Welsh Assembly Government

Consultation - summary of responses

Education and Lifelong Learning Statistics 2010

Date of issue: **16 February 2011**

Contents

Introduction

The Statistical Directorate within the Welsh Assembly Government carried out a User Consultation to assess if Education and Lifelong Learning Statistics are meeting the needs of Users and to identify any areas of unmet demand.

The Consultation, which ran between the 8 September and the 30 November 2010, received 40 completed consultation questionnaires. 21 of these were from Post-16 Education Statistics Users and 19 from Schools Statistics Users. There were 32 individual respondents, 8 of which filled in both Post-16 and Schools questionnaires. 4 of the questionnaires were completed in Welsh and all were received electronically.

We would like to thank all those who took the time to respond to this Consultation - this report summarises all the responses received. A separate report will be published, in June 2011 which lists the planned changes to our outputs and actions that are based on this feedback.

There are five Annexes to this report:

Annex A provides the Numeric Data collected in the Consultation Questionnaire;

Annex B provides a summary of comments from Post-16 Education Statistics Users submitted in the Consultation Questionnaire;

Annex C provides a summary of Comments from Schools Statistics Users submitted in the Consultation Questionnaire;

Executive Summary

There were 32 respondents to the User Consultation:

- 8 from Local Authorities
- 6 from Users within the Welsh Assembly Government
- 6 from Sector Skills Councils
- 4 from learning providers (2 colleges, 1 school and 1 WBL provider)
- 2 from teaching unions
- 2 from registered charities
- 2 from other public organisations
- 1 professional body
- 1 member of the public

Key points:

- The most common uses of Educational and Lifelong Learning Statistics were for Inclusion in Reports, General Background and Benchmarking (page 5).

- Data Tables were found to be the most useful type of output, followed by Online Tables e.g., StatsWales Tables (page 6).

- In most cases the comments about quality of data reflected that users were confident in the quality of our statistics (page 7).

- There were mixed views on the value of commentary, maps and graphs, reflecting the breadth of customers we support, their different uses for our statistics, and their different levels of expertise (page 7).

- In terms of level of detail of the information we publish, there were a number of suggestions for more detailed data to be routinely published on both the schools and post-16 sides. (page 7)

- Overall, users rated the Relevance (71 per cent) and Clarity (67 per cent) of our outputs most highly and Timeliness most negatively (17 per cent) (page 8). However, this varied considerably by groups of output, which will help us as we look at the further development of individual outputs (Chapters 2 and 3).

- Users were also asked to provide any specific comments they had on our outputs and on the post-16 side in relation to a number of specific issues. These are shown in summary in Annexes B and C, and will be useful to us as we develop our plans for the future.

Chapter 1: Results of survey

Responses to Question 2: 'What do you currently use Education and Lifelong Learning Statistics for?'

This question was multiple choice, the options were:
- Research
- Inclusion in Reports
- Briefing
- Benchmarking
- General Background
- Policy Development
- Decision Making
- Funding Allocations
- Monitoring
- Do not use
- Other

Chart 1: Results for Question 2
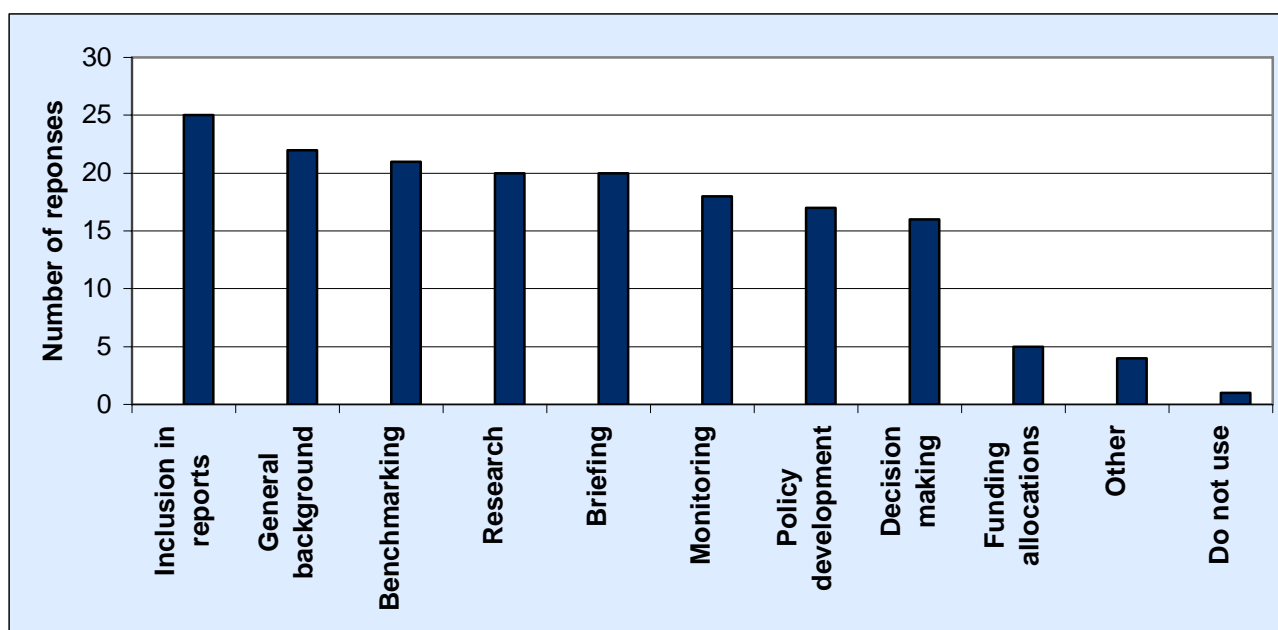
The most common uses of Educational and Lifelong Learning Statistics were for Inclusion in Reports, General Background and Benchmarking.

Users were asked to provide some specific examples, to aid our understanding of the uses made of our statistics. These included use by Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) within their annual Sector Skills Assessments and Labour Market Intelligence. Local authorities and individual providers (schools, colleges, WBL providers) use the data to compare and benchmark performance. Other examples included to feed into other publications and the development of other estimates, and in strategy and policy development and monitoring.

Further detail on the example uses of our statistics is given in Annexes B and C.

Responses to Question 3: 'We publish these data in a number of formats through www.wales.gov.uk/statistics and as online data tables through www.statswales.wales.gov.uk. What type(s) of output do you find most useful?'

This was a multiple choice question, the options were:
- Data Tables
- Charts
- Bullet Points/Headlines
- Statistical Bulletins/Releases
- Online tables e.g. StatsWales
- Commentary
- FE/WBL Benchmarking tool
- Schools Core Data Pack
- Other
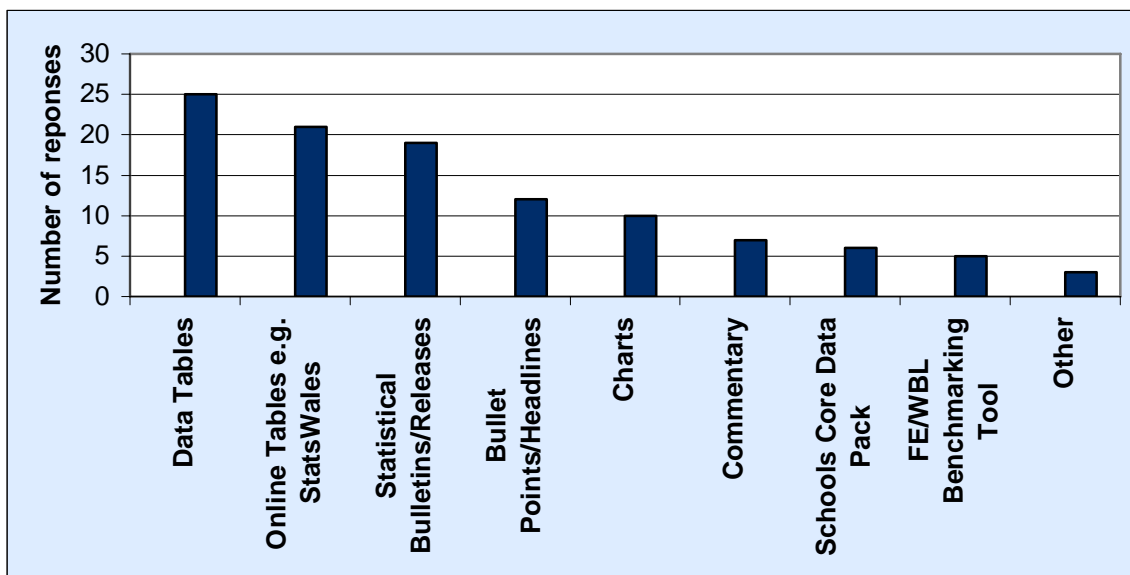
Chart 2: Results for Question 3

Chart 2 shows that Data Tables were the most popular form of outputs, receiving 25 responses. Of the outputs available on both the post-16 and schools questionnaire (Benchmarking Tool and Data Packs are sector specific), Commentary was considered the least useful output, receiving 7 responses.

Responses to Question 4: 'We would be interested in understanding, in general, whether our statistical outputs provide you with the information you need in an appropriate style and format. For example:

- **Do you have the information you need about the *quality* of the data to enable you to use the statistics with confidence and in an informed way?**
- **Does the *commentary* and *analysis* that are published aid interpretation of the statistics they refer to?**
- **Are *graphs*, *tables* and *maps* used in the most effective way?**
- **Through our statistical outputs and StatsWales tables are you happy with the level of detail of the statistics provided?'**

Comments given here reflected the breadth of customers we support, their different uses for our statistics, and their different levels of expertise.

Not in all cases, but in most cases users who commented were confident in the *quality* of the data.

There were mixed views on the value of *commentary and analysis*. Some commented that they found it valuable in helping their understanding of the data, others that they do not use it at all or use it rarely.

Similarly, many supported the use of *graphs and maps* to illustrate the data, others did not make use of them.

A number of specific suggestions for more detailed statistics to be published were given, on both the schools and post-16 side. For example the pupil characteristics release to be made available at local authority level and for more detailed apprenticeship data to be routinely published.

Detailed responses are shown in Annexes B and C

Responses to Question 5

Users were asked to rate groups of outputs against each of the following statements (with 1 being Excellent and 5 being Poor):

    i)   The relevance of the statistical products?
    ii)   The accessibility of the statistical products?
    iii)   The clarity of the statistical products?
    iv)   The comparability of the statistical products?
    v)   The timeliness of the statistical products?

The responses for each individual group of outputs are shown within Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, and highlight the variation in opinions from one set of outputs to another. This level of detail is highly valuable to use as we develop our outputs. However, it is also useful to look at the overall ratings for Education and Lifelong Learning Statistics to get a feel for how are outputs are perceived in general:-
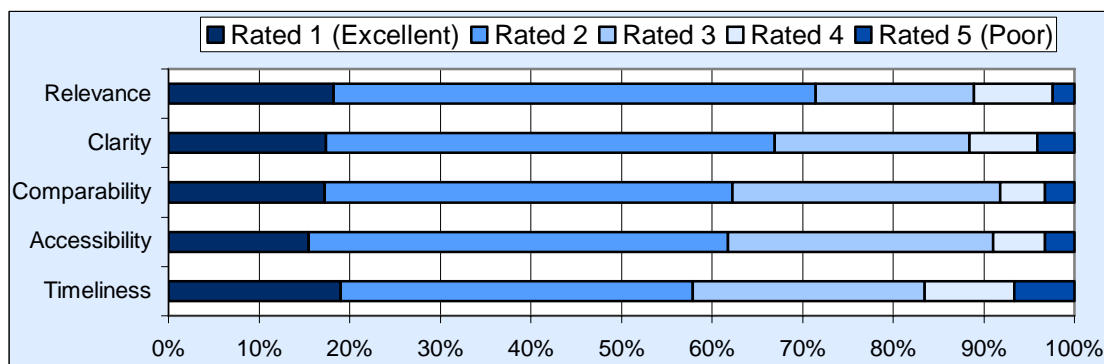
Defining a positive response as those with a rating of 1 or 2; Relevance of the outputs received the highest positive response (71 per cent) followed by their Clarity (67 per cent).

Timeliness of our outputs received the most negative response (17 per cent, including 7 per cent poor).

Responses to Question 6

Question 6 asked for any specific comments on individual groups of outputs. These detailed comments are shown in Annexes B and C, and again are useful to us as we consider the future development of each output.

Responses to Question 7: 'If we need to, can we contact you about your response to this questionnaire?'

90 per cent of respondents were happy to be contacted about their response.

Responses to Question 8: 'How would you like us to keep you informed of developments in this area?'

This was a multiple choice question where respondents could give more than one answer. The options were:
- Internet site
- Email
- Newsletter
- Other

Email was the most favoured option by users to be kept informed of developments receiving 62 per cent of responses, followed by the internet site and newsletter with 21 and 17 per cent respectively. There were no suggestions for other options.

Responses to Question 9: 'We maintain an electronic distribution list, to whom we email our latest outputs. Would you like to be added to this list to receive copies of our outputs?'

62 per cent of respondents wanted to be added to our mailing list for Education and Lifelong Learning outputs.

Responses to Question 10: 'The Welsh Assembly Government intends to publish individual responses to this questionnaire with accompanying name and address (or part of address) of its author as it is felt this gives credibility to the consultation exercise.

Do you wish to be identified as the author of your response?'

67 per cent of respondents wished to be identified as the author of their response.

Chapter 2: Post-16 Education Statistics Users

Responses to Question 5a: 'If you use any of the following *further education, work based learning and community learning* statistical outputs:

- **Analysis of Participation in Post-16 Education and Training**
- **Further Education, Work-based Learning and Community Learning in Wales (releases)**
- **Further Education, Work-based Learning and Community Learning in Wales (volume)**
- **Learning Network Analysis**
- **National Comparators for Further Education and Work-based Learning**
- **Staff at Further Education Institutions**

how do you rate…'

Users were asked to rate each of the following statements (with 1 being Excellent and 5 being Poor):

i)   The relevance of the statistical products?
ii)   The accessibility of the statistical products?
iii)   The clarity of the statistical products?
iv)   The comparability of the statistical products?
v)   The timeliness of the statistical products?

Chart 3: Results for Question 5a [16 respondents]
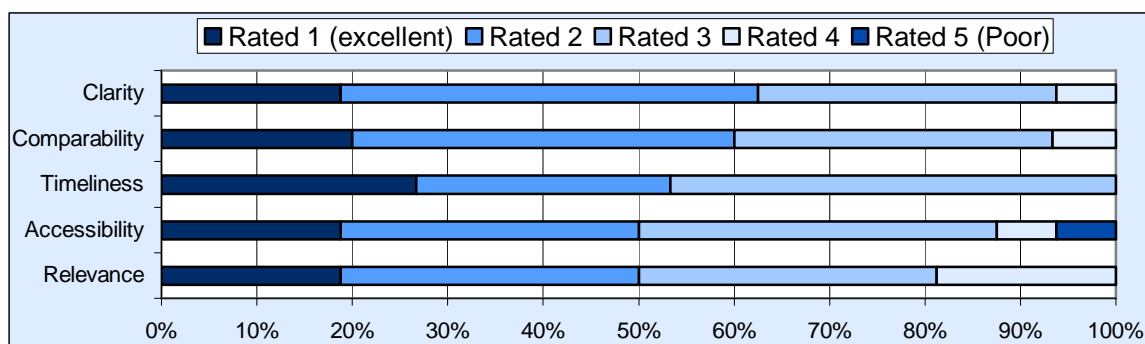
Defining a positive response as those with a rating of 1 or 2; Clarity received the highest positive response with 63 per cent, followed by Comparability (60 per cent) and Timeliness (53 per cent). Accessibility and Relevance of statistical products received the most negative responses (13 and 19 per cent respectively). There was one poor response (rating 5) related to Accessibility.

Question 6a asked if users would like to record any comments on these outputs and in relation to a number of specific issues around the subject area. A full list of the comments received is available in Annex B.

A number of these indicated support for the continuation of, and indeed the expansion of the Further Education staff record into the wider post-16 learning sector. There were also a number of suggestions, particularly from Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) for more detailed data e.g., apprenticeships to be routinely published. There were also requests for data on learners with a visual impairment, and deaf students.

Responses to Question 5b: 'If you use any of the following *higher education* statistical outputs:

- **Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) in Wales: Longitudinal Survey**
- **Destinations of Students Gaining Qualifications from Higher Education Institutions**
- **Destinations of Students Completing Initial Teacher Training Courses**
- **Higher Education Performance Indicators**
- **Higher Education Student Enrolments and Qualifications Obtained at Higher Education Institutions in the UK (Headline summary of HESA data)**
- **Initial Teacher Training**
- **Staff and Finance of Welsh Higher Education Institutions**
- **Students in Higher Education Institutions**
- **University and Colleges Admissions Service Statistics**
- **Welsh in Higher Education Institutions**
-

how do you rate…'

Users were asked to rate each of the following statements (with 1 being Excellent and 5 being Poor):

i)   The relevance of the statistical products?
ii)   The accessibility of the statistical products?
iii)   The clarity of the statistical products?
iv)   The comparability of the statistical products?
v)   The timeliness of the statistical products?

Chart 4: Results for Question 5b [8 respondents]
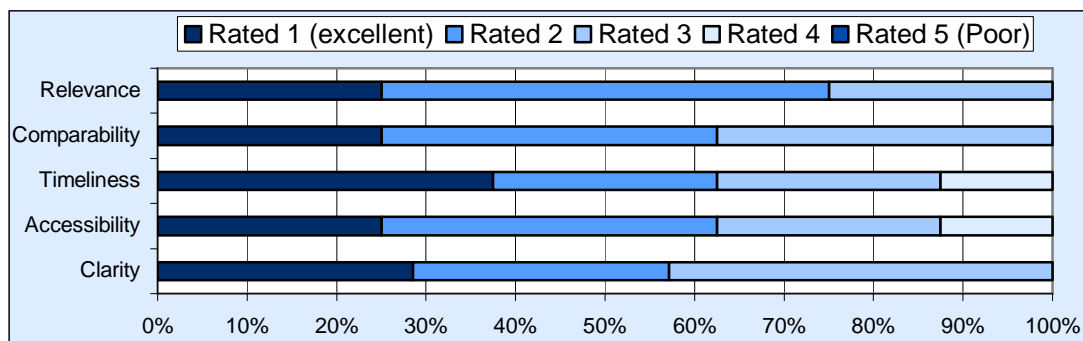
Chart 4 shows that at least half of respondents rated the various aspects of quality as positive (rating 1 or 2). Relevance received the highest positive response with 75 per cent, followed by Comparability, Timeliness and Accessibility (all with 63 per cent).

Timeliness and Accessibility each received one negative response (rating 4). There were no 'Poor' responses (rating 5).

Question 6b asked if users would like to record any comments on these outputs and in relation to a number of specific issues around the subject area. A full list of the comments received is available in Annex B.

These included a number from SSCs related to the fact that they already have direct access to HESA data. Also requests for data to assess the impact of HE policy (e.g., higher education provision in FEIs, Coleg Ffederal, regional strategies, demand for learning).

Responses to Question 5c: 'If you use any of the following *student finance* statistical outputs:

- **Applications for Student Finance, Tuition Fee Loans and Tuition Fee Grants Awarded in Wales (Headline summary of SLC data)**
- **Assembly Learning Grants Awarded to Welsh Domiciled Further Education Students**
- **Education Maintenance Allowances Awarded in Wales**
- **Financial Contingency Funds**
- **Student Loans for Higher Education (Headline summary of SLC data)**
- **Student Support for Higher Education (Headline summary of SLC data)**

how do you rate…'

Users were asked to rate each of the following statements (with 1 being Excellent and 5 being Poor):

i)   The relevance of the statistical products?
ii)   The accessibility of the statistical products?
iii)   The clarity of the statistical products?
iv)   The comparability of the statistical products?
v)   The timeliness of the statistical products?

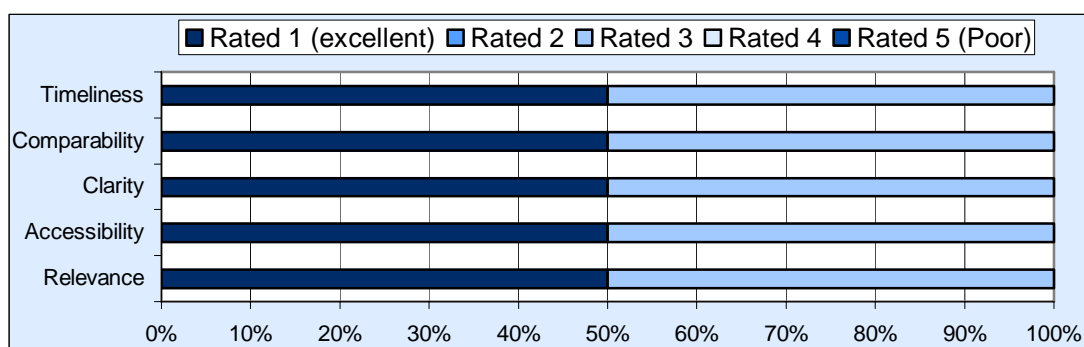**Chart 5: Results for Question 5c** [2 respondents]

There were only 2 respondents to this question; 1 of whom rated the various aspects of quality 'Excellent' (rating 1) and the other 'Average' (rating 3).

Question 6c asked if users would like to record any comments on these outputs and in relation to a number of specific issues around the subject area. No comments were provided.

Responses to Question 5d: 'If you use any of the following *participation* statistical outputs:

- **Participation of Young People in Education and the Labour Market**
- **Pupil Destinations from Schools in Wales (Headline summary of Careers Wales data)**
- **Young People not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)**

how do you rate…'

Users were asked to rate each of the following statements (with 1 being Excellent and 5 being Poor):

i)   The relevance of the statistical products?
ii)   The accessibility of the statistical products?
iii)   The clarity of the statistical products?
iv)   The comparability of the statistical products?
v)   The timeliness of the statistical products?

Chart 6: Results for Question 5d [9 respondents]
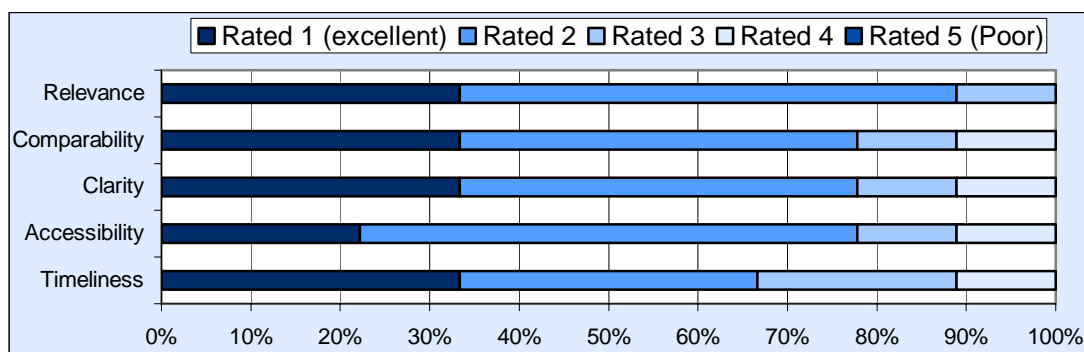
Chart 6 shows at least two thirds of respondents rated the various aspects of quality as positive (rating 1 or 2). Relevance received the highest positive response with 89 per cent, followed by Comparability, Clarity and Accessibility (all with 78 per cent).

All aspects except Relevance received one negative response (rating 4). There were no 'Poor' responses (rating 5).

Question 6d asked if users would like to record any comments on these outputs and in relation to a number of specific issues around the subject area. A full list of the comments received is available in Annex B.

There were requests for additional analyses of young people who are NEET by disability, including visual impairment and hearing impairment specifically. There was also a more general comment that the quality of this data could usefully be improved.

Responses to Question 5e: 'If you use any of the following *qualification and skills* statistical outputs:

- **Educational Attainment of Young People by Age 19**
- **Levels of Highest Qualification held by Working Age Adults**
- **Vocational Qualifications (Headline summary of DfE data)**

how do you rate…'

Users were asked to rate each of the following statements (with 1 being Excellent and 5 being Poor):

- i)   The relevance of the statistical products?
- ii)   The accessibility of the statistical products?
- iii)   The clarity of the statistical products?
- iv)   The comparability of the statistical products?
- v)   The timeliness of the statistical products?

Chart 7: Results for Question 5e [9 respondents]

Chart 7 shows at least half of respondents rated the various aspects of quality as positive. Defining a positive response as those with a rating of 1 or 2; Timeliness, Clarity and Relevance received the highest positive responses with 67 per cent each.

There were no negative responses (rating 4 or 5).

Question 6e asked if users would like to record any comments on these outputs and in relation to a number of specific issues around the subject area. A full list of the comments received is available in Annex B.

These indicated support for participation in the UKCES 2011 skills survey, given the lack of data since the 2005 Future Skills Wales survey and to enable comparison across the UK. Also a number of respondents articulated the need for the development of consistent performance measures for learners in school sixth forms and FE institutions.

Responses to Question 5f: 'If you use any of the following other statistical outputs:

- **Cross Border Flows in Education**
- **International Comparisons of Education Indicators**

how do you rate…'

Users were asked to rate each of the following statements (with 1 being Excellent and 5 being Poor):

i)   The relevance of the statistical products?
ii)   The accessibility of the statistical products?
iii)   The clarity of the statistical products?
iv)   The comparability of the statistical products?
v)   The timeliness of the statistical products?

Chart 8: Results for Question 5f [5 respondents]
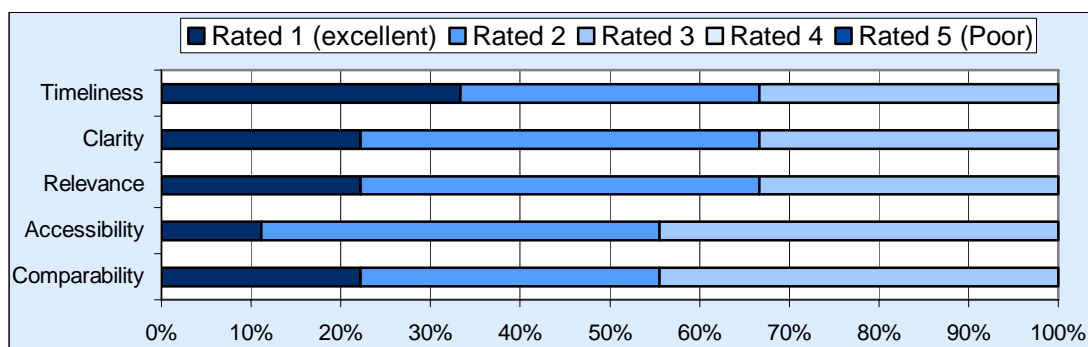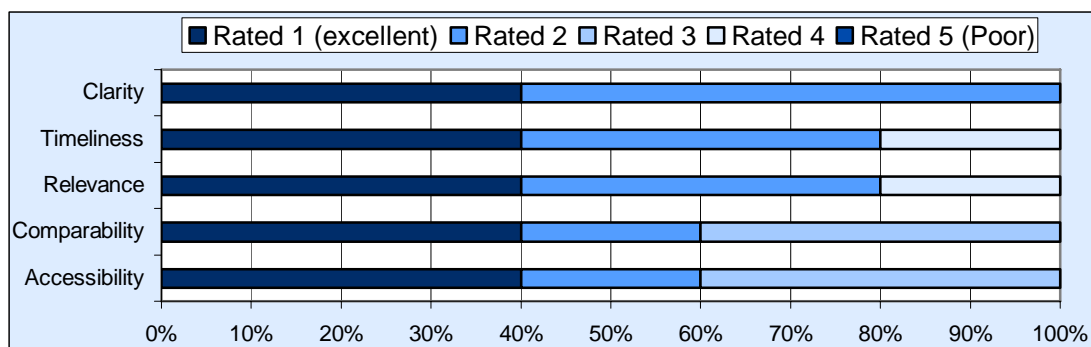

Chart 8 shows at least 60 per cent of respondents rated the various aspects of quality as positive (rating 1 or 2). Clarity had a 100 per cent positive response. This was followed by Timeliness and Relevance, both receiving 80 per cent positive responses.

There were no 'Poor' responses (rating 5).

Question 6f asked if users would like to record any comments on these outputs and in relation to a number of specific issues around the subject area. A full list of the comments received is available in Annex B. Both comments received highlighted the value of internationally comparable data.

Chapter 3: Schools Statistics Users

Responses to Question 5a: 'If you use any of the following *school absenteeism and exclusions* statistical outputs:

- **Absenteeism from Primary Schools**
- **Absenteeism from Secondary Schools**
- **Exclusions from Schools**

how do you rate…'

Users were asked to rate each of the following statements (with 1 being Excellent and 5 being Poor):

- i)   The relevance of the statistical products?
- ii)   The accessibility of the statistical products?
- iii)   The clarity of the statistical products?
- iv)   The comparability of the statistical products?
- v)   The timeliness of the statistical products?

**Chart 9: Results for Question 5a** [13 respondents]
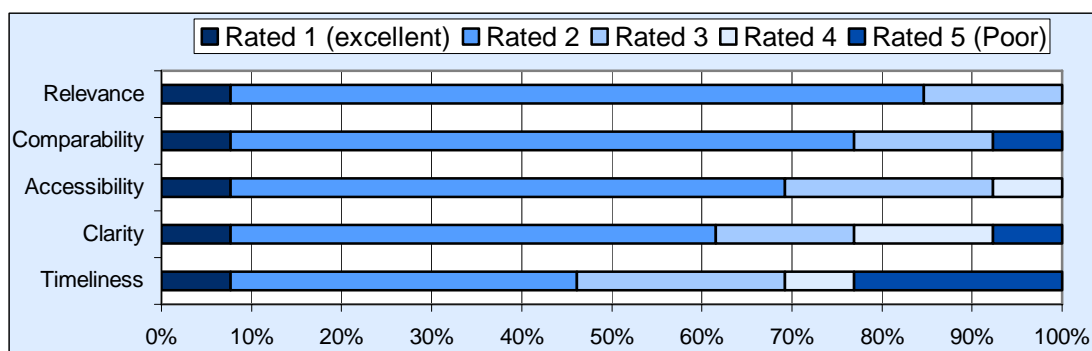
Defining a positive response as those with a rating of 1 or 2; Relevance received the highest positive response with 85 per cent, followed by Comparability (77 per cent) and Accessibility (69 per cent).

Timeliness of statistical products received the most negative response (31 per cent of ratings were rating 4 or 5).

Responses to Question 5b: 'If you use any of the following *examination results and teacher assessments* statistical outputs:

- **Academic Achievement and Entitlement to Free School Meals**
- **Academic Achievement by Pupil Characteristics**
- **Assessment and Examination Performance: Comparison with England and its Regions**
- **Examination Results**
- **National Curriculum Assessments of 7, 11 and 14 year olds**
- **Schools in Wales: Examination Performance**
- **Teacher Assessments of the Non-Core Subjects**

how do you rate…'

Users were asked to rate each of the following statements (with 1 being Excellent and 5 being Poor):

i)   The relevance of the statistical products?
ii)   The accessibility of the statistical products?
iii)   The clarity of the statistical products?
iv)   The comparability of the statistical products?
v)   The timeliness of the statistical products?

Chart 10: Results for Question 5b [15 respondents]

Chart 10 shows at least half of respondents rated the various aspects of quality as positive (rating 1 or 2). Relevance received the highest positive response with 80 per cent, followed by Clarity (67 per cent).

Timeliness of statistical products received the most negative response (33 per cent of ratings were rating 4 or 5).

Responses to Question 5c: 'If you use any of the following *pupils and schools* statistical outputs:

- **Class Sizes in Primary Schools**
- **Schools' Census (provisional)**
- **Schools' Census, Final Results**
- **School Statistics by Assembly Constituency and Region**

how do you rate…'

Users were asked to rate each of the following statements (with 1 being Excellent and 5 being Poor):

  i)   The relevance of the statistical products?
  ii)   The accessibility of the statistical products?
  iii)   The clarity of the statistical products?
  iv)   The comparability of the statistical products?
  v)   The timeliness of the statistical products?

Chart 11: Results for Question 5c [13 respondents]
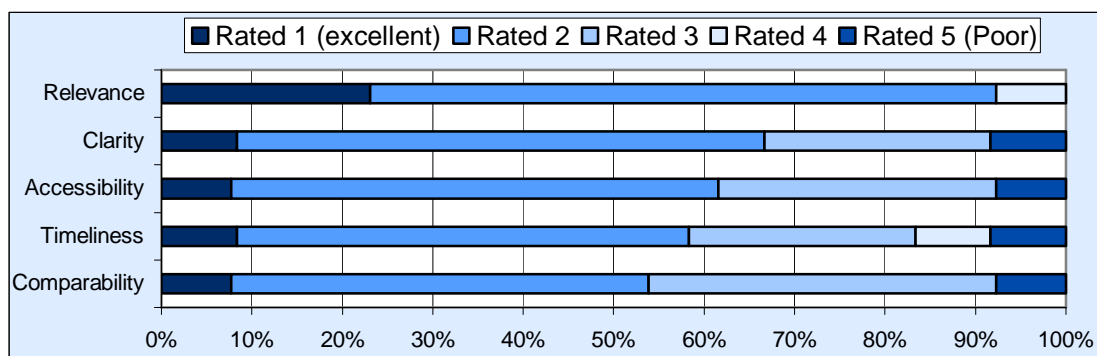
Chart 11 shows at least half of respondents rated the various aspects of quality as positive (rating 1 or 2). Relevance received the highest positive response by far with 92 per cent, followed by Clarity (67 per cent) and Accessibility (62 per cent).

Timeliness received the most negative response (17 per cent of ratings were rating 4 or 5). All other aspects of quality received the same amount (8 per cent) of negative responses.

Responses to Question 5d: 'If you use the following *special education needs in schools* statistical output:

- **Pupils with Statements of Special Education Needs**

how do you rate…'

Users were asked to rate each of the following statements (with 1 being Excellent and 5 being Poor):

    i)   The relevance of the statistical products?
    ii)   The accessibility of the statistical products?
    iii)   The clarity of the statistical products?
    iv)   The comparability of the statistical products?
    v)   The timeliness of the statistical products?
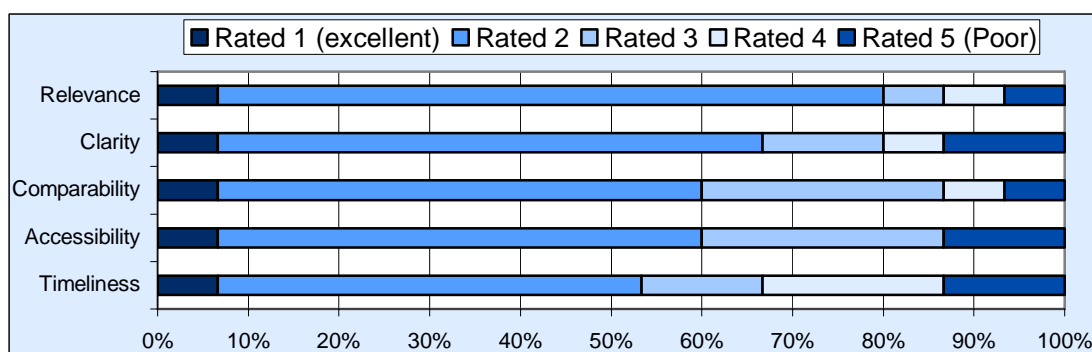
Chart 12: Results for Question 5d [11 respondents]
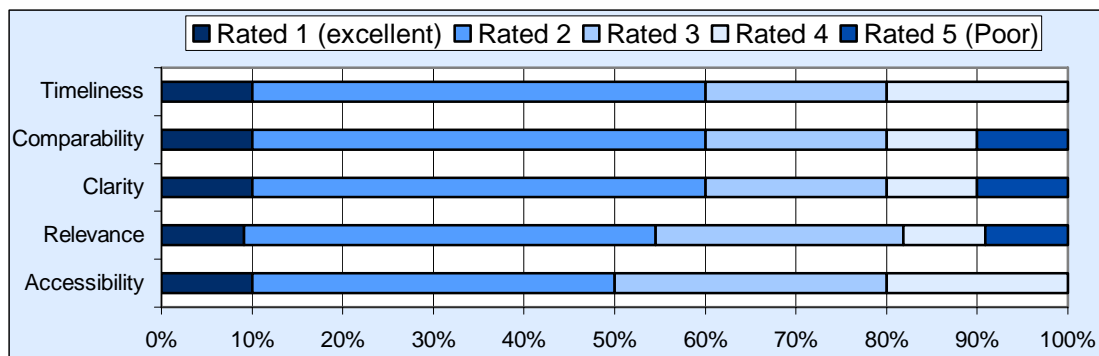
Chart 12 shows at least half of respondents rated the various aspects of quality as positive (rating 1 or 2). Timeliness, Comparability and Clarity received the highest positive response with 60 per cent.

Around 20 per cent of each aspect of quality received a negative response (rating 4 or 5).

Responses to Question 5e: 'If you use the following *pupils leaving education with no qualifications* statistical output:

- **Pupils Leaving Education with No Qualifications**

how do you rate…'

Users were asked to rate each of the following statements (with 1 being Excellent and 5 being Poor):

     i)   The relevance of the statistical products?
     ii)   The accessibility of the statistical products?
     iii)   The clarity of the statistical products?
     iv)   The comparability of the statistical products?
     v)   The timeliness of the statistical products?

Chart 13: Results for Question 5e [14 respondents]
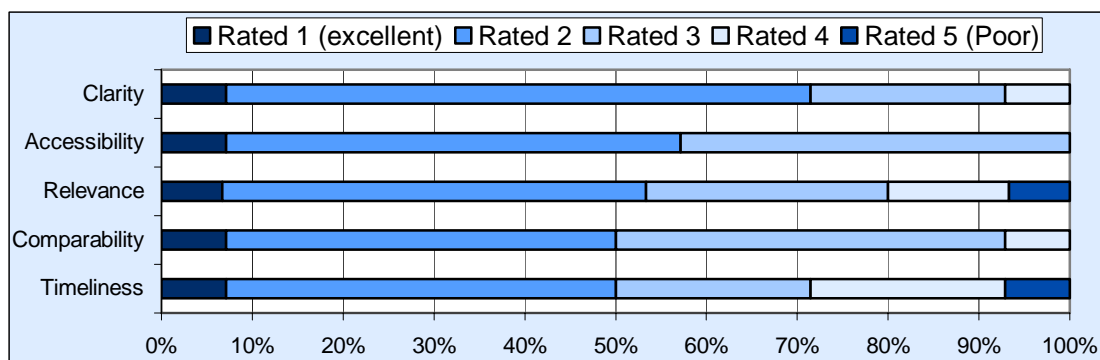
Defining a positive response as those with a rating of 1 or 2; Clarity received the highest positive response with 71 per cent, followed by Accessibility (57 per cent) and Relevance (53 per cent each).

Timeliness of statistical products received the most negative response (29 per cent with a rating of 4 or 5).

Responses to Question 5f: 'If you use the following *teachers* statistical output:

- **Teachers in Service, Vacancies and Sickness Absence**

how do you rate…'

Users were asked to rate each of the following statements (with 1 being Excellent and 5 being Poor):

    i)   The relevance of the statistical products?
    ii)   The accessibility of the statistical products?
    iii)   The clarity of the statistical products?
    iv)   The comparability of the statistical products?
    v)   The timeliness of the statistical products?

Chart 14: Results for Question 5f [3 respondents]
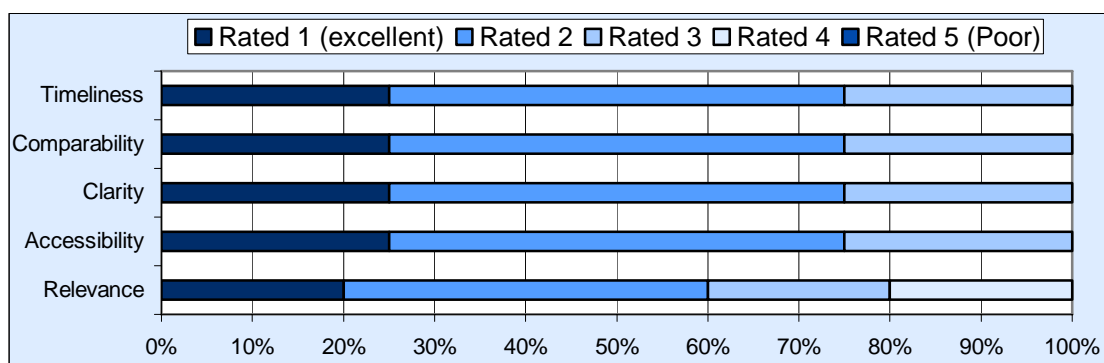
Timeliness, Comparability, Clarity and Accessibility all received the same rating, with 75 per cent being positive (rating 1 or 2).

Relevance of statistical products received the only negative response (rating 4).

Responses to Question 5g: 'If you use any of the following *school finance* statistical outputs:

- **Budgeted Expenditure on Special Education Needs (SEN) Provision**
- **Local Authority Budgeted Expenditure on Schools**
- **Local Authority Budgets for Education: Wales and England Comparisons**
- **Reserves held by Schools**

how do you rate…'

Users were asked to rate each of the following statements (with 1 being Excellent and 5 being Poor):

   i)   The relevance of the statistical products?
   ii)   The accessibility of the statistical products?
   iii)   The clarity of the statistical products?
   iv)   The comparability of the statistical products?
   v)   The timeliness of the statistical products?

Chart 15: Results for Question 5g [7 respondents]
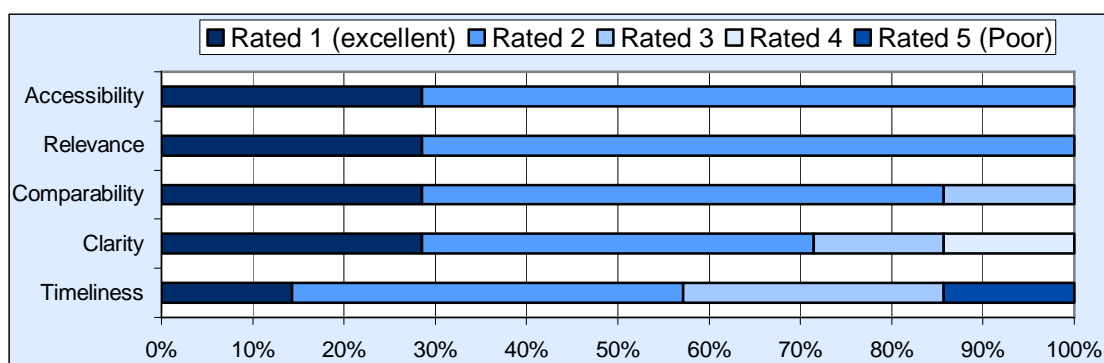
Chart 15 shows at least half of all respondents rated the various aspects of quality as positive (rating 1 or 2). Accessibility and Relevance received a 100 per cent positive response, followed by Comparability with 86 per cent.

Timeliness and Clarity were the only aspects of quality to receive one negative response (rating 4 or 5).

Responses to Question 6: 'Please use this space to comments you wish to make on our existing outputs or if there are any other areas of school statistics that we do not publish any data on that you would like to see published.'

A full list of responses can be found in Annex C. A number of these related to the earlier publication of data. Most other comments proposed other areas of analysis that users would find valuable – these were quite varied, according to users' particular area of interest. Examples include more data on SEN including attainment by secondary need, and in respect of deaf pupils, and data by Welsh language. Also, more information on teachers including by schools' language category and/or language in which subject is taught, teachers employed through agencies, supply teachers etc.

Annex A: Responses to the questionnaire

Question 2. What do you currently use education and lifelong learning statistics for?

	Responses
Inclusion in reports	25
General background	22
Benchmarking	21
Research	20
Briefing	20
Monitoring	18
Policy development	17
Decision making	16
Funding allocations	5
Other	4
Do not use	1
Total number of responses	***169***

Question 3. What type(s) of output so you find most useful?

	Responses
Data Tables	25
Online Tables e.g. StatsWales	21
Statistical Bulletins/Releases	19
Bullet Points/Headlines	12
Charts	10
Commentary	7
Schools Core Data Pack	6
FE/WBL Benchmarking Tool	5
Other	3
Total number of responses	***108***

Question 7. If we need to, can we contact you about your response to this questionnaire?

	Responses
Yes	27
No	3
No response	2
Total number of responses	***32***

Question 8. How would you like us to keep you informed of developments in this area?

	Responses
Internet site	9
Email	26
Newsletter	7
Other	0
Total number of responses	*42*

Question 9. We maintain an electronic distribution list, to whom we email our latest outputs. Would you like to be added to this list to receive copies of our outputs?

	Responses
Yes	18
No	11
No response	3
Total number of responses	*32*

Question 10. The Welsh Assembly Government intends to publish individual responses to this questionnaire with accompanying name and address (or part of address) of its author as it is felt that this gives credibility to the consultation exercise.

Do you wish to be identified as the author of your response?

	Responses
Yes	20
No	10
No response	2
Total number of responses	*32*

Post-16 Education Statistics Users

Question 5a. If you use any *further education, work based learning and community learning* statistical outputs, how do you rate…

	Rating					Responses
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	
the relevance of statistical products	3	5	5	3	0	16
the accessibility of statistical products	3	5	6	1	1	16
the clarity of statistical products	3	7	5	1	0	16
the comparability of statistical products	3	6	5	1	0	15
the timeliness of statistical products	4	4	7	0	0	15
Total number of responses	***16***	***27***	***28***	***6***	***1***	***78***

Question 5b. If you use any *higher education* statistical outputs, how do you rate…

	Rating					Responses
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	
the relevance of statistical products	2	4	2	0	0	8
the accessibility of statistical products	2	3	2	1	0	8
the clarity of statistical products	2	2	3	0	0	7
the comparability of statistical products	2	3	3	0	0	8
the timeliness of statistical products	3	2	2	1	0	8
Total number of responses	***11***	***14***	***12***	***2***	***0***	***39***

Question 5c. If you use any *student finance* statistical outputs, how do you rate…

	Rating					Responses
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	
the relevance of statistical products	1	0	1	0	0	2
the accessibility of statistical products	1	0	1	0	0	2
the clarity of statistical products	1	0	1	0	0	2
the comparability of statistical products	1	0	1	0	0	2
the timeliness of statistical products	1	0	1	0	0	2
Total number of responses	***5***	***0***	***5***	***0***	***0***	***10***

Question 5d. If you use any *participation* statistical outputs, how do you rate…

	Rating					Responses
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	
the relevance of statistical products	3	5	1	0	0	9
the accessibility of statistical products	2	5	1	1	0	9
the clarity of statistical products	3	4	1	1	0	9
the comparability of statistical products	3	4	1	1	0	9
the timeliness of statistical products	3	3	2	1	0	9
Total number of responses	*14*	*21*	*6*	*4*	*0*	*45*

Question 5e. If you use any *qualifications and skills* statistical outputs, how do you rate…

	Rating					Responses
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	
the relevance of statistical products	2	4	3	0	0	9
the accessibility of statistical products	1	4	4	0	0	9
the clarity of statistical products	2	4	3	0	0	9
the comparability of statistical products	2	3	4	0	0	9
the timeliness of statistical products	3	3	3	0	0	9
Total number of responses	*10*	*18*	*17*	*0*	*0*	*45*

Question 5f. If you use any *other* statistical outputs, how do you rate…

	Rating					Responses
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	
the relevance of statistical products	2	2	0	1	0	5
the accessibility of statistical products	2	1	2	0	0	5
the clarity of statistical products	2	3	0	0	0	5
the comparability of statistical products	2	1	2	0	0	5
the timeliness of statistical products	2	2	0	1	0	5
Total number of responses	*10*	*9*	*4*	*2*	*0*	*25*

Schools Statistics Users

Question 5a. If you use any *school absenteeism and exclusions* statistical outputs, how do you rate…

	Rating					Responses
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	
the relevance of statistical products	1	10	2	0	0	13
the accessibility of statistical products	1	8	3	1	0	13
the clarity of statistical products	1	7	2	2	1	13
the comparability of statistical products	1	9	2	0	1	13
the timeliness of statistical products	1	5	3	1	3	13
Total number of responses	**5**	**39**	**12**	**4**	**5**	**65**

Question 5b. If you use any *examination results and teacher assessments* statistical outputs, how do you rate…

	Rating					Responses
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	
the relevance of statistical products	1	11	1	1	1	15
the accessibility of statistical products	1	8	4	0	2	15
the clarity of statistical products	1	9	2	1	2	15
the comparability of statistical products	1	8	4	1	1	15
the timeliness of statistical products	1	7	2	3	2	15
Total number of responses	**5**	**43**	**13**	**6**	**8**	**75**

Question 5c. If you use any *pupils and schools* statistical outputs, how do you rate…

	Rating					Responses
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	
the relevance of statistical products	3	9	0	1	0	13
the accessibility of statistical products	1	7	4	0	1	13
the clarity of statistical products	1	7	3	0	1	12
the comparability of statistical products	1	6	5	0	1	13
the timeliness of statistical products	1	6	3	1	1	12
Total number of responses	**7**	**35**	**15**	**2**	**4**	**63**

Question 5d. If you use any *special education needs in schools* statistical outputs, how do you rate…

	Rating					Responses
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	
the relevance of statistical products	1	5	3	1	1	11
the accessibility of statistical products	1	4	3	2	0	10
the clarity of statistical products	1	5	2	1	1	10
the comparability of statistical products	1	5	2	1	1	10
the timeliness of statistical products	1	5	2	2	0	10
Total number of responses	*5*	*24*	*12*	*7*	*3*	*51*

Question 5e. If you use any *pupils leaving education with no qualifications* statistical outputs, how do you rate…

	Rating					Responses
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	
the relevance of statistical products	1	6	6	1	0	14
the accessibility of statistical products	1	7	6	0	0	14
the clarity of statistical products	1	9	3	1	0	14
the comparability of statistical products	1	6	3	3	1	14
the timeliness of statistical products	1	7	4	2	1	15
Total number of responses	*5*	*35*	*22*	*7*	*2*	*71*

Question 5f. If you use any *teachers* statistical outputs, how do you rate…

	Rating					Responses
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	
the relevance of statistical products	1	2	1	1	0	5
the accessibility of statistical products	1	2	1	0	0	4
the clarity of statistical products	1	2	1	0	0	4
the comparability of statistical products	1	2	1	0	0	4
the timeliness of statistical products	1	2	1	0	0	4
Total number of responses	*5*	*10*	*5*	*1*	*0*	*21*

Question 5g. If you use any *school finance* statistical outputs, how do you rate…

	Rating					Responses
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	
the relevance of statistical products	2	4	0	0	0	6
the accessibility of statistical products	2	4	0	0	0	6
the clarity of statistical products	2	2	1	1	0	6
the comparability of statistical products	2	3	1	0	0	6
the timeliness of statistical products	1	2	2	0	1	6
Total number of responses	*9*	*15*	*4*	*1*	*1*	*30*

Annex B: Summary of comments received from users of Post-16 Education Statistics

Question 2: 'What do you currently use Education and Lifelong Learning Statistics for?'

- Stats used purely as a guide to lead where we may need to focus attention.

- Data was included in the Sector Qualifications Strategy and used in both internal and external reports. Apprenticeship data is used to gain an understanding of the uptake (registrations and completions) of Apprenticeship Frameworks across the Sector.

- We have used the statistics in preparing briefings and papers for internal team development and to support Outline and Full Business Cases. This has been invaluable in assessing weaknesses at post-16 and demonstrating the case for change. The data has also recently been used to inform the development of regional and sub regional Transformation visions.

- We use Welsh education statistics in our annual Sector Skills Assessment to look at the key challenges in terms of the talent pipeline into the workforce. We look at volumes, profile and achievement of those taking technology related education and the extent to which they are able to develop competencies relevant to future employment in the sector and / or better prepare for work in a technology enabled world. We then use this to inform our responses to government policy, and to develop our strategy and actions in Wales.

- The current level of usage is low because the statistics are not comparable with any of the other nations in terms of detail. e.g. the full SFC dataset is made available to Sector Skills Councils to allow them to identify key trends in the qualifications that fall under their footprint (enrolments, starts, success rates etc). These statistics are then used by our qualifications teams to identify whether they are suitable or not. This cannot be done in any detail with the information that is published.

- To inform reports to EU institutions; to inform development of inter-regional European benchmarking; to highlight areas of successful activity (or not); to inform peer learning opportunities; to inform presentations delivered to overseas partners etc.

- Data on the number and profile of staff in further education institutions in Wales is used in our Sector Skills Assessment, LMI Factsheet for Wales, Strategic Plan and Welsh Language Skills Audit Research Report.

- We regularly use the Tribal Benchmarking tool to monitor college performance e.g. overall rate, by subject area and by learning activity, against similar providers and the sector as a whole. We use Learner Network Analysis tables on StatsWales to monitor participation rates of various students groups.

- In the Wales annual Sector Skills Assessments as historic data.

- In order to prepare SWOT analysis, PEST for planning purposes and for comparing participation rates.

- The statistics produced are very useful to us as a union of teachers and lecturers; they enable us to keep an eye on specific developments in the world of education in a way

where it's possible to compare over a period of time. We use the statistics, especially when forming policy, and in our lobbying and campaigning work.

Question 3: 'We publish these data in a number of formats through www.wales.gov.uk/statistics and as online data tables through www.statswales.wales.gov.uk. What type(s) of output do you find most useful?'

There were no responses to this question from Post-16 education statistics users.

Question 4: 'We would be interested in understanding, in general, whether our statistical outputs provide you with the information you need in an appropriate style and format. For example:
- **Do you have the information you need about the *quality* of the data to enable you to use the statistics with confidence and in an informed way?**
- **Does the *commentary* and *analysis* that are published aid interpretation of the statistics they refer to?**
- **Are *graphs*, *tables* and *maps* used in the most effective way?**
- **Through our statistical outputs and StatsWales tables are you happy with the level of detail of the statistics provided?'**

- I assume that data placed on the StatsWales website meets National Statistics standards. I have no reason to doubt the data and use it as the best that is available.
  The data is usually fine in the level of detail and the supporting metadata has always been adequate.

- Quality - stats are really too general to be able to assist in any specific way.
  Commentary/Analysis - useful and fit for purpose to ease understanding.
  Graphs etc - useful and provide an easy to see, quick illustration.

- Ideally, we require in-depth data that is cut by SSC Sector. For example, FE/WBL data (starts and completes), by academic year for …*specific*… qualifications. Also, it is important for us to have access to Apprenticeship Data as well as Higher Education data, including Foundation Degree uptake. The most effective way to supply data would be in downloadable tables or online tables, with the ability to cut the data by gender, age, ethnicity etc.

  It is imperative for us to gather robust data, as regular intervals throughout the year, preferably by quarter.

  In the past we have received data directly following a bespoke request (such as apprenticeship starts/completes). It would be extremely useful if this information was readily available online to download at frequent intervals through the year.

- We, and all other SSCs, need data on apprenticeship take-up and achievement for each year. Data would also be useful on the age, gender, ethnicity and DDA status of all apprentices. All of this data needs to be supplied for each individual apprenticeship framework and for each level available.

- These are the formats that we find useful BUT their use to us is extremely limited because they do not contain information about blind and partially sighted (visually impaired) young people and adults.

- We think the statistical releases and reports are very informative and valuable.

- It would be useful to have more explanations on StatsWales and publications to the background to data e.g. the LLWR and definitions e.g. what is a "learning activity"? Sometimes the provenance of the data is not clear. StatsWales is useful in that you can download and manipulate tables.

- Subject level data is weak - more detail is required. It would also be useful if an exercise to map qualifications to industrial sectors were undertaken so that we could benchmark how the sector is performing. I'm sure Sector Skills Councils would be more than willing to assist with this. Overall, I find the concept of StatsWales good but it could be fantastic if more detail was provided.

- I generally prefer tables of data with supporting narrative highlighting the main comparative points. Time series are also valuable when available - and when not relevant to the particular published data, it would still be useful to have a signpost attached to previous years' figures. Charts etc. are less helpful as it can be difficult to lift the actual data. On the occasions that I want something more visual (e.g. PowerPoint) it is a very simple process to convert a table into a graph.

- We are primarily interested in data or information relating to staff (as opposed to learners) working in the lifelong learning sector ... Overall, the outputs provide sufficient commentary, contextual information, analysis, graphs, tables, trends, details of sources and caveats in relation to the aims and objective of the document. Although data on learners are not a primary concern, we acknowledge the number of outputs providing statistics on learners which could be consolidated.

  The online portal is a useful tool but could be improved by allowing access to the further education staff data for Wales and by making it more flexible so that a variety of cross tabulations and analysis could be carried out.

  However, the main issue relates to the coverage of the statistics provided rather than the style or format of the outputs. A recent review identified a significant array of differences and gaps in data and statistics currently available on the lifelong learning sector workforce in Wales. This makes it difficult to 'accurately and authoritatively' compare data between sub-sectors in Wales and between nations across the UK.

- Information published in statistical bulletins often state if the statistics are preliminary/1st issue etc., but you're not always sure what you're looking at on StatsWales because I'm not aware of any commentary. In some cases, StatsWales has more up to date information and in others, the PDF publications supersede what's on StatsWales. Having different information is confusing and you really need to know you are looking at the same thing. For this reason I believe the commentary/explanation is essential. I also find the analysis in the bulletins, which pull out the headline points, helpful.

  I sometimes find the maps a little confusing to look at especially when the colours used are too similar. On the whole though I think most of the information is presented in the best way and relatively easy to understand.

  You need to be able to see the LLWR tables on StatsWales in the same detail as the Learner Network analysis e.g. by individual provider, student groups etc. Generally it's always useful to be able to see your college and be able to compare with similar providers, which is why Tribal is so useful.

As noted above, SIR data would be helpful if ethnicity, disability and gender information for each college was shown with comparative (updated?) Census data to support EO monitoring.

- We have reservations about the completeness of the data and the timeliness of its provision.

- Quality of data is assumed. We mostly use tables and maps and are very happy with the detail.

- In general, the quality, detail and format of the statistics satisfy our needs. The commentary and analyses are useful.

Question 5a: 'Please use this space to record any specific comments on any of these outputs and any feedback on the following issues relating to *further education, work-based learning and community learning*, which are discussed in more detail on page 5 of the consultation document'

- Further Education Institution staff record: we strongly support the continued publication of this data and for it to be collected and published at institutional level. It would be useful to have an online portal for analysing data and generating benchmarked reports. We would have no objection in principle to the collection of information regarding staff qualifications and skills… We would also welcome data which would allow us to breakdown in more detail the type of academic staff employed at an institution (for example, lecturer or tutor). In respect of benchmarking, it is clear that considerable data already exists within the sector (for example, the benchmarking carried out by Tribal on behalf of institutions). It is important to note however that this data is not widely shared within the sector.

  We would welcome the collection and publication of data (at institutional level) which shows the contractual status of staff, including full-time, fractional and hourly-paid.

- We primarily use the FEI staff record to gain an understanding of the size and profile of the further education workforce in Wales. The current 'Staff at Further Education Institutions' output presents the relevant data in various formats (narrative, graphs and full tables), which is useful. The current timelines for this output meet our requirements.

  The FEI staff record currently provides the most comprehensive workforce data for FEIs in Wales and we would strongly recommend the continuation of this workforce data collection. However, as staff in further education institutions only form 16% of the entire lifelong learning workforce in Wales, the expansion of the FEI staff record (SIR) into other parts of the post-16 learning sector, in which no data is currently collected, is also strongly recommended.

  The lack of data also makes it difficult to attract individuals with the required skills to work in the lifelong learning sector because they cannot make well-informed decisions about suitable career pathways in the sector and careers services are not able to give complete and accurate information or provide well informed advice and guidance relating to the sector.

It is also essential for employers, stakeholders and policy makers to understand the likely demand from all sectors of the economy for the services provided by the lifelong learning sector. Figures showing trends and forecasts relating to this area will enable effective workforce development planning so that future demand for services could be met by an appropriately skilled lifelong learning workforce.

- Change to FEI staff record: It would help if this analysis was co-ordinated with the financial information collected by WAG. Given the Minister's interest in the mix between front line and back office costs, the data collection should include sufficient information (either in the SIR or the finance record) to enable that split to be monitored by WAG and Colleges. Similar information should be collected for other education providers – e.g. schools, Universities etc.

   As the Analysis of Participation is focused at the unitary authority level I don't have any objections to this being published every two years.

   The format of the annual volume is fine. I like the fact it splits up FE, Community Learning and WBL. The summaries for FE, CL and WBL, which pull out the main headline stats, are very useful and the notes under each individual table are a great help in understanding the information and what is included/excluded. I would like to see these tables on StatsWales but I don't want to lose the headlines/explanation that goes with them.

   In terms of the timing of the outputs, one of the real issues for us is the delay in getting performance indicators for the previous year. I would certainly like to get attainment finalised before March.

- The ability to compare statistics on staff at FE colleges and other post-16 providers would be very useful, including sixth forms in schools. Information on staff qualifications and skills would be extremely useful.

- We would prefer the Analysis of Participation information to continue to be provided annually. It would be helpful if the Annual volume of statistics was also available in Excel. The Learning & Skills Observatory link could be improved.

- The data detailed in this section is in fact relevant, but as it is not cut by Sector then it is of very little use as we are unable to extract data of particular relevance.

- We need data on Apprenticeship take-up and achievement.

- It is difficult to respond as although the data are presented clearly, they are of extremely limited use to us as they do not give a breakdown by disability type and therefore provide no information about our client group, which is young people and adults with visual impairment.

- Our main requirement is data at quite a detailed sector and subject level and much of the published data does not go to this level. More detail on the methodology and definitions would be useful. We do find that supply side data has a long time lag before it is published.

- Whilst the data might be comparable across years, it is not comparable with data from either Scotland or England. This makes much of the data limited (or even useless) for our purpose.

- As far as we are aware, there is no published data on the numbers of deaf students… pursuing further education.

  We would urge that efforts are made to ensure that all students with a permanent hearing loss of any level are recorded accurately within PLASC. We are concerned that the definition provided within the Lifelong Learning Wales Record User Support Manual for Learning Providers 2010/2011 (page 399), could lead to the same discrepancy in the recording of PLASC – that, in some cases, students who have a permanent hearing loss, but do not receive any specialist support, may not be recorded.

  We appreciate the difficulty in matching post-16 datasets, but would like to express our support for overcoming these issues in order to provide robust data on the attainment of post-16 students. We believe it is imperative that specific data on the attainment of post-16 students with a permanent hearing loss is published and monitored.

- Obviously the earlier the information is available the better, but matters have improved over the past few years. ANY information about vocational courses provided by Work Based Providers in the Post-16 phase would be a great help to 14 - 19 teams.

- It would be very useful to be able to isolate the number of blind and partially sighted students domiciled in Wales but studying in England at mainstream or specialist colleges.

Question 5b: 'Please use this space to record any specific comments on any of these outputs and any feedback on the following issues relating to *higher education*, which are discussed in more detail on page 6 of the consultation document'

- We make considerable use of HESA data and support the continued use of these statistics as it provides clearly comparable information with institutions elsewhere in the UK. There are however three particular areas where we would welcome specific data. These areas are:

  The development of higher education provision delivered in an FEI. This should include numbers of students by institution and by type of qualification (for example, Foundation Degree) and the staff engaged in their delivery. We expect to see a significant growth in HE in FE provision as a direct result of Assembly Government policy and it will be important to have robust data to allow policy makers to assess the impact and for others in the sector to identify areas for improvement;

  Similar data collection (to above) may also be needed to monitor the impact of Coleg Ffederal;

  Reliable statistical information will be important to allow for a clear assessment of the impact and implementation of the regional strategies that HEFCW now require. Information on where students are learning, as well as the institution at which they are registered, will be essential. At present it is not clear whether this information is available.

- We gather this data directly from HESA via the publications: Students in Higher Education Institutions and Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Institutions. Also, we receive bespoke, in-depth HE data from HESA, in collaboration with the other SSCs (co-ordinated by the Alliance).

- Generally average. We have negotiated access to the full HESA student record as well as the destinations data for the network of SSC's. This allows us greater flexibility in how we analyse the data and the information that we can extract.

- Although, we have not used learner data comprehensively in the past, we would recommend that basic data on learners' profile and participation continues to be made available on the website but in a more consolidated manner. This will enable us to compare the profile of staff and learners and to assess trends in the demand for learning.

  In particular, it will be useful to have access to data on the destination and profile of students/learners who go on to work in the lifelong learning sector, especially those who have completed ITT courses.

Question 5c: 'Please use this space to record any specific comments on any of these outputs and any feedback on the following issues relating to *student finance*, which are discussed in more detail on page 7 of the consultation document'

There were no responses to this question.

Question 5d: 'Please use this space to record any specific comments on any of these outputs and any feedback on the following issues relating to *participation*, which are discussed in more detail on page 8 of the consultation document'

- The NEET data which is greatly needed seems of poor quality compared to much of the other education data, coming from surveys and having to be estimated for UAs. Improving this data would be very welcome.

- Would value the opportunity to be able to draw out the number of self-declared visually impaired students who are in the NEET category please.

- We would like to take this opportunity to highlight the recent report, Young People not in Education, Employment or Training by the Assembly's Enterprise and Learning Committee. The report, which was published in October this year, highlights that, when compared with non-disabled young people, young disabled people are twice as likely to be "NEET" (not in education, employment or training). It recommends that the Welsh Assembly Government statistical publications should routinely analyse data in relation to disability and young people not in education, employment or training. We would endorse this recommendation. We are concerned that young deaf people can face specific barriers in accessing employment and higher education. Since different disability groups have differing access requirements, we would urge that such data is provided and analysed in relation to specific disability groups, including hearing impairment.

- With regard to pupil destination, the availability of data recently ceased (Progression of year 11 pupils by area to local FE College). This was very useful data.

Question 5e: 'Please use this space to record any specific comments on any of these outputs and any feedback on the following issues relating to qualifications and skills, which are discussed in more detail on pages 8 and 9 of the consultation document'

- Development of Consistent Performance Measures for learners 16-18/19: This is an important area for further development. Under the Transformation Agenda, the implementation of transformation plans by local authorities and further education colleges will need to be benchmarked across Wales over a 2-3 year period. Consequently, data comparison between sectors (school/FEI) is paramount.

  Areas where comparable data would be useful:
  - Attainment
  - Completion
  - Progression to HE
  - Progression to employment

- Regarding participation in the UKCES 2011 Skills Survey, we feel that if the requirement for SSC data to be comparable and use national data sources remains as rigidly as currently then there should be a Welsh element to the survey. Bearing in mind the last Future Skills Wales survey was in 2005, there would seem to be a gap in 'whole economy' employer based skills information for Wales and it might be useful to compare Welsh data to the rest of the UK?

  However, the proposed UKCES 2011 skills survey will not provide detailed enough data or evidence for the sector in Wales (just high level comparisons) and crucially the survey is industry based with little detailed occupational or skills data.

- Useful but much of the detail is missing.

- We would like to fully support the UKCES 2011 Skills Survey. The national employer skills surveys are a key source of data on the skills needs of employers and employees across all sectors in each of the four UK nations. They are one of the primary data sources used by us to assess skills requirements of the sector. In the absence of more up-to-date data on skills for Wales, we still refer to some of the findings from the 2005 Future Skills Wales survey and would welcome more up-to-date information in this area. The skills surveys in the other UK nations provide data from recent years on the skills issues faced by employers in the lifelong learning sector and all sectors, and we would like to have the same from Wales.

- It is essential that consistent performance measures for 16-18 year olds are developed. Without that, the ability to properly measure performance between schools and FE is significantly affected. Also, more timely information is important.

- UKCES 2011 Skills Survey: Data would be useful
  Levels of Highest Qualification: Every two years would suffice
  Consistent Performance Measures: Important to consider what is being measured in schools and FEIs e.g. basic skills measures.

Question 5f: 'Please use this space to record any specific comments on any of these *other* outputs and the related issues which are discussed in more detail on page 9 of the consultation document'

- I found the Feb 2010 statistic article on international comparators interesting - and I would be happy to work with stats colleagues on developing that approach in a more targeted way (e.g. linked to EU benchmarks, 2020 Headline Targets, EU regional priorities, Ministerial priorities (SEF etc) - which could usefully benefit from a time series analysis).

- We considered using the 'International comparisons of education indicators' as part of a recent literature review but decided not to use this output due to the lack of data on staff in the lifelong learning sector. It would be useful to have international data released as quickly as possible and broken down into sub-sectors within the education sector.

Annex C: Summary of comments received from users of Schools Statistics

Question 2: 'What do you currently use Education and Lifelong Learning Statistics for?'

- We incorporate the data in two of our publications. Most of the data in these publications are supplied by the Welsh Assembly and supplemented with additional data collected by us directly from local authorities.

- Statistics on education are included in the Joint Needs Assessment.

- Reporting on progress to elected members; monitoring performance at LEA and school level; intervention and support.

- School boarders data is used in the calculation of mid-year population estimates by Local Authority. These estimates are then disseminated and used by central government, local authorities, health bodies, commercial companies, academics and members of the public. Uses include resource allocation, planning, research, as a base for population projections etc.

- The main use is for benchmarking the school against national performance standards. The school does not use the data for its own results performance evaluation, as it does this itself for the following key reasons:
  1. The data is not timely - all data is required by the first week in September at the latest;
  2. The data is often inaccurate and unreliable, especially at KS5 & KS4.

- Statistics for the LA and individual establishments are used regularly to advise SMT of the LA and schools. The 14 - 19 Team also use statistics for the network in its planning and reporting.

- As a Sector Skills Council we use education statistics to inform our research, policy development and strategic plans. What is happening in IT related education is of interest to employers as well as government and other stakeholders in relation to preparation for further and higher education and ultimately work.

- The statistics are usually used to provide comparative data, both at a National level or at Local Authority level as part of our self evaluation process.

- In the production of our evidence file for NAW (and Local) Performance Indicators.

- In my current role I am asked to provide reports to senior officers on specific educational issues. In developing the report I have used statistical reports to provide evidence. In addition I have sought you advice and sign off to ensure the report is robust.

- Used to give advice to the Welsh Assembly Government on the Welsh-Medium Education Strategy and when considering the Local Authorities Welsh Education Schemes.

- To inform reports to EU institutions; to inform development of inter-regional European benchmarking; to highlight areas of successful activity (or not) to inform peer learning opportunities; to inform presentations delivered to overseas partners etc.

- We use the statistics to compare ourselves with other LAs and with the Welsh average. These are used in reports to councillors, advisors, governors, headteachers etc. PLASC info is used as a context with academic info. It is also useful to be able to break down the PLASC info on StatsWales. We find being able to sort information and manipulate data on StatsWales very useful.

- University dissertation.

- The statistics produced are very useful to us as a union of teachers and lecturers; they enable us to keep an eye on specific developments in the world of education in a way where it's possible to compare over a period of time. We use the statistics, especially when forming policy, and in our lobbying and campaigning work.

Question 3: 'We publish these data in a number of formats through www.wales.gov.uk/statistics and as online data tables through www.statswales.wales.gov.uk. What type(s) of output do you find most useful?'

- It would be better if the tables were available in the form of CSV permenant URL (or RDF format) so we could update our analyses automatically

Question 4: 'We would be interested in understanding, in general, whether our statistical outputs provide you with the information you need in an appropriate style and format. For example:

- **Do you have the information you need about the *quality* of the data to enable you to use the statistics with confidence and in an informed way?**
- **Does the *commentary* and *analysis* that are published aid interpretation of the statistics they refer to?**
- **Are *graphs*, *tables* and *maps* used in the most effective way?**
- **Through our statistical outputs and StatsWales tables are you happy with the level of detail of the statistics provided?'**

- The data supplied in their current format is sufficient for our purposes.

- I assume that data placed on the StatsWales website meets National Statistics standards. I have no reason to doubt the data and use it as the best that is available.
  The data is usually fine in the level of detail and the supporting metadata has always been adequate.
- The quality of the data is fine. Its use could be improved by ensuring that the data sets are aligned with that used by ESTYN to evaluate LEA performance with the option of 'drilling down' at individual school level.

- Data is provided in a suitable format and is always received before our deadline, however differences in the layout between independent and special school boarders can be a problem.

- The information in the schools core data pack is inaccurate and unreliable:-

  A PLASC date of January for compiling statistics rather than either May PLASC or actual exam entry information is inappropriate.

Learners who refuse to attend school or educated outside the school should not be included in school statistics. These should be separated out and other new statistics, with a more social focus, should be created to focus on these problem learners.

Some short courses are designed to have the full equivalent of a GCSE but are restricted to a maximum grade of a C, due to the lesser volume of content. Employers recognise these grades and courses as full GCSE equivalents and hence the Welsh Assembly should include these towards the Level 2 Threshold as a full GCSE, and not as half a GCSE as it does at the moment.

The process for changing and amending disputed data is very onerous, inflexible and rigid and leads to the damage of the credibility of the data.

The graphs produced this year have improved over previous years, but further improvements could still be made. The most useful charts are the benchmarking charts and the family comparison charts. [further detailed comments provided]

The packs should contain comparisons for all non-core subjects as well as the core for KS4.

Benchmarking information for KS5 should be compiled too.

The finance tables online are very useful and informative. Please continue to produce these.

- The quality of the data is often questioned by participants IF the data is not favourable to them/their establishment. WAG data has been proved to be reliable in an accepted form. Analysis should always be as "pointed" as possible. Graphs always supplement tables and aid understanding but can confuse if an area indicated is small. Enough detail published; much more could be a turn off!

- Quality: not always sure of KS4 data, especially core datasets and SSSP.
  Graphs tables and maps: good on the whole.

- Because of our remit, the most useful data is that which is presented by subject so the publications of most interest and use to us currently are Examination results and the information on teacher vacancies which is available by subject.

- It would be useful if all of the data sets were also available on StatsWales. For example, the pupil characteristics release would be useful at Local Authority level, not just Wales level. On StatsWales this would be even better as we could monitor attainment of various groups i.e. Free School Meal boys, or girls with SEN. Putting the data on StatsWales would also mean that it could be exported to Excel if we wanted to do further analysis.

- Quality - we tend to assume that the quality is as good as it can be when taking into consideration that the data comes from the schools. Key stage 1 and 2 Teacher Assessments are moderated throughout the local authority, but we are not sure how this compares with other LAs.
  Commentary and analysis - We take into account what is published, but we also do our own analyses.
  Graphs, tables and maps - tables are necessary but graphs are always good.
  We are Happy!

- The quality of the data is always high. However I am not confident to use without seeking additional advice from the team. This is readily provided. I find the commentary and

analysis very useful aid to interpretation, which is supported by the use of graphs. The outputs are generic and sometime do not always provide the level of detail I need for my specific report, however you support me with additional meeting/telephone conversations, if the data is collected.

- I have to sometimes refer to the guidance given to schools on providing the details in order to understand the exact basis for the data. It isn't always easy getting hold of these documents. I'll only refer to the commentary on rare occasions. It would be better if the data was published at individual school level where possible, rather than only in aggregated form.

- I generally prefer tables of data with supporting narrative highlighting the main comparative points. Time series are also valuable when available - and when not relevant to the particular published data, it would still be useful to have a signpost attached to previous years' figures. For me charts etc. are less helpful as it can be difficult to lift the actual data. On the occasions that I want something more visual (e.g. PowerPoint) it is a very simple process to convert a table into a graph.

- The statistical output we use the most is StatsWales. This because we are able to manipulate the data in many different ways. It would be very useful to use maps more. At the moment we don't think this is very well developed. StatsWales isn't the most user friendly website and this could be improved. I think this is an obstacle for its use by a wider audience.

- The key data items I need are not available in your regular publications. For example, time series data on 5 A*-C and points scores for maintained schools at the Wales level. This makes it very difficult to make meaningful comparisons with England. The comparison with England release has nothing at age 15/16 and the historical editions are no longer available from your website. Is this because the comparisons were wrong?

  There's also nothing on your website to explain why the National Pupil Database differed from historical exam results releases and why both have mysteriously disappeared.

- In general, the quality, detail and format of the statistics satisfy our needs. The commentary and analyses are useful.

Question 6: 'Please use this space to record any comments you wish to make on our existing outputs or if there are any other areas of school statistics that we do not publish any data on that you would like to see published.'

- Would like data on persons not in education/training, on attainment by some sub-groups (e.g. looked after children/SEN/traveller etc) and on informal education provision. These have been suggested as topics for our Joint Needs Assessment.

- The use of the data could be improved if some of the outputs could be available sooner.

- Data on attainment by SEN need is the most useful to us but is limited because it covers pupils' primary/major special educational need only. Data on secondary need would be of immense use as we know that around 50% of pupils with a visual impairment have additional needs. We would also like SEN data broken down by type of SEN.

- More information on teacher specialism would be useful in developing appropriate teacher CPD and support materials. Overall we would like to see more data, released earlier with subject reference (for example the provisional results for 09/10 are not by subject).

- Attendance data - this can be slightly confusing to explain to people when the primary and secondary schools submit their attendance return over different time scales (no easy answer, I know). The pupils leaving school without a qualification can be a difficult return to make if young people start courses then drop out, or are in the process of applying for a course but haven't started yet. The SEN statement analysis is difficult to compare as Local Authorities have different approaches to issuing statements.

- We consider that the publication of discreet data on the attainment levels of deaf children and young people is imperative in order to monitor service delivery and to ensure that deaf pupils are afforded equality of opportunity.

  Last year, we expressed concern that the Welsh Assembly Government's School Census recorded a lower number of deaf pupils than would be expected given incidence rates and population levels in Wales. It subsequently became apparent that there were discrepancies in the way in which schools recorded deaf pupils. While some schools recorded deaf pupils who received specialist support as well as those who did not, others only recorded deaf pupils in receipt of specialist support. We would urge that, should the PLASC guidance be rewritten, the Welsh Assembly Government ensures the recording of all pupils with a permanent hearing impairment.

  We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government collates data on the number of qualified teachers of the deaf and the age profile of teachers of the deaf in Wales.

- Special Educational Needs: the published data doesn't include anything on the Welsh language. The most desirable data to have would be details by whether the children speak Welsh at home.

  Class sizes: the data would be more useful at school level so analysis could be done by schools' language category.

  Pupils leaving schools without qualification: it would be more useful to us if the publication's Table 2 was split by the ability to speak Welsh.

  Teacher statistics: they need to be split by schools' language category and/or the language in which the subject is taught.

- It would be useful to have a listing of all available international comparative data sources - and an indication of what data is available from each - something like a mini directory. We are aware of PISA and Eurostat (though on the latter not 100% clear on which areas are covered by data available at the regional level, for example). Generally you have to have a 'dig around' in various sources, including StatsWales, to see what is available. A single annual online directory (with links) based on the type of information, not the source, would save me time - but not sure something like that would be feasible.

- It's important that StatsWales is up to date. This year the Key Stage 1-3 Results were not updated until October. Given that this data was collected by WAG in early July this was too late. It would be very useful to be able to more easily compare individual KS4/5

subjects with each other and with other LAs. It would be really useful if we could look at data in different contexts - data interactively broken down into council electoral wards, LSOAs, Communities First Areas, linking academic acheivement to WIMD etc. Increasingly we are beginning to be asked to produce analyses that are not linked to schools but to the wider community and the CYPP. This might also encourage a wider audience to use the website and improve co-ordination of services.

- It would be good to have information on the contextual value added contribution of schools with different admissions policies and funding models and the distribution and attainment of pupils for whom English or Welsh is an additional language. It is difficult to find information as there are so many publications.

- There are numerous fields in which related data would be useful:
  - Number of teachers employed through agencies
  - Number of supply teachers teaching in schools in Wales
  - Number of HLTAs teaching full classes
  - Number of Headteachers, Deputies and Assistant Heads
  - With regards to Headteachers, how many schools are they responsible for? And what kind of schools- primary, secondary, 3-19?
  - Number of unqualified teachers working in schools in Wales

  Also, the Statistical Bulletins aren't available in Welsh. We would be grateful to see Welsh versions of these.