

# Agenda – Children, Young People and Education Committee

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Meeting Venue:	For further information contact:
<b>Committee Room 5 – Tŷ Hywel</b>	<b>Llinos Madeley</b>
Meeting date: 30 November 2017	Committee Clerk
Meeting time: 09.15	0300 200 6565
	<a href="mailto:SeneddCYPE@assembly.wales">SeneddCYPE@assembly.wales</a>

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## Private Pre-meeting

(09:15 – 09:30)

### 1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(09:30)

### 2 Inquiry into the Emotional and Mental Health of Children and Young People – summary of survey results

(09:30 – 09:45)

(Pages 1 – 22)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)–33–17 – Paper 1a – Summary of survey results – young people in secondary schools and colleges

CYPE(5)–33–17 – Paper 1b – Summary of survey results – education professionals

### 3 Inquiry into the Emotional and Mental Health of Children and Young People – Evidence session 3

(09:45 – 10:45)

(Pages 23 – 58)

Tim Pratt, Director – Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)

Jane Sloggett, Deputy Head of Porthcawl Comprehensive

Rob Williams, Policy Director Cymru – National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)



Steve Rees, Head Teacher of Evenlode Primary School, Vale of Glamorgan  
Chris Britten, Head Teacher of Ysgol Y Deri Special School, Vale of Glamorgan

Attached Documents:

Research Brief – Emotional and Mental Health of Children and Young People  
CYPE(5)–33–17 – Paper 2 – Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)  
CYPE(5)–33–17 – Paper 3 – National Association of Head Teachers Cymru  
(NAHT)

#### **4 Inquiry into the Emotional and Mental Health of Children and Young People – Evidence session 4**

(10:45 – 11:30)

Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW)

Nichola Jones, Head of Inclusion / Disabilities – Pembrokeshire County Council

Kathryn Morgan, Senior Educational Psychologist – Bridgend County Council

David Haines, Head Teacher – Dewi Sant Secondary School, Pembrokeshire

Will McLean, Chief Officer – Children and Young People, Monmouthshire County Council

#### **Break**

(11:30 – 11:45)

#### **5 Inquiry into the Emotional and Mental Health of Children and Young People – Evidence session 5 (via video conference)**

(11:45 – 12:30)

Tabitha Sawyer, Assistant Head Teacher and Mindfulness Lead – Ysgol Pen y Bryn

Arun Ramesh, School Mindfulness Ambassador – Ysgol Pen y Bryn

Amber Stock, School Mindfulness Ambassador – Ysgol Pen y Bryn

Sarah Silverton, Freelance mindfulness teacher and trainer, working through the Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice, Bangor University

**6 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for Item 7**

(12:30)

**7 Inquiry into the Emotional and Mental Health of Children and Young People – Consideration of evidence**

(12.30 – 12.45)

**Lunch**

(12:45 – 13:30)

**8 Inquiry into Flying Start: outreach – Evidence session 4**

(13:30 – 14:30)

(Pages 59 – 67)

Huw Irranca-Davies AM, Minister for Children and Social Care

Karen Cornish, Deputy Director – Children & Families

Richard Thurston, Educations & Skills Research

Attached Documents:

Research Brief – Flying Start: outreach

Additional Information from the Minister for Children and Social Care

**9 Paper(s) to note**

(14:30)

**9.1 Letter from the Llywydd – Update on the Youth Parliament**

(Pages 68 – 69)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-33-17 – Paper to note 1

**9.2 Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Finance to the Chair of the Finance Committee – structure of the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2018–19**

(Pages 70 – 71)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)–33–17 – Paper to note 2

**9.3 Letter from Cabinet Secretary for Education – follow up to the draft budget scrutiny session on 16 November**

(Pages 72 – 90)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)–33–17 – Paper to note 3

**9.4 Letter from the Royal College of General Practitioners Wales – perinatal mental health report**

(Pages 91 – 92)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)–33–17 – Paper to note 4

**10 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) and (vi) to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the remainder of the meeting.**

(14.30)

**11 Inquiry into Flying Start: outreach – Consideration of the evidence**

(14:30– 14:45)

**12 Scrutiny of Welsh Government Draft Budget 2018–19 – consideration of the draft report**

(14:45 – 15:00)

Attached Documents:

Draft Budget Report

# Children, Young People and Education Committee **Agenda Item 2**

Emotional well-being and mental health of children and young people survey summary – young people in secondary schools and colleges

## Background

This document provides a summary of responses received to the emotional well-being and mental health of children and young people survey, completed by young people in secondary schools and colleges across Wales, conducted by the Outreach team. This survey was open for consultation and responses between 4 September and 15 October 2017. In total **1,611** survey responses were received.

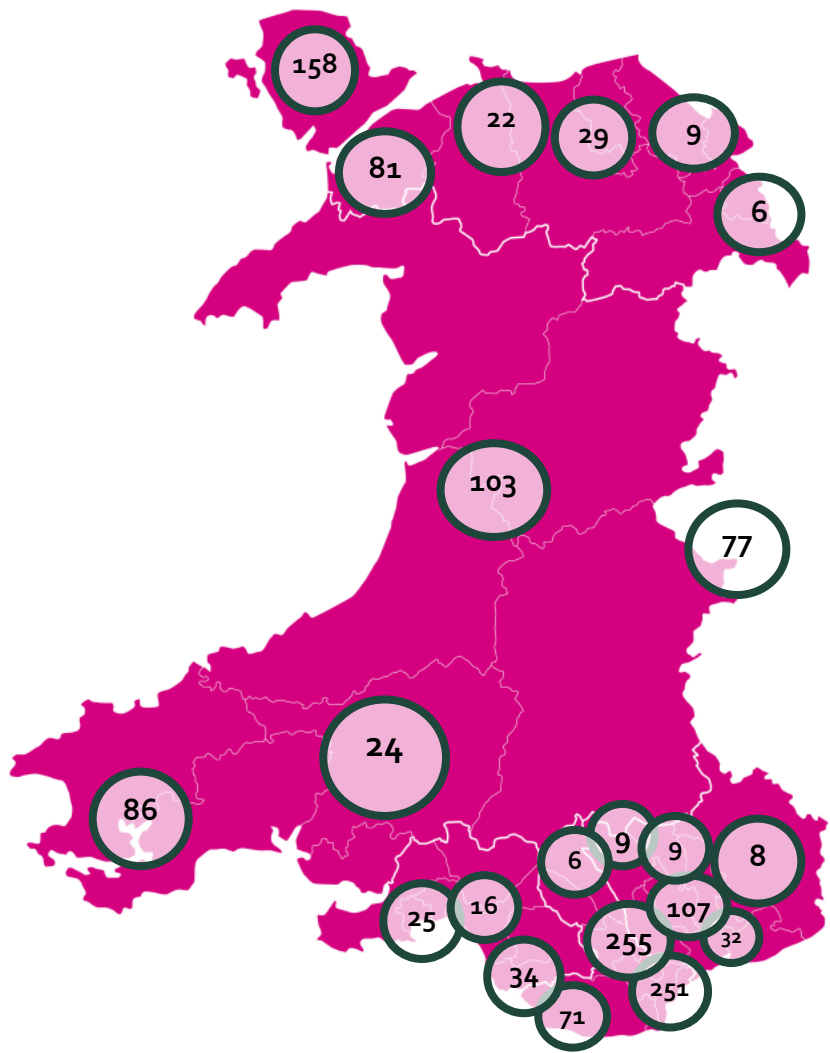
The surveys were conducted to make sure those on the ground – those who receive and those who provide support – were able to have their say.

The survey results are intended to provide an extra source of information, alongside written and oral evidence. They are there to help the Committee test some of the assertions made about the emotional and mental health of children and young people.

The map below shows the number of responses from young people based in different local authority areas. The statistics gathered from this survey represent the views of those who responded, not the public as a whole.



- Blaenau Gwent: 9
- Bridgend: 34
- Caerphilly: 107
- Cardiff: 251
- Carmarthenshire: 24
- Ceredigion: 103
- Conwy: 22
- Denbighshire: 29
- Flintshire: 9
- Gwynedd: 81
- Isle of Anglesey: 158
- Merthyr Tydfil: 6
- Monmouthshire: 8
- Neath Port Talbot: 16
- Newport: 32
- Pembrokeshire: 86
- Powys: 77
- Rhondda Cynon Taf: 255
- Swansea: 25
- Torfaen: 9
- Vale of Glamorgan: 71
- Wrexham: 6
- Did not answer: 193

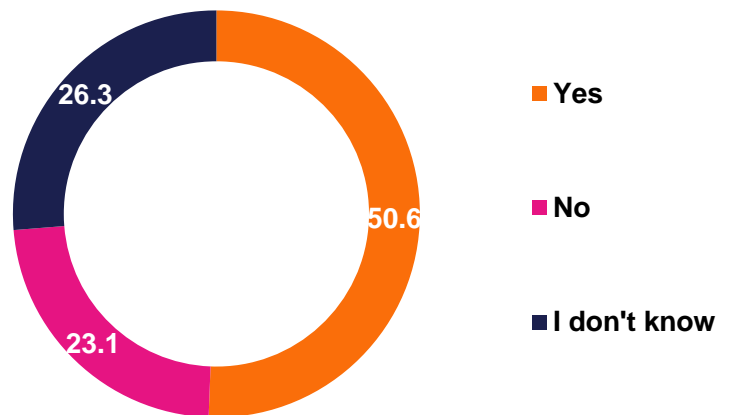


## Survey analysis

1. Does your school or college give students information about emotional well-being and mental health, for example on posters, leaflets or online?

*Total number of responses: 1561*

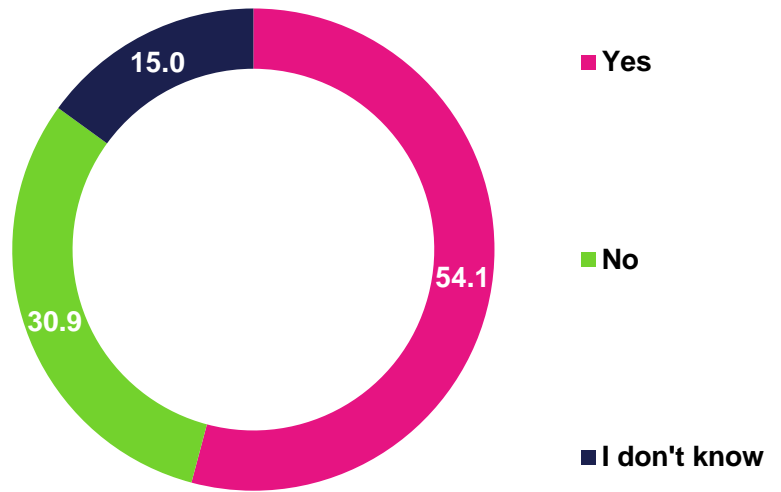
- Yes: 50.6% (790)
- No: 23.1% (361)
- I don't know: 26.3% (410)



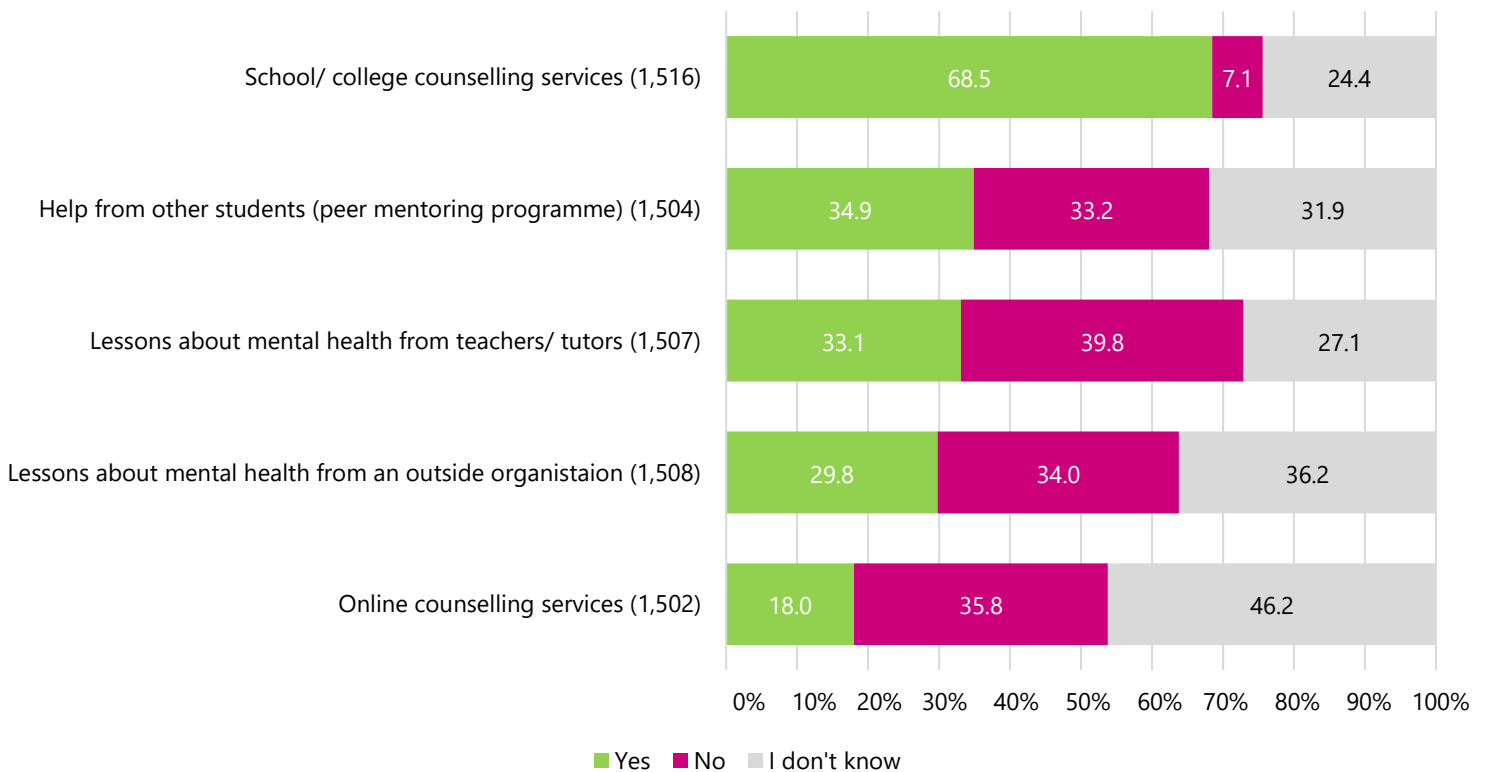
**2. Do you know where to get information about emotional well-being and mental health at your school or college?**

*Total number of responses: 1559*

- Yes: 54.1% (844)
- No: 30.9% (481)
- I don't know: 15.0% (234)

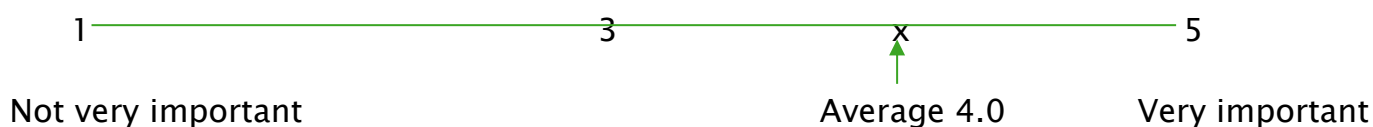


**3. What help is available at your school or college for your emotional well-being and mental health?** *Total number of responses: 1517*



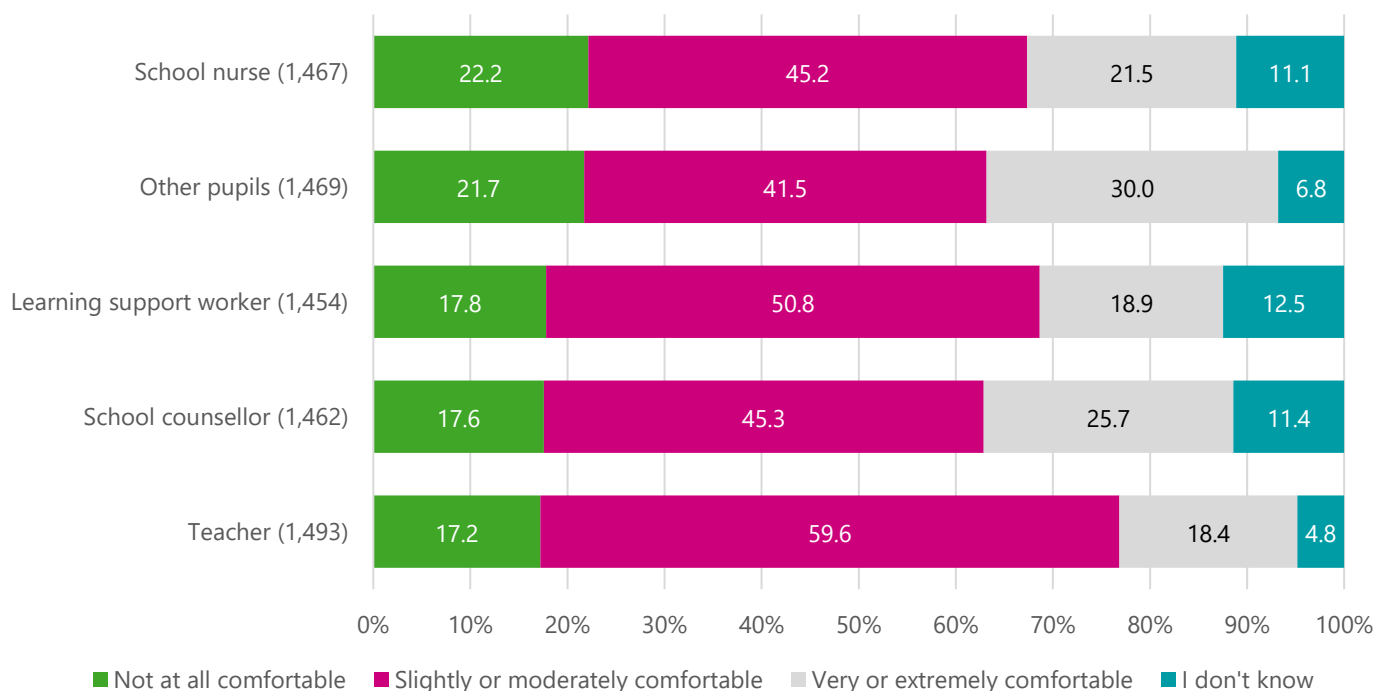
4. On a scale of 1 to 5 how important would you say promoting emotional well-being and good mental health is to your school or college? (1 meaning not very important, 5 meaning very important)

Total number of responses: 1264



5. How comfortable would you feel talking to the following people at your school or college about your emotional well-being and mental health?

Total number of responses: 1494



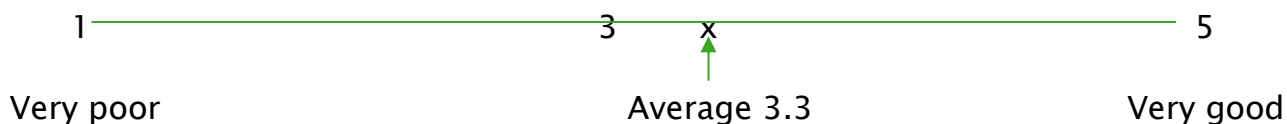
**N.B.** The option of lecturer has been removed from the analysis due to the small number of responses from college students. This means it is not possible to draw robust conclusions for this option.





6. How good is your school or college at helping you cope with things like exam pressure, bullying and peer pressure? (1 meaning very poor, 5 meaning very good)

Total number of responses 1209



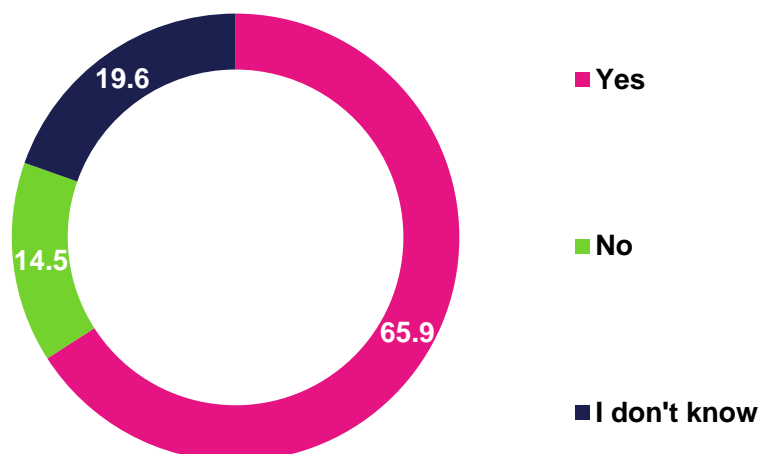
7. Would you like your school or college to teach you more about how to look after your emotional well-being and mental health?

Total number of responses 1490

- Yes: 65.9% (982)

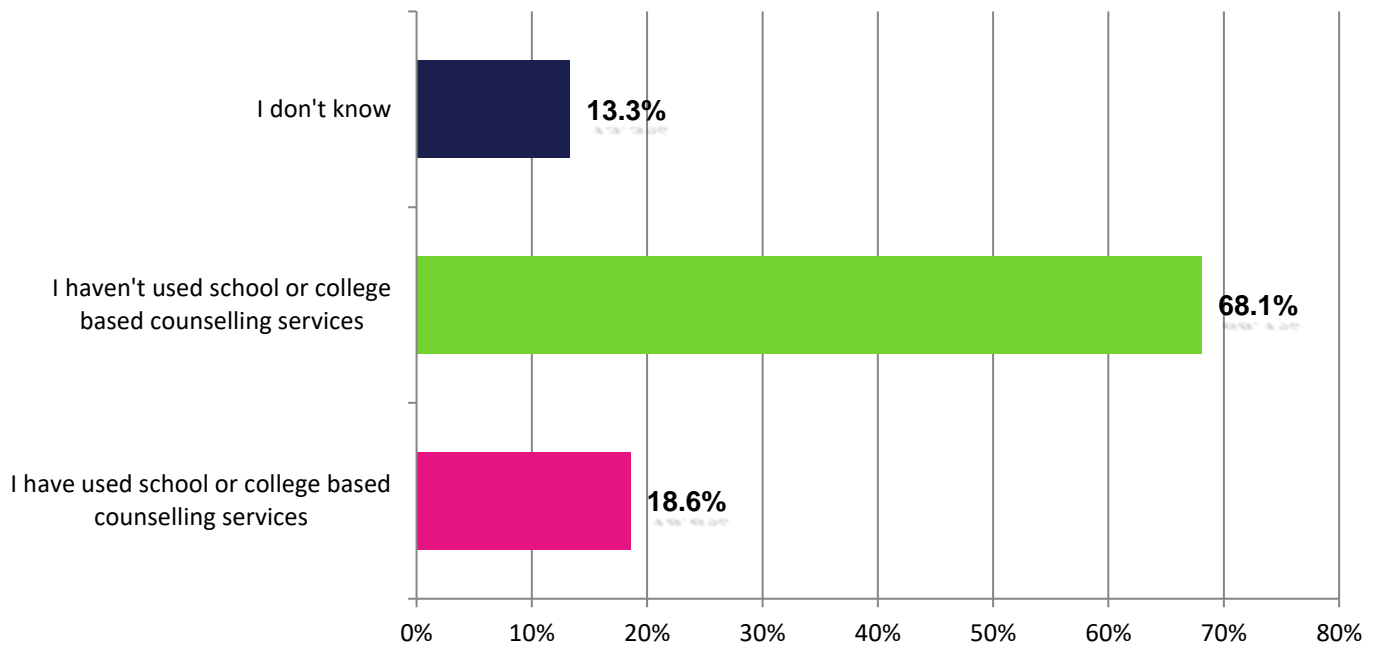
- No: 14.5% (216)

- I don't know: 19.6% (292)



8. Have you used counselling services? Please select the option(s) that apply to you.

Total number of responses 1487



If you have used school or college based counselling services, please answer the questions below.

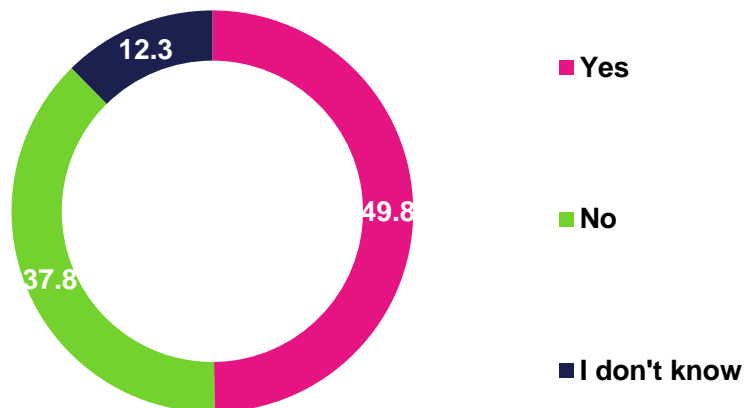
9. Were the school or college counselling services you used helpful?

Total number of responses 283

- Yes: 49.8% (141)

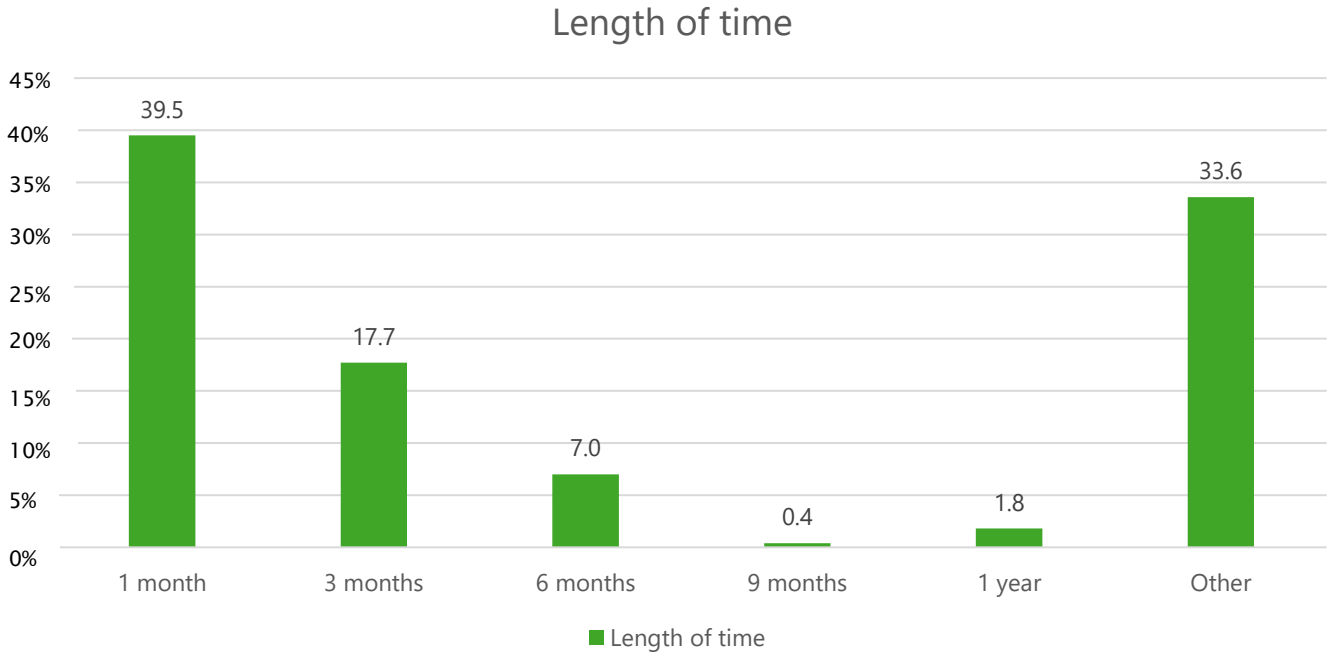
- No: 37.8% (107)

- I don't know: 12.3% (35)



### 10. How long did you have to wait for an appointment to access the school or college counselling services?

Total number of responses 271



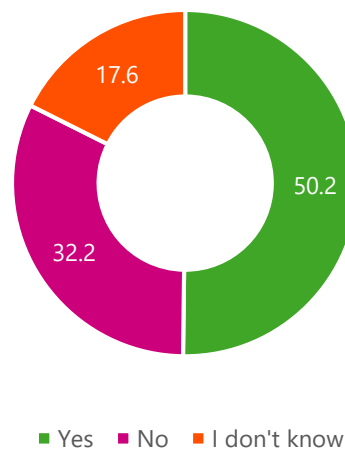
For the 33.6% who noted ‘other’ as their answer to this question, answers ranged from “straight away” through to “over a year”.

### 11. Did you feel that you had sufficient time with a school or college based counsellor?

Total number of responses 273

Sufficient time with counsellor

- Yes: 50.2% (137)
- No: 32.2% (88)
- I don't know: 17.6% (48)



12. If you have any further views and thoughts about the help your school or college gives to students with their emotional well-being and mental health, please tell us here:

*Total number of responses 323*

### Peer mentoring

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“Give pupils trustworthy buddies to speak to”

“More student run programmes concerning mental health because I believe that students feel more comfortable talking to other students”

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### School Counselling Services

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“There are school/colleges counselling services but nowhere near enough”

“Our counselling service got cut”

“I was meant to go to counselling sessions but they haven't been organised (it's been over EIGHT months!)”

“It's not a fun experience having to go and knock on the door, with already worrying things and not wanting others to know about your anxiety”

“Appointments are only available during lesson time which means I get stressed having to catch up with work”

“I know where to get help but it needs improvement. There are school counselling services but I don't trust them”

“Counsellor should be mandatory once a term so that everybody gets help even if they don't know they need it”

“Must make it easier and a shorter wait to see and talk to someone in total confidence”

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“Counsellors must respect the confidentiality of each and every pupil unless they feel that pupil is endangering themselves or someone else. Mine does not”

“Counselling services for 6th form are nowhere near as good as they are for year 7–11”. “There needs to be more mental health resources for the upper school”

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## School nurse

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“School nurse is only in Thursday lunch time which is not enough time to speak to her”.

“School nurse only comes in for 40 minutes (I think) at lunchtime on a Thursday. This isn't good enough”.

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## School support

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“I think the school is good at helping people who have had issues or come forward and tell people they feel they have mental health problems, but the school doesn't help those of us who don't come forward or don't have severe issues”

“I think that for people who are fairly vocal about their mental health issues the school is fairly supportive but there are some topics that the school is not very supportive of and for people who need to talk about them it's just kinda though luck”

“Our school doesn't really care I think I need more help with coping with exam pressure”

“I think we need to be taught how important our mental health is, and how to be accepting of others when they are struggling with their mental health problems. Whether that be with posters or lessons in forms, it needs to be taught”

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“We should be taught about mental health and suicide. Teachers must understand mental health is serious!”

“Although physical and sexual health is discussed during PSE, mental health is not given the amount of lesson time it deserves considering the devastating effects it has”

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## GPs/ CAMHS

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“It would help if teachers / doctors don't tell young people their mental health problem isn't real!”

“She has refused to see the school counsellor again, saying that she was scary. She is currently seeing a psychologist privately having been classed by our GP as not ill enough to get a CAMHS referral as she has not attempted suicide, which, we were told, is the only way to get a CAMHS referral”

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## Teachers

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“I think teachers / lecturers should be taught about emotional well/being and mental health and how their pupils/students can be affected by issues like bullying”

“Usually the teachers will make a big deal and assume lots of things rather than listen and then think it's embarrassing for us so treat us differently in a bad way”

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## Stigma

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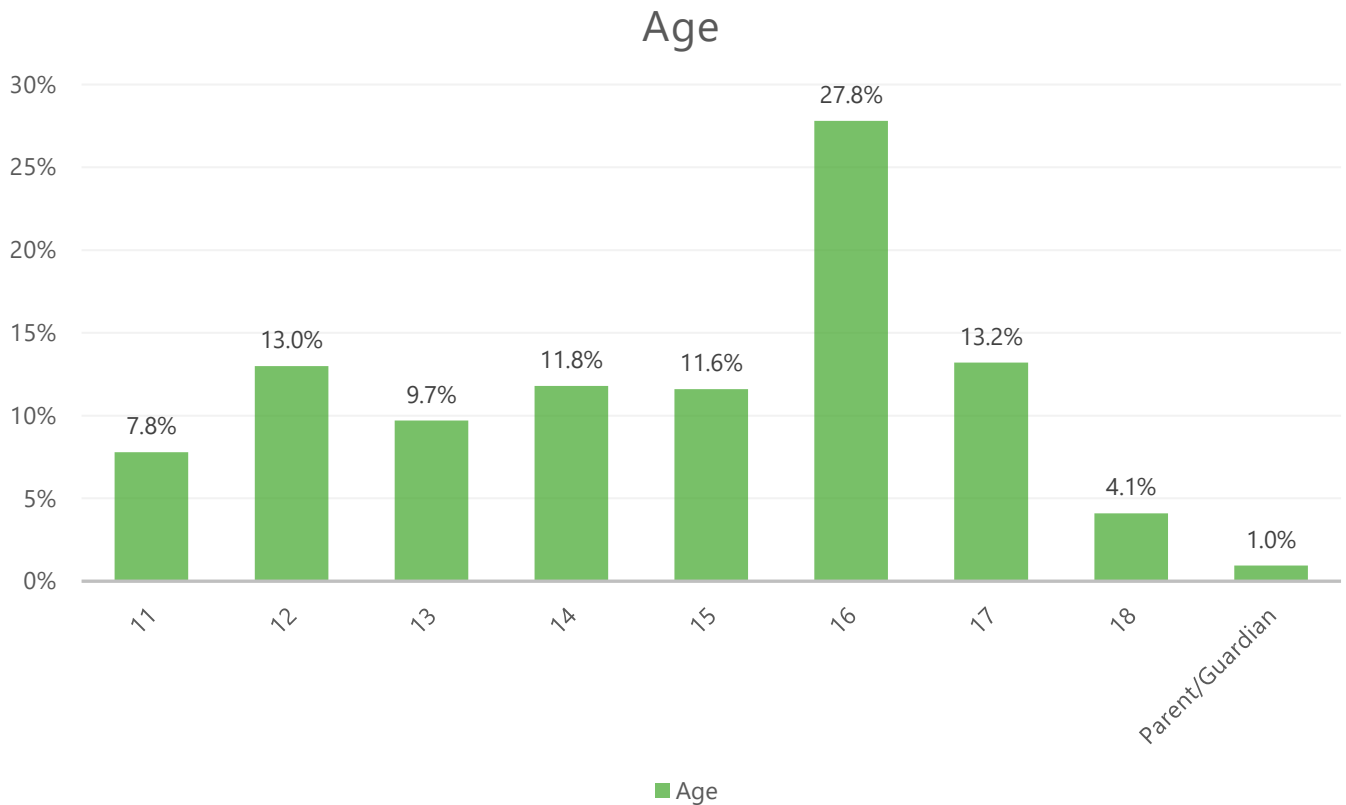
“More help needed for students– being told to 'man-up' is NOT helpful. By not talking openly about mental health it can lead to depression and possibly suicide” “Teaching about emotions in PSE is often overlooked and replaced by useless topics / more emphasis must be put into reducing stigma around



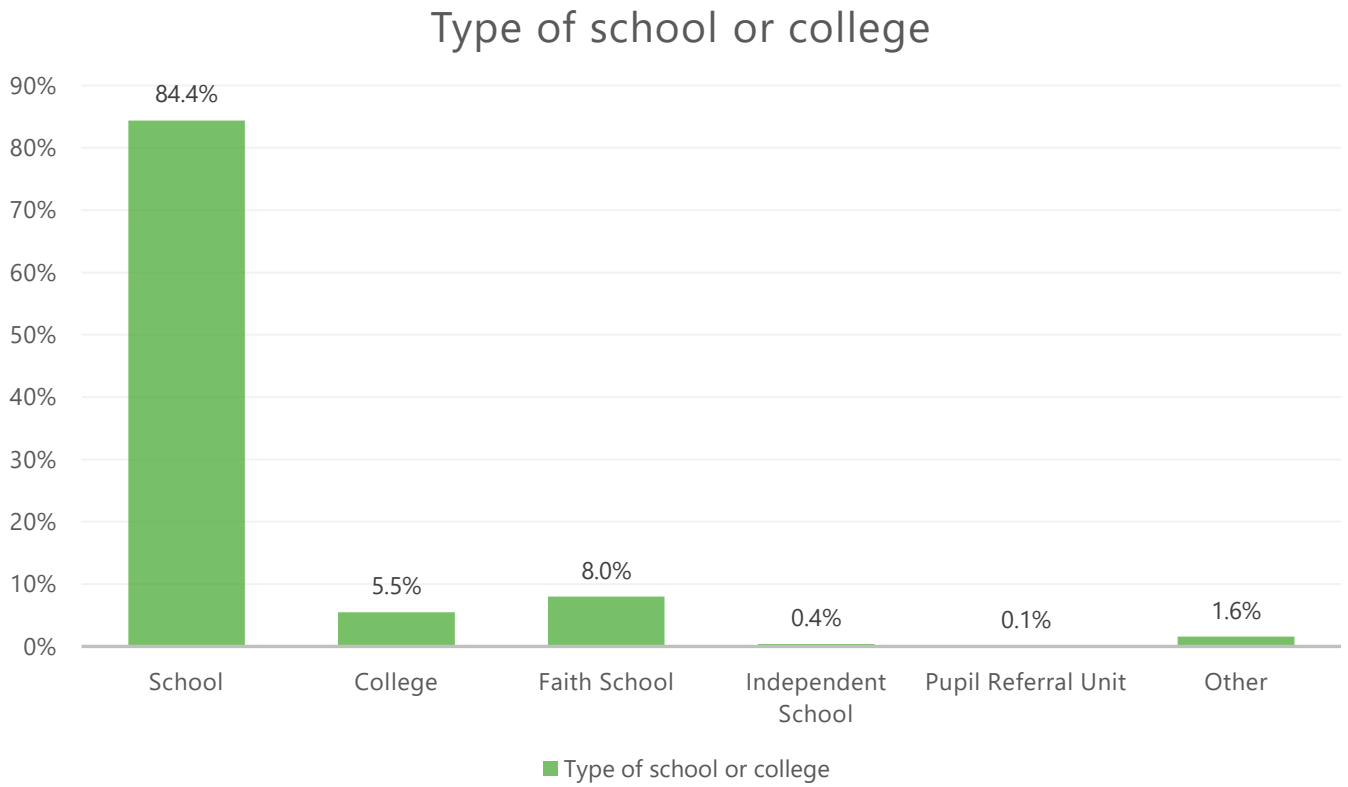
mental health issues as often people worry they will be judged for admitting to having a problem”

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### 13. How old are you? *Total number of responses 1466*



14. What type of school or college do you go to? *Total number of responses 1463*





# Children, Young People and Education Committee

## Emotional well-being and mental health in schools and colleges survey summary – education professionals

### Background

This document provides a summary of responses received to the emotional well-being and mental health in schools and colleges survey, completed by education professionals from across Wales, conducted by the Outreach team. This survey was open for consultation and responses between 4 September and 15 October 2017. In total, **425** survey responses were received from a variety of education professionals, the majority of whom are employed in a secondary school setting.

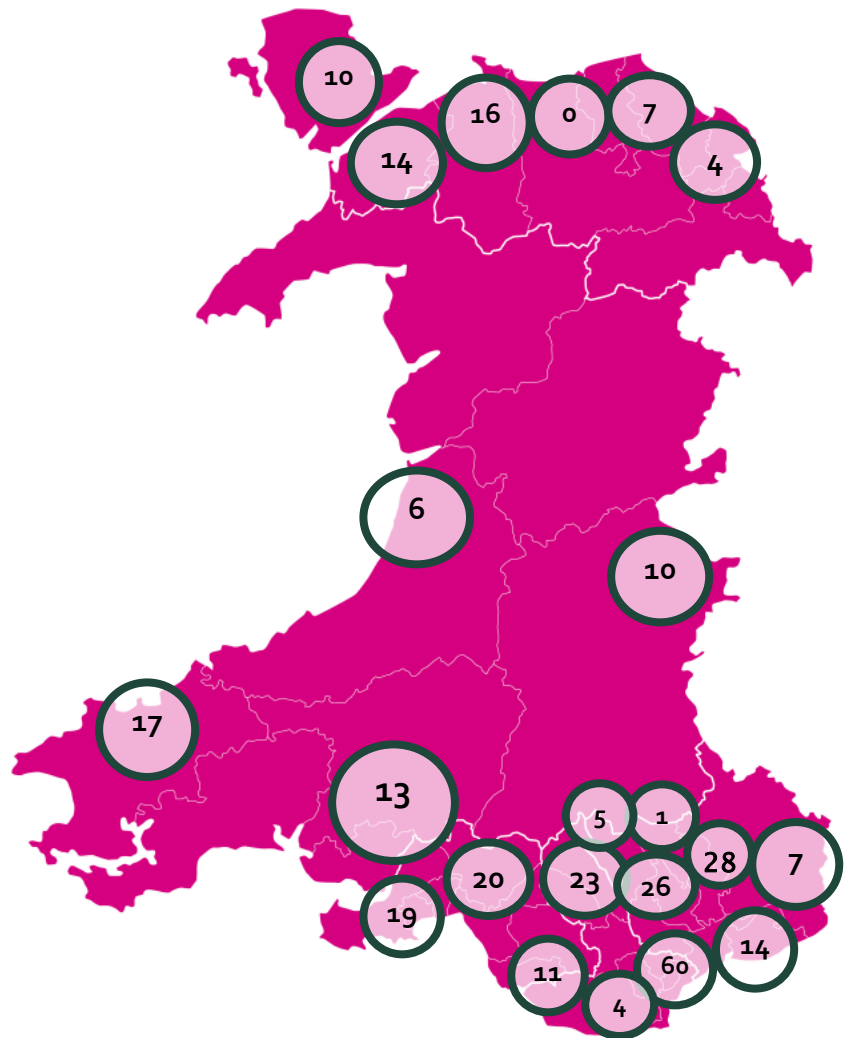
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 Ceredigion: 6  
 Conwy: 16  
 Denbighshire: 0  
 Flintshire: 7  
 Gwynedd: 14  
 Isle of Anglesey: 10  
 Merthyr Tydfil: 5  
 Monmouthshire: 7  
 Neath Port Talbot: 20  
 Newport: 14  
 Pembrokeshire: 17  
 Powys: 10  
 Rhondda Cynon Taf: 23  
 Swansea: 19  
 Torfaen: 28  
 Vale of Glamorgan: 4  
 Wrexham: 4  
 Did not answer: 110



## Survey analysis

### 1. What training or guidance have you received on student emotional well-being and mental health, either through your initial teacher training or CPD?

*Total number of responses 406*

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“Absolutely none through my initial teacher training”

“Limited guidance at PGCE level”

“Very little formal training but some guidance from colleagues”

“School inset sessions with speakers”

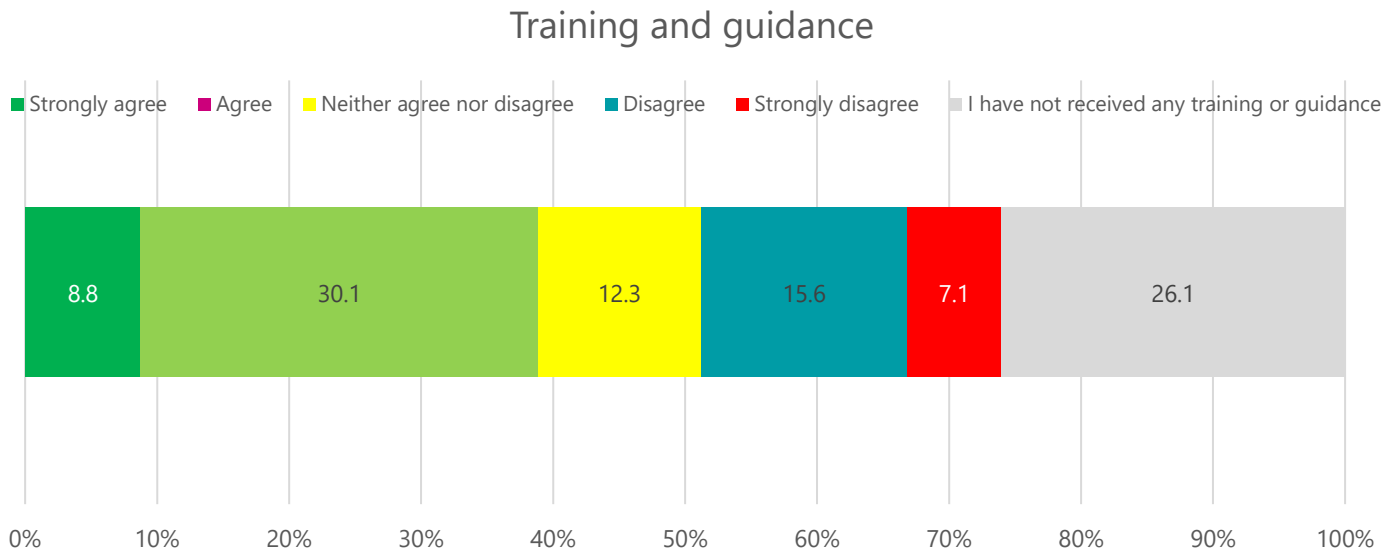
“Very little, just occasional after-school training”

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2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

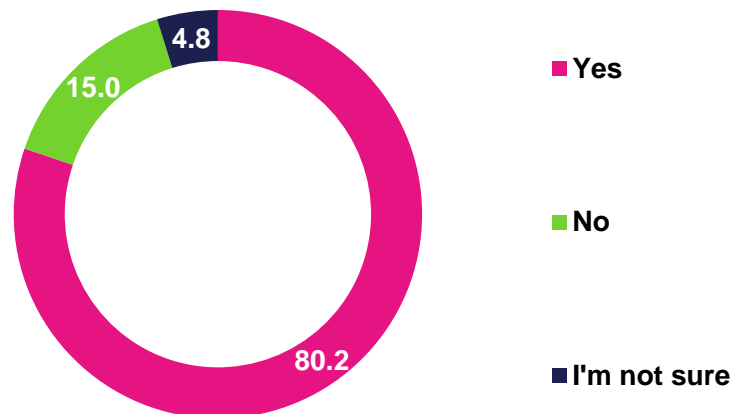
“The training or guidance I have received has helped me to support my students with their emotional well-being and mental health.” *Total number of responses 422*



3. Does your school or college have a counsellor or dedicated support for the emotional well-being and mental health of its students?

*Total number of responses 374*

- Yes: 80.2% (300)
- No: 15.0% (56)
- I'm not sure: 4.8% (18)



#### 4. In what ways is your school or college working with parents and the wider community to promote student emotional well-being and mental health?

Total number of responses 305

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“We don't”

“Parents are only contacted about emotional well-being/mental health on an individual basis”

“We make ourselves accessible to parents to contact us and discuss and concerns they may have”

“Pastoral support officers work with families identified as needing support”

“Strong links with parents through our pastoral system outside agencies used”

“A lot more could be done to involve parents”

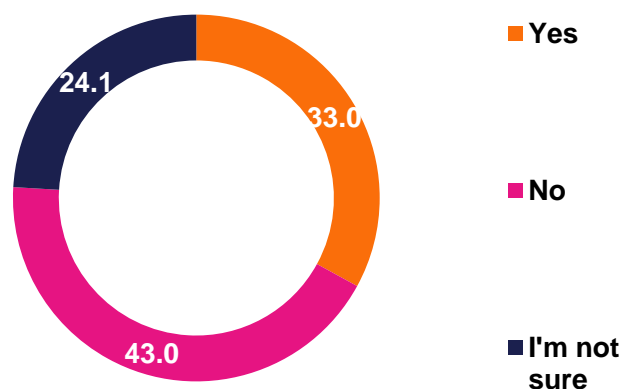
“Staff refer young people to the counsellor and CAHMS but often find long waiting lists or that the young person doesn't meet the threshold for a referral”.

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#### 5. Do you think your school or college is meeting the emotional well-being and mental health needs of its students?

Total number of responses 370

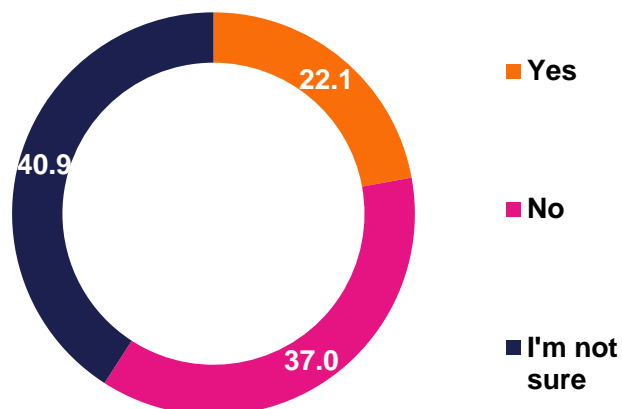
- Yes: 33.0% (122)
- No: 43.0% (159)
- I'm not sure: 24.1% (89)



## 6. Does your school or college have a mental health policy?

Total number of responses 357

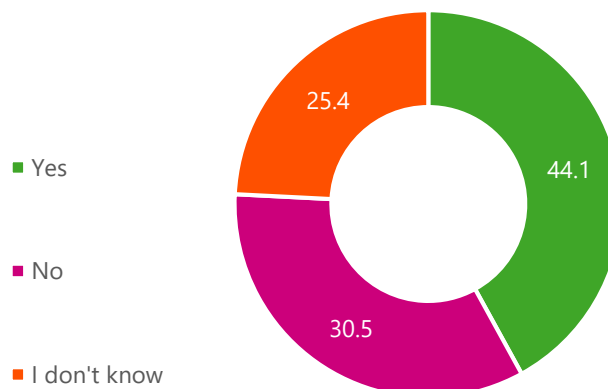
- Yes: 22.1% (79)
- No: 37.0% (132)
- I'm not sure: 40.9% (146)



## 7. Are there whole-school/college procedures that help staff recognise and respond to emotional well-being and mental health issues?

Total number of responses 354

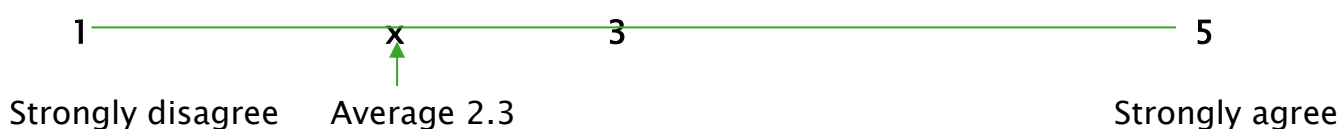
- Yes: 44.1% (156)
- No: 30.5% (108)
- I'm not sure: 25.4% (90)



## 8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? (1 meaning strongly disagree, 5 meaning strongly agree)

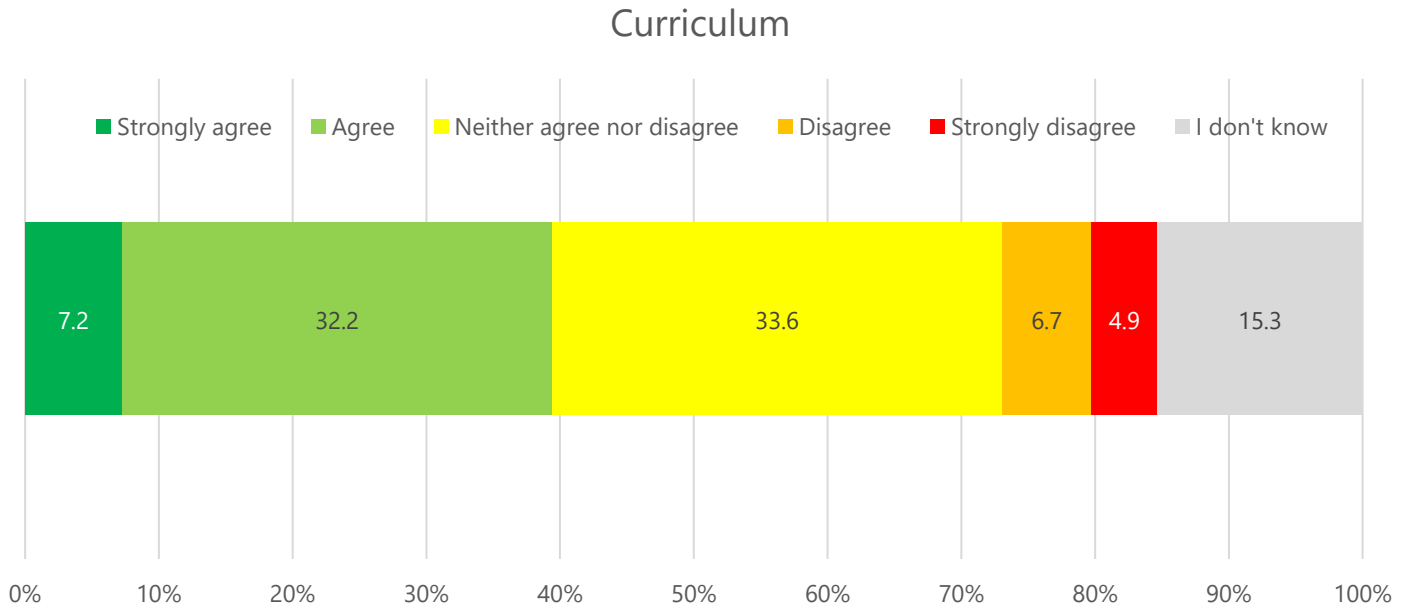
"The current school (age 3–16) curriculum provides opportunities for students to learn about emotional well-being and mental health."

Total number of responses 300



**9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?  
 "The new school (age 3–16) curriculum to be introduced following the Donaldson Review will improve opportunities for students to learn about emotional well-being and mental health."**

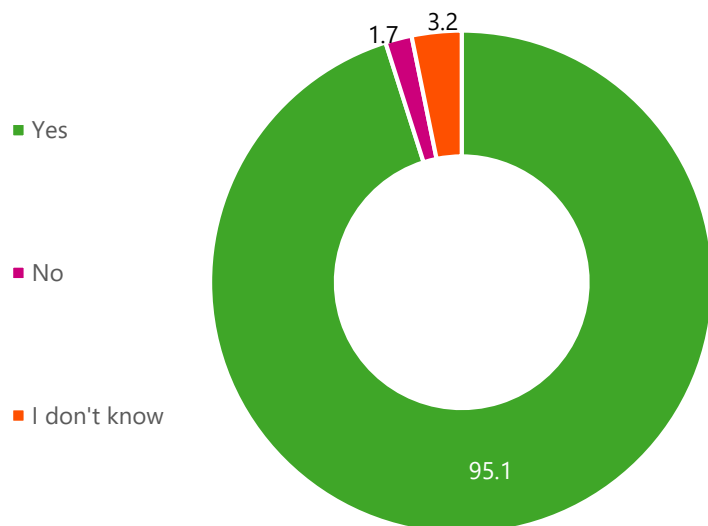
*Total number of responses 345*



**10. Should promoting good mental health be taught as part of the school (age 3–16) curriculum?**

*Total number of responses 349*

- Yes: 95.1% (332)
- No: 1.7% (6)
- I don't know: 3.2% (11)



## 11. Do you have anything else you would like to say about emotional well-being and mental health support for students?

*Total number of responses 202*

### Support available in schools

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“Resilience needs to be taught at a younger age to help pupils build their confidence and to be able to "bounce back"...”

“Pupils should be aware of who they can turn to and to feel safe within the school environment at all times”

“There needs to be more open talk about it. For pupils to realise that it's ok and not need to keep quiet.”

“I strongly feel that there should be easier access routes for schools seeking support for pupils. We appreciate that demand is high but when pupils hit crisis point, there should be fast tracks to support.”

“Youth workers need to be put into schools as a priority in order to support the very underfunded School Based Counsellor agency, which in turn provides some support for the very depleted CAMHS”

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### School counselling

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“It is the support outside of school that needs to be developed. More dedicated and professional CAMHS workers who are able to cope with the complex mental health issues facing some young people today. School counselling can only go so far”.

“As far as I am aware, school based counselling services are only available in a very small number of schools in Wales”.

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### Links between education and health

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“GPs and CAMHS contradict each other. No clear pathway for support. Schools are being asked increasingly to support learner emotional and mental well-being without training. We are TEACHERS”.

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“GPs are often unaware of schools waiting lists to counselling services and all too frequently refer students back to schools for us to deal with”.

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**12. Do you have anything else you would like to say about the support available for education professionals at schools and colleges, to offer emotional intelligence and healthy coping mechanisms for students?**

*Total number of responses 188*

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“There is absolutely none available!...I am ill-prepared and ill-equipped to take care of these young people.”

“We are doing everything we can but the need is huge and there are waiting lists for most services”

“We are not mental health specialists but we are sometimes expected to hold the fort until the specialists can meet the child”

“It is emotionally draining and the lack of supervision given to school-based staff is woefully inadequate, unethical and unhealthy...”

“It should be a mandatory part of the CPD programme – and presented in inset days, not merely by asking staff to go online and read something.”

“CAMHS support is virtually non-existent. None of our pupils seem to meet their criteria, even those displaying suicidal tendencies.”

“Schools feel isolated and this is not something that can be fixed by the curriculum.”

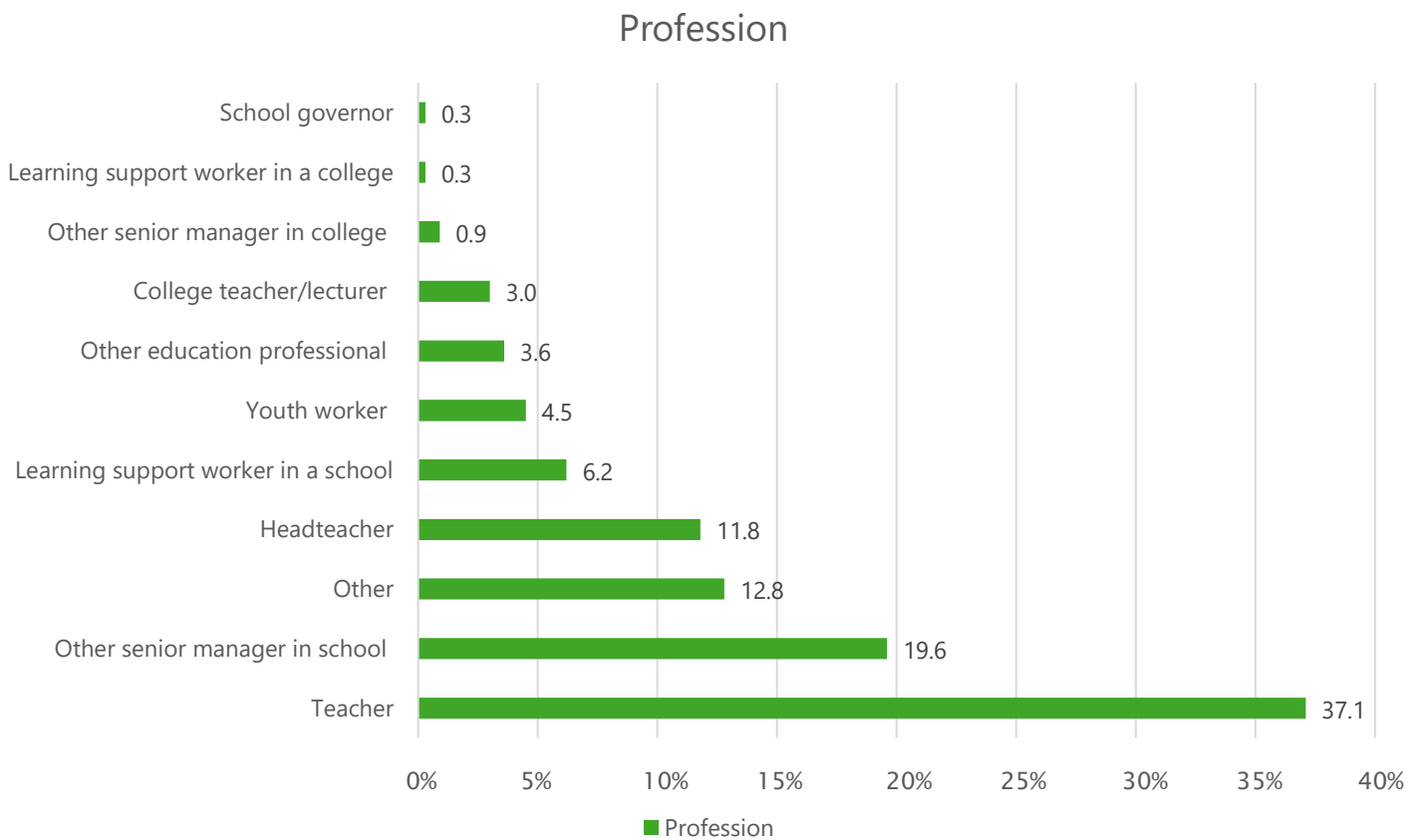
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### 13. What is your profession?

Total number of responses 337

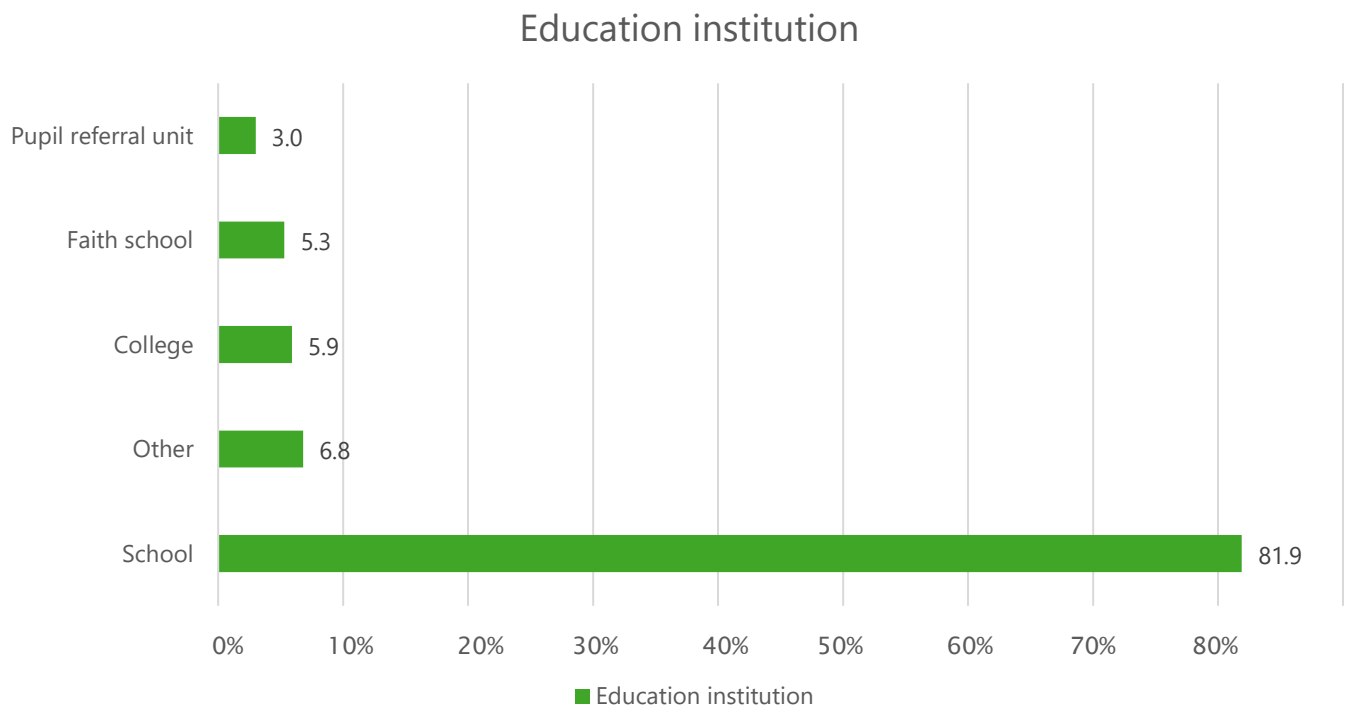


*Other* responses were received from a number of other professionals, including administrative staff, counsellors, welfare officers, 3<sup>rd</sup> sector youth service managers, social workers and child protection officers.



## 14. What type of education institution do you work at?

Total number of responses 337



*Other* responses were received from settings such as CAMHS tier 4 hospital education unit and outreach services, an employability project, an autism unit, youth centres, 3<sup>rd</sup> sector services, and the regional consortia.



Document is Restricted

- 1 The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) represents over 18,000 heads, principals, deputies, vice-principals, assistant heads, business managers and other senior staff of maintained and independent schools and colleges throughout the UK.  
ASCL Cymru represents school leaders in more than 90 per cent of the secondary schools in Wales.
- 2 ASCL Cymru has been fully supportive of the increased emphasis given to the emotional and mental health of children and young people, and supports the principles outlined in the T4CYP programme.
- 3 Our responses below are based on feedback from members, and inevitably are not necessarily statistically reliable, nor are they able to respond to all the questions you ask to be considered. However, they do represent first-hand experiences of the system and outline a number of concerns that are recurrent and consistently raised.
- 4 The overwhelming response from our members, though is that whilst there is an abundance of good intention with relation to this issue, there is a significant lack of consistency in its delivery across Wales. This lack of consistency has resulted in a real “postcode lottery”, and means that whilst some young people may be well supported, others in a neighbouring authority are not.
- 5 In many cases, CAMHS referrals take an extraordinarily long time to initiate, meaning that the young person does not have timely access to professional support. This appears to our members to be the result of CAMHS being short-staffed and with a huge (and increasing) workload. There is sympathy for those working under this level of pressure, but this does not help the young people who are left without support.
- 6 Schools are now responsible for drawing up support plans, but there is a high level of frustration expressed by members about the difficulty of doing this.
- 7 It is incredibly hard for schools to arrange effective inter-agency meetings, as many of those who ought to be involved are very busy and

prioritise their attendance accordingly. As schools have no authority to insist on attendance at these meetings, it frequently means that either the meeting has to be postponed (past the point where timely support can be provided), or the meeting has to go ahead without all the appropriate agencies being present.

- 8 We appreciate that there is a perception about over-referral of young people to CAMHS; however, our members and their staff are the ones that have to deal with these young people on a daily basis. Their understanding of the problems and needs of young people with emotional and mental health issues are grounded in their need to ensure not only the support of the individual, but also the impact that the lack of support may have on the other young people who are taught and live alongside them.
- 9 Members report that some mental health professionals are not fully trained in the T4CYP programme, and therefore may not realise the importance of communicating effectively and in a timely manner with schools. Again, this may be due to lack of staff and workload pressures.
- 10 It is enormously frustrating for schools who have identified a young person in need of urgent support and are unable to gain access quickly to someone who can offer practical advice.
- 11 In some authorities there appears to be a significant shortage of Educational Psychologists. CAMHS will not consider a referral without an EP report, and yet because of the shortage of EPs, it can take two to three weeks before an assessment can be made and a report written. In the meantime, the young person is receiving no support.
- 12 In some authorities there is well co-ordinated and effective provision of school nurses, counsellors and other outside support. These can have a significant impact, and support teaching staff in their delivery of Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE). As the new curriculum is prepared, it is critical that there is a national consistency of support and provision.

- 13 Unfortunately, currently there is not this level of consistency, and some areas schools are left without appropriate support, or with a tiny allocation of resource that is simply not able to meet the needs of the school.
- 14 There is much good work that is done at an individual school level to help young people in building resilience and support their emotional wellbeing. However, in many cases this is done by classroom teachers who have no formal training but are “filling the gap”. Again there is a real need for a consistent approach and funding to ensure that proper training and proven resources are made available.
- 15 In the best authorities this work is given a high priority and schools benefit from effective support to the benefit of their young people. Our frustration is based on the lack of consistency that leaves some young vulnerable people unsupported, at a time when quick and effective interventions could prevent manageable problems becoming major issues, which subsequently could have a major impact on their wellbeing.

## **Conclusion**

- 16 I hope that this is of value to your inquiry. ASCL Cymru would be happy to contribute to further discussions.

**NAHT welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to the Children, Young People and Education committee.**

**NAHT represents more than 29,000 school leaders in early years, primary, secondary and special schools, making us the largest association for school leaders in the UK.**

**We represent, advise and train school leaders in Wales, England and Northern Ireland. We use our voice at the highest levels of government to influence policy for the benefit of leaders and learners everywhere. Our new section, NAHT Edge, supports, develops and represents middle leaders in schools.**

The invitation to submit additional evidence to the National Assembly for Wales' Children, Young People and Education Committee concerning the inquiry on **Emotionally Resilient Children and Young People** is welcome.

NAHT Cymru will focus specifically on the evidence concerning:

### **Links with Education (emotional intelligence and healthy coping mechanisms)**

The work being done to ensure children and young people are more resilient and better able to tackle poor mental well-being when it occurs including:

- The development of the Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning and Experience as part of the new curriculum.
- Children's access to school nurses and the role school nurses can play in building resilience and supporting emotional wellbeing.
- The extent to which health, education and social care services are working together.
- The take up and current provision of lower level support and early intervention services, for example, school counselling services.

1. NAHT Cymru recognises the fundamental role that mental health plays in children's success and the scientific evidence that poor mental health and fragile emotional resilience is a significant barrier to learning.
2. NAHT Cymru believes that the vital role for schools is to contribute significantly to promoting good mental health and emotional wellbeing amongst pupils of all ages and in all settings.
3. We supports the policy of a statutory framework for Personal Social (and Health) Education, for all pupils in all schools. Pupils need to understand and explore the issues around mental health without stigma including protecting themselves in the digital world - about their rights, protection and responsibilities online.
4. Teachers, support staff and school leaders must be supported to maintain their own mental health. Mental health problems are frequently highlighted as a concern in the teaching profession.

‘Teachers who are stressed, or demoralised, make poor role models for young people.’ (The Government Office for Science, London 2008)

5. A second crucial role for schools is in the early identification of pupils suffering from mental health problems. Teachers and school leaders must be empowered to play this vital role in the system.
6. There can be no expectation on any school to provide health and social care services funded from the school budget, unless a joint agency approach is planned and additional secure funding is provided for schools to be able to deliver these to support the unmet mental health needs of pupils.
7. NAHT Cymru welcomes any commitment to invest further in connected education, health and social care services, to increase the capacity to meet the growing demand from schools and pupils for their services and to reduce waiting times for this support. School leaders do not believe this is established across Wales.
8. NAHT Cymru believes that all school staff should receive high quality professional learning throughout their career so that they can:
  - promote good mental health and emotional wellbeing;
  - are well placed to identify emerging mental health needs of pupils;
  - can support and manage pupils with mental health needs and in developing emotional resilience in the classroom and school environment.This CPD should start in Initial Teacher Education and Training and continue throughout the teaching career.
9. The Welsh Government’s commitment to the UNCRC in 2004, adopted as the basis of all Welsh Government policy making for children and young people, is clearly articulated through the seven core aims. NAHT Cymru believe they present broader implications for this inquiry, particularly when considering joined up policy across the areas of health, social care and education.

**The work being done to ensure children and young people are more resilient and better able to tackle poor mental well-being when it occurs including:**

**The development of the Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning and Experience as part of the new curriculum.**

10. The crucial role of schools in developing mental health and emotional resilience is well founded.



11. The developing understanding of neuroscience and how it impacts upon learning is a growing area within education. The work of experts such as Dr Andrew Curran (Consultant Paediatric Neurologist at Alder Hey Children's Hospital in Liverpool), provide compelling evidence of the link between an individual's mental health, emotional wellbeing and their ability to learn. Other joint work undertaken by NAHT with organisations such as Adoption UK Wales and the National Adoption Service for Wales have recently produced materials to support schools in their understanding of similar brain-development areas, such as Attachment Theory.
12. Relevant initiatives, activities and approaches can be found in many schools. The following examples are only an indication of the range of differing approaches across a range of Welsh schools:
13. NAHT Cymru, and ASCL, supported a successful Big Lottery bid by Time to Change Wales. The new Young People's Programme is helping schools across Wales to start conversations around mental health in an effort to reduce stigma and discrimination. Time for Change Wales evidence shows that 1 in 10 young people will experience a mental health problem and the stigma and discrimination that goes with it can often bring additional unhelpful challenges. Time to Change Wales are piloting with nine high schools across Wales.
14. A number of schools have utilised programmes such as those developed through the work of Professor Robin Banerjee, Professor of Developmental Psychology at the University of Sussex. Work focuses on the development and evaluation of school-based strategies to support pupils' social and emotional functioning. In one of the approaches schools utilise pupil level surveys, produce sociograms and reports that highlight potential vulnerabilities and associated risk factors related to mental and emotional wellbeing e.g. anxiety, anger management, isolation etc. Teachers and support staff subsequently undertake training in the specific areas identified through the surveys, and aim to support the most vulnerable pupils and develop their mental health, wellbeing and emotional resilience.
15. Restorative Practice approaches give pupils the tools to solve conflict with peers. It has been used in a number of schools with a staff led approach but some schools have also developed pupil leaders for Restorative Practice and anecdotal evidence suggests that this has been very successful in building emotional resilience and self-confidence.
16. NAHT Cymru is also aware of schools utilising KiVa, a research-based anti-bullying program that has been developed in the University of Turku, Finland. The effectiveness of KiVa has been shown in a large randomized controlled trial. It takes a universal approach to

prevention with activities for all pupils and an additional focused approach to specific bullying incidents.

There is much evidence cited by this programme that, when compared with individuals who were not bullied in childhood, those who were frequently bullied are more likely to use mental health services in childhood and adolescence.

17. Place2Be is a national charity providing emotional support to children in schools. It started working with schools in London but the charity has grown and is currently working in 8 primary schools in Cardiff.
18. Many schools have also recognised the link between physical activity and mental health, wellbeing and emotional resilience. The challenge for schools is in creating the space within a demanding curriculum to enable them to provide regular physical activity, outside timetabled P.E. sessions. The pressure from current accountability measures can result in schools concentrating efforts on specific curriculum areas.
19. Pioneer schools focusing on the Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE), have recognised a number of factors impacting on its successful development thus far. Their evidence suggests there is much already occurring in schools across Wales in support of mental health and emotional resilience – all future plans need to maintain such excellent practice in the curriculum. However, such good practice and support needs to be better connected and shared as there appears few, if any, nationally organised approaches to such work, or a central database of approved / accredited support agencies. The pioneer settings that have been most successful have utilised existing networks to link up with schools and settings not directly involved in the new AoLE development e.g. School Improvement Groups in Regional Consortia.
20. However, it is unclear, as yet, whether key work to focus on mental health, wellbeing and emotional resilience will be dealt with effectively within this AoLE.

### **Children's access to school nurses and the role school nurses can play in building resilience and supporting emotional wellbeing.**

21. School leaders report that school nurse access is, at best, variable. The pressure on the school nurse sector often means that, particularly at primary level, other than annual medical assessments for younger children, schools cannot easily access school nurse support other than for specific, complex, high threshold cases.

22. It is unclear to NAHT Cymru how school nurses could further assist with this area of work, other than in a referral process. The capacity of school nurses to directly assist in building emotional resilience and supporting wellbeing is, we believe, very limited.
23. There have been rare examples of more co-ordinated practice in certain schools. For example, some secondary schools have established regular meetings attended by key personnel such as the school nurse, Primary Mental Health and school representatives such as the ALNCo, Pastoral Team leader and Counsellor. This has resulted in a more aligned process should there need to be subsequent referral to areas such as Local Authority pastoral support or CAMHS. However, this appears to have been established in only a few areas and often as a result of particular, local historical need and the direct support to the general population of pupils remains with the school staff.

**The extent to which health, education and social care services are working together.**

**The take up and current provision of lower level support and early intervention services, for example, school counselling services.**

24. 'Childhood and adolescence are particularly critical stages in life when important skills are learned which set the trajectory for mental capital and wellbeing through later years.' (The Government Office for Science, London 2008)
25. School counselling services tend to be third sector supported (e.g. - Barnados). Schools work hard with ELSA trained staff and learning coaches, but these are being rapidly squeezed out by budget pressure.
26. Schools often experience great challenges in accessing joined up support for those pupils deemed to be at risk or in need. As previously cited (Para 22), the best models appear to have come out of situations of past high need but often focus upon secondary pupils - Year 7+. Primary school leaders have sometimes been told that such services are only available for high need pupils from year 6 up.
27. The same schools have also had difficulty accessing what they feel is a dwindling CAMHS service. Many pupils are deemed to fall below the threshold for support. The result can be a child being left without any support other than what the school can offer. The clear risk is that, without earlier expert support, such individual children will require more comprehensive, costly support at a later date and their learning and general progress could be severely affected.
28. As one school leader clearly expressed, 'Schools would welcome a coherent approach which results in a speedy response to identified pupils'. That can only result from the joining up of key groups as early

as possible. Schools would welcome more streamlined access to CAMHS and other related paediatric specialist services. Currently, these services are not readily available to schools in many areas and, even where they do exist, set a high threshold for intervention. Pupils are often unable to access until there is a significant crisis. Schools feel that they are 'fire-fighting' alone after the damage is done.

29. NAHT Cymru suggest that more accessible services that provide earlier intervention would also be likely to save funding over the long term. The services appear to be set up at the wrong end of the spectrum of need and interventions at a later stage of need tend to be more costly to the individual and to the public purse.
30. The recent end of June 2017 announcement of the White Paper, 'Services Fit for the Future, Quality and Governance in Health and Care in Wales' clearly shows the welcome ambition of Welsh Government to align services and provide a better person focused approach. Given the implications for the ALNET (Wales) Bill, as well as the desire to support children and young people in developing good mental health, wellbeing and emotional resilience, similar links between health, social care and education are now essential. The desired pupil-centred approach cannot be achieved without utilising the respective expertise and potential for pooling of scarce resources across all three areas. It is also clear that when such alignment does take place and work is undertaken pre-school and from early years onwards, significant resource savings could be achieved – as in the evidence cited in the Finnish KiVa anti-bullying programme (Para 17).
31. Many of the examples referred to in our evidence note pockets of good practice but, as is so often the case in Wales, the picture is patchy and inconsistent. The impact of general budget cuts, the varying school funding formulae and the differing Local Authority structures and approaches provide a huge obstacle to a national joint agency approach. Without co-ordinated investment and adjustment to funding structures, children and young people will struggle to access support.
32. In seeking to extend how well health, education and social care services are working together, it also needs to be recognised that children and young people can also attend schools outside the Local Authority where they reside and either the school or home (or in some cases, both) can sit within a different Health Board boundary. For the most vulnerable pupils requiring support, who often have high levels of mobility, this can be exceptionally challenging, particularly for the schools who are seeking to join up health, social care and education support for an individual child or young person.

NAHT Cymru - September 2017

## References:

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# Agenda Item 9.1

**Elin Jones AC, Llywydd**

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru

**Elin Jones AM, Presiding Officer**

National Assembly for Wales

Lynne Neagle AM  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
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20 November 2017

Dear Lynne

## Youth Parliament

I wanted to provide you with an update on the Youth Parliament project following the Commission's meeting in September where we considered the results of the youth parliament consultation.

You will be aware that 5,000 young people took part in the consultation over the summer. Some of the key areas that young people agreed on include;

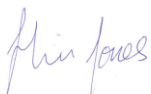
- elections should be held to choose members of a youth parliament,
- members should be aged between 11-18,
- members should be elected for two years,
- the youth parliament should be independent from all political parties.

A full table of findings can be seen below.

The Commission considered the results of the Youth Parliament consultation and agreed to establish a Youth Parliament for Wales, with elections taking place in November 2018.

We will now continue to work in partnership with young people and youth organisations from across Wales to create a body led by young people to ensure their voice is heard as part of the democratic process.

Yours sincerely



Elin Jones AM  
Llywydd

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<p><b>89%</b> of children and young people who responded to the consultation agreed that the organisation should be called <i>‘Welsh Youth Parliament’/ ‘Senedd Ieuenctid Cymru’</i>.</p>
<p><b>96%</b> agreed that the aim of the youth parliament should be <i>‘The youth parliament will give Wales’s young people a democratic voice at a national level and empower them to bring about change’</i>.</p>
<p><b>88%</b> believed elections should be held to choose members of the youth parliament.</p>
<p><b>85%</b> agreed that the youth parliament should have 60 members, 40 to represent Wales’s electoral constituencies and 20 to represent specific groups.</p>
<p>There was a mixed response to the proposed age range of youth parliament members, but almost two thirds agreed that members should be aged between 11 and 18 (<b>65%</b>).</p>
<p>Almost three quarters of the young people surveyed (<b>74%</b>) believed that members should be elected for two years, and <b>81%</b> agreed that members should be able to stand multiple times.</p>
<p><b>82%</b> believed the youth parliament should be independent from all political parties.</p>
<p>More than nine in ten young people (<b>94%</b>) believed the proposed responsibilities of the future youth parliament should be :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Investigate, debate and campaign on issues chosen by young people;</li> <li>- Listen to young people and represent their views;</li> <li>- Engage with Assembly Members;</li> <li>- Help children and young people understand how the National Assembly for Wales and the Wales Youth Parliament works;</li> <li>- Meet together at least twice every calendar year;</li> <li>- Report back to the young people it represents about its work and achievements on a regular basis.</li> </ul>

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg / We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English



# Agenda Item 9.2

Mark Drakeford AM/AC

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid

Cabinet Secretary for Finance



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref

Simon Thomas AM  
Chair  
Finance Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
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21 November 2017

*Arwydd Siôn.*

Ahead of this week's Budget scrutiny session at Finance Committee, I wanted to set out my intention to restructure the draft Budget 2018-19 in accordance with the new Ministerial portfolios following the Cabinet reshuffle.

Both the outline and detailed draft Budget proposals – published on October 3 and 24 respectively – reflect the structure of the Welsh Government Ministerial portfolios at the time.

In order to provide full transparency of the Welsh Government's Budget and our spending plans, it is my intention to restate the Main Expenditure Group (MEG) BEL tables, which were published as part of the detailed spending proposals on October 24, in line with the new portfolio structures.

This will be a purely administrative exercise to regularise changes to the new structures and Ministerial portfolios. In restating the budget tables, we will provide a reconciliation between those published in October and the new structures. As part of this exercise, we will also restate the 2017-18 Budget position to support the scrutiny of the Second Supplementary Budget later this financial year.

The revised MEG BEL tables are currently being reviewed by Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers. I will publish the tables ahead of the draft Budget debate on 5 December.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Pack Page 70

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I am copying this letter to the Chairs of the policy committees.

In gyroir,  
Mark

**Mark Drakeford AM/AC**  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid  
Cabinet Secretary for Finance

CYPE(5)-33-17 - Paper to note 3  
**Agenda Item 9.3**

Kirsty Williams AC/AM  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Lynne Neagle AM  
Chair  
Children, Young People and Education Committee

17 November 2017

Dear Lynne,

During my attendance at the Children, Young People and Education Committee on Thursday 16 November 2017, I agreed to provide further information in relation to some of the questions raised and this is detailed below:

#### Management of School reserves

Following publication of the updated information on school reserves, as at 31 March 2017, I considered it appropriate to write to both Denbighshire and Powys Local Authorities, to seek assurance that they are safeguarding their school budgets. I enclose copies of my letter and the responses received from the Leaders of Denbighshire and Powys Councils.

More widely, I have challenged local government to ensure schools are making good use of the funding allocated to them and whilst the overall level of reserves has decreased with some schools making better use of their reserves, there remains a varied picture.. Some schools continue to maintain higher balances of more than 10% of their total delegated expenditure and in the case of the two authorities above, overall levels have reduced at pace.

#### Breakdown of the Raising School Standards BEL in 2018-19

*Education in Wales: Our national mission* sets out how the school system will move forward in securing implementation of the new curriculum supported by leadership, professional learning, and excellence & equity within a self-improving system. The action plan focuses on raising standards for all, reducing the attainment gap and delivering an education system that is a source of national pride and public confidence.

The Welsh Government's commitment to invest £100 million to raise standards over this Assembly term is aligned to our national plan of action and structured against its overarching objective and four enabling objectives.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

In 2018-19 we have budgeted to spend £25 million to support, enhance and accelerate a range of actions to help delivery of the action plan. As in 2017-18 there is expected to be an element of over-programming to account for natural changes and to ensure we maximise our investment over the term, therefore figures are approximate.

Curriculum and Assessment	£3.0 million (12%)
Leadership	£3.25 million (13%)
Professional Learning	£13.25 million (53%)
Self Improving System	£5.0 million (20%)
Wellbeing	£0.5 million (2%)
Total	£25.0 million (100%)

Within these allocations are:

- £3.2 million to support ALN transformation as part of a total £10.1 million planned investment over the Assembly term from this budget.
- £4.2 million to support the teaching and learning of Welsh including to continue the expansion of the Welsh language sabbatical scheme, deliver a regional programme of professional learning, attract more prospective teachers to teach through the medium of Welsh, support schools to provide more opportunities for learners to use their Welsh language skills, and continue with a programme of research and evaluation to ensure that the teaching and learning of Welsh and through the medium of Welsh is based on best practice.
- £0.6 million over 3 years for action to improve the use of business managers to support school leaders and release critical head teacher time to focus on teaching and learning. This will be match funded by Local Authorities providing a total of circa £1.28 million over the term to support these pilots.
- The £1 million in 2018-19 for Music in Education, announced as part of the Plaid Cymru agreement is outside of this commitment and is set within the Curriculum Assessment Budget Expenditure Line (5162).

The element of the budget which is planned to be passported to and through regional consortia as one of our main delivery partners, reflects action across the enabling objectives and is planned to support a number of areas including around:

- Coding clubs
- LNF Oracy Scheme
- Aspiring leaders
- Collaborative working
- Developing schools as learning organisations
- Welsh professional development
- National networks for excellence
- Digital competence
- Professional standards
- Higher level teaching assistants

## Sufficiency of Local Authority and Regional Consortia support for Governors

Local authorities and the regional education consortia already provide a wide range of governor support services to help governors understand their statutory duties and to help deal with complex queries. For example they:

- provide training for governors to meet Welsh Government mandatory training requirements, (as well as training on other areas);
- provide clerking services for those schools who subscribe to Service Level Agreements; and
- provide regional conferences for governors on national and local developments affecting them.

Many local authorities and/or consortia also provide written material for governors in the form of handbooks, guidance documents, and newsletters on their webpages. These services provide both a local and all-Wales view as much of the training and services available to governors derive from developments in Welsh Government education policy.

Some key recommendations from a review of the activities and services undertaken by Governors Wales in 2014/15 have not been addressed by Governors Wales. Very little has been achieved to align the development officer role with the consortia and there continues to be little progress with Governors Wales sourcing additional income from other partners or revenue raising activities.

Whilst there has been some improvement in the take up of the helpline and hits to their website, the overwhelming majority of school governors continue to access support from their local authorities and consortia and currently only around 2,000 governors (from a total of approximately 21,000 governors) registered on the organisation's mailing list.

During the review a survey undertaken with a sample of just over a thousand governors, chairs of governors and clerk's indicated that only 10% contact Governors Wales should they have a query with their role. Most would use other means such as contacting their local authority, chair of governors, other governors, headteachers, or other means such as mentors and the diocesan authorities. A question was asked of responders as to whether they have used the Governors Wales helpline, and of the 981 who responded only around 10% had used the helpline.

## Update on the regional working review in the context of school governance

We will be working with regional consortia to ensure that the potential loss of Governors Wales' services is mitigated. We have already received feedback from the regional consortia on this matter. Regional consortia we have engaged with thus far have stated that they did not foresee any significant issues arising from the potential loss of Governors Wales.

We are also aware however that Governors Wales are canvassing to ascertain levels of support for introducing a governing body subscription for membership and access to their services. If they can successfully establish a mechanism to become self-funding funding (in line with for example the National Governors Association in England) they may continue to offer services to those governing bodies who wish to access their services specifically.

Consortia feel that the use of the services offered by Governors Wales has likely decreased since the existence of the regional consortia. For example, consortia provide regional conferences for governors, something that Governors Wales no longer provide.

One consortia region stated that they did not expect the loss of Governors Wales to have a major impact in their area acknowledging that there was some duplication in existence between their services and those of Governors Wales.

However, these developments will allow a clear steer in new National Model on strengthening services for governors to be more regionally rather than locally focussed.

Note on the new memorandum of understanding around the expenditure of the Education Improvement Grant (EIG)

Over the next two years the Welsh Government will make available more than £225 million through the EIG for Schools to support our schools, regional consortia and Local Authorities to improve educational outcomes for learners in Wales. This reflects a significant investment through the Welsh Government's additional grant funding.

Over this two year period as part of the whole-government approach to prioritise funding for frontline school services and social care through the Local Government Settlement Revenue Support Grant, I am proposing to make available £22.2 million from the EIG budget. In my evidence paper to the Committee to support scrutiny of the Draft Budget I signalled the potential to include as part of this the element of support for Local Authority Minority Ethnic Achievement services and support for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners.

I should emphasise that this is part of the Draft Budget and as I outlined in Committee, no firm decision has been made. My officials are working with the WLGA on the detail and I will update members in due course. I can confirm that I have written to the Leader of the WLGA to set out my expectations for the £170 million over two years which the Welsh Government is prioritising for schools, to support Local Government as they set their budgets. My expectations are clear and focus around frontline schools delivery, continued investment in regional school improvement arrangements and continued support to reduce and remove barriers to education for our more vulnerable learners.

Update on the number of local authority applications to reduce infant class sizes (by local authority).

All 22 local authorities have submitted business cases for use of the class sizes grant. These are currently undergoing initial assessment in line with the key criteria for the grant.

Update on the £10 million to offset the lower than anticipated income for HEIs

No further update is available at the moment. As I stated in Committee, I am due to meet with the Cabinet Secretary for Finance on the issue. I am happy to provide an update to the Committee when I have had the opportunity to discuss.

I trust these address the additional points raised.

Yours sincerely



**Kirsty Williams AC/AM**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
Cabinet Secretary for Education

**Kirsty Williams AC/AM**  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref: MA-P/KW/3631/17

Councillor Rosemarie Harris  
Leader of Powys County Council

[cllr.rosemarie.harris@powys.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.rosemarie.harris@powys.gov.uk)

23 October 2017

Dear Rosemarie,

On the 19 October the Welsh Government released information provided by Local Authorities around school reserves as at 31 March 2017.

This is a challenging time for public service budgets with the UK Government's continued commitment to austerity and the money to Wales reducing in real terms each year. In previous budget rounds the Welsh Government has sought to protect Local Government from the worst of the reductions with a protection for schools, a cash increase to the overall Settlement this year, and a Draft Budget which prioritises local services, schools and social care through the Settlement Revenue Support Grant in 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Against this backdrop the information released on 19 October shows Powys to have school reserves equivalent to £2 per pupil.

What assurances can you give me that your authority has plans in place to safeguard school budgets and to ensure that schools with negative balances are brought back to modest surpluses quickly and sustainably?

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely

**Kirsty Williams AC/AM**  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
Cabinet Secretary for Education

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
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[Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.



Powys County Council  
Powys County Hall  
LLANDRINDOD WELLS  
Powys  
LD1 5LG

13 November 2017

Ms Kirsty Williams AM  
Cabinet Secretary for Education  
Welsh Government  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Dear Kirsty,

Thank you for your letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2017, in respect of school reserves and budgets.

It is an extremely challenging time for public service budgets, but an extra £1m was invested in schools in the 2017-18 budget, and this has been recommended again for 2018-19. I can confirm that Education alongside Adult and Childrens Social Services remain key priorities for the Council.

The Council are working with seventeen schools who submitted deficit budgets, these were not licensed by the cabinet in July 2017. These schools were issued with a Notice of Concern and were required to submit recovery plans to the Council by the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2017. The majority of schools complied with the Notice of Concern and are now in a position to submit recovery plans for approval which would move them into a licensed position. An updated school balance report will be considered by the Education Scrutiny Committee in November.

It is a priority of the Council to progress further formal intervention with the schools that are not engaging to reduce deficit balances.

There are a number of reviews in progress that will refine the current funding mechanisms:

- The Audit and Education Scrutiny Group, within their work programme, are undertaking a review, to ensure that schools and the Council are effective in their resource management.

Cont/d....

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**Cyngor Sir Powys County Council**



- In addition the Council has commenced a fundamental review of the fair funding formula for schools which will evaluate the distribution of the funding available to schools. There are both short and long term objectives expected to be delivered from this review.

I hope this provides reassurance about the commitment from the Council to the future funding of Powys schools.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rosemarie Harris', written in a cursive style.

**County Councillor Rosemarie Harris  
Executive Leader, Powys County Council**

Kirsty Williams AC/AM  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref: MA-P/KW/3631/17

Councillor Hugh Evans  
Leader of Denbighshire County Council

[hugh.evans@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:hugh.evans@denbighshire.gov.uk)

23 October 2017

Dear Hugh,

On the 19 October the Welsh Government released information provided by Local Authorities around school reserves as at 31 March 2017.

This is a challenging time for public service budgets with the UK Government's continued commitment to austerity and the money to Wales reducing in real terms. In previous budget rounds the Welsh Government has sought to protect Local Government from the worst of the reductions with a protection for schools, a cash increase overall in the Settlement this year, and a Draft Budget which prioritises local services, schools and social care through the Settlement Revenue Support Grant in 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Against this backdrop the information released on 19 October showed Denbighshire to have school reserves in a overall deficit position equivalent to -£70 per pupil.

What assurances can you give me that your authority has plans in place to safeguard school budgets and to ensure that schools with negative balances are brought back to modest surpluses quickly and sustainably?

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely

**Kirsty Williams AC/AM**  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
Cabinet Secretary for Education

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[Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Eich cyf / Your ref

Ein cyf / Our ref

Dyddiad / Date

Rhif union / Direct dial

HHE/SEE

7 November 2017

01824 706097

Kirsty Williams AM  
Cabinet Secretary for Education  
Welsh Government  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

[PS.CabSecEducation@gov.wales](mailto:PS.CabSecEducation@gov.wales)

Dear Kirsty

Many thanks for your letter dated October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017 regarding the information provided by Local Authorities around financial reserves as at March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

I can assure you that the Authority has secure plans in place to support schools with negative balances in order to bring them back into a secure financial position. We have a Challenge and Intervention Strategy for schools in financial difficulty (document attached) and through this process are confident that we can support schools through this challenging time.

School balances were at a high of £3.9m in 2013-14 before falling steadily since. It is important to note that during this period the 1% protection pledge to school budgets has been met in every year, but it hasn't been enough to keep up with the financial pressures placed upon schools. The pay rises and the N.I increase for teachers during this period was especially difficult for the Sector.

The value of Welsh Government Protection to Denbighshire County Council Schools was £4.422m over 6 years from 2011/12 to 2016/17 whereas DCC School Budgets increased by £7.519m over same period. Even with this extra non-statutory investment schools have struggled to cope financially. In particular 2016/17 was a difficult year for schools and council finances alike. DCC protected schools by £1.173m, but the actual school pressures were somewhere nearer to £2.5m so there was a significant funding gap (mainly as a result of the changes to NI and Pension Costs announced a number of years before by the Coalition Government). There have however been no efficiency savings applied to school budgets during the period of protection, unlike the cuts felt by other Council services.

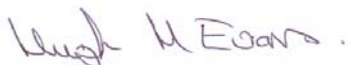
DCC schools also pay their own redundancy and EVR costs. This does however allow them to plan their overspends through a 3 year budgeting process which is monitored closely through our Schools in Financial Difficulty Policy. Our balances are however set to stabilise in 2017/18 and there is a feeling the worst may have passed, but pressure to give pay rises of >1% and further cuts to Council budgets in future years would be a threat. There are also several schools who have now stabilised their deficit but are struggling to clear it, and any further cost pressures could see their deficits increase once more.

/ cont .....

I can assure you that schools in Financial Difficulty are supported throughout the process and are monitored carefully to ensure they are able to secure a recovered position. Regular meetings are held with officers and an escalation process is in place when a planned recovery is not achieved.

I hope this and the supporting document gives you an assurance that there are adequate plans in place to ensure schools with negative balances are brought back to modest surpluses as quickly as possible.

Yours sincerely,



**Cllr Hugh H Evans OBE**  
**Leader of Denbighshire County Council**

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# Denbighshire County Council

## Schools Reporting Timetable and Challenge & Intervention Framework for Schools in Financial Difficulty



**Created:** June 2013

**Last Updated:** June 2017

**Author:** Schools Support Team

Introduction

The Denbighshire Scheme for Financing Schools prohibits schools from planning for a deficit when preparing their annual budget plans. In support of the Authority's monitoring and intervention role the scheme requires schools:

- To return a draft 3 year budget to the LA and if applicable, submit notification that they are unable to set a balanced budget by the 1<sup>st</sup> April each year
- To gain approval, where applicable, for a planned deficit, by the 1<sup>st</sup> May of each year including submission of the proposed recovery plan intended to support the reduction/removal of that deficit. Any unplanned deficits that occur within the financial year due to unforeseen circumstances must be reported as soon as they become known to the school. Approval to carry forward that deficit to the new financial year must be sought.
- To submit a final Governor approved budget (surplus or deficit) by the 31st May each year to include a financial recovery plan for those schools who have been granted a licensed deficit

Schools should only apply for a licensed deficit in circumstances where they cannot set a balanced budget without seriously impacting on educational provision.

Denbighshire County Council has no power to write off the deficit balance of any school and all deficits will remain a liability of the Governing Body until paid back. This applies in all circumstances including during school re-organisation.

Schools must, where possible, avoid the need to apply for a licensed deficit by robustly managing their 3 year budget planning process and being proactive in responding to changes early enough to allow mitigating actions to be implemented.

Where it is found that deficits have occurred as a result of financial mismanagement at a school level then Denbighshire County Council will consider the merits of enforcing its powers under S51 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act to remove financial delegation from the school. Denbighshire is however committed to working with the Governing Body to ensure this can be avoided where possible.

#### What is the purpose of the Framework?

The challenge and intervention framework is intended to act as a mechanism for the Authority to provide schools with an appropriate level of challenge and support to help them set a balanced budget or if this is not achievable to prepare a recovery plan that sets out the action the school will take to achieve a sustainable financial position over an agreed period of time.

The framework will provide schools with:

- **An agreed timescale in which to take the action required to balance the budget**  
A school will normally be expected to deliver its recovery plan within a three year period. This may be extended in exceptional circumstances where a school cannot deliver a recovery plan over three years without seriously affecting its educational provision or standards. Any extension beyond a two year period must be agreed by Denbighshire's Head of Education and Section 151 Officer.
- **Support, Monitoring and Challenge**  
Financial and operational management support and challenge through a network of advisors including Education Officers, Finance Officers and HR Officers.

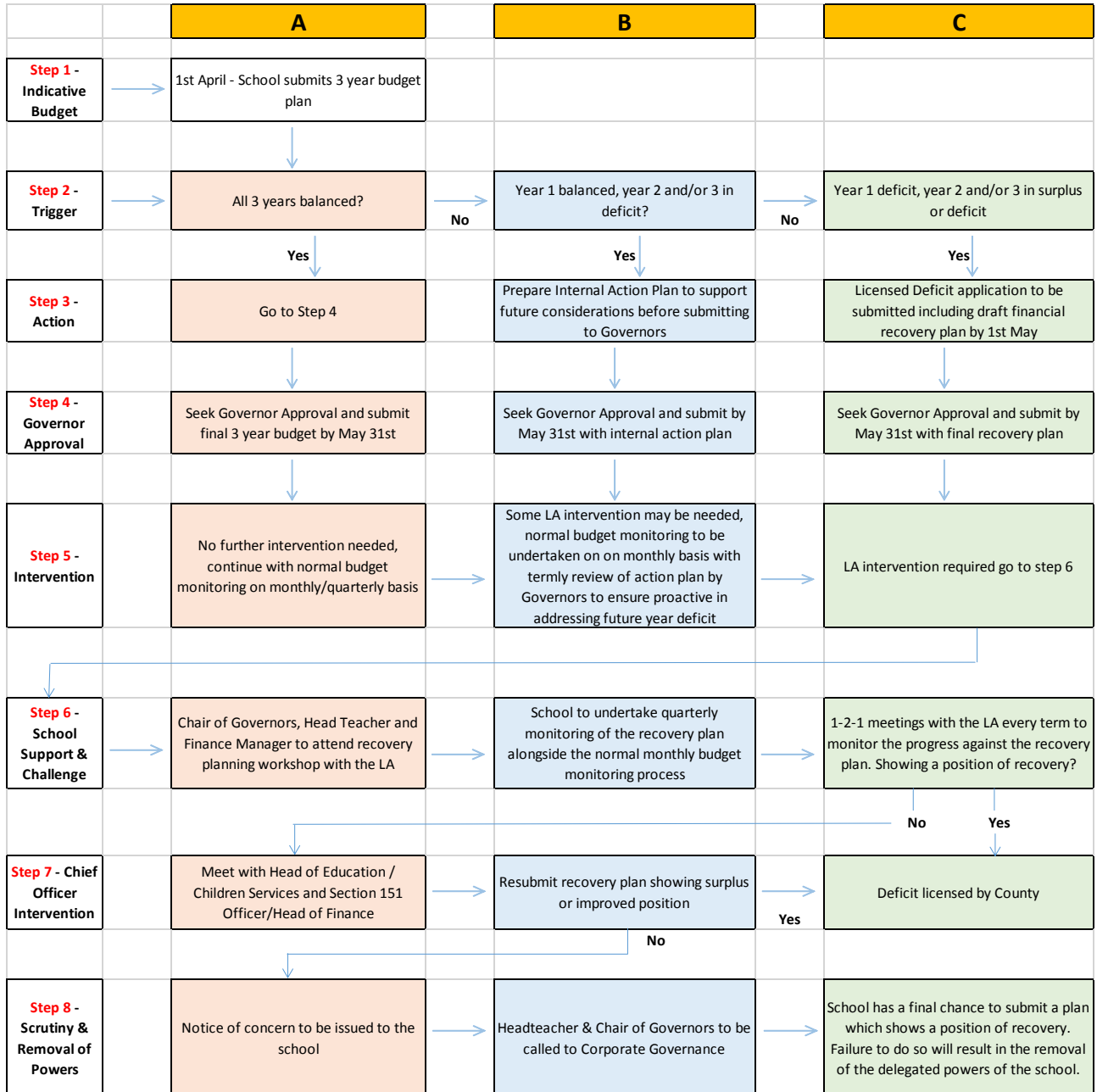
This may include the provision of:

- Benchmarking data
- Financial analysis
- Audit information
- Regulatory Advice

- Contextual data – e.g. demographic changes
- Focused training sessions relevant to the situation

Any school failing to comply with this framework by taking actions to meet the requirements will be in breach of their financial management responsibilities. This will be challenged and can lead to intervention by the S151 Officer and potential removal of the delegated powers of the school

The process for challenging and supporting schools is defined in the diagram below:



Each of the steps in the diagram is explained below.

### **Step 1: Indicative Budgets**

The school will submit their DRAFT 3 year budgets to the School Funding Team by the 1<sup>st</sup> April of each year. These will be based on the final budget released to schools within the annual school budget formulation cycle.

### **Step 2 & 3: Trigger/Action**

If a school submits a 3 year budget plan that shows a surplus position in each of the 3 years no intervention will be required and they will only be required to seek Governor Approval and continue to monitor as part of the normal budget monitoring process for schools.

If a school submits a 3 year budget plan that shows a surplus position in year 1 but a potential deficit in year 2 and/or year 3 then there will be no direct requirement for intervention however the schools will be required to prepare an internal action plan that outlines their commitment to address future year's deficits. They will then only be required to seek Governor Approval and monitor as part of the normal budget monitoring process for schools with the action plan being reviewed on a termly basis.

If a school submits a 3 year budget plan that shows a year 1 deficit and/or surplus/deficit in years 2 & 3 then direct intervention will be required. The school must initially apply for a licensed deficit by 1<sup>st</sup> May with a draft financial recovery plan as supporting documentation. The recovery plan must indicate the actions that will be taken to bring the financial position back into balance. This may be through a combination of income generation and/or a reduction in expenditure and will in most cases result in staffing implications.

If the Recovery Plan is not deemed robust enough to deliver the savings needed the licensed deficit will be rejected. Schools will be in breach of financial regulations if they set a deficit budget that has not been approved via the appropriate process

Schools are required to re-apply for a licensed deficit on an annual basis, even where a recovery plan has been agreed previously. This will allow the LA to ensure that the recovery plan is on track to being delivered and mitigates the risk of further changes at the detriment to the schools financial position

### **Step 4: Governor Approval**

In all cases schools must ensure that Governors are accountable for the financial position of the school. The 3 year Governor Approved budget plan must be submitted by 31<sup>st</sup> May of each year to include a recovery Plan for those in deficit.

### **Step 5: Intervention**

Those schools that are in surplus over the 3 year period will not require any direct intervention and will simply be required to monitor their position within the normal monthly monitoring process. Those schools who may be facing a year 2 and/or year 3 deficit may require intervention dependent upon the severity of the forecast position. This will be provided at the request of the school and if deemed appropriate.

Those schools that are in deficit in the current year will require intervention under step 6 of the above process.



## Step 6: School Support and Challenge

Financial advice, information and training will be available to support schools in recovering from a deficit financial position. This will initially be via a financial recovery workshop that will be set up between the Head teacher, Chair of Governors and Finance Manager. Schools will then be required to continue to monitor the plan, as a minimum on a termly basis and re-submit as necessary.

1-2-1 meetings will be held between the school and LA Officers to ensure the recovery plan is continually validated and appropriately monitored. **Paperwork for this meeting must be received by the Schools Support Team at least 3 working days prior to it taking place, or the meeting will be cancelled and the position escalated. Full spreadsheets including the 3 year plan, recovery plan and staffing list are required.**

Following the submission of a recovery plan a number of validation checks will be completed by the School Funding Team to ensure that the plans are reasonable. This will be done by: -

- Comparing the current year's income and expenditure budgets with previous years' trends to identify any significant differences.
- Checking that the correct balances have been brought forward into the current year and all funding delegated by the Local Authority has been taken in to account.
- Actions included in the recovery plan are realistic and that by implementing them the required level of savings can be achieved.
- Any areas that are unclear or simply not achievable will be queried with the school and clarification sought.

Where the plans are deemed to be suitable then they will be accepted by the Local Authority and reviewed throughout the year in the termly 1-2-1 meetings.

The licensed deficit will be approved by the Head of Education & S151 Officer and written confirmation will be sent to the school once the licensed deficit has been processed.

## Step 7: Chief Officer Intervention

This step is for those schools who are unable to show a position of recovery following meetings with the LA. The Chair of Governors, Head Teacher and Finance Manager will be called to meet with the Head of Education plus the Section 151 Officer to discuss the financial recovery plan submitted.

The School will have another opportunity to re-submit a recovery plan showing a surplus position.

If the plans are deemed to be suitable they will be accepted by the Local Authority and reviewed throughout the year in the termly 1-2-1 meetings.

## Step 8: Corporate Governance Committee & Removal of Delegated Powers

Intervention is proposed to escalate at three levels. It is envisaged that deficit schools will engage with the Local Authority well before the need for intervention as these arrangements are the last resort, for the protection of public monies and to protect the overall resource for all schools. The levels of intervention are:

1. Notice of Concern issued to School

A school that fails to not take the necessary action will be given a formal notice of concern, stating the action the Local Authority recommends they should take to bring the budget back in to balance including any charging of interest on the deficit.

2. School given 1 month to respond to notice of concern

An explanation will be required from the school about the action being taken to safeguard the school's financial position and why progress to date has not been satisfactory.

**The School will also be requested to discuss the deficit at the Council's Corporate Governance committee.**

3. Suspension of delegated financial powers

Where the LA considers that insufficient progress or cooperation has been made decision will be made by the Head of Education and S151 Officer to suspend delegation. Under suspension the authority would take control of the budget and take the necessary action before returning control to the Governing Body. During the suspension school staff would be responsible to the authority for the day-to-day financial administration in the school and all budgetary decisions will be removed from the school.

Removal of delegated powers will apply where:

- The school is persistently in breach of the Scheme for Financing Schools
- The school will not set a balanced budget
- The school will not engage in the licensed deficit process
- The deficit is worsening and no action is being taken by the school
- There is evidence of financial mismanagement by the school
- A school in special measures has not demonstrated commitment to making better use of resources or achieving value for money

**Appendix 1**

**Recovery Plan Proforma**



**Draft Financial Recovery Plan**

-/-/-

\*\*\*\*\* **School**

Status from latest 3 year projection if no further action taken:

	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Surplus/(Deficit) Carried Forward		0	0	
Budget/Forecast Budget				
Forecast Expenditure				
Annual Surplus/(Deficit)	0	0	0	0
<b>Cumulative Surplus/(Deficit) if no further action taken</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Mitigating Actions:

EVRs / Retirement

<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
In-year Surplus/(Deficit)	0	0	0	0
Revised Cumulative Surplus/(Deficit)	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Notes**

## Appendix 2

### Licensed Deficit Proforma



## Application for a Licensed Deficit for Schools

*Schools should only apply for a planned licensed deficit in circumstances where they cannot set a balanced budget without seriously impacting on educational provision.*

Name of School:

Date:

Financial Year: 2017/2018

Value of deficit (predicted deficit by 31/03/2018):

### We will:

- Confirm we will implement the savings in the timescales agreed, and inform the School Funding Section of any deviation from the recovery plan (attached).
- Provide any other information as and when required by the Local Authority.
- Enclose a 3 Year Budget Recovery Plan.

Signed (Headteacher):

Print Name:

Date:

Signed (Chair of Governors):

Print Name:

Date:

Please either scan and return this form to [catherine.howatson@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:catherine.howatson@denbighshire.gov.uk) or send it to the School Funding Team, Finance, County Hall, Wynnstay Road, Ruthin, LL15 1YN.



Royal College of  
General Practitioners  
Coleg Brenhinol  
Meddygon Teulu

23 November 2017

Vaughan Gething AM  
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care  
Welsh Government

Dear Vaughan

## Re Perinatal Mental Health in Wales

We welcome the report published last month by the Children, Young People and Education Committee on Perinatal Mental Health in Wales.

The report highlighted important issues and the challenges faced by this sector. The care of parents and new born children is important as these are formative years and both child and parents are very vulnerable to problems and lack of support. This can have implications for the health of both and also of the wider family for the rest of their lives and have marked implications for the child's wellbeing and education and potentially affect the lives of future generations.

We would urge that the recommendations are implemented in full.

We appreciate that mental health is everyone's business and as GPs we are at the forefront of providing care and support for those with mental health problems. Sadly, we have little or no routine involvement with maternity care and the care of the parents and the youngest babies as this is the remit of midwives and health visitors, who need support from specialist providers with rapid access to therapy and, if required, inpatient care. Unfortunately, due to service changes and fragmentation, midwives and health visitors often have little or no contact with GP practices, reducing communication for concerns about individual patients. For milder health problems, access to counselling or other talking therapy may be slow.

We support Recommendation 16 and I have highlighted this issue with the RCGP core curriculum team. The curriculum is currently being reviewed and there are requests for this section to be strengthened.

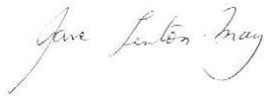
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Ffôn 020 3188 7755 Ffacs 020 3188 7756 ebost [welshc@rcgp.org.uk](mailto:welshc@rcgp.org.uk) web [www.rcgp-wales.org.uk](http://www.rcgp-wales.org.uk)

Patron: His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh Registered charity number 223106

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane Fenton-May".

**Dr Jane Fenton-May**  
**Vice Chair**  
**RCGP Wales**

Copy:

Lynne Neagle AM, Chair, Children, Young People and Education Committee  
Dr Dai Lloyd AM, Chair, Health, Social Services and Sports Committee