

Staff and pupil wellbeing and mental health – January 2021 Update to ECS Scrutiny

Report Structure

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1. Background and Pre-Covid Situation

- a. Strategy and brief policy context

Prior to the March 2020 lockdown, the Department for Education and Children (DEC) was actively involved with implementing its Wellbeing and Equity Strategy, which had progressed through the corporate process in 2017.

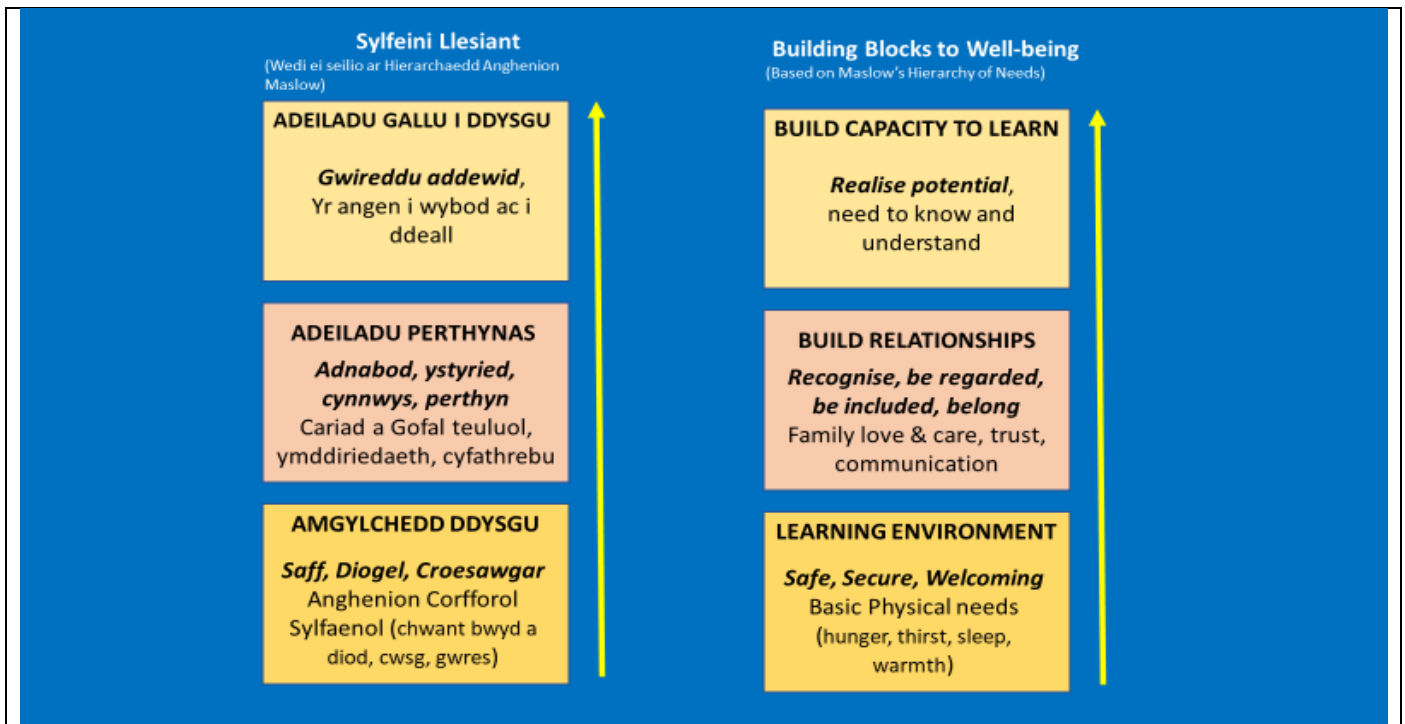
The strapline for our strategy informs us that:

The wellbeing of our young people and staff is integral to our thinking and takes centre-stage

Subsumed within that ideal we contend that:

- **When the basic needs and wellbeing of staff and pupils are catered for, learners are more predisposed to learn**
- **Positive attitudes to learning make it more likely that learners will realise their potential and be as good as they can be**

This approach can be modelled as follows:



At time of authoring, and subsequently, the strategy was informed by a number of key national policy reports, such as:

- *The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015)*¹
- *Education in Wales: our National mission (action plan 2017-21)*²
- Mind over Matter Report (2018)³ and The Missing Middle
- ADEW (2019)⁵

These reports were developed at a time when the discussion around the health and wellbeing of pupils and staff in schools was developing momentum and becoming a live national debate.

The imperative was to harness the salient recommendations offered in literature and to combine those with:

- qualitative and quantitative data drawn from a wide variety of sources in Carmarthenshire
- a wide array of existing service provision at time of writing

... in order to arrive at our strategy.

- provision already in existence for young people and staff

There was a lot in place already, as exemplified by the following:

Support Services in Carmarthenshire pre-Covid.

- Carmarthenshire County Council
 - Carmarthenshire's Wellbeing plan
 - Department for Education and Children
 - *Equity and Wellbeing Strategy*
 - *Behaviour and Engagement Strategy*
 - *Local Curriculum*

- *Healthy Schools*
- *Youth Support Service*
- The ECS Corporate Parenting Team
- The Education and Wellbeing Team
- **Multi-agency & Fora**
- Wellbeing and Young People Group
 - Behaviour and Wellbeing Strategic Implementation Group
 - Supporting Vulnerable Learners' Group
 - Vulnerability Assessment Panel (VAP)
 - Wellbeing, Health and Emotional Support Team (WHEST)
- **Support Services for Schools**
 - *Education Support Advisers & Healthy Schools*
 - *Education and Child Psychology Service*
 - *School Counselling Service*
 - *Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services*
 - *Behaviour Support Community Team*
 - *Pupil Referral Units*
 - *Alternative Curriculum*
 - *Families First / Team around the Family*
 - *Health and Wellbeing LAC*
 - *Carmarthenshire Carers Service*
 - **Wider Support Services**
 - Community Crisis Assessment and Treatment Team
 - Regional suicide and self-harm prevention strategy
 - Young People with Autism
 - *Choices – Substance Misuse Services*

Different approaches operative in our schools....

- Person Centred Planning; Restorative Practices; ACE Awareness; Emotion Coaching; Trauma Informed Practice; Attachment; Neuroscience; Relationship based; PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy); Relational play and Theraplay; Mindfulness; Growth mindset

In addition to services referenced, positive strides were being made in pursuit of our strategy, and were manifested by a number of key teacher and head teacher conferences arranged by DEC:

- Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning in the new curriculum for Wales (1.5.19)
- The Missing Middle (7.11.19) – *e.g. those young people in need of specialist support, but falling below the CAMHS (Child and Adult Mental Health Service) thresholds for assistance*

- School Staff Wellbeing Conference (17.1.20)

Therefore, it was on a positive footing of evolving provision that we entered into the pandemic.

2. The Pandemic Intervenes

a. Appraisal of Situation from a range of sources

Evidence from Educational Support Advisers re potential traumas and losses to children during the first lockdown (September 2020):

PUPIL WELLBEING

- Although pupils' return to school was mainly positive in September, and most pupils have been resilient this term, schools are increasingly reporting that pupils are feeling the losses of interactions with other groups/close contact with staff/ experiences and rites of passage they would normally have.
- A few pupils were presenting as tired, lethargic and hungry
- Lockdown has impacted on physical fitness
- Sleeping and eating habits of some have changed
- Vulnerable pupils and/or bordering eFSM (free school meals), affected most.
- Many Head teachers (HTs) are concerned with the capacity to support the emotional and mental wellbeing of pupils and the current limitation on face to face support, especially for the younger pupils from professionals such as counsellors.
- Many HTs have also noted that the virtual contact and support for "latecomers" is providing challenging to support, with new demands on school staff having to be present with individuals or very small groups in virtual sessions by the AGGaD team (Welsh Language and Bilingualism Improvement Teachers)
- More challenging pupil behaviour is on the increase and is being compounded by pandemic circumstances. Schools are keen for additional support from the LA in this area.
- The pre-school provision and communication with professionals vary across the county – thus impacting on transition and the ability for schools to ensure that the correct/suitable provision is in place. (Early Years' strategic group looking into this currently)
- The increase in cases this term has seen a few families choosing to home educate, though more have returned to school, supported by the re-engagement plans which are being developed.

Evidence from Children's Services

- ECPS (Educational and Child Psychology Service) report that, for pupils with higher functioning Autism, some families are struggling to support their child's engagement in remote learning.

Evidence from School Based Counselling

For quarter 2 reporting (June to September):

- 206 children and young people were counselled (with a waiting list of 118), primarily in secondary schools, but:
 - 11 year 6 referrals; 17 year 5 referrals and 8 referrals younger than year 5
- Counselling was a combination of face to face and remote

For time period **17/09/2020 – 01/12/2020**

- Counsellors have made more than a three-fold increase in CAMHS referrals than this time last year (and flagged an additional 13 young people as safeguarding concerns with the Safeguarding Lead at the relevant schools). Of these, there was an eight-fold increase in suicide ideation or

actual suicide attempts and 7 young people were referred via MARF (Multi-Agency Referral Forum)/direct contact with Social Services for child protection.

During the same period last year

Counsellors made 12 referrals to CAMHS and 15 to Safeguarding, of these 3 were relating to suicidal ideation.

The trend is within the context of a national increase in suicide ideation.

- Other high-risk concerns are disordered eating and auditory/visual hallucinations and a concern of neglect.
- The main issues experienced since the beginning of this term to date are predominantly related to family, anxiety, stress, behaviour and relationships. It's difficult to say whether the instances of these issues are higher than usual as this data will be fully collated for comparison after the end of the current school term.
- There is an additional challenge to carrying out assessments as many young people are absent or self-isolating and for primary schools there is limited access to school sites/safeguarding concerns from the schools in relation to remote sessions.
- The pastoral support in some schools has been affected by staff having to self-isolate, which has also added pressure to the counselling service

Information from Education Welfare Service

- **Increase in domestic abuse notifications.** During the first lockdown in March, the number of domestic abuse reports rose steeply. On average, there were approximately 28 Operation Encompass notifications shared by police each week. This is approximately twice the number of notifications we would normally get. Numbers of notifications remained high through the summer.
- **Impact on attendance.** Many children have struggled to cope with the impact of the pandemic. Alongside, the period of school closures (March to June), many children have also had one or more periods of self-isolation and remote learning since September. This has impacted on progress in learning and general feelings of anxiety about returning to school. Many pupils report feeling more worried about schoolwork, more anxious about friendship groups and more worried about the future. The uncertainty about exams/ teacher assessment has also had an impact on levels of motivation for pupils in key stage 4.
- **Rise in electively home educated children.** Just before the lockdown in March, we saw numbers of electively home educated children increase. A further increase was noted at the end of August/ start of September where, on average 25 children were becoming EHE each week. The main reason given for de-registering children was anxiety around Covid 19.

Evidence from Youth Support Services

- During lockdown mental health or wellbeing concerns and vulnerability have risen.
- Homeless cases have increased significantly with increased risk of mental health issues, substance misuse and sexual/criminal exploitation
- A number of referrals were also made to other agencies such as Women's aid, GP etc.
- Since March 2020 there are a cohort of young people who've experienced a dip in their emotional wellbeing and, in some cases, this has included self-harming behaviours or attempts at suicide
- Some young people who historically experienced anxiety relating to attendance, the lockdown led to a reduction in symptoms as there was no longer the pressure to attend school. However, where a pupil has

a history of being concerned and anxious to attend school, C-19 appears to have exacerbated the situation in some cases.

- For some other pupils, after an extended period away from school they have returned with a renewed energy to learn
- There are children who cannot attend school and feel isolated at home.
- Work placements are not available, and these have kept many disengaged pupils in school.
- Increase in mental health, anxiety, anger-management, self-harm & Area 43/ CAMHS referrals
- Some vulnerable pupils have not engaged via virtual support
- Harder to reach hard to reach families; some families have ignored many attempts by colleagues to get in touch.

As the Autumn term has progressed, additional insights have come to the fore, and a number of colleagues have reported that the time leading up to and through the Welsh firebreak has been more challenging than the first lockdown.

b. Proactive Response

i. Pupils and students

School Curriculum

The national curriculum was disapplied on July 13th, with interim learning guidance suggested for schools. The prime focus of the interim learning guidance was to ensure the Health and Wellbeing of pupils; to check in on their needs as evidenced by experiences encountered over lockdown; to concentrate on basic skills (literacy, numeracy and digital) and begin to offer a broad and balanced curriculum around the 4 purposes of the new curriculum (with 'Healthy, confident individuals' being foremost).

Departmental Continuity of Learning Groups

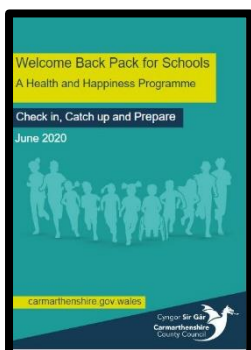
As part of the Departmental 9-point plan for learning continuity, a wellbeing and equity sub-group was set up on a task and finish basis. Comprised of officers drawn from across 3 departmental divisions, the group have met frequently to address and surmount emerging challenges. This group's remit will continue under new arrangements formulated for our departmental meetings structure going forward.

Educational Support Adviser (ESA) Strategy

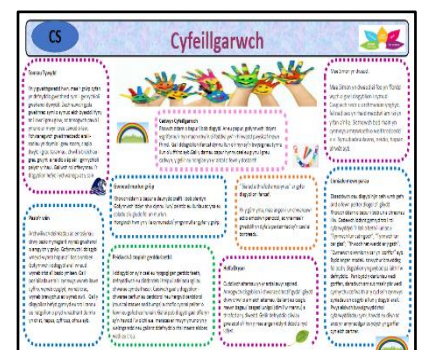
The ESA team are, by their very nature, close to the ground in terms of school operations, Information gleaned from school interactions and other relevant sources have enabled the team to formulate strategies which will proactively address issues emerging at school level. The wellbeing strategy is a comprehensive approach to ensuring that staff and pupils are supported in direct bearing to their need, and also steered to enhance their provision by virtue of prevailing trends and issues which are informed by stakeholder collaboration and our interpretation of the research and emerging good practice landscape.

Furthermore, an exemplar school health and wellbeing development plan has been shared with schools.

Health and Happiness Programme

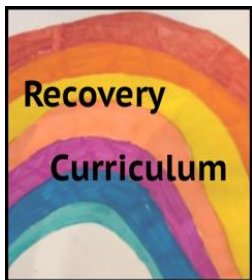


By the time schools re-opened on June 29th, the CCC ECS Health and Happiness programme was ready for deployment. The programme, based on the five ways to wellbeing, provided rich structured opportunities for pupils from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4 to explore and build on their wellbeing. The pack was developed by a range of officers



drawn mainly from our Education Support Adviser (ESA) team working with our Education and Child Psychology Services (ECPS).

Recovery Curriculum



As part of our 'Autumn Series' of virtual Professional Development programme, a leading academic was enlisted to assist us with our support to schools. Prof. Barry Carpenter holds the Chair of Mental Health in Education at Oxford Brookes University. His son, Matthew, is a Secondary School Head teacher and, together, they delivered a webinar to a sizeable audience on September 22nd entitled, 'A *Recovery Curriculum: reconnection, recovery and resilience*'. The session explored:

• ***The Five Losses children could have experienced during lockdown:*** Routine;

Structure;

Friendship; Opportunity; Freedom

- ***The Four consequences:*** Bereavement; Attachment; Anxiety; Trauma
- ***and, critically, the Five levers to recovery:*** Relationships; Community; Transparent Curriculum; Metacognition; Space

Other Sessions from the Autumn Series

Relevant webinars and resources which impinge on supporting the wellbeing of learners include:

- Parental Engagement (with Lotte Van der Goot, CPS, Netherlands). Parental Involvement 3.0 is an augmented approach to improving home-school arrangements. Many of our schools have been interested in this approach and many parental relationships have been galvanised during the pandemic
- 'Disadvantaged Learners – what works?' (with Prof. Lee Elliot-Major, Professor of Social Mobility, University of Exeter) explored key strategies for supporting learners in poverty to make progress. This was deemed especially relevant at this time as achievement gaps appear to have been opening. The Raising Attainment of Disadvantaged Youngsters (RADY) programme, in conjunction with Erw, has also proved beneficial for many schools
- Accelerated Learning – key pedagogies from the Sutton Trust to assist learners to catch up have been shared with schools. A number of pupils, particularly examination groups, have been concerned about regressing and anxious around the 2021 exam series. Helping them to understand how to catch up have been helpful
- Outdoor Learning has enjoyed some prominence during the early stages of the Autumn term as a safe and proactive way of nurturing wellbeing and learning safely. This has been delivered by an organisation called Learning through Landscapes and also via the SOUL project. There is also a section on outdoor learning in the Health and Happiness Programme, following some prior work on the Great Outdoors at the onset of the lockdown period.

Healthy Schools

The Healthy Schools Team have been very active as per usual. Some of the highlights this term include:

- 4 courses on 'Strategies to Support an Anxious Young Person' delivered to 84 professionals
- 2 Youth Mental Health First Aid Training courses to 28 delegates (smaller cohorts due to C-19 – 56 trained in total so far in this rolling programme)
- The PSE-PLC was held on the 20.11.20. (10 secondary schools)

- Healthy Schools Network promoted:
 - World Suicide Prevention Day
 - World Mental Health Day
 - Sustrans 'Active Journeys' – to promote active travel to school and home
 - The following resources have been shared during the Autumn term:
 - Strategies to Support and Anxious Young Person booklet from Elemental Health
 - The 'Powerful Positive Quotes' resource
 - Exemplar Bereavement Policy
 - Stop It Now! Resources – Sexual Exploitation
 - Panorama – Is TikTok Safe?
 - Directory of educational books and poems regarding Hygiene issues for both Foundation Phase and KS2 pupils
 - Personal Development and Relationships Books
- Activities linked to National Anti-Bullying Week
- Healthy Schools Termly Cluster meetings
 - Mental and Emotional Health,
 - Physical Activity Participation Levels linking with Outdoor Learning
 - Infection Prevention & Control.

Educational and Child Psychology Service (ECPS)

Some of the numerous actions the ECPS has taken action to support the health and wellbeing of pupils, young people and staff this term include:

- repackaged training and guidance materials re emotional literacy, nurturing principles, emotion coaching, bereavement and loss amongst others and made accessible for staff self-led remote learning. These materials can be applied to support both staff and pupil wellbeing
- continued to support ELSAs (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) in training and supervision through regular Bulletins on Hwb reminding them of key approaches to apply including how to look after their own emotional wellbeing, signposting to key resources to use and by providing remote supervision sessions
- facilitated the fast tracking of the new Emotional Wellbeing TaPPaS model with secondary schools bringing core support services together to support schools in planning to enhance their provision for emotional wellbeing and support complex case management in an integrated way
- produced new and comprehensive guidance on Emotionally Based School Avoidance for schools to use when planning support for pupils who are experiencing difficulty in attending school.
- Area 43 (School Counselling) have continued to provide remote and face to face counselling working in close partnership with schools re effective and safe delivery. We have determined that the safest and most accessible remote platform for delivery of counselling for pupils in and out of schools is Google Meet and Area 43 are in the process of moving over to use of this platform.

Education Welfare Service

- **Increase in domestic abuse referrals** We responded to this trend by increasing awareness in schools of the impact of domestic abuse and promoting support services. The Domestic Abuse Toolkit for schools was updated to reflect Operation Encompass and included new information on VAWDASV (violence against women, domestic avuse and sexual violence). Schools were also sent a list of domestic abuse support services and were asked to place this on their websites under "information for families" so that it was easily accessible. A child protection policy specific to Covid 19 was developed and also included information on domestic abuse and provided prompts for staff who were engaging with pupils remotely. Families open to the team were also RAG rated and,

where needed, daily contact was provided. A screening tool for telephone calls was also implemented so that families were routinely asked if they were safe to talk and if they were worried about anything.

- **Impact on attendance.** In line with Welsh Government advice, the focus of the team has been on child welfare and support rather than attendance targets. During lockdown, schools were provided with guidance on maintaining regular contact with families. Where they were unable to get a response, they could refer to services on a child welfare basis. We provided a graduated response and, in a small minority of cases only, progressed to welfare checks by police. Support was provided to families around FSM entitlement, wellbeing hampers, debt and financial hardship support, TAF (Team around the Family) and direct work/ emotional support. In addition, we assisted with the delivery and collection of hard copies of schoolwork where families had no access to online working. Guidance was also issued to schools on re-engagement plans and this complemented the recovery curriculum. Where schools failed to engage families in the plan, we continued to accept referrals for these children. Family engagement workers also provided remote “back to school” workshops for primary age pupils.
- **Rise in electively home educated children.** Following the use of engagement plans, the numbers of children becoming EHE dropped significantly to approximately 7 per week and have continued to decrease. When the reason for EHE has been linked to Covid-19, wherever possible the team has assisted pupils to remain on roll at school with relevant support in place

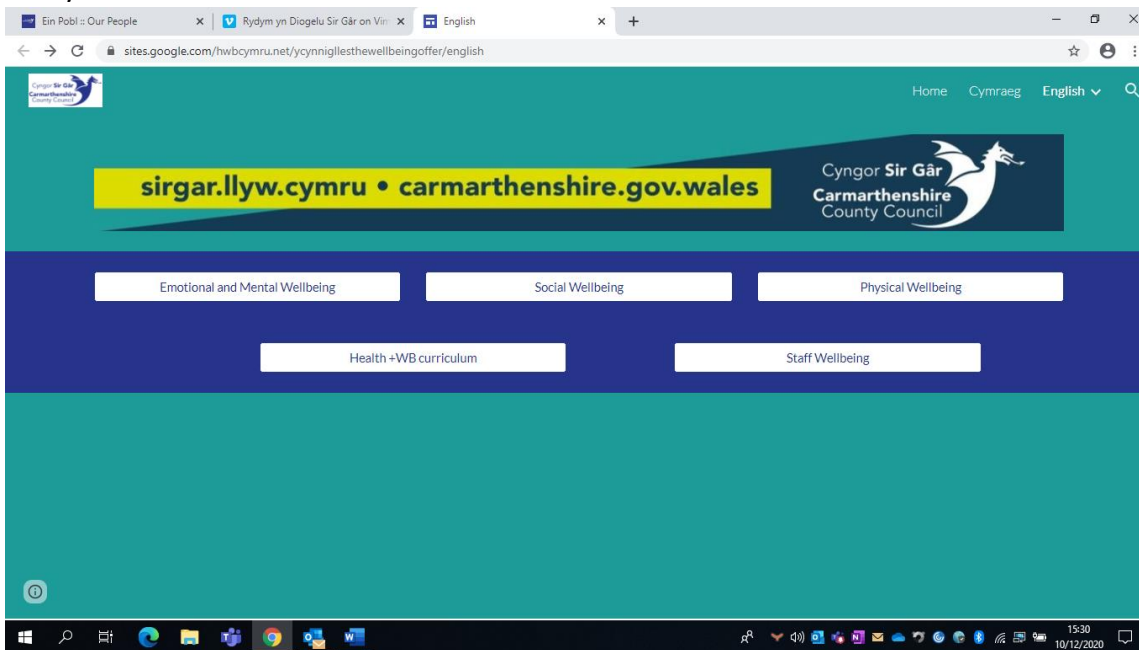
Suicide Ideation and attempts.

The normal protocols and referral pathways have been observed and can come from several sources (e.g. Counselling, Youth Justice etc). We now have quite a few multiagency groups attending to the mental health and wellbeing of young people and adults, including the Suicide and Self Harm Delivery Group.

Regional Training Menu – Professional Learning Opportunities provided by ERW recently and into the new year include:

- **Thinking Differently for Disadvantaged Learners**
- **Wellbeing Matters** - 6 bilingual training videos which use research and evidence-based insights into positive psychology in the context of promoting personal and social awareness throughout the school day
- **Introduction to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**
- **Biophilia:** The Science of Nature and Animals - Why being outside makes us happier, healthier and better able to learn
- **Emotion Coaching - Training for New Practitioners**
- **Empathy Lab: Enabling Schools to Take Their First Empathy Step**
- **Trauma Informed Schools: Understanding Attachment and Trauma in the Early Years**
- **Trauma Informed Schools: Understanding Attachment Across the Whole School**
- **Supporting Adopted Learners**
- **Supporting Pupils Vulnerable to Unsuccessful Transition**
- **Professional Learning Programme for Designated LAC (Looked after Children) / Vulnerable Learner Leads -**
 - Introduction to the Designated LAC Lead Role
 - Understanding Attachment Difficulties
 - Using the Observational Checklist
 - Using Relationship Based Play
 - Exploring Protective Behaviours

Department for Education and Children Intranet site (Porth) – Resources relating to all wellbeing matters have been arranged centrally in one repository. Navigating the site is easy and very many resources can be easily accessed.



Nurture - a daily wellbeing plan around nurture principles has been in use. The resource is full of ideas and activities that can/should be used as part of a recovery curriculum for young learners. We also have an Early Years Strategy where there are 4 objectives – is it intended to improve the provision, collaboration and adaptation/development of systems starting from nursery to the age of 5 to make the best start in life. It is a Regional Strategy and suits the approach we have to wellbeing

ii. Other Young People

Youth Support Service

- The priority during this time has been to keep young people safe and reduce the risk of harm to their emotional wellbeing by keeping regular telephone and social media contact to deliver interventions.
- Offering harm reduction advice and supporting them to develop resilience and personal capacity and encouraging them to develop coping strategies and problem-solving skills, working specifically with the most vulnerable young people in their communities. Furthermore, staff took a prominent role in the delivery of hubs for vulnerable children during the school summer holidays
- Comprehensive programme of detached youth work was undertaken to ensure that young people were engaged with in a meaningful manner
- A large focus of the work has been mental health and wellbeing, plus family liaison
- Social media account - A weekly curriculum has been developed covering areas such as mindfulness and wellbeing, healthy eating, mental and emotional health, health and fitness, weekly challenges etc
- Timetable offering themed days e.g. - Scroll free September, period poverty, plastic free July, national biscuit day, friend's day, National Youth Work Week, Pride month, sun safety, volunteering week, deaf awareness, oral health, quarantine tips, Cam Nesa' and Choices (substance misuse service)

- Other focus has included- G.C.S.E and A level results support. Post 16 week – youth workers, careers, housing and training providers all available for live chat. Macmillan coffee afternoon was also included in a live chat
- Across the service, 1-1 support has also been provided to children and young people focussing on issues such as offending, substance misuse, healthy relationships, domestic abuse, safeguarding and risk-taking behaviours and safety online. Health education sessions have been provided for other organisations covering areas such as first aid and CPR training, LGBTQ + support, STAR (Safety, Trust & Respect) courses.
- Prioritised young people at risk/close to being at risk, often being in daily contact with the most vulnerable - facilitated online drop ins with young people who wish to access the service. Offering practical advice, support and guidance through face time or messenger
- Some aspects of programme delivery on a one to one basis such as the STAR programme. This programme encourages young people to develop healthy relationships in their own lives and aims to prevent abuse in future relationships.
- A wellbeing garden is in the process of being developed
- The creation and development of wellbeing activity packs. The packs were developed following feedback from young people struggling with lockdown and the affects it had on their mental, emotional health and wellbeing.
- Focus on water safety education and messages due to a need linked to reports that there were large groups of young people jumping into sea/reservoirs/rivers/harbours etc
- ii. Staff

Issues Identified by ESA team

- Discussion with HTs in the Autumn term, particularly of late, show concern of the impact of managing the additional stress of Covid on Leaders and staff. Staff are on duty with managing their bubbles and it's a more heightened/ responsive day. Leaders feel they are on duty 24/7 and, in some instances, are not delegating things they may previously have delegated because they are concerned by staff workload.
- The word 'exhaustion' has been mentioned several times
- Nearly all HTs note that workload and managing operational guidance is great and overwhelming
- Managing class and providing for pupils SI (self-isolating) is challenging and an extra burden on teachers. Also, there's the issue of teachers and school staff having to increasingly cover for each other (as more staff have to SI)
- One school in particular has noted that the staggered starts to the beginning and end of the day, and introducing an early closure to the school day (although children receive the same learning/contact time) is very advantageous e.g. a school finishing at 2.40 allows teachers and school staff to stay on until 4pm to complete marking/preparing etc allowing them time with their families in the evenings.
- Nearly all HTs have noted their appreciation of the LA support received during the Covid period to date.
- Cumulative impact of stress as other stressors not offloaded
- More anxiety with parents and parents turning to head teachers for additional help and support
- Ever changing developments
- Time-management; 80%+ of time has been related to Covid operational issues
- Information Overload
- Fear of getting something wrong
- Enormity of keeping everyone safe with a largely unknown foe

- Grieving for loss of school and education as it was

Issues Identified by corporate Health and Safety

- Many School leaders are interested in developing small group peer networks
- Welcome LA acting on feedback to improve courses even further

What works well

- School to school plans
- Someone who listens
- Support from Chair and Vice Chair of Governors
- Regular Virtual meetings – short, sharp bursts,
- Support from fellow heads, staff and LA
- Making time to switch off
- Part of fortnight working from home
- Spending time with pupils and staff gives perspective

Additional Support Requested

- Clarity around what needs not to be done in the academic year
- Informal group of school leaders; share good practice, no reinvention of wheels
- Working as Learning Organisations (SLOs)
- Prioritising tasks effectively
- Confidential coaching, supervision
- Exemplar & generic documents
- Wellbeing training for HTs
- Time away from school, such as working from home

Support to Staff and School Leaders

A comprehensive suite of support and training has been available to staff. This has been developed under the leadership and close cooperation of corporate Health and Wellbeing coordinator colleagues from The Chief Executive's Department. A summary of the support and training on offer is summarised in the table below.





Support	Aim
Head Teachers' Wellbeing Focus Group	Focus group of Headteachers and the LA's Health and Wellbeing team. The purpose of the group is to identify key areas of wellbeing support that HTs would benefit from, and to discuss actions that will support these.
Headteachers' Wellbeing Drop-in Sessions	Virtual drop-in sessions open to all Headteachers, where they are invited to discuss their wellbeing and areas concerning their wellbeing. The sessions are also used to share and demonstrate resources.
Peer Support Network	Developed from the Managing Mental Health in the Workplace training course, this will enable Headteachers to utilise a peer support network, which will encourage positive mental health and provide support to one another where needed.
Staff Health and Wellbeing Champion/Lead	Nominate a member of staff as a staff wellbeing lead. To assist with coordinating staff wellbeing within the school. Be a link between the LA's Health and Wellbeing team and the school.
EWASC (Employee Wellbeing Advice and Support Centre)	The Employee Wellbeing Advice and Support Centre has been set up during this uncertain period in order to support employees of Carmarthenshire County Council with the worries or concerns that they may have at this time.
Local Authority's Intranet	Dedicated section for Head Teacher support, as well as an extensive Health and Wellbeing section containing advice, support and resources
Training	
Personal Resilience e-Learning module	Provides information and advice that enables the learning and enhancing of personal resilience
Mental Health at work e-Learning module	An informative module that covers mental health at work, and the support available to employees of Carmarthenshire County Council
Managing Mental Health in the Workplace	An in-depth training course which provides Head Teachers/Managers with the knowledge and skills to recognise the signs and symptoms of common mental health conditions, as well as build your confidence to have open conversations within the workplace.
Governor Training – Supporting Headteacher Wellbeing	Training session for Chairs of Governors on the theme of 'Supporting Headteacher Wellbeing'. Raising awareness of their responsibility to this topic, whilst sharing resources to assist them to successfully support the Headteacher

The latest update re these sessions indicate that good progress is being made:

- Continuation of pilot project with 4 schools (recommenced Sept 2020) - Results of which will be analysed to inform wider schools wellbeing support
- Co-production of 'Welcome Back-Pack' to support school staff in June 2020 following the closure of schools.
- More targeted approach on supporting Head Teachers' wellbeing
 - 3 drop-in sessions delivered to promote resources and support available
 - Half termly drop-in sessions for HTs on the theme of their Wellbeing
 - Wellbeing focus group set up to input into the support developed for HTs Wellbeing
 - Chair of Governors received training specifically on supporting HT's wellbeing
 - ACAS Managing Mental Health training available for all school leaders (4 sessions to date with 4 more planned for the Spring Term)
- Health and Wellbeing Champions scheme has been introduced in schools – 60 Champions have been nominated so far, who will lead on staff wellbeing in their respective schools
- 3x 5-minute Mindfulness drop-in sessions open to all school staff to initiate calm and focus at the beginning of the school day, were delivered in November

County Council Intranet Site

The site is a rich repository of advice and guidance, which is updated regularly and signposts staff to specialist support. We promote the site when opportunities arise in our ongoing dialogue with schools (see screenshot below):

HR	Wellbeing has been defined as 'the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy', but wellbeing is much wider than this and is a broad experience which encompasses all aspects of life. Given that we spend a large proportion of our lives at work, looking after our workplace wellbeing is of great importance. Workplace wellbeing relates to all areas of working life, such as the safety and comfort of our physical environment, the satisfaction and enjoyment we get out of our job role and how supported we feel within our organisation.
Learning and Development	A happy and healthy workforce is vital to any thriving organisation which is why we continue to prioritise the wellbeing of all our staff, whether you work in front line services, office based or working remotely.
Health and Wellbeing	This section outlines our approach to supporting both your physical and mental wellbeing as well as offering focused and practical solutions for managers. In doing so, we aim to help protect both our workforce and the Authority in the immediate and longer-term future.
Health and Wellbeing	
Stress, mental health and emotional wellbeing	 <p>Stress, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing</p> <p>Take a look at our resources and information that we have put together to support you with Stress, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing</p>
Back and joint pain	 <p>Lifestyle Advice</p> <p>Visit our Lifestyle Advice Section for information on leading a healthy lifestyle. Find advice, guidance, resources and support to help you do so.</p>
Lifestyle advice	 <p>Health and Wellbeing Champions</p> <p>Find out more about our Health and Wellbeing Champion scheme; Who the champions are, what they do and even become a champion yourself</p>
Guidance for managers and teachers	 <p>Guidance for Managers and Headteachers</p> <p>Information and guidance for Managers and Headteachers on providing positive wellbeing support for your staff and yourselves.</p>
Help and support	
Events and activities	
Strategies and action plans	
Occupational Health	
Health & Safety	

Webinar (Education Support)

Education Support are a charity dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of the entire education workforce. They are supported by Welsh Government funding to offer their services in Wales, which includes a confidential helpline. CCC ECS was invited on 15.10.20 to showcase the work of the county council in relation to the health and wellbeing agenda for schools in a national webinar (one in English and the first one of its kind in Welsh). On the back of this input, further links with Education Support are anticipated.

Cross-regional Group

ECS CCC represent Erw on the Wellbeing Partnership Programme (consortia, Local Authorities and the Welsh Leadership Academy). Though early stages, it's foreseen that this programme will add value to existing and planned provision. The **Core identified wellbeing needs are as follows:**

- Headteachers need emotional support and a space to reflect upon how well they are doing both personally and professionally
- In these difficult times it can prove challenging for educational staff to find the time to conduct searches for wellbeing support and resources.
- Support and resources tailored to improving the health and wellbeing in the current prevailing climate are required.

In response to evident need, this plan sets the six main elements of the proposed consortia wellbeing support programme:

- Ensuring all Headteachers and staff are aware of and able to easily access existing support and resources
- Develop and deliver programme to provide at least one mental health first aider in every school
- Create capacity to provide every Headteacher with a coach
- Procure and deliver series of bespoke wellbeing webinars
- Develop compassionate principles for leaders in partnership with the Leadership Academy
- Programme of recognition for educational staff at all levels

National Academy for Educational Leadership Wales

Recently, the National Academy has been running weekly small group drop-in sessions for Headteachers, entitled 'Head to Head / Pen i Ben'. Members of the Carmarthenshire Head Teacher group attend these sessions and are feeding back as to the efficacy of the sessions so that we can work to promote this initiative further if it proves fruitful.

3. Next Steps

a. Appraisal of progress so far:

Merits

- Comprehensive package of support for pupils and school staff
- Integrated working has certainly been of benefit for the staff support menu
- Recent initiatives being part of an existing Strategy
- Focus has been maintained irrespective of the pandemic

Challenges

- No magic wand, nor single all-embracing measure to address all personal needs and challenges
- Sustainability of support needs to be monitored
- Early days with some initiatives
- Some messages slow in coming leading to further uncertainty
- Some duplication of provision, though not overly problematic
- May require a further around priorities

b. Capitalising upon Opportunities

For Pupils and young people:

- Further develop the ESA Wellbeing Strategy
- More work on the Health and Wellbeing Area of development
- Investigate the currency of the Recovery Curriculum, with potential for a follow-up session with Prof. Barry Carpenter in the Spring Series of Webinars
- Further develop service-specific strategies
- Further linkages with the consortium Health and Wellbeing Team
- Explore further avenues with Actif Sir Gâr – potential pilot project involving physical literacy

For staff

- Develop a programme incorporating the voice of Head teachers
- Evaluate the impact of the exemplar Health & Wellbeing School Development Plan (SDP) so that all schools have established an all-school approach to manage health and mental well being
- Further development of support to SLTs and Staff
- Continue to develop multiagency working with internal and external partners

In conclusion, supporting the health and wellbeing of staff and pupils has been a key strategic priority and this has been accentuated and magnified by the pandemic. Navigating the pandemic has been a challenge but we feel that challenges are there to be addressed positively and nothing has been insurmountable. We've discovered new ways of working and fresh perspectives, which are unanticipated opportunities that can be built upon for the future.

Annex 1

Literature:

The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015)¹

Education in Wales: our National mission (action plan 2017-21)²

National Assembly for Wales (2018)³: Mind over Matter – a report on the step change needed in emotional and mental health support for children and young people in Wales

Welsh Government and the Association of Directors of Education in Wales⁴ (2019): Well-being conference - 'Developing a partnership approach for mental health and wellbeing'

General Reference:

Department for Education and Children, Carmarthenshire County Council (2019):

EVERY LEARNER MATTERS:

Proposals to Promote Equity, Well-being, Inclusion and Excellence in Carmarthenshire's learning communities

(2019 – 2030)