



Addendum to National Reading and Numeracy Personalised Assessments – Administration handbook 2020/21

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This document is also available in Welsh.

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Introduction

During 2020/21, the policy regarding the statutory requirement for the use of personalised assessments in Years 2 to 9 is that **personalised assessments in Numeracy (Procedural), English Reading and Welsh Reading will be subject to 'reasonable endeavours' for the remainder of the school year.** This places a duty on schools to make their best endeavours to run assessments for all relevant learners where practical circumstances permit, and taking account of the greater flexibility around disapplication noted below.

The approach to learning, including assessment, as schools return to on-site teaching and throughout the summer term is set out in the [updated guidance for schools from 15 March 2021](#). The use of personalised assessments, as a flexible means of gaining information about reading and numeracy skills in order to support individual learner needs, is part of this approach.

Assessment should continue to focus on supporting the understanding of individual learners' needs, their well-being and progression. Through their adaptive format and learner feedback, personalised assessments can engage and motivate learners, providing them with an understanding of their skills and next steps.

However, the Welsh Government recognises that some schools may face practical challenges in scheduling assessments for all learners during 2020/21, and that schools will need freedom to exercise professional judgement in relation to the well-being of their learners, as they settle back into learning in a formal setting. To make provision for this, **the [administration handbook for 2020/21](#) is amended as follows.**

Timing of personalised assessments

- In order to allow schools the maximum time during which they can schedule assessments throughout the summer term, the assessment site will **not** close down for two weeks during June 2021, as previously planned (see pages 3 and 10) in order to produce the first progress reports and age-standardised scores for Reading.
- As a consequence, age-standardised scores for Reading will now be available for the start of the autumn term, **only if** a sufficient number of learners take the Reading assessment before the end of the school year.

Learner well-being and disapplication

- The handbook states (page 25) that the decision that a learner should not take the personalised assessments is for the headteacher to make. Following the return to on-site learning, practitioners will want to be flexible in their response to individual learner needs and well-being. Taking a personalised assessment should never be a cause of anxiety for any learner; in current circumstances, practitioners may decide that there are instances where they believe a learner's well-being would be adversely affected. In 2020/21 therefore, the headteacher may make decisions for **disapplication on well-being grounds** if they judge appropriate.
- The handbook also states that schools have responsibility for identifying learners who are unable to work at the level of the easiest questions in the personalised assessments (page 23). Following the disruption to learning this year, schools are therefore reminded that it is at their **discretion to consider if assessments should be disappplied for any learners unable to access the easiest questions**, particularly Year 2 learners. Schools are also reminded that for Year 3 and above, staff have the facility to override the starting question difficulty to begin the assessment at an easier level.
- The requirement for headteachers to maintain a list of disapplications (page 25) is removed for this academic year in order to minimise any administrative burden.

Scheduling and taking assessments

- Schools can choose when to schedule the assessments for individual learners, small groups or whole classes, in accordance with their preferences and their IT facilities (page 6). In 2020/21 the amount of time for on-site learning has reduced significantly; demands on IT capacity and other practical considerations in relation to scheduling and taking online assessments may be challenging for some schools. **If a school has made all reasonable endeavours, but for practical reasons is unable to assess all relevant learners, the school will have fulfilled the statutory requirement.**

Feedback and reports

- The handbook states (page 10) that individual learner feedback and progress reports must be shared with parents/carers as part of the normal reporting process, and that schools are encouraged to share these while the information is current. For assessments taken in 2020/21, schools should **use professional judgement about the most appropriate timing and methods for sharing feedback and reports** from personalised assessments, as part of their regular discussions with parents and carers about learners' reading and numeracy skills.