

Questions submitted in advance of, and at, the Children's Select Committee meeting and answers provided as at 08 March 2021.

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- 1. Home education - exams. In 2020 those young people who were home educated and due to be taking exams fell through some gaps nationally due to lack of centre assessment. How is that being considered for this year? Do we have a view of numbers in Wiltshire?**

Academic Year 2019-20: We had 6 students where concern had been expressed to us regarding examinations. Parents were advised to speak with the examining body/examination centres.

Academic Year 2020-2021: This year we have 8 students whom we are aware have expressed concerns about accessing exams. One of those does have a tutor who holds a portfolio of work and the education provider is exploring options currently for getting that work assessed.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/teacher-assessed-grades-for-students>

The above has been published. It provides some answers to what will happen for private candidates (e.g. EHE candidates), parents will already have paid for examination entry to centres such as schools. If those centres don't appear on the "list" that DfE produces clarity is required if parents recover costs or will they have to pay out again.

- 2. School exams. Could we have a reminder of current plans for exams due to take place in 2021? What does the council think could be issues with and / or consequences of this?**

Awarding qualifications in summer 2021

Assessment evidence

Teachers can use a range of evidence to make a judgement of the grade they are performing at. Students should only be assessed on what they have been taught, ensuring sufficient coverage of the curriculum to enable progression. When determining the grade, teachers should reflect the standard at which the student is performing now, not their potential.

Teachers should use the time remaining to balance continued teaching with any assessments they want to undertake. Work done at home can be included as evidence to support a teacher's judgement if it cannot be produced in the school or college environment because of the pandemic, and where teachers are confident that it is a student's own work.

Types of assessment evidence

Teachers can use evidence to determine grades from across the duration of the student's course.

The DfE recommends the following range of evidence is used, where available:

- student work produced in response to assessment materials provided by the exam board, including groups of questions, past papers or similar materials such as practice or sample papers
- non-exam assessment (NEA) work (often referred to as coursework), even if this has not been fully completed
- student work produced in centre-devised tasks that reflect the specification, that follow the same format as exam board materials and have been marked in a way that reflects exam board mark schemes - this can include:
 - substantial class or homework (including those that took place during remote learning)
 - internal tests taken by pupils
 - mock exams taken over the course of study
- records of a student's capability and performance over the course of study in performance-based subjects such as music, drama and PE
- records of each student's progress and performance over the course of study

Making a judgement

Teachers should take account of the standard of any coursework undertaken by students in their overall judgement, including partially completed non-exam assessments where disrupted learning stopped them from completing it. Where this is the case, students should not be penalised.

Teachers should use these non-exam assessments in accordance with exam board mark schemes. Depending on the content they covered, the contribution that the non-exam assessments make to students' overall grade should in the government's view remain broadly similar to a normal year.

Exam boards will publish guidance in March, so teachers have a clear understanding of how to make fair and consistent judgements. Exam boards will also provide schools and colleges with support, guidance, and training on how to minimise the risk of bias and malpractice.

As far as possible, teachers should use the same types of evidence to form a judgment. When assessing different students in their cohort for a subject, schools and colleges should make formal reasonable adjustments for disabled students. If

evidence is produced from assessments taken earlier in the course where formal reasonable adjustments were not in place, centres will be asked to take that into account in their judgement.

Assessment materials

The exam boards will provide **assessment materials at the end of March**. These will include sets of questions organised to help teachers quickly find questions in the topics they have taught.

These questions will be provided with mark schemes, exemplar responses and data on past performance where available, to assist teachers in making fair and consistent judgements of the standard of a student's performance.

Quality assurance

How schools and college will undertake quality assurance

Exam boards will publish requirements for schools' and colleges' quality assurance processes. Exam boards will review all schools' and colleges' quality assurance processes before they submit grades.

The head teacher or principal will submit a declaration to the exam board confirming they have met the requirements for quality assurance.

Schools and colleges can decide the exact timing for when they undertake internal quality assurance, provided they complete the necessary checks before the deadline to submit grades to the exam boards on 18 June.

How exam boards will undertake quality assurance

As well as the checks of schools' and colleges' quality assurance processes, exam boards will complete checks of the evidence for a sample of student grades in a sample of subjects, in a sample of schools and colleges over June and July.

The sample of schools and colleges will take into account centre type and other characteristics of the centre and cohort. The exam boards will also check schools and colleges where concerns are highlighted as part of the initial external process checks. A check will also be triggered:

- if concerns have been raised or as a result of whistleblowing
- if a school or college's results are out of line with expectations based on past performance
- where there have been significant changes in early entries
- where schools have previously received sanctions for malpractice or an investigation is ongoing

Appeals

Every student will have the right to appeal their grade if they so wish. Before a grade is submitted, teachers should make students aware of the evidence they are using to assess them. Students will then have the opportunity to confirm the evidence is their

own work and make their teachers aware of any mitigating circumstances they believe should be taken into account.

If a student wishes to appeal, centres should undertake an initial process review to check all processes were followed correctly and no errors were made. If the school or college finds an error, they can submit a revised grade to the exam board.

If the student still wants to appeal, they will ask their school or college to submit a formal appeal to the exam board for them. The exam board will check the centre followed its own processes and exam board requirements as well as reviewing the evidence used to form their judgement and providing a view as to whether the grade awarded was a reasonable exercise of academic judgement.

If the exam board finds the grade is not reasonable, they will determine the alternative grade and inform the centre.

Results days

Students will receive their results for **A/AS levels** on the **10 August** and **GCSEs** on the **12 August**.

Results for relevant VTQs that are linked to progression to further or higher education, including some BTECs, will also be issued to students on or before these dates. Exam boards will begin to confirm their approach to VTQ results from 25 February.

Following the release of results, there will be a window for students who believe their grade is wrong to raise an appeal.

Exam boards will support schools and colleges in prioritising appeals where their outcome will determine a student's ability to progress to their next stage of education or training.

Vocational, technical and other general qualifications

This year there are 3 groups of vocational, technical and other general qualifications (VTQs) each with a different approach to awarding. Given the diversity of these qualifications, the precise arrangements will differ slightly, but they will aim to provide as much fairness to students as possible.

Ofqual will put in place the technical framework needed to implement the arrangements for each of these groups and the qualifications in scope for each.

Qualifications used for progression to further or higher education

Exams will no longer be going ahead for VTQs most similar to GCSEs, AS and A levels that are used for progression to further or higher education. This will include many performance table qualifications.

These will receive results through alternative arrangements similar to those used for GCSEs, AS and A levels. This also includes other general qualifications such as:

- the International Baccalaureate
- Pre-U

- Core Maths
- Advanced Extension Awards
- Extended Project Qualifications

Qualifications used to enter directly into employment

VTQs used to enter directly into employment, exams or assessments should continue where they:

- are critical to demonstrate occupational or professional competence
- can be delivered in line with public health measures

Exams and assessments can take place in a controlled environment where the risk of transmission is low.

Protective measures should be put in place by schools, colleges or other providers, in line with [public health guidance to support exams](#).

Where the assessment cannot take place safely it will need to be delayed.

Other qualifications

For smaller qualifications that are not like GCSEs, AS or A levels exams and assessment should continue in line with public health measures, or remotely, but with alternative arrangements available for those who cannot access assessments. This includes functional skills qualifications and English as a second language.

3. Mass testing for schools. If they all go back on March 8th are there any concerns regarding all schools being able to manage their testing processes at that point?

The demand on schools to process all the tests within the specified timescale is great. Schools are recruiting personnel to support this process; the Council is offering personnel to support schools over the two-week period.

Schools have some flexibility over the days and can start the testing in advance of the 8th, some schools are using this time to manage the process. Some schools are also phasing the return over the week commencing 8 March.

4. Return to school. What support is the council able to offer schools to help schools and students through the return to school (currently planned for 8 March 2021)

The Council is offering the following support:

- Guidance around reviewing the Risk Assessments
- Continuation of the daily register to support the partnership approach to full attendance
- A new offer from the Education Welfare Service to develop individual plans for pupils at risk of not returning from the 8 March
- Guidance from the Education Psychology service around emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA)
- Public Health advice and support around testing and track & trace
- HR advice and guidance
- Curriculum support, adapting the offer to allow gaps to be addressed
- All the School Improvement Advisers are conducting supportive visits

5. EHCP - is the council planning to / able to amend any of its assessment processes, such as requests for EHCPs, bearing in mind that children have spent less time in school since March 2020, therefore probably making it more complicated for schools to prove the need for an EHCP based on “recent” evidence

We recognise the challenge associated with providing up to date information for a young person which has not been accessing in school learning due to the COVID restrictions and will continue to consider requests made on the basis of the evidence detailed in the submission received. Wherever possible, information submitted by a school as part of an EHCNA should be illustrative of a ‘plan, do, review’ approach and reflect contemporaneous information. The timeframe and requirements for EHCNA remain as described in the SEN Code of Practice, these are laid out by statute and as such cannot be adjusted or changed in any way by Wiltshire Council. Whilst temporary legislative changes to this were enacted in 2020, these have not been put in place during the most recent period of school closure.

We have not experienced a decline in the numbers of EHCP requests and the inclusion teams have continued to offer the usual level of support, both virtually and face-to-face.

6. Agenda item 8 – Adoption West Joint Scrutiny Panel (P33-34) The description of the role of the Scrutiny Panel appears to be self-contradictory. Its constitution prevents it from fulfilling either of its two stated functions:

- **Its role is to ensure democratic accountability. Yet it is not formed by the councils themselves.**

Answer: The panel is indeed commissioned by the Adoption West Board. However, the appointment of elected councillors on the panel is determined by each local authority's relevant overview and scrutiny (or any other committee the local authority has chosen to review the work of the panel).

Each elected councillor on the Adoption West Joint Scrutiny Panel can report back to the relevant committee of his or her local authority throughout the year, in a similar approach to the task group updates received at Children's Select Committee. That is something that the panel is looking to strengthen next year – regular public reporting / updates to "parent" committees – as part of its work on co-ordinating reporting on adoption for all six local authorities.

Currently, democratic accountability is also provided through the panel's annual report being publicly presented to the committees chosen by each local authority.

- **Its role is also to carry out independent scrutiny of the work of the Adoption West Board. Yet it reports directly to the AW Board which monitors its efficiency.**

Answer: The Adoption West Board monitors the efficiency of the panel through its annual report, however the annual report is independently written by the panel and also presented to public meetings for each local authority. This is a very similar approach to Wiltshire Council's process for task group's final reports.

The decision by the Adoption West Board to develop independent scrutiny of Adoption West's activities is currently seen as a positive step; however should the panel feel that it is unable to provide independent scrutiny because of this, such concerns would be reported to the local authorities.

At that point the local authorities could consider establishing a joint overview and scrutiny body to fall under the banner of 'Overview and Scrutiny' as defined by the Local Government Act 2000.

- 7. Agenda item 11a Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency. Page 77 of the agenda pack, paragraph 40. Numbers do not add up. “There are 13 safeguarding concerns; of which 6 are referred, 5 resolved and 1 ongoing (total 12?) and also 7 resolved (19?). Please could this be clarified.**

There have been 13 safeguarding concerns in 2020 /21. Six were referred to the DoFA, of which five are resolved and one is ongoing. The other seven have been resolved and closed through additional support from the School Effectiveness Team, enabling the setting to reach the required standard.

- 8. Hopefully the provision for childcare we have is in the right places and parents do not need to travel too far. Do we take into account substantial housing developments? Do we have, or plan, sufficient local childcare for these?**

Yes, we do consider any additional housing developments when we are reviewing sufficiency across the county. If demand was to increase, we would look to obtain section 106 funding in order to expand provision in the area if existing provision could not meet demand.

At the last meeting of Children’s Select Committee information was provided on Elective Home Education and attendance at schools during the third lockdown. It was agreed that an update on these would be provided at this meeting as well.

9. Elective Home Education (EHE)

Since the start of the academic year September 2020 up to the end of January 2021 there have been 266 new notifications for EHE.

Compared to September 2019 – January 2020 where there were 174 notifications this equates to a 52.87% increase

10. School attendance – headline data

Attendance Figures: Overall daily attendance snapshot Term 3 2021 (January to February 2021)

	07.01	14.01	21.01	28.01	04.02	11.02	12.02	22.02
Response rate	38%	98%	97%	97%	95%	95%	93%	90%
Total attending	3792	10340	10762	11364	11471	11728	9868	10283

Attendance snapshot

Years R to 11	14.01.21	21.01.21	28.01.21	04.02.21	11.02.21	12.02.21	22.02.21
Total pupils with a social worker	44%	46%	47%	49%	52%	45%	46%
National		41%	43%	45%			
EHCPs	34%	35%	35%	36%	38%	29%	36%
National		35%	36%	38%			
total attendance - primary	23%	24%	25%	25%			22%
National		21%	22%	23%			
total attendance - secondary	4%	5%	5%	5%			5%
National		5%	5%	5%			