

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

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

Cyllido Ysgolion yng Nghymru | School Funding in Wales

SF 11

Ymateb gan: Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Merthyr Tudful

Response from: Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Areas of focus	Comments:
The sufficiency of provision for school budgets, in the context of other public service budgets and available resources	<p>The level of schools balances across Wales suggests that at the moment school funding is not sufficient to meet the delivery in schools since an increasing number are experiencing deficit budgets.</p> <p>It would be helpful for there to be a comparison between the levels of funding provided to schools and funding levels provided to Health, Social Care, and other public services for there to be some sense of comparative spend.</p> <p>There would need to be an agreed basis for making comparisons.</p>
The extent to which the level of provision for school budgets complements or inhibits delivery of the Welsh Government's policy objectives	<p>The recent roll out of grant funded initiatives to support projects within schools whilst helpful in some ways and for some schools can also be restrictive as the level of match funding required is often a barrier to schools and LAs being able to draw down the funding. E.g. Business Manager Grant, School Based Supply Grant</p> <p>These initiatives could be helpful in delivering efficiencies across the school system however they often take time to bed in and to be proven to be effective before savings can be realised; therefore a longer term approach where match funding is only required from year 3 onwards may help more schools and LAs to take up these opportunities and for WG policy objectives to be met through these initiatives.</p>
The relationship, balance and	Schools Funding within the LA is based on the delegated ISB as determined by the Formula Funding

<p>transparency between various sources of schools' funding, including core budgets and hypothecated funding</p>	<p>Allocation within the LAs Fair Funding Scheme of Delegation. The detail of this is published in the S52 annually and each school receives their own detailed Formula Allocation.</p> <p>In addition to this there are centrally held budgets spent as part of the wider Gross Schools Expenditure which include services delivered in schools for the benefit of pupils but which the LA assume financial responsibility for i.e. enhanced support, special needs advisory teachers, special tuition, behaviour support etc. This information is shared with the Schools Forum as part of the annual budget setting.</p> <p>Schools also receives grant funding directly from WG (PDG based on Jan 16 PLASC which is unfair and inequitable across all schools as not all pupils will be funded and some schools will be funded for pupils they no longer have)</p> <p>From CSC (RCSIG based on Jan 19 PLASC for the 2019/20 financial year) which results in grant funding being out of alignment with RSG (Based on the previous year's PLASC i.e. Jan 18 for 19/20) and leads to very late grant allocations being notified to schools and LA in March each year.</p> <p>A consistent approach between the data sets for all grants and RSG core funding would be helpful.</p> <p>Hypothecated funding is transparent and is transferred through for the appropriate use. It would be helpful if all targeted funding for schools was hypothecated to allow the local authority to determine the best way to pass this money through to schools.</p>
<p>The local government funding formula and the weighting given to education and school budgets specifically within the Local Government Settlement</p>	<p>The Education IBA does not currently cover the cost of delivering the education services within the local authority.</p> <p>In 2018/19 the additional funding provided by the LA above IBA was circa £2 million</p> <p>It would be interesting for there to be a national comparison carried out between total Education SSA across Wales and the total Education net revenue spend as reported via the Section 52 to see if this is an issue across Wales as a whole.</p>

<p>Welsh Government oversight of how Local Authorities set individual schools' budgets including, for example, the weighting given to factors such as age profile of pupils, deprivation, language of provision, number of pupils with Additional Learning Needs and pre-compulsory age provision</p>	<p>The S52 Parts 1-3 is submitted annually as part of the budget estimates return (RAs) and budget outturn return (ROs).</p> <p>It is unclear what analysis of the S52 detail is carried out. There is benchmarking across LAs on the RA S52 overall but not on the detailed S52 Parts 1-3. i.e. there is no comparison of AWPU, components that make this up, % funding per pupil, place led funding for SEN, notional SEN funding i.e. 5% or 10% etc. and other factors such as SLAs, buildings, lump sums etc.</p> <p>A comparison of the make-up of the formula funding would be helpful in assessing the equity and efficiency of delegated funding arrangements across Wales any may identify areas of commonality leading to further analysis e.g. how much are schools spending on buildings R&M across Wales in comparison to their funding levels? A consideration of PTRs being funded through Formula Allocations as compared to actual PTRs within LAs and schools could be considered for further analysis and links to WG policy objectives etc.</p>
<p>Progress and developments since previous Assembly Committees' reviews (for example those of the Enterprise and Learning Committee in the Third Assembly)</p>	<p>Unsure</p>
<p>The availability and use of comparisons between education funding and school budgets in Wales and other UK nations</p>	<p>The S52 Net Education Revenue comparison across Wales is useful but there is no comparator to England, Scotland, Northern Ireland etc.</p> <p>Also, within the current S52 benchmark data across Wales there is no detail regarding what budgets make up these areas and a sense of whether this is a consistent picture of this across Wales - the lack of this information effects meaningful comparisons being made.</p>