

Readiness for Remote Learning Report

May 2024

Readiness For Remote Learning Report 2023

Summarised Findings

Introduction

This paper provides summarised findings from Education Scotland’s survey on ‘local authority readiness for remote learning’, conducted during June - August 2023. The survey sought to gather information to support the development of the readiness for remote learning report required under The Coronavirus (Recovery and Reform) (Scotland) Act 2022 Recovery Act (Annex A).

Method

In June 2023, Education Scotland invited all 32 local authorities to complete an online survey questionnaire (Annex B) by the closing date 25 August 2023. A total of 24 responses were received, a 75% response rate.

Summarised findings, based on the responses of the local authority officers who completed the survey, are set out below in relation to the main survey questions.

- How ready is your Local Authority to provide remote learning?
- What specific steps has the Local Authority taken to ensure readiness for remote learning?

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in the analysis of the survey findings are set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms which may be used in this paper are to be understood as in common English usage.

Findings

How ready is your Local Authority to provide remote learning?

Planning for remote learning

In relation to their local authorities’ preparedness, almost all survey respondents confirmed that their local authorities have a contingency plan in place for remote learning and most confirmed that the potential for remote learning is on their local authorities’ risk register.

Additionally, several respondents reported that their local authorities have recently updated or developed new education digital strategies or roadmaps for the coming years. Other respondents reported that their local authorities have put in place asset maintenance/ service agreements or programmes in recognition of a need for ongoing support and a renewal of devices.

Moving to remote learning

In considering the level of readiness of local authorities, schools, teachers and learners to move to remote learning (as per March 2020), if required:

- Almost all survey respondents reported that it would take a few days for their local authorities to move to remote learning, while the remaining few stated that for their local authorities it would take around a week.
- Most respondents indicated that their schools and teachers could move to remote learning within a few days. Whereas, a minority of respondents reported that it would take around a week for their schools and teachers.
- In relation to learners, a majority of respondents reported that their learners could move to remote learning within a few days. However, a minority reported that for their learners it would take around a week.

Analysis of the above indicates that, overall, respondents feel that their local authorities are somewhat better placed to move to remote learning than are their schools, teachers and learners; and in turn, schools and teachers are slightly better placed than learners. Responses also suggest that the current level of readiness of a majority of local authorities together with their schools, teachers and learners is such that, if required to do so, they could all move to remote learning within a few days. However, it would still take around a week before all local authorities, their schools, teachers and learners had moved to remote learning.

What specific steps has the Local Authority taken to ensure readiness for remote learning?

Training/Professional Learning for Staff - Digital literacy, digital learning and teaching skills

While, all survey respondents confirmed that their local authorities are offering staff training to improve their digital literacy and digital learning and teaching skills, their reported participation levels vary across local authorities.

High participation levels were reported by just under half of respondents, with most or almost all staff in their local authorities taking part in training offered. While, a further quarter reported lower participation with the majority of staff attending training. However, a minority of respondents stated that less than half of the staff in their local authorities have participated in training offered.

Examples of the types of staff training/professional learning offered by local authorities:

- Learning programmes focused on digital learning / digital learning culture.

- Training and professional development focused on using MS tools to support planning and delivery of learning and teaching.
- Google professional development.
- Digital Leaders /Equity (Digital Inclusion) Leads - providing professional learning / training input delivered to schools and focused on digital skills to enhance learning and teaching and / or improving access to digital resources for all learners.
- Digital Learning Communities/Hubs - building staff confidence and capacity in using digital technologies in the classroom by providing access to a range of professional learning programmes, support and resources

Staff awareness of national sessions on digital literacy and digital learning and teaching

Most survey respondents confirmed that staff in their local authorities are aware of national sessions on digital literacy and digital learning and teaching. However, a few respondents reported that staff in their local authorities are not aware of the national sessions.

Staff engagement in the Digital Schools Award programme

Just above a third of respondents reported that most or almost all of the schools in their authorities are using the Digital Skills Award programme to self-evaluate and improve digital experiences for learners. While, a quarter of respondents stated that the majority of schools in their authorities are doing so. However, more than a third of respondents reported that the Award programme is being used by less than half or only a few schools in their local authorities.

Development of Learners' Digital Literacy Skills

A majority of survey respondents stated that almost all schools in their local authorities are ensuring learners have the digital literacy skills required to engage in remote learning. While a minority stated that most schools in their local authorities are doing so. However, a few respondents reported that the majority of schools in their local authorities are ensuring learners have the digital literacy skills required to engage in remote learning.

Almost all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that schools in their local authorities have continued to develop and use digital technology and digital literacy skills to enhance learning and teaching. However, a few respondents strongly disagreed with this statement.

Provision of support and training for parents/families

A few respondents also reported that their local authorities are providing support and training for parents focused in digital skills and safeguarding.

Virtual offer for delivery of national qualifications

A majority of survey respondents reported that their local authorities have set up a virtual offer for the delivery of national qualifications and a majority of respondents stated that their local authorities are accessing the Regional Improvement Collaborative virtual offer.

Schools' use of the National e-Learning Offer (NeLO)

Almost all survey respondents confirmed that schools in their local authorities are accessing support via the National e-Learning Offer (NeLO). Analysis of responses indicates that the parts of NeLO being used by schools varies across local authorities and that schools, in a majority of local authorities, are using three or more parts of NeLO. The most commonly cited is Live Study support via eSgoil, (by a small margin), followed by Recorded Lessons via West OS and Senior phase resources. The least used are the Resource Collections.

Learning Platforms

Schools' /Teachers' access to a platform for remote learning

All survey respondents confirmed that their local authorities have ensured schools/teachers have access to a platform which could be used for remote learning if and when necessary.

Survey responses identified a range of platform(s) across local authorities. Overall MS Teams is most commonly cited, followed by Google workspace tools. A minority of respondents cited both Google and Teams platforms together.

Teams and Google platforms were reported as being 'own tenancy' by a few respondents and 'within Glow tenancy' by a majority. For around a third of those cited, the tenancy details for Teams and Google were not given. A minority of respondents also cited use of Glow tools such as 365, blogs and websites.

Over half of respondents reported that alongside the above platforms, local authorities and or schools use other platforms/ third party tools such as Seesaw; Showbie, Satchel1 Class Dojo, Learning Journals, among others. In some instances these are purchased and funded by the local authorities, in others they are purchased by individual schools or schools operate their own individual platform agreements.

Additionally, a few respondents commented that to further support readiness to move to remote learning, their local authorities are establishing or intend to establish platforms on an 'own tenancy' basis which will better:

- support management of devices; and
- ensure access for all of their staff and learners

Learners' access to a platform for remote learning

Almost all survey respondents confirmed that their local authorities have ensured all learners have access to a platform which could be used for remote learning if and when

necessary. Analysis of survey responses indicates that local authorities' provision for learners, as cited, largely aligns with the provision cited for schools/teachers (see above).

A few survey respondents indicated that they have not ensured that all learners have access to a platform which could be used for remote learning. Reasons cited include:

- Most learners in the authority do have access to Glow MS Teams and Google Workspace, but this is not suitable for P1-P2 learners who cannot independently log into Glow and parents/carers don't have permissions to login /access. The local authority has not been able to identify a suitable alternative platform due to data privacy concerns.

Parents' access to a platform for communication and sharing during a period of remote learning.

Most survey respondents confirmed that their local authorities ensure parents have access to a platform which can be used to communicate and share during a period of remote learning.

Just under a half of respondents reported that their local authorities provide a single platform for parental engagement such as Google or Teams or third-party platforms/tools such as Parents Portal, Groupcall, Just2Easy, Seesaw. Whereas, for over half of local authorities, two or more platforms are cited. Responses indicate that where this approach is being used it might consist of several main platforms that can be accessed authority-wide or where the authority's main provision is supplemented in schools by other platforms/ third party tools (see schools/teachers section above).

A few respondents indicated that they have not ensured that their parents have access to a platform. Reasons for not offering a platform were cited as:

- The local authority has not found a platform which meets the Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for parents and staff.
- The current provision, a Family Learning Site, is a 'purely one-way' form of communication

Analysis of survey responses suggests that use of multiple platforms/tools in local authorities and schools can help to address (identified/perceived) gaps in national/universal provision giving schools and teachers access to platforms more suited to their own and learners' needs and also providing parents access to platforms which enhance communication and information sharing and enable more meaningful engagement/ involvement in their child's learning. Examples of reported approaches are given below:

- **Learning, Teaching and Assessment**
MS Teams is used for learners from P4 through to S6 and the Seesaw platform/tool is used for learners in P1- P3. The Seesaw platform was purchased and funded by the local authority to meet the access needs of the P1-P3 age group.

- **Learning, Teaching and Assessment**
Glow Teams is used for P3 - S6 learners. However, a mixed and school specific model is used for P1-P2 learners, including third party platforms/tools such as Learning Journals, if purchased by the school.
- **Parental Engagement**
The Seesaw platform/tool is used in primary schools and, secondary schools use email/GroupCall only as parents have no access to Teams or Google Classroom.
- **Parental Engagement**
Safer Schools Scotland app is used for all communication and own tenancy MS Teams is used for parent accessible sessions.

Provision of Devices and Connectivity

Provision of 1:1 Devices to Learners

A minority of respondents reported that their local authorities have provided 1:1 devices to learners in selected year groups. In all cases this includes the P6-S6 year groups and in most it also includes 'middle primary' year groups (P4; P5). The provision extends to 'lower primary' year groups (P1; P2; P3) in only a few of these local authorities. Responses indicate that learners in year groups not included in this provision, are able to access devices in other ways, for example, devices from class sets on ratio 1:5 or 1:6 .

While a majority of respondents reported that their local authorities have not provided 1:1 devices by year group, analysis of responses indicates that learners are able to access devices through other approaches. The approaches used and the related device ratios vary across local authorities and, in some local authorities, across the school estate/sectors. Reported device ratios range from 1:1 - 1:7.5

Examples of reported approaches are given below:

- Learners can access devices from class sets or from a pool of devices within the school - various ratios.
- Digital Inclusion / Equity - 1:1 devices provided to learners to meet an identified need (e.g. poverty-related; additional support need; no access to a device at home).
- Provision of multiple devices in schools covering a wide range of different types of devices for use by staff and learners.
- 'Bring your own device' approaches - e.g. learners can bring their own device to use with learning platform, schools may supplement approach by providing access to a range of devices to support learning.
- Schools can supplement their core provision with school buys resulting in some achieving 1:1 device ratios in their own establishments.

Ensuring access to a device and connectivity at home - Staff

A minority of respondents reported that their local authorities ensure staff have access to both a device and connectivity whereas a majority confirmed their local authorities ensure staff have access to a device only. Although, a few respondents commented that while connectivity is generally expected to be on staff own home networks, it can be provided if required.

A minority of survey respondents reported that their local authorities do not ensure that staff have access to either a device or connectivity. However, a few did note that although staff do not have a dedicated device for home use, staff laptops from the school estate could be altered to allow them to be used at home, if required.

Ensuring access to devices and connectivity at home - Families

A majority of survey respondents confirmed that their local authorities have ensured families have access to both a device and connectivity at home and a minority confirmed that their local authorities have ensured access to a device only.

Analysis of responses suggests that in respect of many of these local authorities, this provision, in part, utilises Scottish Government (SG) grant funded devices issued during the pandemic, which either remain with the families/learners or are returned and re-allocated to others experiencing or at risk of digital exclusion; and also utilises any remaining stocks of connectivity units (mobile hotspot devices / SIMs) acquired through the SG funded initiative.

In relation to connectivity, analysis of responses also indicates that where local authorities are reported to have ensured access to a device only, a few local authorities ensure connectivity in specific cases and / or provide information on social tariffs and free connectivity in local public buildings (schools, libraries and community hubs). There is also indication that if required to move to a remote learning situation again, a few of these local authorities would look to provide connectivity.

While a few respondents stated that their local authorities do not ensure families have access to a device or connectivity at home, responses indicate that learners are supported with devices as required.

Next Steps

In line with Section 17 of the Coronavirus (Recovery and Reform) (Scotland) Act 2022 this report will be published online and the exercise will be repeated in future years to meet the requirements in relation to remote readiness.

[End]

Coronavirus (Recovery and Reform) (Scotland) Act 2022

Section 17 – Report on public schools’ readiness for remote learning:

(1) The Scottish Ministers must report on—

(a) how ready education authorities are for the provision of education in public schools by remote learning, and

(b) any specific steps that have been taken by education authorities and the Scottish Ministers to improve readiness for the provision of education in public schools by remote learning.

(2) The Scottish Ministers must publish the report —

(a) in the case of the first report, as soon as practicable after 31 July 2023,

(b) in each other case, from time to time as the Scottish Ministers consider appropriate.

(3) For the purposes of subsection (1), the provision of education does not include the provision of early learning and childcare.

This full detail of Section 17 of the Coronavirus (Recovery and Reform) (Scotland) Act 2022 can be found here:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2022/8/section/17/enacted>

Local Authority Readiness For Remote Learning Survey

Sections 1: Consent

Survey question 1

Sections 2 & 3: Respondents details

Survey questions 2-6

Main Survey Questions

Section 4: How ready is your Local Authority to provide remote learning?

7. Does your Local Authority have a contingency plan for remote learning?

Yes
No

8. Is the potential for remote learning on your local authority risk register?

Yes
No

9. If you were required to move to remote learning (as per March 2020) how ready is your Local Authority?

- 1 'it would take at least a month'
- 2 'it would take us a number of weeks to be ready'
- 3 'it would take us around a week'
- 4 'it would take few days'

10. If you were required to move to remote learning (as per March 2020) how ready are your schools ?

- 1 'it would take at least a month'
- 2 'it would take us a number of weeks to be ready'
- 3 'it would take us around a week'
- 4 'it would take few days'

11. If you were required to move to remote learning (as per March 2020) how ready are your teachers ?

- 1 'it would take at least a month'
- 2 'it would take us a number of weeks to be ready'
- 3 'it would take us around a week'
- 4 'it would take few days'

12. If you were required to move to remote learning (as per March 2020) how ready are your learners ?

- 1 'it would take at least a month'
- 2 'it would take us a number of weeks to be ready'
- 3 'it would take us around a week'
- 4 'it would take few days'

Section 5: What specific steps has the Local Authority taken to ensure readiness for remote learning?

13. Our local authority is offering staff training to improve their digital literacy and digital learning and teaching skills.

- Yes
- No

14. How many staff have taken part in local authority training?

- almost all
- most
- majority
- less than half
- few

15. Staff in our local authority are aware of national sessions on digital literacy and digital learning and teaching.

- Yes
- No

16. Our local authority has provided 1:1 devices to learners.

- P1
- P2
- P3
- P4
- P5
- P6
- P7
- S1
- S2
- S3
- S4
- S5
- S6
- none of the above

17. Can you give further details of your provision and any other relevant device ratios.

18. Our local authority has ensured staff have access to a device and connectivity at home.

Device
Connectivity
No

19. Our local authority has ensured our most deprived families have access to devices and connectivity at home.

Device
Connectivity
No

20. Please give details

21. Our local authority has set up a virtual offer for delivery of national qualifications. This can be for only one level eg advanced Higher, or more.

Yes
No

22. Our local authority is accessing the Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RIC) virtual offer for delivery of national qualifications.

Yes
No
don't know

23. Are your schools accessing support via the National e Learning Offer?

Yes
No

24. Which parts of NeLO are your schools using?

Recorded Lessons via West OS
Live Study support via eSgoil
Resource collections
BGE resources
Senior phase resources

25. Our local authority has ensured schools/teachers have access to a platform which could be used for remote learning if and when necessary.

Yes
No

26. Please give details of the platform (eg Teams in Glow or Teams on our own tenancy)

27. Our local authority has ensured parents have access to a platform which can be used to communicate and share during a period of remote learning.

Yes
No

28. Please give details of the platform or reason for not offering a platform.

29. Our local authority has ensured all learners have access to a platform which could be used for remote learning if and when necessary.

Yes
No

30. Please give details of the platform or reason for not offering a platform.

31. Our schools are ensuring learners have the digital literacy skills required to engage in remote learning if or when required.

almost all
most
majority
less than half
few

32. Our schools are using the Digital Schools Award programme to self-evaluate and improve digital experiences for learners.

almost all
most
majority
less than half
few

33. Our schools have continued to develop and use digital technology and digital literacy skills to enhance learning and teaching.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Agree
Strongly agree

34. If you are taking any other steps to ensure readiness for remote learning that have not been covered in the previous questions please detail below.



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