

## Enterprise and Business Committee

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Meeting Venue:

**Committee Room 3 – Senedd**

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Meeting date:

**26 November 2014**

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Meeting time:

**09.15**

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Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales



For further information please contact:

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### Agenda

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**Pre-meeting – Private (09.15–09.30)**

**Formal Public Meeting (09.30)**

**1 Introductions, apologies and substitutions**

**2 Outreach video on Assisting Young People into Work (09.30–10.00)**

**Break (10.00–10.15)**

**3 Inquiry into Assisting Young People into Work – Session 8**

(10.15–11.15) (Pages 1 – 54)

Julie James, Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology

Huw Morris, Group Director SHELL, Welsh Government  
Teresa Holdsworth, Deputy Director Youth Engagement and Employment Division,  
Welsh Government

Attached Documents:

Research Service Summary of Consultation Responses

Research Brief

Summary of Outreach Questionnaires

EBC(4)-30-14 (p. 1) – Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology

EBC(4)-30-14 (p. 2) – Minister for Education and Skills

**4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public for the remainder of the meeting (11.15)**

**De-brief (11.15-11.30)**

**5 Legislative Consent Motion: Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill (11.30-11.45) (Pages 55 – 64)**

Attached Documents:

EBC(4)-30-14 (p. 6) – LCM Approach and Legal Advice Note

**STEM Skills – Working Lunch in Conference Room C (12.15-13.15)**

Attached documents:

Timetable for working lunch

Brief on Government response

Document is Restricted

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted

## **Assembly Communications – Outreach**

### **Summary of the Curriculum, Assessment and Qualifications Questionnaire**

#### **Background**

The National Assembly for Wales' Communications team works with the Assembly's committees to engage the people of Wales in Assembly business. We do this by creating direct links between the issues people care about and the work of committees, and providing tailored opportunities for them to have their say.

This document provides a summary of responses received to the Curriculum, Assessment and Qualifications questionnaire conducted by the Outreach team.

Although not specifically designed to inform the Enterprise and Business Committee Inquiry into Assisting Young People into Work, some elements of the questionnaire and subsequent findings may be relevant to the inquiry's terms of reference.

#### **Methodology**

As part of the Children, Young People and Education Committee's scoping exercise into the Curriculum, Assessment and Qualifications the Outreach Team conducted a survey in paper-based format. Participants were asked a range of questions relating to the importance of literacy skills, the skills and subjects young people should be taught at school, their opinion of the Welsh Baccalaureate and whether the qualifications they can currently obtain are suitable for gaining employment.

The survey was created with the aim of targeting children and young people between 14-19 years of age.

#### **Awareness Raising**

The questionnaire was promoted by Assembly staff with relevant groups visiting the Senedd, receiving education visits, and during the Assembly's presence at summer events.



## Key Statistics

**1177** Total number of survey responses received

## Geographical Summary of Responses

Home postcode of survey respondents

Total number of responses: 754

**CF: 299** (South Wales Central)

**CH: 11** (North Wales)

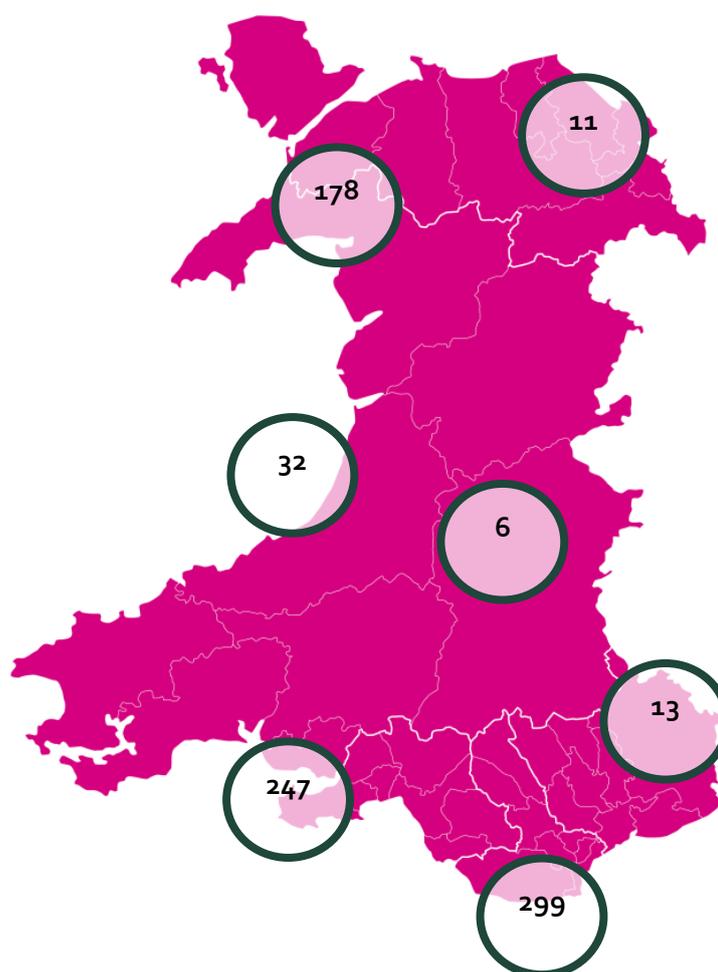
**LL: 178** (North Wales/Mid and West Wales)

**LD: 6** (Mid and West Wales)

**NP: 13** (South Wales East)

**SA: 247** (South Wales West/Mid and West Wales)

**SY: 32** (Mid and West Wales)



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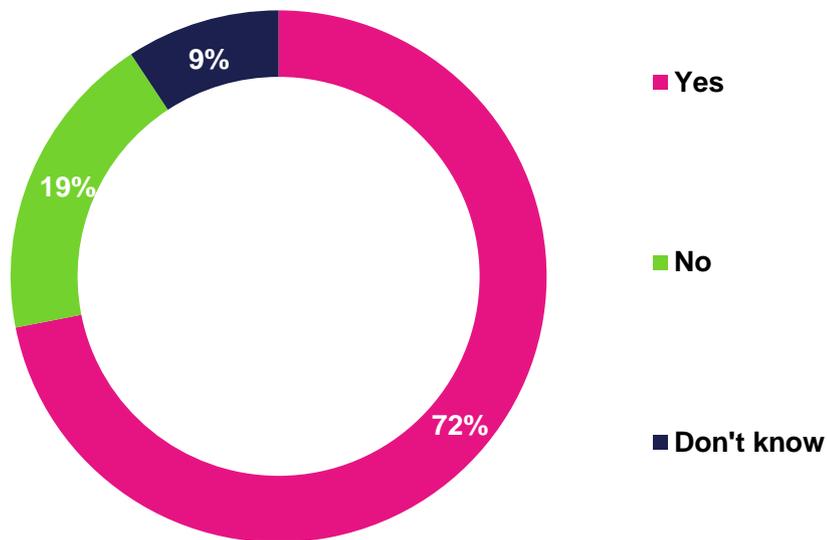
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## Summary of Responses

Question 1: Do you think that reading and writing skills are more important than any other skills you gain at school? Why?

Total number of responses: 1,175

- Yes: **71.91% (845)**
- No: **18.80% (221)**
- Don't know: **9.27% (109)**

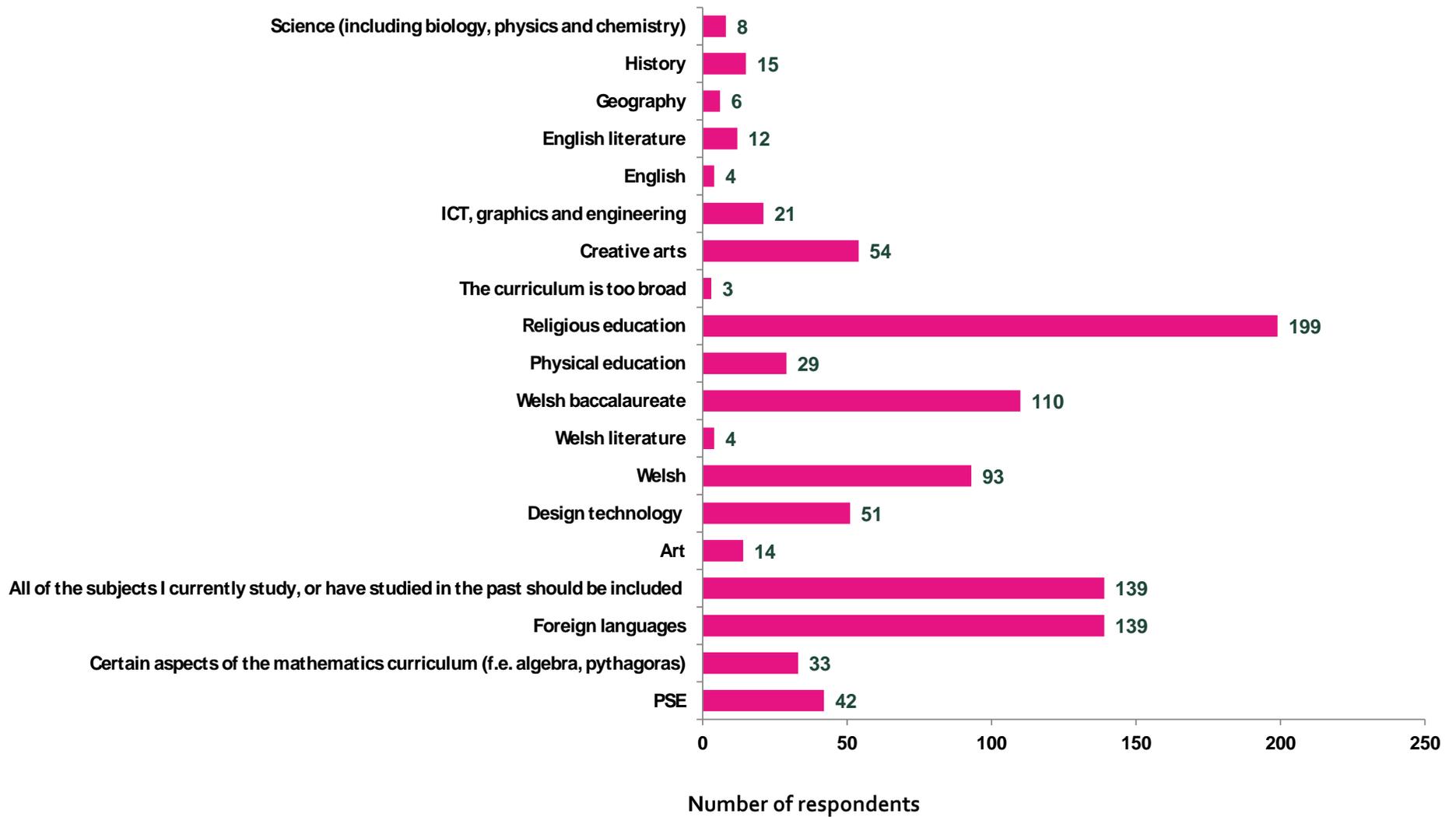


## Comments

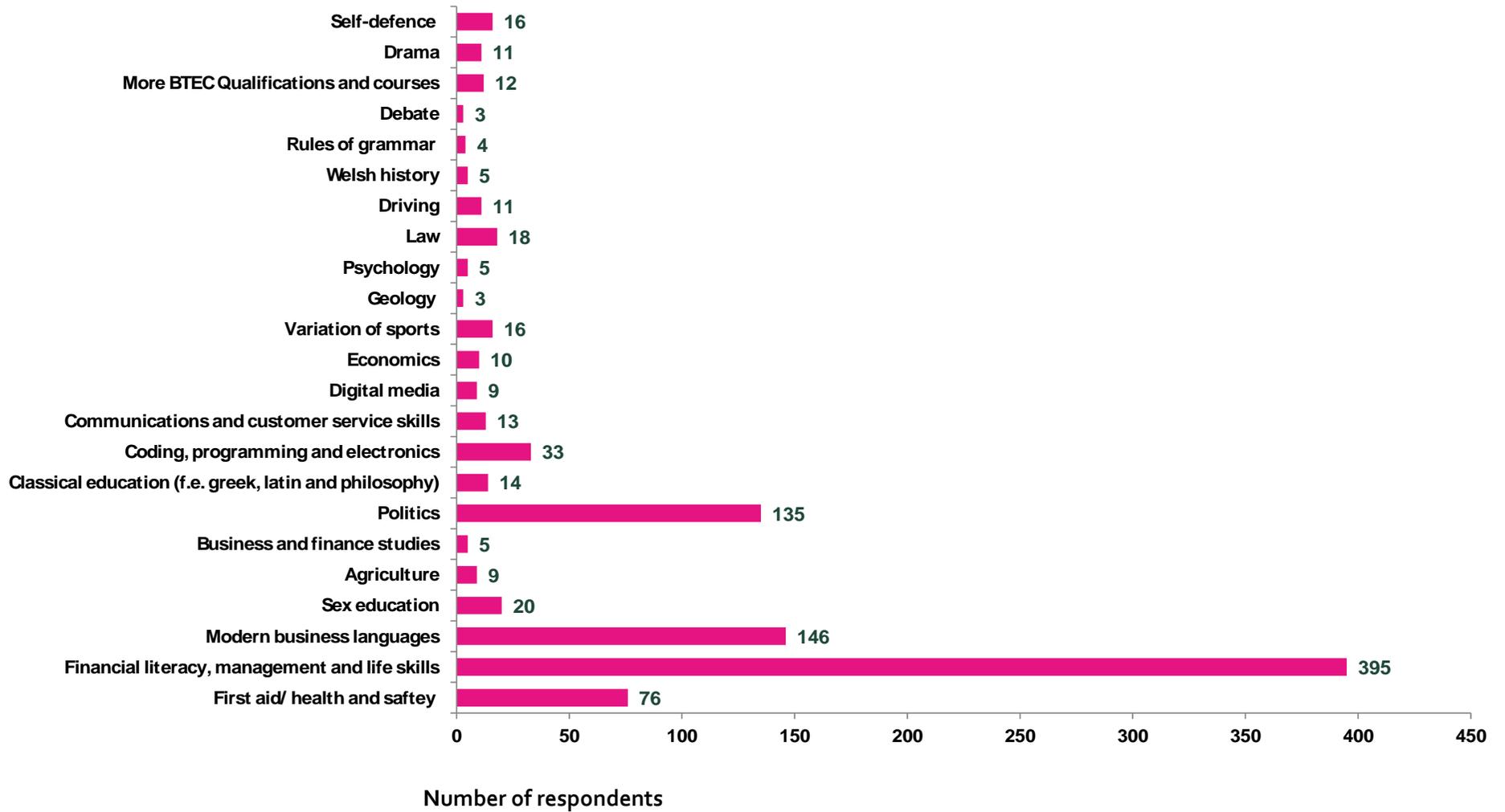
- 742 (84.5%) of the young people stated that reading and writing skills are the foundation for all other skills and dictate your future success (whether in work or in academia);
- 58 (6.6%) of respondents argued that all of the skills acquired through their education are equally important skills to reading and writing;
- 57 (6.5%) of the young people felt that other skills (e.g. financial literacy, communication and I.T) are more important in this digital age than traditional literacy skills;
- 8 (0.91%) of respondents stated that literacy skills allow people to communicate effectively with each other in society;
- 7 (0.79%) of the young people argued that literacy skills are only important in so far as they're relevant to your chosen career path;
- 3 (0.34%) of respondents felt that many jobs in this digital age do not require literacy skills;
- 2 (0.22%) of the young people stated that these basic literacy skills are often taken for granted; and
- 1 (0.11%) of the respondents argued that the state cannot rely on parents to teach their children these basic literacy skills.



Question 2 – Is there anything you are studying at school now, or have studied in the past, that you think shouldn't be included in the curriculum anymore?



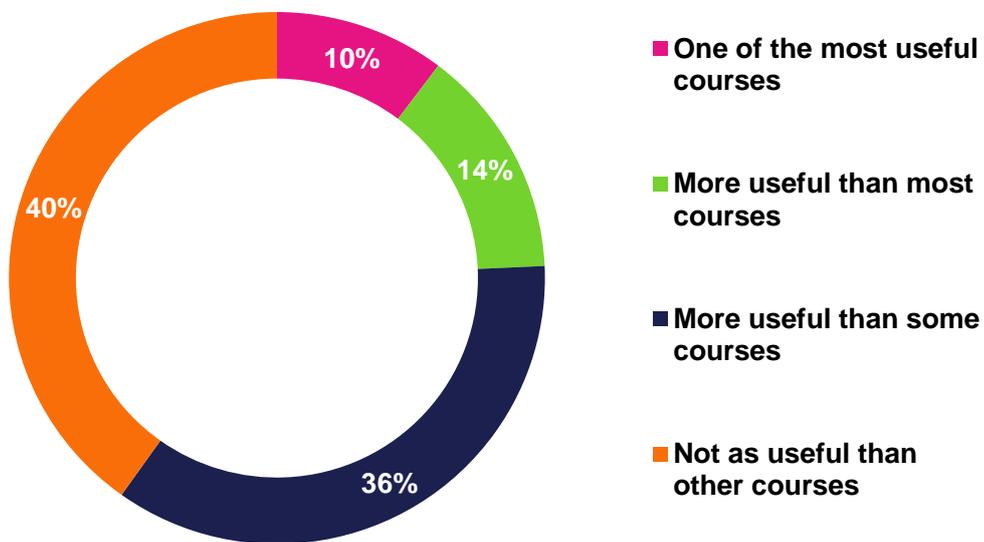
Question 3 – Is there anything you think should be taught in schools that isn't at the moment?



**Question 4 – In your opinion, the Welsh Bacallaureate is/was:**

*Total number of responses: 1,108*

- One of the most useful courses: **10.28% (114)**
- More useful than most courses: **13.98% (155)**
- More useful than some courses: **35.55% (394)**
- Not as useful as other courses: **40.16% (445)**



## Comments

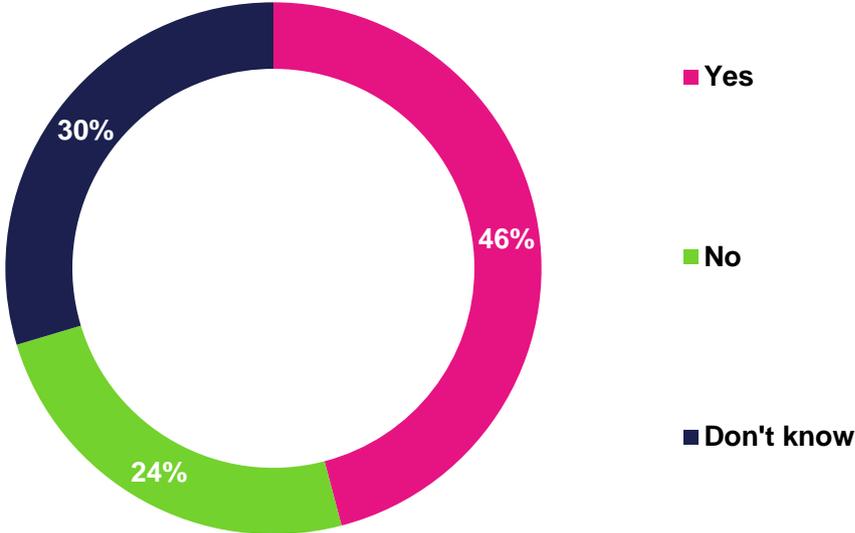
- 289 young people stated that the Welsh Bacallaureate helped teach them a variety of core skills (e.g group work and team building, communications and public speaking);
- 44 respondents argued that the Welsh Bacallaureate isn't useful because it isn't accepted by all Universities (particularly those outside of Wales);
- 214 young people felt that the Welsh Bacallaureate is irrelevant in its worth as a qualification and not useful;
- 9 respondents stated that the Welsh Bacallaureate as a qualification is/was too easy to justify an A-level award;
- 148 young people felt that the Welsh Bacallaureate is useful in terms of its value in UCAS points when making applications to University, and awards a pupil with a recognised University/College qualification;
- 45 respondents argued that working towards the Welsh Bacallaureate qualification is/was too time consuming;
- 13 young people stated that the Welsh Bacallaureate only helps pupils who wish to go on and study in Higher or Further Education;
- 7 respondents felt that the Welsh Bacallaureate allowed them to learn more about Wales, Welsh culture and it's politics;
- 65 young people argued that the other subjects they study/studied were more important than the Welsh Bacallaureate;
- 14 respondents felt that the Welsh Bacallaureate's value hinged on what field/subject a young person wanted to go on and study;
- 4 young people stated that many of the skills they learn whilst studying the Welsh Bacallaureate were ones they had already developed through other subjects;
- 22 respondents argued that the Welsh Bacallaureate could be taught better;
- 7 young people felt that the Welsh Bacallaureate should be an optional subject choice;
- 12 respondents stated that the Welsh Bacallaureate taught them the skills employers look for when sifting job applications.



**Question 5 - Should the Welsh Bacalaureate be used as one of the main ways to give young people the right skills to find the job they want, or get into the college or university they want?**

Total number of responses: 1,137

- Yes: 45.91% (522)
- No: 24.45% (278)
- Don't know: 26.63% (337)



## Comments

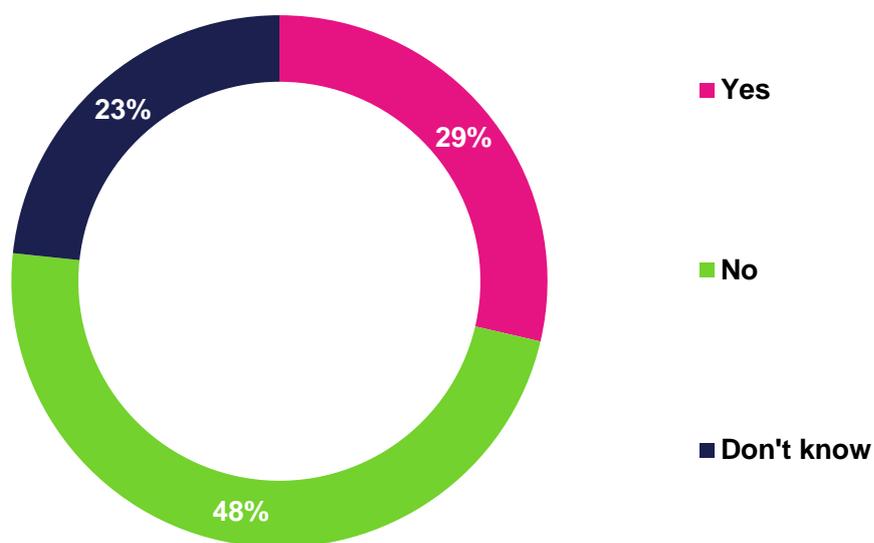
- 111 young people agreed with the question, on the basis that the Welsh Baccaulaureate covers a variety of important skills pupils need to succeed;
- 54 respondents felt that as the Welsh Baccaulaureate is a recognised qualification, it should be used as a way of giving young people the skills they want to work or to University/College;
- 45 young people argued against the question, on the basis that the Welsh Baccaulaureate is not a useful subject to study;
- 48 respondents agreed that other subjects are equally/ more important for giving you the skills you need to enter the workforce or go to University/College;
- 30 young people felt that the Welsh Baccaulaureate is/was a useful subject to study;
- 25 respondents argued that the Welsh Baccaulaureate helps students to make decisions about their future;
- 19 young people stated that the Welsh Baccaulaureate is an easy course and qualification for pupils to attain these necessary skills;
- 15 respondents felt that the Welsh Baccaulaureate could be improved to provide students with more practical experience of the skills needed to work and/or go to College/University;
- 14 young people argued that the Welsh Baccaulaureate can help you only in so far as your desire to continue studying and/or working in Wales;
- 10 respondents stated that the Welsh Baccaulaureate should be an optional subject to study;
- 4 young people felt that an International Baccaulaureate would be more useful in this context;
- 3 respondents argued against the question, on the basis that the qualification isn't recognised by every employer, College and University in the UK.



**Question 6 – Did your schools and/or your careers advisor tell you about the different vocational qualifications, like NVQs, that you can study?**

*Total number of responses: 1,128*

- Yes: **28.63% (323)**
- No: **48.04% (542)**
- Don't know: **23.31% (263)**

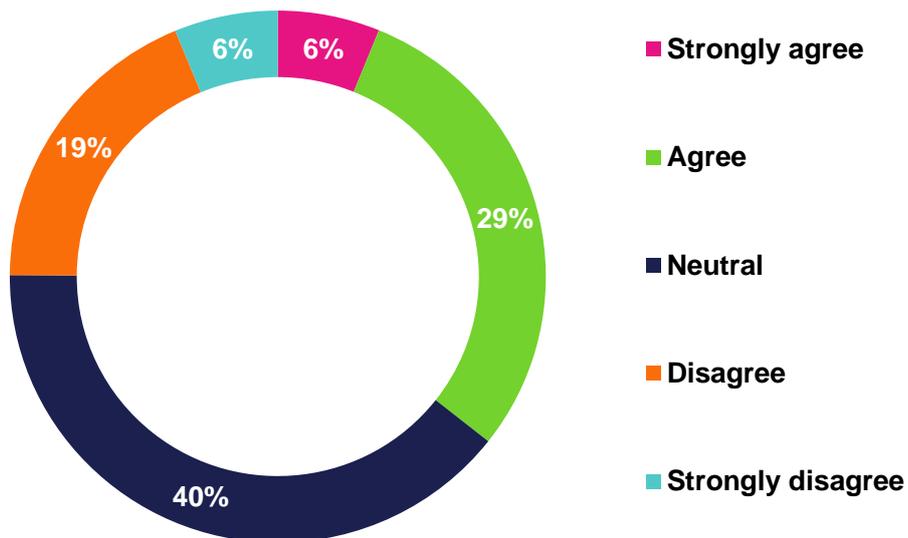


Question 7 – How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

*"What is currently being taught in school or college adequately prepares me, or has adequately prepared me, for later life and finding a job"*

Total number of responses: 1,120

- Strongly Agree: **6.16% (69)**
- Agree: **29.46% (330)**
- Neutral: **39.46% (442)**
- Disagree: **18.66% (209)**
- Strongly disagree: **6.25% (70)**



## Comments

- 9 young people argued that at present, they are only being taught how to pass exams, as opposed to preparation for later life and finding suitable work;
- 15 respondents felt that more could be done to improve what is currently being taught at school or college to help prepare them in their future endeavours;
- 331 young people stated that they feel adequately prepared for later life and finding a job. These reasons included acquiring the necessary skills employers look for in potential candidates, and the requisite qualifications to go to Further or Higher Education;
- 406 respondents argued that they did not feel adequately prepared for their later life and finding a job. Respondents cited that they had not received any practical help whatsoever in terms of achieving these objectives, which often involve writing CVs and covering letters, making applications or simple financial management.

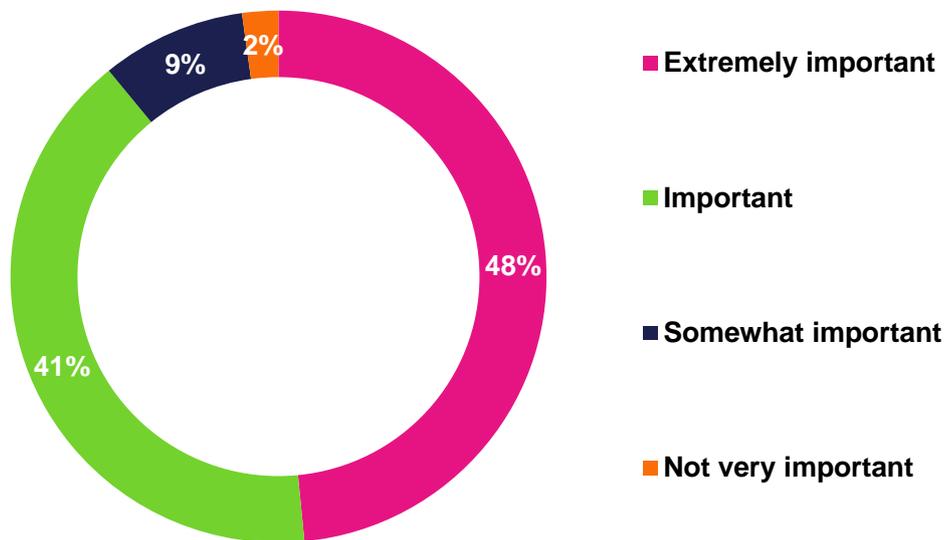
Financial literacy was cited as the biggest skill respondents felt lacking in when answering this question, and they would like to have learnt more about mortgages, savings, investments and how to open a bank account.



**Question 8 – Is it important that the qualifications young people in Wales achieve are respected and valued by potential employers, colleges and universities in other parts of the UK and the rest of the world?**

*Total number of responses: 1,100*

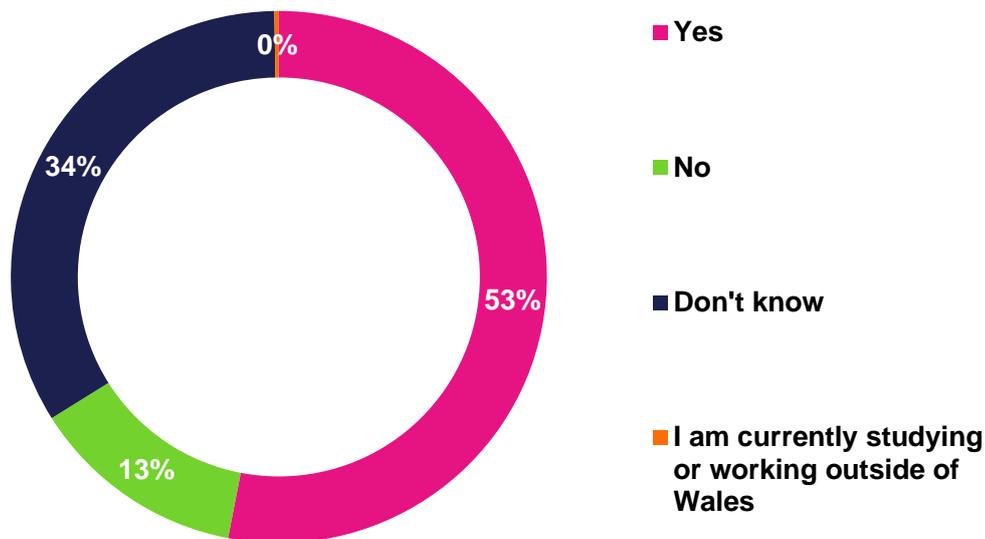
- Extremely important: **48.45% (533)**
- Important: **40.63% (447)**
- Somewhat important: **8.72% (96)**
- Not very important: **2.18% (24)**



## Question 9 – Do you think you will want to study or work outside of Wales in future?

Total number of responses: 1,103

- Yes: **53.03% (585)**
- No: **13.05% (155)**
- Don't know: **33.63% (371)**
- I am currently working or studying outside of Wales: **0.27% (3)**



### Comments

- 214 young people stated that they would like to study or work outside of Wales, whether within the UK or abroad;
- 17 respondents felt that this decision premised on their final grades;
- 81 young people argued that they would like to stay in Wales to work and/or study;
- 284 young people felt that they would have to work and/or study outside of Wales because there are more work opportunities and better Academic Institutions;
- 22 respondents argued that as Welsh speakers, they want to stay in Wales but may feel that they have to leave due to the work opportunities available to them;
- 6 young people stated that the courses they want to study at University/College were only available outside of Wales.

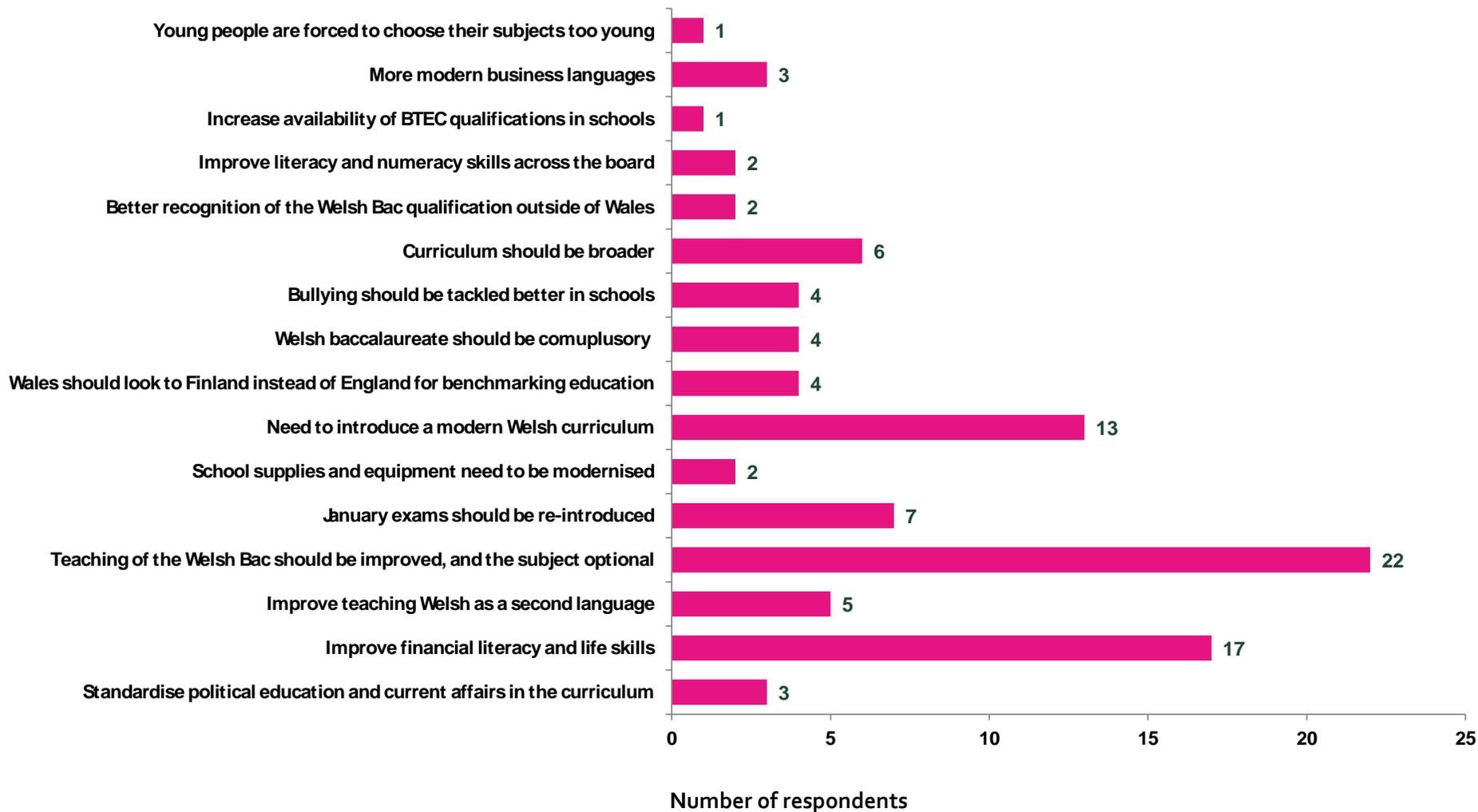


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Question 10 – Do you have any other comments you wish to make about the curriculum and qualifications in Wales?



### Question 11 – What is your home postcode?

Total number of responses: 754

CF: **4.0%** (299) (South Wales Central)

CH: **1.48%** (11) (North Wales)

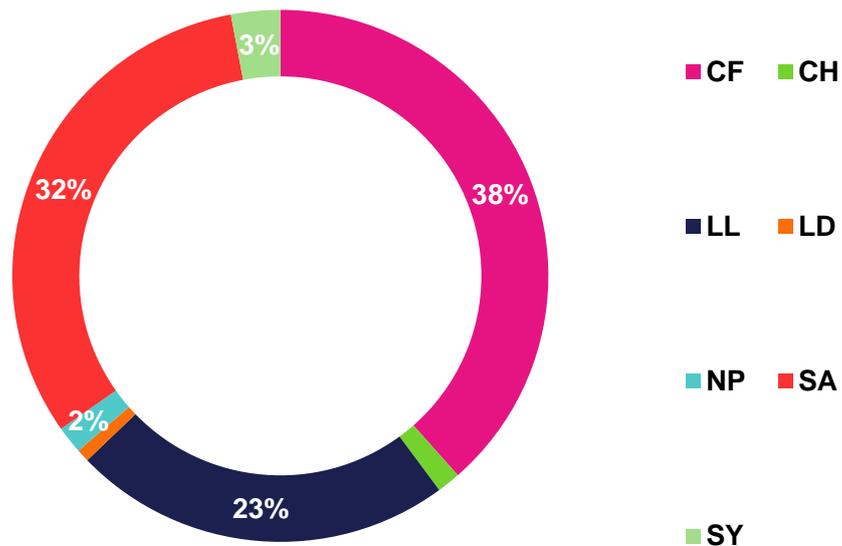
LL: **23.6%** (178) (North Wales / Mid and West Wales)

LD: **0.79%** (6) (Mid and West Wales)

NP: **1.72%** (13) (South Wales East)

SA: **33%** (247) (South Wales West / Mid and West Wales)

SY: **3.05%** (23) (Mid and West Wales)



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# ENTERPRISE & BUSINESS COMMITTEE INQUIRY ASSISTING YOUNG PEOPLE INTO WORK WRITTEN EVIDENCE

## BACKGROUND

The Welsh Government is committed to supporting the engagement and progression of all young people aged 16-24 years in Wales. We first set out our expectations for the delivery of Youth Support Services to support the engagement and progression of young people in *Extending Entitlement: supporting young people in Wales (2000)* and further directions and guidance in 2002. An on-going commitment to reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment and training (NEET), was set out in the Tackling Poverty Action Plan. Published in July 2013, the action plan sets targets to:

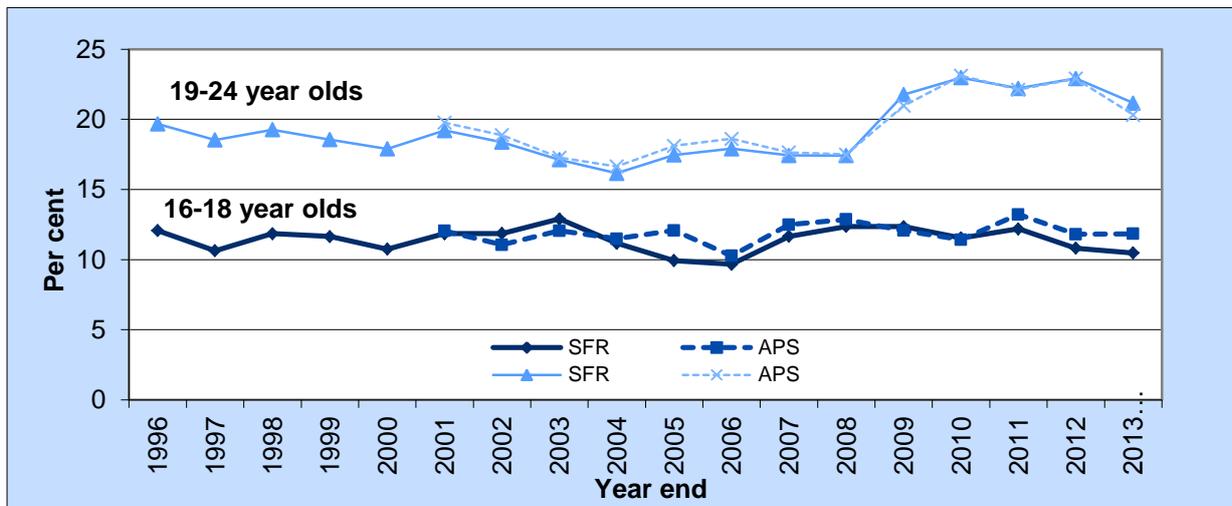
- reduce the number of NEET young people aged 16-18 to 9% by 2017
- reduce the proportion of young people aged 19-24 who are NEET in Wales relative to the UK as a whole by 2017.

## THE DATA

The number and proportion of young people who are NEET in Wales is published annually in the Statistical First Release (SFR), *Participation of young people in education and the labour market*. The release provides information on the learning activities and labour market status of young people aged 16-24 in Wales and is based on population data, school pupil numbers, information on enrolments at Further Education Institutions in Wales, including work-based learning and enrolments at Higher Education Institutions, alongside economic activity data from the Annual Population Survey.

The chart below shows that the proportion of 16-18 year olds who are NEET has remained around 10 to 13 per cent since 1996, decreasing to 10 per cent at end 2013. Prior to the start of the 2008 recession the proportion of those aged 19-24 who are NEET was broadly stable. However after the start of the 2008 recession the proportion of 19-24 who are NEET saw a large increase from 17 per cent to levels around 22 to 23 per cent from 2009 onwards, with a decrease to 21 per cent in the latest period. The 2008 recession could therefore be interpreted to be a contributory factor to the higher levels of those NEET amongst 19-24 year olds in recent years. The chart below shows estimates from the Annual Population Survey alongside the Statistical First Release data.

## Young people NEET in Wales: Comparison of estimates in the Statistical First Release and using the Annual Population Survey<sup>1</sup> (calendar year)

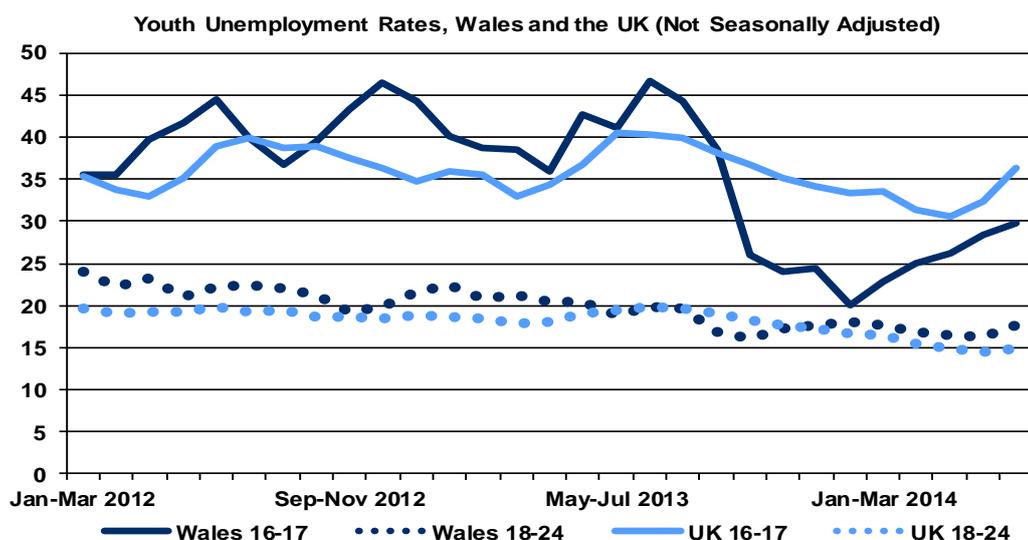


(p) SFR: Year end 2013 is provisional

<sup>1</sup>For years 2001-2003 the source is the annual Local Labour Force Survey for Wales<sup>1</sup>

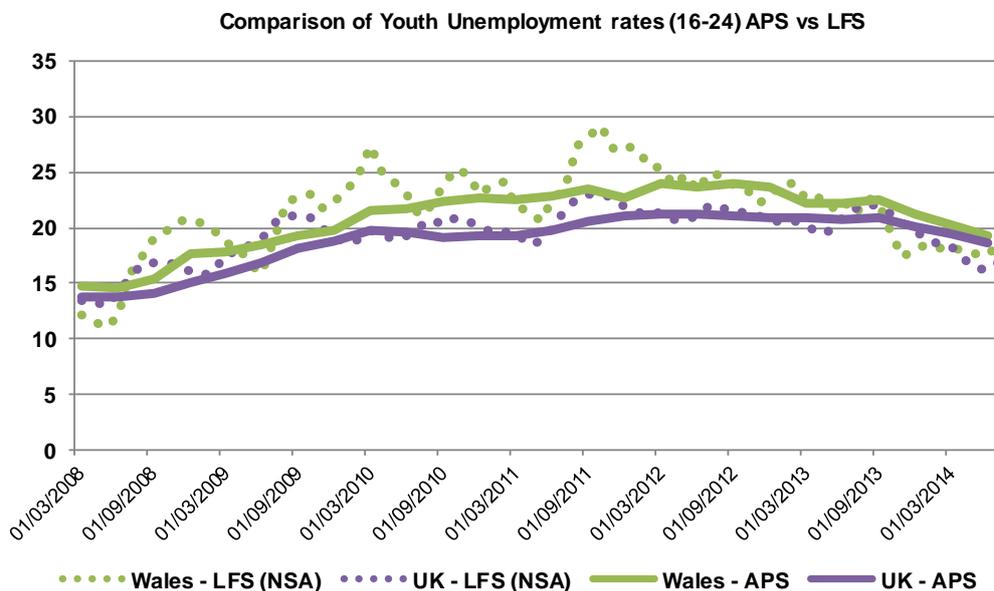
For youth unemployment, there are two sources of data, the monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the preferred, more robust but slightly less timely, quarterly Annual Population Survey (APS). The information below relates to data up to and including June 2014 for the APS and data up to and including July 2014 for the LFS.

The LFS statistics show that up to July, and for the 16-17 age group, Wales had an unemployment rate of 29.7 per cent with a decrease of 11.4 percentage points over the year compared to the UK rate of 36.3 per cent (down 4.3 percentage points over the year). For the 18-24 age group Wales had the third highest unemployment rate of the UK countries and English regions at 17.6 per cent (down 1.2 percentage points on the year). The UK average 18-24 age group unemployment rate was 14.9 per cent (down 4.5 percentage points over the year).



<sup>1</sup> [Statistical Bulletin Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\) \(Year to 31 December 2013\)](#)

The APS results up to June 2014 show that youth unemployment for the whole age group 16-24 is falling faster in Wales than in the UK. Both the APS and the LFS also show the rate to be above that of the UK.



## REDUCING THE NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING

### The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework

Given the on-going economic challenges we face as a country we are committed to ensuring the best possible opportunities exist for maximising youth engagement and progression in Wales. Despite the data showing that improvements have been made in recent years there has been a need to reinvigorate our approach in order to secure further improvements. The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework and Implementation Plan<sup>2</sup>, published in October 2013, seeks to bring together all of the elements of effective NEET reduction in one place.

The Framework is built around the needs of young people where better availability of information enables the young person to act as a more powerful consumer in the system and where the accountability of different agencies for delivering better outcomes for young people is strengthened.

The foundations of our approach are based on six key building blocks:

- Identifying young people most at risk of disengagement.
- Better brokerage and co-ordination of support.
- Stronger tracking and transitions of young people through the system.
- Ensuring provision meets the needs of young people.
- Strengthening employability skills and opportunities for employment.
- Greater accountability for better outcomes for young people.

<sup>2</sup> [Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Implementation Plan](#)

The Framework sets out the role of Welsh Government, local authorities and other partners in increasing youth engagement and employment in Wales. The Youth Engagement & Progression Framework and Implementation Plan are non statutory, but complement existing guidance (Extending Entitlement 2002) by providing examples of how to implement targeted approaches to the provision of youth support services. The Framework is underpinned by a two year implementation plan.

A recent Wales Audit Office report<sup>3</sup> into young people not in education, employment and training highlighted that the Welsh Government *“is well placed to reduce the number of young people aged 16-18 who are NEET”* and if implemented successfully the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework is *“likely to help reduce the overall number of 16-18 year olds who are NEET”*.

The purpose of the Framework is to provide a systematic mechanism for local authorities to identify those in need of support, to establish the support available, and to track the progress of young people as they make the transition from education into further education or employment. The Framework provides the structure to help local authorities to establish whether local and national provision is delivering effective outcomes and value for money through the measurement of reductions in numbers of young people NEET at a local level.

At the heart of the Framework are two new actions, the first is the offer of a lead worker within a relevant organisation who can provide continuity of support and contact for the most at risk young people. The second is the development of a proactive Youth Guarantee which is the offer, acceptance and commencement of a suitable place in education or training for a young person making the first time transition from compulsory education at age 16. We believe this will provide a clear progression route for all young people, linked to effective information, advice and guidance to help them make a more informed choice, and support their progression post 16.

There is no additional cost to implementing the Framework; it is intended to help local authorities refocus their existing expenditure as a result of mapping provision to identify potential gaps, recognise any unmet provision need and importantly removing any duplication and overlaps in provision.

We believe local authorities are best placed to provide strategic and operational leadership for the Framework’s implementation. Each local authority submitted an action plan in March 2014 confirming their commitment to implement the milestones set out in the Framework’s implementation plan. Welsh Government officials have analysed each action plan using contextual, post 16 destination and quarterly Careers Wales progression data to identify potential delivery risks and to monitor progress. This analysis has been discussed with local authorities during bi-annual review meetings with Welsh Government officials to ensure local authorities are delivering the right support to these young people.

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<sup>3</sup> [Wales Audit Office Report - Young people not in education, employment and training](#)

Regional Working Groups, facilitated by Welsh Government, have been established which include local authorities and representation from Careers Wales, FE, Work Based Learning, NTfW, Regional Education Consortia, schools and the Third Sector. The workshops are themed around the different areas of the Framework in order to share experiences, highlight good practice and to help Welsh Government develop any further guidance required.

Each local authority has a Welsh Government lead contact who works closely with them to support their implementation of the Framework, ensuring that they meet the milestones within the implementation plan. A formal evaluation of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework is currently underway. The evaluation programme is split in to two phases; and will continue until 2018. The first phase will provide evidence about the effectiveness of the framework in facilitating local authorities and their partners to engage young people. The second phase will be an impact evaluation of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework.

### **Improving Education-Employer Engagement**

As part of the employability strand of the Framework we have committed to strengthening employer engagement in schools. The Enhanced Employer Engagement project will aim to establish more strategic, coherent and sustainable approaches to education-employer links which will help prepare young people more effectively for transition into the world of work. We want to introduce a more consistent 'partnership model' and use the new model to create new and higher expectations of school-employer links across secondary schools in Wales.

Welsh Government is also leading on the development of an ESF project which will be delivered by Careers Wales and is called 'Activate your potential'. Activate your potential aims to provide employer-linked activities and opportunities, supplemented with careers information; advice and guidance to young people aged 11-19. These young people will typically demonstrate patterns of attendance, levels of attainment, general conduct and broader employability skills that place them at risk of disengaging from education, employment or training.

### **Careers Advice and Guidance**

Careers Wales provides an all-age, bilingual and impartial Careers Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) service. There is a statutory duty on Welsh Ministers to provide CIAG services to young people in schools and colleges, a responsibility they discharge through the services delivered by Careers Wales.

During the period of April 2013 to March 2014, Careers Wales supported 3,794 young people into employment, apprenticeships or Jobs Growth Wales opportunities:

- 826 were 16 to 18 year olds
- 2,968 were 19 to 24 year olds

Careers Wales provide targeted services to support young people who are not in employment, education or training. Careers Wales are highly effective in supporting young people to get on in life. In 2013-14 a total of 5,199 (or 81%) of unemployed young people aged 16-18 working with Careers Wales progressed into education,

training or employment and 489 (8%) were referred to other agencies to address identified personal barriers to progression.

These actions support the wider agenda of Poverty Reduction in Wales: Stakeholders support the value of the contribution made by Careers Wales in this regard - *“The opportunity to work together (with Careers Wales) and access impartial careers advice has been hugely beneficial in our task of helping people into employment, particularly in respect of many of our customers who have never worked and who lack clear and realistic career aspirations”*. (Huw Thomas, Group Partnership Manager, Wales, Department for Work and Pensions – June 2014)

Careers Wales are working to effectively connect with regional Labour Market Information and economic development plans. *“Careers Wales provides a clear consistency in terms of approach with schools; employer engagement; co-delivery with education partners on STEM and other regional priorities.”* (Iwan Thomas, Regional Skills & Employment Coordinator, North Wales Economic Ambitions Board – July 2014).

### **Traineeship Programme**

The Traineeship Programme is a non-employed status training programme for 16-18 year olds not otherwise engaged in post-16 education or employment. The Programme supports young people to gain sustained employment by helping them with their confidence and motivation. The Programme seeks to improve skill levels through the delivery of entry level qualifications up to NVQ Level 1 in their chosen occupational area. Progression rates for young people leaving the Traineeship Programme are encouraging. In its first year of operation, 63 per cent of leavers from the Traineeship programme had a positive progression (i.e. to employment (including self employment or voluntary work) or learning at a higher level). For year 2 (2012/13) progression statistics show that 67 per cent of leavers from the Traineeship programme had a positive progression (i.e. to employment (including self employment or voluntary work) or learning at a higher level).

A two year evaluation of Work-Based learning will run until 2015. The evaluation will specifically take account the Traineeship Programme to seek to establish whether or not it is operating as intended, and consider key lessons for future development of the programme.

### **Young Recruits Programme**

The Young Recruits Programme (YRP) is an all Wales programme that provides financial support to eligible employers who can offer a high quality apprenticeship programme to recruit and train additional young apprentices (16-24 year olds). The YRP offers a subsidy of £50 per week to employers for up to 52 weeks to support apprentice’s wages. YRP has been extremely successful in supporting Apprenticeship delivery and we have exceeded our Programme for Government commitment to support 4,000 apprentices during 2013-15.

### **Apprenticeships**

The Welsh Government fully supports Apprenticeships in Wales and this remains one of its flagship programmes. Apprenticeships are a way to earn a wage and work alongside experienced staff to gain job-specific skills. The Welsh Government pays

for the training element of Apprenticeships, whilst the employer is responsible for the employment costs, such as salary. Any company in Wales, whatever size or sector, can engage with the Apprenticeship programme. One of the key aims of the programme is to support businesses wishing to take on an apprentice, thereby providing investment to assist businesses to develop a skilled workforce and contribute to economic growth. In Wales, the all age programme, has targeted support to those aged between 16 – 24 years so that we can ensure we get the right balance between serving the needs of young people entering the labour market, and providing options for adults.

Over the last few years, the success rate for the Apprenticeship Programme has been raised significantly reaching over 80%. The programme is supported by an Apprenticeship Matching Service, which is a free online tool for both employers and potential apprentices to access to advertise and apply for Apprenticeship vacancies.

### **Jobs Growth Wales**

The Welsh Government recognises that reducing the number of young people who are NEET in the ages of 19-24 is more challenging as the statistics highlight it is impacted by a number of issues, specifically economic and employment factors which fall under the remit of the UK Government.

The Jobs Growth Wales programme launched in April 2012 was developed as a direct response to the disproportionate effect on the unemployment levels experienced by young people across Wales. It was introduced to create jobs for young people who are unemployed but ready to take up employment. Jobs Growth Wales has been designed to tackle a key issue that young people face in their search for work; namely, how can they secure the relevant work experience required by employers to enable them to find permanent employment. Not only does Jobs Growth Wales create opportunities for unemployed young people, but the posts are also “additional” jobs, helping Welsh businesses to grow.

Latest unemployment figures suggest that Jobs Growth Wales is having a positive impact on reducing youth unemployment in Wales, as the rate of unemployment is falling faster in Wales than any other region of the UK. The programme has now created over 16,000 job opportunities with over 12,700 young people filling these jobs. Jobs Growth Wales has exceeded its target of filling 12,000 job opportunities over three years of delivery ahead of schedule.

### **Skills Policy**

On 30 January 2014, the Welsh Government published its Policy Statement on Skills which outlined the major challenges facing post-19 employment and skills in Wales over the next decade. To address these challenges, a Skills Implementation Plan was produced and in July.

The plan sets out the policy actions required in order to develop a sustainable skills system for the future. It has the aim of supporting Wales to evolve into a highly skilled nation and to create the conditions which will allow businesses in Wales to grow and flourish. To achieve this aim the Welsh Government recognises there must

be responsible action from government, employers, providers and individuals particularly in regard to investment in skills.

The plan focuses on providing an integrated and accessible employment and skills offer across Wales. For example, the new Skills Gateway will facilitate access to employment and skills support for both employers and individuals. The plan also sets out how we will strengthen the approach to regional skills delivery, building on the regional structures in place across Wales.

The Welsh Government is committed to continuing to work with employers, trade unions and delivery partners to deliver this plan and achieve a sustainable and competitive skills system for Wales.

## **National Assembly for Wales**

### **Enterprise and Business Committee**

**November 2014**

#### **Inquiry into Assisting Young People into Work**

##### **Evidence from: Welsh Government**

The Committee has requested an update on recent changes to pre and post 16 education provision to understand more fully how these changes will better prepare young people for the world of work.

##### **1. The National Literacy and Numeracy Framework**

The National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) was introduced as a statutory curriculum requirement in September 2013 and aims to bring precision into the teaching and learning in key literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. It currently covers Reception to Year 9.

From September 2015, the LNF will be extended to cover 3-4 years and 14-16 year olds (on a non-statutory basis). It is fully inclusive and designed for all learners of all abilities. It was designed and developed in collaboration with practitioners and LA representatives, and was subject to full consultation. This included stakeholder sessions, between April and October 2012. It was made available in January 2013 and was broadly welcomed and continues to be supported by the sector.

Since September 2014 there has also been a requirement for schools to assess using the LNF. The Framework gives teachers the tool to track all pupils' progress with precision.

In supporting the implementation of the LNF, we have developed an interactive version of the LNF online, complete with exemplifications for each expectation statement. There is also a range of training, guidance and exemplification materials for teachers and schools – also designed and developed in collaboration with practitioners (some from school practitioner panel schools).

The National Support Programme (NSP) has been put in place to provide hands on support to all schools in Wales, including special schools to help understand the requirements of the LNF and to implement the LNF.

The NSP works with 1600 schools across Wales - primary, secondary, special and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and has produced 330 resources and materials to support schools to implement the LNF. Some 92 schools have received direct funding to develop best practice material to share with the wider school system in Wales. Although early days, early indications are schools are working very hard to embed the LNF into their teaching and learning.

Implementing the LNF is the responsibility of the whole school. All teachers should be teachers of literacy and numeracy. They should actively embrace opportunities to embed these crucial skills in teaching across the curriculum.

## **2. New/revised qualifications including changes to GCSEs and the Welsh Baccalaureate**

The Review of Qualifications took a comprehensive look at qualifications for 14-19 year olds in Wales and made 42 recommendations for improving the qualifications system in Wales. The Review was prompted by concerns that the qualifications system in Wales was overly complicated and that improvements were needed to ensure that the qualifications on offer are relevant in terms of the progression opportunities they offer young people and valuable in terms of the broader educational benefits they extend to learners.

**GCSEs:** GCSEs remain as the main Level 1 and Level 2 general qualifications at 14 to 19 in Wales. New GCSEs in English Language and Welsh Language were accredited in October for first teaching from September 2015 and will provide a greater focus on literacy and the functional skills that learners need in their everyday lives, preparing them for the world of work or further study. Two new maths GCSEs were also accredited in October for first teaching from September 2015; one will focus on the maths needed for everyday life and the world of work and the other will focus on the mathematics needed for progression to scientific, technical or further mathematical study. Having two maths GCSEs reflects the importance of the subject for progression and employment; it is expected that most young people in Wales will take both new mathematics GCSEs.

These new GCSEs reflect and support the improvements that will result from the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework. Learners who have not achieved at least a grade C in GCSE English or Welsh Language and Mathematics-Numeracy by 16 will be expected to continue to work towards these GCSEs or other appropriate qualifications.

**AS/A Levels:** The Review found strong support for both the A level brand and product and concluded that A levels are fit for purpose and require little change. Several AS and A level qualifications are being revised for 2015 and we are developing these in step with changes in England.

A levels in Wales and England will be the same in size, scope and level of demand, and will share the same content as far as possible. AS qualifications will remain as a coupled part of A level qualifications in Wales; stakeholders, including universities, have been clear that they value and support this approach.

**Welsh Baccalaureate:** A new Welsh Baccalaureate was accredited in October for first teaching from September 2015. In line with the Review's recommendations the Welsh Baccalaureate has been revised and made more rigorous and will focus on developing the skills valued worldwide by employers and higher education. These skills include: literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, planning, organisation, innovation, creativity, critical thinking, problem solving and personal effectiveness. These skills

are developed and assessed through three Challenges and a substantial individual project, based on independent research.

**Vocational qualifications:** All vocational qualifications in Wales are being classified as either IVETs or CVETs (initial or continuing vocational education and training), according to European conventions. Since September, only IVETs have been available to learners up to the age of 16, so younger learners have access to qualifications appropriate for their age, providing a broad introduction to a sector and allowing for progression. Those over 16 can take IVETs or CVETs, which focus more on competence in specific roles. To support the on-going development and improvement of the vocational qualifications systems in Wales, the Welsh Government is introducing a number of sector specific stakeholder panels (involving employers, employer representative bodies and teaching and training institutions) to take a strategic view of vocational qualifications within each sector.

### **3. Greater accountability through schools categorisation**

We know that using performance data to drive school improvement has made positive strides for many schools and learners. Since secondary school Banding was introduced we have seen schools in Band 4 and 5 make real progress year-on-year. Band 5 schools in 2012 have seen the overall percentage of pupils achieving the Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh First Language and Mathematics increase from 35.0 per cent in 2012 to 45.0 per cent in 2013. Similarly Band 4 schools in 2012 have gone from 45.8 per cent to 49.5 per cent in 2013.

To build on the improvements achieved by Banding and to include primary schools, we have announced a new National School Categorisation System which will cover both primary and secondary schools. The new system will assess schools on the following intelligence:

- a range of performance measures provided by the Welsh Government
- robust self-evaluation from schools on their ability to improve in relation to leadership, learning and teaching
- corroboration of the school's self-evaluation by education consortia Challenge Advisers.

The outcome of the performance data and self-evaluation will generate a Categorisation for each school, which will trigger a bespoke programme of support, challenge and intervention. The Categorisation will be determined by consortia, discussed with the school and moderated by a quality assurance and standardisation group to ensure consistency within and across consortia.

The primary purpose of the National School Categorisation System remains just as it was with Banding. It is to identify schools that are most in need of support, to ensure that, in partnership with local authorities and consortia, we direct our support and resources most effectively to secure the improvements necessary in our school system.

This is not about labelling, naming or shaming, or creating crude league tables. It is about putting schools into a position that enables them to identify what are the

factors that contribute to their progress and achievement, or what are the areas to focus on to achieve further development.

#### **4. Local curricula and closer arrangements between schools and colleges**

Collaborative working between colleges and local authorities forms a fundamental part of discussions linked to the post-16 planning cycle. These partnerships provide opportunities for learners to access course provision which would sometimes be unavailable at their home school.

Young people have been given opportunities to follow high quality vocational courses at colleges, such as Engineering and Manufacturing, which are being offered at FE colleges, through collaboration with schools.

Collaboration has enabled learning providers to deliver courses in priority subjects, such as Modern Foreign Languages, where low uptake would normally make such courses unsustainable.

For example, the 14-19 Network in Wrexham has offered a two year GCSE Spanish Twilight collaborative course at Coleg Cambria in response to falling number of learners taking a Modern Foreign Language at KS4 and post 16. This course was offered to all learners in Wrexham as part of the local curriculum offer and was oversubscribed.

In September 2013, the independent 14-19 Learning Pathways Task and Finish Group recommended that local curriculum points, which were introduced to safeguard level 1 course provision in order to meet the needs of a range of learners, were no longer needed as learning providers are now routinely delivering such courses, due to increased collaborative working arrangements.

In 2014-15 the Welsh Government allocated £10.0m of 14-19 Learning Pathways grant to education consortia to take forward the 14-19 Learning Pathways policy and develop local curricula which includes the delivery of collaborative course provision including the cost of transport.

Following a recommendation from the 14-19 Learning Pathways Task and Finish Group the Local Curriculum Offer at Key Stage 4 from 2014 has now been reduced from 30 to 25 choices. The number of vocational choices has been reduced from 5 to 3.

The post 16 Local Curriculum Offer remains at 30 choices including a minimum of 5 vocational courses.

All schools and FE colleges in Wales are either meeting or exceeding the revised local curricula offer requirements of the 14-19 Learning Pathways policy. This is evidence that learners are continuing to be offered a wide curriculum offer which the 14-19 Learning Pathways Task and Finish Group concluded had benefitted learners.

## 5. Mergers between colleges and universities

The Webb Review 2007 (the Transformation Policy) signalled an intention to improve learning opportunities for all communities in Wales. Evidence suggested that the existing arrangements for post-16 learning delivery were unlikely to support the learning transformation that Wales required to allow seamless progression into employment and HE.

In 2011 the Programme for Government manifesto committed to improve Further and Higher Education (FE/ HE) outcomes in Wales by “*working to encourage mergers of colleges to provide increased learning opportunities and enable closer collaboration between FE and HE providers*” and to “*create a smaller number of stronger universities*”.

The Welsh Government set out to secure a workforce sufficiently skilled to access emerging high level employment opportunities. The aim was to reduce unnecessary duplication of provision through increased collaboration, and to widen the options available to learners by ensuring that resources could be better focussed on learner outcomes, progression, quality and access, and less on supporting duplication, back office functions and administration. In some instances relocation of provision was necessary to answer issues of inappropriate location or poor alignment between staff expertise and student demand.

To meet the challenge and maximise the benefit to learners, policy direction in Wales has been to transform post-compulsory learning through a managed process of HE rationalisation, college mergers and 6<sup>th</sup> form integration, while at the same time retaining local accountability.

The number of college mergers completed to date means that the policy initiative has delivered a reduction in the number of FEIs, down from 20 in 2009 to 12 by 2014<sup>1</sup>, a year ahead of target. By today HE provision in Wales is delivered via 9 higher education institutions, a reduction of 4 as a result of HE mergers which have taken place since 2009. HE provision can also be accessed at a number of further education colleges.

In addition there have been 3 FE/ HE mergers; Merthyr College forms part of the University of South Wales, while both Coleg Sir Gâr and Coleg Ceredigion have become subsidiary bodies of the University of Wales Trinity St David. The concept of ‘dual sector’ bodies is recognised as a model that has the potential to be applied elsewhere in Wales to encourage progression.

As a result of the moves to establish stronger FE/HE links, some merged institutions now serve as regional hubs for learning, developing specialist provision in ‘Centres

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<sup>1</sup> The data includes Merthyr Tydfil College, (which in May 2006 merged with the University of Glamorgan) but excludes the 3 designated institutions: WEA Cymru, YMCA, and St David's Sixth Form College. This is in line with the analysis in the Report of the Independent Task and Finish Group on the Structure of Education Services in Wales (2011). From 2013/14, the data also includes Coleg Ceredigion and Coleg Sir Gâr, following their merger with University of Wales Trinity St David. The data for this indicator are sourced from departmental management information and have not been published as official statistics.

of Excellence', and by developing close collaborative partnerships with the involvement of FE, HE, WBL providers and employers, are progressing parity of esteem between vocational and academic learning.

Merged institutions have tended to report on initial short term achievements, which, in the main, have indicated financial efficiencies and savings amounting to between 5 and 10% of overall turnover. This will eventually impact on the primary aim of merger i.e. to realise and redirect benefits to quality of provision, access, learner outcomes, and progression.

Larger institutions have created commercial arms to their portfolio of operations and many earn substantial amounts of income in this way, using the income to sustain and develop the other learner and business services of their college.

Whilst the post compulsory sector has generally responded well to the Transformation Policy, some institutions have not engaged in merger arrangements, and a few appear to be proposing limited interaction with other providers. Smaller colleges tend to be constrained by their inability to secure the larger financial capital investment needed to answer fast changing vocational requirements.

## **6. Employability of undergraduates and postgraduates from Welsh higher education**

In June 2012 the Agreement on Skills and Employability for Wales was launched, committing HEFCW and the three other partners (NUS Wales, CBI Wales and HEW) to actions to improve the job related skills of graduates in Wales. There has been a focus on work placement and work experience; employer approved courses; and embedding employability skills across all higher education curricula

HEIs in Wales have prepared Skills and Employability Action Plans, which demonstrate a wide range of activity from employability awards to new work experience schemes. HEFCW has provided one-off funding for initiatives to enhance innovation and sustainability. There are employment and employability measures in HEFCW's fee plan arrangements with institutions which will ensure that both are high on the agenda for HEFCW and HEIs in Wales.

It is clear that the changes to the student funding regime introduced from 2012/13 have also encouraged HEIs to focus on employability, as employment statistics are now published by course, and employment prospects feature large in students' decisions as to where to apply to study.

**Full-time graduates:** Of the 2012-13 cohort of first degree graduates, some 92.4 per cent had obtained employment, or had entered further study 6 months after graduation from full-time courses. This is above the UK average of 92.1 per cent, and above both the England and Northern Ireland figures.

Some 58 per cent of first degree graduates from Welsh universities gained employment within Wales. The comparable figures of gaining employment in the country of study are: England 98 per cent; Scotland 83 per cent and Northern Ireland

91 per cent. Salaries in Wales and Northern Ireland were lower than in England and Scotland.

In addition to the normal Welsh HEIs, the Open University has some 8000 part-time students in Wales, over 70 per cent of which are in employment whilst they study. Over 800 students are sponsored by their employing companies.

## **7. Latest GCSE and A level results**

One of the main measures of performance in education in Wales is the Level 2 inclusive threshold. This represents 5 GCSEs or equivalent at grade A\*-C in English or Welsh First Language and Mathematics.

This year's provisional exam results show progress is being made on attainment. In 2013/14, the provisional numbers of 15 year olds achieving the Level 2 inclusive hit an all-time high of 55.1 per cent. This is 2.3 percentage points higher than 2012/13 – the highest year-on-year increase since records began for this measure in 2006/07. Performance in this threshold is now 11.0 percentage points higher than that year.

In terms of A levels, 17 year olds continue to perform well in A Level and equivalent qualifications, with 97.1 per cent of those entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels achieving the Level 3 threshold. This is 0.6 percentage points higher than in 2012/13.

These provisional results indicate the new momentum in the school sector in Wales and reflect the positive changes in our direction of travel. There are improvements in the percentage of pupils achieving A-C in the individual subjects of English/Welsh First Language, Mathematics and Science.

The Department for Education (DfE) in England published provisional Key Stage 4 results on 23 October. In 2011 Wales was 8.9 percentage points below England for Level 2 inclusive. Wales' performance has been improving over recent years and has been closing the gap with England. In 2014 the provisional data shows that there is now only a 0.9 percentage point gap between England and Wales.

However it should be noted that England has made significant changes to its policies for school performance measures which are reflected in their data this year. Despite publishing data based on the previous year's methodology (to facilitate a more like-for-like comparison) there are limitations to this data – they have not been able to take into account any changes in behaviours and decisions made by schools based on policy announcements made by the DfE. Comparisons between Wales and England data for 2014 must therefore be treated with caution.

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