

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 17

Ymateb gan: Cyngor Caerdydd
Response from: Cardiff Council

Areas of focus	Comments:
The sufficiency of provision for school budgets, in the context of other public service budgets and available resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Cardiff school budget exceeds IBA for schools and has done so for many years, which could suggest that funding is insufficient.- Cardiff represents a significant proportion of the overall growth in school budgets over the last few years, however this has only been achieved via severe cuts to other services and not as a result of additional funding via the RSG.- Post-16 grant is insufficient with many schools subsidising post-16 provision with pre-16 funding.- Secondary schools in particular are experiencing significant financial challenges, potentially suggesting that funding is inadequate.- Critical grant funding has been subjected to significant cuts in recent years, further reducing the level of funding for schools.- ALN funding is not sufficiently recognised, particularly in the context of a significant growth in need and changes in legislation. As an example, Cardiff's expenditure in relation to support for pupils in mainstream settings with complex needs, has grown exponentially over the last six years, with the cost having nearly tripled and now totalling circa £10m. The RSG has not increased in recognition of pressures such as this.
The extent to which the level of provision for school budgets complements or inhibits delivery of the Welsh Government's policy objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The policy regarding MEAG/Travellers suggests that there is a conflict between WG objectives and the funding available to support that objective.- The way in which the Pupil Development Grant has been distributed in the current financial year creates a divergence between the funding and the pupils who need it. Would suggest that this

	<p>doesn't meet with policy objectives around disadvantaged pupils.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The role of regional consortia in distributing and controlling grant funding, particularly when considering the level of grants retained by regional consortia and not being passed to local authorities to be targeted as effectively as it could be. - ALN policy objectives are not sufficiently reflected in the settlement, particularly in light of the significant growth in demand in this area. - The way in which local authority contributions to regional consortia do not sufficiently recognise need within each individual authority. For example, the CSC contribution is based on the school IBA, rather than a cost driver such as number of schools. Therefore, individual authorities are effectively subsidising the services being received by other authorities. - A review of the way in which post-16 funding is distributed is required, particularly reconsideration of the split between school and FE provision, which results in significant fluctuations year on year.
<p>The relationship, balance and transparency between various sources of schools' funding, including core budgets and hypothecated funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a lack of transparency around grants passed to regional consortia for distribution. A significant amount is retained or passed directly to individual schools without the LA having an understanding of the funding being distributed. - A significant proportion of funding is hypothecated, restricting the flexibility in its use and not enabling the funding to be locally targeted at the right priorities. - There is potentially an issue between the balance of grants between primary and secondary schools. A significant proportion is channelled via primary schools and a large proportion of these grants have been in place for many years. Consideration needs to be given to whether it is now appropriate to build these into schools base revenue budgets.
<p>The local government funding formula and the weighting given to education and school budgets specifically within the Local Government Settlement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consideration needs to be given as to whether or not the most appropriate cost drivers are being used to distribute funding for schools. For example, should number of schools be a consideration as well as the number of pupils within a local authority boundary. - There is a lack of recognition of ALN and general level of need in the formula. This is a particularly

	<p>significant cost driver affecting some authorities much more than others.</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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There should be more local control given to each authority to distribute its school funding. - For example, should there be a relaxation of the 70% rule (for funding to be distributed on the basis of pupil numbers), enabling LAs to distribute funding as they see fit. - This should reduce the annual fluctuations in individual school funding that happen each year, simply because numbers may change slightly. In some cases, schools with stable numbers receive budget decreases simply because other schools have increased their numbers. - Instead of 70% on pupil numbers, perhaps more weighting should be given to ALN.
<p>Progress and developments since previous Assembly Committees' reviews (for example those of the Enterprise and Learning Committee in the Third Assembly)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The level of hypothecation remains high, despite repeatedly calls for more funding to be passported via the RSG to individual local authorities. - There remains insufficient medium term budget information to be able to facilitate robust medium term financial planning for schools. The recent decision to 'freeze' PDG funding figures provided some much needed stability for schools should there be further consideration regarding the provision of three year budgets to schools to enable more robust and effective medium term financial planning.
<p>The availability and use of comparisons between education funding and school budgets in Wales and other UK nations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Benchmarking information in Wales is useful, but comparisons can be difficult because of inconsistencies in data capture/classification between authorities, as well as the geographical differences between LAs making comparisons less valuable. - In addition, there is insufficient recognition of the different responsibilities that a faith school, for example, hold in comparison with community schools. - Unsure to what extent comparison with England is possible, in the context of the growth of academies and the different operating models.