

# FULL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

## A. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### 1. Describe and explain the impact of the proposal on children and young people.

#### Curriculum

The proposals put the four purposes at the heart of the Curriculum for Wales Framework. These are the starting point for all teaching and learning. The four purposes of the curriculum are that children and young people develop as:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the World
- healthy, confident individuals ready to lead fulfilling lives as valid members of society.

The four purposes are described through key characteristics contributing to developing ethical informed citizens who 'understand and exercise their human and democratic responsibilities and rights' and 'respect the needs and rights of others, as a member of a diverse society'.

The curriculum guidance has been designed to describe a continuum for all learners from 3 to 16. All maintained schools and funded non-maintained nursery settings must adopt a curriculum. An adopted curriculum must meet the following general requirements:

- enable learners to make progress towards the four purposes
- be broad and balanced
- be suitable for learners of differing ages, abilities and aptitudes
- provide for appropriate progression for learners and includes a range of provision to ensure this (linked to ages, abilities and aptitudes).

A curriculum will need to encompass the following Areas:

- Expressive Arts
- Health and Well-being
- Humanities
- Languages, Literacy and Communication
- Mathematics and Numeracy

- Science and Technology

The **Curriculum for Wales Framework** is designed to help practitioners to develop a more integrated approach to learning. The six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE) bring together familiar disciplines and encourage strong and meaningful links across different disciplines. Those individual disciplines will still play an important role, especially as learners progress and begin to specialise. However, the guidance promotes collaboration and cross-disciplinary planning, learning and teaching, both within and across AoLEs. This will enable learners to build connections across their learning and combine different **experiences, knowledge and skills**.

Supporting learners to make progress is a fundamental driver of the Curriculum for Wales framework. This is reflected in the statements of What Matters; the descriptions of learning for each of these statements, and is also the primary purpose of assessment.

Understanding how learners progress is critical to learning and teaching and should inform curriculum design, classroom planning and assessment. Rather than setting out outcomes in key stages, the guidance describes progression through:

- **principles of progression** for the curriculum as a whole and for each individual AoLE. These articulate the ways in which learners make progress in their learning and contribute to the **four purposes**. These will be incorporated in a statutory code once the Curriculum and Assessment Bill becomes law.
- **descriptions of learning** which provide guidance on how learners should progress within each statement of what matters as they journey through the continuum of learning. These are arranged in five progression steps which provide reference points for the pace of that progression. These expectations are expressed from the learner's perspective and are framed broadly so that they can sustain learning over a series of years. While the learning continuum is the same for each learner, the pace of progress through it may differ. As a result, the progression steps only broadly relate to age. They broadly correspond to expectations at ages 5, 8, 11, 14 and 16.

This means all learners making progress along the same continuum, regardless of any additional learning needs they may have. A more personalised approach to learning will support every learner to progress at a suitable pace, and be challenged appropriately.

*Successful Futures* identified that the current system has become centred on making general, best-fit judgements about learner performance. The consequences of this are insufficient focus on progression, with 'best-fit' judgements masking wide variations in progress in different aspects of learning. The framework proposes the removal of the current system of 'Levels'.

Progression in learning is a process of increasing sophistication, rather than being about a body of content to be covered. Progression is not linear and different learners are likely to progress in markedly different ways. Assessment, built into the school curriculum, should recognise this.

The focus now will be on continuous assessment with learners being assessed in relation to the school curriculum, which will have been designed to reflect the national principles of progression, drawing on the descriptions of learning. Practitioners should assess all learners across the 3 to 16 continuum based on the progression articulated in their school curriculum. In doing so, they should take into account the diverse needs of individual learners.

Schools should not undertake specific assessment activities at each progression step to make a judgement about a learner's progression at a set age or point in time and descriptions of learning are not a series of criteria to be directly assessed against, nor can they be met with single assessment tasks.

Working with the Office of the Children's Commissioner, we have refined the guidance on embedding human rights education in schools' curricula. This supports schools to embed Human Rights Education and a rights based approach into their school-level curriculum design and development.

Schools' curricula will need to be broad, balanced, inclusive and challenging. One of the four purposes is that all children and young people will be ambitious, capable learners who are ready to learn throughout their lives. This includes setting high standards and seeking and enjoying challenge to support the needs of More Able and Talented learners (MAT).

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and curriculum reform policies have been co-constructed with stakeholders and are key components of *Our National Mission* to raise standards and reduce the attainment gap. The new ALN system, curriculum and assessment reform and the broader professional learning programme are being aligned.

From the age of 14 onwards, young people will begin to specialise and make choices. For learners aged 14 to 16, a school must design a curriculum so that, in addition to the mandatory curriculum elements and mandatory cross-curricular skills, it provides:

- choice for learners in the other learning they will undertake, but in such a way that ensures all learners still undertake some learning in each area of learning and experience
- other elements which the school requires all learners (or some groups of learners) to undertake.

Qualifications will be developed to reflect learning.

### Assessment

There will be a continuum of learning from 3 to 16 years. Within schools assessment will be an ongoing process that is embedded within day-to-day practice and is fundamental to the learning process.

Within the assessment guidance, assessment is now described as an ongoing process which is intrinsic to curriculum design and which is indistinguishable from learning and teaching. It should be a key aspect of curriculum design, rather than a stand-alone process.

The assessment guidance clearly describes the purpose of assessment as being to support the progression of each individual learner in relation to the 3-16 continuum. A part of this, three main roles for assessment have been identified:

- Supporting individual learners on an ongoing, day to day basis
- Identifying, capturing and reflecting on individual learner progress over time
- Understanding group progress in order to reflect on practice

Active engagement between the learner and practitioner on a regular basis is at the heart of supporting learner progression and key to this is establishing:

- where learners are in their learning
- where they need to go in their learning
- what needs to be done for them to get there, taking account of any barriers to their learning.

Assessment will not only consider the outcomes of learning i.e. what a learner has learned, but should also consider the process of learning, in order understand how a learner has learned, enabling adjustments in daily practice to be made to take this into account.

Under the new Curriculum for Wales there will be a broader approach to transition, supporting learners along the learning continuum, as they move between different groups, different classes, different years and different settings (currently transition processes focus primarily on the learners moving from primary to secondary schools). As part of this, ensuring the well-being of all learners should be an important and integral part of the process, recognising the needs of individuals, while also supporting both continuity and progression in their learning.

We are already making changes to our national tests, and have introduced online personalised assessments. The purpose of these statutory online personalised assessments is to help move learning forward through supporting both the learner and practitioner to understand how a learner's reading and numeracy skills are developing and what the next steps should be. In personalised or 'adaptive' assessments, the questions are selected based on the learner's response to the previous question. This provides an individual assessment experience and tailors the level of challenge for every learner. Schools have far more control over these assessments and are able to decide when a learner, or groups of learners, would benefit most from the assessment, unlike the current national tests where there is a test window.

### *Evidence and Consultation*

Based on the evidence gathered during the Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment arrangements in Wales (the Review), *Successful Futures* recommended principles of curriculum design which outlined that that any proposed structure should satisfy a number of criteria, including having children's rights at the heart.

The Review undertook a national call for evidence, encouraging stakeholders from across Wales to submit their views and help shape the outcome of the Review. In order to generate debate and discussion, the questions included in the call for evidence were deliberately very broad and open-ended and included questions such as 'What are the three best things about education in Wales?' This received over 700 responses, of which over 300 were from learners themselves.

A recurring concern of learners who spoke to the Review team was their perception that the curriculum was out of date in relation to digital technology. Representatives of business were similarly concerned. They saw the ability to use technology creatively for research and problem solving as key competences that they wanted to see in prospective employees. *Successful Futures* recommended that digital competence be given equal status to literacy and numeracy as a cross-curriculum responsibility. The development of the Digital Competence Framework (DCF) was fast tracked and made available in September 2016 support digital competence in schools.

Learners in particular, but not exclusively, also wanted to see a greater focus on general social competences (life skills and personal confidence, personal and social education (PSE)), basic skills (i.e. literacy and numeracy), and more vocational education and careers guidance. Stakeholders felt that ‘...schools should be doing more than simply imparting knowledge’. While successful learning was a highly valued outcome of education by all stakeholders (including learners), so too were a range of other outcomes. General social competences, life skills and personal confidence were seen by all as important things to be gained from school. These views have been reflected in the proposals for statutory cross-curricular skills (Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Competence); and the embedding of integral skills into the guidance. The inclusion of an AoLE dedicated to Health and Well-being and equal in status to the other AoLEs also reflects the emphasis learners placed on personal and social education.

Children and young people wanted lessons to be more relevant and engaging, with more practical lessons, more fun, more interactivity, and more out-of-classroom activities. There is a sense that a more general enthusiasm for learning has been sacrificed in the race for qualifications.

Through the design process, there has been full consultation with a range of schools and settings. Different settings have been engaged to ensure the new curriculum arrangements are accessible for all learners, including Foundation Phase settings and groups with an ALN focus. For instance, the Pioneer School Network has representation from different language medium schools, special schools and Foundation Phase practitioners. This model of development has prompted practitioner engagement with the learner on the emerging proposals for the curriculum and has fed this back into the design process. In addition, the Camau Project (led by University of Wales Trinity St David and Glasgow University) to support the development of progression in the curriculum is

developing a toolkit for practitioners to use to support them in their curriculum design (including learner voice).

During the feedback phase, learners were invited to give their views and feedback on the new curriculum arrangements. To support this:

- learners were able to provide feedback online
- focus groups were held with them across Wales and the outcomes were considered part of the feedback phase
- a toolkit was developed for group leaders across Wales to run their own focus groups to support learners with the new curriculum, in particular through schools councils.

The analysis of the feedback phase directly informed the refinement of the curriculum guidance and has been published.

## **2. Explain how the proposal is likely to impact on children's rights.**

The proposed curriculum and assessment arrangements contribute to the following articles in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- Article 28 -Children have a right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this.
- Article 29 - Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, and their own and other cultures.

Welsh Government is committed to ensuring that the needs of learners are at the heart of the new curriculum. The design of the new curriculum in *Successful Futures* set out ten principles for curriculum design, one of which focussed on inclusivity and the Rights of the Child: *'taking account of their [children and young people] views in the context of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and those of parents, carers and wider society.'*

The four purposes will be at the heart of the learning and experience of all children and young people in Wales, whatever their school or maintained educational setting.

Specifically, the four purposes recognise the role of children's rights – All children and young people will be ethical, informed citizens: who respect the needs and rights of others, as a member of a diverse society; and who understand and exercise their human and democratic responsibilities and rights.

Overarching guidance provides guidance for schools on:

- **Learning about human rights:** understanding human rights, and the sources of those rights including the **UNCRC**
- **Learning through human rights:** the development of values, attitudes and behaviours that reflect human rights values
- **Learning for human rights:** the motivation of social action and empowerment of active citizenship to advance respect for the rights of all.

A guide for children and young people has also been developed to be published alongside the curriculum guidance.

Children's rights are also part of the guidance in the Health and Well-being and Humanities AoLEs. Rights are included in the mandatory statements of what matters. Rights are also included in the guidance in the descriptions of learning.