop processes and structures that enable practitioners to develop a shared understanding of progression within and beyond their own school. Schools are to conduct on-entry assessments and the personalised assessments remain a statutory requirement. WG intend to revoke the requirements for end of Foundation Phase and key stage 2 assessments to be undertaken from the 2021-22 academic year and remove the requirement to moderate end of key stage 2 and 3 assessments from 2021-22 onwards.

- 2.7 Transition plans will establish processes that jointly support learner progression, the overall needs and well-being of the learner and ensure appropriate pace and challenge in their approach to progression and developing curriculum and assessment arrangements. Schools will communicate with parents/carers each term. The method of communication can be done in a variety of ways that best suits the audience. The feedback to parents/carers is to include:
- a brief summary about progress across the breadth of the curriculum.
 - information about future progression needs/next steps.
 - advice on how parents/carers can support progression at home.
 - information on general health and well-being.
- 2.8 Following the publication by the WG of the Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) guidance and legislation in January, Swansea SACRE is in a position to start the development process for the RVE agreed syllabus. This will become the statutory document for RVE across all schools in Swansea. All schools in Swansea will be audited with regard to the agreed syllabus and how we can ensure that it is a document that is fit for purpose. The syllabus will be shared with schools by the end of the summer term with training provided in the autumn term of 2022.
- 2.9 Swansea SACRE hosted its second annual conference on 25 January 2022, with Lat Blaylock (national RE adviser) delivering sessions to both primary and secondary colleagues on the theme of 'anti-racism and RVE'. This will be supplemented by further collaborative work within the LA to offer continued support and resources for schools and practitioners. Professional learning sessions are being delivered by the RVE adviser over the next six months to support practitioners and governors.
- 2.10 The WG Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) pilot finished in February 2022. Fourteen schools from Swansea were involved in the pilot and received funding to develop curriculum plans, strategies for working with their stakeholders, and the creation of supporting resources. WG will be publishing their findings from this pilot in the summer term. The RSE code and guidance was published by WG in January. Professional learning sessions are being delivered over the next few months to support practitioners and governors.
- 2.11 A working group has been set up to formulate a local authority RSE policy which can be adopted or adapted for schools in Swansea. The group will

include cross-phase practitioners who have been part of the RSE trial, headteachers, representatives from Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence partnership, the healthy schools team, the LA safeguarding lead, and officers of the school improvement team.

2.12 In 2021, Qualifications Wales consulted on what GCSE subject and other made-for-Wales qualifications there should be for learners in Wales. The consultation covered the six Areas of Learning and Experience in the new curriculum. Having considered the feedback, Qualifications Wales has made the decisions outlined below.

In the Expressive Arts

- create new GCSEs in Art and Design, Drama and Music.
- create a new GCSE in Film and Digital Media.
- ensure learners in Wales have a choice of qualifications that assess dance and to work with professionals to create a new made-for-Wales Dance qualification.
- continue to offer a choice of qualifications that cover different areas of the expressive arts.

In Health and Well-being

- create new GCSEs in Food and Nutrition, Physical Education, Health and Social Care, and Childcare.

In Humanities

- create new GCSEs in Business, Geography, History, and Religious Studies.
- create a new GCSE in Social Studies.

In Languages, Literacy and Communication

- create a new GCSE in Welsh that combines language and literature (Welsh-medium and bilingual schools).
- create a new GCSE in Welsh (for English-medium schools).
- create a new additional qualification for pupils in English-medium settings who are ready to progress further in their Welsh language skills.
- create a new GCSE in English that combines language and literature.
- create new GCSEs in French, German, and Spanish.
- create a set of small, made-for-Wales qualifications in a range of international languages.
- ensure learners and schools can continue to access a range of British Sign Language (BSL) qualifications and to work with professionals to create a new made-for-Wales BSL qualification.

In Mathematics and Numeracy

- create a new combined GCSE in Mathematics and Numeracy.
- create a new small number skills qualification that can be taken in addition to the Mathematics GCSE.
- create a new made-for-Wales Level 2 qualification in Additional Mathematics.

In Science and Technology

- create new GCSEs in Computer Science, Built Environment, Design and Technology, and Digital Technology.
- create a new GCSE in Engineering and Manufacturing.
- create a new GCSE in Science (replacing the existing set of science GCSEs).

With regard to Integral Skills, Qualifications Wales will reform the Skills Challenge Certificate.

3. Conclusions/Key Points Summary

- 3.1 WG provide good quality resources and support for schools with regard to preparing to implement CfW. There are ambitious plans to refine and improve the resources, support and the professional learning offer.
- 3.2 Swansea schools are supported well by the LA's RSE/RVE Lead.
- 3.3 The LA needs to continue to support its school leaders and promote and create opportunities that allow time for them to think strategically. We should continue to collaborate with schools to review their progress towards CfW implementation, share effective practice and strengthen partnership working. School improvement advisers will sensitively monitor, evaluate, and support schools in areas related to curriculum development and their assessment arrangements. The LA needs to support school leaders create processes and structures that develop a shared understanding of progression.

4. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 4.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
 - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
 - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 4.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance

with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the ‘well-being goals’.

- 4.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 4.4 An IIA Screening Form has been completed with the agreed outcome that a full IIA report was not required for the following reasons:
- This is a report to share information. The summary of impacts is low. No mitigation is required.
 - This is a report to share information regarding the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales, which is linked to the corporate objective of improving education and skills.
 - This is a report to share information. No risks have been identified and no impact is envisaged.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Glossary of terms:

Acronym	Expansion
LA	Local Authority
WG	Welsh Government
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
BSL	British Sign Language
CfW	Curriculum for Wales
RSE	Relationships and Sexuality Education
RVE	Religion, Values and Ethics
SACRE	Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
IIA	Integrated Impact Assessment

Background papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A – IIA Screening Form