

Agenda – Public Accounts Committee

Meeting Venue:	For further information contact:
Committee Room 1 – Senedd	Fay Bowen
Meeting date: Monday, 27 March 2017	Committee Clerk
	0300 200 6565
Meeting time: 13.45	SeneddPAC@assembly.wales

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(14.00)

2 Paper(s) to note

(14.00 – 14.05)

(Pages 1 – 3)

Community Safety in Wales: Letter from the Welsh Government (9 March 2017)

(Pages 4 – 9)

Medicines Management: Letter from Boots (9 March 2017)

(Pages 10 – 12)

3 Regional Education Consortia: Evidence Session 1

(14.05 – 15.30)

(Pages 13 – 108)

Research Briefing

PAC(5)–10–17 Paper 1 – Auditor General for Wales Memorandum

PAC(5)–10–17 Paper 2 – Briefing to accompany Auditor General for Wales Memorandum

PAC(5)–10–17 Paper 3 – Teacher’s professional learning and education survey results

PAC(5)–10–17 Paper 4 – Letter from NASUWT

Hannah Woodhouse – Managing Director, Central South Consortium Joint Education Service (CSC)

Nick Batchelar – Lead Director (City and County of Cardiff) Central South Consortium Joint Education Service (CSC)

Debbie Hartevelde – Managing Director, South East Wales Education Achievement Service (EAS)



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Dermot McChrystal – Lead Director (Torfaen CBC) South East Wales Education Achievement Service (EAS)

Betsan O'Connor – Managing Director, Education through Regional Working (ERW)

Barry Rees – Vice-Lead Director (Ceredigion) Education through Regional Working (ERW)

Arwyn Thomas – Interim Managing Director, Regional School Effectiveness & Improvement Service for North Wales (GwE)

(15.30 – 15.40 – Break)

4 Regional Education Consortia: Evidence Session 2

(15.40 – 16.30)

Research Briefing

Simon Brown – Strategic Director, Estyn

Clive Phillips – Assistant Director, Estyn

Mark Champion – HM Inspector, Estyn

5 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the following business:

(16.30)

Item 6

6 Regional Education Consortia: Consideration of evidence received

(16.30 – 17.00)

Concise Minutes – Public Accounts Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 3 – Senedd

Meeting date: Monday, 13 March 2017

Meeting time: 14.00 – 16.42

This meeting can be viewed

on [Senedd TV](#) at:

<http://senedd.tv/en/3914>

Attendance

Category	Names
Assembly Members:	Nick Ramsay AM (Chair) Mohammad Asghar (Oscar) AM Neil Hamilton AM Mike Hedges AM Rhianon Passmore AM Lee Waters AM
Witnesses:	John Howells, Welsh Government Shan Morgan, Welsh Government David Richards, Welsh Government Ian Williams, Welsh Government
Wales Audit Office:	Matthew Mortlock Nick Selwyn Mike Usher
Committee Staff:	Fay Bowen (Clerk) Claire Griffiths (Deputy Clerk) Katie Wyatt (Legal Adviser)



	Owen Holzinger (Researcher)
	Jonathan Baxter (Researcher)

Transcript

[View the meeting transcript \(PDF 999KB\)](#) [View as HTML \(999KB\)](#)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed the Members to Committee.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from Neil McEvoy AM. There was no substitute.

2 Paper(s) to note

- 2.1 The papers were noted.
- 2.1 **NHS Waiting Times for Elective Care in Wales and Orthopaedic Services: Letter from the Welsh Government (6 March 2017)**
- 2.2 **Senior Management Pay: Public Services Staff Commission Report**

3 Introductory Session: Welsh Government Permanent Secretary

- 3.1 The Committee held an introductory session with Shan Morgan, the new Permanent Secretary at the Welsh Government.
- 3.2 The Permanent Secretary agreed to consider the challenges digitalisation will bring and would report back with her views.

4 Inquiry into Regulatory oversight of Housing Associations: Evidence Session 12

4.1 The Committee took evidence from John Howells, Director of Housing and Ian Williams, Deputy Director (Sector Development), Welsh Government as part of its inquiry into Regulatory oversight of Housing Associations.

5 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the following business:

5.1 The motion was agreed and was extended to cover Item 1 of the meeting on 28 March 2017.

6 Inquiry into Regulatory oversight of Housing Associations: Consideration of evidence received

6.1 The Committee considered the evidence received.

7 Coastal flood and erosion risk management in Wales: Consideration of draft report

7.1 The Committee considered the draft report.

7.2 A few minor changes were suggested and a revised version will be emailed to Members.

8 Forward Work Programme – Summer 2017

8.1 The Committee considered and discussed the summer work programme.

Agenda Item 2.1

Y Pwyllgor Cyfrifon Cyhoeddus / Public Accounts Committee

PAC(5)-10-17 PTN 1

Y Grŵp Addysg a Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Education and Public Services Group



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Nick Ramsay AM

Chair, Public Accounts Committee

National Assembly for Wales

Cardiff Bay

Cardiff

CF99 1NA

9 March 2017

Dear Mr Ramsay,

COMMUNITY SAFETY IN WALES

Thank you for your letter of 9 February concerning the Auditor General's *Community Safety in Wales* report and the Public Accounts Committee's ongoing consideration of this topic.

As Additional Accounting Officer with responsibility for this area of work, the Permanent Secretary Shan Morgan has asked me to respond to you directly.

The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children has now followed up his 7 February announcement to plenary about establishing an Oversight Group to lead a fundamental review of community safety partnership working in Wales with a written statement to the Assembly which provides further detail about the terms of the review.

A copy of the written statement *Working Together for Safer Communities* of 9 March is attached and I hope this provides the clarification you and committee members are seeking.

Yours sincerely

REG KILPATRICK

Cyfarwyddwr Llywodraeth Leol /

Director for Local Government



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

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

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Working Together for Safer Communities**

DATE **09 March 2017**

BY **Carl Sargeant AM, Cabinet Secretary for Communities & Children**

On 7 February I announced a review of the way public services work together to help make our communities safer in Wales. I will be establishing an Oversight Group to review current arrangements and to develop an ambitious shared vision for public services to work together more effectively.

The purpose of the group is to ensure the delivery of a high quality evidence-based review following the Wales Audit Office report *Community Safety in Wales*. In part, it seeks to address the issues raised in that document however, the remit of the review and the group is wider and will examine the way public services in Wales work together to help make our communities safer and to develop an ambitious, shared vision within which organisations work together more effectively.

The Oversight Group will consist of the key partners and agencies – both devolved and non-devolved – who are responsible for providing the visible and effective leadership necessary to deliver sustainable community safety partnership working across Wales.

I want the review to be ambitious in its thinking and to develop a clear vision for community safety that is not only robust, relevant and responsive, but will be sustainable in the long term.

Almost 20 years on from the ground-breaking Crime and Disorder Act 1998 that established a statutory requirement for public services to work together in partnership to improve community safety we now have an unprecedented opportunity provided by the current implementation of the Well-being of Future

Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to establish a sustainable approach to partnership working in Wales that will deliver safer communities for future generations.

The review will ensure Welsh Government is better placed – through appropriate collaboration with non-devolved agencies and partners and via the wellbeing objectives published alongside the *Taking Wales Forward* Programme for Government – to provide effective leadership to the public service in Wales that supports the local delivery of safer and more confident communities.

The review will make recommendations for:

- Establishing a strategic vision for community safety in Wales which all organisations involved understand, share and build into their national, regional and local planning;
- A sustainable approach to partnership working in Wales developed through the collection and analysis of evidence including UK-wide and international evidence about what works;
- Understanding, defining and clarifying the range of stakeholders and their leadership roles, including that of Welsh Government, Police and Crime Commissioners, Local Authorities and Whitehall Departments;
- Creating stronger, more effective and more accountable leadership from all agencies and organisations;
- Reflecting the new clarity around leadership by streamlining and simplifying governance to enhance accountability while refocusing activity so as to avoid duplication, and confusion;
- Achievement of the well being objectives published alongside the *Taking Wales Forward* Programme for Government; and
- Ensuring delivery in accordance with the Taking Wales Forward Programme for Government.

It will take account of the wider political and policy context including:

- UK and Welsh legislation and whether there is a need for further reform, including opportunities offered by the Wales Act 2017;
- UK policy, for example in prison reform and developments in youth justice and community cohesion and around Police and Crime Commissioners etc.;
- the single planning process through Public Service Boards;
- Interdependencies between devolved and non-devolved responsibilities (including Police and Crime Commissioners) and the potential for better alignment; and
- Welsh Government's proposals for the reform of local government and in particular the regionalisation of services.

I do not intend to create a group that just debates the issues but one that can bring real expertise to the area and will have the credibility to make real change. The Oversight Group will be streamlined, consisting of a small number of representatives of the key services drawn from local government, fire and rescue services, Police and Crime Commissioners, Youth Justice Board Cymru, police chiefs, probation and prison services, Community Justice Cymru and UK Government Departments. The review itself, however, will be as inclusive as possible.

I anticipate the first meeting of the Oversight Group taking place early in March followed quickly by publication of the terms of reference and questions to pose to stakeholders during a summer consultation and gathering of evidence, research and perspectives from all quarters.

While the Oversight Group will work on developing a vision for community safety in Wales, there is no reason for local work to be stalled in the meantime. Police and Crime Commissioners in Wales have shown a strong desire to work with Welsh Government and their local partners to refresh the way in which community safety is delivered in their police force area.

I am pleased to support the commitment of each Commissioner to work with the Chief Constable and local authorities to revive community safety work in their area and I would encourage all other organisations to work with them on this agenda. Progress on the ground will inform the work of the Oversight Group and contribute toward the ambitious approach I am advocating.

It is my intention for draft findings and recommendations to be published in September. This will then enable Welsh Government to host a series of regional multi-agency stakeholder events to test and finalise our ambitious shared vision for safer communities for future generations before I make an Autumn Statement to the Assembly outlining the way forward.

Agenda Item 2.2

Y Pwyllgor Cyfrifon Cyhoeddus / Public Accounts Committee

PAC(5)-10-17 PTN 2



9th March 2017

Boots Regional Office
Boots UK Limited
36 Queen St
Cardiff
CF10 2RG

Nick Ramsey AM
Committee Chair
Public Accounts Committee
National Assembly for Wales

Nicholas.Ramsay@assembly.wales

Dear Chair,

Thank you for your letter dated 7th March regarding the concerns raised at the Welsh National Assembly's Public Accounts Committee of the 6th March 2017.

We are aware of the cost to the NHS of wasted resources and our pharmacy processes are designed to minimise medicine waste at every opportunity. Therefore, I was disappointed to read Mr. McEvoy's concerns that medicines being delivered by Boots are only identified by the patient as not being required at the point of handing over the medicines. I believe this to be a misunderstanding and would like to reassure you that our processes around the delivery of medicines are robust.

In answer to your specific questions, it might be helpful to explain the process that our pharmacies are required to follow when offering our free delivery service to our vulnerable patients.

All of our pharmacy teams are required to follow a set of defined Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) relating to the safe handling and dispensing of medicines and this includes specific SOPs that cover the delivery of medicines to patients. Training for these SOPs is done at individual staff level and our pharmacists are required to sign a declaration that all of the staff working in their pharmacy have read, understood and are following the processes laid out in the SOP.

In our SOP covering the delivery of medicines, our pharmacy teams are directed to contact the patient, or their representative, before attempting delivery to;

- a) Confirm that he or she will be available to receive the delivery during the specified time
- b) Inform the patient of any owing item(s) and/or any Controlled Drug (CD) items that are due for delivery

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- c) Confirm that all the prescribed items are still required and remove any items no longer required
- d) Give any relevant clinical/counselling information.

Once the medication has been dispatched by the pharmacy team, if the delivery cannot be received by the patient, it is returned to the designated Boots pharmacy until further contact can be made with the patient.

If the pharmacy team is unable to contact the patient, or his or her authorised representative, prior to the scheduled delivery, the pharmacist must make a professional decision whether to attempt to deliver. In this situation, the pharmacist will consider the needs of the patient and the urgency with which they may need their medication.

In situations where the patient refuses a delivery, or is no longer contactable (for example, is in hospital), the medicines should be put back into stock at the originating pharmacy. The corresponding prescription forms are NOT submitted to Shared Services for payment. Therefore, no cost is incurred by the NHS for the dispensing or delivery activities we have undertaken. We normally only destroy medicines when they are date-expired or when patients have returned medicines to us.

Finally, we have not assessed the cost, volume and nature of returned at the point of delivery.

Please be assured that we take the care of our delivery patients very seriously and always try to deliver the best possible service to meet their needs.

Yours sincerely,

Andy Francis
Head of Customer Experience - Wales
Boots UK

Document is Restricted

Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru
Auditor General for Wales

Achieving improvement in support to schools through regional education consortia - a review of progress

Memorandum for the Public Accounts Committee



WALES AUDIT OFFICE
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

I have prepared and published this Memorandum for the
Public Accounts Committee in accordance with
various statutory provisions.

The Wales Audit Office staff that assisted me in preparing
this memorandum are Stephen Martin, Sian Clark, Sophie Knott
and Gareth Jones under the direction of Alan Morris
and Matthew Mortlock.

Huw Vaughan Thomas
Auditor General for Wales
Wales Audit Office
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Introduction

- 1 This memorandum provides the National Assembly's Public Accounts Committee (the Committee) with an update on the progress made by the Welsh Government, local authorities and regional education consortia in response to recommendations set out in my June 2015 report **Achieving improvement in support to schools through regional education consortia**.
- 2 In 2011, the then Minister for Education and Skills set out 20 priorities for transforming standards of achievement in Wales and said that local authorities should work in consortia arrangements to raise standards and to achieve efficiencies. Local authorities agreed to work through new consortia arrangements from September 2012, and in February 2014 the Welsh Government published a **National model for regional working**¹ (the National Model) outlining arrangements for consortia and requiring them to be either formal joint committees or an arm's length company.
- 3 Local authorities have established four regional consortia:
 - a Central South Consortium (CSC) – Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Vale of Glamorgan.
 - b South East Wales Education Achievement Service (EAS) - Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, Torfaen.
 - c Education through Regional Working (ERW) – Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Swansea.
 - d North Wales School Effectiveness Service/Gwasanaeth Effeithiolrwydd Ysgolion Gogledd Cymru (GwE) – Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Wrexham.
- 4 The consortia have different formal structures – EAS is a company limited by guarantee while the other three are Joint Committees of local authorities. They also operate differently – for example ERW operates through three regional hubs and most challenge advisers are employed by the local authority in which they mainly work; while CSC and EAS are more centralised services with staff mainly employed by a host authority on behalf of the consortium.
- 5 Achieving school improvement requires effective actions throughout a system involving schools, local authorities, consortia, the Welsh Government and other stakeholders (including diocesan authorities, colleges and other agencies). Establishing effective consortia for school improvement involves a complex set of legal, financial and political arrangements. I asked Wales Audit Office staff to undertake an early review of the arrangements to ensure that the governance and financial arrangements were appropriate. The review was undertaken in collaboration with Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales (Estyn). Estyn prepared its own report² for the then Minister for Education and Skills.

¹ Welsh Government, **National model for regional working**, February 2014.

² Estyn, **Improving schools through regional education consortia**, June 2015.

- 6 **My 2015 report concluded that after an uncertain start, the foundations for regional school improvement services were being established and there were positive signs of progress, but remaining weaknesses were hindering the development of the whole system and the effective governance and financial management of the regional consortia.** I made nineteen recommendations related to five key areas of concern. These were the need to:
- clarify the nature and operation of consortia;
 - focus on outcomes through medium-term planning;
 - develop more collaborative relationships for the school improvement system;
 - build effective leadership and attract top talent; and
 - improve the effectiveness of governance and management of regional consortia.
- 7 Estyn, in its report, also made recommendations which reflected my concerns but also commented on and made recommendations related to the operational work of consortia with schools. The Estyn report for the Minister was undertaken as an early exercise in advance of a programme of inspections of consortia which were carried out in the spring and summer terms of 2016.
- 8 Rather than undertaking its own inquiry, the previous Public Accounts Committee referred my report to the Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Committee. In autumn 2015, the CYPE Committee undertook a short inquiry on my report and the Estyn report and took evidence from representatives of the regional education consortia and the then Minister for Education and Skills. The CYPE Committee did not issue a report but its legacy report recommended that ‘Any successor Committee should maintain an active role in reviewing how effective the Regional Education Consortia are in supporting the Welsh Government’s education priorities and in particular the way in which they are increasingly being used to distribute education funding which may have previously been provided directly to local authorities’³.
- 9 In my 2015 report, I noted that the core budgets for the four consortia in 2014-15 were approximately £18.5 million, less than one per cent of the £2.63 billion that was expected to be spent through local authorities on education. During the five years to 2013-14 local authorities had reported a reduction in their net overall expenditure on school improvement of 49 per cent from £105 million to £54 million. These trends have continued with local authority net expenditure on school improvement in 2014-15 reported as £52.5 million.

3 Children, Young People and Education Committee, National Assembly for Wales, **Fourth Assembly Legacy Report**, March 2016.

The audit

- 10 Between March and June 2016, Wales Audit Office staff took part in the Estyn-led inspections of the four consortia and discussed progress with local authority councillors, senior officers, consortia leaders and staff. They also considered a range of documentary evidence, including self-assessments by the consortia. To help inform this memorandum, Wales Audit Office staff have also met with Welsh Government officials and the Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW).
- 11 The Estyn inspection reports have been published⁴ and **Appendix 2** provides a short summary of the inspection judgements. The judgements for each consortium cover five elements of their school improvement work and leadership. During spring 2016, Estyn amended the framework for the inspections to exclude judgements about outcome standards. Estyn said this was because of the 'difficulty in correlating standards at a regional level over the last three years with the development of the consortia during that period. There are several variables that will have influenced outcomes during that period and to seemingly attribute improvements or declines in performance during that period solely to the consortia would not be entirely fair'.
- 12 Nevertheless, Estyn's inspection reports do provide a commentary on performance of individual schools across each of the consortia regions. In addition, Estyn publishes an annual Chief Inspector's report⁵ which comments on trends in educational performance across Wales. Within the extensive analysis of performance, the Chief Inspector's Annual Report for 2014-15 and the consortia inspection reports note the large variations in performance between schools and local authorities. This memorandum does not seek to summarise that performance information. Rather, its focus is on progress in the areas covered by my previous recommendations.

⁴ The inspection reports are available at www.Estyn.gov.wales

⁵ Estyn, **The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales 2014-2015**, January 2016

Key findings

- 13 **Overall, there has been reasonable progress by the Welsh Government, local authorities and regional education consortia in implementing the recommendations made in my 2015 report. There has been a noticeable improvement in the arrangements for governance and financial control of the consortia. However, the consortia are still at different stages of development, as evidenced by the recent Estyn inspections, and there is variation in the progress made on the issues covered by my recommendations.**
- 14 I have set out in the rest of this memorandum a summary of findings relevant to each of the five areas of concern that framed my previous recommendations (paragraph 6). I have not made any new recommendations but would expect the Welsh Government, local authorities and regional education consortia to continue to implement in a timely manner my previous recommendations, as well as the recommendations made by Estyn in its June 2015 report and the recent inspection reports.
- 15 **Appendix 1** provides a high level summary of progress against each of my previous recommendations. This memorandum does not seek to report on progress in respect of Estyn's June 2015 recommendations. However, the results from the recent Estyn inspections provide an indication of the overall progress that is being made by each consortium and reflect the findings of the joint Estyn and Wales Audit Office inspection teams.
- 16 To assist the Welsh Government, consortia and local authorities to respond quickly to the inspection reports and my review, we have, at a stakeholder event in September 2016, highlighted key areas where insufficient progress has been made and further work should focus. At the event, the representatives of consortia and local authorities agreed to produce action plans in response to the highlighted areas and the findings of the Estyn inspection reports. The Welsh Government also plans further work in the areas where it has not yet met the previous recommendations.

The nature and operation of consortia

The regional education consortia are becoming more firmly established and accepted

- 17 In 2015, I found that there was continuing uncertainty about some aspects of the nature of the consortia and their scope. Significant differences had emerged in the arrangements for consortia and the Welsh Government had not adequately reflected the statutory role of local authorities in the National Model for Regional Working. An unpublished revision to the National Model had not completely addressed issues related to the role of consortia advisory boards and some other issues including responsibility for approving business plans. I recommended that the Welsh Government should take full account of the statutory responsibilities of local authorities when developing the role of consortia, amend the National Model to be less prescriptive about structure, and agree with local authorities clear roles and responsibilities for present and future school improvement interventions.
- 18 **My follow-up review found that the nature and operations of consortia are becoming more firmly established and consortia are being accepted as important school improvement organisations by schools themselves, local authorities and other stakeholders. While there is variation between regions, consortia are more confident in their roles and governance arrangements. Processes for consultations are more firmly established and although there are no formal agreements between the Welsh Government, local authorities and consortia about the processes for future changes, the bodies have confidence that there will be appropriate consultation and, where appropriate, ‘co-construction’.**
- 19 This is important because while consortia no longer face potential changes linked to reorganisation of the 22 local authorities, there are significant challenges ahead. These challenges include the implementation of significant changes to the curriculum in Wales, expected legislation on the arrangements for pupils with additional learning needs, and the Welsh Government policy to further develop federations of schools⁶. Where new roles are considered for consortia it will remain important that appropriate legal advice is considered to ensure that the statutory responsibilities of local authorities are appropriately recognised by the Welsh Government and consortia arrangements.

⁶ The Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014 which came into force on 22 May 2014 give effect to local authorities' powers to federate schools. Schools already have powers to federate by choice under provisions introduced in 2010. These powers have now been consolidated into the 2014 Regulations. The new regulations will allow local authorities to force the grouping of schools into federations.

- 20 Since my previous report, further adjustments were made to the National Model which better addressed the role of consortia advisory boards and necessary flexibility has been given to enable the arrangements to fit with the different consortia structures. Most of the consortia have consolidated their governance arrangements; for example, by completing the membership and clarifying the operations of board or joint committee advisory committees, sub-committees and working groups. Although the governance arrangements for each consortium are different, they are supported by and are appropriate for their local authorities. However, the pace of improvement has varied. The variation is noted in inspection reports; 'These elected members and officers have worked effectively together to develop this strategic vision and put in place the appropriate governance structure to drive this forward' (CSC). 'The consortium has been slow to ensure that the governance arrangements align with the expectations of the Welsh Government's National Model for Regional Working. For example, the Advisory Board and the management board were only constituted in the last year' (GwE).
- 21 In North Wales, a lack of capacity hampered progress in developing GwE as an effective school improvement service during the first 18 months of its operation. The inspection report notes that senior leaders in the six local authorities and GwE's senior management team have since revised their approach and addressed some of the issues and 'as a result, schools, local authorities and elected members have a growing, if fragile, confidence in the consortium's capability to deliver an effective school improvement service.' Growing confidence regionally is also reflected in increased acceptance nationally, for example, the consortia managing directors are now full members of ADEW and this acceptance will assist the relationships between consortia and local authority directors and contribute to collaborative approaches to policy.
- 22 In 2015, I found there was some confusion among Welsh Government officials, local authority councillors and directors, and consortia staff about whether consortia were commissioned by local authorities or jointly provided services. This year's fieldwork found that the Welsh Government and local leaders were clear about the position – the three joint committee consortia are shared services whilst the company consortium is a commissioned service.

To focus on outcomes through medium-term planning

There has been mixed progress in medium-term planning by consortia and the Welsh Government

- 23 In 2015, I found that the uncertain position regarding possible local government mergers and the government priority to seek rapid improvement in educational outcomes had contributed to a desire to establish formal consortia very rapidly. The regional consortia produced 2014-15 business plans quickly and the Welsh Government assessed that all the plans had weaknesses. The Welsh Government's desire to inject pace into the new arrangements had affected the rigour of some processes, such as the quality of business planning, and contributed to a lack of openness within the system. I recommended that as any possible local authority re-organisation would not have been fully implemented until 2020, the Welsh Government and regional consortia should develop three-year plans for the further development, scope, and funding of regional consortia linked to appropriate strategic objectives.
- 24 **This year I found the Welsh Government had improved the flexibility of arrangements for business planning and three of the consortia have adopted three-year business plans. However, the development of these plans has been hampered by uncertainty about policy and financial arrangements as a consequence of the National Assembly elections and the referendum on membership of the European Union. For example, in respect of the Welsh Government's plans for local government re-organisation, which have recently become clearer following on from the publication in September of the new Programme for Government⁷.**
- 25 Most of the consortia have adopted a three-year planning timetable. The Estyn inspection report for EAS notes 'The business plan has a suitable emphasis on medium-term objectives...' The inspection report for ERW notes 'Over the last two years, the region has developed its business planning from a one year model to a three-year medium-term rolling plan. This plan is helping senior leaders to approach to school improvement in a more strategic and sustainable way'. However all consortia found that the annual funding horizon from the Welsh Government and uncertainty over strategic developments made medium-term planning difficult, despite the greater security arising from the Welsh Government's decision to reconsider reducing the number of local authorities.
- 26 In 2014, the Welsh Government published **Qualified for Life** which contained its strategic objectives for education for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales to 2020. This high level overview draws on information from more detailed documents including **Improving Schools**, published in 2012, which set out plans for the schools element of education to 2015. It was based on the proposals the then Minister announced in 2011. Following cabinet appointments in June 2016, the First Minister set out nine agreed education priorities in a letter to the new Minister⁸.

⁷ Welsh Government, **Taking Wales Forward 2016-2021**, September 2016

⁸ Welsh Government, letter from the First Minister to the Cabinet Secretary for Education, 15 June 2016.

While these priorities are broadly consistent with Qualified for Life, they include a policy to reduce infant class sizes, a review of the current policy on surplus school places and other matters which will require further more detailed policy development and may have an impact on the role of consortia and the use of grant funding.

- 27 The Welsh Government, local authorities and consortia all accept that funding through short-term grants and late announcements about the level of or guidance on grants has hindered planning by consortia and schools, and discussions are taking place to seek to improve arrangements. The Welsh Government hopes it can work towards November as the final deadline for announcing grants guidance. The Welsh Government is also considering moving towards greater focus on outcomes from the use of grants rather than using detailed stipulations about how funds may be spent.
- 28 In my recent report on the **Financial resilience of local authorities in Wales 2015-16**⁹, I noted that 'The annual budget setting and late changes to the indicative figures are a consistent criticism that local authorities have made of the Welsh Government and this is seen by them as a key stumbling block to authorities being able to develop a longer-term focus on planning budgets and implementing transformational work. However, whilst it is clear that late changes to budgets did cause authorities real difficulties in finalising spending plans, the direction of travel on funding of local services in the current period of austerity is well understood and authorities should still be able to plan the likely impact of funding cuts.' I noted that a number of authorities needed to improve their use of financial modelling to assess the likely impacts on financial plans and required savings for different scenarios. This also applies to education consortia who should use such financial modelling to continue to develop their medium-term financial plans.
- 29 Since the fieldwork for my previous report on the consortia, the Well-being of Future Generations Act has come into force. The Welsh Government is committed to applying the sustainable development principle and working towards the well-being goals in its policies. Welsh Government officers have met with ADEW, local authority directors of education and the consortia managing directors, and have been considering how to apply this approach to consortia and school improvement. There is a clear link between improving school performance and several of the well-being goals, although, at present, it is too soon to see how the Act is influencing policy development in relation to school improvement. The Act will require the Welsh Government, local authorities (and therefore the consortia) to more explicitly address the achievement of the national well-being goals and, when set, local well-being objectives in their future business plans.

9 Auditor General for Wales, **The Financial resilience of local authorities in Wales 2015-16**, August 2016.

To develop more collaborative relationships

There has been significant progress in developing collaborative arrangements and greater trust among consortia and between consortia and the Welsh Government

- 30 In my 2015 report I said that the co-production of the National Model had not led to the development of collaborative relationships between the Welsh Government, consortia and local authorities in which strengths, weaknesses, developments and problems are shared, and the best solutions sought. The lack of confidence between partners had contributed to defensiveness in the relationships which had hindered progress. For example, the **review and challenge**¹⁰ process was a potentially helpful process. But, in practice, defensiveness and lack of openness by consortia had reduced the effectiveness of this process. I recommended changes to the review and challenge process, greater sharing of practice amongst consortia and greater recognition of the interdependency of all partners in the school improvement system.
- 31 **My follow-up review in 2016 found there has been significant progress in developing collaborative arrangements and greater trust among consortia and between consortia and the Welsh Government. Revised arrangements for 'review and challenge' are not yet in place but were due to be. Consortia are developing arrangements for sharing practice and taking 'lead responsibility' for new developments.**
- 32 I found that all four consortia, ADEW and the Welsh Government believe the relationships are significantly better. Improved communications and consultation about developments illustrate increased recognition of the inter-dependency of all partners in contributing to school improvement. GwE noted that 'Managing Directors and Welsh Government meet regularly to agree on consistent approach and strategic direction to key developments... This has enabled a much increased level of joint understanding and shared ownership across the consortia.'¹¹
- 33 Following my report and the Estyn review in 2015, regional consortia held a two-day event for their senior leadership. This event marked a change to a more collaborative relationship between the consortia and began a process in which consortia share their practice and have taken on lead roles in the development of practice in many areas. For example, EAS challenge advisers have engaged in joint training with the CSC. EAS also leads on support for Welsh Baccalaureate, GwE and EAS have worked together on their arrangements to implement a self-improving school system. ERW has taken a lead in a shared consortia programme to encourage and support recruitment of teachers, and ERW has linked with GwE to commission a report on rural poverty and its impact on education. Following an open procurement exercise, the Welsh Government awarded the four regions a contract to develop a programme for the Standardisation of Teacher Assessment. The EAS takes the lead on contract management.

¹⁰ The Welsh Government organised termly 'Challenge and Review' meetings with each consortium at which the Minister or senior government officers challenged the progress of consortia.

¹¹ GwE evidence provided for the 2016 inspection.

- 34 Consortia leaders stressed that there was potential for a higher level of cross regional collaboration but the progress made and the improved trust between consortia and the Welsh Government illustrate an improvement in the culture between the consortia and Welsh Government.
- 35 I previously found the review and challenge process by which each consortium was held to account by the Welsh Government illustrated a hierarchical approach to accountability rather than recognising that consortia and the elected assembly members and councillors at national and local level shared a mutual interest in all elements of the school improvement system working effectively. Challenge and review meetings were not held in spring or summer 2016 due to the Estyn inspections but will be held with the new Minister in autumn 2016. The intention is that the meetings will be a two-way process. The autumn meetings will be holding regional consortia to account for performance and progress against their action plans following the recent Estyn inspections, and also regional consortia holding the Welsh Government to account for their role. The spring and summer meetings will be more focussed on considering development priorities and inspection outcomes. This framework is capable of meeting the recommendation to develop a more collaborative but robust comprehensive 'system review' approach in which all partners in the system share progress, challenges and issues openly.

To build effective leadership and attract top talent

Some actions have been taken but no national strategic approach has yet developed to build effective leadership and attract top talent

- 36 In 2015, I reported that regional consortia, local authorities and the Welsh Government had all found difficulties in recruiting to senior leadership roles for education and we found there had been limited action to address this. I recommended that the Welsh Government, local authorities and consortia should improve capacity and capability in the system, improve the attractiveness of education leadership roles, support the professional development of leaders, and ensure that appropriate performance management arrangements are in place.
- 37 **This year, I found that while there have been improvements in the performance management arrangements for consortia leaders and some training through ADEW, there is not yet a national strategic approach to attracting talent and developing the leadership for school improvement. Consortia are using secondments of senior school leaders to draw in new senior staff but recognise the barriers to recruitment that exist.**
- 38 When we undertook fieldwork for the 2015 report, consortia had a number of their senior managers in 'interim' or temporary positions or very newly in post. This year we found that most senior positions were filled with permanent appointments and there was a good degree of stability in leadership roles. Some consortia had also increased their capacity in key areas; for example, EAS had strengthened their capacity for managing their financial and human resources responsibilities. However, consortia managing directors all acknowledged that succession planning was difficult as many senior posts in consortia and local authorities have lower salary levels and less security than school based posts. The secondment of headteachers and other senior school leaders into challenge adviser and senior positions is seen as one effective way of helping encourage interest in permanent consortia roles as well as helping to develop expertise in creating a self-improving school system.
- 39 The Welsh Government has supported consortia to make improvements to capacity and supported a WLGA initiative working with ADEW and the Staff College for all ADEW members including the consortia managing directors to strengthen capability (planned before the Auditor General for Wales report) and a further course is being considered for the next tier of local authority and consortia leaders. However, there were mixed views about the effectiveness of the courses for senior consortia leaders. Managing directors felt there would be benefit in training specifically for consortia leaders which included both training in specific skills/ knowledge and leadership skills.

- 40 While some developments, such as the ADEW course, have taken place there is not an agreed strategy for the development of consortia leadership. In July 2016, the Welsh Government made a commitment to the development of a Leadership Centre for education leaders¹², although, it is not yet clear what this will involve. Consortia and ADEW recognise that there are recruitment issues for leadership posts in consortia and local authorities and hope they will be able to work with the Welsh Government to develop a strategy to address the issues. The Leadership Centre may form a key part of the strategy.
- 41 There have been some actions to address weaknesses in the performance management arrangements for some senior consortia leaders identified in my 2015 report. The accountability arrangements for all managing directors and senior consortia staff are now clear. Performance review arrangements for consortia senior staff now also include identification of professional development needs. However, there has not been any strategic co-ordination across the four consortia to consider whether there can be a shared approach to meeting some of the professional development needs.

¹² The Minister announced this in a statement to a plenary session of the National Assembly for Wales on 12 July 2016.

To improve the effectiveness of governance and management of regional consortia

All consortia have made reasonable progress with their governance and management arrangements, but the quality of progress in specific areas is variable

42 In 2015, I reported that while continuing progress was being made, regional consortia had not developed fully effective governance and financial management arrangements. I made recommendations to local authorities and their regional consortia covering eight issues:

- use of self-evaluation and governance reviews;
- performance management including business planning and value for money;
- financial management;
- risk management;
- overall scrutiny arrangements;
- openness and transparency of decision making;
- addressing potential conflicts of interest; and,
- development of robust communications strategies.

43 **This year I found that all consortia have made reasonable progress with their governance and management arrangements. However, the quality of progress in specific areas is variable and weaknesses remain particularly in respect of the assessment of value for money, risk management and some scrutiny arrangements.**

Self-evaluation and governance reviews

44 There have been improvements in self-evaluation in all consortia, although, the quality is still variable and not all joint committee or board members are rigorous enough in challenging self-evaluation information presented to them. Some consortia are using Annual Governance Statements, reviews of governance and internal audit reviews more effectively, but not all. The variation in progress is noted in the Estyn inspection reports: 'the current self-evaluation report generally provides a fair and balanced view of ERW's overall performance' (ERW), however, in GwE 'the self-evaluation report is generally too descriptive and lacks sufficiently robust evaluation of the effectiveness of the consortium's work' Each consortium is developing different arrangements for internal service reviews. The arrangements at EAS are the most established and comprehensive ([Exhibit 1](#)).

Exhibit 1 – Service review arrangements at EAS

Each element in the business plan for EAS is subject to a periodic review using a process known as FADE (Focus, Analysis, what to Do, and Evaluation). This process, introduced in 2015, has recently incorporated an evaluation of value for money. FADE reviews are carried out by those responsible for the activity concerned but subject to quality oversight by senior managers. The inspection report for EAS notes 'The FADE model provides a methodical framework for accountability, allows the service to modify intervention in a more responsive way, and is contributing effectively to the development of a culture of continuous improvement'.

Performance management including business planning and value for money

- 45 Business planning processes have improved in all consortia, but there are still some weaknesses in the identification and use of appropriate outcome measures and targets. The inspection report for CSC notes: 'The consortium's current business plan sets out well the strategic goals for the consortium within a three year vision, as well as its high level goals for the current year. These take good account of both the Welsh Government's school improvement priorities and those for the region.' However, the inspection report for ERW notes 'the business plan and related documentation do not set out clearly enough how the impact of ERW's work is to be evaluated and how progress against ERW's priorities will be tracked and measured'. Business plans for each consortium include appendices setting out any specific plans at a local authority level, although, there is no consistent approach to the level of detail provided.

Financial management

- 46 Financial control is more robust in all consortia with improved financial reporting and monitoring. However, not all consortia cover all elements of school improvement expenditure (especially where significant expenditure is managed through local authorities). As noted above, three of the consortia have developed three-year business plans but only one, EAS, has begun to develop a medium-term financial plan alongside the business plan to identify the resources that they will use to achieve their business plans objectives. That other consortia do not have robust medium-term financial plans reflects a weakness also present in some local authorities¹³.

¹³ In my August 2016 report on **The Financial resilience of local authorities in Wales 2015-16**, I noted that 'in a minority of local authorities the financial planning framework and the corporate plan objectives are not fully integrated'.

- 47 Nevertheless, consortia are all giving greater consideration to value for money than previously, partly in response to challenge from councillors. ERW is beginning to use an approach derived from the National Audit Office¹⁴ using seven principles to inform judgements about value for money. Some consortia have placed emphasis on assessing value for money on pupil outcomes at the end of key stage 4 without giving sufficient consideration to the whole range of activity that the consortia deliver. The GwE inspection notes: 'to date no formal framework has been developed to assess the wider value for money that GwE provides. There is not a consistent view across all stakeholders of how the value for money of GwE's activities can be measured, with a considerable emphasis being placed on key stage 4 level 2+¹⁵ results over other business plan objectives.'

Risk management

- 48 All consortia have made some progress in developing their arrangements for risk management and for reporting on risks. However, progress is varied and in most consortia, the risk registers and arrangements are still not sufficiently robust and therefore not contributing appropriately to decision making. For example, the inspection report for ERW notes: 'Over the last year, ERW has refined and formalised its arrangements for identifying and managing its risks. The process is appropriate and includes relevant actions to mitigate against the risks'. However, the inspection report for EAS notes: 'the formal identification and management of risk in the company are at an early stage of development.'

Overall scrutiny arrangements

- 49 There have been improvements in the arrangements for scrutiny for school performance by individual local authorities and this is noted in the inspection reports. However, progress has been slower in putting in place arrangements for effective scrutiny of the overall consortia performance in some regions. Nevertheless, for one consortium, ERW, the local authorities have established effective co-ordination of scrutiny arrangements. The inspection report notes 'ERW has also helped the six local authority's scrutiny chairs work more closely together through regional conferences. These events are helping chairs to build an effective common approach to the scrutiny of school performance and ERW's work across the region.' The company consortium, EAS, as a commissioned service, has different arrangements and has established an audit and risk committee, although, it is too soon to assess its effectiveness. Other consortia have made less progress in establishing arrangements for overall scrutiny. For example, while CSC has worked well with individual local authority scrutiny committees, no clear joint or co-ordinated scrutiny arrangements have been put in place and the inspection report notes '...scrutiny chairs remain unclear about which aspects of the consortium's work they can and cannot scrutinise directly.' The CSC consortium has indicated that it will be taking action to progress its arrangements.

¹⁴ National Audit Office, **Analytical Framework for Assessing Value for Money**, 2013

¹⁵ This is the 'Level 2 threshold including English or Welsh first language and mathematics'. To achieve this learners must have gained level 2 qualifications in English or Welsh first language and in mathematics as part of their threshold.

Openness and transparency of decision making

- 50 Most of the issues identified in 2015 in relation to the openness and transparency of decision-making have been rectified and all consortia now make joint committee/board minutes and papers available publicly. However, it is not always easy to find the information or to get advance meeting dates from the consortia websites. We identified a small number of examples where decisions were made by sub-groups and not always reported appropriately.

Addressing potential conflicts of interest

- 51 All consortia have now recognised the potential conflicts of interest where staff work for more than one body, for example a private education consultancy and a consortium, and have put procedures in place to expect disclosure of potential conflicts. Consortia will need to ensure that their procedures are followed consistently.

Development of robust communications strategies

- 52 All consortia have developed their communications arrangements for their stakeholders and some consortia have developed specific communications strategies. Communication is generally most effective with schools. Some consortia have been less effective in developing their communications with councillors.





Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summary of progress
against my June 2015
recommendations

Appendix 2 – Estyn inspections of
regional education
consortia during 2016

Appendix 1 – Summary of progress against my June 2015 recommendations

Exhibit 2 indicates the extent to which my recommendations have been implemented by the Welsh Government, local authorities and regional education consortia (as relevant).

-  Green indicates that implementation of the recommendation has been completed or is substantially complete and on track for full completion.
-  Yellow indicates that most relevant organisations are making reasonable progress but actions are not yet complete across the majority of bodies.
-  Amber indicates that some progress has been made by most relevant organisations but significant further progress is required.
-  Red indicates that there has been no or limited progress in addressing the recommendations by all or up to half of the organisations.

Four of the 19 recommendations have been fully actioned while eight showed reasonable progress although not completely implemented. Some progress had been made by most organisations on six other recommendations, although, significant further progress is still needed. There were no recommendations where no progress has been made, although, one recommendation has not yet been tested.

Exhibit 2 – Progress against my June 2015 recommendations

Recommendation	Progress rating ¹⁶
R1 To clarify the nature and operation of consortia	
1.1 The Welsh Government should take full account of the statutory responsibilities of local authorities, and take appropriate legal advice, when considering changes to the roles it expects of local authorities and the regional consortia.	Not yet tested.
1.2 The Welsh Government should update the National Model to be less prescriptive on the structure under joint committees or boards whilst maintaining a focus on outcomes.	Green
1.3 The Welsh Government and local authorities should develop and agree a consistent approach to the role of regional consortia and the Welsh Government in school improvement interventions so that all parties are clear what they should be involved in and responsible for.	Yellow
1.4 Local authorities should clarify whether consortia services are jointly provided or are commissioned services (services provided under joint-committee arrangements are jointly provided services and are not commissioned services).	Green

¹⁶ The performance rating is based on an overall assessment of progress made by Welsh Government, local authorities and regional education consortia (as appropriate) to address individual recommendations

Recommendation	Progress rating
R2 To focus on outcomes through medium-term planning	
2.1 As any possible local authority re-organisation will not be fully implemented until 2020, the Welsh Government and regional consortia should develop three-year plans for the further development, scope, and funding of regional consortia linked to appropriate strategic objectives.	Amber
R3 To develop more collaborative relationships for the school improvement system	
3.1 The Welsh Government should develop the present 'Review and Challenge' approach (where the Welsh Government hold regional consortia to account) to establish a more collaborative but robust comprehensive 'system review' approach in which all partners in the system share progress, challenges and issues openly.	Yellow
3.2 Regional consortia should develop improved arrangements for sharing practice and supporting efficiency (for example, one consortium could take the lead on tackling an issue or have functional responsibility for the development of a policy).	Yellow
<p>3.3 The Welsh Government, local authorities and regional consortia should recognise the interdependency of all partners fulfilling their school improvement roles and agree an approach to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information sharing and consultation about developments related to school improvement; • developing collaborative relationships of shared accountability; and • undertaking system wide reviews, and an alignment of the understanding and position of regional consortia across all Welsh Government relevant strategies. 	Green
R4 To build effective leadership and attract top talent	
4.1 The Welsh Government should work with local authority leaders to improve capacity and capability in the system to support strategic development and effective governance.	Amber
4.2 The Welsh Government and local authorities should collaborate to improve the attractiveness of education leadership roles to attract the most talented leaders for the school improvement system.	Amber
4.3 Local authorities should collaborate to support the professional development of senior leaders and to ensure appropriate performance management arrangements are in place for senior leaders.	Yellow

Recommendation	Progress rating
R5 To improve the effectiveness of governance and management of regional consortia local authorities and consortia should:	
5.1 improve their use of self-evaluation of their performance and governance arrangements and use this to support business planning and their annual reviews of governance to inform their annual governance statements;	Yellow
5.2 improve performance management including better business planning, use of clear and measurable performance measures, and the assessment of value for money;	Amber
5.3 make strategic risk management an integral part of their management arrangements and report regularly at joint committee or board level;	Amber
5.4 develop their financial management arrangements to ensure that budgeting, financial monitoring and reporting cover all relevant income and expenditure, including grants funding spent through local authorities;	Yellow
5.5 develop joint scrutiny arrangements of the overall consortia as well as scrutiny of performance by individual authorities, which may involve establishment of a joint scrutiny committee or co-ordinated work by local authority scrutiny committees;	Amber
5.6 ensure the openness and transparency of consortia decision making and arrangements;	Yellow
5.7 recognise and address any potential conflicts of interest; and where staff have more than one employer, regional consortia should ensure lines of accountability are clear and all staff are aware of the roles undertaken; and	Green
5.8 develop robust communications strategies for engagement with all key stakeholders.	Yellow

Appendix 2 – Estyn inspections of regional education consortia during 2016

The inspections took place as follows:

- CSC: 29 February – 11 March 2016
- GwE: 18 – 29 April 2016
- EAS: 16 – 27 May 2016
- ERW: 13 – 24 June 2016

The timing of the inspections means that CSC was still in the financial year 2015-16 and drafting its forward plans for 2016-17 whereas ERW was nearly three months into 2016-17 when the inspection took place.

During spring 2016, Estyn decided that the inspections would not include judgements about outcome standards. Estyn said the reason for the change 'relates to the difficulty in correlating standards at a regional level over the last three years with the development of the consortia during that period. There are several variables that will have influenced outcomes during that period and to seemingly attribute improvements or declines in performance during that period solely to the consortia would not be entirely fair'.

The Inspections provided judgements for aspects of the quality indicators for the quality of support for school improvement and the quality of leadership and management (Exhibit 3). The judgements reflect the findings of the joint Estyn and Wales Audit Office inspection teams.

Exhibit 3 – Summary of Estyn inspection judgements

Provision	CSC	GwE	EAS	ERW
How good is the support for school improvement?	Adequate	Adequate	Good	Good
Leadership and management				
Leadership	Good	Adequate	Good	Good
Quality improvement	Good	Adequate	Good	Adequate
Partnership working	Good	Adequate	Good	Good
Resource management ¹⁷	Adequate	Unsatisfactory	Good	Good

¹⁷ The indicator for resource management covers management of resources and value for money.

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Document is Restricted

Teacher's professional learning and education survey

Background

This document provides a summary of responses received to the teacher's professional learning and education survey conducted by the Outreach team, as part of the Children, Young People and Education Committee's inquiry into Teachers Professional Learning and Education, and the Public Accounts Committee's inquiry into Regional Education Consortia.

The survey targeted those working within the education profession in Wales, and was promoted online through the Assembly's social media accounts, by sharing with relevant groups and representative organisations, e-mailing schools directly, through the Assembly's Education newsletter and promoting during Assembly Education sessions on the Estate and across Wales.

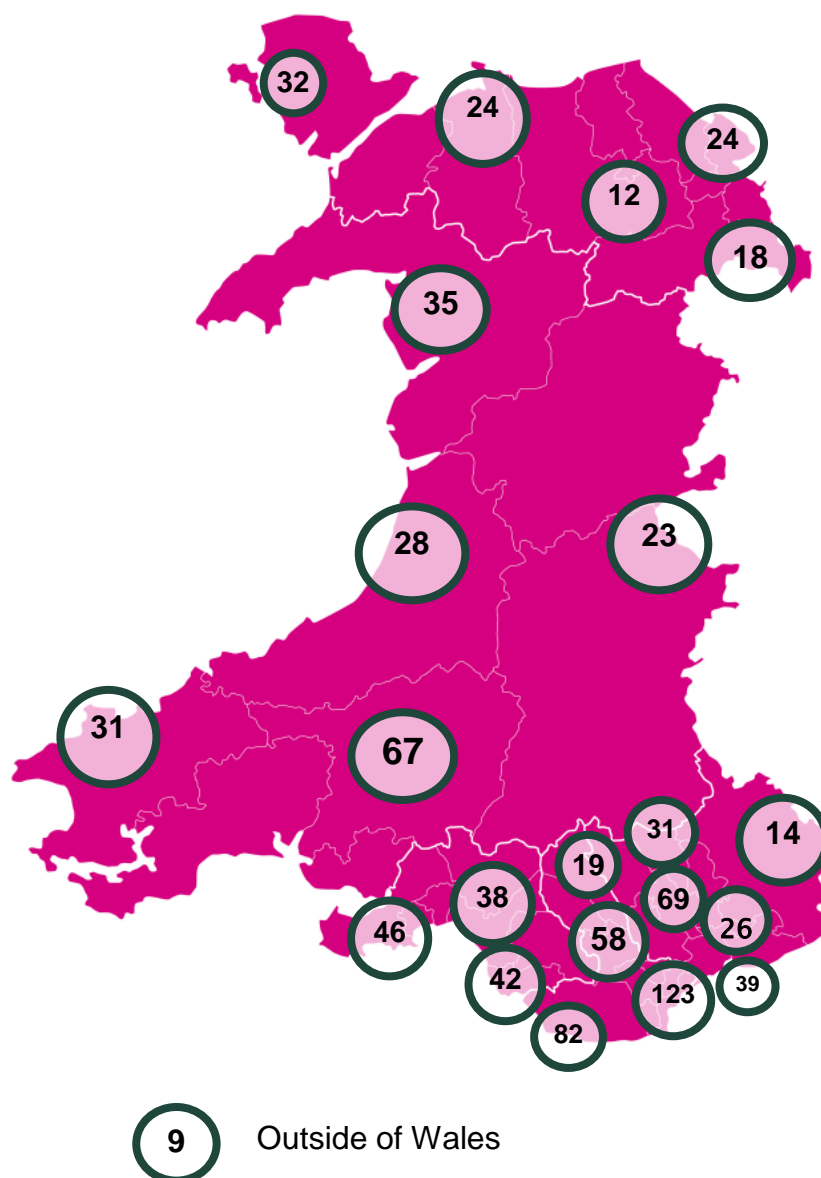
Survey Analysis

837 Total number of survey responses received

- **54.17%** of responses received from **classroom teachers**
- **18.32%** of responses received from **other senior managers in school**
- **16.57%** of responses received from **school governors**
- **11.05%** of responses received from **teaching assistants**
- **5.66%** of responses received from **other education professionals**
(including supply teachers, trainers and lecturers)

Number of survey responses broken down by local authority area

Blaenau Gwent: 31
 Bridgend: 42
 Caerphilly: 69
 Cardiff: 123
 Carmarthenshire: 67
 Ceredigion: 28
 Conwy: 24
 Denbighshire: 12
 Flintshire: 24
 Gwynedd: 35
 Isle of Anglesey: 32
 Merthyr Tydfil: 19
 Monmouthshire: 14
 Neath Port Talbot: 38
 Newport: 58
 Pembrokeshire: 31
 Powys: 23
 Rhondda Cynon Taf: 31
 Swansea: 46
 Torfaen: 26
 Vale of Glamorgan: 26
 Wrexham: 18
 Outside of Wales: 9



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

“I am fully aware of the ongoing and upcoming changes to the curriculum” (total number of responses: 834)

- Strongly disagree: 9.59%
- Disagree: 26.73%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 14.50%
- **Agree: 38%**
- Strongly agree: 11.15%

“I feel well prepared for the ongoing and upcoming changes to the curriculum” (total number of responses: 834)

- Strongly disagree: 22.66%
- **Disagree: 46.88%**
- Neither agree nor disagree: 17.02%
- Agree: 11.99%
- Strongly agree: 1.43%

“I think that initial teacher education provides teachers with the skills and knowledge they will need throughout their career” (total number of responses: 832)

- Strongly disagree: 17.42%
- **Disagree: 43.87%**
- Neither agree nor disagree: 21.63%
- Agree: 15.74%
- Strongly agree: 1.32%



“I feel that initial teacher education prepares and encourages career long learning”
(total number of responses: 831)

- Strongly disagree: 13.11%
- **Disagree: 39.10%**
- Neither agree nor disagree: 26.71%
- Agree: 19.25%
- Strongly agree: 1.80%

“The current continuing professional development programme provides school staff with the skills and knowledge they need to effectively do their jobs” (total number of responses: 831)

- Strongly disagree: 21.66%
- **Disagree: 39.47%**
- Neither agree nor disagree: 21.66%
- Agree: 16.24%
- Strongly agree: 0.96%

Do any of the following issues restrict your ability to take up training opportunities?

- **Workload: 620 (77.69%)**
- Cost of supply teachers to cover: 491 (61.52%)
- Awareness of training opportunities: 324 (40.60%)
- Availability of supply teachers to cover: 262 (32.83%)
- Distance of travel to training location: 140 (17.54%)
- Other:



- Cost of courses: 58 (7.26%)
- Availability of training: 31 (3.88%)
- Not being released to attend training: 27 (3.38%)

Other comments or recommendations made in relation to changes to the curriculum and continuing professional development:

University engagement: “Not enough involvement at University level and missed opportunities to engage teacher training as part of a CPD delivery model. Hub University can research impact, trial with trainees and share out to schools, reducing cost, developing school to school input and promoting reflective practice.”

Teaching Assistants: “At the moment I believe there is not enough training available for Teaching Assistants. Teachers have their degree courses to teach them the skills to "manage" children in their classes, however us Teaching Assistants are somehow expected to know these skills without the appropriate training. Addressing this right at the start of a Teaching Assistant's career would mean a great deal.”

Teaching Assistants: “CPD for teaching assistants is non-existent!”

Special schools: “Special schools need extra inset days to ensure enough CPD. We need to do lots of basic medical, behavioural and other essential recaps each year, leaving time for CPD in short supply. More access needs to be provided to courses, and far more course providers should be sought out by education authorities.”



A/SLN: “I believe that all initial teacher training courses should have modules covering aspects of ALN. Many teachers appear to have little or no knowledge of the difficulties this can bring both to a mainstream class and specialist education setting.”

A/SLN: “More awareness of SEN is needed in teacher training and in professional development.”

Relevance of training: “Initial training was completely irrelevant to an actual teaching day. Agree the theories and theorists are important on how children learning but this is not then used in practise. The current cpd is determined by the senior leadership teams and in larger schools many staff have little to no opportunity.”

Relevance of training: “Initial teacher education needs to be more robust and realistic. Schools need to play a bigger part in the training and recruitment stages as many teachers leave the profession after a few years due to pressure of workload and stress.”

Pace of change: “Not given priority. Schools don't get enough funding for training. New A Level and GCSE courses rushed through and no textbooks ready to use. Hardly any training. Teaching pupils blind, with hardly any resources.”

Pace of change: “Most teachers I speak to are exhausted by the pace of change education has had to cope with in recent years. This is a major contributor to the excessive workload teachers are currently trying to cope with.”



Pace of change: “We needed a longer period of time before the new curriculum was launched. The A level and GCSE changes were massive and even most exam boards did not have enough time to support the teachers with resources. When they did provide resources it was a rushed job or they realised the resources months after the new spec had started. I have worked every holiday to prep but I still feel that I am trying to catch up.”

Pace of change: “Can we have more time before new gcse welsh full course is implemented in Wales. We do not feel ready, or properly trained to implement it.”

Pace of change: “Each curriculum change places a huge burden on teachers, meaning a complete review and recreation of all resources, support is not adequate and guidance tends to be neither timely nor clear.”

Pace of change: “The Donaldson Review commands widespread support. Implementation should be at a realistic pace, to be followed by a sustained period of stability without further political intervention.”

Pace of change: “Changes to the curriculum are too rapid and insufficient funding is provided by the Welsh Government to train teachers on how to deliver these changes from the bottom up.”



Funding and availability: “Schools need to be funded and training needs to be available if teachers are going to be able to effectively carry out and embed changes.”

Funding and availability: “If it's going to be implemented properly, the government needs to invest in training it's teachers by giving schools extra money to allow teachers extra time to prepare schemes of work, lessons, resources and assessments.”

Funding and availability: “Changes and CPD require funding. For the last few years we have seen school budgets slashed. How can we deliver on new curriculum without the sufficient funds to support them? If the Government want education to improve they MUST INVEST in it!”

Funding and availability: “All teachers should be provided with cpd budget. It should be mandatory for schools to allow a minimum of one cpd opportunity chosen by the teacher each year. Curriculum changes should be accompanied by funding to allow teachers the time to effectively prepare schemes of work and lesson plans.”

Funding and availability: “Teaching assistants are left behind with training because of funding. Schools just don't have the resources to allow staff time off for courses. This is unfair. TA's can't develop and children then suffer when they are not up to date on the latest ideas and education.”

Funding and availability: “Due to cut backs to school budgets and loss of staff there isn't enough members of staff at school to cover classes for teachers to attend courses and not enough money to pay supply teachers. A very sad and sorry situation.”



Need for support: “Love the idea of the new curriculum, and keen to implement, but more guidance is needed. Particularly in regard to DCF and preparing schools for RELIABLE digital resources, including wifi.”

Need for support: “Although I have had training and studied Success Futures (I have also met Graham Donaldson), I feel that there is a guessing game at the moment as to how the new curriculum will be taught.”

Need for support: “The support for teachers regarding the new curriculum has been woefully inadequate. Schools, teachers and governing bodies are, from my experience, very underprepared for these considerable changes.”

Workload: “Workload is the biggest factor. While staff can go on a training course there is little time for them to embed it in practice due to high workload. Most teachers are overstretched and have little time to put ideas into practice.”

Workload: “Teachers want to develop professionally, but get stuck in a rut due to workload.”

Workload: “As a governor I am concerned at the extremely long hours the teachers are working. I see merit in the new curriculum but do not want to see exhausted teachers trying to deliver it.”



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements

“I have a good understanding of the role of regional education consortia” (Total number of responses: 766)

- Strongly disagree: 111 (14.49%)
- Disagree: 187 (24.67%)
- Neither agree nor disagree: 158 (20.62%)
- **Agree: 260 (33.94%)**
- Strongly agree: 51 (6.65%)

“I understand the improvements regional education consortia are seeking to achieve” (Total number of responses: 767)

- Strongly disagree: 118 (15.38%)
- Disagree: 235 (30.63%)
- Neither agree nor disagree: 143 (18.64%)
- **Agree: 240 (31.29%)**
- Strongly agree: 31 (4.04%)

“I am aware of the support that the regional education consortia provides to my school to improve” (Total number of responses: 765)

- Strongly disagree: 131 (17.12%)
- Disagree: 190 (24.83%)
- Neither agree nor disagree: 141 (18.43%)
- **Agree: 255 (33.33%)**
- Strongly agree: 48 (6.27%)



“I understand the support that the regional education consortia provides to me in my role in my school.” (Total number of responses: 761)

- Strongly disagree: 175 (22.99%)
- **Disagree: 222 (29.17%)**
- Neither agree nor disagree: 150 (19.71%)
- Agree: 175 (22.99%)
- Strongly agree: 39 (5.12%)

“The support that the regional education consortia provides to my school helps us to improve.” (Total number of responses: 763)

- Strongly disagree: 143 (18.74%)
- Disagree: 189 (24.77%)
- **Neither agree nor disagree: 251 (32.89%)**
- Agree: 149 (19.52%)
- Strongly agree: 31 (4.06%)

“I understand the role of regional education consortia in the development of teachers at all levels.” (Total number of responses: 763)

- Strongly disagree: 154 (20.18%)
- **Disagree: 251 (32.89%)**



- Neither agree nor disagree: 190 (24.90%)
- Agree: 148 (19.32%)
- Strongly agree: 20 (2.62%)

“My regional education consortia provides effective continuing professional development to teachers and teaching assistants at all levels.” (Total number of responses: 763)

- Strongly disagree: 185 (24.24%)
- **Disagree: 228 (29.88%)**
- Neither agree nor disagree: 226 (29.61%)
- Agree: 105 (13.76%)
- Strongly agree: 19 (2.49%)

Other comments or recommendations made in relation to Regional Education Consortia

Cost and availability of training provided: “A lot of the courses and resources come at too high a cost for large numbers of staff to benefit.”

Cost and availability of training provided: “There needs to be far more courses on offer and far more CPD provided. Not enough effective or relevant courses on offer.”



Cost and availability of training provided: “Welsh Medium training opportunities not yet fully developed.”

Suitability of support: “Conferences within consortia omit ALN or just paid a little lip service within such events. Communication is poor between Special schools and consortia.”

Suitability of support: “I am in a green school. Very little contact with consortium. There is little bespoke support provided. It's all very general.”

Suitability of support: “I believe that funds should go directly to schools. Advice from the consortia has sometimes proved to be at odds with advice from Estyn; very worrying!”

Suitability of support: “Their input and support for quality assurance and data can be contradictory and conflict with Estyn's observations.”

Suitability of support: “Inconsistencies amongst the consortia, inconsistencies with Estyn. Generally, there are too many inconsistencies and differing opinions that I sometimes feel I can't do right for doing wrong.”

Suitability of support: “Little training for TAs with regards to additional needs given that we work so very closely with these groups.”

Suitability of support: “Regional consortia seem to be yet another level of bureaucracy, between Welsh Government and Local Authority and ultimately



schools. Personally I feel finances would be better suited to providing additional staff in schools rather than creating another tier of bureaucracy. In a small country like Wales, why can't Welsh Government bypass LA/Consortia and deal direct with schools?"

Awareness: "I have no idea who they are or how they benefit the school."

Awareness: "I have not received any direct support from the consortia, nor have I been made aware of the support available from senior management."

Awareness: "I do not feel they effectively communicate training activities."

Links with other institutions: "Not enough cross institution work. Research done in university can support but links not made"

Links with other institutions: "FE College not fully included in local consortium for sharing practice. Feel a little left out by the whole regional consortia set up in terms of CPP/sharing good practice. Seems our college management have some involvement, but not felt at teaching level."

Challenge vs support: "Consortia are too focused on challenge and don't really know how to deal with support. Especially at the senior level...Categorisation is a shambles and should be scrapped (especially flawed downgrading on moderation with no real explanation and by people who have never set foot in the school."



Challenge vs support: “They are people who have very little knowledge or concern for the stresses and strains that teaching staff are under and are completely out of touch with modern teaching practice. I welcome help and support, but my experience of the consortia is that of an increased workload and unrealistic targets being set.”

Challenge vs support: “I feel that the regional consortia tend to take the inspector role instead of helping schools and supporting.”

Challenge vs support: “Too many layers doing similar things, resulting in significant pressure stress and challenge upon schools. Imbalance between support and challenge, too many people challenging...and not really able to provide significant support.”

Challenge vs support: “education consortia tend to find faults rather than support teacher’s development.”

Challenge vs support: “ERW needs to support schools and not see them as a tool to constantly criticise and remind that whatever they do it is never good enough. Poor morale in ERW, especially Ceredigion.”

Challenge vs support: “Don't feel they give enough help and advice. They are not hands on enough.”





The Public Accounts Committee
Inquiry into Regional Education Consortia
Tuesday 21 March 2017

1. The NASUWT welcomes the opportunity to submit written evidence to the National Assembly for Wales Public Accounts Committee (PAC) inquiry into Regional Education Consortia.
2. The NASUWT is the largest teachers' union in Wales representing teachers and school leaders.

GENERAL COMMENTS

3. The NASUWT offers the comments and observations which follow on the inquiry into Regional Education Consortia (the Consortia) under scrutiny by the PAC. In particular, the Union will focus on the issues of governance and financial management as well as the openness and transparency of the operation of the four Regional Education Consortia in the context of the Welsh Government's *National model for regional working*.¹
4. The NASUWT has been involved in discussions and engagement negotiations with the Consortia since their inception. The Union has had a very mixed experience with the four Consortia and believes that there

¹ <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/140217-national-model-for-regional-working-en-v2.pdf>

is still a lack of understanding of the role of the Consortia both within the Consortia themselves and amongst teachers and schools.

5. The NASUWT, as a key stakeholder, has attempted to work closely with the Consortia to ensure that the outcomes of their work are to the benefit of schools and teachers. The Union has sought to initiate true partnership working with the Consortia but has been faced with a lack of understanding of the meaning of partnership. Meetings initially took the form of briefing sessions, with the Consortia simply updating the workforce unions as to their activities.
6. More recently, the NASUWT experience with the Consortia has become more positive, with their role and the role of the workforce unions being better understood.
7. Progress has been made with the Education through Regional Working (ERW) Consortium in west and central Wales and the Central South Consortium (CSC) when discussing model policies on pay, performance management and capability procedures for use across the consortium region.
8. Although the Consortia have responsibility for ensuring the provision of specialist Human Resources (HR) support to schools in accordance with the appendix to the *National model for regional working: revitalising people management in schools* (Welsh Government Guidance document no: 170/2015),² difficulties remain over the Consortia's understanding of the role of local authorities as the employers, and that any model policies, regardless of whether or not agreement has been reached at consortium level must then be subject to the normal local authority protocols and procedures.
9. These processes are less well established and understood in the School Effectiveness and Improvement Service for North Wales (GwE) and the Education Achievement Service (EAS) in south-east Wales. In GwE,

² <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150424-national-model-for-regional-working-en.pdf>

these functions remain with the individual local authorities, whilst in EAS there is a south-east Wales grouping of HR officers that sit alongside the Consortium, with some officers taking a dual role. This has, in some cases, led to confusion and delays over responsibility.

10. Whilst the NASUWT acknowledges that some progress has been made in the engagement with the Consortia over regional working, there remain significant issues regarding the openness, transparency and funding of the Consortia.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

11. The NASUWT has experienced considerable difficulty in finding the minutes and reports of meetings, statements of accounts and dates of board meetings of the Consortia and, although each consortium has its own website, there is no consistency in the reporting of meetings and minutes.

12. The *National Model for Regional Working* states that:

‘Normally notice of meetings of the joint committee will be given on the consortium’s website and the meetings will be open to the public...’³

13. Dates of meetings and agenda items are available for the CSC Joint Education Service but these are found on the Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council (RCT) website and not on the CSC website. These web pages and documents can only be found easily by using external search engines and not from within the RCT website itself. This information is hosted by RCT as the lead authority in the region; similar information regarding CSC cannot be found on any other websites of the other constituent local authorities.
14. Likewise, the information about ERW meetings is hosted on the Pembrokeshire County Council’s website. This is, to some extent, replicated on the City and County of Swansea and the Powys County

³ Ibid

Council websites, but not on those of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, Carmarthenshire County Council and Ceredigion County Council.

15. The EAS website contains minutes of board meetings, statements of accounts and the previous year's business plan but does not include the dates and locations of forthcoming meetings. The company board meetings are not open to the public. Only very limited information regarding EAS can be found on the websites of the constituent local authorities.
16. Information provided by the Welsh Government to the NASUWT in 2014 showed that the budget for the regional consortia should have been as set out in Table 1.
17. The NASUWT has found marked discrepancies between these figures and those reported by the individual consortium. The budget for ERW had been set by the Welsh Government at £5.322 million for 2014-15. However, the statement of accounts for ERW put the contributions from member authorities at £267,000.⁴
18. ERW's business plan for 2017-19 states that the total income from the constituent local authorities amounts to £250,000 and their total funding including Welsh Government grant funding is £500,000. This is at odds with the Wales Audit Office *Memorandum for the Public Accounts Committee – Achieving improvement in support to schools through regional education consortia – a review of progress*, November 2016, which states:

*'...the core budgets for the four consortia in 2014-15 were approximately £18.5 million...'*⁵

⁴ Education through Regional Working Statement of Accounts 2014/2015
https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/objectview.asp?object_id=12247&language=

⁵ <https://www.wao.gov.uk/system/files/publications/Reg-education-review-memo-2016-english.pdf>

Table 1

Required local authority minimum contributions for 2014-15, based on the 2014-15 mainstream schools SSA

Region	Local Authority	SSA Formula 2014-15 Mainstream Schools Sector distribution	Percentage distribution
North Wales	Isle of Anglesey	422,621	2.3%
	Gwynedd	740,733	4.0%
	Conwy	652,994	3.5%
	Denbighshire	623,793	3.4%
	Flintshire	933,484	5.0%
	Wrexham	782,631	4.2%
	Sub total	4,156,256	22.4%
ERW	Powys	786,048	4.2%
	Ceredigion	414,511	2.2%
	Pembrokeshire	759,950	4.1%
	Carmarthenshire	1,141,069	6.2%
	Swansea	1,370,773	7.4%
	Neath Port Talbot	850,288	4.6%
	Sub total	5,322,639	28.7%
Central South	Bridgend	862,092	4.6%
	The Vale of Glamorgan	799,973	4.3%
	Rhondda Cynon Taf	1,531,657	8.3%
	Merthyr Tydfil	359,863	1.9%
	Cardiff	1,917,619	10.3%
	Sub total	5,471,204	29.5%
South East	Caerphilly	1,169,666	6.3%
	Blaenau Gwent	417,511	2.3%
	Torfaen	600,536	3.2%
	Monmouthshire	481,642	2.6%
	Newport	934,254	5.0%
	Sub total	3,603,609	19.4%
Wales		18,553,708	100.0%

19. By contrast, the CSC Budget for 2016-17 sets the local authority contributions at £4.195 million.⁶

20. The Regional Education Consortia also receive grant funding from the Welsh Government. Part of this money can be kept by the Consortia for

⁶ Central South Consortium report for Joint Committee 14th March 2017
<http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/CentralSouthConsortiumJointEducationService/2017/03/14/Reports/AgendaItem5ReportoftheTreasurer.pdf>

administrative purposes and to finance their own activities. The remaining amount of money, which represents the large majority, is delegated to schools. However, in none of the reports that the NASUWT has found on any of the Consortia are these amounts broken down with sufficient clarity to provide the whole picture of the funding of the Consortia.

21. As stated previously, the NASUWT has experienced considerable difficulty in accessing the reports and budgets of the Consortia. These are not published by StatsWales in the same way that school budgets and local authority finance is reported. The information is difficult to find, inconsistent and opaque.
22. Over the period of 2013 to 2016 StatsWales has reported the Education revenue expenditure, by authority and service.⁷
23. This shows that the total amount spent by local authorities on school improvement has fallen from £54.137 million in 2013-14 to £44.174 million in 2015-16 (Table 2 below).
24. The changes to individual local authority spends are also marked, with Conwy County Borough Council increasing their spend by 115% whereas the Isle of Anglesey County Council has reduced theirs by 85%.
25. The NASUWT maintains that the changes and variations in spending are very difficult to understand in the context of the work of the Consortia. In particular, the figures for the ERW region do not shed any further light on the funding arrangements in that area. It may be that the comments from the Auditor General for Wales in the June 2015 report, *Achieving improvement in support to schools through regional education consortia*, provides some explanation:

‘We found that many local authorities have ceased to have ‘head of school improvement’ posts during 2011-13 but have since re-instated similar roles to provide the local authority with

⁷ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Local-Government/Finance/Revenue/Education/educationrevenueexpenditure-by-authority-service>

a lead officer to interact with the relevant senior or principal challenge adviser for the consortium.⁸

Table 2

Education revenue expenditure, by authority and service 2013-2016

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2013 to 2016	
Local Authorities	Total School improvement	Total School improvement	Total School improvement	Change	% Change
	£ ,000s	£ ,000s	£ ,000s	£ ,000s	
Isle of Anglesey	1318	1066	202	-1116	-85
Gwynedd	1596	2444	1296	-300	-19
Conwy	626	1409	1348	722	115
Denbighshire	2713	2558	2763	50	2
Flintshire	3360	2243	2625	-735	-22
Wrexham	967	1553	1762	795	82
GwE Total	10580	11274	9996	-584	-6
Powys	5217	5442	2225	-2992	-57
Ceredigion	3184	2892	2033	-1151	-36
Pembrokeshire	1086	1255	1344	258	24
Carmarthenshire	3372	3247	1988	-1384	-41
Swansea	2970	2026	2242	-728	-25
Neath Port Talbot	7251	7921	8353	1103	15
ERW Total	23079	22783	18186	-4893	-21
Bridgend	1307	1128	1092	-215	-16
Vale of Glamorgan	913	1458	942	29	3
Rhondda Cynon Taf	3012	3145	3031	19	1
Merthyr Tydfil	973	97	458	-515	-53
Cardiff	2723	2286	2002	-721	-26
CSC Total	8929	8114	7525	-1404	-16
Caerphilly	6615	6381	5179	-1436	-22
Blaenau Gwent	1382	960	685	-697	-50
Torfaen	1135	995	680	-455	-40
Monmouthshire	1350	1095	1086	-264	-20
Newport	1067	936	837	-230	-22
EAS Total	11550	10367	8467	-3082	-27
Total Unitary Authorities	54137	52537	44174	-9963	-18

⁸https://www.audit.wales/system/files/publications/regional_education_consortia_report_english.pdf

26. The NASUWT firmly believes that much more needs to be done to improve the openness and transparency of the workings of Regional Education Consortia and that lessons must be learnt before this model is extended to other local authority services.
27. The NASUWT does not accept the assertion of the Welsh Ministers that the Regional Education Consortia model presents a good example of collaborative working between local authorities.



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