



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/21

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18TH NOVEMBER 2020

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICE

CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM BLENDED AND DISTANCE LEARNING OFFER

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide members of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee with some brief introductory context to Central South Consortium's presentation on their support to schools to develop their blended and distance learning provision.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:-

- 2.1 Consider the presentation from Central South Consortium school representatives.
- 2.2 Consider whether further information is required to evaluate the effectiveness of the support on offer to schools to assist them to deliver high quality blended and distance learning.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The pandemic has disrupted learning across the County Borough, nation and around the globe. It is imperative that our schools deliver high quality blended and distance learning opportunities for children who are unable to attend school due to lockdown measures or self-isolation due to a diagnosis of Covid-19 or potential or close contact with a confirmed case.
- 3.2 As the commissioned service with responsibility for delivering school improvement services to our schools, Central South Consortium plays a critical role in delivering effective school improvement support and professional learning opportunities for our schools.
- 3.3 Members will be provided with an update on the professional learning offer and guidance provided by Central South Consortium to support the development of

blended and distance/remote learning, which will provide a basis for further scrutiny and exploration.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The response to Covid-19 has dramatically changed Education in Wales and across the world. Covid-19 cases and lockdown measures have impacted significantly on the capacity of schools to deliver face to face education and blended and distant learning opportunities are vital for ensuring continuity in learning.
- 4.2 As a school improvement organisation, Central South Consortium
- Support and provide effective guidance to promote equity for all learners in distance learning and engagement in learning;
 - Provide appropriate, ongoing support and guidance for senior leaders and practitioners, as schools evolve and adopt blended and distance learning through digital and non-digital approaches; and
 - Provide professional learning for all practitioners related to blended and distance/remote learning.
- 4.3 Settings and schools will need to consider how to evolve their current distance learning models to include in-school face to face contact and where applicable, from a distance through video conferencing, live streaming or recording of lessons. This approach is referred to '*Blended Learning*'. Adopting a single and seamless 'curriculum' approach is essential where practitioners can develop a more integrated approach to learning so that children and young people can build connections across subject areas. This has to be done safely and with appropriate consideration given to learner and staff wellbeing, and safeguarding.
- 4.4 Distance learning allows learning experiences to happen from just about anywhere and may or may not involve a digital device and internet connection. It should support the well-being of all learners, provide a choice of learning opportunities for the social, physical and emotional development of learners. As well as tasks to promote their resilience. This learning allows individuals to learn when and where it is more convenient for them and does not have to mirror learning as it normally occurs in school. Schools do have a responsibility to ensure that all learners engage in the learning offer and adopt a graduated response to supporting learners to overcoming any barriers to engagement.

5. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 Central South Consortium provides ongoing support and advice for schools across the region on blended and distance learning. Comprehensive information and guidance can be found at the links below:

[Guidance on continuity of learning during COVID-19](#)

[Roadmap to blended learning](#)

[Blended learning guidance](#)

[Developing integrated approaches to blended learning](#)

[A resource to support distance learning](#)

[Distance learning considerations](#)

[Models of blended learning](#)

[Principles of remote instruction webinars](#)

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 This is an information report. No Equality Impact Assessment screening form is required.

7. CONSULTATIONS

7.1 This is an information report, no consultation is required.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no financial implications.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 None at present.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP

10.1 Educational performance has a clear link to the Council's priority of Building a Strong Economy. Improved educational performance will have a positive impact on this priority.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 Central South Consortium has developed a range of guidance materials and professional learning experiences for schools to promote equity for all learners in blended and distance learning. This has been achieved by providing ongoing support and guidance for senior leaders and practitioners in distance professional learning.

11.2 Improvement Partners have a key role to play in evaluating the strategic development and delivery of blended and remote/distance learning opportunities across our schools and in monitoring the impact on outcomes for learners. The organisation ensures that good practice is shared across schools in the region and that bespoke support is provided for schools that experience difficulties in delivering high quality blended learning and distance learning approaches.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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