

Report to	Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	28 September 2023
Lead Member / Officer	Gill German (Lead Member for Education, Children and Young People), Geraint Davies (Head of Education)
Report author	Kathryn Nash, Suzie Lohead, James Brown, and Ruth Thackray
Title	Whole School Approach to Emotional & Mental Wellbeing

1. What is the report about?

1.1. The report provides an overview of how schools are implementing Welsh Government's statutory framework on 'embedding a whole-school approach' to emotional & mental well-being. This replaces the existing National Quality Award Emotional Health and Well-being criteria of the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS). As part of this, Denbighshire County Council are working in strong partnership with schools, Health, Public Health Wales to support all schools and settings to develop our own provision in line with terms and conditions of Welsh Government grant funding.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. To provide information regarding the work that schools and Denbighshire have undertaken as part of implementing the whole school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1. Scrutiny is invited to discuss the details of this report and to identify any aspects of whole school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing which may benefit from detailed examination in the future.

4. Report details

- 4.1. The Framework on embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being (WSA) was published by Welsh Government in March 2021 to support schools, including pupil referral units (PRUs) and education settings in reviewing their own well-being landscape and in developing plans to address their weaknesses and build on their strengths. It recognises that the school alone cannot meet all the needs of a complex population of children and young people, and sets out the role of regional bodies, the NHS and others such as the third sector, in supporting the school. It is meant to support and complement the Curriculum for Wales and in particular the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience.
- 4.2. Within DCC, wellbeing support for schools has been played a key role for many years. Currently there is a Health and Wellbeing Team Lead in place who works closely with the North Wales Implementation Lead within Public Health. Various teams across DCC work together on wellbeing and strong partnerships between Inclusion teams and colleagues in Health have been developed through regular professional dialogue and a structured program of meetings. An example of this collaborative work with CAMHS can be seen in the co-construction of 'Suggested Questions – Emotional and Mental Wellbeing' and 'Emotional and Mental Well-being Flowchart' which support school staff and help determine the levels of concern and appropriate interventions available.
- 4.3. DCC have established a Whole School Approach (WSA) group that meets half termly. This group includes key partners from Health (CAMHS / CAMHS IN Reach), Healthy Schools, Public Health Wales and regional consortia (GwE) to ensure a collaborative approach to implementing the Whole School Approach Framework. The group aims to support the implementation of the framework and continues to consult with schools in relation to their interventions and training to ensure that the authority's Wellbeing grant meets their needs. The WSA group also aims to consider the evidence base and efficacy of interventions to support schools in making informed choices.
- 4.4. Denbighshire's Health and Wellbeing Team Lead works closely with the North Wales Implementation Lead within Public Health on an assessment tool. This self-assessment tool provides a broad overview and a starting point for

development of the WSA. It is a means to foster an inclusive dialogue across the school community that helps the school identify what it is currently doing well and what areas need further development or improvement and jointly support schools with their tool and action plan. The process of completing the tool and the discussions that the school has, involving all parts of the school community, is the valuable part of the process. Having identified areas for improvement the school will prioritise them into an action plan that can be incorporated into wider school development and improvement plan to develop a culture of wellbeing across the school.

- 4.5. Based on consultation with schools, DCC has been able to develop a suite of evidenced based training opportunities to include Trauma Informed Schools, Friends Resilience, Empathy Lab, Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA) Seasons for Growth. All are aimed at increasing resilience and emotional health in learners.
- 4.6. A further aspect of the grant funding is to enhance schools and settings with counselling provision. 'Denbighshire Independent Young Persons Counselling Service (DIYPCS)' is the school-based counselling service and is well established in the secondary sector. It is also a BACP accredited service for counselling children and young people. The counselling service is in the early stages of development in the primary sector, following Welsh Government guidance to expand the service downwards to children 4 years and above, in March 2022. In response to increasing demand and complexity of emotional difficulty in schools, DIYPCS Counsellors have access further training in 'Therapeutic Play', trauma and cognitive therapy.
- 4.7. Schools monitor and capture their progress in this area on a regular basis. Self-evaluation tools such as Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) and School Health Research Network (SHRN) provide schools with information for them to identify further aspects for development. To fulfil our duties within WSA, DCC support schools with this work through a universal approach and targeted approach where appropriate.
- 4.8. DCC actively promotes collaboration across schools and shares successful practice where possible, for example Headteachers' conference in June 2023. As part of Estyn inspections, effective practice is also recognised and in June

2023, Estyn invited a DCC primary school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to implementing a whole-school approach to well-being for dissemination on Estyn's website.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

5.1. This area of work contributes towards making Denbighshire a healthier and happier place where young people want to live and work and have positive emotional wellbeing. It also contributes to make Denbighshire a place where young people can learn and make good progress in their skills as part of the Four Purposes, learning in a fair and safe environment. This will help ensure all learners have the best start in life and can realise their full potential.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

6.1 Implementing the Framework requires close partnership working between schools, the local authority, and partnership agencies. The WSA grant provided £147,464.69 in 2022/2023 to the local authority and reduced to £129,383.44 for the current financial year. Welsh Government have allocated £5.3m nationally to support CAMHS School In-Reach services this financial year.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

7.1. A Well-being Impact Assessment will generally be required for decisions or proposals for change in order to comply with the Equality Act 2010, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language Standards. This report does not require a decision for change and therefore a Well-being Impact Assessment has not been completed for this report.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

8.1 This is the first time that the WSA Framework has been brought to Performance Scrutiny Committee. As the Approach is being implemented there is regular consultation between all partners, including schools, local authority, GwE, Public Health Wales and BCUHB.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

- 9.1. Costs will be met from existing delegated budgets to schools, Education budget and also grant funding that has been made available from Welsh Government.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

- 10.1. The implementation of the Framework is reviewed and reported upon by Estyn as part of their inspection work and is under scrutiny from Welsh Government. The local authority, Public Health Wales, GwE, and BCUHB are already working in partnership to monitor and support schools with their implementation, thereby reducing the associated risks.
- 10.2. Continuation of the work is dependent on the funding received through the WSA approach to support counselling, school-based support, and education other than at school (EOTAS); further reduction of this funding will put the work at risk at a time when there is increased need and demand for support.
- 10.3. Wellbeing support provided by school is dependent upon the level of delegated budgets to schools – reductions to school budgets will reduce the level of wellbeing support provided by schools.

11. Power to make the decision.

- 11.1. Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000. Sections 7.3, 7.4.1 and 7.4.2 of the Council's Constitution.
- 11.2. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to make arrangements to ensure their functions are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in school or another place of learning. This includes supporting the mental health and emotional well-being of learners. Section 21(5) of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on governing bodies to promote the well-being of learners at the school as far as related to the matters mentioned in section 25(2) of the Children Act 2004, which includes physical and mental health and emotional well-being, education, training and recreation, and social well-being.