



# ERW

Ein Rhanbarth ar Waith  
Education through Regional Working

## **ERW Activity Report during Covid-19 Lockdown**

July 2020

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## **Section 1: Introduction and Regional context:**

This report provides an overview of the:

- strategies and actions undertaken by ERW officers in support of school communities and Local Authorities during Covid-19 lockdown
- strategies employed by Local Authorities to implement effective contact and engagement with schools in support of pupils' well-being and ongoing learning
- levels of engagement of pupils in distance learning

Since the onset of Covid-19 the ERW region has worked closely and collaboratively with its constituent local authorities (Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Powys, Pembrokeshire and Swansea), Consortia partners, WG, Estyn and others in support of the highest quality of distance learning and well-being provision for all learners.

In the main, this work has been strategically coordinated and directed by the implementation of an over-arching ERW Strategy Group namely, the 'ERW Continuity of Learning Strategy Group.' The group is made up of nominated senior officers from each local authority working alongside the ERW Interim MD, Assistant MD and Lead for Digital Learning and Systems. In turn, this group has been further supported by ERW Officers and the existing ERW Senior Challenge Adviser (SCA) Network which provides direct contact and awareness of 'learner and school voice.'

These strategic groups have worked closely with ERW officers to implement and share the nationally devised 'audit tool' in an effective manner. A detailed analysis of this work is noted (current up until June 2020) below within Section 2.

## **Section 2: Distance Learning – a summary of engagement:**

The ERW Senior Leadership Team shared the content and intention of the 'Audit tool' with the ERW Continuity of Learning Strategy Group and Senior Challenge Adviser Network to ensure a collaborative and encompassing approach to this crucial piece of work. It is also important to recognize that throughout the vast majority of discussions with headteachers and senior leaders, schools report positively on the levels of regular contact maintained with pupils and parents since the point of school closure.

The 'conversational approach' to this work has helped to add much validity and detail to the responses obtained.

The key objectives of the exercise were to:

- work collaboratively with schools to complete the 'light touch' questions in regards to engagement of learners.
- develop a regional overview of current practice in regards to how learners are accessing distance learning and engaging.
- identify effective practice to inform and support regional guidance and models going forward
- identify key barriers and how to support schools in collaboration with Local Authority and partners.



These objectives built effectively upon the work initiated by the Strategy Group and SCA Network from the outset of Covid-19. All ERW partners had demonstrated great eagerness to maintain our well-established levels of collaboration and learning from each other across the region. This supportive approach was greatly enhanced by the implementation of this shared piece of work as follows:

- Senior Challenge Advisers from each of the five Local Authorities along with their colleague Challenge Advisors contacted headteachers and members of senior leadership teams in their schools to discuss the current provision for facilitating Distance Learning
- questions from the audit were used to guide the conversation and the responses were captured in the questionnaire
- 306 responses were recorded during these conversations between headteachers and Challenge Advisers across the following range of schools:

Nursery =	1
Primary =	250
Secondary =	36
All ages (3 - 16/19) =	6
Special =	5
PRU =	6

### Summary of responses received from ERW schools:

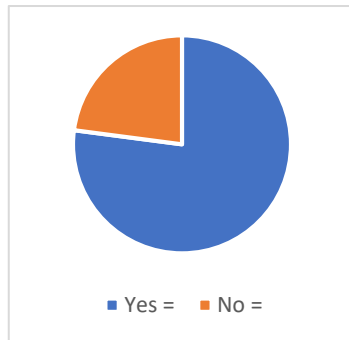
#### i) Access to Hwb usernames and passwords:



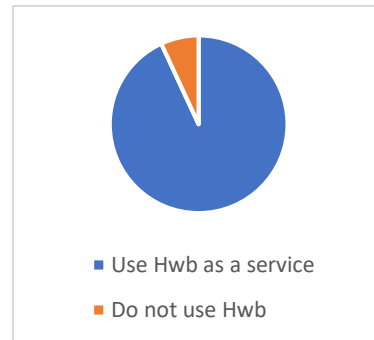
99% of staff had access to Hwb, while pupils in 92% of schools also had access to Hwb.



### Are schools able to communicate Online with learners?



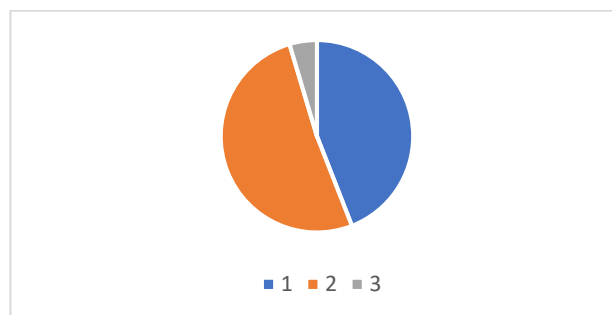
### Do schools use the Hwb platform to facilitate this communication?



### Key messages:

- 76% of schools were able to communicate with ALL learners in their settings and 93% of schools use Hwb to facilitate this communication
- 97% of schools are able to share digital tasks and educational resources online with pupils
- 94% of schools are able to assign tasks and receive work back from pupils through learning platform
- 87% of schools are able to provide digital feedback to pupils on work submitted

### ii) Current position of ERW schools:



### Key messages:

- 44% 134 schools are currently able to offer online learning activities to pupils and have capacity to support other schools
- 51% 156 school are currently able to offer online learning activities to pupils, however, do NOT currently have capacity to support other schools

- 5% 14 schools needs support to offer online learning activities to pupils

### iii) **Additional Regional support for Distance Learning:**

- ERW has prioritised the support of those schools that have been identified as requiring support to offer online learning activities to pupils. This support has been provided.
- ERW has engaged with those schools that are in a position to support others. Digital content from these schools has been shared via Dolen. Schools were also identified and agreed to present at the series of webinars run by ERW.
- ERW has delivered a series of 'Webinars', initially focusing on the use of specific Hwb tools to enable learners to connect and collaborate with each other:

11/3/20	Cysylltu Dysgwyr trwy Flipgrid	Cymraeg
13/5/20	Connecting learners through Flipgrid	English
18/5/20	Collaboration and connecting learners using MS Teams	English
18/5/20	Cydweithio a chysylltu dysgwyr trwy MS Teams	Cymraeg
20/5/20	Cydweithio a chysylltu dysgwyr trwy feddalwedd Google for Education	Cymraeg
20/5/20	Collaborating and connecting learners using Google for Education tools	English
21/5/20	Connecting learners through J2e	English
21/5/20	Cysylltu dysgwyr trwy J2e	Cymraeg
3/6/20	Supporting Transition through Flipgrid Webinar	English
4/6/20	Supporting Transition through Flipgrid Webinar	Cymraeg
17/6/20	Connecting with Foundation Phase learners through J2e	English
18/6/20	Cysylltu â dysgwyr yn y Cyfnod Sylfaen trwy j2e	Cymraeg
24/6/20	Datblygu sgiliau siarad a gwrando trwy feddalwedd Hwb	Cymraeg
25/6/20	Developing speaking and listening skills using Hwb tools	English
26/6/20	Supporting Teachers' wellbeing, Professor Neil Frude	English

### **Section 3: LA Strategies and Practice**

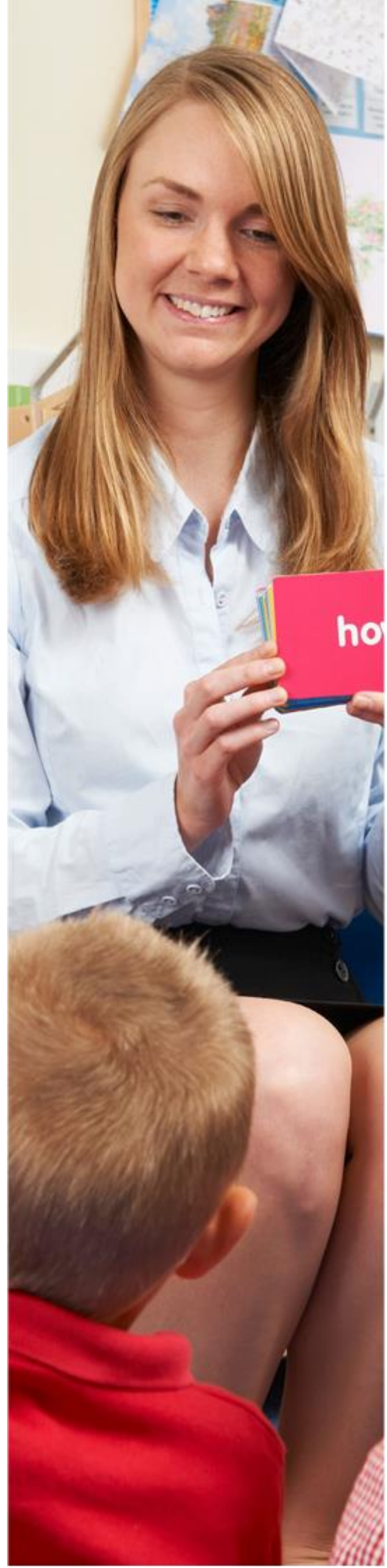
The ERW Continuity of Learning Strategy Group has played a pivotal role in ensuring collaborative guidance and consistent support for learners and their families across the region. The key focus and benefit of each weekly meeting has been the opportunity to openly share specific elements of local practice. This has worked exceedingly well along with much discussion to help ‘problem solve’, as a regional team, any individual levels of challenge.



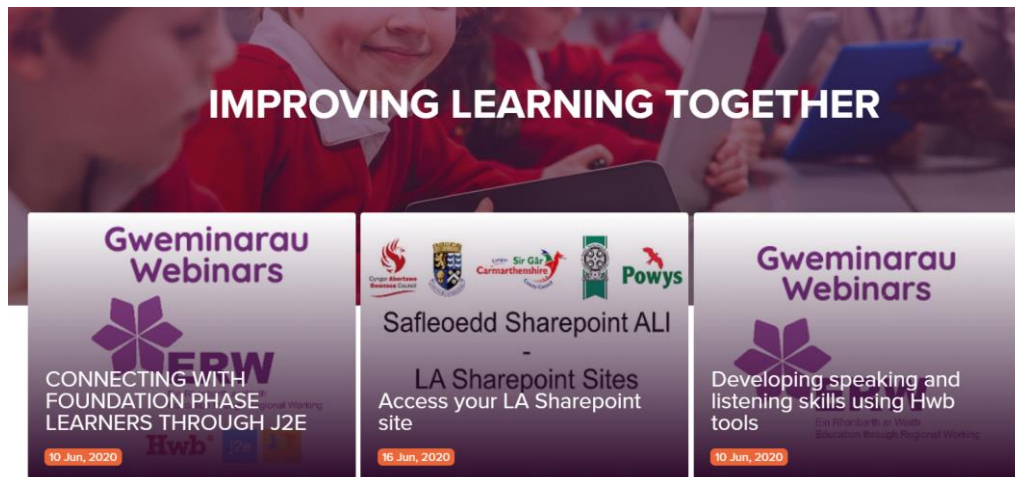


**Local Authorities within ERW have summarized their strategies and practice to date in the following manner:**

- ✓ Local versions of a Continuity of Learning Plan have been developed to facilitate bespoke access to a range of appropriate 'deliverables' in support of all learners
- ✓ Challenge Advisers and colleague LA officers have and continue to maintain very close links with school leaders and governors (this approach has contributed greatly to securing enhanced levels of engagement and providing bespoke support where needed)
- ✓ LAs are maintaining a regular overview of IT equipment, connectivity and resource needs – support for this agenda recognises the future nature of a 'blended learning' environment and is planning accordingly
- ✓ LAs are working closely with schools to provide families with regular updates on the availability of provision, support and evolving plans for future distance / blended learning options at a local school level
- ✓ Weekly professional development newsletters shared with schools by the Local Authority to signpost regional and local materials (detailing approaches to distance learning and highlighting resources to support these approaches)
- ✓ Schools utilising their Cluster School arrangements to design learning plans thus ensuring a consistent approach to distance learning
- ✓ Challenge Advisers provide support for professional development and training for online learning techniques (linked with the ERW Webinar content)
- ✓ Teachers have formulated class plans that encompasses one week of learning with plans including at least three daily activities (literacy and numeracy are featured daily)
- ✓ Topic-based approaches continue to be used successfully, providing context and ensuring learners are connected by a common theme
- ✓ Teachers facilitate the learning of/revision of skills through the use of online clips e.g. BBC bitesize, Oxford Owl, White Rose Maths etc (clips are carefully selected and links to materials are embedded within the class plans)
- ✓ Learning plans are uploaded to the school website every Sunday afternoon for the following week and parents are also notified through the school's Twitter feed



## **Section 4: ERW Practice and support**



Our work has included a range of specific actions and contributions in support of the health and wellbeing of children and young people across our region. A focused has been maintained on ensuring high quality support for the national Continuity of Learning (CoL) Plan, close collaboration with all our partners and as a result, practical support and resources for all practitioners via our ‘Dolen’ platform.

Some examples of this work include:

- Supporting the wellbeing of learners through exemplifying strong practice using the Hwb platform to stay in touch and remain connected with their teachers and peers
- A range of guides on effective use of digital tools to support school business e.g. Microsoft Teams
- Numerous resources to support asynchronous delivery
- Numerous resources for schools and teachers to use/adapt in their own context to support literacy, numeracy and digital skills
- Guidance for parents/carers (for schools to adapt for their own settings).
- Professional Learning opportunities for teachers to support distance and blended learning approaches

- Bespoke support for individual schools and clusters via individual officers or teams e.g. Curriculum Team and Secondary Team inputs
- Support for schools for the re-opening of schools on 29 June 2020.

To ensure our region provides consistent and constructive provision in line with national guidance, effective regional working has continued to develop and flourish across the Consortia throughout the Covid-19 period. Strong practice has been shared frequently with all key messages to schools aligned consistently. For example, ERW contributed in detail to the creation of national 'models' of distance and blended learning across the key stages. In addition, regular dialogue with Welsh Government and our constituent LAs has ensured that schools have been effectively supported during this challenging time.



## **Areas of Activity and Contribution**

### **1. The National Continuity of Learning Plan (V1 and V2):**

Team members have attended, led and contributed significantly to numerous central elements of the Plan's content including the Underpinning Principles and series of Deliverables.

Our activities and contributions have impacted in particular depth and detail through:

- UP2 (Inclusion) design, content and strategic direction
- our significant role in the development, writing, design and publication of regional and national guidance for:
  - D2 (Hardware) and D3 (Tools in the system) - we have collaborated and contributed in depth across both of these 'Deliverable' areas to ensure clear guidance and support for schools
  - D4 (Guidance for HTs, Teachers & TAs ) – detailed support for guidance documentation, context of the work and publication of teaching and learning 'models' for use across key stages
  - D5 (Guidance for Parents & Carers) – our work includes the creation of the original draft which was then utilised by WG, along with an innovative animation published on our Dolen site and further, significant contributions to the primary, KS3, 4 and 5 and ALN guidance (regional guides created to support schools to develop advice for parents/carers linked to numeracy, literacy and digital competence)
  - D6 (Schools use of Hwb) – we have supported the development of structured guidance for schools in detail, reinforcing the effective use of Hwb across all of our work and publications
  - D7 (School Business) – we contributed to the resources which have supported school leaders' awareness of effective strategies to ensure continuation of school business at an appropriate and manageable level
  - D8 (Web-based Professional Learning) – we have contributed greatly to the resources created and ensured measured direction and guidance for all schools and practitioners
  - D9 (Welsh language skills for all learners) - we chaired this group and provided extensive support for creation of 'phase specific' resources

- D10 (Preparing for the new curriculum) – the ERW Curriculum Team plays a key role in developing national resources and guidance whilst continuing to develop resources and support schools/clusters locally in readiness for the revised curriculum
- D11 (Content to support remote learning) - we have supported the quality assurance and development of the 'Staying In is the new Going Out' resource and maintain an ongoing role within this 'Deliverable'
- D12 (Health & Wellbeing) – we have supported this work extensively at a national level (based on the '5 Ways to Wellbeing') and created a wide range of resources for schools and settings
- collaboration with Cardiff Met and Sport Wales to develop 'Be Active' guidance
- creation of a range of video based guides published on Hwb
- collaboration with Professor Neil Frude to provide a web support for school staff wellbeing the week before schools opened on 29 June 2020
- a highly successful series of digital learning Webinars (focused on D6 - ) and provided for schools across the region and Wales:
  - use of Hwb tools for collaboration
  - supporting transition and connecting with Foundation Phase learners through the 'J2E' software programme
  - developing speaking and listening skills through Hwb
  - Webinars facilitated by ERW digital team with 10 schools from across the region presenting their practice and lessons learned so far (with a key focus on supporting pupils' wellbeing, collaboration and connection)
  - Webinars facilitated by ERW digital team with 10 schools from across the region presenting their practice and lessons learned so far (with a key focus on the following 3 areas; supporting pupils' wellbeing, collaboration and connection, supporting Year 6/7 Transition and connecting with Foundation Phase learners)

**Attendance statistics:**

1216 attendees

352 attended the Welsh medium webinars

864 attended the English medium webinars

822 attended from ERW schools

58 ERW officers attended



327 attendees from the other 3 Consortia (including school based colleagues and Consortium officers)

- collaboration with regional Professional Learning leads across Wales to develop materials and guidance for effective, research informed learning and the development of two sets of guidance for
  - a) producers of web-based Professional Learning
  - and
  - b) consumers of web-based Professional Learning
- provide practical and supportive guidance for practitioners engaged in leadership programmes (where possible to develop online content so that these programmes can continue through remote delivery)

## **2. Provision and collaboration with our school communities:**

All ERW Team members were made available for redeployment from the onset of Covid-19 with some members called to support within local 'Hubs' and understaffed office-based activities such as supporting eFSM processes within LAs.

Enhanced collaborative-working between our Secondary and Curriculum teams has impacted well on the direct support and provision made available for schools.

Recent research on the impact of schools closures on vulnerable and disadvantaged learners has been undertaken and shared with schools. We are confident that this will support the imminent return to school and blended learning agendas well.

In addition, we focused our school improvement work immediately on constructive and practical provision for our school communities via the creation of over two hundred individual resources currently available on 'Dolen.'

We have enhanced the role of our digital support programmes and systems in support of a plethora of valuable activities across all provision.

Further examples of our contributions are noted below:

- a range of resources to support schools to develop material linked to the 'wellbeing of learners'
- publication of an ERW Google Site to support Distance and Bended Learning
- guidance materials developed and shared based on 'Recovery Curriculum' trauma informed models
- guidance updates for the effective use of PDG
- further support for schools and settings on the use of 'Flipgrid' to promote wellbeing through developing a sense of belonging and connectedness
- additional Webinars developed on 'Relationship Based Play' to support wellbeing
- publication and support for networks of schools through our distance learning package 'Principles of Excellence' (all practitioners within one member LA will use the model over the next two years supported by our Curriculum Team)
- ongoing provision and enhancement of our dynamic 'Transforming Your Curriculum' (TYC) programme (available directly to schools through Dolen)
- ongoing and enhancement of ALN Transformation documentation
- 'AoLE Walkthroughs' developed as online tools to support individual practitioners with their work
- creation of a 'Mass Observation' resource for schools to use as part of their re-opening strategy (based on reintegration, reorientation, wellbeing, belonging and connectedness and the Curriculum for Wales philosophy) - the pack will enable schools to create a nurturing and collaborative project which will support pupils to interpret and manage their Covid-19 experiences, providing an archive of information for the future
- revised support developed for literacy, numeracy and digital skills across all key stages, including subject guides developed and published to support learners moving from KS4 to KS5
- ongoing support for special schools and PRUs to ensure sharing of effective practice to support distance learning approaches and engagement (a range of resources published on 'Dolen' to support ALN specific issues)
- ongoing bespoke support for a range of schools and clusters for:
  - digital systems and learning
  - preparation for Curriculum for Wales

- virtual leadership and professional learning activities
- secondary curriculum support (including secondary middle-leader network meetings with most departments across the region in attendance)
- support for secondary senior and middle leaders with regard to revised examination processes

### **3. Collaborative work and contributions with regional and national partners:**

In the main, this work has been strategically coordinated and directed by the implementation of an over-arching ERW Strategy Group namely, the 'ERW Continuity of Learning Strategy Group.' The group is made up of nominated senior officers from each local authority working alongside the ERW Interim MD, Assistant MD and Lead for Digital Learning and Systems. In turn, this group has been further supported by the existing ERW Senior Challenge Adviser Network which provides direct contact and awareness of 'learner and school voice.'

#### **Together, we have achieved the following key tasks:**

- shared valuable guidance and information between LA officers in support of a range of key issues e.g. National CoL Plan development, WJEC and Qualifications Wales examination updates, availability of resources on 'Dolen' and LA officers able to share local experiences with the ERW SLT members, request additional support where appropriate etc
- communicated effectively and regularly with all LAs through our 'ERW Comms', Twitter systems and 'Dolen'
- maintained an ongoing, supportive dialogue with key stakeholders such as Estyn, FE and HEI organisations
- contributed to and developed a wide range of resources for ongoing cross-regional projects (led by ERW SLT and Team staff) in support of our school communities
- Key messages shared with LA officers through ERW CoL Group and Senior Challenge Adviser group e.g. National CoL development, examination updates, resources on Dolen etc

- LA officers share local experiences with ERW SLT members and request additional support where appropriate.
- Feedback shared on best practice in schools across the LA.
- Consistency of messages developed and shared.
- Effective communication with LAs through ERW Comms and Dolen.
- Performance Management reviews adapted for an April-Sept timeframe in keeping with current situation.
- Information collated and shared on engagement in digital events, training etc.
- Ongoing dialogue with key stakeholders e.g. Estyn, FE, HEI.
- Contribution to and development of resources for full range of cross-regional projects by SLT/Central Team staff.
- Team meetings (SLT/Curriculum/Secondary) effectively delivered through MS Teams to enable sharing of practice etc.
- Staff training on developing Fitzpatrick evaluation for PL, Pupil wellbeing and TYC/PFE.
- Regional guidance QA.
- Evaluation of PDGLAC.
- Development and sharing of digital platforms/systems for regional and LA staff.
- Sharing of key messages of SLO to support schools.

#### **4. Professional Learning and Leadership:**

Guidance and protocols for effective and appropriate web based professional learning developed.

Contribution to effective transition strategy to ensure that PL can continue in 2020/21.

Membership of cross-regional leadership group supporting national leadership programmes and reviewing programmes 2020/21.

Regional PL leads to develop redraft of shared expectations document to support PL during current circumstances.

In collaboration with HEIs to continue to offer remote support to schools engaged with enquiry including National Professional Enquiry Project, Building Research Capacity Projects, Lead MAT Schools Enquiry Project, Post-16 Enquiry Project.

To work with WG and cross-regional PL leads on strategic planning and recruitment of schools to the National Pedagogy.

Leading Collaborative Learning Project with Lyn Sharratt – continue to collaborate with Swansea University in evaluating the impact of the work to date and maintain contact with Dr Sharratt’s latest publications and webinars.

Re-engage schools with work by organizing a national webinar on teacher ‘Clarty’ during a pandemic.

Range of support for NQTs.

Ongoing work with WG to support ITE providers in to deliver training support current cohort of students during period of lockdown.

Dialogue with ITE providers, including the OU, to support planning arrangements for cohort of 2020/21.

**To date, our ERW Team has focused on providing:**

- guidance and protocols for effective and appropriate web based professional learning
- contributions to an effective transition strategy to ensure that Professional Learning can continue to progress during the academic year 2020/21
- support for cross-regional leadership group working to ensure appropriate reviews of national leadership programmes for 2020/21
- support for regional PL Leads across Wales to develop and redraft the national ‘shared expectations’ document in support of PL activities during this period
- collaborative support for HEIs to continue to offer remote support for schools engaged with research enquiry, including the National Professional Enquiry Project, Building Research Capacity Projects, Lead MAT Schools Enquiry Project and Post-16 Enquiry Project
- collaborative support for WG and cross-regional PL leads to ensure strategic planning and recruitment of schools to the National Pedagogy Project
- continuation of the ‘Leading Collaborative Learning Project’ with Dr. Lyn Sharratt (continued successful collaboration with Swansea University in evaluating the impact of the work to date and maintaining contact with Dr. Sharratt’s latest publications and Webinars)
- a range of support for NQTs and ongoing work with WG to support ITE providers in to deliver training support current cohort of students during period



of lockdown (including dialogue with ITE providers and the OU in support of planning arrangements for cohort of 2020/21)

## **5. Outcomes and impact of our activities and contributions:**

- Effective communication across central team through focussed SLT meetings. ERW Comms improved to ensure key messages shared with all school leaders. Significantly improved subscription to ERW newsletter.
- Schools have engaged in the range of support and have accessed resources linked to pupil wellbeing.
- Shared understanding of the importance of the welfare of pupils, parents and staff
- Clear guidance given on how to prioritise and structure Distance Learning through range of high quality resources, webinars and training opportunities.
- Significant uptake from schools and positive feedback on webinars sharing schools' support for learners.
- Guidance for Parents/Carers documents available for schools to adapt to their own context and share as appropriate.
- Range of models supported by comprehensive resources from ERW central team to support the distance learning agenda and reduce teacher workload.
- Use of strong practice across the region has ensured sharing of resources on pupil engagement, collaboration as well as a range of subject specific tasks created/adapted to meet the present situation.
- Strengthened use of Microsoft/Google platforms within Hwb to develop effective links within and across schools.
- Effective use of digital resources to support networking events.
- School staff being upskilled through the use of a digital platform for professional development.
- Support and challenge/scrutiny from regional CoL group and Senior Challenge Advisers.
- Consistent messages disseminated to schools by ERW / LA officers.
- Strengthened collaboration between peers at a cluster level through digital means ensuring co-constructed strategic thinking. High quality 'virtual transition' events supported at a regional level.
- Strengthened collaboration between local authority officers and ERW.

- Clear, research-informed support for schools on distance learning agenda.
- Effective cascading of key messages to school staff to ensure consistency and clarity.
- Significant collaboration with stakeholders on and contribution to the national CoL plan.
- Strong regional delivery of resources and guidance on a range of CoL deliverables.
- Increased alignment of key messages across ERW teams.
- Stronger awareness amongst school leaders of effective strategies to ensure continuation of school business.
- Quality Professional Learning developed in readiness for future needs.
- Newly Qualified Teachers having clarity regarding completing their induction year.
- Strong partnership work with ITE to ensure initial teacher training students have clarity on the appointment system for next year.
- Strong partnership working with range of cross-regional groups. Dialogue has continued to be useful even on paused projects.

These commentaries seek to provide an overview of the valuable contributions and practice provided by Team ERW since the onset of Covid-19. We are most grateful for the ongoing high levels of engagement and collaboration across the region and nationally in support of this work. In support of all learners across our region, ERW will continue to vigorously support the evolving distance and blended learning agenda as it unfolds over the coming weeks and months.

## **An overview of the range of ERW support, activities and impact**

### **National Continuity of Learning Plan:**

- Attendance at UP2 meetings.
- Key role in developing and writing guidance for D12 around 5 Ways to Wellbeing.
- Range of resources developed for D12.
- Collaboration with Cardiff Met/Sport Wales to develop 'be active' guidance.
- ERW webinars developed and delivered to support wellbeing, collaboration and connection.
- Key contributions to D3 and D6 in initial iteration of the CoL.
- Range of video based guides published on Hwb.
- Series of digital learning webinars (D6) provided for schools across the region and Wales on – Hwb tools for collaboration, supporting transition, connecting with FP learners through J2E, developing speaking and listening skills through Hwb.
- Webinars facilitated by ERW digital team with 10 schools presenting their practice and lessons learned so far.
- Collaboration with regional PL leads to develop materials and guidance for effective, research informed learning.
- Contribution to D4 guidance including developing and supporting the publication of a range of models at all phases.
- Significant contributions to all guidance, resources and on-line training and support across the country and for schools in the region published under D2/D3.
- Significant contribution to D5 – high level guidance based on ERW draft and linked to 5 Ways to Wellbeing agenda. Animation to support message published on Dolen.
- Contribution made to the primary/KS3/4/5 and ALN guidance for parents and carers. Regional guides created to support schools to develop advice for parents/carers linked to numeracy/literacy/digital competence.
- Contribution to D8 in terms of guidance developed at planning meetings.
- Significant contribution to D9, including developing national message and developing resources through practitioner groups.

- In collaboration with cross-regional PL leads to develop two sets of guidance for producers of web-based PL and consumers of web-based PL.
- Provide guidance for practitioners engaged in leadership programmes, where possible to develop online content so that these programmes can be delivered remotely.
- D10. ERW team continue to develop resources and support schools/clusters.
- Quality assurance contribution to D11 through development of 'Staying in is the new Going Out' resource.
- Provide context for resources and link to D4/5.

### **Supporting and working with schools:**

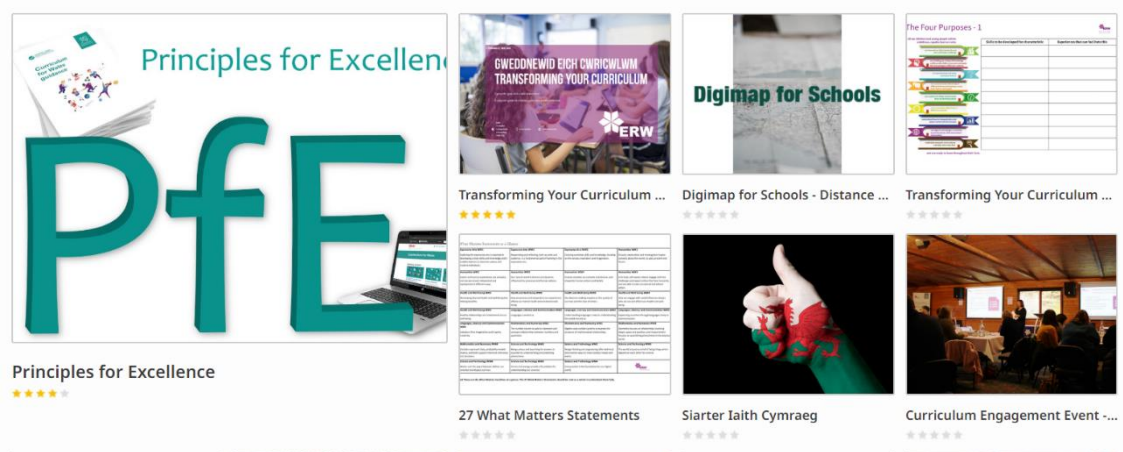
- Range of resources to support schools to develop material linked to the wellbeing of learners.
- Guidance materials developed and shared based on 'Recovery Curriculum' trauma informed models.
- Guidance updated and shared on effective use of PDG.
- Further support for schools and settings on using Flipgrid to promote wellbeing through developing a sense of belonging and connectedness.
- Webinar developed on Relationship Based Play to support wellbeing.
- Support for Network of schools through distance learning package 'Principles of Excellence'. All practitioners in one LA to use the model over the next two years supported by the curriculum team.
- Dynamic 'Transform Your Curriculum' (TYC) available through Dolen to support schools.
- ALN Transformation documentation developed.
- AoLE walkthroughs developed.
- Creation of a Mass Observation pack for schools to use as part of their re-opening strategy based on reintegration, reorientation, wellbeing, belonging and connectedness and CfW philosophy. The pack will enable schools to create a nurturing and collaborative project which will support them to deal with and celebrate the Covid-19 experience and provide an archive of information for the future.
- Team members supporting hubs in the region.

- Wide range of resources made available to all schools from curriculum team. These are available on the ERW Dolen platform and can be downloaded and used/adapted by schools.
- Support developed for literacy, numeracy and digital skills in FP and key stage 2.
- 'Time Capsule' resource developed for schools through a series of digital learning resources, Welsh language resources and wellbeing projects.
- Support for special schools – sharing of practice to support distance learning approaches and engagement.
- PRU meetings to support distance learning approaches and engagement.
- Range of resources published on Dolen to support ALN.
- Digital resources developed and published through Dolen.
- Over 200 new resources published on Dolen during this period to support schools.
- Bespoke support for a range of schools and clusters on digital systems and digital learning.
- Regional Google Site on distance learning developed and launched to support schools. Updated to include the move towards blended learning and share international research.
- Comprehensive range of resources developed by the secondary team and published on Dolen and the subject Hwb networks, including models of distance and blended learning. Resources include range of new activities/high quality resources for KS3/4/5 learners to support current context for schools/leaders/learners.
- Range of subject guides developed and published to support learners moving from KS4/5
- Resources adapted to exemplify distance learning through range of Hwb software.
- Bespoke support from secondary team for schools in need of additional support.
- Joint working between secondary and curriculum team to develop aligned support for schools. A few schools engaged with this support as a pilot.
- MS Teams Network meetings for secondary middle leaders across the region with a specific focus on distance/blended learning, asynchronous/synchronous



learning etc. Follow up support delivered to departments through MS Teams.  
Most departments across the region represented in these meetings with 288 delegates across the sessions.

- Support for senior and middle leaders with examination issues, liaison with Qualifications Wales etc. (where appropriate)
- Research on impact of schools closures on vulnerable and disadvantaged learners undertaken and shared.



## **Section 5: Key findings and next steps towards 'Blended Learning'**

The implementation of the 'audit tool' and ongoing collaboration via the ERW Continuity of Learning Strategy Group has supported several key features of the evolving 'Distance and Blended Learning' agendas well.

These benefits include:

- capitalising on embedded collaborative ways of working across the region
- joint problem solving of specific issues at a local level in a 'team approach' manner e.g. dealing with the balance of provision and avoidance of digital task 'overload'
- sharing the experience of common challenges to progress and engagement which include:
  - engagement levels within specific groups e.g. EAL, Vulnerable pupils and ALN (LAs report a maximum level of c.60%) and a further issue with Year 10
  - levels and content of parental / family engagement with the following elements forming part of the challenge:
    - i) children now taking part in practical activities outside of education e.g. agriculture
    - ii) parents want more formal teaching and 'live streaming' of lessons
    - iii) parents stating that they are not teachers and will not teach their own children (they do not have the basic skills to support their children)
    - iv) working lives of parents clashing with their home-based learning provision
      - challenges due to the lack of 'normal' structures & routines
      - social issues (especially deprivation issues)
      - digital exclusion (due to resource and / or connectivity issues)



- initial concerns and confidence levels of a minority of staff to offer distance and digital learning experiences (effective brokered support put in place immediately and ongoing to deal with this)
  - challenges pertaining to the tracking and monitoring of pupil progress
- agreeing common themes for further support and improvement which include:
- supporting all children and staff into the 'return to school' phase with a particular focus on their mental health and wellbeing
  - ensuring children are accessing the correct stage of work through differentiated learning experiences
  - increasing opportunities for synchronous learning
  - enhanced use of teaching assistants to support small group work and ALN provision
  - keeping learning experiences enjoyable and engaging (including learning which does not involve 'online / digital experiences') to ensure we tackle any emerging levels of disengagement due to the length of the lockdown period
  - enhancing the engagement levels of aforementioned vulnerable groups
  - ensuring wellbeing focuses on practical support for pupils, parents and staff throughout this period, adapting appropriately as 'repurposing and return' to schools commences
  - specific support and guidance for Years 6, 10 and 12 pupils
  - maintaining a 'balance of provision' which may alter as the 'blended learning' agenda evolves along with supportive guidance for learners/parents

This work will continue to be progressed under the strategic leadership of the Continuity of Learning Strategy Group and Senior Challenge Adviser Network. All ERW officers remain fully engaged and active within the national programme of support for the repurposing of our school communities. Our provision will continue to evolve and reinforce this key priority, harnessing the wide range of skills and expertise of the ERW workforce in a structured and effective manner.

### **Focus of ERW Staff Work – March 23 to June 30 2020**

ERW staff, since the decision to close the offices in Carmarthen, have continued to provide support for schools across the 5 LAs, with a specific focus on the health and wellbeing of children, young people and school staff. ERW central team staff have continued to deliver high quality support for senior and middle leaders as key partners in the national Continuity of Learning (CoL) plan as well as through the Dolen platform. ERW leadership has clearly focused on ensuring consistent and effective support throughout this challenging time when the national curriculum has been relaxed.

Effective working has continued to develop within and across the regional consortia and strong practice has been shared frequently and key messages have been aligned

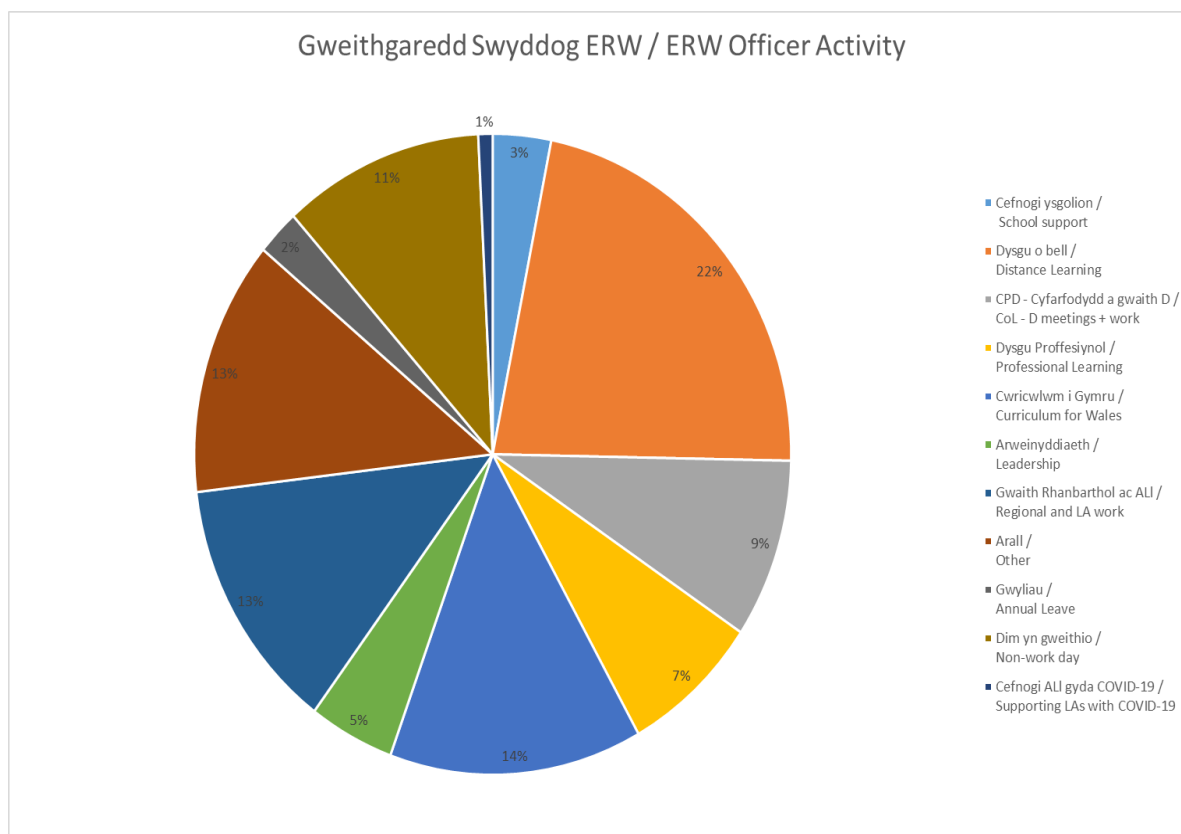
Whilst maintaining our support for our school communities, we have also supported all team members via daily 'check in and out' sessions with line-managers. This practice has ensured that we are all looking out for and after each other's wellbeing. It has also supported the immediate sharing and awareness of key national and regional messages. We believe that this approach has enabled us to establish a stronger team foundation. In turn, we have continued to provide successfully for our schools and engage effectively with all our partners as we move in collaboration towards a national 'blended learning approach.'

We have provided opportunities for ERW staff to access Professional Learning during this period, both as individual teams and whole staff sessions through support for:

- Distance and Bended Learning
- Wellbeing
- Curriculum for Wales
- Hwb Tools

Below is a summary of the school improvement activities that have been undertaken by all ERW school improvement staff and the time allocation to each activity since the lockdown began, covering the period between March 23<sup>rd</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The Business Support, HR and Finance team have also been instrumental in ensuring that

staff are well advised and supported during what have been unprecedented working modes.



## Key

1	School support	Working directly with schools.
2	Distance Learning	Preparation of materials for Dolen, Digital work, webinars, etc.
3	WG Continuity of Learning Plan	'Deliverable' meetings, Under Pinning work meetings, prep time for CoL work.
4	Professional Learning	Materials to support PL, personal research, PL meetings, HLTA.
5	Curriculum for Wales	Materials to support CfW, etc.
6	Leadership	Support for school leadership, Network meetings, NQTs, PDG, etc.
7	Regional and LA work	Regional meetings, cross-regional work, Senior CAs, ERW CoL work.
8	Other	Internal meetings, admin time, report writing, personal prep time, check-ins.
9	Leave / Holiday	
10	Non-working Day	
11	Supporting LAs with Covid-19	Work in Hubs and other supporting activities.



## Communications

### Headteacher Communications Newsletter

We have continued to publish our weekly Headteacher Communications newsletter on a Thursday and currently issue to **601** school leaders in the region. The content has focused on WG Covid-19 guidance, the WG Continuity of Learning Plan and ERW guidance and support for Distance Learning, Blended Learning and wellbeing of staff and pupils. These overarching themes include support for Curriculum for Wales, Curriculum at KS4, Professional Learning, Digital support (HWB tools), middle and senior leadership, vulnerable learners, NQTs and HLTA. All support is accessible at one point, ERW's digital platform, Dolen.

### ERW General Newsletter

Our General Newsletter for all school staff is issued every two weeks, currently to **451** school practitioners. The content focuses on Continuity of Learning Plan and ERW guidance and support for Distance Learning, Blended Learning and wellbeing published on ERW's digital platform, Dolen. At the end of each month, a 'What's new on Dolen' special issue is published.

### Dolen

Over 200 new resources have been produced and published on Dolen since 23 March 2020. These have been accessed by ERW schools and schools in all other regions.



## Twitter

Our Twitter account @ERWCymru saw a significant increase in activity between 23 March and 30 June 2020. At the end of June 2020, the ERW Twitter account has 4,263 followers.

	April	May	June
<b>Tweets:</b> The number of Tweets published by @ERWCymru	98	120	138
<b>Followers (new)</b>	105	127	120
<b>Mentions</b> A mention is when someone uses the @ERWCymru Twitter handle.	435	362	533
<b>Profile visits</b> The number of times users visited our Twitter profile page.	2,321	2,208	2,282



## **Links:**

### **Dolen**

<https://porth.erw-rhwyd.cymru/repository?redirectedFrom=Hwb>

### **Distance and Blended Learning**

**Google site** <https://sites.google.com/hwbcymru.net/erw-distance-learning-sal/home-english/blended-learning>

<https://porth.erw-rhwyd.cymru/repository/browse?sort=&language=en&category=Distance%20Learning&tags=Distance%20Learning>

### **Curriculum for Wales**

<https://porth.erw-rhwyd.cymru/repository/browse?sort=viewed&language=en&category=Curriculum%20For%20Wales&tags=Curriculum%20For%20Wales>

### **Webinars**

<https://porth.erw-rhwyd.cymru/repository/browse?sort=viewed&language=en&category=Webinars&tags=Webinar&tags=Webinars>

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning**

<https://porth.erw-rhwyd.cymru/repository/browse?sort=viewed&language=en&category=Wellbeing%20and%20attitudes%20to%20learning&tags=Wellbeing%20and%20attitudes%20to%20learning>

July 5<sup>th</sup> 2020