

# Agenda – Children, Young People and Education Committee

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Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 2 – Senedd

Meeting date: 8 March 2018

Meeting time: 09.00

For further information contact:

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Committee Clerk

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## Private Pre-meeting

(09:00 – 09:15)

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

(09:15)

### 2 Inquiry into Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes – Evidence session 3

(09:15 – 10:00)

(Pages 1 – 78)

Regional Education Consortia

Betsan O'Connor, Managing Director – ERW

Cressy Morgan, Support and Learners Coordinator – ERW

Andrew Williams, Senior Lead Standards & Improvement Planning – Central South Consortium Joint Education Service

Debbie Lewis, Senior Lead Teaching & Learning Experiences – Central South Consortium Joint Education Service

Attached Documents:

Research Brief



Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales

CYPE(5)-08-18 – Paper 1 – Education through Regional Working (ERW)

CYPE(5)-08-18 – Paper 2 – Central South Consortium Joint Education Service

### **3 Inquiry into Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes – Evidence session 4**

(10:00 – 10:45)

(Pages 79 – 94)

Regional Consortia

Sharon Williams, Wellbeing Regional Adviser – GwE

Paul Matthews-Jones, Core Lead – GwE

Ed Pryce, Service Strategic and Policy Lead – Education Achievement  
Service for South East Wales (EAS)

Kath Bevan, Lead for Equity and Well-being – Education Achievement  
Service for South East Wales (EAS)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-08-18 – Paper 3 – GwE

CYPE(5)-08-18 – Paper 4 – Education Achievement Service for South East  
Wales

### **Break**

(10:45 – 10:55)

### **4 Inquiry into Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes – Evidence session 5**

(10:55 – 11:40)

(Pages 95 – 108)

NAHT and ASCL

Rob Williams, Policy Director – NAHT Cymru

Damon McGarvie, Headteacher of Pennar Community Primary School,  
Pembrokeshire and NAHT Cymru President

Tim Pratt, Director – ASCL Cymru

Ravi Pawar, Headteacher of Blackwood Comprehensive School

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-08-18 – Paper 5 – NAHT Cymru

CYPE(5)-08-18 – Paper 6 – Association of School and College Leaders

## **5 Inquiry into Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes – Evidence session 6**

(11:40 – 12:25)

(Pages 109 – 127)

National Education Union (NEU), NASUWT and Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru (UCAC)

Neil Foden – Wales Executive of the National Education Union (NUT Section)

Mike O'Neill – Vice-President ATL Section, National Education Union Cymru

Rex Phillips, National Official Wales – NASUWT

Elaine Edwards, General Secretary – UCAC

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-08-18 – Paper 7 – National Education Union Cymru

CYPE(5)-08-18 – Paper 8 – NASUWT

CYPE(5)-08-18 – Paper 9 – Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru (UCAC)

(only available in Welsh)

CYPE(5)-08-18 – Private Paper

## **6 Inquiry into Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes – Evidence session 7**

(12:25 – 13:25)

(Pages 128 – 137)

Sir Alasdair MacDonald, Welsh Government Advisor on Education

Mel Ainscow, Emeritus Professor of Education and co-director of the Centre for Equity in Education – Manchester University

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-08-18 – Paper 10 – Professor Mel Ainscow

## **7 Paper(s) to note**

**7.1 Additional information from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health following the meeting on 18 January**

(Pages 138 – 139)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-08-18 – Paper to note 1

**7.2 Update on Welsh Government response to Recommendations from the Committee's Report: Scrutiny of the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2018–19**

(Pages 140 – 142)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-08-18 – Paper to note 2

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

(13:25)

**9 Inquiry into Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes – Consideration of the Evidence**

(13:25 – 13:30)

Document is Restricted

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Cyllid wedi'i dargeddu i wella canlyniadau addysgol | Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes

TF 20

Ymateb gan: Ein Rhanbarth ar Waith

Response from: Education through Regional Working (ERW)

ERW covers 12,000km<sup>2</sup> with almost 500 schools. In September 2017 474 schools in ERW had pupils who were eFSM (table 1). There has been a minor decrease in the number of eFSM pupils across the region since 2016 from 20,019 to 19,999. The majority of eFSM learners attend schools which fall into FSM benchmarking groups 1 and 2 (table 2).

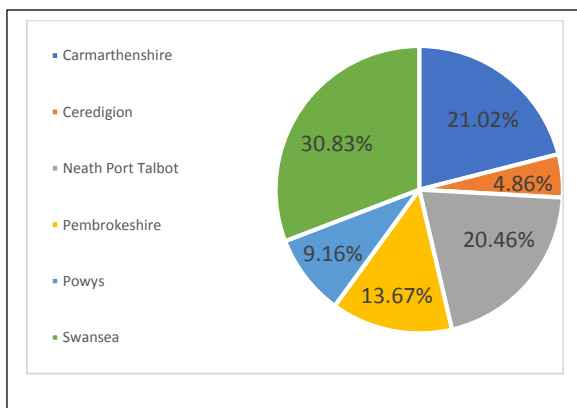


Table 1 Distribution of pupils eFSM in ERW Groups

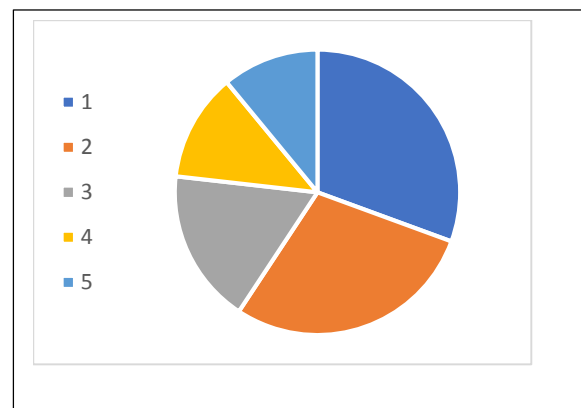


Table 2 FSM Benchmarking Groups

### Schools use of PDG

All Challenge Advisers make a judgment about PDG spend which is submitted as part of the CV1 report to Rhwyd. During CV1 Challenge Advisers discuss the issues outlined below:

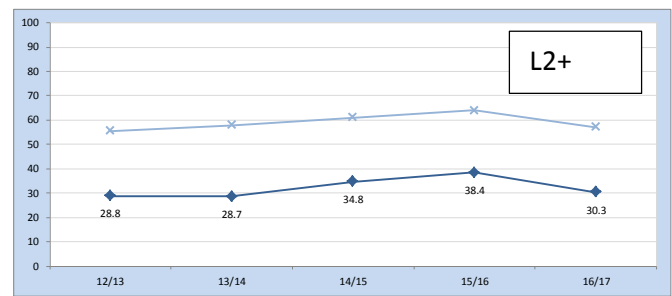
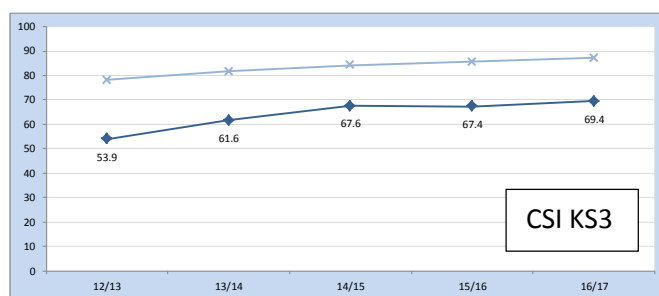
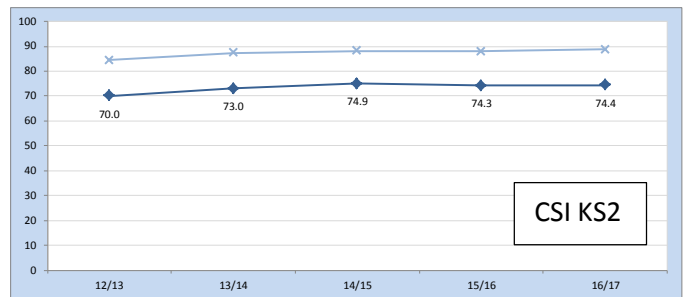
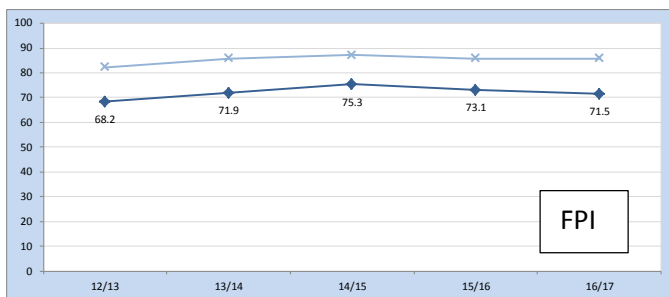
- A focus on curriculum content in particular literacy and numeracy.
- Effective learner tracking systems for attainment and wellbeing.
- Attendance, analysis of attendance data and understanding of its specific attendance issues, interventions in place to improve attendance and their impact.
- Effective use of EIG and PDG and its effect on standards.

Most schools in the region use their PDG effectively to plan for and secure improvement for vulnerable pupils. This term nearly all of the Primary CVS1 reports recorded that the school made good use of the PDG and all Secondary and Special school CVS1 reports recorded that the school made good use of the PDG. There are a number of interventions in places across the region ranging from those targeted to individuals to those that are whole school approaches.

Targeted interventions nearly always focus on literacy and numeracy catch up whereas whole school approaches focus more on pupil well-being. There is variation between Local Authorities on the specific approaches and interventions that are used in schools to support eFSM pupils.

### Impact of PDG on attainment

Support visits monitor the quality of leadership, teaching and learning in conjunction with pupil standards. Challenge Advisers review spend during support visits and a detailed evaluation of the impact of the grant is provided. Evaluations are scrutinised during the support visit and reported on Rhwyd. Data on FPI, CSI and L2+ show that trends in performance of eFSM pupils are in line with trends in performance of non eFSM pupils across the region.



## Regional Consortia's use of the PDG for Looked After Children

The LAC element of PDG has been managed by regional consortia since September 2015. In that time the regional strategy has been to address the underachievement and attainment of current and previously looked after children through increasing the knowledge and understanding of those working with them about the impact of trauma and stress. A consistent and thorough package of training has been delivered in partnership with Kate Cairns Associates to primary, secondary and special settings on Attachment and Trauma Informed Practice as part of the regional LAC/PDG strategy to. This training has universal benefits for all learners and staff in schools. All training funded through the LAC element of the PDG has significant benefits for all learners and not just those who are part of the grant count.

The percentage of LAC pupils achieving FPI, CSI (KS2 and KS3) and L2+ and L1 in 2016/7 is higher than it was in 2012. The percentage of pupils achieving L2 is lower. One must be cautious when attempting to draw conclusions from LAC data as the cohorts are very small. **Schools Challenge Cymru programme**

In 2014 Welsh Government identified 40 schools to be part of Schools Challenge Cymru (SCC) and be supported by external Challenge Advisers. Many schools in ERW did not qualify for the resources in the SCC programme as they did not meet the selection criteria set by Welsh Government based largely on data focussing on the performance of pupils who were eFSM. Despite best efforts ERW were unable to increase the number of schools so selected 4 additional schools which had similar characteristics to nearly all SCC schools and specifically had comparable factors to the four ERW SCC Schools. They were all causing concern to both LA and region; all were in an Estyn category; all had weak leadership; all needed improvements in teaching and all were performing below modelled expectations.

The strategies planned for these schools were similar to those in SCC Schools. Accelerated Improvement Boards were established following an established model in ERW. Additional resources were provided for identified areas for improvement in literacy, numeracy and within school core subject variation. Additional resources were also provided for capacity building.





Conclusions at January 2016 suggested that similar strategies used in ERW yielded improvements at a greater pace than the four ERW SCC Schools and the 40 national SCC Schools. This can be attributed to a number of contributory factors. Firstly, there were clear lines of accountability throughout the project. Secondly, there were strong lines of effective communication between Schools, Challenge Advisers, Local Authority and ERW. Finally, an in depth knowledge and understanding of the schools involved meant that appropriate levels of challenge and support were offered.



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TF 07

Ymateb gan: Gwasanaeth Addysg ar y Cyd Consortiwm Canolbarth y De  
Response from: Central South Consortium Joint Education Service

### **Pupil Deprivation/Development Grant, PDG**

100% of PDG funding received by the consortium is allocated to schools. There is no top slicing/centrally retained element of the grant.

We have for a number of years employed a strategic lead for 'Closing The Gap'.

'Closing The Gap' has been and remains a priority as evidenced by our business planning and the fact that it is a performance management objective for staff.

We have a strategy, supportive guidance for schools and monitor the use of PDG through schools' improvement planning and self evaluation reports.

Challenge advisers focus on pupils entitled to free school meals, eFSM, when looking at the tracking of pupil progress and target setting.

Data commentaries for the consortium and for each of the five local authorities has a section on outcomes for eFSM learners. Until this summer, outcomes for eFSM learners have improved year on year for most key performance measures. This year's changes to GCSE seem to have impacted disproportionately on eFSM learners.

Whilst the monitoring of pupil outcomes is one way of monitoring impact, there are a number of issues:

- The focus just on eFSM learners is problematic for a number of reasons:
  - Changes in entitlement to FSM
  - It's not just the eFSM learners that experience poverty
  - Culturally schools find it difficult to positively discriminate for a particular group of learner
- The way in which the impact of PDG is measured is problematic in that it is measured largely through threshold measures in specific areas as opposed to progress measures and impact on softer but essential areas such as confidence, resilience and aspiration. Further, our research showed the importance of emotional/pastoral support and

engagement with parents. The impact of this is not best measured by academic threshold measures.

- Some schools have developed creative and effective ways of focussing on removing barriers to learning and improving outcomes for eFSM learners.
- Where numbers of eFSM learners are few, the comparison of the performance of a small group of learners with that of a large group of learners is statistically limited.
- Pupils often belong to more than one group. In the current system no recognition is given to those eFSM learners that have significant additional learning needs. Their progress is still measured by threshold measures rather than the progress they make despite their difficulties.

PDG is a valuable source of funding for many schools. It has undoubtedly raised the focus on the barriers to learning that poverty can cause.

Our wider work on this issue includes

- Stepping into Business pilots funded – enterprise programmes supported for six (pilot) schools serving communities with high eFSM
- 24 Business Class partnerships in place with Business in the Community – eFSM data and categorisation information shared with BiTC to prioritise programme take up for schools in most challenging circumstances.
- School Improvement Groups, SiGs have focussed on closing the gap.
- Our professional learning offer includes support in closing the gap.
- Two headteachers in the region are our Associated Headteachers for closing the gap

It is important to note that consortia are just part of the provision. Local authorities have a range of services to support these vulnerable pupils including attendance, ALN support, youth service and social services.

### **PDG LAC**

The grant is allocated to the consortium to distribute to local authorities and schools.

Welsh Government PDG LAC Funding £1,523,750

The key actions come under the following headings:

#### 1. Support for Children placed outside of Wales

The out of Wales commitment stands at £28,700 (2%). Funding for children placed outside of Wales will be accessed in the same way as schools access funding within the region

## 2. Strategically Delivered Support

The consortium will strategically support Looked After Children in education. The region will work to raise attainment of Looked After Children by:

- Providing a regional training programme for schools and Local Authorities
- Providing support for cluster / transition training for schools

Training programmes will be devised according to the identified needs across the region as well as consideration of local needs. Training programmes will be evaluated and will have identified outcome measures.

## 3. Support for School to School Working

The Consortium will identify hub schools that will be able to provide school to school training programmes as well as bespoke support, advice and guidance to schools across the region in order to build capacity across the region. The Hub schools will sign up to an SLA which will identify the intended outcomes of the support / training provided. All support will be evaluated to show evidence of impact.

## 4. Bursary

The Consortium will establish a bursary fund to ensure needs can be supported across the region. Schools will identify the intended impact measures of the additional funding and will be expected to provide evaluative comments following the implementation of the funding.

## 5. Targeted Support for schools

The Consortium will support individual schools needs. Schools will be expected to include this funding within SIP with identified outcomes measures.

As the corporate parents, local authorities take the lead on this. For this region, Esther Thomas is the lead Director for LAC. She works with the LAC lead officer from each of the five local authorities. They determine policy and how the grant is best spent. A strategic lead has been appointed.

Tracking of progress and target setting for LAC pupils is in place. Comparing the performance of such a comparatively small group of pupils with that of the whole cohort brings statistical challenges. Provision is often bespoke to learners and progress captured within personal education plans, PEPS, for each looked after child. As with eFSM learners,

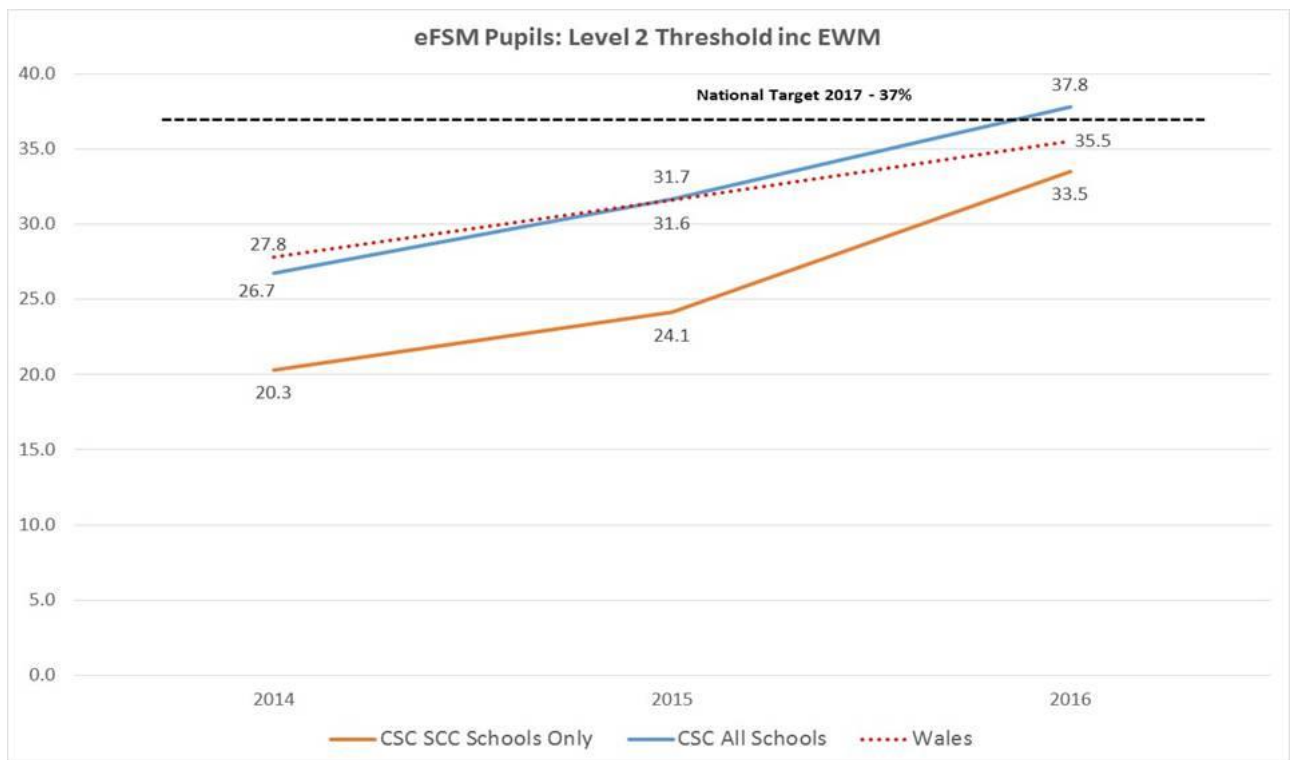
impact can be measured in a range of ways other than threshold academic performance measures.

It is important to note that consortia are just part of the support. Local authorities have a range of services to support these vulnerable pupils including attendance, ALN support, youth service and social services.

### School Challenge Cymru, SCC

This region had 16 SCC schools.

The rate of improvement in these schools was compared with non SCC schools to give an indication of impact. For example:



Since the end of SCC funding, we have worked to take the most effective elements from SCC and integrate these into our systems. This has included the development of Accelerated Progress Leads for our most vulnerable schools

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TF 14

Ymateb gan: GwE

Response from: GwE

## **The Children, Young People and Education Committee:**

Re Inquiry into Welsh Government's approach of targeting funding on particular cohorts of pupils, primarily through The Pupils Development Grant.

### **Overview from GwE:**

#### **PDG FSM:**

1. Detailed work has been undertaken over the last 10 months to align grant allocations with our priorities. The FSM element of the PDG is incorporated into the regional, LA and key portfolio Business Plans. To meet the priorities GwE have identified a wide range of objectives that is monitored and measured within the following elements:
  - Standards
  - Curriculum and Assessment.
  - Leadership
  - Wellbeing
  - Teaching and Learning
  - Business.
2. All PDG (FSM and Early Years) funding is directly allocated to schools. There is no centrally retained element to the grant by the consortia.
3. The Regional Wellbeing Adviser has the lead for the PDG across the consortia and has developed an overall PDG framework model that is been piloted with schools across the region. Focus has been on supporting schools within specific LA's to raise the standards of FSM learners across the local authority within five key elements. See attached model.



Annex A

4. Data, target setting and tracking are consistently applied to challenge and support schools via the SIA's and are used to evaluate the PDG processes. The SIA's are required to gather evidence of use of PDG and its impact in all school visits. If there are significant concerns regarding the use of PDG the Senior Core Lead will be responsible in implementing the appropriate action and support. All SIA's complete a monitoring report in regard to how the PDG is utilised and implemented within the school.
5. Outcomes for eFSM learners have improved year on year for most key performance measures across the consortia.
6. The PDG framework implemented within schools has been focusing on early intervention evidence based research provision such as the SEAL programme/implementing the EET Sutton Trust within 5 key programmes, ACE's approach and family engagement at KS3 and KS4. However most of the school's funding is targeted at KS4 and the links with raising attainments.
7. FMS Group of Learners - eFSM learners often belong to more than one group and have a range of barriers. Overall, in the current system there is no recognition given to those eFSM learners that have significant additional learning needs as well as the increasing concerns regarding their social and emotional wellbeing and their engagement in education. Their progress is still measured by threshold measures rather than the overall progress and success they make.
8. A number of schools have allocated interventions via key staff/roles to support vulnerable learners during key transition stages, for example early years to foundation phase, primary to secondary. Some schools have used the PDG funding to develop effective links via family engagement to raise attainment of learners from deprived backgrounds.

## **2. Regional consortia's use of the PDG on looked after and adopted children:**

1. GwE's Regional Wellbeing Adviser is responsible for the coordination, development and implementation of the PDG support plan across the region. The grant, £844,100 is allocated to the consortia to distribute to local authorities and schools.
2. In 2017-18 GwE has developed and implemented a regional grant guidance and application procedure for the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) for LAC/previous LAC across the region. The regional grant guidance gives individual schools/cluster schools in partnerships with local authorities the opportunity to apply for grant funding under key

headings. This has been proven to be successful in terms of collaborative working and consistency across the region.

3. Key Objectives for the PDG LAC funding are:

- Improve the education attainment of Looked after Children across the region with focus on Foundation Phase and L2+.
- Ensure no LAC has a permanent exclusion
- Work with schools and local authorities to assess, track and monitor progress of LAC.
- Develop a cluster / school-to-school approach in terms of accessing LAC PDG grant across the region.
- Support schools to adopt an evidence-based sustainable model to develop their curriculum and support for LAC learners.
- Develop the transition guidance for LAC to ensure effective primary to secondary / post 16 engagement with focus on measuring impact of interventions.

4. The key elements come under the following headings:

- **Regional coordination and support** - GwE have retained 7% of the total grant fund in terms of coordination of the work across the region and developing the regional professional development offer across the region for schools and local authorities.
  - **Regional training and professional development offer** - Focus has been on implementing evidence based interventions across the region within nurturing / attachment/trauma/bespoke packages to schools and LA's.
  - **Bursary allocation to local authorities** - Local authorities with GwE have implemented their individual bursary for learners that is focused on raising attainment.
  - **Grant support for looked after children outside of Wales** - We have implemented a regional approach for the PDG grant for out of Wales's schools with clear evidence for tracking and monitoring.
  - **Supporting local networks and partnerships via grant applications within key areas** - the majority of the LAC PDG funding is allocated to key support and intervention packages via cluster and local authority working. Focus for this year has been on creating and developing a nurturing whole school approach via the Nurture Group Network, in addition to implementing evidence based interventions within emotional and social wellbeing.
5. The main objective over the next 3 years for GwE and the region is - The attainment of Looked after Children (LAC) Achieving L2+ will increase by at least 5%.

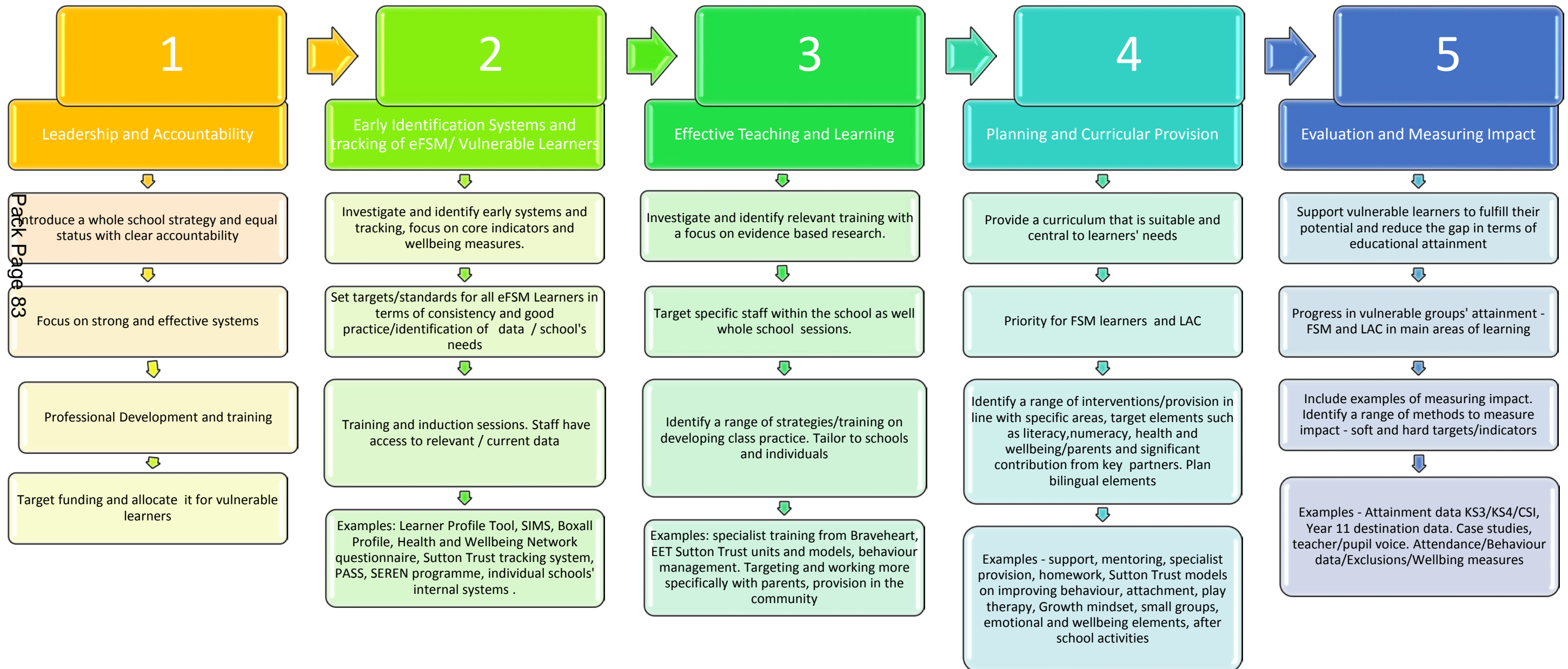


6. To date effective use of both summative and formative LAC attainment data has been used to target improvement and used to track progress and shared with all Core Leads/SIA's and LACE coordinators.
7. In partnership with Local Authorities, GwE have access to the number of looked after children in each school and this is shared with SIA's to ensure we offer targeted support and interventions via the PDG grant.

### **School Challenge Cymru, SCC**

1. The GwE Region had only 5 schools that participated in School Challenge Cymru. The progress made in the five schools over the period of the programme was generally disappointing. Two of the schools have been placed in special measures following Estyn Inspection. Two of the school have made some improvements and are categorised as C Amber for 2017-18, with the other three schools categorised as D Red.
2. GwE has taken some of the most effective elements from SCC and integrated them into the Secondary Challenge and Support Strategy. This has included the use of Accelerated Improvement Boards for schools causing concerns. Funding received for building capacity across the region was much less in North Wales compared to other regions, and therefore its impact on non SCC school has been less.
3. The rate of improvement in the SCC schools have been compared with non SCC schools to give an indication of impact. Generally, the rate of improvement in the SCC supported schools has been poor considering the funding invested.

# PDG Strategies & Support Resources



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TF 12

Ymateb gan: Gwasanaeth Cyflawni Addysg i Dde Ddwyrain Cymru

Response from: Education Achievement Service for South East Wales

## Regional Context

The EAS is the school improvement service for the five Local Authorities (LAs) in South East Wales (Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen). The number of pupils of compulsory school age in 2017 was 71,234. This represents 19% of all pupils in Wales. There are 240 maintained schools in the region, 16% of all maintained schools in Wales (EAS figure correct from Jan 2018, Wales figure from PLASC, 2017). The percentage of pupils of compulsory school age who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) is 18.5%, which is higher than the national figure of 17.8%. This level of eligibility is the second highest of the four regional consortia (PLASC, 2017). In the region, 10% of people aged three and over say that they can speak Welsh compared to the Wales average of 19% (2011 Census, ONS). The percentage of pupils aged 5-15 from an ethnic minority background is 9.7%, an increase from 7.3% in 2013. This is a similar rate of increase to that nationally (10.1% from 8.3%). These overall figures mask significant differences between LAs, with the proportion of ethnic minority pupils in Newport increasing from 23.0% to 23.7% in 2017. As of March 2017, 816 children in the region are looked after (LAC) by a LA and attend a school in the region. This represents 14% of LAC in Wales.

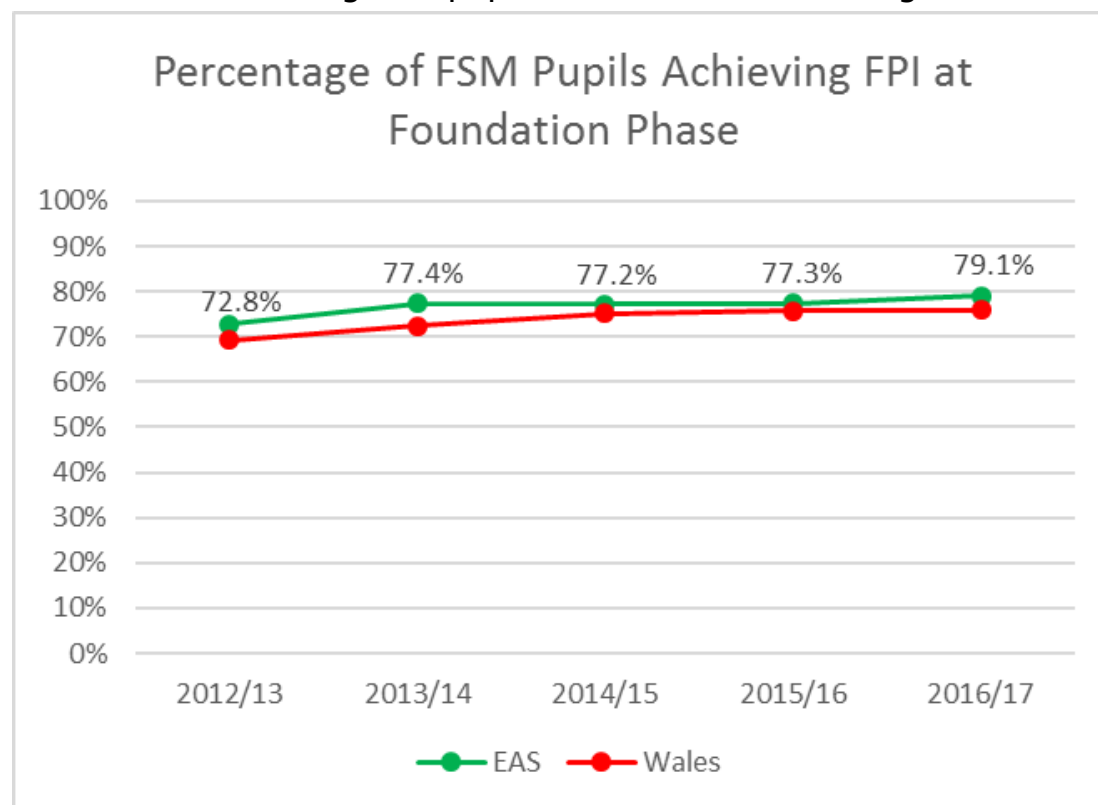
## PDG

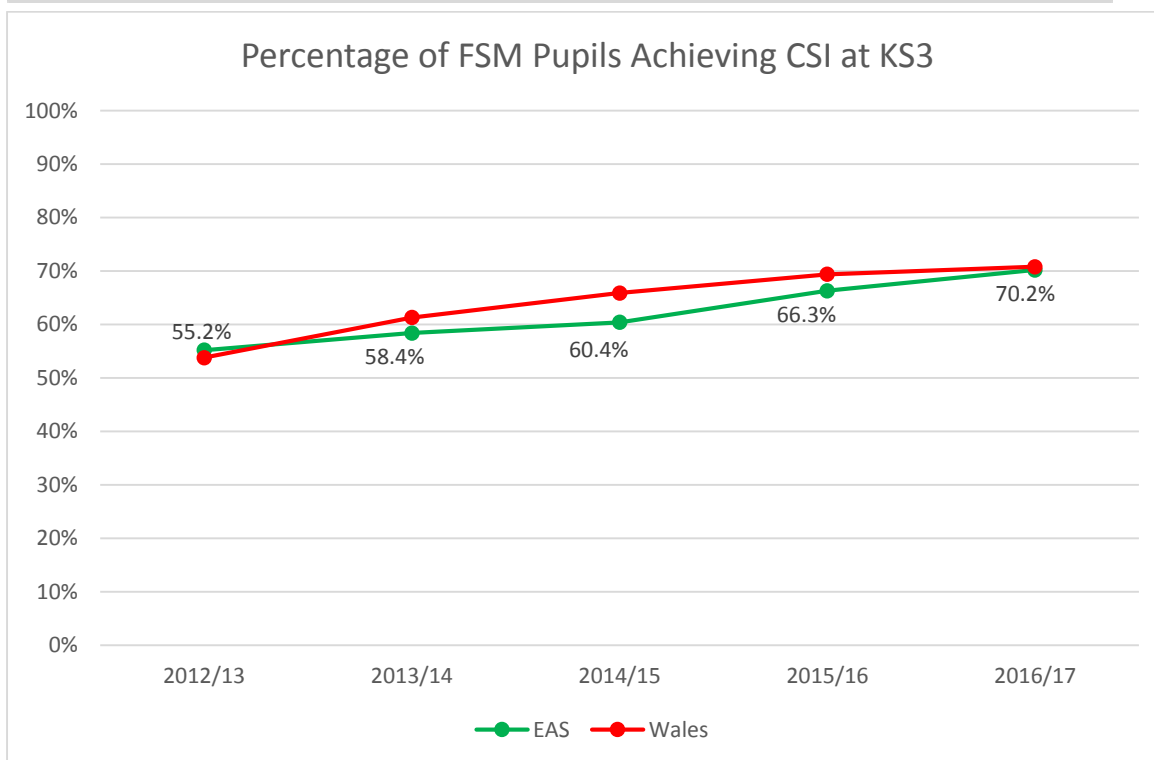
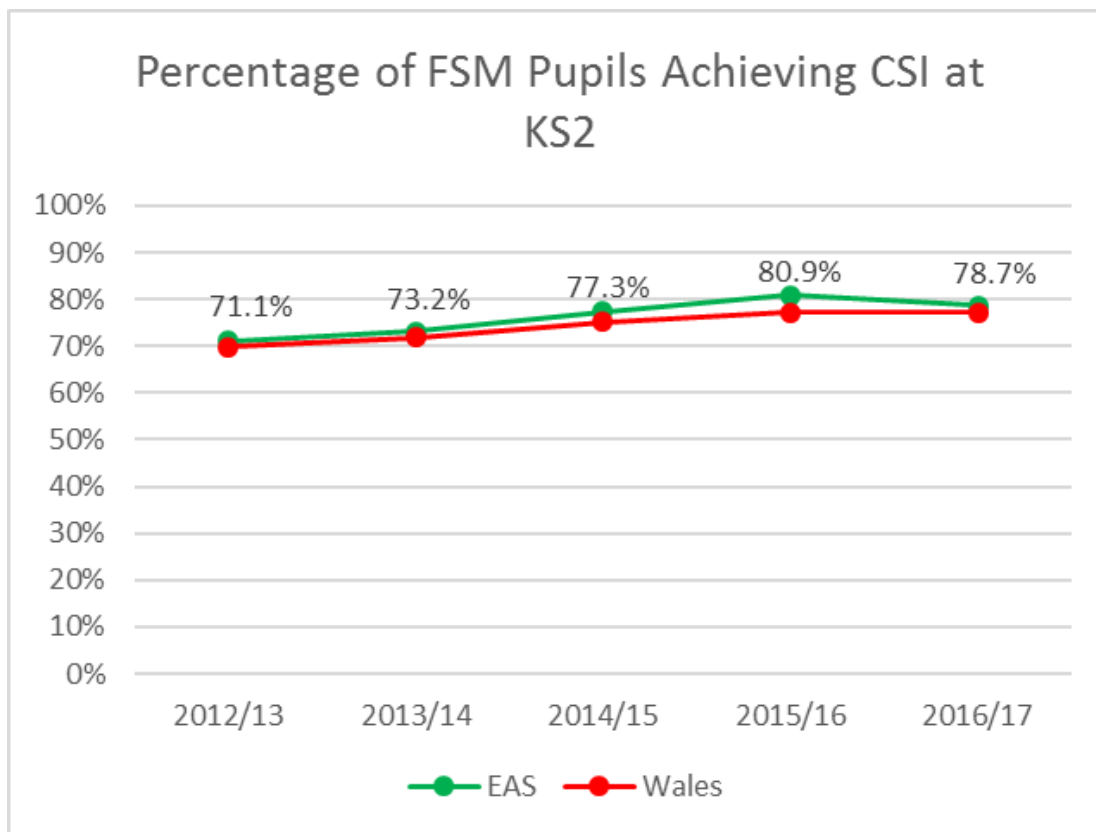
### Areas for Enquiry:

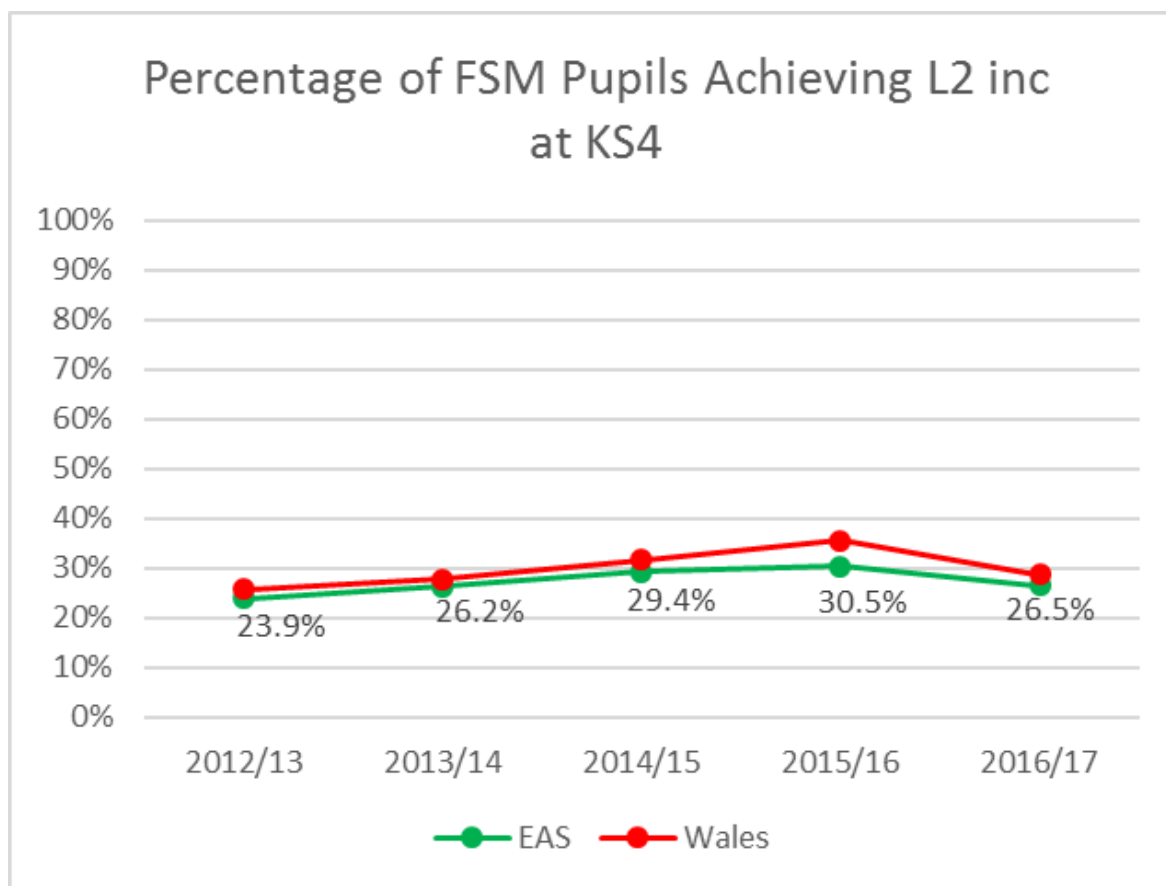
- **Schools' use of the PDG and the extent to which this benefits the pupils it is designed to be targeted at;**
- **The relationship between PDG-funded support for pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and expenditure on activities designed to improve attainment of all pupils.**

There is a regional strategy for Closing the Gap which is being further developed and refined to ensure a more holistic approach. There is an acknowledgment that despite the work completed to date the pace of

improvement for vulnerable learners, particularly in key stage 4 remains too slow and too variable. The focus for the Regional Professional Learning Offer for 2017/2018 therefore encompasses a wider scope and focuses upon the research more fully in this aspect of work. Appropriate emphasis is given to activities designed to accelerate the progress of FSM learners and approaches to gain first-hand evidence of the impact of this work is priority for all EAS curriculum teams. Regional pupil outcomes across the region are below:







The appointment of the PDG curriculum lead from September 2015 has been important in developing the overarching EAS and school collaboration on this priority. There is now a much sharper regional focus on the use of data for FSM learners. Cluster data packs have been developed which detail FSM performance at the end of each key stage set against the total PDG allocation for each school and the cluster as a collective. This additional layer of information supports Challenge Advisers when discussing and agreeing PDG allocation. The potential outcomes for FSM learners are captured through progress towards targets collections in March and June.

Challenge Advisers and school leaders have been trained on the use of the Sutton Trust Toolkit through a series of workshops and there is an agreed process by which PDG spend is agreed by Challenge Advisers in line with best practice and grant terms and conditions. Headteachers have received update training on the new PDG terms and conditions and the requirement to re-balance the funding between key stage 3 and key stage 4.

Improved analysis of the regional data for vulnerable learners have led to the enhancement of the 2017/2018 Professional Learning Offer for Equity and Wellbeing. New activities including but not restricted to have been added: Child Development and Wellbeing Workshop; Growth Mindset; Cluster Based

workshops – the Equity and Wellbeing Strategy Pack; Family Engagement Officer Network; PG Cert Equity in Education; Evidence Based Approaches to Addressing the Challenges of Poverty workshop; Leadership and Governance for Closing the Gap; Research Findings Workshops; Looked After Children (LAC) Support Offer; Key stage 2/3 Reading Transition and supporting the teaching through a bank of resources for EAL. Early feedback on these resources has been positive.

In the 2014 the EAS Governor Survey 74% of governors advised that they understood the priorities and outcomes of PDG/ EIG. Link Role guidance (including PDG) was issued and all governing bodies encouraged to appoint a Closing the Gap (PDG) Governor. In the 2015 survey, this had risen to 78.11% with a further small increase in 2016 to 78.83%. At the end of the spring term 2017 the region had 172 Closing the Gap Governors (71%) this will increase during the autumn term as the role is included on the agenda for the AGMs. 87% of Heads agreed that governor training has made governors more aware of PDG. On line training to support governors understanding of PDG and other grant streams has been developed in Summer 2017. In addition, a bank of resources has been provided to all governing bodies to assist them in challenging the allocation of PDG and to provide a bank of exemplary questions to enable effective monitoring of impact of the spend of the grant on FSM learners. During 2016/2017 an online training app has been developed for governor induction. In the evaluation of the pilot 94% found the content appropriate and the app easy to use. This will now be rolled out in autumn 2017 and the data training app will be developed.

The processes by which the region engages more effectively with wider LA services to develop the Regional Anti-Poverty Strategy is underdeveloped and is an area for development identified within the Business Plan. The approach to Wellbeing through a series of LA-based wellbeing projects and work with the LNS has only recently been introduced. This will result in an agreed definition of wellbeing that will operate across each cluster; the identification of a cluster-wide mechanism for measuring and tracking learner wellbeing and the publication of documented guidance to schools which will focus on: Maximising wellbeing through the learning environment; Planning for wellbeing in the curriculum; Ensuring wellbeing through teaching, learning and assessment; Supporting wellbeing through support services in the school; The link between wellbeing and progress and standards; The use of pupil voice to enhance and capture wellbeing in school; and the analysis of the beyond-school partnership model for supporting wellbeing across the school community.

The research profile commissioned from HEI partners in December 2016 includes the following topics: Network groups in primary and secondary schools and their impact on leadership; The Professional Learning Programme; Closing the gap; Determining the relationships between pedagogy, disposition to learn and wellbeing; Reframing impact capture and aligning activity to outcome; and analysis of the factors impacting on achievement of more able learners. Interim reports have been received from all research partners, with the final reports received in July 2017. The content of these reports have helped to shape the regional direction for the development of key strategies.

It is important to note that consortia are just part of the provision. Local authorities have a range of services to support these vulnerable pupils including attendance, ALN support, youth service and social services. This area of work will remain a high priority on the Business Plan for the coming years.

### **More Able Learners**

Improving the progress and achievement of more able learners across the region are also a prominent feature of the current Business Plan. The appointment of a regional lead for this aspect of work has helped to accelerate key actions. Through the creation of a regional strategy group and engagement with The National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE) a draft regional strategy for More Able has been created and was launched through a well-attended Conference in February 2017. Work continues in this area with planned training for More Able Coordinators in schools early in the autumn term. In addition, the Regional Professional Learning Offer for 2017/2018 is now more appropriately focused on providing support and guidance for more able provision. Learning Network Schools have been appointed through the summer term who will assist in the delivery of the offer.

The EAS Seren Project for more able and talented (MAT) year 12 learners was successfully launched in October 2015. This is an established partnership with all sixth forms in the region and Coleg Gwent. The full impact of this project is too early to judge. All 24 schools with a 6<sup>th</sup> forms and the 2 Coleg Gwent A level campuses have learners on the Seren programme. In 16/17 there were 246 learners on the programme, compared to 248 in year 15/16 and 253 in 17/18. Oxbridge, Russell Group and Sutton Trust 30 – nearly all schools report an increase in applications to these group of universities since the start of the Seren programme. Following A' level results in 16/17: 63% of all Year 13 learners who gained a place at a Sutton Trust 30 /Russell Group university were Seren learners; Of the 63%, 4% of Seren learners gained places at Oxbridge.



The EAS Seren programme for Year 12 learners was launched in 15/16 and in 16/17 we had the first cohort of Seren learners apply to University. Therefore, this is the first year that we have been able to gather relevant data for Seren learner destinations and this will be used as a benchmark for the Seren programme moving forward.

All 6<sup>th</sup> forms in the EAS region now have ALPS data reporting and in 16/17 was the first year to be able to view value added performance across all schools on an equal platform. Overall, in 16/17 the most able learners with the highest GCSE points scores performed very well at A' level.

## **PDG – Looked After and adopted children**

### **Areas for Enquiry**

#### **Regional consortia's use of the PDG on looked after and adopted children, and the impact this is having;**

The Pupil Deprivation grant is a Welsh Government Grant to improve outcomes for learners who are currently Looked after and Formerly Looked After who are educated within the South East Wales region It is intended to overcome the additional barriers that prevent this group of learners from achieving their full potential.

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year that the grant has been allocated to the regional consortia. During the first 2 years the region began to develop a strategic regional approach developing systems and processes to coordinate the grant at a regional level. The 3<sup>rd</sup> year will consolidate Regional arrangements that are in place at a consortia level and further develop the school to school working on a cluster basis to ensure the grant is allocated consistently and that capacity is built within each cluster to support LAC pupils. The Regional Steering group will continue to oversee and quality assure the use of the grant across the region and facilitate the sharing of good practise across the region.

The Regional LAC Coordinator will continue to work with Welsh Government and the other regional leads to develop and implement the national Strategy and ALN reforms working towards embedding personal centred planning for looked after pupils. The EAS will continue to work closely and constructively with the 5 South East Wales authorities, schools and other partners to develop effective interventions that support the improved educational outcomes of this group of learners and to ensure they reach their full potential. We are looking to build sustainability with our plans by developing the school to school networks and sharing practice across the region and wales.

In the 2017/18 financial year, the grant will continue to be held centrally by the EAS but will be allocated on a cluster basis. Each cluster will be allocated

a proportion of the grant monies based on submitted pupil numbers. The Clusters are invited to submit one application showing how they will work together on a school to school basis to meet the needs of eligible pupils in their schools.

There are 3 key areas for funding for 2017/18:

- Regional Coordination
- Training Plan
- Building Capacity and school – school work.

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the grant the EAS have continued to develop their regional strategy and embed our processes and systems to coordinate the grant at a regional level. In March 2017 we had 816 young people who were Looked After and attending schools in the region. In 2017/18 the region has allocated funding on a cluster basis to ensure all schools have access to funding for the pupils eligible for this grant.

This approach also ensures where pupils move schools in our area they are still able to access support from the grant. Regional guidance with exemplar forms were developed to support schools in developing their plans. LAC pupils living in England for whom we are corporate parents have also been contacted and asked to submit a plan with the pupil targets for the year. In the summer term 2017 we have been working with Early years non- maintained and Foundation Phase settings, Post 16 and Voluntary Sector providers to share the regional strategy. They have been included in the training programme as they support our young people throughout their educational settings.

As part of the service level agreement we have with schools who receive funding they produce evaluations and case studies on they interventions and support they have undertaken. This evaluation of their plans enables us to develop our strategy and programme for the year. The evaluation outcomes from all the regional training events are closely monitored and any shortfalls addressed. The overall response to the training events to date are very positive and training well attended.

### **Targets for LAC learners**

Targets for the progress and attainment of LAC pupils are set locally at school level, and these are then collated by the EAS, Learning Intelligence service. These targets form part of a regional approach to collect and disseminate targets set for all children and young pupils. The information for LAC pupils is being analysed by the LAC coordinator, and shared with the respective local authority through the information sharing protocol in place.

Through target setting meetings in all schools, challenge advisers discuss the progress of all learners including LAC learners. In addition each of the Local Authority LACE coordinators share their performance data for attainment, attendance and exclusions using the new all Wales template and other LA data sets to look at trends and look at any issues that may be arising.

## **Training**

The training programme for 2017/18 had been developed in consultation with schools/carers and practitioners. We focus on roles and responsibilities of key staff supporting our young people and training for foster carers to help them support young people with education in the home. In 2017/18 we have developed new courses in line with current issues such as:

- Support for school with Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers
- Work with the Gwent Missing Children Project supporting schools with pupils going missing and looking at Child Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking's
- Personal Centered Planning and work towards the new ALN Bill.

## **Enhancing Capacity**

The region has 252 schools that have been grouped into 38 clusters. 36 primary and secondary clusters and 2 clusters one for the Special Schools and one from the Pupils Referral Units. In the summer term each cluster submitted a detailed plan to show their strategic support for pupils within the cluster. Further development of School to School working is a key focus in 2017/18 where schools within clusters can develop and share their knowledge and expertise. The majority of the plans are to develop support for pupil's Social and Emotional Wellbeing, reduce exclusions and raise attainment.

## **Regional Planning**

The links with the other lead coordinators and particularly links with the other consortia leads have been positive in sharing knowledge/best practice and joint planning. The EAS Lead Coordinator has been part of several task and finish groups including the development of a guide for Designated teachers, LAC Data template and Chairing the PEP/IDP expert group. The lead post continues to enable the region to map out a strategic view of the LAC/former LAC population within the region and their educational needs. Work with the Early years settings, Post 16 providers and Voluntary sector providers is developing.

Regular half-termly meetings have been established between the EAS LAC Coordinator and Equity and Wellbeing lead to further enhance collaborative working and share knowledge of initiatives aimed at supporting vulnerable

learners. The Lead coordinator and Equity and Wellbeing advisor have been working with the regions Learning Network Schools for Equity and Wellbeing to look at training and support that can be provided for schools across the region for LAC and vulnerable learners.

## School Challenge Cymru, SCC

### Areas for Enquiry

- **The impact of the Schools Challenge Cymru programme and the consequences of its closure on the participating ‘Pathways to Success’ schools;**
- **How the lessons and legacy of Schools Challenge Cymru can be used to complement subsequent policies and initiatives aimed at improving educational outcomes;**
- **Evaluation of attainment data in light of the PDG and Schools Challenge Cymru programmes;**

There were 14 schools across the region that were identified to become part of the SCC Programme. Each of the LAs apart from Monmouthshire had schools that were included in the programme. As a consequence of the high number of schools within the programme the region benefitted from significant resources that were aimed at improving the capacity of schools to support each other. For example, this funding enabled the region to establish networks of professional practice to support the development of leadership and pedagogy. These networks have grown and have gone from strength to strength. The region views the investment in building capacity of schools and the development of networks of professional practice as a strength of the programme.

The rate of improvement in schools within the SCC programme was compared with non SCC schools for both FSM learner performance and for all pupils. In summary: Out of the 14 Schools

Challenge Cymru (SCC) schools, only 4 demonstrated a two-year consecutive improvement at the Level 2 threshold including En/We and maths since 2014 there was a decline in the performance of 8 SCC schools in 2016, 4 with a decline of more than 5 pp. Out of the remaining 22 non-SCC schools, 8 demonstrated a two year consecutive improvement since 2014. There was an improvement in 15 non-SCC schools in 2016. Non-SCC schools have seen an improvement at the Level 2 threshold including En/We and maths over the last 3 years from 58.3% in 2014 to 62.4% in 2016, an increase of 2.4pp. Despite SCC schools improving from 44.6% in 2014 to 48.7% in 2015, this improvement was not sustained in 2016 as SCC schools saw a decline of 0.5pp.

With the conclusion of the SCC programme in March 2017, regional transition arrangements were agreed. This included the early transition from the SCC Accelerated Improvement Board (AIB) approach to the EAS Education Improvement Board approach (this approach was built upon the principles used in the SCC programme) in identified vulnerable schools in each of the 3 LAs. In addition, the EAS provided transition training for all headteachers and chairs of governors in SCC schools to ensure a thorough understanding of regional processes and expectations. Since the end of the programme there has been a change of Challenge Adviser in many of the previously SCC schools.

### **A snapshot of lessons learnt from the SCC programme:**

- The use of school networks and support mechanisms from within and beyond Wales is critical.
- There needs to be effective line management and clear lines of accountability for Challenge Advisers.
- The use of Accelerated Improvement Board to hold schools to account regularly for progress are effective and have been utilised across the region.
- The focus for school improvement needs to be on all aspects of leadership and provision and not solely on the end of key stage 4.
- More focus needs to be placed on the quality of school improvement planning and the accuracy of self-evaluation judgements made by school leaders.
- Effective links need to be made into LA wider services to ensure that schools make effective progress. The region has strong links with each of the LAs to ensure this is the case.
- Cabinet Members for Education, LAs and Regional Consortia need to have clear roles in holding schools to account.

Since the end of SCC funding the region has taken the most effective elements from SCC and has integrated these into regional systems. Use has been made of the external review of the programme, as appropriate, to assist decision making in how the region approaches school improvement activity.

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Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Cyllid wedi'i dargedu i wella canlyniadau addysgol | Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes

TF 19

Ymateb gan: Cymdeithas Genedlaethol Prifathrawon Cymru

Response from: National Association of Head Teachers Cymru



**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 evidence to the National Assembly for Wales' Children, Young People and Education Committee concerning the inquiry on **Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes** is welcome.

NAHT Cymru will focus specifically on the evidence concerning:

- **Schools' use of the PDG and the extent to which this benefits the pupils it is designed to be targeted at;**
- **The relationship between PDG-funded support for pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and expenditure on activities designed to improve attainment of all pupils;**
- **The impact of the Schools Challenge Cymru programme and the consequences of its closure on the participating 'Pathways to Success' schools;**
- **How the lessons and legacy of Schools Challenge Cymru can be used to complement subsequent policies and initiatives aimed at improving educational outcomes;**
- **Targeted funding / support for more able and talented pupils;**
- **The value for money of both the PDG and Schools Challenge Cymru programmes.**

1. **NAHT membership range - Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers, Assistant Headteachers and Middle Leaders - puts us in an excellent position to provide evidence to this inquiry.**

## **Introduction**

2. At the outset, NAHT Cymru note that responses from school leaders continue to indicate perceived shortcomings in using an exclusive eFSM metric to identify the most vulnerable pupils. Many school leaders question whether eFSM is the most effective measure in order to effectively indicate those 'disadvantaged' pupils who would benefit most from additional resource such as PDG.
3. Frequently we receive comments from school leaders that indicate how poverty and other vulnerabilities can adversely affect the achievement of groups of pupils who never directly access the full additional resources.

These circumstances might include:

- a. those pupils who experience the impact of poverty but have never been eligible for free school meals, such as those from single parent families where the parent may choose to undertake more than one job taking their income just beyond the threshold of eligibility;
  - b. those pupils that are occasionally eligible for FSM at varying times of the year due to unreliable / seasonal parental employment (but not eligible at the point of the PLASC census returns so are not included in allocations of PDG resource);
  - c. those who are eligible but, for a variety of reasons including their family's perception of an associated stigma, never apply for eFSM status;
  - d. those looked-after children who are unofficially 'fostered' by other family members and may slip through the 'looked-after' child indicator.
4. The above is clearly not an exhaustive list but illustrates how certain circumstances may result in situations whereby a critical proportion of children and young people adversely affected by poverty / disadvantage never directly benefit from the available resources or cause a dilution of the overall resource within a school as it is spread more widely by the school than the original noted pupil numbers.
  5. It is also worth noting that the relationship of eFSM / poverty / looked-after status and educational underachievement is not absolute. Numbers of pupils from categories that would qualify for additional support resources achieve well and their families continue to provide outstanding support to their children in partnership with their schools, despite the challenging economic circumstances the family may face. This is not to say that PDG, for example, should not be utilised in such circumstances, but that the type of additional support must be differentiated by pupil need.

6. Some schools, for understandable reasons, focus the use of PDG on those eFSM pupils who are underachieving, however, in some schools the resource is utilised for the benefit of all eligible pupils irrespective of the prior achievement levels.
7. However, establishing effective identification criteria is a complex and challenging issue for all governments and is one that NAHT looked at in some detail in recent years. We explored alternative measures that could be used to better identify those pupils that could be considered adversely affected by poverty and disadvantage. The conclusion was that FSM was the best (or 'least worse') of the available options but that possibly including further data, such as the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, as well as utilising the 'Ever 6' FSM indicator for those pupils who have ever been eligible, might enable a greater proportion of those pupils who need support to receive it.
8. NAHT also believe that if eFSM is to be truly effective and the main driver for identification of those requiring support, auto-registration for eFSM is essential as it ensures that as many pupils who are eligible benefit from the support.

**Schools' use of the PDG and the extent to which this benefits the pupils it is designed to be targeted at;**

9. Schools use PDG in a variety of ways and frequently seek to be flexible in the use of the resource in order to meet the varying needs of eligible pupils. Schools may implement specific interventions, such as catch-up literacy programmes, to support particular groups of pupils and such circumstances frequently feature a combination of PDG, other relevant grants and core school budgets.
10. Undoubtedly, there is an effect caused by accountability as to the type of support put in place by schools. Despite recognising the inextricable link between pupil mental health and wellbeing and their ability to learn and make effective progress, schools – particularly those under pressure from literacy and numeracy targets – may choose to focus on specific literacy and numeracy interventions funded by PDG, rather than on initiatives to support pupil wellbeing as the benefits to those pupils in their academic progress may not come to fruition swiftly enough for the school to demonstrate impact to external organisations such as regional consortia or Estyn.
11. The recently published 'Evaluation of the Pupil Deprivation Grant - Final report - December 2017' undertaken by Ipsos MORI, WISERD and the Administrative Data Research Centre – Wales on behalf of Welsh Government, indicated the pooling of resource as a fairly common feature - 'as a part of the full suite of funding provided to schools the impact of the PDG is reliant on the existence of other



funding streams with similar or complementary aims.....evidence shows that schools top up the funding used to run PDG activities from their own budgets and/or other funding streams by substantial amounts’.

12. It is clear, therefore, that impacts upon other budgets, such as austerity effects on school budgets, is likely to indirectly affect the impact of PDG initiatives.
13. Much of the impact of disadvantage upon children and young people lies outside the direct influence of schools, it is also clear that on arrival at school, pupils from economically challenged circumstances can already be at a significant disadvantage compared to their peers. The Sutton Trust highlighted this school start gap in a report in 2016 which showed that in terms of reading readiness, disadvantaged pupils are on average 8 months behind their peers on arrival at school.
14. NAHT strongly believe that investing in the early years, as well as joint agency approaches in pre-school years, is vital if Wales is to close the gap for disadvantaged children and young people.
15. Schools can evidence that funded interventions, such as employing family liaison officers, can have a huge impact. In such cases, schools are able to support hard to reach families, are better placed to provide good communication, run courses to support pupils and families and improve the school to home link as early as possible. Some of these same schools, however, are reporting that the pressures resulting from more challenging school budget demands may require them to reallocate this vital support in the very near future.

**The relationship between PDG-funded support for pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and expenditure on activities designed to improve attainment of all pupils;**

16. The use of PDG funding is rarely in isolation and frequently involves the pooling of different resources, as cited in the ‘Evaluation of the Pupil Deprivation Grant - Final report - December 2017’. Most schools seek to undertake a holistic approach to the self-evaluation / school improvement cycle and, in analysing pupil data and utilising their knowledge of specific pupil needs, will seek to co-ordinate the use of all resources, including PDG resource, on a whole school basis.
17. NAHT fear that the pressures now facing school budgets will have a direct influence upon the type of activities they are able to add in the future for the most vulnerable learners through PDG and other grants.

18. School leaders have told us the following in relation to their budgets and the knock on effect this has with additional grants such as the PDG:
- 'Across the authority, the schools managing to draw together a budget anything like the one they need, tend to be the ones in receipt of significant pupil deprivation grant. We lost £50,000 to the UK government's apprenticeship levy; so we lose two staff to pay for it and the parents will be very unhappy with that situation.'
  - 'Our budget is £300,000 short this year and we are looking at reducing interventions and have increased class sizes'
  - 'Grants (such as EIG and PDG) are masking the extent of the funding shortfall'

**The impact of the Schools Challenge Cymru programme and the consequences of its closure on the participating 'Pathways to Success' schools;**

19. The Schools Challenge Cymru (SCC) programme appeared to present a varied picture. It appeared to be highly dependent upon the lead school and their commitment and ability to link with partnership schools. NAHT are aware of secondary schools in receipt of the SCC funding where primaries in the same cluster saw little benefit at all. In one such case there was no evidence of impact of spending or partnership working. In fact monies promised through agreed plans never materialised, staff appointed by the secondary school to benefit cross phase working did not attend meetings or deliver any programmes and the Schools Challenge Cymru Challenge Adviser at that time never made it to the many cluster meetings to which they were invited. Headteachers from the primary cluster schools never met the SCC Challenge Adviser.
20. However, elsewhere secondary lead schools took a different approach and made effective use of SCC money with visible impact. Partnership working was a key feature and there was a degree of sustainability planned into the system beyond the initial funding.
21. It was somewhat unclear how robustly and consistently the regional consortia monitored the use of the SCC funds. It is also worth noting that the positive outcomes of such a programme are potentially both longer term and in areas such as pupil confidence, wellbeing and engagement which are harder to demonstrate in terms of measurable impact over a short time period.
22. Clearly, the closure of the SCC programme had a variable impact upon the various 'Pathways to Success' schools, depending upon the level of cluster, joined up working that had been established by the lead schools – where it was poor, the impact would have been

minimal, however, where it had been effective, the loss of the programme would place under threat some positive outcomes for vulnerable pupils.

**How the lessons and legacy of Schools Challenge Cymru can be used to complement subsequent policies and initiatives aimed at improving educational outcomes;**

23. In his paper, 'Education Community Partnerships: A new way forward for Education in Wales', Professor David Egan notes a number of features of successful school community co-ordinated approaches from across the world that seek to tackle the underachievement of disadvantaged pupils.

The lessons from the SCC programme appear to align with this type of thinking - in practical terms Professor Egan notes the following requirements in the approach:

- High quality pre-school education.
- Excellent learning and teaching within schools.
- Family engagement opportunities
- Extensive out-of-hours learning opportunities
- A strong focus on wellbeing.
- Opportunities for early intervention when anyone falls behind in their learning.
- A variety of routes to employability.

24. If the above were to be undertaken, with similar cluster focused approaches as the SCC programme intended, with robust monitoring and an expectation of joint working between schools and their partners the approach could prove to be more effective. Leadership across the sectors need to share the aspirations, secure buy-in to that commitment through pooling of resources to address the challenges faced by such vulnerable learners and their families both within and outside the learning environment (including front loading pre-school and early years) - as a result there should be a greater opportunity of success for children and young people.

25. For Wales to effectively tackle disadvantage and the impact of poverty on the educational outcomes of children and young people, high level government policy across the various sectors needs to align.

26. In addition, there must be an acceptance that educational institutions cannot address the types of disadvantage affecting children and young people by themselves, each sector must recognise and work together to maximise their impact.

27. Professor David Egan explains that, 'The increasing knowledge we have about the importance of families and communities in influencing educational achievement, joined with a new model of

school improvement, can offer a new innovative direction for Welsh education policy which could be particularly focused on improving equity within the system.....The development of Education Community Partnerships, influenced by current emerging practice in Wales and examples drawn from other countries, could provide an organisational format for this new direction in Welsh education policy.'

28. However, this could prove to be an insurmountable challenge without adequate core funding of the school system as a whole, otherwise the risks outlined in paragraphs 13 and 14 would potentially dilute the impact of the focused resources if they are still covering gaps elsewhere in core budgets.

### **Targeted funding / support for more able and talented pupils;**

29. In previous evidence sessions to the Children, Young People and Education committee concerning areas such as the Additional Learning Needs Bill and the emotional resilience, mental health and wellbeing of children, as well as in paragraphs 13 and 14 of this paper, school leaders have outlined the pressures currently facing them in terms of the use of such funding and resource.

30. The need to target funding / support for more able and talented (MAT) pupils is fully accepted and continues to be a focus for many schools. However, where prioritising is now an inevitable consequence of the increasingly limited resources, schools are left with little left in order to support MAT pupils once they have ensured those learners who are struggling most are supported. For example, numbers of schools are losing support staff who in the past would have been providing additional challenge and support to the most able pupils.

### **The value for money of both the PDG and Schools Challenge Cymru programmes.**

31. One of the major difficulties in assessing the value for money of the PDG and the SCC programmes is being certain that the additional resource or programme itself was the sole reason for any positive outcomes, particularly given the point made earlier in our evidence about combined funding streams. As the 'Evaluation of the Pupil Deprivation Grant - Final report - December 2017' states, '.... it is worth reiterating that schools top up PDG funding by a considerable amount. It is therefore difficult to assess the extent to which the additional funding works with PDG to support a wider cohort of learners, who, schools consider, experience broader disadvantage than just being e-FSM.'

32. Any additional resource is welcome and should provide a positive impact for pupils, however, two factors need to be noted. Firstly, the metrics that are to be used to gauge success - certain pupil

data accountability measures are too narrow, or are over too short a time period to provide reliable progress measures – and secondly, only if the resource is completely additional and not diluted by inadequate funding elsewhere.

33. One NAHT school leader member stated, ‘In truth, PDG does not add extra resources if it covers core staffing costs and these core staff members deliver interventions as well as trying to offer in-class support. At KS2 my school has two Teaching Assistants (shared between 6 classes) and without PDG we may not be able to sustain that. This is not enough support but we did not want to set a deficit budget.’
34. Some school leaders report that they submit a grant funding impact report with detailed information on programmes being funded and measurable impact of those to their Challenge Adviser twice per year. It is unclear whether this is a consistent approach across all Challenge Advisers or regional consortia. If this was the case, the level of detailed evidence of the impact of targeted funding would be considerable.

## **Conclusion**

35. For targeted funding to improve educational outcomes, NAHT believe a number of factors need to be considered and acknowledged. These can most effectively be expressed as:
- Education policies (and schools themselves) not operating in isolation;
  - Pooling of cross-sector resourcing to maximise impact;
  - Cross sector leadership being supported to work collaboratively;
  - Strong focus on pre-school and early years;
  - Investment in developing quality of teaching;
  - Support for wider family needs and community to develop effective home-school links;
  - Ensuring additional targeted funding is not consumed or diluted by insufficiency of funding elsewhere;
  - Accountability measures that encourage all stakeholders to seek equity and positive outcomes for all;
  - Providing a clear purpose for maximising educational outcomes related to aspirations, employability and future success – make sure this is clear to children and young people and their families.

**Rob Williams – Policy Director NAHT Cymru**

## References:

- ***‘EDUCATION COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS: A NEW WAY FORWARD FOR EDUCATION IN WALES’***

written by Professor David Egan. June 2016

(The Wales Centre for Equity in Education is a national policy and applied research centre dedicated to improving educational equity in Wales. It is a joint initiative between the University of Wales and the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.)

- ***Evaluation of the Pupil Deprivation Grant  
Final report - December 2017***

Written for Welsh Government by Julia Pye, Lucy Lindley (Ipsos MORI) Chris Taylor, Daniel Evans (WISERD) Katy Huxley (Administrative Data Research Centre – Wales)

- The Sutton Trust - ***‘International inequalities’ - Learning from international comparisons***

Written by Sean Reardon and Jane Waldfogel  
December 2016

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Cyllid wedi'i dargeddu i wella canlyniadau addysgol | Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes

TF 13

Ymateb gan: Cymdeithas Arweinwyr Ysgolion a Cholegau (Cymru)

Response from: Association of School and College Leaders



1. The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) represents nearly 19,000 education system leaders, heads, principals, deputies, vice-principals, assistant heads, business managers and other senior staff of state-funded and independent schools and colleges throughout the UK.  
ASCL Cymru represents school leaders in more than 90 per cent of the secondary schools and an increasing proportion in the primary phase in Wales. This places the association in a strong position to consider this issue from the viewpoint of the leaders of Welsh schools and colleges of all types.
2. ASCL Cymru has been fully supportive of the Welsh Government's principle of providing targeted funding to address the issues and needs of specific groups of students, and welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this enquiry.

**With reference to your specific areas of focus:**

3. Schools have found a variety of ways of using PDG in order to benefit the students for whom it was designed. However, there has always been an issue with the boundary between provision for eFSM students and others whose needs may be just as great, but who do not necessarily, for a variety of reasons, fit that category. In practice it has proved almost impossible to separate out these types of student. We see this as a positive benefit, as the use of free school meals is, at best, a blunt tool that can miss out students for whom this additional support can be a critical part of their education.
4. In general terms, we feel that the majority of schools are using the additional funds in a positive and constructive manner. However, there have been situations where the restrictions placed upon the use of the PDG funds have resulted in schools having to be very creative

in their reporting of it. This highlights an issue with the current system, namely that, the more restrictive and specific the conditions of the grant, the more time and resource has to go into justifying its use. It is surely not the intention that a senior member of staff should have to spend days (if not weeks) of their time dealing with the bureaucracy associated with the grant in order to ensure that reporting forms and spreadsheets demonstrate the required use of the grant. One of our schools estimated that the cost (in staffing terms) of administering the PDG was in the region of £5-7,500 per year. This was in a school where the actual PDG income was £50,000. This potentially reduced the impact of the grant by 10-15%. We do not believe that this level of required bureaucracy is necessary or desirable.

5. It is a positive benefit of PDG, that where schools invest in interventions and support packages for eFSM students, these will have an impact on other students within the school. New and innovative approaches to teaching and learning, however they are arrived at, will impact the work of staff across the school. This should be encouraged and recognised as an important part of the benefits of this grant. It is sad, although perhaps inevitable, that some schools are so focused on meeting the requirements of the grant that they may not to publicise or overtly encourage these cross-over benefits.
6. We are concerned, therefore, that some of the consortia, in attempting to ensure that the conditions of the grant are demonstrably met, have put in place a level of bureaucracy that can stifle creativity and encourage a “tick-box” mentality. We have no figures to be able to estimate the staffing cost to the consortia of running the bureaucratic systems they have put in place, but feel sure it represent a significant use of scarce funds. We would maintain that it would be far more cost-effective to reduce significantly the level of detailed reporting and justification for spending, and replace it with an analysis of impact on the students concerned. It would very soon become apparent where the funds are being well used to the benefit of those who most need it, and vica-versa.
7. It is appropriate that specific funds should be made available to support the learning of looked after and adopted children. The consortia are proper gate-keepers for these funds, and the allocations to schools are normally timely and appropriate. These additional funds appear to be well-used and support the learning of these students. We would reiterate our comment above about the level of bureaucracy that can sometimes be required.
8. We consider that there has been good progress since the 2014 enquiry *Educational outcomes for children from low income households*. This can be attributed to a large extent to the



continuation of the PDG, which has allowed schools to ensure that resources are channelled to areas of identified need. However, the following two paragraphs identify some areas of concern that remain.

9. The additional funding supplied by the PDG has been most welcome and has allowed schools to implement strategies for the most vulnerable students. However, the year-to-year nature of the grant means that long-term planning is impossible. This has an impact on the ability of schools to provide stability for staff or consider spending on medium to long-term projects. It would be most helpful if the Welsh Government could provide a clear time-frame for the lifetime of the grant, to allow schools to plan more effectively. We would suggest that a five-year commitment (which could be renewed at a future date if felt appropriate), would allow schools an appropriate level of certainty that would encourage longer-term planning and even more effective use of the grant.
10. We are still concerned that, whilst schools rightly are charged with ensuring that the quality of the educational experience of young people, there remains a significant issue about the role of parents in education. It is evident that, particularly in many low-income households, there is at best an ambivalent attitude to education, and in many a feeling that education is of little value. This sort of attitude can be a major influence on young people, and seriously affect their approach to their education. Schools will always do whatever they can to encourage parents to adopt a more positive approach, but this can be almost impossible if the parents cannot be enticed into engagement with the profession. We feel there is a major role here for the Welsh Government to play in helping to engage and enthuse parents as partners in education.
11. It is clear that the Schools Challenge Cymru project did not result in consistent improvements in all participating schools. Whilst in many of the schools it led to clear and measurable improvements, in others it did not. Our view is that whilst the intent of the project was admirable and had enormous potential, in implementation there were issues. The most significant of these was in the lack of coordination and resulting layering of further accountabilities on these schools. The fact that separate improvement boards were set up, and were not required to engage with the local consortia and local authorities led to significant duplication of effort and contradictory advice being given in some cases. If these had formed part of a coordinated approach, in our view, it would have been more likely to have resulted in more widespread success.
12. In our view, there is a place for identifying schools in need of additional support in order to raise standards. However, to an extent, these are already in place through the work of ESTYN and the current Schools Categorisation system. The resources that went into

the SCC could perhaps have been better used to ensure that the additional support required for these schools came through established channels, and in a clearly structured and fully coordinated manner.

13. We are concerned that attainment data has remained focused on an artificial pass/fail concept based around a GCSE “C” grade. Whilst it is appropriate that schools are given targets that challenge them and encourage them to ensure all students realise their potential, this sort of artificial hurdle is always likely to give a skewed picture. We would maintain that it would be far more beneficial to measure the level of improvement of the individual from a clear starting point, in order to be able to demonstrate actual “value-added”. This is not to say that schools should not do everything they can to motivate students to achieve the highest grade they can, but it does recognise that not every student is capable of achieving five or more “C” grades at GCSE. It is surely not just that an individual student or the school should made to feel they have failed because a great deal of hard work and professional support has resulted in an “E” grade. There needs to be recognition of the success of the many students for whom this is a reality.
14. We are fully supportive of the intent to ensure that there is similar support for more able and talented students in our educational system. There is always a danger that, with an accountability system that focuses on achieving a minimum level, the focus will be on getting to that point. This can mean that the needs of our most able students may be a lower priority. In the best schools, these students are well catered for, but in many they are not given the attention they need. We would encourage the Welsh Government to maintain and even expand their focus on these students, to ensure that we also allow them to achieve their full potential.
15. In our view, the PDG is a well-used resource, and whilst we question the financial impact of the accompanying bureaucracy, we feel that overall the money is well used. We fear that the Schools Challenge Cymru project did not represent such a good use of funds in all cases. It would be wrong to write it off as a failure, because there is clear evidence of significant improvement and positive outcomes in some schools. However, it is also clear that in other cases, the level of duplication, contradictory advice and lack of coordination caused issues and did not represent value for money.

## **Conclusion**

16. I hope that this is of value to your enquiry, ASCL Cymru is willing to be further consulted and assist in any way that it can.



Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Cyllid wedi'i dargedu i wella canlyniadau addysgol | Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes

TF 02

Ymateb gan: National Education Union Cymru

Response from: National Education Union Cymru

## **About the National Education Union Cymru:**

- The National Education Union Cymru stands up for the future of education. It brings together the voices of teachers, lecturers, support staff and leaders working in maintained and independent schools and colleges to form the largest education union in Wales.
- The National Education Union is affiliated to the Trades Union Congress (TUC), European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) and Education International (EI). It is not affiliated to any political party and seeks to work constructively with all the main political parties.
- Together, we'll shape the future of education.

## **Our response**

We welcome the opportunity to contribute evidence to the Children and Young People's Committee's consultation on Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes. There is a clear need for a wide ranging debate on education funding in Wales, in particular in light of increasing evidence that teachers and parents are having to personally fund the resources required in classrooms. This is not acceptable.

We are aware that this consultation is confined to set questions and areas of interest in recognition of the need to reduce the scope of the inquiry. We will address the individual issues in our response.

However, we would very much encourage the committee to revisit education funding as a topic and look at the whole issue in context. While this would prove a time consuming and large topic of discussion it is very difficult to look at specific funding streams in isolation and without a true reflection of the extremely challenging financial climates schools are currently operating within. We strongly believe the committee will benefit greatly from further exploration of education funding as an inquiry topic and that it would lead to a very worthwhile evidence and research base for the National Assembly to debate in future.

**eFSM – what does this really mean?**

Whilst many believed that those eligible for free school meals (eFSM) included all of those children and young people whose parents could apply for FSM this is not the case. In reality eFSM is all those who had applied for FSM. Therefore FSM and eFSM are virtually the same.

We are therefore concerned that the allocation of the PDG is not based on those children who are eligible through their circumstances, but eligible through the schools ability to obtain consent for the child to have free school meals.

We believe there should be consistency in how local authorities assess access to FSM – which should use the Ever 6 model, which has been used in England. This allows for parents to apply for FSM once, which is then counted for 6 years – and allows schools to plan their interventions appropriately.

### **The situation in England**

We understand that the Pupil Premium in England has suffered from changing criteria every year. With the introduction of free school meals to all infant children the incentive to fill out a form to gain PP is harder to gain traction.

As we understand it, because the number of children receiving free school meals in England is now difficult to measure (because all infants receive FSM) they are moving to a system which assigns money based on “low attainment”.

### **Who is eligible in Wales?**

Schools or consortia receive extra money for pupils under certain conditions. They are:

- Who are eligible for FSM (eFSM) (schools)
- Who are looked after by a local authority (LAC) (consortia)

### **Rates of the PDG/ PP in England and Wales 2015/16**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Eligible group</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Wales	Age 5-15 eFSM	£1,050
	LAC	£1,050
	Foundation Phase 3-4 yrs	£300
England	Primary school aged children (reception to yr 6)	£1,320
	Secondary aged pupils (years 7-11)	£985
	LAC	£1,900
	Children who have ceased to be looked	£1,900

	after by a local authority	
	Children whose parents are in the services	£300

Full details of the rates of PDG can be found on the WG website<sup>1</sup>.

### **WISERD evaluation**

Whilst the PDG has received relatively positive evaluation from Wiserd<sup>2</sup>, news reports suggest some “leaked documents” suggest that PDG is being used to fulfil 1% above block-grant manifesto commitment made by WG – it is not extra money.<sup>3</sup>

However, we are concerned there are discrepancies in terms of how much money is given to children and young people in Wales and England, as well as who is eligible for the PDG. We believe the ‘Ever 6’ method should be used in Wales to reflect the true number of children eligible for FSM.

Schools’ use of the PDG and the extent to which this benefits the pupils it is designed to be targeted at:

A number of National Education Union Cymru school leaders have been very positive about the impact the Pupil Development Grant has had on their Free School Meals (FSM) pupils. As a targeted grant it has made a significant difference to that specific set of learners very often helping to establish noticeable increases in attainment levels, pupil progress and development.

Our members believe that much more needs to be done as part of community engagement, but the PDG is a useful way to help redress the imbalance. Many members believe that funding as a whole is critical to the ability of schools to support all pupils, but in particular those on FSM. However, it does not compensate for educational engagement outside school hours. If a child or young person value education as a way out of poverty, then education is something they are more likely to engage with. If parents or guardians have specific challenges in this regards, either through their own experiences of education or as a result of financial hardship, then they are likely to have needs that require additional support, both financial and otherwise. Not sure exactly in what regard you mean?

In schools, PDG money tends to be focussed upon the weaknesses in data in each individual school and is delivered in ways designed by that school. It is fair to say that this individual approach allows schools to use the funding for their own specific needs and challenges. That is very useful and is a practice that should be encouraged. However, as a result it’s not possible to simply summarise the impact upon the targeted pupils unless every school’s individual plans are collated and evaluated as a whole.

<sup>1</sup> <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150323-pdg-essential-guidance-en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.wiserd.ac.uk/research/education/current-projects/evaluation-pupil-deprivation-grant/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/huw-lewis-urged-come-clean-7035358>

In addition to the above we do believe there needs to be a stronger focus on pupils who are living in families experiencing in-work poverty. For example, in some areas the difference between family the income of those on FSM and others is substantial. In other areas there may be very little difference between the income of those on benefits and those struggling to hold down multiple minimum wage jobs. Morally, there is an argument to state that the PDG should be used for strategies which benefit all learners who are experiencing disadvantage.

The relationship between PDG-funded support for pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and expenditure on activities designed to improve attainment of all pupils;

When responding to this question it is important to recognise that some areas of work undertaken by schools are hard to disentangle from all pupils – for example, one National Education union member reports to us that they have established a ‘vulnerable pupil panel’ and a ‘vulnerable’ pupil lead teaching assistant – the majority of pupils are FSM, but not exclusively so. This therefore certainly supports pupils eligible for free school meals but the decision to take this approach also benefits a wider section of the school cohort. There will also be examples of teachers who may have their salary, or part of their salary, funded through PDG budgets. They may have a specific focus in their work on promoting attainment for eFSM pupils but that does not mean that they do not also contribute more widely to the success of other pupils within a school. We believe this is in line with the expectations of the PDG and can be checked using the PDG flow chart<sup>4</sup>.

Equally, when appraising the way resources are utilised it again depends on the specific schools and also depends upon how much they receive. There will be examples of pupils who are eFSM who receive extra support through PDG funding initiatives even though they are on target to achieve positive outcomes. At the same time other children who aren’t classed as eFSM may still receive the PDG funded intervention because they are behind their targets.

It is also important to recognise the wider funding pressures on schools. With budgets so tight in some schools unless the children, both eFSM and not, access the PDG activities there is no other monies available to support them apart from their normal class based support.

Finally it is worth noting that a lot of the support eFSM pupils receive come in the form of the time given by teachers and support staff. It is harder to quantify this in direct correlation to the use of any specific funding stream.

Regional consortia’s use of the PDG on looked after and adopted children, and the impact this is having;

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<sup>4</sup> <http://learning.gov.wales/docs/learningwales/publications/150408-pdg-essential-guidance-diagram-en.pdf>

Feedback from members stated that this tends to be a very hit and miss approach. Often it is largely down to how proactive a school is in their applications to access the monies rather than any specific considerations on behalf of the regional consortia. Additionally, members have stated that they have been informed on occasion by regional consortia staff that there isn't enough money to share it out fairly for every Looked After Children (LAC) so the individual school bids will guide the decision process. Whilst individual schools may be able to evaluate the impact of their own LAC plans unless the whole package of LAC funding is collated and evaluated there is no way to realistically evaluate the impact the funding as a whole has.

Other school leaders within the union have stated that they simply do not know how regional consortia make use of the PDG, which in itself is a damning appraisal of the consortia's approach to both communication about and use of this funding.

Some members have raised specific concerns about how regional consortia have allocated the grant. In the Central South consortia region for example one school reported that they were sent information in October 2017, inviting them to apply for this year's grant within a 10 day timescale. Successful bids were notified by the end of November with impact reports required to be produced by mid-February and the money spent by the end of March. These rushed timescales will undoubtedly impact on the effectiveness of how the money can be strategically utilised by schools to achieve the desired outcomes. Not only is the money then allocated in a hastily arranged fashion the notion of spending money through December and January and reporting the impact by February is unreasonable. Members also report that the allocation and criteria for the grant appear to have changed on an annual basis since its introduction leaving schools unclear about what they can apply for and how it should be used.

Progress since the previous Children, Young People and Education Committee 2014 inquiry; Educational outcomes for children from low income households;

Wiserd have undertaken two interim reports on the PDG, which can be found here:

<http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/21168/1/141022-evaluation-pupil-deprivation-grant-year-1-en.pdf>

<http://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2015/151203-evaluation-pupil-deprivation-grant-year-2-en.pdf>

The impact of the Schools Challenge Cymru programme and the consequences of its closure on the participating 'Pathways to Success' schools;



Anecdotal feedback received stated that one area where the SCC money had been successful was in enabling secondary schools to undertake much more intensive transition support work with primary school pupils. Since the removal of the money the capacity to undertake this work has gone which has had a negative impact on the transition process, particularly for the most vulnerable learners.

How the lessons and legacy of Schools Challenge Cymru can be used to complement subsequent policies and initiatives aimed at improving educational outcomes;

Grant funding is not an acceptable way for schools to be funded. Schools need the security of adequate funding in our base budgets so that they are able to undertake effective, long-term planning in order to deliver high quality teaching and support interventions.

Evaluation of attainment data in light of the PDG and Schools Challenge Cymru programmes;

With a study finding that 65% of all primary Pupil Deprivation Grant-funded interventions were delivered by teaching assistants<sup>5</sup>, these key members of staff should be properly rewarded for their contribution as key members of the education workforce.

One of the big issues with evaluation of attainment is that it is far too crude a measure and takes no account of the progress the pupils have made. Therefore, unless the attainment data is monitored the PDG impact cannot be properly evaluated as it doesn't take into account the progress of pupils that don't reach the expected outcomes but have still made significant progress.

Targeted funding / support for more able and talented pupils;

Many members feedback suggested that it was unlikely that this cohort of pupils will be supported explicitly by the PDG. For many it was a case that there simply wasn't enough funding provided through the grant to target all individuals and the priorities often fell elsewhere. It is an unfortunate consequence of the limited supply of PDG money that more able and talent pupils have, by and large, not been specifically targeted through the funding.

Other member feedback suggested that with the emphasis placed so heavily on individual pupils reaching specific attainment targets and levels the funding was channelled towards those pupils at risk of not achieving the expected outcomes. As such these accountability measures drove schools to focus funding and resources at borderline pupils rather than those more able and talented. This is however a wider problem with the way the existing

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<sup>5</sup> <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/21168/1/141022-evaluation-pupil-deprivation-grant-year-1-en.pdf>

system is set up and the pressures it puts on schools, the curriculum, resources and priorities rather than an issue confined to PDG expenditure.

The value for money of both the PDG and Schools Challenge Cymru programmes.

There is a significant level of support for the PDG as a funding stream amongst the teaching profession. It has been a crucial element of additional financial resource which schools have effectively utilised in a variety of ways to support staff and pupils, particularly those from poorer and more challenging backgrounds. It is very much valued and retains a high level of support within the sector.

In terms of SCC, some schools have been able to show improvements due to the investment and support, others have been less able to state categorically that any change in their outcomes has been due specifically to the SCC initiative. However, what can be stated is that there was a lot of support for the SCC policy when it was announced. It was a programme similar to the London Challenge. That initiative ran for a number of years, whereas the SCC policy has come to an end prematurely, and is therefore difficult to compare it with other programmes and fully evaluate the initiative. Nevertheless, taking away much needed funding at this time, puts increasing pressure on schools where resources are much needed.

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Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Cyllid wedi'i dargedu i wella canlyniadau addysgol | Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes

TF 15

Ymateb gan: NASUWT

Response from: NASUWT

1. The NASUWT welcomes the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Children, Young People and Education Committee (CYPEC) Inquiry into Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes (the Inquiry).
2. The NASUWT is the largest teachers' union in Wales representing teachers and school leaders.

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

3. In noting the focus of the Inquiry, the NASUWT finds some difficulty responding to the specific areas raised by the CYPEC, as engagement with the education workforce unions over the introduction and application of the Pupil Development Grant (PDG), formerly referred to as the Pupil Deprivation Grant, the Schools Challenge Cymru (SCC) initiative and the role of the regional consortia on the use of the PDG on looked after and adopted children (LAAC) has been negligible.
4. Indeed, the Union has been left to pick up the pieces of teacher morale and confidence being decimated in at least one of the so-called 'Pathways to Success' schools, where 'gaming' and 'data manipulation' appeared to be supported by SCC, while in another school, the headteacher was eventually removed from post, following complaints made by the NASUWT. Regrettably, the Governing Body in the latter case was supported by SCC in its attempts to protect the headteacher. In both cases, industrial action ensued.

5. The NASUWT, therefore, welcomed the decision to abandon the SCC initiative as it appeared to be an ill-conceived, quick-fix, data-driven exercise, with the attitude of 'do what it takes to improve outcomes', and where command and control management, rather than collegiality and co-operation, held sway.
6. The NASUWT maintains that there are some fundamental principles against which the grants referred to as being within the focus of the Inquiry, and the distribution of the same, need to be measured and evaluated by the CYPEC. The Union asserts that the grant funding and its distribution must:
  - (i) provide equality of opportunity and equitable access for all learners, including through the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum, and contribute to raising educational standards for all pupils and narrow the achievement gap;
  - (ii) ensure that all schools are funded on the same basis, irrespective of their legal or governance status, which should not result in anomalies between schools where their needs and circumstances and the expectations upon them are the same;
  - (iii) reflect the additional costs related to pupil deprivation, socio-economic circumstances, school location and setting;
  - (iv) ensure the provision of, and access to, high-quality education and related support services for children and young people, and particularly vulnerable children, including those currently provided by local authorities;
  - (v) provide equality of entitlement for all learners to be taught by qualified teachers and for the recruitment, retention and development of a world-class workforce in every school or setting as critical components in delivering better outcomes for all

- children, and that these entitlements must not be based on parents' ability to pay;
- (vi) be clear and transparent so that school budgets are based upon clearly identified and agreed sets of expectations about what work schools should do and the performance expectations that will apply to them;
  - (vii) enable fair, open and easy comparisons to be made with regard to the income and expenditure of different institutions;
  - (viii) be fit for purpose, taking account of local circumstances and needs and the expectations on schools and local authorities, while promoting public and professional confidence in the system;
  - (ix) be sufficient in ensuring that the global amount available for the funding of schools takes full account of education priorities and needs and promotes fairness, equity, inclusion and social cohesion;
  - (x) ensure that any changes to the funding for schools do not result in detriment to colleges or early years provisions, which are also essential in providing education for school-aged pupils;
  - (xi) be responsive to changing needs and circumstances;
  - (xii) be predicated on consultation and democratic involvement at national, local and institutional levels, including full recognition of school workforce trade unions;
  - (xiii) promote stability for schools and enable schools to plan and organise their priorities in the longer term, and help to minimise turbulence;
  - (xiv) support the best use of resources, through arrangements for strategic planning of local provision, institutional collaboration, economies of scale and the pooling of resources to meet locally identified educational needs; and

- (xv) ensure that schools in receipt of state funding should not be able to 'hoard resources' and that they demonstrate the provision of good value for money.
7. By its very nature, the SCC initiative, which resulted in additional funding going to a relatively small number of schools identified as 'facing the greatest challenge', would not have met several of these principles.
  8. In contrast, the PDG sought to target funding across schools according to need, based primarily on an index of deprivation, within the school funding formula and, as such, this approach would meet several of the principles. However, the CYPEC may wish to reflect on the NASUWT's long-standing concerns about the use of indices of deprivation as indicators of socio-economic need, and on the potential implications of the introduction of Universal Credit (UC) which could result in children losing their eligibility for free school meals (eFSM).
  9. Further, in raising this contrast, the NASUWT is not providing an indication of support for the current methodology of funding schools in Wales to the CYPEC. Indeed, the Union maintains that the current system, which is based primarily on pupil numbers rather than the needs of the curriculum and the designated needs of specific groups of pupils, does not enable either schools or local authorities to retain staffing complements to ensure that these needs are catered for effectively.
  10. The NASUWT believes that the CYPEC should question seriously the decision to move away from the hypothecation of the grants in the focus of the Inquiry and to allow a regional consortium to allocate the funding, presumably, as it sees fit. The Union raised concerns about the decision to amalgamate this grant funding into the Education Improvement Grant (EIG) in its evidence to the inquiry into the EIG.

11. The NASUWT is concerned that the un-hypothecation of these grants could lead to funding being allocated on the basis of grace, favour and patronage, rather than being targeted to areas of need through the provision of either dedicated funding to schools or the retention of central local authority services where specialist staff can be deployed to areas of need.
12. The NASUWT has previously raised concerns over the funding for meeting learners' Additional Learning Needs (ALN) in written and oral evidence presented to the CYPEC's inquiry into ALN, and in the Union's response to the consultation to the ALN Bill which was annexed to the written evidence. However, it may be of interest to the CYPEC to be aware that NASUWT members charged with the responsibility for catering for the needs of these learners often complain that the funding they should be able to access is not ring-fenced to the learners and is often vired to other budget headings.

#### **SPECIFIC COMMENTS**

13. The NASUWT offers the comments and observations which follow on the issues under scrutiny by the CYPEC:

***Schools' use of the PDG and the extent to which this benefits the pupils it is designed to be targeted at.***

14. The NASUWT is aware that many schools have been placed in the position of having to use the PDG funding to retain staffing levels on a general basis because of the school funding methodology and/or the disparities in school funding levels between local authorities across Wales. In addition, the situation is exacerbated by the general underinvestment in education by successive Welsh Governments which, as estimated by the NASUWT, has led to an on-average per-pupil funding gap between maintained schools in Wales when compared to maintained schools in England increasing from £31 in 2000-01 to £678 in 2015/16.

This is equivalent to an additional £306 million which should be going into school budgets in Wales and which could result in the employment of around 7,500 additional teachers, or a combination of additional teachers and learning support staff. Instead, as the CYPEC will be aware, schools have been blighted by year-on-year redundancies.

***The relationship between PDG-funded support for pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and expenditure on activities designed to improve attainment of all pupils.***

15. As stated previously in this evidence, the NASUWT recognises that using the deprivation index of eFSM provides a reasonably effective means of ensuring that the PDG can be targeted to areas of need on a relatively equitable basis across Wales. However, this view is tempered by the Union's long-standing concerns about the use of indices of deprivation as indicators of socio-economic need, and by the potential implications of the introduction of UC, which could result in children losing their eFSM.
16. The NASUWT suggest that the CYPEC should ask the Welsh Government to consider seriously the turbulence which may ensue around the introduction of UC and what measures are needed to ensure that no school loses out simply as a result of changes to the eligibility criteria for FSM. The Union maintains that the Welsh Government needs to recognise and address the fact the levels of deprivation will not have changed, just the way in which they are defined for the purpose of school funding and, in particular, access to the PDG.

***Regional consortia's use of the PDG on looked after and adopted children, and the impact this is having.***

17. Other than the general concerns expressed elsewhere in this response over the use of the regional consortia structure to distribute the PDG, the NASUWT is not able to comment further on this issue.



***Progress since the previous Children, Young People and Education Committee 2014 inquiry; [Educational outcomes for children from low income households.](#)***

18. In noting that the 2014 Inquiry covered, amongst other things, the Pupil Development Grant, known at the time as the Pupil Deprivation Grant, the SCC initiative, and the role of regional consortia, the NASUWT suggests that the CYPEC should reflect on the failure and subsequent abandonment of the SCC, the decision to rename the PDG, and low esteem in which the regional consortia are held, when considering what progress has been made since the 2014 Inquiry.

***The impact of the Schools Challenge Cymru programme and the consequences of its closure on the participating 'Pathways to Success' schools.***

19. The NASUWT is unsure about the impact the closure of the SCC programme had on the participating schools as there was very little transparency about the degree to which the schools benefited directly from the additional funding and how much was used by SCC to administer the programme.
20. In any event, as stated elsewhere in this evidence, the Union's limited experience of the programme was entirely negative.

***How the lessons and legacy of Schools Challenge Cymru can be used to complement subsequent policies and initiatives aimed at improving educational outcomes.***

21. The NASUWT maintains that the decision to abandon the SCC programme speaks for itself in terms of lessons learnt and legacy and does not believe that the approach has anything to offer in terms of

complementing subsequent policies and initiatives aimed at effectively improving educational outcomes for pupils, as the programme was data driven and lacked integrity.

***Evaluation of attainment data in light of the PDG and Schools Challenge Cymru programmes.***

22. For reasons expressed elsewhere in the response, the NASUWT questions the reliability of the data relating to the SCC programme and to a lesser extent the data relating to the PDG, although the Union is aware of the PDG being used to facilitate the removal of pupils from non-core subjects in order to concentrate on literacy and numeracy outcomes and to ‘cram’ pupils in terms of the achievement of level 2-equivalent GCSE C grade qualifications.

***Targeted funding/support for more able and talented pupils.***

23. The NASUWT is aware of schools ‘ticking the box’ in establishing a post-holder with a teaching and learning responsibility (TLR) for more able and talented (MAT) pupils, but is not confident in commenting further about the support that is offered to MAT pupils.

***The value for money of both the PDG and Schools Challenge Cymru programmes.***

24. The NASUWT maintains that the SCC programme provided very little, if any, value for money for the reasons expressed elsewhere in this evidence, but would not view the PDG in the same light. However, the Union has serious concerns over the implication of the name change and the reliance on the regional consortia to ensure that the funding is distributed in accordance with the principles referred to in paragraph 6 of this evidence.



**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales**  
**Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee**  
**Cyllid wedi'i dargeddu i wella canlyniadau addysgol | Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes**  
**TF 06**  
**Ymateb gan: Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru**  
**Response from: Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru**

Gwerthfawroga UCAC y cyfle i ymateb i ymchwiliad y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg i Gyllid wedi'i dargeddu i wella canlyniadau mewn addysg. Byddai UCAC yn barod i ddarparu rhagor o dystiolaeth, llafar neu ysgrifenedig, petai hynny'n fuddiol i'r Pwyllgor.

Mae UCAC yn undeb sy'n cynrychioli athrawon, arweinwyr a darlithwyr ym mhob sector addysg ledled Cymru.

**Defnydd ysgolion o'r Grant Datblygu Disgyblion a'r graddau y mae o fudd i'r disgyblion a dargedir Y berthynas rhwng cymorth a ariennir gan y Grant Datblygu Disgyblion ar gyfer plant sy'n gymwys am ginio am ddim a gwariant ar weithgareddau sydd wedi'u cynllunio i wella cyrhaeddiad pob disgybl;**

Yn sgil y wasgfa gyffredinol a chynyddol ar gyllidebau ysgolion, yr hyn mae aelodau UCAC yn eu hadrodd wrthym yw bod y Grant Datblygu Disgyblion yn cael ei ddefnyddio mwyfwy i dalu am staff ychwanegol - cynorthwyr dysgu, fel rheol - yn hytrach nag unrhyw ymyraethau mwy arbenigol eraill.

Gall y rhain fod yn staff sy'n gweithio'n benodol gyda phlant sy'n gymwys am ginio am ddim, neu fel ffordd o gynnig cefnogaeth ychwanegol yn y dosbarth yn fwy cyffredinol, gan gynnwys y plant sy'n gymwys am ginio am ddim.

Caiff hyn ei wneud am sawl rheswm:

- mae maint dosbarthiadau'n cynyddu, a hynny heb fod cynnydd yn y lefelau staffio; mae athrawon ac arweinwyr yn teimlo nad oes modd rhoi'r sylw unigol sydd ei angen ar rai disgyblion; mae arweinwyr ysgolion cynradd yn adrodd nad yw'r Grant Cyfnod Sylfaen bellach yn ddigonol i dalu am y niferoedd staff angenrheidiol
- nid oes gan ysgolion ddigon o gyllid (arferol) i gynnal eu grwpiau a'u gwaith ymyrraeth bellach, ac mae hynny'n cael effaith negyddol ar y gallu i gynnig cefnogaeth ychwanegol i ddysgwyr bregus, neu ddysgwyr sydd angen cefnogaeth ychwanegol neu arbenigol o unrhyw fath

Mae'r Grant Datblygu Disgyblion yn gallu mynd rhyw ffordd tuag at lenwi rhai o'r bylchau hynny, ac mae ysgolion yn gweld hynny fel mater o flaenoriaeth.

**Gwerthuso'r data cyrhaeddiad yng ngoleuni rhaglen Grant Datblygu Disgyblion a rhaglen Her Ysgolion Cymru**

Mae nifer o ffactorau'n golygu y gall fod yn anodd gwerthuso effaith y Grant Datblygu Disgyblion ar y data cyrhaeddiad:

- mewn ysgolion sydd â chanran fach o ddisgyblion sy'n gymwys am ginio am ddim, mae'r disgyblion wedi'u gwasgaru ar draws y dosbarthiadau, a gall fod yn anodd dangos sut maent yn cael eu targedu, a beth yw effaith y Grant arnynt
- fel y dywedwyd uchod, mae tuedd i wario'r Grant mewn modd mwy holistaidd (aelod staff ychwanegol mewn dosbarth) a llai penodol (nid ymyriad sy'n targedu disgybl neu grŵp o ddisgyblion penodol), sydd yn ei dro yn ei gwneud hi'n anoddach mesur yr effaith

**Targeddu cyllid/cefnogaeth i ddisgyblion mwy abl a thalentog**

Mae teimlad ymhlith rhai nad oes angen cyllid neu gefnogaeth ychwanegol ar gyfer y grŵp hwn o ddisgyblion. Mater i athrawon yw sicrhau eu bod yn ymestyn disgyblion mwy abl a thalentog a hynny o fewn y dosbarth a'r cynllun gwers arferol.

**Gwerth am arian y rhaglen Grant Datblygu Disgyblion a rhaglen Her Ysgolion Cymru**

Mae maint dosbarthiadau yn thema sy'n codi'n gyson ac yn gynyddol fel problem gan ein haelodau, yn athrawon dosbarth ac yn arweinwyr ysgol. Yn y sefyllfa sydd ohoni, mae teimlad mai'r defnydd gorau o'r

arian fyddai i fynd tuag at leihau maint dosbarthiadau, ac y byddai hynny'n cael effaith gadarnhaol, gyffredinol ar ansawdd a safonau, gan gynnwys y disgyblion hynny sy'n gymwys am ginio am ddim.

Nid yw aelodau, yn gyffredinol, yn ymwybodol o sut cafodd yr arian i leihau maint dosbarthiadau babanod ei ddyrannu, ac nid ydynt, yn gyffredinol wedi gweld yr effeithiau yn eu dosbarthiadau/ysgolion nhw. Cafodd y canllawiau ar gyfer dyrannu'r arian eu cyhoeddi fisoedd lawer ar ôl y cyhoeddiad bod yr arian ar gael, a'r Awdurdodau Lleol gwnaeth y ceisiadau, heb fod ysgolion yn ymwybodol o'r broses o gwbl. Awgrymwn fod hyn yn thema y gallai'r Pwyllgor ystyried ymchwilio iddo yn y dyfodol.

O gymryd cam yn ôl, gellid dadlau mai'r gwerth gorau am arian fyddai defnyddio'r grant i sicrhau ymyraethau penodol, arbenigol - ac ychwanegol. Fodd bynnag, nid yw sefyllfa gyllidebol ysgolion yn caniatáu hynny ar hyn o bryd.

Mae'n gwbl glir mai llenwi'r bylchau mae'r Grant yn ei wneud ar hyn o bryd, yn hytrach na chael ei ddefnyddio i ymestyn a darparu ymhellach. Hoffem fod yn gwbl glir nad oes bai ar ysgolion am wneud y penderfyniadau hynny; nid yw eu sefyllfa gyllidebol yn cynnig fawr o ddewis iddynt.

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

Document is Restricted

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Cyllid wedi'i dargedu i wella canlyniadau addysgol | Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes

TF 09

Ymateb gan: Yr Athro Mel Ainscow

Response from: Professor Mel Ainscow

## Schools Challenge Cymru: what are the lessons?

### A discussion paper

The suggestions made in this paper have been generated through discussion with school leaders and advisers involved in the programme.

Over the last two and a half years or so, Schools Challenge Cymru has worked with forty 'Pathways to Success' secondary schools that had previously experienced considerable difficulties in improving the attainment of their students. All the schools serve communities that are, to varying degrees, disadvantaged. Broadly stated, the aims have been to bring about rapid and sustainable improvements in these schools, and to use the lessons from these developments to strengthen the capacity of the education system to improve itself.

In a relatively short time, the forty schools have all, to varying degrees, made significant progress. In some cases, the gains in terms of examination results have been remarkable. Attainment across the schools on the GCSE Level 2 Inclusive measure has improved by 7 percentage points, with progress for pupils eligible for free school meals improving by 8.2 percentage points. This rate of improvement is faster than the overall progress made across Wales over the same period. A small number of the schools have proved more difficult to move. However, significant progress has been made in strengthening leadership and governance in these schools, such that there are now reasons to be optimistic about their future.

This success has been achieved as a result of actions taken by the schools themselves, with bespoke support from a team of highly experienced advisers. This is reflected in comments such as the following from head teachers:

*The Schools Challenge Cymru programme has had a more profoundly positive impact on our school's standards than any other national or regional programme in which the school has participated over the last decade.*

*Without the support of the programme the rate of progress in raising standards at the school would undoubtedly have been considerably slower.*

*We really benefited from the School Challenge Cymru programme, and this has been a key driver in our school improvement. The philosophy underpinning the programme was communicated with absolute clarity, complemented by financial and practical help and support.*

This paper summarises the lessons that can be drawn from these experiences. Together, these lessons provide a basis for a more effective strategy for strengthening the national approach to school improvement, particularly in relation to schools facing challenging circumstances. Consideration is also given to systemic barriers that need to be addressed in order to implement such a strategy.

### **Drawing the lessons**

The work of Schools Challenge Cymru suggests that schools in Wales have untapped potential that needs to be mobilised in order that they can be more effective in improving themselves. The major contribution of the advisers involved in the programme has been in using their expertise and wide experience to identify and make better use of this latent potential. Importantly, they have worked as a team in carrying out this demanding task, meeting regularly to share ideas and sometimes visiting schools together where a second opinion has seemed necessary.

Our analysis of what has happened suggests six interconnected lessons that arise from the efforts of advisers to move forward schools that had previously been stuck:

**Lesson 1: Start by analysing the context.** Whilst there are some common factors that have previously prevented progress across the forty schools, each one has had to be analysed in detail. This analysis has involved advisers in working alongside school leaders in collecting and engaging with context specific information related to factors such as culture, capacity and confidence. Whilst this always starts with statistical performance data, it requires much more in-depth probing, through classroom observations, scrutiny of students' work, and discussions with students, staff and governors.

In carrying out an initial review, advisers were able to assess the capacity of the head and senior staff to lead a push for improvement. In some cases, this led to the conclusion that urgent changes in leadership were necessary. Similarly, some situations required changes in the membership of governing bodies. These changes required advisers to work closely with local authority staff and, occasionally, pressure was required to ensure that changes were made. An adviser described what happened following a school being placed in special measures:



*An outstanding headteacher was appointed who has now developed a very effective senior team to lead the school. With the support of Schools Challenge funding and support, they have transformed the ethos and aspirations of the school through setting a clear vision and implementing strategies that focus on teaching and learning.*

Having seen a massive leap in the school's examination results during less than a year, the adviser added:

*It is now a self-improving school with a motivated staff and a high level of challenge from a very committed governing body that will enable them to become an excellent school providing high quality education for all the pupils.*

**Lesson 2: Mobilise leadership from within the school.** Contextual analysis has continued throughout the period of Schools Challenge in order to monitor the impact of the improvement strategies that have been introduced. In this way, barriers to progress have been identified and addressed. As a result, strategies have been customised in response to the developing situation in each context, using evidence as a catalyst for change.

Much of the work of advisers has concentrated on working with senior staff to build confidence and strengthen their leadership skills. So, for example, in a previously failing school that has now made outstanding progress, the adviser commented:

*All staff at the school have fully embraced the opportunities offered to them through the Schools Challenge Cymru programme and it has been rewarding working alongside the leadership team and supporting them to raise standards. Teachers at the school now have the necessary drive, resilience and skills to further improve outcomes with a sharp focus on improvement planning and doing things in the right order. The school is built around strong relationships, trust and a sense of community.*

Talking about the impact on schools, another adviser commented:

*The visible difference in resilience and confidence of leaders at all levels was excellent to see in comparison to where they were three years ago.*

It is also evident that, in many cases, advisers have been able to identify other staff within the schools, including some relatively inexperienced teachers and support staff, with the potential to lead improvement efforts. An important factor here has been to ensure that head teachers and other senior staff encourage and support this process of capacity building.

Additional resources and support have been used tactically to support these developments, as a head explained:

*The additional funding and wider challenge the school received as part of the Schools Challenge Cymru programme were the catalysts for the accelerated progress made across the main indicators.*

The success of these interventions has strengthened the capacity of the schools to manage change through effective school-based professional development activities. This invites a degree of optimism that these changes will lead to sustainable improvement, as noted by another of the advisers:

*I was recently reminded by one of the head teachers that, even more significant than the improved pupils' outcomes made in the past two years, is the development of classroom culture and leadership capacity to ensure that these gains will continue to improve year on year.*

### **Lesson 3: Promote a culture of learning amongst students and staff.**

Across the schools, the progress that has been made has led to changes in expectations regarding what is possible and higher aspirations of what students can achieve. This is promoting cultural change, leading to what the business guru Peter Senge describes as a 'learning organisation', i.e. a group of people working together collectively to enhance their capacities to create results they really care about. For example, two of the heads explained what this involved in each of their schools:

*There is a much more collaborative culture, with more effective targeted professional development and a more collegiate approach to school improvement.*

*The school has moved from quite a hierarchical approach to reviewing teaching and learning to a more collegiate model at the heart of which has been an attempt to ensure that classroom doors are open, that we celebrate the very best classroom practice at every opportunity, and develop, support and challenge bespoke programmes where underperformance is evident*

Strategies used to achieve these changes have varied from school to school. There are, however, certain overall patterns. So, for example, it was evident at the start of the programme that most of the Pathways to Success schools lacked effective arrangements for tracking student progress in order to target appropriate support. Improving this factor proved to be relatively straight forward, usually by drawing on the expertise of schools that already have effective mechanisms in place. A head explained:

*A significantly improved data tracking system recognises underperformance very quickly and support is directed accordingly.*

Another head commented:

*Once the student outcomes started to improve, the ambition of younger students increased. This caused a snowball effect as teachers' expectations of the students grew.*

There was also a sense of fragmentation within many of the schools, with teachers often working alone to solve the problems they face. With this in mind, efforts have been made in all the schools to promote within-school collaboration through the introduction of participatory, inquiry-based professional development strategies. For example, a head saw the impact in terms of:

*.... significantly enhanced professional development, bespoke high quality mentoring and coaching from our challenge adviser. The flexibility to allocate resources promptly, all underpinned the change process.*

Another head commented:

*... the development of lead practitioners within the school to provide a coaching model to others has provided sustainability, evidenced in the increasing number of good and excellent lessons and rapidly improved outcomes.*

In some schools, the students themselves have also been mobilised to further strengthen the culture of learning. Once again, this points to underused resources within schools that need to be used more effectively.

**Lesson 4: Connect to relevant external support.** We know from research that a feature of schools that face challenging circumstances is that they tend to become isolated and inward looking. With this in mind, advisers have placed considerable emphasis on linking the Pathways to Success schools to other schools. A head commented:

*As a Pathways to Success school we have worked in partnership to improve our academic results and refine the school improvement systems that lead to sustainable, stable and improving schooling.*

In many cases, the partnerships have built upon the existing local area clusters, a feature that is a strength of the Welsh education system. In some instances, these groupings have been further strengthened by the development of joint professional development programmes that have enabled the sharing of cross-phase expertise.

In many cases, too, more intensive partnerships have been brokered with other secondary schools. These partnerships, which take many forms, often involve crossing the borders between local authorities. In some cases, they involve two schools, where the strength of one is used to provide support in addressing concerns in another. Other schools have multiple partners for different purposes. As such partnerships develop, advisers continue monitoring what happens, since they can sometimes lead to the proliferation of meetings that result in no actions being taken.

Commenting on highly successful partnerships in two of the Pathways to Success schools he supported, an adviser explained:

*The leadership of both schools see it as a partnership of equals. The head teachers having mutual respect for each other is key. But, just as important, the staff who work with each other across the schools see that it has mutual benefit. Through this work, colleagues have developed their confidence to ask questions of their own practice in order to improve.*

Most notably, we have seen how between-school partnerships have led to striking improvements in the performance of schools facing the most challenging circumstances. Commenting on this, an adviser said:

*The move from the school as an inward looking organisation to one that has embraced partnerships and contact with other schools, the consortium and other providers, was a critical cultural change and is a significant element in the sustainability of the project.*

It is important to recognise, however, that such collaborations are complex. They therefore need careful brokering and monitoring in order to ensure they have an impact. Significantly, we have found that, where they are effective, such collaborative arrangements can have a positive impact on the learning of students in all the partner schools. This is an important finding in that it draws attention to a way of strengthening relatively low performing schools that can, at the same time, help to foster wider improvements in the system. It also offers a convincing argument as to why relatively strong schools should support other schools. Put simply, the evidence is that by helping others you help yourself.

**Lesson 5: Find ways of injecting pace.** Moving forward with urgency has been a central emphasis within Schools Challenge Cymru, not least because overall progress within the Welsh education system has been relatively slow over many years. The approach taken by the advisers has been vital in this respect. In particular, they have got close to the schools - particularly senior members of staff - through regular visits, supplemented by frequent contacts through phone calls and email. They have also established a presence within the schools, so as to connect directly with others who can help to move things forward, including governors. For example, an adviser commented:

*I have just done a support visit to the Maths departments in each of my schools and it was very pleasing to note the urgency and pace they had all responded to the task ahead of improving outcomes by August. They all have clear actions plans and robust high impact strategies up and running.*

Commenting on ways of achieving pace, another adviser argued:

*The significant funds made available, combined with ministerial clout, allowed for quick decision making and the rapid implementation of plans and innovations.*

Pace has also been encouraged through the involvement of advisers in each school's accelerated improvement board, where those involved hold one another to account for carrying out agreed tasks. Crucially, they involve only a small group of key stakeholders, chaired by the head teacher. This reinforces the point that they and their colleagues are responsible for the improvement of their schools. The notes of the monthly meetings of these boards also provide an efficient means of keeping other stakeholders informed in ways that avoid time-wasting reporting arrangements.

**Lesson 6: Improve the image of the school within its community and more widely.** Within a context where schools are, to varying degrees, in competition with one another, external image is a vital factor. The problem is that many of the Pathways to Success schools have had a poor image within their local communities, often going back over many years. As a result, they find it difficult to attract students, particularly those from more aspirational families. This means that they often have spare places that are eventually filled by students who are excluded from other schools. This situation is then made worse by the fact that the schools have difficulty in employing suitably qualified teachers, particularly in those subjects where there is a shortage.

Given these circumstances, emphasis has been placed on promoting the progress made in the Pathways to Success schools in their local communities and, indeed, more widely. This has helped to build belief within the schools. Being part of a high-profile national initiative with Government backing has helped with this, as noted by one head whose school has had a long-term bad image:

*We never felt a stigma attached to the programme. Rather, the identification that we are amongst a group of schools uniquely placed to make a real difference to young people's lives, including those who are amongst the most disadvantaged.*

Clearly, the rapid progress that many of the schools have made in terms of examination results has helped in this respect, alongside other achievements related to the arts, sport and outdoor activities. Reports of these developments in the media have been systematically orchestrated, and, as a

result, representatives of some of the schools have been invited to make presentations at local and national conferences. Meanwhile, some of the schools are now developing as centres of professional development for staff in other schools.

In these six ways, as intended, Schools Challenge Cymru is having a ripple effect across the education system by demonstrating what is possible with learners from less advantaged backgrounds and then sharing their expertise with others.

### **Addressing barriers to school improvement**

As more effective improvement measures have been introduced into the Pathways to Success schools, we have been experiencing various forms of 'turbulence', as taken-for-granted assumptions about what is possible have been subject to challenge. This has thrown light on some of the factors that have prevented earlier improvement. Our purpose has been to demonstrate what is possible and, in so doing, find ways of identifying and overcoming barriers that have held back progress in the past.

Our ongoing monitoring of the developments that have occurred suggests that these barriers mainly relate to existing ways of working, which, although well intended, consume time and resources, and delay action in the field. They include the following:

- **The over emphasis placed by some local authorities (and consortia staff) on putting schools, particularly those facing challenging circumstances, under increasing pressure.** This tends to demoralise the key agents of change, i.e. the staff in the schools. It also leads to considerable time being wasted on debating and disputing plans and targets. Whilst target setting is helpful, without powerful support strategies it is unlikely to lead to sustainable change.
- **Multiple accountability arrangements.** This means that school leaders are spending too much time preparing reports for different audiences, and attending various review and scrutiny meetings and, being given different (and at times conflicting) advice on the improvements required and how they can be implemented.
- **Lack of effective support for school improvement.** The challenge advisers working in the consortia are spending far too much time monitoring and reporting on school progress in relation to national accountability procedures. This leaves little time for working closely with schools to support authentic improvement processes in the way the Schools Challenge Cymru advisers have been able to do.
- **Actions by local authority and consortia staff that limit the freedom of school leaders to take responsibility for their own improvement.** As a result, this leads to a sense of dependency on

outsiders to lead improvement efforts, rather than those within schools taking responsibility and being accountable for improved outcomes.

- **Poor knowledge amongst staff in local authorities about the strengths and weaknesses of the schools with which they work.** Too often their descriptions of schools are expressed in terms of superficial patterns of student performance based on headline figures, rather than detailed understandings of teaching and leadership practices, attitudes, expectations and organisational cultures. As a result, latent potential for leading improvement is too often overlooked.
- **Governors who, in some instances, seem to be unclear about their roles and responsibilities.** These community representatives represent another untapped potential that needs to be mobilised to support the efforts of schools to improve themselves. However, we have found that, in some instances, they are a significant barrier to progress. There are important implications here for local authority relationships with governing bodies.
- **Local authorities that remain reluctant to make use of their powers of intervention in the case of schools that are a cause for concern.** In some instances, it may be that they believe that their continued use of lesser actions, such as issuing warning notices, is sufficient. Our concern is that, as a result, difficult situations are sometimes allowed to further deteriorate, leading to a collapse of confidence within schools and the communities they serve. Very often, too, this leads to increased union involvement that creates yet further barriers.

Some of these difficulties arise because of a lack of clarity amongst local authority and consortia staff about their respective roles and responsibilities, although this is definitely improving. The need for certainty in this respect is particularly vital as national efforts are made to develop self-improving school systems, a change that requires radical changes to thinking, practice and relationships at every level.

All of this implies a rethink of national education policy. In particular, policy makers have to foster greater flexibility at the local level in order that practitioners have the space to analyse their particular circumstances and determine priorities accordingly. This means that policy makers must recognise that the details of policy implementation are not amenable to central regulation. Rather, these have to be dealt with by those who are close to and, therefore, in a better position to understand local contexts.

It is worth adding that some of the practices of Estyn, although often a positive stimulus for change, can also unintentionally act as barriers to progress. For example, we have observed that they can sometimes discourage the efforts of

schools by failing to recognise and celebrate the progress being made. The pattern of frequent monitoring visits to some schools can also act as a distraction from their improvement activities. At the same time, the apparent preoccupation with monitoring paperwork as a means of ensuring consistency in the way local authority and consortia staff work tends to encourage an atmosphere of compliance, leading to a satisfaction with mediocrity and a reluctance to explore new responses. The changes currently underway in Estyn are encouraging in this respect and we have been grateful for the supportive contributions of HMI colleagues to the programme.

### **Looking to the future**

In thinking about how the lessons that have emerged from Schools Challenge Cymru might be used more widely it is essential to recognise that they do not offer a simple recipe that can be lifted and transferred between contexts. Rather, they define a different approach to improvement, one that uses processes of contextual analysis in order to create bespoke strategies that fit particular circumstances. In so doing this helps to identify resources that can inject pace into efforts to push things forward.

The aim therefore is to 'move knowledge around' through strengthening collaboration within, between and beyond schools. What is distinctive in the approach is that it is mainly led from within schools, with head teachers and other senior staff having a central role as 'system leaders'. As noted above, this will require new thinking, practices and relationships across the education system. In this context, the regional consortia have a crucial role in helping to make this happen.

In moving forward, then, the next step must be to use the lessons from Schools Challenge Cymru to encourage rapid improvement across the education system, focusing most urgently on schools facing challenging circumstances. In so doing, it will be important to prevent the diluting of the approach as it is used more widely and to ensure that it is implemented with pace. In this respect, consistent leadership and support from Government will be vital.

**Mel Ainscow  
March 2017**



# Agenda Item 7.1

Royal College of  
Paediatrics and Child Health  
Wales

Coleg Brenhinol  
Pediatrieg a Iechyd Plant  
Cymru

*Leading the way in Children's Health*  
*Yn arwain y ffordd ar Iechyd Plant*

## **RCPCH briefing for CYPE Committee on community child health workforce data**

The RCPCH carries out a census of the paediatric medical workforce every two years. We are currently in the process of collecting and analysing data for the 2017 census. When complete, this should give us a full picture of the paediatric workforce in Wales and across the UK. The census data provide the most reliable and up to date picture of the community child health (CCH) workforce.

However, we currently only have complete data from two of the seven health boards in Wales: *Powys* (which has comparatively small staff numbers) and *Abertawe Bro Morgannwg. Betsi Cadwaladr* have started their return, but have not yet completed. The remaining four health boards have currently not provided data. We continue to contact the clinical leads for each trust to request this.

The data from the 2015 census show that there were 87 filled CCH posts in Wales: 39 consultants and 48 SAS docs. At first glance, this is a reasonable ratio, even a little better than average in comparison to the rest of the UK. Furthermore, only two CCH posts were reported as vacant in Wales. However, there are some important caveats to note.

First, demand for services provided by community paediatricians vary across the UK and it may be that Welsh CCH professionals are expected to provide more. During the verbal evidence provided at the Committee session, we heard that changes to CAMHS services and other pathways have had an impact on CCH professionals, sometimes adding significantly to workloads or expectations.

Second, we only have information about Less Than Full Time (LTFT) working for 15 of these 87 posts, so we don't know how many of the rest were LTFT. Of the 15 who supplied this data, 6 were LTFT. It is therefore not possible to calculate and compare the overall Whole Time Equivalent available for the service. We would therefore urge caution in using these figures.

Finally, on vacancies: *Cardiff and Vale* and *Aneurin Bevan* health boards – two major employers – did not provide this data, so these figures may be unrepresentative of the true picture in Wales.

In a separate piece of work on CCH, we circulated a survey in 2016 to look at the services provided and waiting lists. Unfortunately, only three out of boards in Wales replied and one of those with partial information. This data does not therefore give us a reliable picture of the CCH workforce in Wales.

Therefore, unfortunately, we are unable to provide complete data about the CCH workforce in Wales. This is something we are very keen to improve in future but we must stress that the data we can provide will only ever be as good as the responses we get from health boards. We are concerned that several health boards have not responded to our surveys or to our census. We are also concerned that even when data is provided it is often incomplete. We don't know why this might be

but it is plausible that health boards under pressure have not allocated resources (primarily in terms of staff time) to gathering or supplying this data.

There is much discussion in Wales about designing services for the future, not least in response to the recent report from the Parliamentary Review. However, it is difficult to see how we can accurately design and support services without workforce information. We would therefore appreciate any support from the Committee as a whole or from individual members in encouraging and supporting health boards to submit data in full.

The Committee and its individual members might consider writing to the Health Boards to encourage them to engage in these processes, or ask the Cabinet Secretary what actions the Welsh Government is taking to ensure that health boards collect and share data on workforce with us and other Medical Royal Colleges or other organisations carrying out this work. Finally, we note that Health Education and Improvement Wales will have a role in workforce intelligence and planning. We look forward to discussing this in more detail with HEIW after April 2018 with a view to agreeing ways of working together to improve data collection in paediatrics.

CYPE(5)-08-18 - Paper to note 2  
**Agenda Item 7.2**

**UPDATE ON WELSH GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT: SCRUTINY OF THE WELSH GOVERNMENT DRAFT BUDGET 2018-19, DECEMBER 2017**

**UPDATE FEBRUARY 2018**

The Welsh Government's Draft Budget 2018-19 was scrutinised by the CYPE Committee on two occasions in November 2017. Following on from those sessions, the CYPE Committee completed its report containing 21 recommendations to which I responded formally.

This paper includes an update against Recommendation 7 of the Committee's report and deals specifically with the Education Improvement Grant for Schools and support for minority ethnic achievement and the education of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners.

As part of the scrutiny process of the Draft Budget, I outlined my thoughts to the Committee to include support for this area in my priorities for Local Government. This is something I considered carefully.

The Committee's recommendation was as follows:

On the basis of the evidence provided in our Education Improvement Grant: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic Children Report (February 2017) we urge the Cabinet Secretary to retain funding to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic learners as part of the Education Improvement Grant.

In my formal response to the Committee I rejected this recommendation noting that there remained a number of considerations to be worked through.

Firstly, Local Authorities are responsible for school funding and have a duty to ensure appropriate learning provision is available for all learners. For more than a decade the Welsh Government has provided targeted additional grant funding to Local Government to support our minority ethnic, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners. Over that time Local Authorities have tried and tested arrangements and I fully recognise the expertise and experience in our schools and in those Local Authority services.

Secondly, what is clear to me is that this kind of support should not be allowed to be seen as additional. That is not sustainable in the long term and our expectations should be greater. I welcomed the CYPE Committee's inquiry into the EIG and though the evidence presented to the Committee was wide-ranging, varied and in parts contradictory, there seemed to be a clear call for sustainable and consistent funding arrangements. I believe one of the Committee's fundamental areas of concern was around Local Government accountability outside of hypothecated grant arrangements.

Local Government has long called for dehypothecation of grant funding, simplified arrangements, greater flexibility to deliver services and manage the pressures they have. These are Local Authority services and the Local Government Settlement remains the most sustainable way to fund core delivery.

And lastly, in prioritising funding to Local Government for schools, all Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers have had to make difficult decisions and consider a range of services and the ways they are funded.

I believe it is right and appropriate, therefore, that I have given due consideration to this matter as part of our whole government approach to support Local Government in discharging their duties. That is why I have written to the WLGA Leader on this matter over the past months. I have clarified my expectations, provided information to support their planning and have subsequently welcomed the assurances the Leader has provided on behalf of Local Government that they will continue to prioritise support for vulnerable learners from an early age including our minority ethnic, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners.

In seeking to deliver against these assurances, however, I have been made aware that some Authorities, specifically Cardiff, Newport and Swansea, which are the main centres of higher population density for these learners, have identified they will be negatively impacted on what they feel to be distributional issues.

Whilst I have been clear that this is not a grant transfer and not subject to the same processes, we are sympathetic to the representations made to us and have been working with the WLGA to find a solution.

I am pleased to say that we have agreed an additional £5 million from Reserves for 2018-19 which will alleviate the impact on our main urban authorities and we have confirmed the allocations in writing with the Chief Executive Officers; I understand this has been welcomed.

Moving forwards, in 2018-19 we wish to work with the main urban areas of Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham to support them in preparing for the future delivery of support for minority ethnic and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners.

As we work with those authorities and the WLGA I am keen that we make the most of this opportunity to make progress against the policy approach the Welsh Government outlined in 2014.

Our policy statement highlighted that the then funding arrangements were not sustainable and Authorities needed to increase collaboration and partnership working in order to deliver services against growing need and pressured budgets in future. Estyn's evidence to the Committee indicated no significant change in delivery arrangements, despite placing the funding within a clear regional approach.

Therefore the Welsh Government is making a further £2.5 million available in 2018-19 to support the transition to place this work on a regional footing in line with the National Model for Regional Working.

I welcomed the Committee's inquiry into the EIG and as we work with the WLGA and the urban authorities to move to more sustainable future arrangements I will be mindful of the concerns you raised around accountability as we seek the best possible educational outcomes for our children and young people in Wales.

My officials are meeting with the Chief Executive Officers of Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham and I will keep the Committee updated on progress.

Turning briefly to the issues of sustainable development and impact assessments, we have been mindful during this budget process of the requirements on Welsh Ministers under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and to have due regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. I am sure that Authorities will similarly now wish to do so in the context of their budget setting processes.