
Ymateb i Ymgynghoriad / Consultation Response

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Dyddiad / Date:	21.12.22
Pwnc / Subject:	Draft assessment arrangements for funded non-maintained nursery settings

Background information about Estyn

Estyn is the Office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. As a Crown body, we are independent of the Welsh Government.

Our principal aim is to raise the standards and quality education and training in Wales. This is primarily set out in the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and the Education Act 2005. In exercising its functions, we must give regard to the:

- Quality of education and training in Wales;
- Extent to which education and training meets the needs of learners;
- Educational standards achieved by education and training providers in Wales;
- Quality of leadership and management of those education and training providers;
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners; and,
- Contribution made to the well-being of learners.

Our remit includes (but is not exclusive to) nurseries and non-maintained settings, primary schools, secondary schools, independent schools, pupil referrals units, further education, adult community learning, local government education services, work-based learning, and teacher education and training.

We may give advice to the Welsh Parliament on any matter connected to education and training in Wales. To achieve excellence for learners, we have set three strategic objectives:

- Provide accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales;
- Inform the development of national policy by the Welsh Government;
- Build capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales.

This response is not confidential.

Response

Introduction

Overall, we welcome these assessment arrangements and feel that they will support practitioners to understand progression in children's learning.

We feel that they make clear how they should be used by practitioners individually and to develop a shared understanding of progression.

Throughout, we feel that it is important for the link between these arrangements and the curriculum for funded non-maintained settings to be clear. We have made a few suggestions where this could be strengthened.

We support the view that the arrangements should not be used as a tick list approach and have suggested how to mitigate against this. We have also included some suggestions as to where professional learning can be used to support practitioners to use the arrangements effectively.

We would be happy to discuss these suggestions further with Welsh Government colleagues.

Consultation questions

Question 1

- i) Do you work in or support the delivery of education in a funded non-maintained nursery setting?

Yes	✓	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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- ii) If yes, in which type of setting/organisation do you work? (If no continue to iv below.)

Private day nursery	<input type="checkbox"/>	Umbrella organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Playgroup	<input type="checkbox"/>	Third sector	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pre-school	<input type="checkbox"/>	Training provider	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cylch Meithrin	<input type="checkbox"/>	Government	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regulatory body (including inspectorates)	✓
Regional consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

iii) What is your primary role?

Leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	Development officer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practitioner	<input type="checkbox"/>	Policy development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Early years advisory teacher (or equivalent)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of management committee	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inspector	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consultant	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

iv) If you do not work in or support the delivery of education in a funded non-maintained setting, in what capacity would you like to provide feedback?

Childminder	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child or young person (under 18)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practitioner in a non-funded non-maintained setting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Student/academic	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent/carer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adult 18-plus (not a parent or carer)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

v) Are you providing feedback on behalf of an organisation or group?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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If 'yes', please specify.

Estyn

Question 2 – Have you read the 'Draft assessment arrangements for funded non-maintained nursery settings' consultation document?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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If you have selected 'No', we recommend you read the document before continuing on with the questionnaire.

Question 3

- i) Are you aware of the legal duties for assessment arrangements in funded non-maintained nursery settings?

Yes	✓	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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- ii) To what extent will these assessment arrangements support practitioners in fulfilling their legal duties to undertake assessments of children's progress in funded non-maintained nursery settings?

Unsupportive	Supportive	Unsure
<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

The assessment arrangements set out clearly the expectations for practitioners working in funded non-maintained nursery settings and explain their legal duty. They explain how planning links to progression and how assessment arrangements link to the developmental pathways. It is generally clear how these arrangements are part of the curriculum and not a bolt on.

Question 4 – How clear is it that practitioners should use these arrangements to support their assessments when planning for progression?

Unclear	Clear	Unsure
<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

Overall, this is clear, but it may be useful to include in the first sentence of **4. Progression** that 'Supporting children to make progress is at the heart of the curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings' **and these assessment arrangements are designed to be used as part of the curriculum when planning for progression.** This would emphasise that these arrangements are part of the curriculum and not an addition.

Question 5

- i) Is it clear how the principles of progression should be applied when making decisions about children's learning and development?

Yes	✓	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Please explain your answer.

This section is explained well and provides sufficient detail to make clear how to use the principles of progression alongside the curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings.

- ii) How useful is the table that shows how the principles of progression can be applied to support assessment of the learning and progress of younger children?

Not useful	Useful	Unsure
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

The examples of 'what this looks like for children aged 3 and 4' are particularly useful and there is a clear link between these and the principles of progression

- iii) What, if anything, additional would you like to see included in the table?

Question 6 – How useful will the assessment arrangements be for practitioners to develop a shared understanding of progression (set out in section 4.3 of the consultation document)?

Not useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	Useful	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Please explain your answer.

This section is useful because it sets the expectation that practitioners will work with others, within and outside their setting, to develop an understanding of progression. The focus on considering the views of parents is welcome and takes account of the important role that they play in their child's development. The importance of professional dialogue with schools is also highlighted and this is also welcome. It sets the expectation that this will take place to develop a shared understanding of progression. This is an area for development for many schools and settings.

Question 7

- i) Is it clear that both initial (section 7) and ongoing (section 5.1) assessment are equally important to children's progress?

Yes	No	Unsure
✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

The first sentence in sections 5 and 7 are key to this, 'The curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings reminds us that assessment should not be a tick list or a one-off event and should be indistinguishable from learning and teaching' and 'Initial assessment arrangements are an important first step in the ongoing assessment process'

They highlight that assessment is an ongoing process and the whole document sets out the purpose of assessment clearly and links it well to the principles of progression.

- ii) Which terminology do you find most useful for describing the assessments that must take place within 6 weeks of a child receiving funded nursery education?

Initial	On-entry
✓	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

The document states that initial assessment is conducted over the first six weeks following entry into education. From this, we assume that if a child joins a new setting at a later date there will not need to be an initial assessment, but instead their initial assessment will be shared with the new setting. Practitioners at the new setting may conduct their own assessment to build on the initial assessment. For this reason, it seems more useful to describe the assessment as initial as opposed to on entry.

- Question 8** – Is the purpose of the ongoing assessment (section 5.1) clearly explained?

Yes	No	Unsure
✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

This section, as part of section 5 in its entirety, makes the purpose of ongoing assessment clear. It also usefully sets out the form assessment should take and how the information should be used.

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Question 9 – Is the role of observation in assessment clearly explained?

Yes	No	Unsure
✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

The section provides sufficient and useful information to guide the practitioner. It links well with, and makes suitable reference to, the curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings. It also helpfully raises awareness of unconscious bias. The summary section of what observational assessment should and should not look like is particularly useful to practitioners.

Question 10

i) Is the purpose of the initial assessment clearly explained?

Yes	No	Unsure
✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

This section provides specific detail about the process that is clear and unambiguous and will be useful to practitioners.

ii) To what extent are the descriptions in the initial assessment section of the arrangements helpful in supporting practitioners to understand how children make progress?

Not helpful	Helpful	Very helpful
<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

Overall, we feel this section is helpful but it could be strengthened by the inclusion of text at the start of this section to explain that not all children will necessarily be at the stage described as 'initially' and some may have already progressed past this stage for some aspects.

The way the skills have been broken down into areas to consider is useful for practitioners, but there could be a danger that this becomes a tick list. It would be beneficial to encourage practitioners not to view this initial assessment as a list of criteria they have to assess against, but instead to use the aspects more holistically to identify children's strengths and areas for development. If practitioners do identify potential

developmental concerns, it may be useful to include signposts for next steps for them to take.

iii) What additional information, if any, would you like to see included as part of these descriptions?

As above

iv) Does the layout of the descriptions support practitioners to make judgements about individual children's progress?

Yes	No	Unsure
✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

Yes, they do, but there are risks to this approach as outlined above.

Question 11 – What else is needed to support the use of the assessment arrangements in practice?

Please see response to 10ii

Question 12 – Can you see these assessment arrangements supporting children's progress within and across the developmental pathways in the curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings?

Yes	No	Unsure
✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

These arrangements should support children's progress within and across the developmental pathways providing practitioners view them as part of teaching and learning and not as a bolt on to the curriculum. Generally, this is made clear throughout this document. It would be beneficial for any professional learning regarding these assessment arrangements to emphasise this point.

Question 13 – We would like to know your views on the effects these assessment arrangements would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.

What effects do you think there would be?

We welcome that assessment should consider pupils' competence in both the language of their home and the language of the setting. This should provide a good indication of their overall linguistic ability. This will be relevant to whatever the child's home language is, including Welsh.

We do not anticipate that these assessment arrangements will have an adverse effect on opportunities for people to use Welsh or on treating the Welsh language less favourably than English. However, it may be useful to consider how to support practitioners who are developing their own Welsh language skills use the Welsh version of the document, for example with explanations of specific terminology.

How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

For practitioners who are developing their Welsh language skills, it may be useful to provide additional support or professional learning around the assessment arrangements.

Question 14 – Please also explain how you believe these assessment arrangements could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Supporting comments

For practitioners who are developing their Welsh language skills, it may be useful to provide additional support or professional learning around the assessment arrangements.

Question 15 – We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: