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CABINET

Tuesday, 12th May, 2020

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CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

Portfolio holder for Education - Cllr Phyl Davies

12th May 2020

REPORT TITLE: Continuity of Learning

REPORT FOR: Information – Cabinet.

Continuity of learning plan

On 20th April 2020, the Education minister published a continuity of learning policy statement entitled 'Stay safe, Stay learning'. The document outlines the expectation and support for learning moving forward during this period of school closure.

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-04/stay-safe-stay-learning.pdf>

The Local Authority is working closely with WG, Estyn, ERW and other local authorities to develop the plan. The main priority should be to ensure that as many people as possible remain fit, healthy and have a positive attitude towards life and will be ready for work or learning when this traumatic period is over. At the same time, we need to ensure that the learning pupils undertake during this period enables them to engage in their learning effectively and make progress.

The introduction of distance learning is a very different way of educating our pupils. For nearly all pupils in our county, they are learning at home with the support and help of their parents. This is new territory for us all, including the teaching profession, many of whom also have their own children at home at this time.

Distance learning should not be about replicating the normal classroom experience in the home. Circumstances make this virtually impossible. During this period, it is not reasonable to expect distance learning experiences to mirror learning which learners get at school.

Schools need to prepare for this new method of teaching and learning. Schools will need to consider the training needs of their staff in order that they can deliver distance learning experiences.

In Powys in week one and two of the continuity of learning plan, the school service has been pro-active in providing schools with guidance, facilitating the sharing of good practice and establishing connectivity issues.

We established that there were a substantial number of families that did not have a suitable device for learning and also some that had no wi-fi access. As a result of this, clusters of schools were asked to identify spare school devices that could be repurposed for home usage for those learners who did not have devices. The collaboration between and across

clusters has been excellent and has resulted in all learners throughout Powys now having a suitable device for learning. Working closely with Welsh Government we have also been able to ensure learners have access to Wi-fi through the purchase of 4G dongles which are due to arrive on Monday 11th May 2020.

Teachers have access to a wealth of resources through the Welsh Government learning platform HWB. All learners in our schools have a HWB username and password which enables them to access safe, reliable content for learning. The regional consortium ERW also facilitates shared resources which informs the development of the Powys continuity of learning plan which is updated on a weekly basis and sent to all schools for support and guidance.

Clusters of schools are meeting at least weekly, with the cluster leader of learning meeting fortnightly with the Interim Chief education officer and senior challenge advisor as well in order to discuss progress, issues and to share their practice. To date, clusters are at different stages of developing the joint working with some clusters sharing joint projects for example on the NHS and other clusters working on the new curriculum areas of learning and pooling resources under these headings. The purpose of the joint meeting is to share these resources across the county to ensure more consistency moving forward.

To date, all of our clusters are working on continuity of learning plans. A Powys Distance Learning Plan has been written which is an operational plan to put the continuity of learning plan into practice across our schools. There are key themes which include Wellbeing, Connectivity, Learning and learners, Remote teaching and Provision. This also includes a fortnightly publication of actions to support schools to implement the plan.

There are many examples of good practice which include joint projects, transition work and providing parents with guidance. All clusters have a challenge advisor supporting the work. Examples of good practice are being shared in clusters and across clusters through the use of teams. In addition, work has already begun on transition, from early years' settings to primary schools, from primary to secondary schools and to support our young people at 16 and 18 with their next, very important life changes.

Schools are also being supported through the production of examples of remote and digital learning shared with schools on a weekly basis. The focus is on approaches to digital learning, resources and networks. Many of these examples are from Powys schools that have adopted these methods successfully.

Many of our schools are embracing the change with confidence and at pace. Although not in their school buildings, the headteacher and governing body of each school still have the responsibility for teaching and learning for their own pupils. If parents have issues regarding the work the school is providing, then the process remains the same as it was before the school buildings were closed. They should contact the headteacher of their child's school to discuss their concerns.

Nearly all of our schools are supporting our vulnerable learners effectively. This has included all schools, in conjunction with children's services, health colleagues, youth workers, sports development officers working together to ensure learners are connected which includes weekly and often daily phone calls and emails. This has been a key priority for Welsh Government, Estyn and for all of us in Powys in our Continuity of Learning Plan.

Supporting learners with the Continuity of Learning Plan.

Many schools have already begun a system of check-ins with all pupils, including vulnerable learners and their families.

Children's Services are remaining in contact with the families they support. Schools and the PRU are making contact with learners as frequently as is necessary – a RAG rating system is commonly being used, with learners being contacted daily, more-than-weekly, or weekly as needed. This is in addition to any contact made in relation to academic work. Educational Welfare Officers are linked with clusters and childcare hubs and are making contact with vulnerable pupils and their families.

Weekly Emotional Health meetings are taking place between services including Childrens Commissioning, PRUs, Open Access Youth Service, Youth Intervention Service, Detached Youth Work team, CAMHS, School Nurses, Credu (Young Carers), Xenzone (Counselling), domestic violence services, Careers Wales, NPTC College and others. At these meetings, the level and type of service being offered to children and young people is shared and any gaps and cross-working opportunities are identified and actioned.

The Youth Intervention Service (YIS) are continuing to deliver one to one support to some of the most vulnerable young people in Powys who are open to the service. These young people have a variety of support needs, some of which have been exacerbated due to the impact of schools closing. The individually tailored support offered is by phone and digitally and is under constant review by the team and managers, adapting to changes in young people's emotional health as this period continues. Support is also being offered to the parents of young people open to YIS, to help them to deal with issues around behaviour, boundaries, loss of routine and the effect of being in closer proximity as a family.

The YIS are in contact with identified pastoral and safeguarding leads in the high schools in order to identify which additional young people may benefit from the additional support available from the service. The YIS and Detached Youth Work Team are working together with schools to identify those young people in Year 11 who may struggle to make a successful transition into employment, education or training, including those for which the current circumstances will have a negative impact on their transition plans. The Detached Youth Work team and partners including Careers Wales will offer support to these young people.

The Detached Youth Work Team is also continuing to offer one to one support to the vulnerable young people aged 16-25 open to the team, including learns in post-16 Education. The team is also working with Housing to offer essential support to the increasing number of young people presenting as homeless at this time.

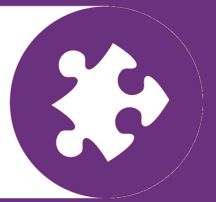
Xenzone have also agreed to have twice-weekly check-ins with any children who are on the face-to-face counselling caseload, and are still accepting new referrals for face-to-face counselling. The provision of remote or tele-counselling support (i.e. contact with a counsellor via telephone, Skype or similar) is under continual review, and the Schools Service is seeking ways to enact this. This is distinct from the web-based Kooth provision, which remains available.

The Open Access Youth team are supporting young people through various virtual platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp and Microsoft teams. They have published a series of videos on these platforms to send messages out to young people, such as 'stay home, stay safe and this week the message is Diolch/Thank you for the young people who are listening and staying home'. There are weekly virtual youth club sessions across the county via Microsoft teams and this is working well so far, young people join in the activities delivered by the youth workers and can ask questions, seek information and support and can ask for contact outside these sessions if required. This will be via phone calls, emails or Facebook messenger. The team are sending out weekly activity resource packs to the Hubs

and are in contact with the Urdd to provide Welsh Language activities. The wellbeing links in the schools are in contact with the school youth workers so any young people who need emotional support can contact the youth worker they know from the high schools across Powys.

This is a challenging time for all involved in our Education system in Wales. It is clear that the professionalism, commitment and care shown by school staff, school service staff and across other service areas in the council over the past six weeks has been admirable as we strive to ensure our learners stay safe and stay learning.

Powys Distance Learning Plan



Information for parents and carers to support children's emotional health, wellbeing and learning at home



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Message from Cllr Phyl Davies Cabinet Member for Education and Property

Dear Parents / Carers,

First of all, I would like to say a huge thank you for all the work you are doing in supporting your children with their learning at home.

Your children have now been at home for six weeks, and it is possible that the current arrangements may continue for the foreseeable future.

The Education Minister has made it clear that until it is safe to reopen schools, they will remain closed.

Therefore, we have to find different ways of delivering teaching and learning. This is a challenge for us all. The Welsh Government has issued guidance for all parents which can be found on the following link:

<https://gov.wales/covid-19-guidance-parents-and-carers-support-families-stay-safe-healthy-and-learning>

There is also a support page on the [Welsh Government's Hwb](#), the digital platform for learning and teaching in Wales.

The Hwb provides you with guidance and places to find activities for your children to do that are safe. You will need your child's username and password to access Hwb, you will then be able to access the link: <https://hwb.gov.wales/distance-learning/distance-learning-tools-through-hwb/parents-and-carers/>

We are working very hard with our schools to ensure all learners are equipped for distance learning.

I would like to thank our headteachers, teachers and support staff for the work they are doing in preparing for distance learning as well as their invaluable work in the emergency childcare hubs. It is still early days for this new way of working and you as parents, your children, and teachers alike are rebalancing, finding a new rhythm, and essentially still making the changes in these unprecedented time. With each week that passes this change will feel more like the new norm for us all.

By working together - parents, children, headteachers, teachers, governors, elected members and officers at the council, we can ensure that your children are safe, well and enjoying their learning during this time.

Once again, thank you for all you are doing. Keep safe.



Please be reassured we are not expecting you to home school your children during this period - you cannot take on the teacher role or deliver the school day in your own home:

- You are there to parent – to provide your children with a safe and healthy environment in which they can work on what their teachers are sending them
- You can support your children to learn just by being there and by giving them your encouragement, you do not need to act as home tutors
- You are not expected to cover the normal school day, give support and guidance to your children as and when it is appropriate during the day
- Be guided by what the school is setting for your child. Teachers will be ensuring that tasks set are age and ability appropriate, and within reasonable time limits
- Let your children do things on their own as well – encourage them to be independent, particularly as they get older, such as in upper primary and secondary school
- You know your children best and know the time and support they need
- Talk to your child about the work they've been doing and take an interest in what they've been learning
- Learning is not all online - there are lots of things that your children can do in the house and garden that will help them learn - from books, drawing and other creative activities, to cooking and gardening, television and radio
- Not every day needs to be the same – make distance learning work for you
- Remember that your children are learning all the time, and being in school is just part of that
- If you have any concerns about your child and their distance learning, you should contact your school

Powys Distance Learning Plan

We have been working closely with Welsh Government, ESTYN, our regional partners, headteachers and school staff to develop this new way of learning.

We have put together a Distance Learning Plan which sets out the way forward for learning during the coronavirus outbreak. We are providing a range of learning opportunities across the curriculum for all of our children and young people and are working hard to ensure that they can quickly catch up when our schools reopen.

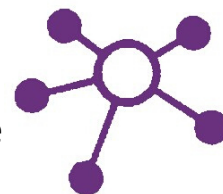
The plan includes:

Learning and learners

Schools are working hard to review their curriculum plans to ensure that there are planned learning opportunities for all pupils. The local authority and the ERW region are supporting schools with their planning. This is to make sure that it is consistent with the curriculum requirements of the national Continuity of Learning plan.

Connectivity

It is important that we make sure all pupils can continue learning by having access to a PC / laptop / tablet, as well as the relevant software and connectivity.



An audit of learners who are having difficulty with access to learning has been carried out and plans put in place to mitigate any issues. For example, by issuing laptops and other devices and providing support for connectivity.

Teaching

All schools are ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants are committed to the Powys Distance Learning Plan. For example, by preparing appropriate learning materials, monitoring work and feeding back to pupils as well as continually reviewing what is in place.



This will be carried out mainly through a programme of online distance learning and will help to develop digital teaching skills using a variety of tools.

Sharing and collaborating

It is important that schools work together to create suitable learning resources, as well as share relevant resources and good practice with each other.



Wellbeing

The wellbeing of pupils and staff is a key priority. Schools will check in regularly with learners and their families, especially pupils with Additional Learning Needs, vulnerable children and harder to reach groups.

Communications

Effective communication is important, and schools / teachers will be keeping in regular contact with families during this time.

Leadership and Management

Effective leadership and management are vital to delivering this plan, as well as in terms of making sure schools continue to function during this period and for when the time comes for schools to reopen.

There is also a range of web-based training that school staff can access to continue to improve their skills and knowledge.



Further advice / support

If you have any issues or concerns in relation to your children's continued learning, your school and teachers remain your first point of contact. Your head teacher will be able to give us feedback and if there is any additional support needed, we can look into it.

We would urge parents to please stay in touch with their schools, let them know how you are getting on and send some photos too.

We also want to thank you for your support and co-operation at this time, we know it isn't easy especially when you are working or have to care for others too.

Distance learning support

Distance learning support on Hwb includes a range of tool and resources to help you with learning activities as well as links to advice on health and wellbeing.

It is suitable for use from nursery age onwards. Your child will have been given a login and shown how to use it in school. If you have young children, you will have received login details and information on how to access [Hwb](#) from home.

A number of [support videos](#) have also been developed to help parents using [Hwb](#), including getting started with logging in and how to use the range of distance learning tools available.

Welsh Government - Stay Safe, Stay Learning

Welsh Government has published information on its Stay Safe, Stay Learning: Continuity of Learning plan on its [website](#). This includes further guidance and advice for parents during the coronavirus pandemic.

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CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

Portfolio holder for Education - Cllr Phyl Davies

12th May 2020

REPORT TITLE: Emergency childcare hubs

REPORT FOR: Information – Cabinet.

Emergency Childcare hubs

On Friday 20th March 2020, all schools across Wales were closed and the Easter holiday was brought forward for learners due to the Covid virus outbreak. Schools were repurposed to become childcare hubs for key workers' children and vulnerable learners. Over the period of a week Powys had set up 15 childcare hubs for school age pupils across the authority, two of which were for special schools and PRU. Emergency Childcare hubs were set up and commenced in Powys on 27th March 2020.

Our general principles when setting the hubs up were:

- 1.1 *The primary purpose of a hub is not to provide education. The primary purpose of the hub is to provide childcare within a carefully managed setting.*
- 1.2 *It is important to recognise that the hubs need to provide a safe environment for all users*
- 1.3 *It must be recognised that children (and staff) will be finding the current situation confusing and emerging events may be having a detrimental effect on a user's mental health. As professionals, we have a duty to support children and each other to ensure physical and mental wellbeing are supported.*
- 1.4 *Where possible, we will seek to have bilingual staff at all hubs*

Hubs in Powys operate from 8am – 6pm seven days a week including bank holiday weekends. Staff, including headteachers, teachers, support staff, catering staff, cleaning staff, sports development officers and officers from the local authority schools service, work in the childcare hubs on a rota basis throughout school holidays and weekends. This work has been commendable and our thanks goes to all the staff involved who have had to adapt and change working patterns very rapidly.

Hubs are located in the following areas:

Cluster	Hub location	Hub Lead
Brecon	Priory C in W School	Lynsey McCrohon
Bro Hyddgen	Ysgol Bro Hyddgen – Primary campus	Dafydd Jones
Calon Cymru – Builth Wells	Newbridge-on-Wye C. in W. School	Helen Nixon
Calon Cymru – Llandrindod Wells	Cefnlllys C.P. School	Karen Jenkins
Crickhowell	Crickhowell C.P. School	Mark Wakeley
Gwernyfed	Archdeacon Griffiths C. in W. School	Louise Simms
Llanidloes	Llanidloes C.P. School	Elen Chennetier
Llanfair Caereinion	Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School	Phil Jones
Llanfyllin	Llanfyllin C.P. School	Dewi Owen
Maesydderwen	Ysgol Gymraeg Dyffryn y Glowyr	Emma Rofe
Newtown	Ysgol Dafydd Llwyd	Siân Davies
Presteigne	Presteigne Primary School	Ros Beck
Welshpool	Welshpool C in W Primary School (Howell Drive site)	Justine Baldwin
Penmaes/ PRU south	Penmaes	Karen Gittins

Cedewain/ PRU north	Cedewain	Russell Cadwallader
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Numbers of children attending the hubs ranges from 145 up to 245 across the LA. Numbers in the hubs have been increasing of late as a result of the intentional joint work between schools and children's services to ensure that more vulnerable learners are accessing the hubs.

The Schools Service has been working closely with Children's Services and health professionals to identify vulnerable learners, and to ensure that those learners are tracked and supported. Schools and Schools Service staff are maintaining regular contact with those learners they believe to be vulnerable. Whilst it isn't possible to categorise all of these learners by particular labels, it includes (but is not limited to):

- Children/families supported by TAF;
- Children/families supported at the level of Care and Support;
- Children on the Child Protection register;
- Children Looked After;
- Children with disabilities;
- Children with Statements of SEN, or with lower levels of ALN/SEN;
- Children with Hearing or Visual Impairments (Sensory Support Service are maintaining regular contact);
- Children who are Young Carers;
- Children with other wellbeing needs;
- Children with Statements of SEN who are on roll at a maintained special school;
- Children on roll at the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).

Bespoke safeguarding policies for both Emergency Childcare Hubs (ECHs) and Emergency Childcare Specialist Hubs (ECSHs) have been created. The senior challenge advisor and acting senior ALN manager have established a 'Team Around the Hub' to provide support for staff and pupils in each hub. This includes a challenge adviser, ALN manager, foundation phase advisory teacher, Xenzone counsellor, Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) and a member of the social services team.

Designated and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads for Emergency Childcare Hubs and Emergency Childcare Specialist Hubs have been identified. These have overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within their hub. Each hub also identifies a nominated lead person for safeguarding to be on site during each shift. In addition, every school has Designated and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads. They have also nominated additional contacts, with contact details for each person whether they're in school or at home. This database has been shared with Children's Services.

Children's Services and the Schools Service are aware of which learners are Children Looked After (CLA), and those who are on the Child Protection (CP) Register. Each hub has been provided with the list of children who are within their hub's 'catchment' who are CLA or CP. This is being checked and updated if necessary on a weekly basis by the Schools Service and re-distributed to Hubs.

Where schools are making contact with children/families, guidance has been issued on how this should be undertaken and logged.

For those learners on roll at either a special school or the PRU, provision in the ECSHs has been organised on a rota system, to ensure that all learners can access the ECSH, and to ensure that the correct staff with the requisite training are available on site to meet each learner's individual needs.

Three meals are available throughout the day which include breakfast, lunch and tea. Pupils attending the hubs who are eligible for free school meals have meals provided in the hubs. Social distancing is adhered to throughout the day including at meal times. A cleaner is on site throughout the day to ensure surfaces, door handles etc are wiped and disinfected throughout the day. Handwashing routines are regular and managed well.

Parents book their children into the hubs through an online booking system which is working effectively. Transport is provided for those children who are eligible.

PPE is available in all the childcare hubs. In the 13 mainstream hubs, PPE is available for dealing with pupils who are displaying symptoms and need to be isolated with a member of staff until they are collected by their parents. In the special childcare hub and early years' hubs, PPE is available for feeding and/or intimate care as well. Long distance thermometers have also been purchased for use in the hubs. Tests are available for all staff who may be displaying symptoms.

The set-up of the emergency childcare hubs has been very successful across Powys and is an excellent example of joint working across schools, across different service areas in the local authority and with the Trade Unions. Thanks to all our staff who have shown commitment, professionalism and care for our families and children in Powys.