

Dear Annwen Morgan,

During the early autumn term, the Welsh Government asked us to undertake a review of local authorities work in supporting their learning communities in schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) during the period from March to October 2020.

This letter outlines the outcome of this work in Anglesey local authority. The content of the letter is based on virtual meetings with officers, the cabinet lead member for education and a sample of schools and PRUs. We have also considered the supporting documentation provided by the local authority and the feedback from surveys of school/PRU leaders, governors, teachers and support staff, parents and pupils. We have referred to the outcomes of the surveys where relevant, although the surveys were mainly be used to inform the national report which was published on our website on 15 January. Here is a [link](#) to that report.

We would like to thank your staff for giving of their time to discuss their work with us and for providing additional information on request.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Meilyr Rowlands".

Meilyr Rowlands
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

The local authority's work to support its schools and PRUs - March to August 2020

Leadership and collaboration

The Director of Education, Skills and Young People has maintained regular and purposeful communication with his officers, staff and with elected members during the pandemic. During our engagement calls with schools, headteachers confirmed that the local authority also maintained clear lines of communication with schools and PRU during this period, providing helpful, timely and regular guidance and reassurance.

Education Officers were mindful of the importance of maintaining staff and pupil wellbeing. Headteachers noted that local authority officers also provided purposeful support for non-maintained settings and collaborated effectively with Children's Services and other agencies to ensure valuable support for vulnerable learners in their schools and PRU.

There was strong collaboration within both the primary and the secondary headteacher strategic fora during the pandemic. The Director of Education, Skills and Young People has established and shared a strong vision of 'Tîm Môn', which supports both autonomy and collaboration in schools to achieve the best for the island's learners. In line with the 'Tim Môn' approach, headteachers discussed and came to collective agreement on all relevant decisions, plans and policies. There were several examples of leaders and teachers collaborating to produce teaching and learning resources as well as policies and practical procedural documents. Collaboration between the five secondary schools has been strong in the past few years, supported by the work of the regional Core Leaders for the local authority. This has facilitated effective school-to-school work during the lockdown period.

During this period, the local authority continued to work with the very few schools that were a cause of concern. The local authority provided valuable support for the newly appointed headteacher in a secondary school causing concern, who took up his post just as schools closed.

Work on school re-organisation continued during this period and officers approached this work sensitively, giving due regard to the wellbeing of headteachers and school staff.

Cameo: Keeping governors informed

Governors were kept regularly informed throughout the lockdown period and in preparation for the new academic year. Whilst face-to-face training had to be suspended, the local authority enabled all governors to access the eLearning platform free of charge as well as the new Open Learn site.

The relationship between Anglesey schools and the local authority was strengthened during the lockdown period through regular and purposeful meetings. Initially at the

start of lockdown, the local authority made daily calls to schools, which later progressed to weekly calls. Both the Primary Strategic Forum and Secondary Strategic Forum held daily and then weekly meetings. In addition, the local authority and regional consortium organised regular cluster meetings as well as subject and themed meetings. Local authority officers attended all these meetings, supporting headteachers by giving them the autonomy to run their schools but also ensuring that leaders adhered to guidelines and policies. Headteachers valued this flexibility, and appreciated the fact that the local authority allowed them to make decisions that were appropriate to their own contexts. They also reported that the local authority was able to ensure consistency on matters such as assessment, transition arrangements and safeguarding matters through these fora.

The local authority provided ongoing support throughout the lockdown period to all non-maintained settings with a focus on delivering online resources for parents. This included maintaining local authority funding for settings, ensuring that most settings were able to re-open at the start of the new academic year. Local authority officers have built on well-established collaboration with Mudiad Meithrin and Early Years Wales to share resources and good practice across the authority. During the lockdown period, the local authority continued with its plan to increase nursery provision by opening two new purpose-built settings in September.

Throughout the lockdown period, Isle of Anglesey County Council maintained regular, clear and helpful communication with parents and the public. They used social media, letters and regular press releases to ensure messages were shared as widely as possible.

The local authority faced the additional challenge of a significant outbreak of COVID-19 cases in a local factory just as schools were due to reopen. Their response was both sensitive and decisive. A joint letter from The Learning Service and headteachers was sent to parents confirming that Anglesey school pupils would not be returning on the 29th of June, as originally intended. This decision was made at corporate level, based on safeguarding the health of Anglesey residents, and the health and safety of school pupils and staff. The authority made every effort to alleviate concerns and anxiety amongst parents and kept them informed of updates and of developments in cleaning school buildings, school transport and acquisition of personal protective equipment (PPE). They reassured parents that the focus during the only week of school re-opening would be on responding to pupils' emotional health and wellbeing needs as well as ensuring continuity between school-based support and home learning.

Promoting learning

The local authority's 'continuity of learning' plan established that the first priority for any school was the health and wellbeing of learners, parents and staff. As part of this work, the local authority developed and shared useful guidance to parents and carers on use of digital applications and platforms and produced a well-considered advisory document for parents on how to support their children's learning at home.

Officers organised weekly online video meetings in each secondary school catchment area with a senior manager from the Education Department in attendance and working closely with catchment area chairpersons and groups. In collaboration with GwE, this arrangement supported local distance learning plans and enabled schools to share resources. Local authority officers initially consulted with school leaders on the impact of any lack of digital devices on learning. Following this analysis, they organised a collection of devices from various sources and installed new software which they shared with families across the local authority to support pupils' learning and engagement.

Cameo: Support for digital learning

One strategic manager, with responsibility for leading digital developments within the local authority, put in place significant provision and support for schools in a short space of time. During our engagement calls, headteachers shared their appreciation of this support. As part of this work, every secondary school and each cluster nominated a 'Digital Champion' to work with the local authority and to be responsible for sharing developments with their schools.

The local authority collaborated with learners, parents, schools, GwE and Welsh Government to ensure a purposeful distance learning strategy. Local authority officers co-developed a local microsite in collaboration with the catchment Digital Champions in order to facilitate school-to-school collaboration. The Anglesey distance-learning website includes valuable guidance and support on blended learning as well as resources and good practice information.

<https://sites.google.com/hwbcymru.net/strategaethdysgudidolmon/cartref?authuser=1>

The secondary school/cluster 'Digital Champion' ensured all staff could access and use the content within the micro-site and maintained communication with schools to share new information and material regularly. School leaders confirmed that this resource has led to strong and productive collaboration across Anglesey schools.

The education service organised helpful support for schools from departments across the local authority. For example, the human resources department offered practical support on employment issues and the facilities department supported schools with ICT issues. The local authority also facilitated opportunities for school leaders and digital champions to collaborate directly with Google UK enabling them to develop further resources to support their work.

Officers responded swiftly and suitably to concerns about live lessons and produced a comprehensive distance learning policy and support guidance for staff and parents, which included a model policy and guidance for schools. Headteachers identified that this guidance and support from the local authority regarding distance learning and the policy around live streaming were sensible and helpful.

Officers maintained effective communication with GwE in order to support teachers with their work. The teaching materials and learning resources provided by GwE

staff were shared through the local authority's digital platform and with support from each cluster's 'Digital Champion'. GwE also reviewed cluster practice and facilitated cluster discussions. This also involved sharing approaches to blended learning in line with national and regional guidance.

Supporting vulnerable learners

The local authority created 'Canolfannau Gofal' (care centres) that were located in different areas across the island. These care centres provided extended day care and learning provision for children of key workers and vulnerable children. The local authority redeployed its leisure staff to maintain the care package during weekends. This provision was also in place throughout every school holiday, with the responsibility transferring to Children's Services. Officers monitored the take-up of the places available and made sensible changes to provision as time progressed. For example, after an initial review period, the number of care centres reduced to fourteen. As schools and the PRU were preparing their buildings for re-opening at the end of June, and as numbers of learners needing care increased, a few more sites were used as extra care centres.

By the start of the lockdown period, the local authority had already identified its vulnerable learners and had made plans for supporting low-income families with the continuation of their children's learning. The process for identifying vulnerable learners was jointly developed and put in place by schools and the PRU, children's services and care centres. A matrix of vulnerability and a care and support assessment were used to determine children's vulnerability and need. The outcomes were shared with the schools and the PRU, care centres and families. The vulnerability assessment continued to be used with new referrals, for whom factors relating to the pandemic had increased their vulnerability.

A co-ordinated, multi-agency approach enabled both children and education services to identify the most suitable professional or agency to support specific learners. This shared responsibility to support vulnerable pupils included teaching staff, youth service workers, TRAC/Ad TRAC¹ workers, education welfare officers, social workers and other support workers from within Children's Services.

Every vulnerable family received a family pack from the Anglesey children and families' service. Nearly 500 packs were delivered in total. These packs included age-appropriate small toys and games, stationary, learning resources and activities. Local authority staff processed grant applications swiftly to purchase IT equipment for vulnerable children and their parents or carers.

School staff across the local authority maintained weekly telephone contact with vulnerable learners. In addition to learners identified through the matrix and assessment system, other groups of learners were included. These were children whose families were already accessing support from 'Teulu Môn' (the authority's early help hub), learners identified as at risk of participating in anti-social behaviour

¹ TRAC and AdTRAC are European-funded regional programmes to support young people at risk of disaffection and being not in education, employment or training.

and those on the child protection register or subject of a multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC). Staff also provided extra support through weekly telephone contact to learners previously accessing the 'Teulu Môn' service and learners receiving enhanced support in schools, such as those with poor attendance and those open to Gorwel (a service for families affected by domestic abuse and homelessness). This partnership approach to supporting vulnerable pupils and their families was shared and promoted as effective practice across the region.

Cameo: Support for vulnerable families in an area of considerable deprivation

Local authority staff from the education, children's services and youth departments collaborated productively to provide substantial support for vulnerable families living in an area with significant social and economic deprivation. Through the support of Holyhead High School, they provided targeted support for mental health and wellbeing. The school created an appointment system for pupils and their parents and carers to gain access to school pastoral staff and personnel from specialist agencies, such as counselling. All key workers involved in this service were able to access a shared digital platform in order to communicate effectively and regularly with each other. This provision helped to engage vulnerable learners in education and with other agencies. For example, learners who accessed the TRAC service were successful in completing their work towards achieving Agored Cymru accreditation and learners working with the Youth Service achieved various Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

Before schools closed, the local authority established a clear plan for the provision of free school meals for eligible learners. Initially, the local authority adopted a home delivery system, making use of school support staff, youth engagement officers, and TRAC/AdTRAC staff. This approach helped maintain communication with families and allowed informal safeguarding and welfare checks on families where children may be at risk of harm. As time progressed, and in line with most of Wales, the local authority switched to an electronic payment system. In addition, the care centres continued to cater well for the learners who attended in terms of providing nutritious meals and healthy snacks and were able to maintain welfare checks.

Cameo: Prioritising safeguarding

The local authority put in place helpful safeguarding training for its education staff during the period of school closures. More than 70 school and PRU staff attended enhanced safeguarding training and around 150 staff studied a full module in trauma-informed practice. This training helped school staff to be well informed and prepared for schools reopening. Sixteen schools took part in bespoke 'Safer Schools' training and all primary schools within the local authority were given training and access to the authority's 'My Concern' safeguarding and child protection system.

The local authority's work to support its schools and PRU from September 2020

Leadership and collaboration

Since the re-opening of schools for all pupils in September, Isle of Anglesey County Council has continued to work diligently to maintain its support for its schools and the PRU. Corporate leaders have maintained close supportive contact with the Director of Education, Skills and Young People and his team and understand how different officers are providing support for schools and the PRU. The director's vision for developing the 'Tîm Môn' identity has developed with pace during recent months.

Headteachers and senior school staff appreciate the way the local authority ensures that they are kept informed of decisions. They feel that their views are taken into account. This enables headteachers to understand the importance of making collective decisions to promote consistency across Anglesey schools.

Headteachers also appreciate how officers have supported their wellbeing throughout this period. They provided practical advice and guidance, for example through streamlining the risk assessment process and supporting leaders in preparing their own risk assessments.

The local authority has prioritised the work of certain services, such as the Youth Service. The Chief Executive, senior officers and elected members understand the importance of youth work in rural communities. There is a strong desire to support vulnerable children within Anglesey and to recognise the challenges that many young people face. All elected members have received training on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

Staff within the Learning Service have worked together flexibly and have adapted their approaches to support schools during this term as COVID-19 cases increased in schools. Although a significant proportion of the team were not in post at the start of the pandemic, they have shown adaptability by leading on initiatives outside their areas of specialism. Officers have also provided worthwhile guidance on matters such as the allocation of grant funding and procurement of personal protective equipment. This practical support is valued highly by schools.

Promoting learning

The Anglesey schools with which Estyn engaged during autumn 2020 felt that they have been well supported by the local authority and GwE during this period. Officers worked across council departments and produced a broad range of useful guidance, often in conjunction with GwE, to enable schools to re-establish learning. For example, officers have produced and shared bespoke local guidance at each stage of the pandemic.

Local authority staff have collaborated with partners to strengthen provision for Welsh. They produced a broad range of resources for schools to support them in

the delivery of Welsh language learning. They have also worked closely with foundation phase practitioners to produce teaching and learning resources shared on the local authority website for parents to use at home.

During our engagement calls, a number of headteachers described how pupils' oracy skills in Welsh had deteriorated considerably since the lockdown, in particular formal speech. There is now a purposeful drive to support teachers to improve oracy skills at foundation phase and key stage 2. In secondary schools, language teachers are concentrating on improving pupils' skills in speaking to a range of different audiences.

The Canolfan Iaith (Welsh language centre) has reopened partly this term. This is because COVID-19 measures restrict the use of small rooms and buildings. Canolfan Iaith staff have produced substantial resources for schools to support teachers in the delivery of Welsh lessons during the lockdown period and since September. They have also worked collaboratively with foundation phase teachers to produce teaching and learning resources to support early language acquisition. These resources are also available on the local authority website for parents to access.

This term, officers have continued to encourage schools to share good practice through the work of the cluster 'Digital Champions'. The role of the Digital Champion has continued to develop, and the local authority has used their expertise to promote collaboration and provide bespoke training for teachers and support staff in relation to their use of ICT. Headteachers told us that this has increased staff confidence in the use of technology to promote learning.

Senior council leaders share the director's vision for developing the 'Tim Môn' identity and understand the importance of listening and responding to the views of headteachers. Senior leaders in the council and the Learning Service are keen for local authority and GwE officers to increase their role in monitoring and quality assurance in the coming weeks so that officers gain a secure understanding of the quality of provision across their schools.

Local authority officers collaborate closely with GwE Supporting Improvement Advisors (SIA) to ensure that schools make appropriate, informed decisions about school improvement. For example, many schools have made use of pre-lockdown assessments to identify how pupils' skills have developed during home learning. Officers have encouraged schools to consider a wide range of evidence from September in order to identify gaps in pupils' learning.

Officers acknowledge the risk of schools placing too much pressure on children too early, but they are also keen for learning to continue. Headteachers have had helpful discussions with officers about making use of the lessons learnt about pupil progress in recent months. For example, headteachers noted that providing a broad range of open-ended activities was an opportunity for pupils to make their own choices. In some cases, parents have supported their children effectively which resulted in those children making very good progress. Senior officers are currently formalising opportunities for parents and other stakeholders to share their views about provision.

Officers and head teachers acknowledge the negative impact of poverty and lack of parental engagement on pupil progress. In many schools, teachers note that certain groups of children have lost confidence in learning and that their progress has been far slower as a result. Officers and headteachers agree that while it is important to maintain high expectations, re-establishing pupil confidence and supporting their wellbeing remains the highest priority this term.

Headteachers were positive about the support and advice provided by the local authority and GwE staff to help them plan how to use the grant for 'Recruit, recover, raise standards (RRRS): the accelerating learning programme'. Senior officers are clear that headteachers are best placed to prioritise how this additional grant funding should be spent. Officers are providing support and advice to schools and working with GwE to plan a programme of monitoring to ensure that the funding has maximum impact.

GwE has created a helpful dashboard linked to the RRRS grant so that schools can access information quickly to share ideas on grant spending such as support for running small intervention groups. Some small schools told us that they have had difficulty in recruiting staff, as the grant funding will only sustain provision for a limited number of additional hours.

One primary school has focused on pupils who need a boost in literacy and numeracy through small group and individual precision teaching. They made this informed decision based on past success with this method of specific targeted support. A secondary school is using the grant to support specific groups of more vulnerable learners. The school has employed additional staff to create opportunities to rebuild confidence and increase opportunities for social interaction. Pastoral leaders in this school have been involved fully in agreeing the schools' approach and have consulted with parents to share information about their plans. The headteacher reports that local authority officers with responsibility for wellbeing and inclusion have supported this work effectively and facilitated collaboration with the Youth Service and other agencies.

Cameo: Creating a culture of autonomous schools within a supportive and collaborative education system

Senior leaders at Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern have used first-hand information from pastoral staff to identify areas for development linked to the 'Recruit, recover, raise standards' grant funding. They have collaborated with a range of partners, such as TRAC and the Youth Service, to provide one-to-one coaching sessions to develop pupils' confidence and increase resilience. The headteacher felt empowered by the local authority to use the grant funding creatively to best support specific groups of learners. This is in line with senior officers' vision for setting high expectations of schools to develop autonomous leadership within a supportive and collaborative system.

Headteachers have identified that it is challenging to find a balance between providing professional learning and supporting staff wellbeing during such a difficult time. Officers have been in regular contact with schools and have ensured that worthwhile and relevant professional learning opportunities are available to staff. The local authority and GwE's view is that staff and pupil wellbeing remains the main

priority. They both also emphasise that accelerating learning is also a significant priority this term.

Cameo: Professional learning opportunities

Education officers have encouraged schools to seek and create their own professional learning opportunities that are relevant to their own contexts. During the lockdown, teachers and support staff at a number of Anglesey schools have been undertaking research and training courses through the Open University. They have gained knowledge in a range of areas such as developing resilience in pupils, and skills in discussing parenting of adolescents. Staff provided feedback for their senior leadership team and details about how the learning will influence their practice. The headteachers note that the research undertaken has also helped staff to plan for the new curriculum.

Education officers and SIAs have worked together well to develop a range of teaching and learning materials that are accessible to teachers and support staff through a central convenient online location. Headteachers report that these resources provide valuable support to their staff. The GwE professional learning offer currently concentrates on providing operational guidance around teaching and learning. There is also support for schools to reflect on the quality of provision during the lockdown period and to use this information as they prepare for the delivery of Curriculum for Wales.

GwE is prioritising support for the weaker schools with on-site visits by SIAs. All schools can access webinars and online presentations. Supporting Improvement Advisors also hold virtual 'surgeries' to support schools with specific issues. The local authority has facilitated useful workshops for headteachers to share their experiences of dealing with particular challenges such as how they have responded to outbreaks of COVID 19 in their school. The well-established secondary school network, 'Grŵp Camu', continues to share practice in blended learning and the accelerating learning programme with the support of regional SIAs. Members include senior leaders with responsibility for teaching and learning. They have worked diligently to co-create blended learning resources.

Supporting vulnerable learners

There has been effective collaboration between internal local authority departments, outside agencies and specialist services since the outset of the pandemic. Staff from Children's Services, Youth Services and the Education Psychology Service have worked closely with education staff to support vulnerable learners and improve pupils' learning and wellbeing.

The allocation of a member of the local authority's Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion team to support each school since the lockdown period has enabled those officers to gain first-hand information about the wellbeing of vulnerable learners. Weekly meetings between officers, specialist teachers and senior staff with

responsibility for special education needs have supported the provision and care for children at risk of disaffection or delays in progress. The Principal Education Psychologist and the Swyddogion Ansawdd (SEN Quality Officers) discuss relevant information about vulnerable learners in weekly SEN management meetings. The Principal Education Psychologist relays any pertinent messages to the director and senior education officers. This means that senior education officers have a good understanding of the wellbeing of vulnerable learners and the level of their engagement in learning this term.

The education officer with responsibility for wellbeing and inclusion is a strategic partner in Isle of Anglesey County Council's early help hub – Teulu Môn. Teulu Môn hold regular meetings with representation from many external agencies to plan and review services for vulnerable families across the island. These agencies include CAMHS, the Speech and Language Services, children's specialist services (Gwasanaethau Arbenigol Plant), children's services and the Education Psychology Service. Schools make referrals to 'Teulu Môn' in collaboration with the officer responsible for wellbeing and inclusion. She works with schools to ensure they receive high quality support for learner welfare and wellbeing matters. She also ensures that information and guidance produced by 'Teulu Môn' is relayed to schools through well-established catchment SEN and inclusion network meetings.

All secondary schools who took part in our engagement calls praised the work of the Youth Service in supporting their vulnerable learners throughout the lockdown period and the autumn term. The Youth Service continues to support young people at risk of disaffection during this term. Youth service staff have continued with some aspects of the work initiated during lockdown and has adapted suitably according to the needs in different schools. All five secondary schools hold regular 'Inclusion Panel' meetings. Panel members include Youth Service personnel and TRAC staff.

Cameo: The contribution of the Youth Service to supporting vulnerable learners

The Ynys Môn Youth Service supports young people to access key stage 4 courses in further education colleges, access alternative education providers and complete extended work experience. Alternative education courses include a military preparation course and an outdoor education course, 'Wild Elements'. The youth service also provides its own courses which link with Agored Cymru to provide credits for BTEC levels 1 and 2. These include credits in 'resilience, mental health and crafts.' The youth service provides 29 various courses that are offered to pupils in secondary schools. Youth service staff also deliver PSE lessons in schools and run Duke of Edinburgh bronze and silver awards courses.

The head of the youth service is currently planning the delivery of service to pupils living in rural areas of Ynys Môn in partnership with the Urdd Gobaith Cymru movement and the Young Farmers' Federation. This is a priority area for the local authority and there is significant support for this work from the elected members.

The referral process for statutory assessment continued throughout the lockdown period. All referrals for assessment come through to the SEN and Inclusion Forum.

The local authority also plan support and interventions for other vulnerable learners through other fora, such as the Moderation Panel, the Forum for Unwell Children and the Elective Home Education Panel. All meetings continued virtually throughout the lockdown period. Specialist staff responded swiftly to any request for emergency arrangements. Headteachers note that the SEN and inclusion Service responded quickly to requests for support or emergency assessment. The inclusion team report that communication with schools has strengthened significantly due to the frequency of contact and the depth of discussion around individual learners during the lockdown period. This helps speed up the assessment process as the SEN and Inclusion Team are fully aware of the learners presented to panels.

Cameo: Support for schools to assess their pupils

The local authority has invested recently in two useful diagnostic tools to assess learners' speech and language difficulties and general learning difficulties. The authority has shared these tools with all schools and provided suitable guidance on their use. These assessment tools enable staff to carry out an initial assessment of pupils' difficulties and inform them of the need for a referral for formal specialist assessment or intervention.

The well-established IDP Online system has been particularly beneficial to support vulnerable learners since March. This system allows schools, officers and specialists to access learners' IDPs, make amendments to targets, upload assessment details and update data. From September, the SEN and Inclusion team have added a helpful new 'Reasonable Adjustments' module within the IDP Online system. This module allows schools to adjust provision when it is not possible to meet some elements of the IDP, such as personal targets or the provision of support. The team has provided beneficial guidance and support on this module to all stakeholders in the IDP Online system including parents.

Local authority officers report that there has been a rise in referrals by parents for their children to be electively home educated (EHE). The local authority has established an Elective Home Education Forum and strengthened its procedures for parental elective home education requests. Both the Education Welfare Service and 'Teulu Môn' are involved in the assessment process. The local authority now requires more evidence and information from parents prior to processing the requests. Officers have strengthened monitoring activities with Education Welfare Officers (EWO) conducting more home visits to ensure parents fully understand the implications if they choose to educate their own children. In many instances, the supportive nature of the work by the EWO has resulted in parents changing their minds about elective home education and sending their children back to school.

The SEN and Inclusion service has created and promoted differentiated resources for a range of learners' needs in order to compliment other distance learning resources. This work includes adaptations and differentiated versions of tasks. The SEN and Inclusion team prepared a range of resources and shared them on the Gwynedd and Môn website. Some of these resources were also included in the regional resource dashboard. The region's Supporting Improvement Adviser (SIA) with responsibility for vulnerable groups has also provided purposeful resources for

schools and parents and these are available on the authority's SEN and Inclusion website. This SIA attends half-termly meetings with the education officers and representatives from children's services in order to gather important information on aspects of learning needing further support.

The Educational Psychology Service have also supported GwE to create risk assessments and guidance for working with more vulnerable children. They have created leaflets and information sheets for schools on how to support pupils with physical and health difficulties in using personal protective equipment. For example, the guidance on wearing clear masks when working with pupils with hearing impairment is used by SENCOs when they complete the 'Reasonable Adjustments' module on the IDP Online system.

The SEN and Inclusion Service has continued to provide schools with a range of professional learning opportunities. These include training on differentiation for different groups of pupils, mindfulness and taster training sessions on MAPA (Management of actual or potential aggression). Schools have received training on how to include voice-over in their digital presentations to help pupils with special educational needs. In addition, the Education Psychology Service is currently delivering a package of training around 'emotional-based school avoidance' to lead persons in schools.

Cameo: A strategic drive to build capacity in schools to support vulnerable learners

In response to a rise in demand for school-based counselling, senior inclusion staff made a strategic decision to ensure school staff could deliver therapeutic style provision in their own schools. The local authority wanted to ensure that staff in all Anglesey schools received training in key areas of support for vulnerable learners. As such, there have been valuable opportunities for relevant staff to be part of 'train the trainer' professional learning events to develop specific skills and to cascade their learning to colleagues. These key areas include mindfulness awareness, loss and bereavement, ELSA (social and emotional health) and friendly communication techniques.

The local authority Youth Service has provided beneficial training to all its part time youth leaders so that they are better informed to support vulnerable learners from September onwards. This includes training in Prevent and in the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on children and young people. In addition, Youth leaders have also been upskilled in how to support both bereaved children and those who express suicidal ideation.

Local authority officers have strengthened the provision for safeguarding since March. An identified leader acts as 'Safeguarding Champion' in every primary cluster and in all secondary schools. The network of Safeguarding Champions meet regularly. Grant funding through the Rural Schools' initiative has allowed all school staff, specialist teachers and senior leaders across the local authority to access supplementary safeguarding training. Colleagues from Children's Services have provided training to the Safeguarding Champions on making effective referral writing

in accordance with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures. All Anglesey schools now use the 'My Concern' digital application to log any welfare concerns and referrals. Isle of Anglesey County Council is now fully involved in Operation Encompass and the Learning Service has worked productively with North Wales Police officers to create and share informative presentations with all schools on this new, important partnership.