

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6TH JANUARY 2021

<p>Subject: Staff and pupil wellbeing and mental health – January 2021 Update</p>	
<p>Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To offer an update in this focus area, as requested by Education and Young People Scrutiny Committee 	
<p>To consider and comment on the following issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note report contents and provide observations and further suggestions 	
<p>Reasons: The health and wellbeing of school staff, pupils, young people and adults who are clients to the Department for Education and Children is an area of interest in Carmarthenshire. The Covid-19 pandemic has intensified interest, an increase in general concern, with additional support and preventative measures put in place</p>	
Exec Board Decision Required	No

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Cllr. Glynog Davies		
<p>Education and Children Directorate</p> <p>Name of Head of Service:</p> <p>J. Aeron Rees</p> <p>Report Author:</p> <p>Aeron Rees</p>	<p>Designations:</p> <p>Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing</p> <p>Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing</p>	<p>Tel Nos:</p> <p>E-Mail Addresses:</p> <p>01267 246532</p> <p>07717 858973</p> <p>JARees@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</p>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
EDUCATION AND CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
6TH JANURAY 2021

Staff and pupil wellbeing and mental health – January 2021 Update

BRIEF SUMMARY OF PURPOSE OF REPORT:

The paper will:

- 1. Provide Background and reference the Pre-Covid Situation**
 - a. Outline established strategy and give a brief policy context
 - b. List provision already in existence for young people and staff

- 2. Describe changes when the pandemic intervened**
 - a. Give an appraisal of the situation from a range of services
 - b. Highlight the proactive response in respect of:
 - i. Pupils and students
 - ii. Other young people within the service's remit
 - iii. Staff

- 3. Suggest next steps**
 - a. With appraisal of progress so far
 - b. How we can capitalise upon opportunities

Whilst focussing on the wellbeing of pupils and school staff, there will also be reference to the wellbeing of other young people, who may not be in school , but still under the remit of the Department for Education and Children (e.g. young adults in the Youth Support Service).

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

Signed: **J. Aeron Rees**

Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities YES	Legal NO	Finance YES	ICT YES	Risk Management Issues YES	Staffing Implications YES	Physical Assets NO
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1. Policy and Crime & Disorder

The Department of Education and Children has a pre-existing Wellbeing and Equity Strategy. This has stood services in good stead in navigating through the pandemic. That said, the lockdown, firebreak and intervening periods have thrown up new challenges and created new opportunities which will merit a review of our strategy.

Welsh Government's '*Education in Wales: Our national mission*' brought a new focus to wellbeing, ensuring equity and excellence for all. Taking forward that work, and recommendations by the Senedd Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Committee, we are now close in Wales to securing an all-Wales framework for a whole-school approach to mental health and emotional wellbeing. This development will be looked at with interest to further inform Carmarthenshire's policy direction.

The legalities around this issue is primarily enshrined in Welsh Government guidance, which has been updated and newly issued in direct response to the pandemic.

3.Finance

There has been increased demand for staff training since the March lockdown. Costs have been met departmentally to fund external providers. This appears an adequate situation currently but is not a determinant of future demand. We have also commissioned some specialist input from key educationalists to inform our approach to pupil wellbeing and may need to continue to broker the expertise from within our budget.

4. ICT

Digital Platforms have provided a very effective way of conducting online professional development during the pandemic. Continued refinement of our platforms and increased staff confidence and competence will be an asset going forward, so that remote learning becomes more sophisticated.

5. Risk Management Issues

New risks have been identified such as the traumas experienced by young people, especially the vulnerable. Support services and pastoral arrangements in schools have themselves been pressurised by additional demand and staffing challenges. There has been a growth in acute concern for some young people, such as an increase in suicide ideation.

6. Staffing Implications

There is no fundamental additional staffing demand, albeit there will continue to be a strong focus on upskilling and developing existing staff i.e. officers, school and special setting leaders and practitioners. Staff in the Department of Education and Children have worked closely with Health and Wellbeing staff in the Chief Executive's Department. It would be desirable if these links, galvanised during lockdown, can be perpetuated and further developed.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: J.A. Rees, Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing

(Please specify the outcomes of consultations undertaken where they arise against the following headings)

1. Scrutiny Committee – pending
2. Local Member(s) - n/a
3. Community / Town Council – n/a
4. Relevant Partners – Approaches have been shared with Local Authority Link Inspectors
5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations – Updates in regular ERF meetings



EXECUTIVE BOARD PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S) AWARE

Yes - Paper forwarded
21.12.21

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
EVERY LEARNER MATTERS: Proposals to Promote Equity, Well-being, Inclusion and Excellence in Carmarthenshire's learning communities (2019 – 2030)		  Equity Strategy.final.4.19.d