

TEACHER PANEL

EDUCATION SCOTLAND:

ENHANCED SUPPORTING FOR LEARNING AT HOME PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT FOR HEAD TEACHERS AND OTHERS

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to outline the approach that will be taken by Education Scotland to enhance its work to support children's and young people's learning experiences at home during the period of school closures. In addition, information is provided on the professional learning support which is being offered to head teachers and other groups of practitioners.

Background/Context

2. On 19 March 2020, educational settings across Scotland and the UK closed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Scottish Ministers outlined support for local authorities to put in place arrangements to care for the children of key workers; the need to continue to support vulnerable children; and the aim to deliver as much educational continuity as possible. This has resulted in children and young people receiving some learning and teaching using digital technologies and other methods from teachers and practitioners to support children and their parents. Others are being cared for as part of a local authority 'hub' or other type of provision if they are deemed eligible and if parents wish to take up this offer.
3. Across Scotland, due to socio-economic factors, some children and young people will not have access to the internet or to online platforms in order to engage in the learning and teaching on offer. Some local authorities have provided hardware and mobile connectivity for children and young people to access learning. In local authorities with rural and remote educational settings, poor internet bandwidth in households is a limiting factor in the ability to deliver quality online learning and teaching. Work is currently under way in partnership with Learning Directorate to improve digital access where needed.
4. It is acknowledged that 'lockdown' conditions present unique and previously uncharted challenges for families in supporting children and young people to learn. Some children and young people will have considerable support, encouragement, space and resources for learning within their households, and for many reasons, others will not.
5. In the early stages of the crisis, Education Scotland quickly reviewed existing and developed new materials to support both teachers and parents. This included Parent Club materials, advice to parents and practical activities. For teachers, the aim was to offer good quality materials and advice and to ensure that teachers who required support in areas such as digital skills were able to access support as quickly as possible. On 24 March Education Scotland launched a new web area

with resources in every curriculum area and on key aspects such as creativity, DYW and family learning. We also provided help through webinars and blogs for practitioners to develop the appropriate digital skills to use online resources to support pupils' remote learning at home.

6. Interest and uptake in our online remote learning offers since schools closed continues to be strong. Over 1,500 joined the initial 11 webinars. So far this term we have scheduled 10 new webinars that have already attracted over 1,000 practitioners to sign up. Topics include Evidencing Learning using iPads. More than 31,000 minutes of our YouTube materials have been watched through 3,500 views. Overall, engagement with our online materials to support remote learning through the DigiLearn has been high, with around 63,000 views of the site.

Key points

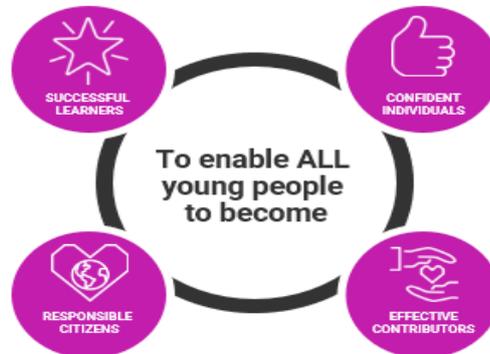
7. We recognise that to support children's and young people's learning at home more needs to be done. As the national improvement agency, Education Scotland will provide additional resources which will complement the work being undertaken by local authorities, leaders, practitioners and parents to support continuity in learning. This work will focus on five key areas as follows:

- Providing guidance and advice on expectations of children's and young people's entitlement to learning experiences during school closures during Term 4.
- Creating learning activities for all curriculum areas across the Curriculum for Excellence levels.
- Sharing high-quality programmes for remote learning taking place across Scotland.
- Directly delivering a range of webinars and support sessions for teachers, leaders and practitioners to support planning, curriculum offer and pedagogical approaches to blended learning.
- Continuing to develop and provide guidance on effective use of Glow.

Providing guidance and advice on expectations of children's and young people's entitlement of learning experiences during school closures

8. Local authorities, schools and settings have a responsibility to continue to support and evaluate children's learning at this difficult time. There is a strong culture of the impact of self-evaluation in Scottish schools leading to positive outcomes for learners. We must build on these skills to reflect on current practices and ensure we are doing our best to ensure all children continue to make progress in their learning. We each have a duty to support all children and young people to achieve success.

9. Scotland's curriculum places learners at the heart of education. At the centre are four fundamental capacities. These capacities reflect and recognise the lifelong nature of education and learning.



10. During these challenging times the four capacities still hold. We want to ensure that children and young people experience a broad range of learning experiences during school closures in Term 4.
11. Entitlements are part of the Curriculum for Excellence policy framework, and Education Scotland will work with policy colleagues and education stakeholders to draft a set of expectations which will support children and young people to be successful in their learning and achievement. These will be discussed and finalised through the 'curriculum and assessment' workstream of the Education Recovery Group.

Creating learning activities for all curricular areas across Curriculum for Excellence levels

12. During these uncertain times, our curriculum offers the flexibility for schools to adapt to the needs of their own unique contexts and the individual needs of their learners. The [Refreshed Narrative on Scotland's curriculum](#) was launched in September 2019. It reinstates the core principles in Curriculum for Excellence and focuses on putting learners at the heart of education, helping them to gain the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for life in the 21st century.
13. Over Term 4 and beyond, Education Scotland will provide resources to support learning at home. We will create a resource bank of straightforward, open-ended learning activities which are challenging and that develop children's and young people's independence in learning. These resources will be built up over a 10-week period, with new content being created and uploaded on a weekly basis.
14. The learning activities provided each week will be based on the following as core:

- literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing

- interdisciplinary learning challenge covering at least two other curricular areas
 - weekly creativity challenge
15. Education Scotland's resources will be located on a dedicated space on the National Improvement Hub. Education Scotland 'learning newspapers', one for parents to support home learning and one for educators, will be issued weekly to share the learning activities; range of support available; and share approaches for learning taking place across Scotland. This will include details of professional learning opportunities which leaders and practitioners can access.
16. Additionally, there will be clear focus on supporting educators in creating ideas and learning activities which are challenging and that develop children's and young people's independence in learning. For example, there will be guidance for teachers and practitioners in designing open-ended challenges for learners, including:
- top tips for creating challenging tasks which develop children's and young people's skills, including those for employability;
 - effective digital approaches to learning and teaching;
 - how teachers can encourage independent learning in learners; and
 - effective ways and different approaches to providing feedback to learners at distance

Sharing high-quality programmes for remote learning taking place across Scotland which with practitioners can access and use

17. This work being undertaken by Education Scotland needs to recognise and enhance the effective work already being carried out by practitioners and local authorities across Scotland. It is more crucial than ever, for educators and partners working across Scotland to network and work together to support children's and young people's learning during these extraordinary times.
18. Before this present situation, Regional Improvement Collaboratives were sharing good practice and supporting learning and teaching. We should build on this in a concentrated effort to ensure that we broaden the reach of learning activities and curriculum programmes so that all children and young people can benefit from a range of high-quality programmes already in place and being developed by practitioners and local authorities. Examples already being delivered by schools and local authorities will be gathered and shared so that other practitioners can see what is working and have the opportunity to make use of them to support the learning they are providing for children and young people.

19. Each week, Education Scotland's 'learning newspapers' will include a 'spotlight' feature, sharing learning activities planned by practitioners and local authorities to support learning at home.

Directly delivering a range of webinars and support sessions for teachers, leaders and practitioners to support planning, curriculum offer and pedagogical approaches to blended learning

20. Education Scotland will provide a range of curriculum area/subject webinars focusing on learning, teaching and assessment. These will support focused discussions between practitioners and Education Scotland staff on how to help learners progress in their learning.

21. The focus of the webinars throughout Term 4 will be learning, teaching and assessment and ensuring young people can continue with their learning and make progress. The webinars could offer support to teachers on finding innovative solutions to the challenges of working virtually. The focus would mainly be on Senior Phase although not exclusively. This would be delivered by subject specialists in Education Scotland to ensure specific issues are addressed.

22. As part of the webinars there will be discussions to support the sharing of practice on approaches to learning and teaching via online platforms, while encouraging young people to take responsibility over their learning by developing leadership and independence. They will be aimed at encouraging teachers to adapt existing resources and consider opportunities for interdisciplinary and collaborative learning and the development of higher order thinking skills.

Continuing to develop and provide guidance on effective use of Glow

23. Education Scotland is committed to continuously improving the services available through Glow based on the needs of education. Regular engagement with the Glow Key Contacts, comprising key leads from local authorities, informs the direction and planning for improvements. This has included the addition of Google's G Suite to Glow's core services based on stakeholder consultation. Glow Connect (<https://glowconnect.org.uk/>) provides information and support on Glow and there are a range of webinars and blogs available to help practitioners make effective use of Glow, including best use of G Suite, WordPress Class Blogs, Microsoft Forms and Office 365 within Glow. These webinars have attracted over 1,500 attendees since schools closed.

24. Daily Glow usage has increased. The peak number of unique users was 257,951 on Monday 23 March, the first day of school closures, with total logins/sessions of over 927,000. Since the Easter break, daily logins/sessions have continued to be high, with over 636,000 sessions on 28 April. Weekly Glow logins/sessions in the week commencing 20 April were over 3 million, around three times the weekly logins/sessions over January and February 2020.

Professional learning support for head teachers and others

Overview

25. As schools in Scotland are experiencing an undefined period of unprecedented building closure, it is important to consider the nature of support required for head teachers and others. This paper explores the current and developing offer to support head teachers through the challenges of leading schools and learning communities during this period, with a specific focus on virtual meeting spaces and taking cognisance of other developments across Education Scotland.
26. Education Scotland is already working with partners to ensure education professionals have access to relevant resources and appropriate support as they quickly adjust their working practices whilst continuing to meet the immediate needs of their children, families and learning communities.
27. In the short-term, additional support might be required for head teachers to consider solutions to practical issues, to reflect on the impact of these rapid changes on themselves and to support their own wellbeing. In the medium-term, additional professional learning and opportunities to collaborate might support head teachers to lead and manage a range of continued and developing issues.
28. It is important to remember that over 1,000 teachers and leaders across the system are currently engaged in programmes of learning as part of Education Scotland's Professional Learning and Leadership (PLL) suite of programmes. These programmes are continuing, with Lead Specialists in the PLL team engaging with participants regularly and redesigning programme elements to ensure participants are supported during this time to complete programmes successfully this session.

High level summary

29. Current support opportunities for head teachers:

- Remote Leadership of Learning and Teams – plans to arrange virtual meeting spaces for school and system leaders as a short-medium-term action.
- Head teachers taking part in programmes offered by the ES Professional Learning and Leadership team can be contacted and connected through virtual means. Three of these programmes already have a Glow Teams space to connect participants.
- Proposals in place to reprioritise actions of existing national working groups including establishing reflective supervision and online coaching and mentoring approaches.

30. Further development of online communities for head teachers:

- The recent OECD report ‘A framework to guide an education response to the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020’ suggested that “In addressing this adaptive challenge, collaboration will be essential, everyone will need to step up, get out of the comfort zone, in order to get the job of educating students done.”

The scope of this work, therefore, is to further develop online communities to connect head teachers nationally, providing an online space beyond their immediate local community. This would be to build from existing opportunities and consider further developments based on needs that are identified from PLL intelligence gathering from programme participants and as issues emerge in the longer term.

Illustrations

31. Target participants:

- Initially, start with current head teacher programme participants – small group sessions. Broaden out through social media and PLL newsletter.
- Add different groups/themes as a focus for discussion: primary, secondary, ASN, new in post/acting HTs and to articulate with and support wider work across ES/SG e.g. transitions.

32. Short-term (April – mid-May)

- PLL Lead Specialists to develop Teams sites for programmes, to enhance interaction with participants e.g. discussion topics, questions to consider.
- Use PLL intelligence gathering exercise to identify specific requirements for head teachers.
- Test out initial ideas with RIC Leadership Leads and CLPL Leads.
- Plan and schedule an initial series of ‘hang-outs’ (for May and June) including coffee meets, meets on identified themes and topics of interest for head teachers.
- Excellence in Headship (EiH) Learn sessions for online delivery of the existing EiH programme 19/20 and new 20/21 programme, and add into the initial programme schedule.

33. Medium-term (May – August)

- Promote The Excellence in Headship Community Glow team’s space as a collaborative space for head teachers to continue development of the offer

and to consult and engage with head teachers on themes and topics of interest, in advance of the 20/21 online programme launch.

- The new Excellence in Headship 20/21 programme, using online delivery will be advertised to head teachers.
- Link in with the development of coaching support for head teachers, as taken forward with the Education Recovery – Workforce Support plan.
- Maintain a PLL presence on Teams spaces, posing questions and discussion starters relating to the needs of head teachers as communicated through surveys or by any other relevant methods.

34. Long-term (August onwards)

- Continued development of facilitated online discussions for school leaders, system leaders and head teachers.
- The Excellence in Headship programme for 2020/21 will be offered as an online delivery model, using the medium of Glow teams and/or any other appropriate digital platforms.
- EiH Learn sessions for head teachers will be delivered online from August to December 2020, with a move towards a blended approach of online and face-to-face from January 2021.