

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 23 SEPTEMBER

EVIDENCE PAPER

This paper sets out: my priorities and key areas of work for the 6th Senedd; plans and progress in relation to delivery of legislation and Programme for Government commitments; the approach to dealing with and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic; the approach to lifelong learning; an update on the implementation of the Reid Review; and the role and voice of children and young people.

Priorities and key areas of work

Education creates opportunities and changes lives. It's essential for our economy and can help create a fairer and more equal society. Our priority is to put the well-being and progression of learners at the heart of everything we do, in line with the Well-being and Future Generations Act.

Covid recovery - as we recover from the pandemic we must ensure our education system emerges stronger than ever. Our Renew and Reform plan published in June 2021 set out how we will target £150m of additional investment to support learners and practitioners as we manage our recovery. We are determined that the emphasis placed on well-being and flexibility in the education system over the last year is built upon and closely aligned with the introduction of the exciting new curriculum.

Education reforms - we will continue a programme of reform which includes our world-leading curriculum, vital funding and governance changes in tertiary education and stronger leadership at every level of the education system to realise the transformational benefits of the Curriculum for Wales.

Supporting all learners - we will work with children and young people, their families and the education workforce to ensure the best outcomes for learners, particularly the most vulnerable and work together to close the attainment gap, raise the aspirations of our learners and better bridge the digital divide

Creating One Million Welsh Speakers - the Welsh language is a unique and important part of our national life. We will work with partners and individuals across Wales to encourage people to learn or use their Welsh on a daily basis, strengthen and increase our Welsh language education provision and support the language to thrive in communities across Wales.

Programme for Government

Annex A details the Programme for Government 2021 to 2026 commitments within the Education and Welsh Language portfolio. It outlines indicative steps and timescales and explains in brief terms how we will coordinate and integrate across the whole of government to deliver these commitments.

Legislation

Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Bill

The Welsh Government is committed to continuing its long-term programme of education reform to ensure educational inequalities narrow and standards rise. Having all aspects of tertiary education and research under one body is vital to achieve this.

Following close working with stakeholders, the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Bill which establishes a new Commission for Tertiary Education and Research in Wales will be introduced. It will have extensive funding, planning and regulatory powers, to improve quality, efficiency and efficacy across the PCET and research sector. It will have the interests of learners at its heart, and will work collaboratively with stakeholders and education providers to improve individual and national outcomes.

Welsh Medium Education Legislation

A commitment has been made in the Programme for Government to bring forward a Welsh Medium Education Bill in this Term. The purpose of the Bill will be to strengthen and increase the provision of Welsh-medium education across Wales in order to meet targets in Cymraeg 2050.

Subordinate legislation has been strengthened which will support Welsh-medium education through the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESP). A consultation on non-statutory guidance in relation to school categories according to Welsh-medium provision has been undertaken. Further work on effective delivery of WESPs will be undertaken.

Youth Services Legislation

The Programme for Government sets out several commitments in relation to youth services including legislating for a new framework for youth services in Wales. Once the report of the Interim Youth Work Board is published in September 2021, we will consider the findings and how they can help realise the Programme for Government commitment.

COVID-19

School, college and higher education operations

On 27 August we published the local COVID-19 Infection Control Decision Frameworks for schools, colleges and HE. In developing these frameworks we engaged closely with local authorities, colleges, trade union representatives and public health officials.

The Frameworks set out arrangements for the delivery of learning, enabling schools, colleges, work-based and adult learning providers and HE to tailor interventions to

reflect local risks and circumstances. It consists of core measures that should be in place, regardless of the risk level, and variable measures that may be tailored to reflect the level of risk identified. They will be supported by public health officials and local authorities to ensure measures are appropriate to their circumstances.

The guiding principles at the heart of these Frameworks are to:

- enable education to operate as ‘business as usual’ as far as possible;
- secure the best outcomes for all learners by considering both their educational needs and wellbeing;
- manage the ongoing risks of COVID-19 as safely as possible as for other infections, and ensure clarity of actions required if there is a case in a school or college.

The approach set out in the Frameworks should be adopted as soon as possible after the start of term, and by 20 September 2021 at the latest. Local authorities will be discussing with schools how this approach will be embedded into their operational arrangements, ensuring that staff, learners and the wider education community understand the measures in place in their school.

There is a potential risk of further disruption to learning as winter approaches; there is likely to be increased winter viruses along-side possible pressures from Covid-19. Whilst there are changes in guidance, there continues to be an emphasis on the importance of key measures aimed at minimising the impact of these potential pressures in all settings. The evolving public health situation will continue to be closely monitored.

Recovery – Renew and Reform

The Renew and Reform plan outlined the Welsh Government’s response to the impacts of COVID-19 on learners and learning. Recognising the different impacts of the pandemic on learners, [the plan](#) committed to working with partners to develop and deliver over £150m of support for learners’ well-being and progression. It builds on the successful interventions and initiatives deployed over the last year, including retaining and supporting more than 1,800 full-time equivalent staff recruited under the Recruit, Recover, and Raise Standards programme.

Forming part of the £150m, crucial support during the summer break has been provided via a £4.55m funding allocation to local authorities as part of the ‘Summer of Fun’. Local authorities have worked with partners to deliver a range of funded play, sporting and cultural activities, available in Welsh and English. This has supported the physical, mental and emotional well-being of children and young people aged 0-25, aligned with other important initiatives like the School Holiday Enrichment Programme and the Playworks Programme. A further £450,000 has been allocated to develop pilots for sporting and cultural activities to run alongside the school day, in partnership with Sports Wales and Arts Council of Wales.

Over £7 million is being invested to offer term-long placements to eligible newly qualified teachers (NQTs). Working closely with the regions and the Education Workforce Council (EWC), over 400 NQTs have been matched with schools.

Commencing in September. NQTs on the scheme will benefit from a period of continuous employment in one school. Recognising the challenge of ensuring all NQTs receive the high-quality support and professional learning throughout their induction period, an enhanced induction professional learning programme will run throughout the 2021/22 academic year. The placement scheme will provide schools with additional capacity, enabling them to support learner recovery and the development of the Curriculum for Wales.

Other priorities include measures to support workforce well-being and contingency plans for continuity of learning in the event of further disruption. A more detailed formal update is due to be published by 23 September 2021.

Lifelong learning

The Welsh Government is committed to expanding lifelong learning opportunities as part of our wider [strategic vision for the Post-Compulsory Education and Training Sector](#), which was published in November 2020.

The Tertiary Education and Research Bill will include new provisions which will advance the commitment to lifelong learning.

A review of Adult Education to increase participation is a key commitment in the Programme for Government. It will seek to make improvements and increases to adult learning across sectors. The current Policy Statement for Adult Learning in Wales 2017 supports adult learning and the provision of Essential Skills, and is primarily targeted at Further Education Institutions and the Adult Learning Network.

Expanding Personal Learning Accounts (PLA) is a joint Ministerial portfolio responsibility with the Minister for Economy. All courses and qualifications delivered through the PLA programme are endorsed by Regional Skills Partnerships to ensure the provision meets regional skills needs and addresses skills gaps. A £2 million pilot commenced in September 2019 via two colleges, Grwp Llandrillo Menai and Coleg Gwent. For the 2020/21 academic year, the PLA pilot was merged with the Skills Development Fund becoming a £12m 'Personal Learning Account Programme'. The PLA programme then benefitted from an additional £5.39m to take the total academic year allocation for 2021/22 to £17.39m. Of the £17.39m, £2m has been allocated to the overall programme funding to support training and skills in the 'green' economy, including [green construction and electric and hybrid vehicle technology](#). Similar initiatives are anticipated in future.

Discussions are taking place with a range of policy leads across Welsh Government, including foundational economy, logistics, decarbonisation and childcare to see how the PLA offer and provision might support these sectors.

Reid Review – implementation and funding

The Welsh Government has made good progress in implementing some of the recommendations from the Reid Review, most notably the repurposing of the London office to focus on promoting the excellent research and innovation activity in Wales and improving inter-Government engagement on policy matters.

Work is underway to develop a new cross Government Innovation Strategy to reflect that, post Brexit, there is an increasingly pressured financial position, with the loss of ERDF monies and also, the Welsh Government's need to focus innovation effort towards recovery and growth, in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Professor Reid's review is one source of evidence which will inform this work.

In line with the recommendation from the Diamond Review, the Welsh Government has continued to maintain levels of Quality Research funding awarded to HEFCW. In 2019, additional revenue funding of £15m was provided to HEFCW to further support reforms arising from the Welsh Government response to the Diamond Review and recommendations contained in the Reid Report, including £7.5m for Research Wales Innovation Funding to enable HEFCW to bring forward its plans to reintroduce funding for innovation and knowledge transfer.

Children's rights approach

Wales has led the way in children's rights by enshrining them in law through The Rights of the Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011. There is a commitment to empowering children and young people, ensuring that their voices will continue to influence those decisions that affect them; this includes informal engagement, discussion and participatory ways of working, or through more formal avenues, including consultation. In taking key decisions, and through an integrated approach to impact assessment, the impact of those decisions on children and young people will be assessed in the context of children's rights.

Following the wide ranging and in-depth inquiry into Children Rights by the previous Senedd's Children, Young People and Education Committee in August 2020, a number of the Committee's recommendations were included within the revised Children's Rights Scheme (CRS). The draft CRS was published by the Welsh Government for consultation in December 2020. An overview of the feedback received from stakeholders and children and young people was [published](#) in June 2021. The CRS is currently being revised and should be published during autumn 2021.

The CRS sets out the intention to develop a participation strategy to ensure children and young people are provided with meaningful opportunities to express their views. The Welsh Government provides annual funding to Children in Wales and this enables children and young people to have their views heard by Ministers and policy makers through the 'Young Wales' programme and other participation activity.

CYPE COMMITTEE – 23 SEPTEMBER

ANNEX A

This document details the Programme for Government 2021 to 2026 commitments within the **Education and Welsh Language portfolio** under responsibility of the First Minister and full Cabinet [blue], and under responsibility of the Minister for Education and the Welsh Language [green]. It outlines indicative steps and timescales for delivery and explains in brief terms how our intended approach to coordinating and integrating the cross-cutting commitments.]

Programme for Government 2021 to 2026 Commitment	Indicative steps and timelines	Coordination and integration
Continue our long-term programme of education reform, and ensure educational inequalities narrow and standards rise		
We will make sure nobody in Wales is left behind after the coronavirus pandemic, repairing the damage done over the last year. We will continue a programme of reform which includes our world-leading curriculum, vital funding and governance changes in tertiary education, stronger leadership at every level of the education system and a commitment to lifelong learning. We will work with children and young people, their families and the education workforce to ensure the best outcomes for learners, particularly the most vulnerable.		
Fund up to 1800 additional tutoring staff in our schools	<p>Recruit Recover and Raise Standards (RRRS) programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New cycle of LA reporting and summation reporting – from September 2021 • New funding arrangements and modelling and adjustments to funding formula as required – from Spring 2022 <p>Formal evaluation timeline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation begins – Autumn 2021 • Interim report – Spring 2022 • Final report – Summer 2022 	<p>The RRRS programme is integrated in the Welsh Government’s education COVID-19 recovery plan, Renew and reform: supporting learners’ wellbeing and progression, and its supporting governance. The independently chaired internal Renew and Reform programme board includes officials across schools, post-16 and childcare.</p> <p>The Renew and Reform programme plan outlines how Welsh Government will work in partnership with the education profession and other stakeholders to ensure we are aligned to the common priorities set out in our response to the pandemic. We will listen</p>

Programme for Government 2021 to 2026 Commitment	Indicative steps and timelines	Coordination and integration
		to the voices of our learners so our children and young people have a say in the policies that affect them most and we will support leaders in schools to determine the right approach to support the needs of their learners.
Build on our School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP)	Following the summer 2021 programme, where we provided £4.85million to enable up to 8,000 places, we will consider how best to further extend the scheme once the final evaluation of the programme is available later in autumn 2021. With this in mind we have used some funding to extend SHEP into schools which do not meet the free school meal scheme criteria to test support for the scheme and to act as case studies to inform future decisions. We expect to agree plans for 2022 by December this year.	The Welsh Government works closely with delivery partners such as the WLGA to maximise the benefit of the programme.
Continue to meet the rise in demand for Free School Meals resulting from the pandemic and review the eligibility criteria, extending entitlement, as far as resources allow	The Welsh Government has allocated an additional £83.3million since the start of the pandemic to provide free school meals. Provisional Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) 2021 data indicates that the total number of pupils eligible for free school meals (of all ages in maintained schools and including those who are transitionally protected) has risen to over 108,000. This represents an increase of 18,000 pupils in a year.	As part of the review, work is underway to establish the policy and cost implications. This includes ongoing discussions with external partners, including the Bevan Foundation and Policy in Practice. The review will be informed by research and evidence, such as that commissioned / undertaken by them and the Wales Anti-Poverty Coalition. As the review progresses, further engagement work will be undertaken as appropriate with stakeholders.

Programme for Government 2021 to 2026 Commitment	Indicative steps and timelines	Coordination and integration
	<p>Officials have begun a review of the eligibility criteria. We anticipate the review will conclude in the autumn/winter. An update will be provided to the Senedd in September.</p>	
<p>Invest in the learning environment of community schools, co-locating key services, and securing stronger engagement with parents and carers outside traditional hours</p>	<p>We plan to undertake a policy review which will inform a future work plan, goals and context around community schools. Our efforts will focus on how community schools can support improved attainment, aspirations, wellbeing and educational outcomes for all learners. This will include a scoping exercise to define the characteristics of a community school and explore how we can better engage families and the wider community.</p>	<p>Taking forward this commitment will involve considerable cross government working across Education and a number of other portfolios, such as Social Justice.</p>
<p>Explore reform of the school day and the school year</p>	<p>Through engagement and discussion with the education sector, and other stakeholders such as our social partners, we will explore the potential for reform of the school day and year. Activity is expected to focus around a number of key priorities, including learner and staff wellbeing; narrowing inequalities; and continuing to raise standards for all.</p>	<p>The programme of work is integrated within our Renew and Reform plans and its governance.</p>
<p>Develop a sustainable model for supply teaching that has fair work at its heart</p>	<p>During autumn 2021, we will review models which exist in other jurisdictions and identify potential options for further development through engagement with social partners.</p>	<p>Taking forward this commitment will involve discussions with Local Government colleagues around potential implications for local government, as well as with the National Procurement Service in relation to</p>

Programme for Government 2021 to 2026 Commitment	Indicative steps and timelines	Coordination and integration
	<p>We will work with stakeholders to understand the implications of alternative models within the current supply model context in Wales, and by summer 2022 we will aim to have identified the scope of a sustainable model and the actions required to support it.</p> <p>The legacy arrangements, potential requirement for legislation, and need for an orderly transition, is likely to mean any significant changes being realised in the third year of this Senedd term.</p>	<p>the supply framework and colleagues leading on social partnership and fair work.</p>
<p>Take the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Bill through the Senedd</p>	<p>Welsh Government is committed to expanding lifelong learning opportunities as part of our wider strategic vision for the Post-Compulsory Education and Training (PCET) Sector, which was published in November 2020.</p> <p>Following consultation last year we intend to introduce a revised Tertiary Education and Research Bill in the Senedd in the autumn. The Bill will include new provisions which will advance our commitment to lifelong learning and we will be working closely with stakeholders over the coming years to develop the finer detail of this commitment in advance of the establishing of the new Commission for Tertiary Education and Research in 2023.</p>	<p>Officials across a number of Welsh Government departments are and will be engaged in the delivery of this commitment. The Bill has the interests of learners at its heart and includes provisions to ensure the voices of all post-16 learners are heard through a Learner Engagement Code.</p> <p>The Bill will allow the Commission and Welsh Ministers to shape the tertiary education in Wales to meet the demands of learners and employers.</p>

Programme for Government 2021 to 2026 Commitment	Indicative steps and timelines	Coordination and integration
	<p>Our long-term programme of education reform will make sure nobody in Wales is left behind after the pandemic, and this legislation will further demonstrate our commitment to lifelong learning .</p>	
<p>Push forward towards a million Welsh speakers, and enable our tourism, sports and arts industries to thrive</p>		
<p>The arts, tourism and sport are of vital importance to both the Welsh economy and to our national life, and the Welsh language is a national treasure which belongs to every individual in Wales. We will widen access to our heritage, harness the creativity and sporting ability of people in Wales, and ensure that these industries have the support they need to maintain their proper place on the world stage.</p>		
<p>Establish a National Music Service</p>	<p>Proposals for a sustainable pathway for education in music for Wales are currently being developed for Ministerial consideration with a decision expected in Autumn 2021.</p>	<p>Education officials are working closely with the Culture, Sport and Tourism Department, and a range of key stakeholders (including via a Music Education Group) consisting of representatives from WLGA, the Arts Council of Wales, all local authority music services as well as other music organisations such as Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, National Youth Arts Wales, and regional education consortia.</p>

Programme for Government 2021 to 2026 Commitment	Indicative steps and timelines	Coordination and integration
Legislate to strengthen and increase our Welsh language education provision	The Welsh Government has committed to prepare a Bill for introduction in this Senedd term to support equitable access to Welsh-medium education and remove barriers by bringing coherence to and enabling effective planning of Welsh-medium education.	A Bill project board will be established reporting into the Legislative Programme Board and is expected to engage with partners via the Welsh Language Partnership Council education sub-group.
Lead Wales in a national civic conversation about our constitutional future, and give our country the strongest possible presence on the world stage		
Wales is a confident and outward-looking country, and we know that issues such as the coronavirus pandemic, climate change and globalisation cannot be solved without our friends and allies in Europe and beyond. We will build and strengthen our global relationships, celebrating different cultures and embracing internationalism. We will work for a new and successful United Kingdom, pressing the UK Government for reform.		
Put in place a £65million international learning exchange programme	<p>Current schedule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery organisation established - July 2021 (complete) • Programme Strategy published - December 2021 • Applications Open - March 2022 • Mobilities begin - September 2022 	This cross-cutting commitment will be led by Skills, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning, working closely with pre-16 education officials, the Office of the First Minister, International Relations and Trade officials.

Programme for Government 2021 to 2026 Commitment	Indicative steps and timelines	Coordination and integration
Provide effective, high quality and sustainable healthcare		
The coronavirus pandemic has shown our health service at its best, but it has also created extraordinary pressures on staff and services. We want to create a 21st century NHS by investing in the post-Covid recovery, tackling health inequalities, improving mental health provision and focussing on prevention. We will continue to support our health workers, protect the NHS, deepen the integration of services, improve accessibility, reduce carbon in the design of new facilities, extend the use of new technologies and support people to live healthy lives.		
Roll out child and adolescent mental health services ‘in-reach’ in schools across Wales	<p>This is part of broader work encompassing our whole school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing.</p> <p>Local Health Boards (LHB) submitted proposals to use funding and establish services in June 2021, with funding allocations agreed in July 2021. LHBs are at different stages of implementation and all plan on having all or part of their service established by early 2022.</p>	Building on the publication of statutory framework guidance for schools and local authorities in March 2021, we will continue to support and embed this work using our £9million budget which has been jointly agreed by the Minister for Education and Welsh Language and the Minister for Health and Social Services, recognising the cross-cutting nature of this work. This work is also a key part of our response to the coronavirus pandemic, as we recognise the emotional and mental impact is likely to outlast the physical impact of the pandemic.

Tackling poverty and promoting prosperity

The action of the Education and Welsh Language portfolio supports the Welsh Government’s collective ambitions to tackle poverty and promote prosperity for all. Our programme of education reforms, actions to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and specific areas of work targeted at reducing inequalities and improving educational outcomes for all learners will play an important role in realising our ambitions. The Education and Welsh language sectors will work closely with and support the Minister for Social Justice’ commitment to coordinated and integrated action to tackle poverty and promote prosperity.

For example, the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) not only plays an important role in addressing inequity in education, but to our wider tackling poverty agenda. Our focus on community schools policy development will see us consider how community schools can support improved attainment, aspirations, wellbeing and educational outcomes for all our learners, particularly those who are disadvantaged by poverty. This will impact across portfolio areas and will require particular close working with the Social Justice portfolio. The Minority Ethnic, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (MEGRT) grant provides dedicated funding to support local authorities to improve the educational outcomes for Minority Ethnic, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners. For 2021-2022, an additional £1million was approved, bringing the total funding to £11million. The Gypsy, Roma and Traveller guidance for schools is being updated and is due to be completed by July 2022, in line with our Race Equality Action Plan.

The Welsh language and shared delivery of *Cymraeg 2050*

The Welsh Government's Welsh Language Division works across government to support our ambitions for the Welsh language in Wales and the world. There are a number of commitments listed in the Programme for Government which are key to the delivery of *Cymraeg 2050* but which sit outside of the portfolio. Officials will work with colleagues to ensure these commitments contribute fully to the ambitions and delivery of *Cymraeg 2050*. These include:

- Creating a Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan;
- Giving Transport for Wales new powers to better integrate rail, bus and active travel and regulate from them to meet Welsh language standards;
- Increasing apprenticeships in care and recruiting more Welsh speakers; and
- Working to protect Welsh place names.

The following Programme for Government commitments within the Education and Welsh Language portfolio are under the responsibility of the Minister for Education and the Welsh Language.

Programme for Government 2021 to 2026 Commitment	Indicative steps and timelines
Strengthen the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF)	Earlier this year, to inform approaches aimed at strengthening the Framework, we undertook consultation and engagement with stakeholders, including young people. We will shortly publish the outcome of this exercise and draw on the findings as part of a planned redraft and publication of the revised Youth Engagement and Progression Framework this year. Next, in collaboration with key partners, we will revise and strengthen the Early Identification guidance that sits alongside the Framework, and which will better support the early identification of young people that have disengaged, or are at risk of disengaging from their education, employment or training. Looking forward, and linked to the Young Person’s Guarantee, further consideration will also be given to those elements of the Framework which are aimed at strengthening the identification and support offered to 19-25 year olds.
Invest more than £1.5 billion in the next phase of the 21 st Century Schools and Colleges Programme	The successfully established 21 st Century Schools and Colleges investment programme will continue to be open to all local authorities and further education institutions in Wales to support projects that deliver improvement in our school and college infrastructure to meet the current and future demand for places and address issues of poor condition and suitability for delivery of the curriculum. Up to 200 schools and colleges will be refurbished or replaced by the end of the second wave of investment.
With local authorities, transform learning environments, develop net-zero carbon schools and open up school facilities for local communities	Through our 21 st Century Schools and Colleges infrastructure Programme the Welsh Government and local authority partners are investing in new educational facilities which are net zero carbon as well as retrofitting net zero carbon technology to existing building infrastructure. We have been working with delivery partners and the construction sector in developing a Decarbonisation Route Map for the education sector. The Route

Programme for Government 2021 to 2026 Commitment	Indicative steps and timelines
	<p>Map is due to be published in September 2021. Additional support to the sector will be provided through the establishment of an Education Decarbonisation Best Practice Group. This Group will support schools, colleges and universities in the decarbonisation of the education estate in Wales.</p> <p>Under the first phase (£15million) of community hubs investment, 21 projects will be delivered (of which 10 are already complete) providing enhanced facilities and support services to their local communities.</p> <p>A review of the building design standards that underpin the 21st Century schools and colleges programme in the context of delivering the new curriculum and community schools is under consideration.</p>
<p>Review Adult Education to increase the number of learners in Wales</p> <p>[including reference to employability plan]</p>	<p>The review will seek to scope out improvements and increases to the current adult learning offer across sectors. The current Policy Statement for Adult Learning in Wales 2017 supports adult learning and the provision of Essential Skills, and is primarily targeted at FEIs and the Adult Learning Network.</p> <p>Learning and Work Institute are currently reviewing the policy and delivery landscape and also opportunities to improve ESOL provision. A review of Family Learning across Wales is being undertaken to understand what has survived Covid. Opportunities to work with Community Focussed Schools will be explored in this area.</p> <p>A new funding methodology was introduced in 2020/21 to ensure equity across sectors, based on population and educational / income deprivation. Funding is allocated to local authorities via the Community Learning Grant.</p> <p>Good progress has been made improving links between the adult learning sector, the Adult Learning Network and Regional Skills Partnerships (RSP) to ensure the adult learning sector is represented and reflected in RSP priorities.</p>

Programme for Government 2021 to 2026 Commitment	Indicative steps and timelines
	<p>Adult learning has an important role to play in developing the low level skills that will enable learners to progress to the higher level skills needed to improve the economy.</p> <p>In addition, the Wales Centre for Public Policy has been asked to conduct a review of lifelong learning in Wales. The project will analyse how lifelong learning in Wales can best be provided and how it can help to meet the Welsh Government's broader policy objectives. The work will inform the next Welsh Government's thinking on the future of lifelong learning policy as we move ahead with our post-compulsory education and training reforms.</p> <p>Employability Plan Work is in progress to assess the ambitions of our lifelong learning commitment, and progress to close qualification gaps with the UK at all levels by 2028. This is against a backdrop of significant reductions in funding part time learning and increased future investment in skills and qualifications in England.</p>
Provide additional counselling provision throughout the next [current] Senedd term	<p>In 2021-22 we have made an additional £1.75million available to local authorities to support improvements in and expansion of counselling provision. In particular we know that children and young people's emotional wellbeing will have been adversely affected as a result of the pandemic. Between January and March 2022 we will work with local authorities to assess the impact this additional funding has had. In addition we have contracted Cardiff University to review counselling provision to ensure that the current service is able to meet current and anticipated future demand; and to examine the need for provision of suitable interventions for children below the current Yr6 Counselling threshold. The review has been impacted by the pandemic, though we currently expect it to report its findings in early 2022.</p>

Programme for Government 2021 to 2026 Commitment	Indicative steps and timelines
<p>Support schools and teachers to deliver our world-leading Curriculum for Wales</p>	<p>Curriculum for Wales timeline - recognising specific challenges faced by secondary schools during the pandemic, secondary schools have the option to continue with existing plans to start in 2022 with Year 7, or to start a year later in 2023 with Years 7 and 8 together. Roll out for primary schools remains at 2022. Beyond 2023, the roll out of the Curriculum for Wales will follow on a year by year basis with the first qualifications designed specifically for the Curriculum for Wales being awarded in 2026/2027 academic year as planned.</p> <p>Curriculum for Wales support - shortly, we will update the “Journey to 2022” to provide comprehensive support for schools on the steps they should be taking in preparation for curriculum rollout. We will ensure appropriate guidance is made available across multiple topics including for religion and values and ethics, careers and relationships and sexuality education. This additional guidance was consulted on during the summer and will be finalised by the end of 2021. Similarly, we will finalise guidance to support practitioners working with learners at the beginning of the learning continuum and provide a curriculum and assessment framework for funded non-maintained nursery settings to adopt.</p> <p>We will ensure supporting legislation for the Curriculum for Wales is in place following Royal Assent of the Curriculum and Assessment Act earlier in 2021.</p> <p>National Network - we have committed to establishing and supporting the practitioner-led operation of the National Network for implementation. The Network will be launched in early autumn 2021 and will start by looking at fundamentals of a school’s curriculum, including learners’ progression.</p> <p>Renew and Reform - In the summer we published the Renew and Reform Plan, setting out the approach to support learners, partners and the education system to move on from the disruption as a result of the pandemic.</p>

Programme for Government 2021 to 2026 Commitment	Indicative steps and timelines
Reduce unnecessary bureaucracy to support school leaders	<p>During Autumn term 2021, we will work with existing head teacher networks in relation to bureaucracy concerns and supplement this with wider engagement activity - with employers and trade unions, and with other devolved governments. The intention will be to have a strong evidence base; based on a good understanding of activities and priorities being taken forward elsewhere and information on what has worked well in this area. We will publish a summary of the background research, and identify, and where appropriate develop, resources to share with schools during summer term 2022. We will work with head teachers and wider stakeholders across the education system in Wales to develop and test proposals for short and medium-term actions, agreeing deliverables and an implementation plan by the autumn term 2022. Working in social partnership, we will then begin to implement agreed actions in a phased / prioritised way in the new academic year.</p>
Implement the new Additional Learning Needs Act [Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act]	<p>The Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Code for Wales was issued in March alongside a number of regulations made under the ALNET Act. Implementation of the ALN system will be sequenced in its first year. Children who do not have an identified special educational need (SEN) or who are not awaiting or undergoing an SEN assessment, will move to the new ALN system from 1 September 2021.</p> <p>For children who attend a maintained school and who have identified SEN via school action or school action plus, the ALN system will apply from 1 January 2022, rather than September 2021. This will provide time for the sector to reflect on the guidance, undertake preparatory work and engage with children, in receipt of SEN provision via school action/school action plus, and their parents.</p>

Programme for Government 2021 to 2026 Commitment	Indicative steps and timelines
	<p>As our ALN reforms begin a key transition period, the Welsh Government will provide support for the effective implementation and embedding of the new ALN system across all relevant areas.</p> <p>We will focus on workforce development to ensure a highly skilled, ALN-aware workforce operates within which both ALNCoS and non-ALNCoS will be knowledgeable and skilled teachers of children and young people with additional learning needs. This will be supported by a new professional learning offer including a new national <i>Masters in Education - ALN</i> and a supply of 10 newly qualified educational psychologists annually.</p> <p>We will focus on development of core skills and awareness raising, supporting all relevant stakeholders to be aware of and understand their responsibilities under the ALN Act.</p>
Expand the teaching of modern foreign languages in our schools	<p>We have a clear vision and strategy to support modern foreign language learning in Wales, set out within the Global Futures 2020-2022 strategic plan. The strategic aims and accompanying actions are taken forward by Welsh Government, regional education consortia and other key partners as we transition to the Curriculum for Wales in 2022.</p> <p>We are developing a set of proposals to expand support for modern foreign languages / international languages under our Global Future Action Plan. An evaluation of the existing plan will be completed during the autumn 2021 and advice on the next steps of the programme are expected to be submitted in early Spring 2022.</p>
Invest in the Pupil Development Grant	The PDG plays a key role in tackling the impacts of poverty on educational attainment. We will continue to invest in the PDG and its constituent

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	<p>components including PDG Access, working closely with our partners to support schools and settings to gain maximum benefit from the support provided. We will commission further evaluation of the PDG and work across portfolios to understand the impact this grant has not only on educational outcomes, but wider tackling poverty goals.</p>
<p>Protect the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) for young learners</p>	<p>The EMA Scheme has been maintained for eligible new and continuing students studying in the 2021/22 academic year. EMA is demand led and provides a financial incentive of £30 per week to encourage young people (aged 16-19) from lower income households to continue in full-time education beyond compulsory school age. EMA aims to help with the associated costs of further education. An eligible student must be following an eligible further education course up to level 3 at a recognised educational institution with learning sessions (a class, or other taught or guided study session) consisting of at least 12 hours per week.</p> <p>The EMA income thresholds and grant levels have remained the same since the 2011/12 academic year.</p>
<p>Maintain our commitment to provide free breakfasts for all primary school pupils</p>	<p>Wales led the way in the UK by introducing free breakfasts in primary schools in 2004. Now, under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, local authorities have a duty to ensure that the provision of primary school free breakfasts continues. The Welsh Government has produced statutory guidance on the provision of free school breakfasts in primary schools, and as part of our plans to revise the Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2013 we will update the statutory guidance on free school breakfasts to make sure it reflects the latest scientific advice.</p>

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<p>Appoint a Cabinet level Minister to develop and take forward the proposals of the Youth Board for Wales</p>	<p>The Welsh Government will continue to support the work of the Interim Youth Work Board. We will consider the recommendations of the Interim Board once published in September and formally respond by the end of 2021, with a view to beginning implementation of the agreed recommendations from January 2022 onwards.</p>
<p>Legislate for a new framework for youth services in Wales</p>	
<p>Support the democratic role of local authorities in education provision</p>	<p>On the back of a range of reports over recent years looking at the role of local authorities and other strategic partners in relation to support for school leaders, Professional Learning, the induction of Newly Qualified Teachers, the impact of the professional standards and support for Teaching Assistants.</p> <p>We will in the first year explore current arrangements and the role of local authorities in relation to the range of statutory functions delivered by them. We will determine how these arrangements can be strengthened and provide advice to Ministers on priority areas for action.</p>
<p>Promote parity of esteem between vocational and academic routes in Welsh education. Examine how a greater degree of federation can support educational leadership across Wales</p>	<p>The Welsh Government is responding to Estyn recommendations following a Thematic Review report on partnership working concerning post 16 (year 11) transition/data sharing and officials are developing written agreements to underpin transition and curriculum planning drawing from the review.</p> <p>The Welsh Government is planning an independent review of the 16 – 19 curriculum offer (to take place in 2022-23 financial year). In advance of that, and to support and provide an evidence base to inform the guiding principles, aims, coverage and depth of an independent review, officials have instructed Estyn to undertake a thematic review this year on the current curriculum offer 16 – 19 and career choices at transition.</p>

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	A review of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009, and legislative amendments required, will support our wider policy approach to parity of esteem between vocational and academic qualifications and routes.
Explore how to strengthen professional learning communities	<p>We will explore how to strengthen professional learning communities through our National Approach to Professional Learning (NAPL) including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The refresh and development of the NAPL. • Funding support for professional learning at school level. • Expanding the National Professional Enquiry Project (NPEP) and network of research schools. • Exploring potential around the use of, and possible extension to, in service training (INSET) days beyond 2022. • Working with the National Academy for Educational Leadership to develop professional learning guidance and case studies for practitioners.
Expand the role of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol	Welsh Government has provided an initial investment of £0.8million to the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol in 2021-22 for further education projects. Our commitment is to expand the role of the Coleg ensuring that additional sector areas and the apprenticeship sector will benefit during this Senedd term by building the sectors' capacity through adequate staffing of full time equivalent tutors and assessors targeting first and second language Welsh speakers.
Expand our Welsh language early years provision	The Welsh Government continues to fund Mudiad Meithrin to deliver its Sefydlu a Symud (SAS) programme to expand provision in the early years as an access point to Welsh-medium education. The programme exceeded targets for its first 3 years and has a current annual target of 12 new groups. The programme is also supported by: Mudiad Meithrin's Cymraeg for Kids programme; workforce training through the apprenticeship scheme and 'Cam wrth Gam' schools programme; and its Academi training, development and learning programme.

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Expand the Pupil Immersion Programme	<p>The pandemic has meant more families are relocating to Wales leading to a rapid increase in demand in applications for late language immersion provision. In addition, late immersion has been rolled out successfully in some areas to regain language skills lost during lockdowns. Evidence collated through local authority Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) have highlighted the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expand late language immersion provision to meet increased demand; and, • to better support mainstream Welsh-medium schools settings to re-immerse learners already in the system, and provide on-going support to maintain their skill levels. <p>Ensuring all LAs have access to the pupil immersion programme would give all pupils equal access to language support across Wales.</p>
Introduce a pilot project which will incentivise young Welsh speakers to return from universities to help teach Welsh in schools	<p>The Welsh Government is working with the National Centre, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and Universities to pilot three projects to incentivise young Welsh speakers to return from universities to help teach Welsh in schools. One project will be led by the National Centre and the other two via the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and universities. The three projects will work in tandem targeting undergraduates and graduates to support the teaching of Welsh in schools and to encourage the use of Welsh in schools. It is hoped that the projects will encourage students to move into teaching.</p>
Address the recommendations from the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, Contributions and Cynefin in the new Curriculum Working Group	<p>To support the implementation of the recommendations of the Working Group the Welsh Government has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed that the Chair of the Working Group, Professor Williams OBE will support the Welsh Government with the implementation of the recommendations in an advisory role;

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established an internal working group to implement the recommendations which are overseen by a steering board of which Professor Williams is a member; and • Continued to engage with external stakeholders and members of the working group. <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Welsh Government is developing a strategy to increase recruitment levels into Initial Teacher Education and subsequently into the wider workforce. The initial draft strategy will identify steps that can be taken to support an increased representation in the workforce and is expected in autumn 2021; • Several reports have been commissioned into the impacts of the under-representation in the workforce and officials are currently reviewing the evidence and recommendations from this research. <p>Proposed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing English-medium Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic teaching and learning resources and respond to any recommendations the working group may issue; • Commission new learning resources; and • Work with colleagues to ensure the working group's recommendations are linked with the education elements of the Welsh Government's Race Equality Action Plan.
Provide free access to the Urdd Eisteddfod in 2022 [Economy portfolio with EPS Group lead]	This is a cross-portfolio action between Education and Economy. Funding is sought to allow free access to the Denbighshire Urdd Eisteddfod in 2022 on its centenary anniversary. Offering free access to the Urdd Eisteddfod will attract a

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	new audience to the festival and therefore to the language, from every stage of the language continuum and every background.
<p>Expand the use of shared and degree apprenticeships</p> <p>[Economy and Education working collaboratively to deliver this action]</p>	<p>Shared Apprenticeships We have developed two new Construction shared apprenticeship projects that have started to recruit apprentices for this academic year. The Welsh Government is working with stakeholders to scope the options to expand shared apprenticeship projects within the Creative sector for this year in south and north Wales. We are also scoping the demand for a Digital project within the Valleys Taskforce and an Engineering project with possible delivery from August 2022.</p> <p>Degree Apprenticeships We are working with stakeholders to prepare options for expansion. Expansion would be dependent on priorities, budget, value for money considerations and the findings from the independent evaluation. Decisions are expected to be made in Autumn 2021 on the scope of the expansion.</p>
<p>Expand Personal Learning Accounts (PLA)</p> <p>[Economy and Education portfolio joint action]</p>	<p>Expanding Personal Learning Accounts is a joint Ministerial portfolio responsibility between Economy and Education and Welsh Language.</p> <p>Indicative Steps and Milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 6,200 learners in 2020/21 academic year - 7,000 learners in 2021/22 academic year - Evaluation to be published autumn 2022 <p>All courses and qualifications delivered through the PLA programme are endorsed by Regional Skills Partnerships to ensure the provision meets regional skills needs and addresses skills gaps. We have allocated £2 million of</p>

<p>Programme for Government 2021 to 2026 Commitment</p>	<p>Indicative steps and timelines</p>
<p></p>	<p>the overall programme funding to support training and skills in the ‘green’ economy, including green construction and electric and hybrid vehicle technology https://gov.wales/new-college-courses-jobs-green-economy. <u>Similar initiatives are anticipated in future.</u></p> <p>Discussions are taking place with a range of other policy leads across Welsh Government, including foundational economy, logistics, decarbonisation and childcare to see how the PLA offer and provision might support these sectors.</p>