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National Reading and Numeracy Personalised Assessments: administration handbook 2023 to 2024

Introduction

The purpose of personalised assessments

Online assessments in reading and numeracy are designed to help teachers and learners understand how a learner's reading and numeracy skills are developing and to plan next steps. They are designed to support learning and teaching as part of schools' wider **assessment arrangements under Curriculum for Wales**. The assessments are for formative use, so that all maintained schools have information on the reading and numeracy skills of their learners and a common understanding of strengths and areas for improvement in these skills. When planning progression, teachers are encouraged to give full

consideration to the skills identified by the assessments (not the scores alone), alongside any other relevant classroom-based information.

The assessments are focused on understanding learner progress and should not be used for school performance or accountability purposes.

Requirements for 2023 to 2024

The assessments are **mandatory**; this means that learners in Years 2 to 9 in maintained schools (including community, voluntary-aided, voluntary-controlled and foundation) must take the personalised assessments in reading and numeracy at least once during the school year. Numeracy is taken in 2 parts: Numeracy (Procedural) and Numeracy (Reasoning).

This handbook sets out the arrangements for the National Reading and Numeracy personalised assessments and provides guidance on administration, access and disapplication arrangements. It forms the National Tests administration handbook ('NT administration handbook') for the purposes of the Education (National Curriculum) (Assessment Arrangements for Reading and Numeracy) (Wales) Order 2013. National Tests are now delivered online and referred to as 'personalised assessments'. Therefore, for the purposes of this guidance, National Tests will be referred to as 'personalised assessments' or 'assessments'. With regard to the reference to the National Tests assessment timetable ('NT assessment timetable') in the Order, personalised assessments are available for scheduling throughout the year.

Benefits of personalised assessments

The online reading and numeracy assessments provide an individualised assessment experience that dynamically adjusts the level of challenge for each learner.

The personalised assessments are constructed from large banks of questions (and texts for the Reading personalised assessments) that are based on the continuum of skills in the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) which has been refreshed to align with the ethos and principles of Curriculum for Wales.

The assessments are 'adaptive' which means that questions are selected based on the learner's response to the previous question or questions. When learners answer questions correctly they will receive more challenging questions, and when learners answer incorrectly they will receive easier questions. This personalisation means that every learner

will see a different set of questions, and the number of questions will vary.

This process continues until the assessment system has covered areas across the curriculum and gathered sufficient information on the learner's responses.

Responses are marked automatically and feedback is usually available to staff the day after an assessment is taken.

Timing of personalised assessments

Schools have the flexibility to schedule the personalised assessments at any point during the academic year that they consider is most beneficial to inform learning, teaching and progression planning.

Schools should note that there may be planned downtime for the personalised assessments system from time to time, which will be communicated via the assessment website.

Learners are required to take the personalised assessments once during the 2023 to 2024 academic year. Schools also have the option to use the assessments a second time during the academic year, which can be useful to support understanding of learner and group progress. If schools decide to use an assessment for a second time, it is recommended that learners do not take the second assessment in the same term as the first.

Learner well-being

Personalised assessments should not be a cause of worry for learners and it is very important that schools consider how the assessments are presented. Familiarisation assessments are available for learners to use at any time so that they can view and become accustomed to the different types of questions available in advance of taking an assessment. Aside from using these, 'practising' with questions should be avoided as this is inappropriate and unnecessary in the context of formative assessment and can cause anxiety for learners.

Learners are allowed to take rest breaks during an assessment if required. Please see the section headed 'Rest breaks' below.

Using personalised assessments

Access to personalised assessments

Staff and learners access the personalised assessments through the Hwb platform, using their individual Hwb account logins. Detailed step-by-step guidance can be found in the user guide, which staff can access on the assessment website once logged in through Hwb.

Before learners can take personalised assessments:

- the headteacher, or staff member acting on their behalf, must log in and accept the data and administration requirements, and assign functions and access for relevant staff
- staff need to schedule and release assessments for learners by logging in to Hwb and navigating to the personalised assessments website (by clicking on 'Personalised assessments' in the menu near the top right-hand side of the page or by clicking the 'Personalised assessment' tile on the Hwb homepage)
- learners need to log in to Hwb and work through the familiarisation assessments so that they understand the question formats and how to navigate through the assessments

For information on how users find their Hwb usernames and passwords, please go to ['Getting Started'](#).

Schools should note that the assessment website relies on data retrieved from schools' management information systems (MIS) and that the personalised assessment data follows the learner when they move school. Schools must ensure that their MIS is up to date, and that their Hwb Provisioning Client runs successfully on a regular basis.

Assessments in other settings, for example pupil referral units (PRUs)

Learners in Years 2 to 9 who are registered in mainstream schools must take the personalised assessments at least once during each academic year. This includes learners who have dual registration in a mainstream school and also at a PRU or special school (unless a disapplication decision has been made). The responsibility for ensuring the assessments are run rests with the headteacher of the mainstream school at which the learner is registered, who can arrange for the learner to take the personalised assessments in either setting.

For PRU learners who are dual-registered, personalised assessments can be scheduled by

a teacher on either learning site. Both schools can access the learner's feedback and progress reports.

Headteacher agreement and user management

Data protection is the responsibility of schools as independent data controllers. Schools need to ensure full compliance with the data protection principles in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Schools must therefore ensure that access to data about individual learners complies with the UK GDPR. This includes access to data related to the statutory personalised assessments.

Schools have discretion as to which of their staff have access to assessments and reports. When making arrangements for their staff to schedule and facilitate the personalised assessments, schools must be mindful of the provisions of the Welsh Government's **[‘School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions \(Wales\) Document 2023 and guidance on school teachers’ pay and conditions - September 2023’](#)** or relevant terms and conditions.

In order for personalised assessments to be run in any school, the headteacher (or a suitable staff member acting on their behalf) must log in to the assessments website (accessed via Hwb) and assign functions and access for relevant staff to schedule and facilitate assessments and to view learner and group reports.

The headteacher is automatically assigned the ‘Administrate’ function, which enables them to manage other users’ functions. Further information on how to assign functions to staff can be found in section 3.8 of the user guide.

The headteacher (or suitable staff member acting on their behalf) also needs to agree that the personalised assessments will be run in accordance with this administration handbook and must re-sign this agreement for each academic year. Access for other staff members will be restricted until this has been signed.

The functions allocated by the headteacher determine which activities staff can undertake on the assessment website. Access can be restricted to particular year groups or classes, to ensure that staff are accessing relevant and appropriate information. The rights and roles allocated in the previous year will automatically carry over for staff remaining in post

at the school, therefore the headteacher should review these functions and access requirements each academic year.

Scheduling assessments

Please note that the headteacher, or nominated staff member, must allocate access before users can schedule assessments or access feedback and reports.

Schools have the flexibility to schedule the personalised assessments throughout the academic year. Schools can schedule the assessments for individual learners, small groups or whole classes, in accordance with their preferences and their IT facilities. As the personalised assessments are different for each learner, there is no requirement for a whole class of learners to take the assessments at the same time.

Personalised assessments must be scheduled for a particular school day and be scheduled at least the day before the assessment is due to take place. They can be taken at any point during the school day. If a learner does not start an assessment on the scheduled day, it will be cancelled overnight, and the school can reschedule the assessment. If a learner starts an assessment on the scheduled day but does not complete it, the results will be submitted overnight unless the assessment is cancelled by the school. It is important in this situation that the assessment is cancelled and rescheduled by the school.

A step-by-step guide to scheduling assessments is available on the assessment website.

At the start of an assessment, learners are allocated a question (or text and set of questions) based on their curriculum year group. When scheduling, the teacher can override this setting to give an easier starting point if appropriate. Further information on this can be found in section 6.13 of the user guide.

When scheduling, staff members can also select accessibility options and colour changes as set out under '[Modifications to personalised assessments](#)'.

IT set up

The assessments have been designed to be compatible with a wide range of devices that have a modern browser installed. Before any assessments are run, devices should be fully charged and checked for updates. Further information on IT set up can be found in section 3 of the user guide.

Further guidance on how schools can get the best out of their IT systems can also be found in [the Education Digital Standards and Guidance](#).

Language

Numeracy personalised assessments can be taken in English or Welsh. The language of a learner's assessment is chosen when a staff member schedules the assessment. A learner is able to view the question in the alternative language at any point during the assessment by clicking the 'globe' icon at the bottom of the screen.

When scheduling the Reading personalised assessments for learners, staff members select which assessments will be taken, English Reading or Welsh Reading. Questions and texts are not available in the alternative language as the assessments assess learners' skills in reading each language. Requirements regarding which Reading personalised assessments learners should take are covered under the '[Requirements for learners receiving education through the medium of Welsh](#)' detailed below.

Familiarisation assessments

In advance of taking personalised assessments, schools should ensure learners have an opportunity to try familiarisation assessments in each subject. This will enable learners to view the question types and understand how to answer them, and also to become familiar with the navigation of the assessments. This is particularly important for the Numeracy (Reasoning) assessment which requires use of audio.

Familiarisation assessments are accessed on the assessment website via Hwb and can be used by learners at any time. Further information can be found in section 3.13 of the user guide.

Taking the assessments

Before a learner can take a personalised assessment, a staff member with the appropriate access to facilitate an assessment must release the assessment scheduled for the learner. Staff members have the option to release assessments for individual learners, or for a whole class.

Detailed guidance on how to schedule and facilitate assessments is available in the videos and sections 3.9 and 4.1 of the user guide, which also includes checklists for staff to use before and during an assessment.

Once an assessment has been released, the learner can access the assessment on the assessment website via Hwb using their Hwb login. Learners should navigate to the assessments website and click either 'Numeracy (Procedural)', 'Numeracy (Reasoning)', 'English Reading' or 'Welsh Reading'.

Key features

Before the assessments have started, staff members should remind learners of key features of these assessments.

- The purpose is to provide learners with information on their skills so that they understand what they can do and the areas they may need to work on.
- Learners cannot go back to a previous answer and make amendments once they have moved on to the next question.
- If learners get stuck on a particular question and cannot answer, they shouldn't worry if they find it hard, they should just move on to the next question.
- Learners may need to scroll down on-screen to see the full question content. A green notice will pop up on the screen to warn them of this.
- If a learner encounters problems with their computer or device, they should raise their hand and advise a staff member (if they need to switch to another device mid-assessment, the assessment will resume where it left off).
- Although there is no fixed end point in terms of duration for Numeracy (Reasoning) or Reading assessments, when the system has gathered enough information the assessments will end automatically.
- Numeracy (Procedural) assessments will end after 28 questions have been completed.

During the assessments, the staff member should:

- check that learners are progressing through questions and moving on if they don't know the answer to a particular question
- check that learners are working honestly and independently
- check learners have rough paper and a pen or pencil for working out/notes
- pause the assessment and encourage the learner to take a break, if they feel this would be beneficial to the learner

Staff should be aware that if there is an incident or interruption, assessments can be paused, resumed or cancelled on the assessment website.

Assessment conditions

Each learner receives a different set of questions, and therefore it is not necessary for whole classes to take the assessments at the same time. Schools can schedule assessments for individual learners, small groups or whole classes, depending on preferences and facilities available.

In order that teachers can gain the most accurate information about learners' skills, schools should ensure that:

- the room is set up to allow learners to work on devices independently
- learners have all necessary resources (paper and a pen or pencil for any rough working out/notes), and for Numeracy (Reasoning) a calculator or manipulatives if applicable, plus headphones for accessing the audio element of the assessment
- the work produced in the assessments is genuinely that of the learners
- there is appropriate supervision at all times
- the assessments are run according to the guidance given in this handbook

When their assessments have been released by a staff member in the assessment website, learners should navigate to [Hwb](#) and enter their Hwb login credentials. They should be given assistance entering these where required.

Assessment length

The personalised assessments do not have a fixed duration. Numeracy (Procedural) has a fixed number of questions; Numeracy (Reasoning) and Reading assessments do not have a fixed number of questions but stop when the system has made a reliable decision about the learner's ability. Learners can work at their own pace. The staff member can use their professional judgement to determine how long to give the learner to complete the assessment based on classroom practice and learner well-being.

The staff member facilitating the assessments can and should encourage learners to move on through the questions, rather than spend too long on questions they cannot answer.

- Numeracy (Procedural) personalised assessments generally last between 20 and 40 minutes.
- Numeracy (Reasoning) personalised assessments generally last between 25 and 40 minutes.

- Reading personalised assessments generally last between 25 and 45 minutes.

Before learners take the assessments, you will need to ensure that there is sufficient time to set up, including ensuring all devices are working and all learners have their Hwb account login details.

If you are scheduling for a group of learners or a whole class, you may need to plan a suitable activity for those who finish their assessment ahead of the rest of the group.

Rest breaks

Rest breaks may be given to learners of any age at any time during the assessment, and an assessment may be spread throughout the school day. It is recommended that staff members give particular consideration to younger learners, and that learners in Years 2 and 3 have rest breaks. The length of the break is at the discretion of the school. Staff members can decide when or if breaks are appropriate for other learners.

The staff member can pause the assessment at any time during the assessment, and learners can log out of the assessment and then log back in after the break. It is important that the staff member pauses the learner assessment when a break is given, otherwise the learner will be able to access it from a different device.

The assessment must be completed in a single day. If a learner cannot complete it in a single day the assessment should be cancelled by the school and rescheduled, otherwise the results will be uploaded overnight.

When an assessment is paused or stopped, the results for the questions the learner has answered will be uploaded at 5.00 p.m. on the day the assessment is taken unless the assessment is cancelled. An assessment with submitted answers cannot be restarted.

Absence

Should a learner be absent on the day of a scheduled assessment, the assessment can be rescheduled for another time. If the learner has not started the assessment, it will automatically be cancelled overnight. If a learner has started the assessment but cannot complete it, for example because they are sent home ill, then the assessment should be cancelled by the school.

After the assessments

Feedback and reports

A range of reports are available for individual learners and groups of learners, including whole classes to those staff members with 'Administrate' or 'Facilitate and analyse' functions.

Feedback on skills for individual learners who have taken Numeracy (Procedural) and Reading personalised assessments is usually available on the assessment website the day after assessments are completed. Staff have the opportunity to review feedback before releasing this to the learner's Hwb account. Further information on how to release the report to the learner can be found in section 5.3 of the user guide.

Feedback on skills for individual learners who have taken the Numeracy (Reasoning) assessment is usually available on the assessment website the day after assessments have been taken. This feedback report is teacher-facilitated and cannot be released to the learner.

On completion of the Numeracy (Reasoning) personalised assessments, staff will have access to sample questions (via the learner feedback report and group skills profile report) which they can use with learners to support the development of reasoning skills.

Progress reports for each assessment are also available the day after assessments are completed. Progress reports include a progress chart which is automatically updated after each assessment, and also an age-standardised score for the learner's most recent assessment. Staff can release these to the learner in the same way they do with feedback reports. Further information on how to do this can be found in section 5.4 of the user guide.

Other reports available to schools to support planning and progression include skills profiles and progress reports for groups and classes. Training materials on making use of the information in the reports are available on the assessment website and on [Hwb](#).

Reports must be shared with parents/carers as part of the normal reporting process. The reports to be shared are feedback for Numeracy (Procedural) and Reading, and individual learner progress reports in all subjects. Wherever possible, schools are encouraged to share these with parents/carers while the information is current. However, teachers can use their professional judgement to decide how and when to share the reports, for example on-screen at a parents' evening or printed out and shared at the end of term, alongside and in

the context of other information on the learner's progress. If the assessments are taken twice during the academic year, then parents/carers should receive both sets of feedback.

Consideration should be given to how feedback is provided to learners and parents/carers who do not have access to a computer outside of the school environment, which is more likely to be the case for those from lower income households. All learners in our education system should be supported to achieve their potential and aspirations.

Feedback for Numeracy (Reasoning) will be teacher-facilitated and will not result in a report for issue direct to parents/carers.

Supporting good practice

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to monitor the assessment arrangements in at least 10% of their schools. To support the formative purpose of personalised assessments, monitoring will now focus on promoting good practice in the delivery of the assessments and encouraging the use of information on learners' skills to inform learning, teaching and progression planning.

This activity may be undertaken at any time by the local authority or regional education consortium working on the local authority's behalf. Headteachers and governing bodies have a duty to permit the local authority or regional consortium to access school premises for this purpose.

The assessments are designed for formative use, to help identify strengths and possible next steps to support learner progress, and they are not to be used for school performance or accountability purposes. There is no legal requirement for schools to share assessment scores with their local authority or regional consortium.

Support

Further guidance on the personalised assessments, including managing user access, scheduling and taking assessments, as well as accessing feedback and reports, is available in the user guide on the assessment website. Training materials in the form of pre-recorded webinars are also available on the assessment website and [Hwb](#). For further support, schools can contact the Assessment Helpdesk on 029 2026 5099 or help@personalisedassessments.wales.

Specific requirements for Numeracy (Procedural) and Numeracy (Reasoning) personalised assessments

The Numeracy assessment is taken in 2 parts, Numeracy (Procedural) and Numeracy (Reasoning). The Numeracy (Procedural) assessment focuses on numerical facts and procedures, the tools needed to apply numeracy within a range of contexts. The Numeracy (Reasoning) personalised assessment provides information on how well learners can apply their procedural skills to solve numerical problems.

It is possible that some Year 2 learners may not be ready to apply their procedural skills to the problems and contexts designed for Year 2 in the bank of questions for the Numeracy (Reasoning) assessments. Schools are advised to run the Year 2 Numeracy (Procedural) personalised assessments first, and then to use their discretion and professional judgement regarding whether or not to use the Numeracy (Reasoning) assessments with some or all of their Year 2 learners.

For all other curriculum year groups, the Numeracy (Reasoning) part of the assessment is required. Schools are reminded that, when scheduling, staff can start an assessment with questions designed for a lower year group if they consider that a lower starting difficulty would be appropriate. Headteachers are also reminded that they have the discretion to disapply assessments for learners who are not working at the level of even the easiest questions in the personalised assessments question bank. Following an assessment, teachers are encouraged to use the sample questions supplied with the reports in order to support their learners to develop their reasoning skills.

The use of calculators and manipulatives

Numeracy (Procedural) personalised assessment

Calculators and/or other tools are not allowed to be used for the procedural assessment. Learners should have access to paper and pens/pencils and should be encouraged to use them for their working out.

Numeracy (Reasoning) personalised assessment

Year 2 and Year 3 learners should have access to a calculator and/or other tools which can include manipulatives for the assessment if they normally use them in class. Learners in

Years 4 and above should all have access to a calculator. They may also use other tools, which can include manipulatives (if deemed appropriate by the teacher), for the assessment. Learners should also have access to paper and pens/pencils and should be encouraged to use them for their working out.

Structure of the Numeracy assessments

Each Numeracy (Procedural) personalised assessment is tailored to the learner's responses. The first question in an assessment is selected to be appropriate for a learner in their current curriculum year, although the teacher can override this where necessary if a learner is working at a level significantly below this. Subsequent questions are selected from the bank of questions as outlined under '**Benefits of personalised assessments**' above. There is no fixed end point in terms of time duration for Numeracy (Procedural) assessments. However, the assessment will end after 28 questions have been completed.

Each Numeracy (Reasoning) personalised assessment is also tailored to the learner's responses, in a similar way to the Numeracy (Procedural) personalised assessments. However, the content of the assessments varies in some ways. There are 2 question types in Numeracy (Reasoning) personalised assessments, namely:

- single mark questions
- multi-mark questions (with hints)

These questions are used to structure the assessment as follows:

- for Years 4 to 9, the assessment begins with single-mark questions before progressing to individual multi-mark questions with hints. The assessment concludes with the stimulus section, namely information pages and audio content on which a number of single- and multi-mark questions are based
- for Years 2 to 3, the assessment comprises single-mark questions followed by the stimulus section described above

For this assessment, learners will access an audio file and must have a set of headphones attached to their device.

It is important to note that learners cannot go back once they have moved on to the next question.

Timing

Numeracy (Procedural) personalised assessment

Learners will work at their own pace, and the length of an assessment will typically be between 20 and 40 minutes.

Numeracy (Reasoning) personalised assessments

Learners will work at their own pace, and the length of an assessment will typically be between 25 and 40 minutes.

Familiarisation assessments

Familiarisation assessments are provided for staff to use with learners prior to taking the assessment. Following this introductory use they can also be taken by learners on their own.

They are divided into sets: Years 2 to 3, Years 4 to 6, and Years 7 to 9. Each familiarisation assessment contains 8 or 9 questions or information screens, which include examples of each of the question types used in the personalised assessments.

For Numeracy (Reasoning), the assessment includes audio content and the use of hints. It is therefore very important that staff use a familiarisation assessment with their learners beforehand so that learners can experience and understand how the hint questions work. Learners should be encouraged to attempt all questions and use the hints to help them.

Some learners may not be familiar with some of the question types or may not have completed assessments on computer. It is very important, therefore, that you spend time familiarising learners with these materials so that when they take an assessment it will provide the best information on their skills.

For learners in Years 2 to 6, it is recommended that you read the familiarisation questions aloud and work through each question, checking that learners are clear about how to complete each question.

For learners in Years 7 to 9, you do not have to read the questions aloud but you must ensure that learners are clear about how to complete each of the different types of question and should discuss the most appropriate approach for each of them.

Familiarisation assessments may be accessed at any time. They should be taken shortly before a personalised assessment (though not necessarily in the same lesson due to time constraints and in case learners become tired).

Setting the language of the assessment

When scheduling a Numeracy personalised assessment for learners, staff members can select whether the assessment will be taken in English or Welsh. In either case, the alternative language version of the question will be available as a pop-up window at any time. Clicking on the globe icon at the bottom of the screen allows learners to see the assessment content in the other language. The alternative language version is displayed as an image and the learner cannot enter an answer in the alternative language. In Numeracy (Reasoning) a learner can access the audio in the other language by using the globe icon and selecting the audio on the relevant screen.

Responding to questions

The assessment questions may be read aloud to learners if needed. No help should be given with any of the numerical content of the questions.

You should answer questions such as 'Is this the right one?' by saying 'Choose the one you think is the correct one'.

Facilitating a Numeracy personalised assessment

Before the assessment has started, staff members should remind learners of the key features of the assessments and remind them of the following.

- If they need help reading a question, they should raise their hand and ask a staff member (who may read the question aloud to the learner but should not help with the numerical content).
- If they want to see the question in the alternative language (English/Welsh) they should click the globe icon at the bottom of the screen. If they want to hear the audio section in the alternative language in the Numeracy (Reasoning) assessment they should click the globe icon and select the audio on the relevant screen.
- They can use paper and a pen or pencil for working out, but they must type their answer on-screen.
- The length of the assessment is not a reflection of their ability and they should work at their own pace. The assessment's length will vary for each learner, but they will

generally last between 20 and 40 minutes depending on how fast the learner works and how many questions they receive.

During the assessment, the staff member should:

- check that calculators and other tools are not being used for the Numeracy (Procedural) assessment
- check that learners are working independently
- encourage learners to progress through the assessment at a pace that suits them
- check that learners do have access to calculators or manipulatives (if appropriate) for the Numeracy (Reasoning) assessment, and that they have headphones ready to use for the audio section
- tell learners not to worry if they get a difficult question and encourage learners to move onto the next question if they don't know the answer
- pause the assessment and encourage the learner to take a break, if they feel this would be beneficial to the learner

Specific requirements for Reading personalised assessments

Structure of the assessment

At the start of the assessment the learner will receive either a sentence completion question or a short text with 3 associated questions. The initial questions will be at a difficulty appropriate for learners in that curriculum year, although the teacher can override this where necessary if a learner is working at a level significantly below. Subsequent texts and questions are selected from the bank based on the learner's answers to the previous questions. For example, if a learner is presented with a text and 3 associated questions, the system will evaluate the responses they have given and then select a more challenging text and group of questions or an easier text and group of questions as appropriate.

It is important to note that learners cannot go back once they have moved on to the next question.

Timing

Learners will work at their own pace, and the length of an assessment will typically be

about 25 to 45 minutes.

Familiarisation assessments

Familiarisation assessments are provided for staff to use with learners prior to taking the assessment. There are 3 familiarisation assessments: Years 2 to 3, Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 9.

Each familiarisation assessment contains one text and a range of questions, which include examples of each of the question types used in the personalised assessments. A sentence completion question is included in the familiarisation assessments for Years 2 to 3 and Years 4 to 6.

It is very important that you spend time familiarising learners with these assessments so that when they take an assessment it provides the best information on their skills.

Familiarisation assessments can be found by teachers in the familiarisation assessment tab and may be accessed at any time. They should be taken shortly before a personalised assessment (though not necessarily in the same lesson due to time constraints and in case learners become tired).

The questions are presented in a fixed order to enable staff to talk a whole class through a familiarisation assessment, for example by reading the text and the questions together, and discussing the answers and how to respond.

Requirements for learners receiving education through the medium of Welsh

Learners in Year 2 in Welsh-medium education are required to take the Welsh Reading personalised assessments only. Learners in Welsh-medium education in Year 3 are required to take the Welsh Reading personalised assessment. For these learners the English Reading personalised assessment is also available as an option. Learners in Years 4 to 9 in Welsh-medium education are required to take both the Welsh and English Reading personalised assessments. There is no Welsh Reading personalised assessment for learners in English-medium education.

When scheduling an assessment for learners, staff members select English or Welsh Reading personalised assessments as appropriate.

Facilitating a Reading personalised assessment

Before the assessment has started, staff members should remind learners of the key features of the assessments and remind them of the following.

- They may have sentence completion questions, and these may not be at the start of the assessment.
- When they have a text to read, they should read it carefully before they move on to the questions.
- There will be an instruction to use the 'Next' button to answer the questions after the learners have read the text.
- The questions (other than the sentence completion questions) will appear with a button that can be used to open the reading text so learners can refer back to it.
- Learners can select the 'X' button to close the text.
- If the text covers a question the text can be dragged to one side to view the question again.
- Learners cannot have texts or questions read to them as this is an assessment of reading.
- The length of the assessment is not a reflection of the learner's ability and learners should work at their own pace. The assessments will be about 40 minutes, but this will vary depending on how fast the learner works and how many texts and questions they receive.
- If learners do not know the answer to the question, they should move on to the next question.

Modifications to personalised assessments

The assessments have been designed with learners' access in mind. It is expected that nearly all learners will be able to access them without special arrangements. However, where accessible versions are needed the assessments have been devised to meet the widest possible range of access needs, and to work with a wide range of commonly used access technologies and usual access arrangements. Where possible, learners should be provided with support to access the assessments in the same way that it is provided to them in day-to-day classroom practice for computer-based working. Section 6 of the user guide outlines further information on:

- use of tactile diagrams and Braille Reading booklets (section 6.1)

- colour changes (section 6.2.3)
- using screen readers (section 6.3, although please note that screen readers cannot be used with a Reading personalised assessment as this is an assessment of the learner's reading skills)
- enlarged versions or magnification tools (section 6.4)
- use of scribes (section 6.10)
- use of readers (section 6.11, although please note that the instructions can be read to learners in the Reading personalised assessments, but the texts and questions must not be read)
- audio content (section 6.9)
- reading aloud (section 6.12)
- quiet space (section 6.2.2)

Please note

Copies of the booklet of tactile diagrams for Numeracy (Procedural) can be obtained by contacting the Assessment Helpdesk on 029 2026 5099 or

help@personalisedassessments.wales

For the Reading assessments, Braille reading booklets are available in grade 1 and grade 2 Braille. Copies of the booklets can be obtained by contacting the Assessment Helpdesk on 029 2026 5099 or help@personalisedassessments.wales

Staff must allow 2 weeks for delivery of these materials for any planned assessments.

British Sign Language

In the Numeracy (Procedural) and Numeracy (Reasoning) personalised assessments any question or instruction can be signed to the learner. The learner's usual sign language support can be used to sign text to the learner, working at the learner's own pace. You may sign all or part of any question and record the learner's sign language responses if appropriate, and if this is usual classroom practice.

Learners who use and learn through British Sign Language will be dependent on competent interpreters of the assessment material who are able to work at a level appropriate for the assessment and are familiar with learners' use of signs for subject-specific vocabulary.

For Numeracy (Reasoning) where audio narration supports the on-screen content, printable scripts are available to access and download for signing to learners. The audio narration script booklet can be obtained by contacting the Assessment Helpdesk on 029 2026 5099 or help@personalisedassessments.wales

In the Reading personalised assessments, only the instructions can be signed to the learners. Texts and questions cannot be read or signed to the learner as this is an assessment of the learner's reading skills.

Additional communication support

Learners who receive additional communication support in the classroom to access learning should have access to the same support, in line with standard classroom practice for each learner, when taking online assessments.

Changing the assessment starting point

The first question in an assessment is determined by the learner's current national curriculum year group. It is possible for the teacher to override the starting question difficulty, to make it easier than would normally be presented to learners in their national curriculum year. The override is available to the teacher in the assessment website when scheduling an assessment for a learner. For further information see section 6.13 in the user guide.

Note that for learners in Year 2 the starting point in the Numeracy (Procedural) and Numeracy (Reasoning) personalised assessments is one of the easiest questions in the bank. For the Reading personalised assessments there are a number of easy texts and questions in the bank aimed at learners who are finding it difficult to access Year 2 reading skills in the LNF.

Disapplication

Personalised assessments have been designed to allow as many learners as possible to have access to them and there is an expectation that nearly all learners will take them. Staff are able to change the level of difficulty for the start of each assessment (see section 6.13 of the user guide), where they consider it appropriate. There may, however, be a small number of learners who are unable to access the assessments, even with modifications in place.

There may be some learners, mainly but not exclusively in Year 2, who are not yet working at the level of the easiest questions in the bank for one or more of the personalised assessments. Schools have responsibility to identify learners who they consider unable to work at the level of the easiest questions in the personalised assessments question bank or who are unable to access the assessments with modifications in place.

The decision that a learner should not take the personalised assessments is for the headteacher to make. When making a decision the headteacher must:

- have regard to this statutory guidance
- have considered whether any of the access arrangements would support the learner to access the personalised assessments

It is not necessary for headteachers to disapply or modify parts or all of the curriculum in order to do this.

All disapplication decisions must be made individually. For example, a learner disappplied from the Numeracy (Procedural) personalised assessment is not automatically disappplied from either the Numeracy (Reasoning) personalised assessment or the Reading personalised assessment.

In order to minimise any administrative burden for schools, there is no longer a requirement for headteachers to maintain a list of disapplications. However, if requested by their consortia or local authority, headteachers should be able to explain the grounds for the number of disapplications in their school, with regard to the guidance in this handbook.

Disapplication on well-being grounds

Taking a personalised assessment should not be a cause of anxiety for any learner. Teachers may decide that there are instances where they believe a learner's well-being would be adversely affected. In this academic year therefore, the headteacher may continue to make decisions for disapplication on well-being grounds, if they judge them appropriate. The decision should be made on an individual learner basis, and not for whole classes or year groups.

Learners who cannot access the personalised assessments even with modifications

Some learners' additional learning or other needs will be sufficiently significant or severe that, in the view of the headteacher, they will not be able to access the personalised assessments even with full use of the modified personalised assessments and the access arrangements available.

Headteachers may therefore determine that such learners are not required to take the personalised assessments.

Learners for whom relevant sections of the curriculum have been disapplied

Some learners may have a statement of SEN (as provided for in section 113 of the Education Act 2002) or an individual development plan (IDP, as provided for in section 41 of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018) which modifies or disapplies some or all of the curriculum. In addition, under sections 113 to 116 of the Education Act 2002, headteachers may temporarily disapply the curriculum for a particular learner if, for the time being, it is inappropriate to offer the curriculum as it currently applies to them. Where such a disapplication has an effect on the literacy and/or numeracy elements of the curriculum such that the learner's ability to access the personalised assessments would be adversely affected, the headteacher may determine that that learner need not take them.

Learners entering from different education systems and whose ability to access the personalised assessments cannot be established

Due to the facility to adjust the starting question of the assessments, and their year-round availability, it is unlikely that a school would consider disapplication on this basis. However, if a school does not have time to determine a learner's ability to access the personalised assessments before the end of the school year, for example because they have recently arrived from a different education system, the headteacher may determine that a learner need not take personalised assessments during that school year. This provision applies for that year's personalised assessments only.

Disapplication in relation to learners with English as an additional language (EAL) or Welsh as an additional language (WAL)

Disapplication would be appropriate for relatively few EAL or WAL learners. Headteachers who take this option must be willing and able to explain their decision to their regional consortium or local authority and to the learner's parents or carers. When making a decision the headteacher must have:

- regard to this statutory guidance
- considered whether any of the access arrangements would support the learner to access the personalised assessments

Learners who are new to the UK education system

Learners from a non-English-based or non-Welsh-based education system (NEWBES) may not be disapplied from the personalised assessments solely for this reason. The personalised assessments are for formative use and therefore all learners must take them unless they cannot access them, or the school cannot assess their ability to do so.

To consider a learner as NEWBES, the following criteria must be satisfied:

- the learner's first language is not English or Welsh
- the learner has arrived from a non-English-based or non-Welsh-based education system
- the learner entered a United Kingdom (UK) education system on or after the start of the 2022 to 2022 school year (1 September 2022)

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