

14–19 Learning Pathways

The Review of Local Collaborative Provision at Key Stage 4

Task and Finish Group Report

September 2013

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Foreword

As educationalists we see lots of change and developments over time but it would be hard to find one that impacted so directly on the lives, educational outcomes and pathway choices for so many children in Wales.

The 14-19 Learning Pathways policy gave everyone options and choices and its impact cannot be ignored. It enabled us to move forward as an inclusive society creating opportunities where previously they didn't exist and allowing individuals to build for themselves futures rich in educational foundations.

As a Group we all felt the huge responsibility in taking part in this review and I would like to thank all those involved for their honesty, passion and hard work during the process. It's hard to remember life before 14-19 but it quickly became evident that our educational environment had now evolved and without diminishing the impact it has had for the children of Wales now was the right time to consider our way forward – to refresh our approach.

The recommendations within this report have been made with the ethos that made 14-19 so successful – every child counts, every child has different skills and every child deserves an opportunity to achieve and attain. They have also been made, however, to ensure our students have qualifications that are respected not just locally but nationally and internationally.

It is our belief that the quality of the choices rather than quantity of courses available is what counts. By reducing the size of the curriculum offer at KS4, we want to make the offer real, deliverable and fair. By including in this offer the need for a minimum of 3 vocational courses we show our respect for vocational learning and our understanding that skills are taught and shown in more than one way.

14 -19 changed futures, it addressed poverty and enabled students to thrive and it is our hope that the recommendations made within this report will allow it to continue to do so within the new society it has helped to create.



Claire Armitstead

Chair of the Review of Local Collaborative Provision at Key Stage 4

Executive summary

This Task and Finish Group on local collaborative provision at KS4 was brought together between February and September 2013 to progress the Minister for Education and Skills' commitment to review the decision to set 30 choices as the minimum number of courses that should be offered to learners at Key Stage 4 (KS4).

The Group was chaired by a secondary headteacher and involved representatives from schools, local authorities (LAs), colleges, work based training providers, employers, Careers Wales and Estyn (observer role) – which included representatives involved in Welsh medium provision. The full membership is shown at Annex A to this report.

While this report expresses the views and expert opinions of Group members in their professional capacity, it is supported by the considered evidence presented to them by sector professionals and Welsh Government officials from a range of policy areas.

The positives of wider choice

Before approaching the task at hand, the Group considered how influential the 14-19 Learning Pathways policy had been since its launch in 2006; and how that policy had directly influenced the transformation of educational provision for 14-19 year olds in Wales. The Group felt it important not to understate the positive effects that the wider choice of courses in conjunction with learner support at KS4 (both key components of the 14-19 learning Pathways policy) have had in helping to engage learners and in them achieving their potential.

In 2012 the Minister for Education and Skills in responding to the National Assembly for Wales' Children and Young People's Committee's inquiry into the impact of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009, noted that much data around the impact of wider choice was inconclusive. The Group looked again at the data and agreed it was difficult to track a direct cause and effect between wider choice and improved attainment. However, the Group found that the overarching trends in attainment data (particularly around key dates when the policy of wider choice was implemented) and from the first hand experiences and considered professional opinion of Group members, that wider choice had in fact proved beneficial to learners and consequently impacted on their attainment and progression.

The Group members reflected on gains made since the introduction of the policy in terms of widened choice, which includes greater access and availability of Welsh-medium courses, and improved collaboration between learning providers. However, it was felt that there are some areas where there remains scope to improve equality across Wales in terms of KS4 learning experiences. The Group recognised that there are operational challenges for some schools and LA areas in delivering wider choice. They concluded that reducing the minimum number of courses required to form a local curriculum, whilst ensuring that valuable elements of the policy are protected (eg vocational / Welsh-medium provision), is a means of providing all schools in Wales with the flexibility and support necessary to focus more on the quality of the offer, rather than the number of courses made available. The Group considered that, moving forward, this should ensure that the guiding principles of the policy are not lost and, if anything, can be further consolidated as the delivery challenge is reduced.

Linkages with other policy developments

The Group considered the decision to review the local curriculum offer at KS4 now to be of opportune timing; especially against the backdrop of recent educational developments.

In taking forward the review, it was considered important to take stock of all recently introduced or impending policy changes that directly or indirectly affect local collaborative provision at KS4 to ensure that proposed changes here were not in discordance with wider developments. Improved coherence was a key driver for change and the Group recognised the need to adapt aspects of the policy to reflect the evolving educational environment.

Imminent changes that will directly impact on the KS4 local curriculum offer were considered, such as the implementation of the recommendations from the 14-19 Review of Qualifications (including the new numeracy GCSE and revised Welsh Baccalaureate (WBQ)). The Group also looked at

overarching Ministerial priorities: improving standards in literacy and numeracy and narrowing the gap between poverty and attainment. Policy developments that have been introduced to directly address these targets were reflected on, such as the introduction of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) for pupils aged 5-14 and the review of Assessment and National Curriculum, which is underway, and the Group were satisfied that proposed recommendations were not at odds with the underlying agenda.

The Group also considered options for the future delivery of 14-19 and noted Hill's conclusions following his review of education services review on the future delivery of education services in Wales. The recommendations around increasing school partnerships (hard clusters, federating schools) and organising school improvement with a stronger and more consistent regional tier, were considered to be of particular relevance. The Group recognised the opportunity for the regional tier to play a greater role in ensuring a strategic approach to 14-19 provision moving forward.

Opportunities and challenges

In considering evidence the Group were mindful of particularly difficult budget settlements within which the Welsh Government and LAs currently have to operate. Consequently, the Group focussed on bringing forward recommendations that not only seek to improve local curriculum provision for learners, but that are also realistic in terms of deliverability.

The review process was an opportunity to identify areas that could be delivered or managed more effectively to ensure gains made since the emergence of the 14-19 Learning Pathways policy were not lost in an environment of fiscal pressure. The Group members deemed it important to be explicit about what activities they judged should be funded from the 14-19 grant and what activities should be linked to other policy and programme resources going forward. This exercise was enhanced given the evolution of educational funding and greater local delegation to schools since the 14-19 grant was first introduced; and realisation that there are now already in place more appropriate mechanisms for funding certain activities than a stand alone 14-19 grant.

The Group accepted the need to rationalise the 14-19 grant for sustainability purposes, but after analysis of current activity, they also considered it necessary to ensure that regional 14-19 co-ordinators, while still afforded a degree of flexibility in terms of planning, are clear on identified national priorities. This should facilitate a more consistent approach to delivery across Wales and also ensure the protection of front line services to learners. The Group members were of the opinion that these services should include course provision for 14-16 year olds, in particular vocational courses, and activities around engaging learners in the education system.

The Group placed high value on quality learner support within learning environments and recognised that protecting this component of the 14-19 grant provides the opportunity for the 14-19 agenda to better align with and contribute to the wider agenda of "not in education, employment or training" (NEET) prevention work, which is being taken forward under the implementation of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework.

In specifying the minimum levels of funding that will be required in future the Group's intention is to ensure a seamless transition to the new arrangements, protecting essential elements. The need for ongoing financial support for learners already undertaking courses was considered a key part of this. Ever mindful of the need for efficiency savings moving forward, the Group members judged that some ongoing resource will be required for the delivery of local collaborative provision at KS4, over and above that available through core funding to schools, even if the proposed changes to the Measure are accepted.

Recommendations

The Group commends to the Minister for Education and Skills the following recommended actions to be taken forward by the Welsh Government in conjunction with regional education consortia, local curriculum planners and 14-19 learning providers:

1. Regulations under the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 should be brought forward as a matter of urgency to reduce the minimum number of courses required to form a local curriculum offer at KS4 to 25.

- 2 Regulations under the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 should include a minimum number of 3 vocational courses required to form a local curriculum offer at KS4. The Group further recommends close monitoring of impact and that the Welsh Government remits Estyn to undertake an evaluation of the quality and relevance of local curriculum offers in a sample of schools.
- 3 As the points scoring system contained within the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 has now served its purpose and no longer contributes to the process of local curriculum planning in a practical sense, new Regulations should be used to withdraw this requirement at both KS4 and post-16 as soon as possible.
- 4 A ring-fenced element of the funding for 14-19 Welsh-medium courses will need to be in place and equity of provision will need to be protected.
- 5 There should be a more consistent approach between LAs and across regions in how local curriculum student transport is managed and funded during the school day, including the sharing of models of good practice with the aim of reducing transport spend.
- 6 Greater use of timetabling solutions, peripatetic teachers, and evolving virtual learning environments (VLEs) should be made by schools and colleges to reduce learner travel and associated costs.
- 7 Generic vocational two-tiered (L1 and L2) IVET qualifications based within or across sectors should be developed through the Review of Qualifications stakeholder framework and in conjunction with industry and awarding organisation representatives, in order to deliver a broader options base for IVETs at KS4 and better facilitate progression to post-16 learning in a vocational context (CVETs).
- 8 A broader communications strategy should be developed around 14-19 changes, including connectivity across other DfES policy developments such as changes to vocational qualifications, so that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the synergies and interactions between current educational policy developments.
- 9 In taking forward the IVET approach at KS4, some flexibility should be included in the qualifications categorisation arrangements to ensure that appropriate qualifications that attest to generic competencies (eg basic food hygiene) can be studied by, and funded for, KS4 learners.
- 10 As a reflection of the evolution of school budgets since the introduction of 14-19 grants, for example the School Effectiveness Grant (SEG) or Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG), only the costs for staff training associated with the learning coach function should be supported through the 14-19 funding. Other costs associated with the learning coach function should be harmonised within wider funding streams to schools.
- 11 Moving forward, the Welsh Government should consider transitional arrangements that would move towards the harmonisation of the 14-19 grant for KS4 provision into other regional level funding streams, taking into account the recommendations from the review of the future delivery of education services in Wales, thus also realising efficiencies around administrative costs due to economies of scale.
- 12 For post-16 learners starting programmes of study from September 2014, the costs associated with the delivery of activities including course provision (as currently subsidised by the 14-19 grant), should be met solely through the new post-16 funding system.
- 13 Transitional arrangements to be put into place for 2014-15 to ensure the implementation of changes to 14-19 policy and programmes, whilst protecting provision for those learners already undertaking courses, with a minimum funding level of £10 million. For 2015-16 and beyond the minimum level of funding could be set at £8 million as new harmonised arrangements come into effect.

- 14 That the Welsh Government over the next 12 months works closely with regional network coordinators and consortia leads, to develop the evolving role of the regions in managing 14-19 delivery and associated funding in a more robust and consistent way, including the preparation of clear revised 14-19 guidance for stakeholders.

Chapter 1: Introduction and context

1.1 Background

The Welsh Government committed itself to transforming provision for 14 to 19 year olds following the publication of 'The Learning Country: Vision into Action' in 2006. The aim was to ensure that:

*'95 per cent of young people by the age of 25 are ready for high skilled employment and/or further education or higher education by 2015.'*¹

The 14-19 Learning Pathways framework published in 2006² consists of six key elements, which fall into two distinct categories: learner provision and learner support. In order to ensure consistent implementation of the policy, its basic principles have been encompassed within a legal framework – the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 (hereafter referred to as 'the Measure').³

One of the key elements within the learner provision category is 'wider choice and flexibility of programmes and ways of learning'. The current KS4 local curriculum requirement of 30 choices was subject to consultation during the development of the Measure. The Measure was subsequently passed by the National Assembly for Wales on 17 March 2009 and approved by her Majesty in Council on 13 May 2009.

The Measure is a means of driving the implementation of 14-19 Learning Pathways, and has ensured that all 14-19 learners in maintained secondary schools and further education institutions in Wales are currently able to choose from a minimum of 30 courses, of which five must be vocational.

The Measure also ensures that young people have access to learner support services which will help them overcome any barriers to their learning. By providing young people with access to a wide range of courses and learner support services the expectation is for:

- educational attainment to rise at both KS4 and post-16;
- a reduction in the number of young people leaving full-time education with no qualifications;
- an increase in the number of young people progressing into further learning; and
- a reduction in the number of 16-18 year olds who become NEET.

The National Assembly for Wales' Children and Young People Committee⁴ held an inquiry into the implementation of the Measure in autumn 2011. The purpose was to scrutinise the legislation and assess how successfully it had been implemented across Wales.

The Committee's report, published in May 2012, contained ten recommendations, including:

*'The Minister for Education and Skills should review the decision to set 30 courses (including five vocational courses) as the minimum number of courses necessary to form a Local Curriculum at Key Stage 4. As part of his review, the Minister should evaluate any unintended consequences of the wider choice of courses; the balance between academic and vocational courses and the impact on smaller and rural schools.'*⁵

The report also denotes that much of the evidence presented was contradictory and some witnesses to their inquiry expressed concerns over accessibility and the impact of wider choice. The Committee raised no issues with regard the post-16 curriculum offer.

¹ [The Learning Country: Vision into Action 2006](#)

² [Learning Pathways 14-19 Guidance 2006](#)

³ [Learning and Skills \(Wales\) Measure 2009](#)

⁴ [Children and Young People Committee](#)

⁵ [Inquiry into the Implementation of the Learning and Skills \(Wales\) Measure 2009 – Report](#)

1.2 Terms of reference

The terms of reference of this Task and Finish Group were defined as reviewing and making recommendations to the Welsh Government on the KS4 local curriculum offer. Specifically, the Group were asked to make recommendations on the future number of choices, taking into account:

- any unintended consequences of wider choice of courses;
- the balance between general and vocational courses;
- accessibility of courses in rural areas and the impact on smaller and rural schools;
- the impact on Welsh-medium and bilingual schools;
- alignment with the 14-19 Transport Review and the 14-19 Qualifications Review;
- the potential impact of the end of 14-19 grant funding on sustainability; and
- the views of learners.⁶

As part of the review the Group were also asked to consider the validity of the requirement of minimum points for a local curriculum offer for KS4 and post-16. At KS4 there is presently a minimum points score of 780 points, which must consist of at least 260 points covering vocational courses and at post-16 there is a requirement for a minimum score of 1600 points.

1.3 14-19 dependencies/synergies

Policy areas with linkages to the 14-19 education phase were identified in order to ensure that the recommendations were considered within a wider context. It was also recognised that the map (copy at Annex D) benefits subsequent development of policy in considering alignment with other policies as well as establishing which areas need to be either directly consulted or informed of change.

1.4 Methodology

The Group met a total of six times. It also considered papers distributed virtually, 'out of committee'.

The secretariat for the group was provided by Welsh Government Department for Education and Skills (DfES) officials. The secretariat had a role in ensuring relevant evidence was shared with the Group to inform discussions, commissioning additional research on the Group's behalf when evidence gaps were identified, and providing administrative and logistical support for meetings.

The Group sought evidence from a variety of sources and range of statistical data was used to inform debate. Verbal and written evidence was provided to the Group by representatives from:

- North Wales Regional 14-19 Network
- Central South Regional 14-19 Network
- South West and Mid Wales Regional 14-19 Network
- South East Regional 14-19 Network
- Knowledge and Analytical Services (Welsh Government)
- LMI Project (Welsh Government)
- Welsh Language Development Unit (Welsh Government)
- Review of Qualifications (Welsh Government)

⁶ The last two points were added by the Group following agreement of the Minister for Education and Skills

- Assessment and National Curriculum Review (Welsh Government)
- BMG Research⁷

This document, which represents the final report of the Task and Finish Group, is submitted to the Minister for Education and Skills for consideration.

⁷ [BMG Research website](#)

Chapter 2: Evidence

The Group established areas that have salience for KS4 education and evidence was provided in order to inform discussions. A summary of evidence presented to the Group is included in this chapter.

2.1 Children and Young People Committee's inquiry into implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009

The Group noted the report from the above inquiry and that the Committee members received evidence from a broad range of stakeholders before arriving at the ten recommendations in their report.

In the report the Committee do not challenge that the implementation of the Measure has resulted in increased choice for learners, particularly the number of vocational courses that are offered, as witnesses confirmed this to be the case. However, reference is made in the report to contradictory evidence being presented to the Committee on whether all pupils are able to benefit from wider choice and the extent to which practical barriers restrict the choice of some learners. The report also examines the relationship between funding and sustainability and captures concerns from 14-19 network co-ordinators, who reported that:

“we need to move towards sustainability, but if we add transport costs to the costs of the provision of vocational courses, then that can be inhibiting or even prohibitive.”⁸

The Group were advised that the recommendation to review the requirements of the KS4 local curricula is one of the more fundamental in the report and that the Minister for Education and Skills accepted this recommendation stating:

“Although we have still not seen the full impact of the Learning Pathways policy I am keen that all Welsh Government policies are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are benefitting learners. I am therefore accepting a review of the local curriculum at Key Stage 4 in relation to the minimum number of courses offered. I remain fully committed to ensuring that young people are offered a local curriculum which provides access to a wide range of courses that allows them to follow courses which meet both their individual needs and interests”⁹

2.2 Research and statistics

Social Research

At an early stage in the review, the Group received relevant pieces of 14-19 Social Research from the Welsh Government's Knowledge and Analytical Services (KAS). The existing Welsh based evidence includes:

- Learning Options for 14-19 Year Olds (2007)¹⁰ – a study which sought to examine the perceptions of young people, parents and 14-19 network representatives in relation to the Welsh Government's Learning Pathways policy. The focus of the study was the extent to which these stakeholders were aware of and understood the elements of the Learning Pathways, and their attitudes towards it.

⁸ [Inquiry into the Implementation of the Learning and Skills \(Wales\) Measure 2009 – Report](#)

⁹ [Written response to the recommendations in the Committee's report](#)

¹⁰ [Learning Options for 14-19 Year Olds \(2007\)](#)

- Evaluation of the Learning and Skills Measure (2009)¹¹ – a study which focussed on the likely impacts of the Measure on 14-19 Pathways and assesses the degree to which wider choice is secured, considering Welsh-medium provision and partnerships in rural areas.
- Learner Voice (2009)¹² – the school learner voice survey which captures learner views on motivation, collaborative delivery and reasons for not being able to study first choice subjects.
- Estyn: Welsh-medium and bilingual provision for 14-19 learners (2008)¹³ – the review identified the extent to which Welsh-medium and bilingual provision is a barrier to delivering 14-19 Learning Pathways.
- Estyn: Progress in implementing a wider option choice (2010)¹⁴ – the review examined progress but also identified shortcomings.

The headline findings noted by the Group were:

- young people felt that employers were more likely to take on people with academic qualifications (Learning Options for 14-19 Year Olds 2007);
- schools with high achievement rates were not always fully engaged in 14-19 Learning Pathways (Evaluation of the Learning and Skills Measure 2009);
- pupils often did not differentiate between academic and vocational courses – they were just seen as options on the menu (Evaluation of the Learning and Skills Measure 2009);
- if student demands for courses are met, motivation and satisfaction increases (Learner Voice 2009);
- students studying at more than one site were less likely to want to enter year 12 at that school than attend FE college (11% compared with 33% of learners where lessons were all at one site) (Learner Voice 2009);
- the main reason for not being able to study first choice subjects is a timetabling issue (Learner Voice 2009);
- the number of vocational qualifications available in Welsh is a small proportion of what is available in English (Estyn: Welsh-medium and bilingual provision for 14-19 learners 2008);
- there is too little evaluation of the quality, outcomes, efficiency and cost effectiveness of provision (Estyn: Progress in implementing a wider option choice 2010);
- there is variation in the range and number of courses available to learners in different areas (Estyn: Progress in implementing a wider option choice 2010);
- too many courses have limited viability because they attract only small numbers of learners and/or duplicate provision that is available elsewhere in the same catchment area (Estyn: Progress in implementing a wider option choice 2010).

The Group considered understanding the experience of KS4 learners in schools to be of particular importance when making recommendations in respect of the local curriculum offer. Consequently, the Group requested the views of learners be added to the terms of reference and also for research to be commissioned by the Welsh Government so that this could be considered in the context of the review.

¹¹ [Evaluation of the Learning and Skills Measure \(2009\)](#)

¹² [Learner Voice 2009](#)

¹³ [Estyn: Welsh medium and bilingual provision for 14-19 learners \(2008\)](#)

¹⁴ [Estyn: Progress in implementing a wider option choice \(2010\)](#)

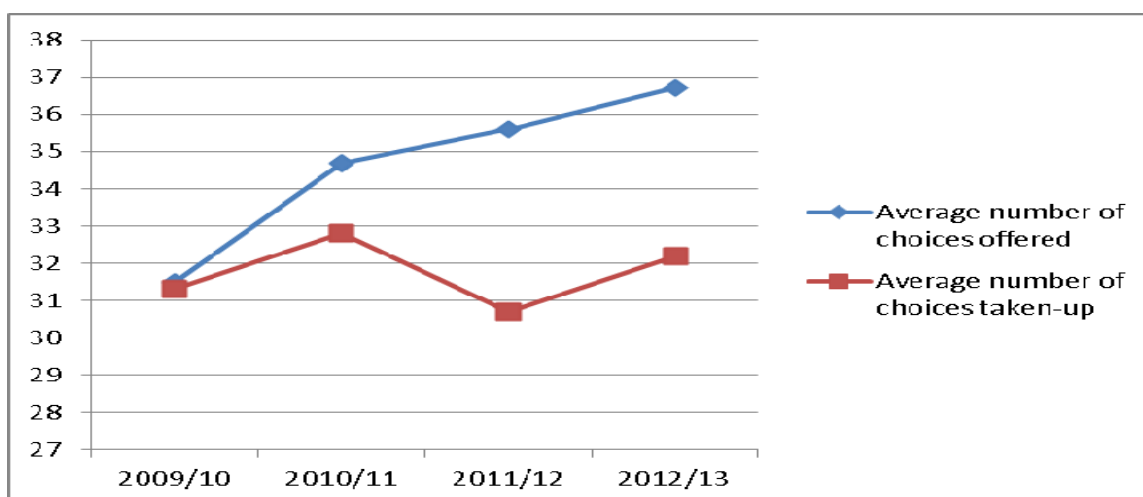
Course offer and take up data

Analysis of curriculum data on the take up of local curriculum courses was offered to the Group.

Schools record their KS4 local curriculum information on Careers Wales Online; this includes both their local curriculum offer and information on the courses that are subsequently delivered, together with numbers of students following courses.

A comparison of the average number of choices offered with those taken up by learners and delivered suggests that whilst there is a differential, the vast majority of choices are taken up by learners and run. The table below also shows that the average number of choices delivered has consistently met, and slightly exceeded, the statutory minimum offer requirement of 30 choices.

KS4 local curriculum courses offered and taken up by learners



Source: Analysis of Careers Wales Online KS4 offer and take-up data, Welsh Government, 2013

Analysis was undertaken on the average number of courses offered by LAs. The Careers Wales Online data shows that in 2012/13 the average number of choices offered within LA areas ranged from 31.8 in Powys to 42.7 in Wrexham; with a Wales average offer size of 36.7 courses. Regarding the take up of those courses the average number ranged from 26.1 courses in Caerphilly to 37 in Blaenau Gwent; with a Wales average of 32.2 courses taken up.

Regarding 2013/14 plans, schools across Wales have offered an average of 37 courses; with LA averages ranging from 33.5 in Ceredigion to 42.8 in Wrexham. The data from courses taken up by learners from Careers Wales online for the 2013/14 academic year was still being finalised at the time of writing and is not available for this report, but it is anticipated that a similar pattern where the majority of courses offered are taken up would continue.

If a course is offered and then does not run, typically, this is due to timetabling issues or lower levels of learners choosing that option, as subjects with a low number of learners enrolled are generally not financially viable. It has been reported that travelling to access course provision can be a deterring factor for some learners when making their subject choices, though the costs for such travel is also a factor when considering the viability of running a course option.

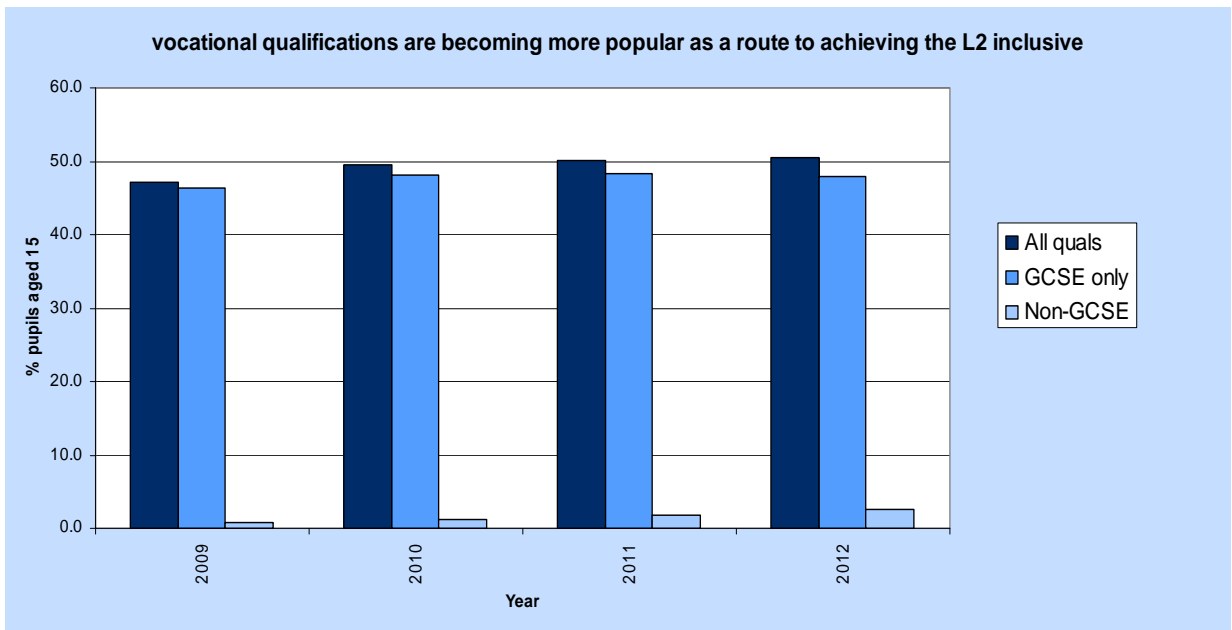
Key Performance Data

The 14-19 key performance indicators and trends were shared with the Group and some of the statistics of interest included:

- the percentage of pupils achieving the Level 2 (L2) inclusive¹⁵ is increasing; from 47.2 in 2009 to 50.5 in 2012;

¹⁵ The L2 inclusive threshold is equivalent to 5 A*s to C GCSEs including English/Welsh and mathematics – including vocational.

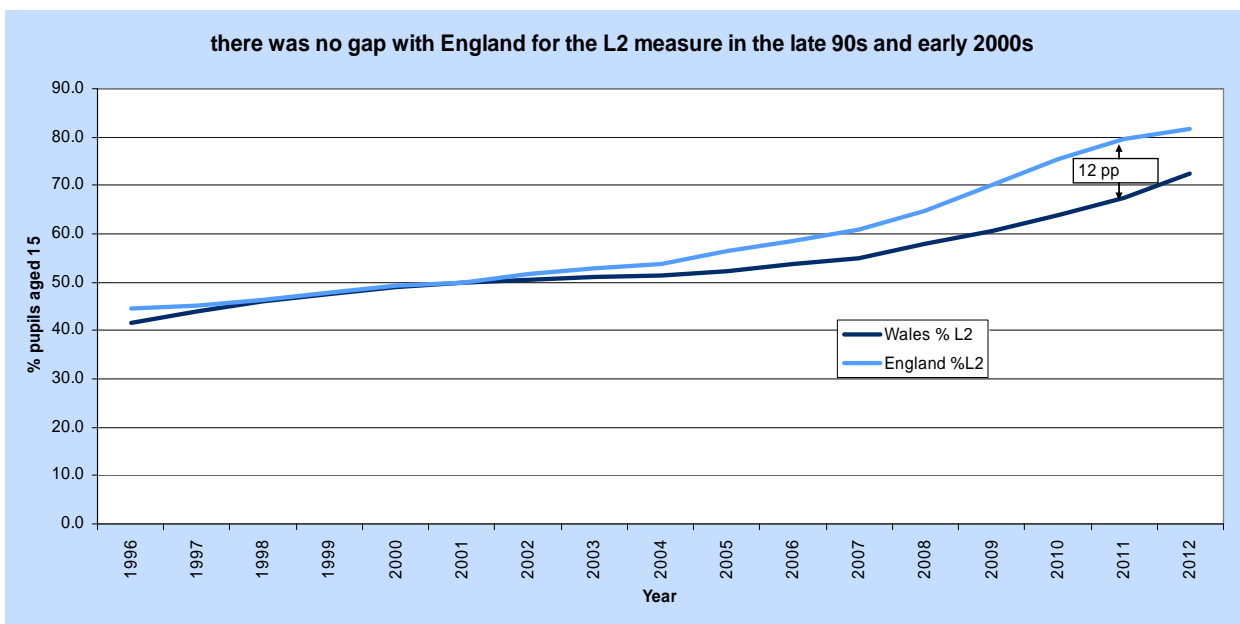
- the percentage of pupils achieving the L2 inclusive from only GCSEs has decreased slightly from 48.3 in 2011 to 47.9 in 2012; and
- the percentage of pupils achieving the L2 inclusive from non GCSE qualifications has been increasing; from 0.8 in 2009 to 2.6 in 2012.



Source: School statistics (Welsh Government)

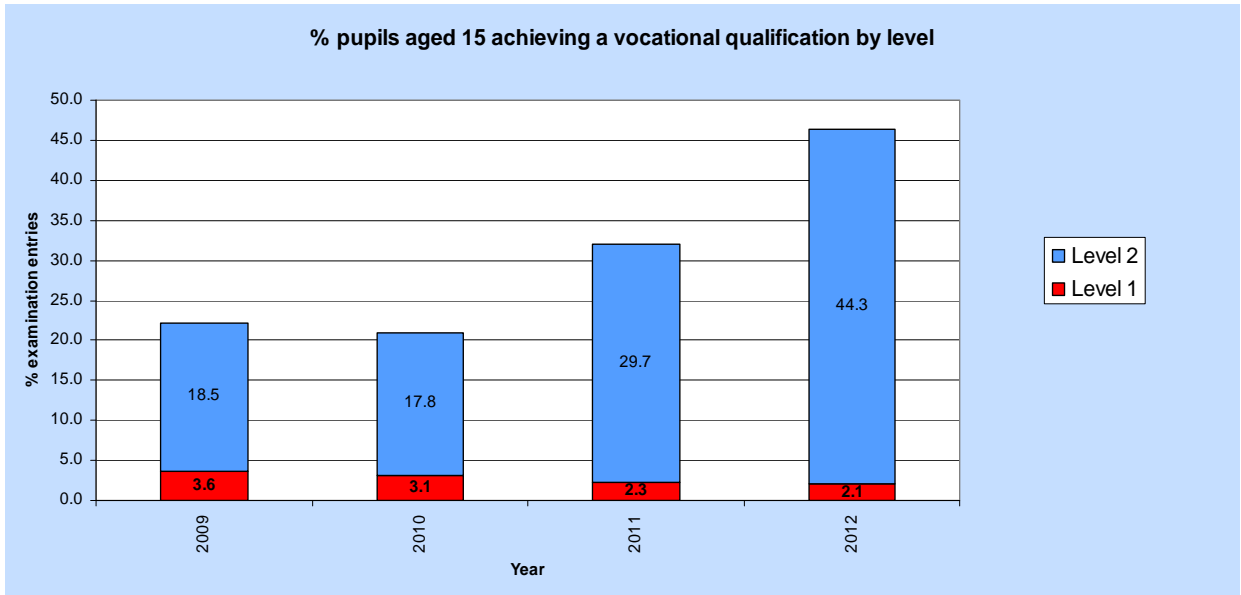
A comparison with England of the percentage of learners achieving L2 was shared with the Group and it was noted that the level of attainment increased year on year in Wales, with significant increases after the period when the 14-19 Learning Pathways policy was introduced (2006). It was also noted that the gap in attainment between England and Wales has narrowed recently to 9.2 percentage points.

The percentage of pupils achieving the L2 inclusive measure has been increasing, and the vocational element of qualifications within the L2 inclusive is increasing, which leads to the assumption that the expansion of vocational qualifications is contributing to higher levels of attainment.



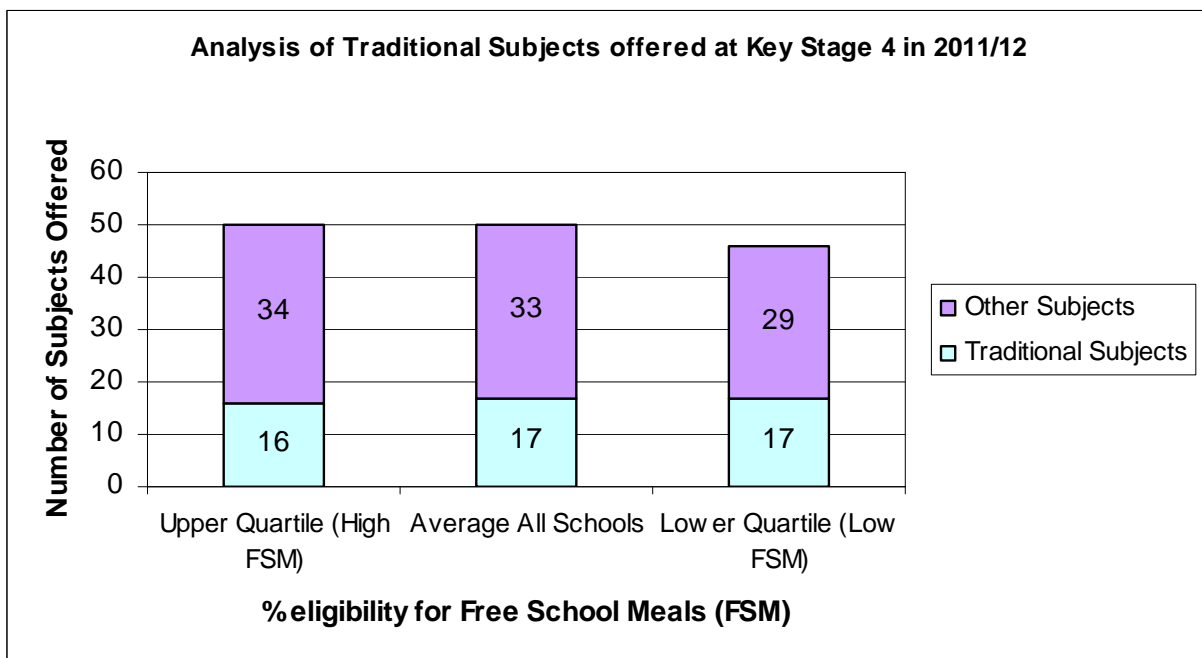
Source: School statistics (Welsh Government)

The Group also noted that since the introduction of the Measure in 2009 the percentage of Level 1 (L1) entries has decreased slightly whereas the percentage of L2 entries has significantly increased. The continued use of L1 courses is important to ensure that appropriate courses are being made available to learners where a lower level is necessary. However, the increasing achievement of L2 vocational courses signals that greater emphasis is being placed on the vocational element and on learner progression.



Source: School statistics (Welsh Government)

Analysis of the 2011/12 KS4 local curriculum offer was undertaken to assess whether there was any notable difference in the nature of the course offer between 'traditional' subjects and other subjects, based on the Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility level of the schools.

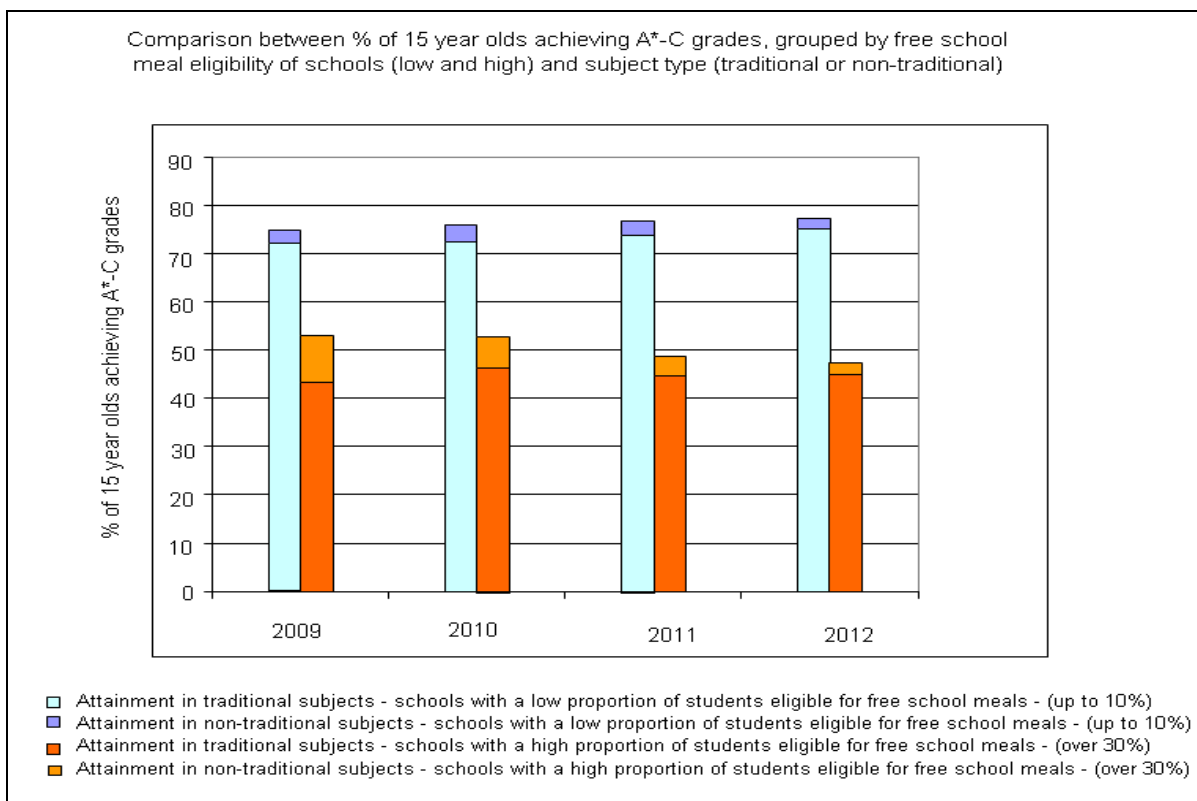


Source: Careers Wales Online offer data, 2011/12

The latest available complete data showed that there was no notable correlation between the number of 'traditional' subjects offered in schools at KS4 and the schools' level of Free School Meal

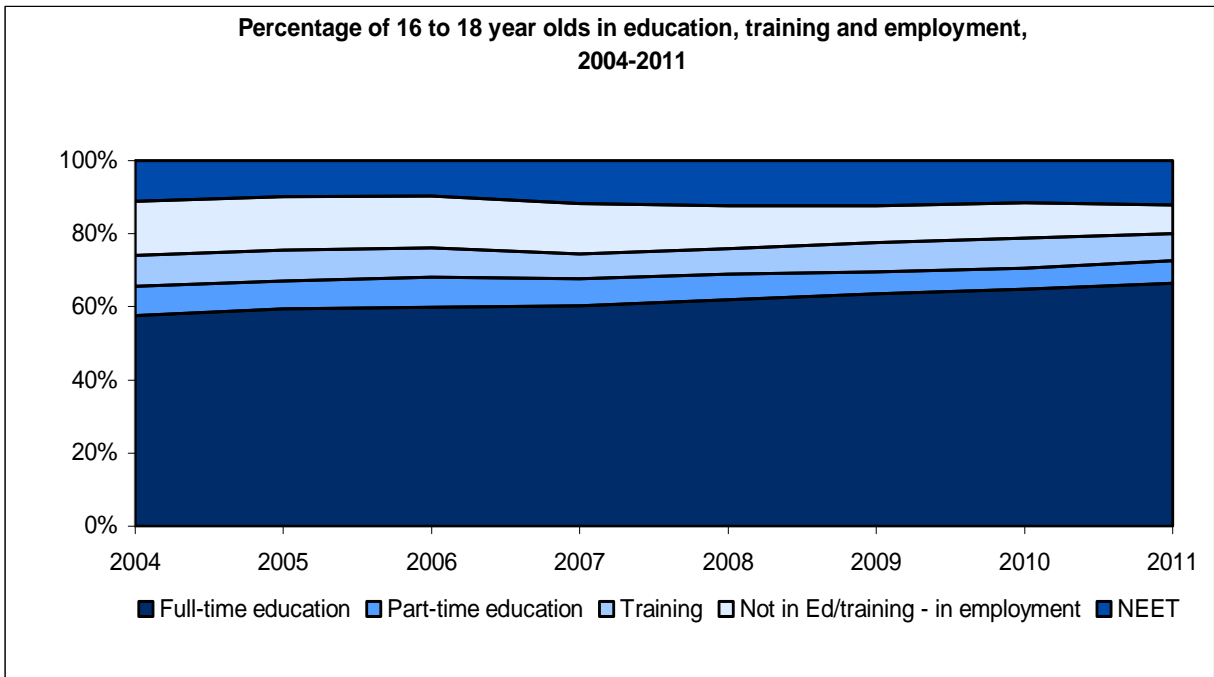
(FSM) eligibility. Interestingly, however, the nature of the offer of other 'non-traditional' courses in those schools with high FSM eligibility showed that wider choice was being delivered in those schools, with an average of 5 extra non-traditional subjects between the upper and lower quartiles. This suggests that there is a degree of wider choice being offered in more deprived communities.

Analysis of attainment levels in schools where the FSM eligibility is low (up to 10% of learners are eligible) demonstrates that, since the introduction of the Measure in 2009, the percentage of learners achieving A*-C at L2 has increased slightly. Conversely, in schools with the highest proportion of FSM eligibility (over 30% eligible), the attainment levels have decreased slightly. This indicates that whilst in some cases schools in more deprived communities might be offering wider choice, and there may be positive outcomes associated with this particularly around engagement, L1 attainment, and literacy and numeracy development, it is not yet having a notable impact on the overall attainment of learners A*-C at L2.



Source: Careers Wales Online data, School statistics attainment data (Welsh Government)

The number of 16-18 year olds who are NEET has fluctuated a little from year to year but has consistently remained around 10-12%. However, the number of 16-18 year olds in full time education has increased from 57.6% to 66.4% throughout the period. This may be as a consequence of the engagement agenda, with access to a wider choice of subjects at KS4 encouraging some learners to remain in education. There may be other factors that have led to an increase of 16-18 year olds in full time education, such as lack of employment opportunities. The statistics support this conclusion as the proportion of 16-18 year olds in employment has reduced, particularly since 2007, which suggests there are links to the recession.



Source: ONS, HESA, Welsh Government, Annual Population Survey

2.3 14–19 grant funding and regional networks

Funding

14-19 Learning Pathways grant funding has been provided to LAs by the Welsh Government to take forward the policy, including meeting the requirements of the Measure. The four LA regional education consortia have appointed lead authorities which co-ordinate the development of annual Regional Network Development Plans (RNDPs). Within the RNDPs regional consortia identify how they use their indicative grant funding allocations to take forward 14-19 Learning Pathways in their respective regions.

14-19 Learning Pathways grant allocations are considered by the Welsh Government as part of the annual budgeting process; and the budget for 2013-14 is £15.386m. This represents a decrease of 29% over the three financial years shown below.

Financial Year	14-19 Grant	Reduction from previous financial year
2011-12	£21.14m	3%
2012-13	£17.17m	19%
2013-14	£15.39m	10%

Although subject to annual fluctuations, 2013-14 spend is broadly apportioned as follows:

- 69% - Course Provision
- 13% - Learning Coaching
- 9% - Transport
- 9% - Administration

See Annex C for a more detailed all-Wales breakdown of expenditure by activity type.

Evidence from 14-19 network co-ordinators

The statistical evidence in section 2.2 largely provides substantiation to the evidence presented to the Group by the 14-19 regional network co-ordinators. They reported that since the introduction of the Measure, overall there have been improvements against key performance indicators.

Some of the network co-ordinators cited local decreases in the number of young people aged 16-18 becoming NEET has enabled many more young people to progress to further education, training and work; and that such reductions represent significant savings to the public purse based on research by the University of York (2010), which identified the average lifetime cost to society of a young person becoming NEET in England in 2008 at 16 as £56,300 per individual.¹⁶ However, while there may be local variations which are attributable to 14-19 interventions, statistical data at the Wales level shows that the number of young people who are NEET has fluctuated over the past 10 years, but has remained broadly unchanged (see section 2.2).

The network co-ordinators also provided information to the Group on what practical problems have been addressed in order to implement the Measure and examples of best practice. Some examples referenced included:

- development of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between learning bases and learning providers, together with a number of other policies and procedures to underpin the SLA, to help deliver collaborative provision across authority areas;
- removal of unnecessary duplication of courses through partnership working;
- managing issues with geographical isolation of schools and impracticability of transporting learners to other schools and colleges by the development and delivery of school based vocational courses; and
- use of blended learning and Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs), particularly by Welsh-medium schools who are less able to work in partnerships locally, to widen choice and sustain what would have been small teaching groups.

Some issues / suggestions raised included:

- inevitable consequences for L1 courses as the Measure specifically targeted L2 courses pre-16;
- mismatch between demand for courses and the job market, supported by the Hidden Talents II report¹⁷. In one region an example was given where 94,000 students completed Hair and Beauty courses, despite there being just 18,000 jobs available;
- doubts about sustainability of the partnerships and number of vocational qualifications that can be offered if 14-19 grant funding ends without a consequent evolution of the policy; and
- need for more flexibility and decision making at school level, especially given counter pressures on the curriculum – i.e. there is an increasing emphasis on core subjects, the L2 inclusive threshold and WBQ. There is also the requirement for a broad offer to meet the Measure, despite the fact that, in some instances, learners will only be accessing 2 options in a practical sense.

Network co-ordinators also submitted a sample of learner surveys from their respective regions. Some of the main findings included:

- a considerable number of learners enjoy being taught within a vocational environment;

¹⁶ [Estimating the life-time cost of NEET: 16-18 year olds not in Education, Employment or Training 2010](#)

¹⁷ [Hidden Talents II report 2013: Local Government Association 2013](#)

- learners reported issues, with unclear advice, support and information given about the courses before and after they make their option choices;
- learners reported that they like activities they don't associate with school, tasks that are practical and encourage independence; and
- dissatisfaction amongst some learners with their travel arrangements.

Dependency on grant funding to meet the Measure

Analysis was undertaken on how schools would have fared in meeting the 30 choices requirement of the Measure without 14-19 grant funding in 2012-13. This considered the aspects of the grant apportioned to course provision only. Course offer data from Careers Wales Online showed that if the choices that were grant funded in 2012-13 were removed, without the ability of schools and colleges to transition to alternative arrangements over time, 51 schools would have fallen below the minimum requirement to offer 30 course choices.

A similar exercise was undertaken on planned provision for 2013-14 and how the 14-19 grant funding supported local collaborative provision. This was tested against a minimum requirement of 30 course choices, and a revised minimum of 25 choices. The Careers Wales Online data showed that without the direct 14-19 grant funding support, and without the ability to transition to alternative arrangements, 24 schools would have fallen below the 30 choice requirement, while only 5 would have failed to meet a 25 course choice minimum¹⁸.

The reduction of schools over the 2 years (from 51 to 24) that would have failed to meet the terms of the Measure at 30 course choices if no grant funding was available suggests that dependency on 14-19 grant funding is already being managed out when making options available to learners. This may be as a consequence of reducing grant budgets over recent years.

2.4 Reviews

Review of Qualifications

The Group were provided with the background on the review¹⁹, launched by the Deputy Minister for Skills in 2011, as well as a summary of resulting recommendations. The most relevant developments considered by the Group were:

- the recommendation to adopt the definitions from the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training for Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) and Continuing Vocational Education and Training (CVET);
- changes to performance thresholds (14-16), with the non-GCSEs contribution limited to 40% and no qualification worth more than two GCSEs in equivalence terms;
- the recommendation that the WBQ should become the main performance measure after 2017. The revised WBQ model was shared with the Group, although it was noted that working groups are still engaged on the compulsory elements of the core and content of units for stakeholder feedback in autumn. The Group also noted that the value of the WBQ in terms of course choices, currently 3 choices, was likely to reduce to 1 under the new arrangements;
- the recommendation that, for teaching from 2015, two new mathematics GCSEs should be introduced, one covering numeracy and the other covering aspects of mathematical techniques; and
- the suggestion that at 14-16 learners should have a broad and balanced curriculum, and that post 16 they should undertake a coherent programme of learning.

¹⁸ The source of this data is Careers Wales Online. The data is entered by schools.

¹⁹ [Review of Qualifications for 14 to 19 year olds in Wales 2012](#)

Review of the extent and impact of increased travel as a consequence of the Measure

Research into the effects of increased travel as a result of the Measure was commissioned in response to the Children and Young People Committee's inquiry into the implementation of the Measure. The aim of the review was to identify and consider whether the additional travel requirements associated with the Measure have had any impact on learners, teachers and lecturers and, if so, to what extent. BMG Research, awarded with the contract to review the extent and impact of increased travel as a result of the Measure, presented their key findings to the Group. The main barriers to learner travel reported were:

- timetabling difficulties, and student reluctance to travel;
- cost of transport for provision at other providers and travel time;
- negative parental views; and
- poor public transport access.

The main positives reported were:

- overall, learners and senior teachers welcomed the additional curriculum options on offer;
- the quality of learning experience at other providers;
- increased learner independence; and
- increased learner engagement.

These findings were broadly in line with learner views feedback provided by the 14-19 regional networks. It was generally thought that learners would prefer to be able to study the same options at their main schools if that were possible. However despite these concerns they tended to be outweighed by learners' enjoyment of their courses.

In respect of funding, BMG maintained that interviews with LA education and transport officers uncovered concerns that some partnerships may not be sustainable without the right levels of funding for travel and there being minimal potential for savings in rural areas as the access to public transport is limited. Interviews with schools also confirmed that Welsh-medium schools (particularly in rural areas) still find it challenging to find appropriate partner organisations within easy to travel distances.

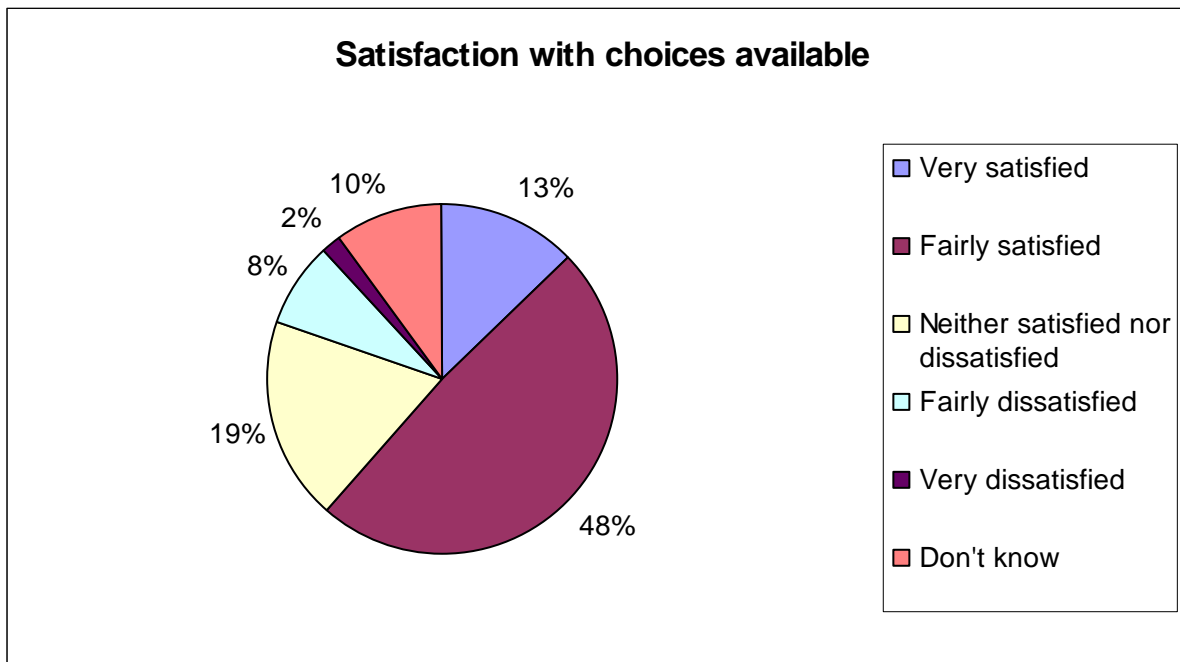
It was also reported that several LAs are currently working to identify how to fund transport when overall 14-19 grants are further reduced. This will include seeking further funding both within the authority itself and from schools and some areas are pessimistic that the current partnerships will last if funding cannot be identified.

Learners experiences at KS4

Research into learner experiences and attitudes to learner provision and support at KS4 was incorporated into the study on learner travel. Due to the restricted time and budget available for this research, only eight schools returned questionnaires covering some 2,000 learners. Therefore, the findings below are not representative of schools across Wales; results are indicative and should be interpreted with caution. The key findings presented to the group included:

- generally learners were happy with the balance of vocational and academic choices, however, there were concerns voiced that they were sometimes being 'pushed' into certain choices;
- difficulties were experienced with the 'column' system of selecting options, as choices were restricted if they clashed or were fully subscribed;
- the majority of learners reported receiving support for making their KS4 choices from family members (at 70%) and teachers (at 69%);

- 42% of learners found it 'fairly easy' to make their subject choices for KS4;
- one-fifth of learners reported having had support from a careers advisor (at 21%) or the Careers Wales website (at 22%), although awareness and use of Careers Wales and the website was generally low in discussion groups;
- high value placed on non-formal learning opportunities, particularly work experience and part-time jobs to help get practical experience. Learners were also very proud of community and volunteering activities; and
- learners wanted more 'real world' appropriate learning.



Source: BMG Research, KS4 learner views study, 2013

Assessment and National Curriculum Review

While the Assessment and National Curriculum review is focussed on KS2 and KS3, the Group members were interested to find out about it and consider whether there might be implications for KS4. It was explained that, in short, the purpose of the review is to:

- consider whether the expectations for what learners should know and be able to do, as set out in the current National Curriculum Subject Orders, are sufficiently demanding and in line with the expectations of the LNF; and
- consider the wider assessment arrangements which operate in schools and to make recommendations on any changes needed to ensure that the LNF and the tests form part of a coherent approach.

The team leading on the review has been in phase one – evidence gathering and analysis - and will be launching an open consultation in the autumn 2013.

The future delivery of education services in Wales

In January 2013 the then Minister (Leighton Andrews AM) announced the appointment of Robert Hill to undertake the review on the future delivery of education services in Wales. The Group noted

that the resulting report²⁰, which has been the subject of consultation until September 2013, presents a wide range of options for consideration by the Welsh Ministers covering five areas:

- improving classroom teaching and learning
- strengthening school leadership
- **increasing school partnership**
- improving accountability
- **organising school improvement**

The Group considered the sections more relevant to the forward management of 14-19 Learning Pathways business. In the report, a recommendation put forward is to increase school autonomy by licensing schools to take greater control over managing staff, the curriculum and budgets, while also increasing formal school partnerships / federations. The argument in support of this is that it should lead to increased attainment as schools will be subject to clear accountability for their performance. This arrangement would also place more responsibility on high performing schools to assist weaker schools. The Group recognised that these possible changes could have implications for 14-19 Learning Pathways. For example, it would likely cement existing collaboration between schools when developing their local curriculum offer, and could have an effect on how funding is applied in future.

The Hill review report also proposes that there is an immediate consolidation of the number of education services, with a view to reorganising LA education functions. If these recommendations are implemented the Group recognised that this will impact on the regional working models currently in place to facilitate 14-19 Learning Pathways.

2.5 Welsh-medium forums

The Group received background on the Welsh-medium forums set up to facilitate schools and colleges collaborating to support each other and share provision where possible. The main objectives of the forums are to:

- promote development of Welsh-medium 14-19 education and linguistic progression routes;
- promote cross-border collaboration between institutions offering Welsh-medium or bilingual education; and
- provide support, advice and leadership to educational institutions that provide Welsh-medium or bilingual provision.

There are 3 forums set up across Wales: one in north Wales; one in south west and mid Wales; and one in south east Wales (incorporating central and east regions).

While the 14-19 grant allocation for funding the forums is not substantial (for 2013-14 it is £186,286, with £1.341m of the total grant set aside to fund Welsh-medium and bilingual course provision) it was explained that funding the forums has a role in supporting the delivery of Welsh-medium courses.

2.6 Labour Market Intelligence (LMI)

Welsh Government representatives shared research with the Group and highlighted the following key points:

- LMI project has taken account of skills surveys and related analysis in order to improve the accessibility and usage of LMI to help inform the decisions of potential users;²¹

²⁰ [The future delivery of education services in Wales: Review undertaken by Robert Hill Consulting 2013](#)

- research indicates that there is a mismatch between young people's career aspirations and the labour market;
- the engagement agenda pre-16, which includes Careers and the World of Work, provides an opportunity to better inform young people on available progression routes, which in turn should help to inform their individual learning pathway; and
- where education leavers were assessed to be poorly prepared for work, the reasons why were asked, with a lack of working world / life experience, maturity, a poor attitude, and lack of motivation cited as the main reasons across most groups.

The LMI project team was commissioned to produce a paper on the current evidence on the benefits and detriments of the curriculum offer at KS4, with particular attention paid to the increasing number and range of vocational qualifications available. The desk study involved a summation of existing research, and also covered the effects of obtaining a vocational qualification on the likelihood of gaining employment. Some of the key findings included:

- there are several issues that schools may encounter when delivering vocational courses, some created or exacerbated due to working with an external provider;
- positive effects are reported on the probability of gaining employment from obtaining a vocational qualification, and findings show this is broadly in line with those found for academic qualifications;
- Ofsted's two year survey²² investigating the effects of increased flexibility in the KS4 curriculum in England found that for some groups of students, particularly those at risk of disaffection or disengagement, students were enjoying learning more in KS4 due to the opportunity to study subjects they felt were more relevant, and also due to the greater variation in modes of learning;
- studying vocational subjects can improve the attendance, behaviour and attainment of learners, especially those who are at risk of disengagement, and
- evidence was inconclusive on whether taking more vocational courses at KS4 resulted in substantial improvements in the general attainment of students (also noted at section 2.2).

At the Denbighshire Pathways to Success Event, held on 15 March 2013, the Head Girl of Rhyl High School spoke about how wider choice has benefitted learners at the school:

“Over the past couple of years the pupils at my school have been offered the chance to use the strengths they have to gain qualifications from several different programmes that are suited to them as a part of their regular school week, and one significant change from this is the number of exclusions – in 2008 we'd had 279 incidents of exclusion in the year, 500 days lost, where last year only 30 incidents and 102 days lost. Of course many pupils are quite happy to be in school and in a classroom all the time, but there are many different options for those who aren't.”

2.7 The local curriculum points

The rationale for adopting a scoring system when the Measure was introduced in 2009 on top of the requirement for schools and colleges to offer a minimum of 30 courses was to ensure the needs of all learners were being met. This meant that L1 courses could be included in the scoring system at KS4 and Levels 1 and 2 courses at post-16.

At KS4 30 courses at L2 (GCSE size) is equivalent to a score of 600 (30 x 20) – however under the Measure a minimum score of 780 is set for each local curriculum. This score was set to ensure

²¹ [Employer Skills Survey](#), [Employer Perspectives Survey](#), [Working Futures](#), [National Strategic Skills Audit for Wales](#)

²² [Ofsted: The Key Stage 4 curriculum: increased flexibility and work-related learning 2007](#)

learning providers offered a range of courses of various size / volume and level. Within this score, a minimum score requirement of 260 has been set for vocational provision (one third).

As a consequence at KS4, where schools are required to meet 30 choices including a minimum 5 vocational courses, they also have to ensure the curriculum covers 780 points of which 260 points must cover vocational courses.

At post-16, 30 courses at L3 are required together with a minimum score of 1600 points. To be eligible to count as a choice the minimum size of each course is required to be equivalent to a minimum of 34 points which equates to Diplomas available from the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). All Level 3 Diplomas on the QCF count as a choice. For courses based on qualifications from the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) such as GCE A Level the minimum size acceptable to count as a choice is 50 points. Courses at Levels 1 and 2 (with a local curriculum score of at least 20) can contribute to the achievement of the 1600 points provided that the requirement of a minimum of 30 choices at Level 3 is met.

At present some vocational courses have a size of 120+ points and examples of such qualifications are shown in the table.

Course Title	Local Curriculum Score
City & Guilds Level 2 Diploma In Furnishings - Upholstery (QCF)	120
City & Guilds Level 2 Diploma in Work-based Horse Care (QCF)	140
SQA Level 3 Diploma in Shopfitting (Construction) (QCF)	175

Chapter 3: Main conclusions and recommendations

The Group, upon reviewing the evidence presented, discussed the way forward using the headings in the terms of reference as a structure.

3.1 The consequences of wider course choice

It was clear from evidence presented that the intended consequences of wider choice include: joint working, promoting access and availability of Welsh-medium courses, consistency across Wales and improvements against key performance indicators. The Group recognised that there has been considerable progress against all areas since the introduction of the Measure.

The unintended consequences were also considered by Group members. These included:

- disruption to the school day associated with lengthy travel time or other problems associated with travel arrangements;
- delivery of more vocational subjects by school teachers. In such instances where the subject is outside the teacher's direct area of expertise, this can impact on training / development needs and / or on the quality of the delivery;
- increased uptake of vocational subjects inevitably having an impact on lower uptake in some traditional subjects, demonstrated by the percentage of pupils achieving the L2 inclusive from non GCSE qualifications increasing;
- expectation of learners successfully completing L2 vocational course that they will be able to progress to a professional qualification at L3;
- shared timetable issues and impact of this on other groups of learners within the school; and
- less emphasis on L1 courses as the Measure is focused on L2, although this is offset with a marked increase in the number of learners achieving a L2 qualification (table section 2.2: % pupils aged 15 achieving a vocational qualification by level).

The Group also cited other positives of wider choice, which included:

- change in baseline expectation for learners and expectations for future pathways;
- more young people achieving at L2;
- reduction in permanent exclusions from school and disaffection amongst groups of KS4 learners, demonstrated by improved attendance;
- learners across the ability range choosing more suitable pathways;
- learners experiencing varied modes of learning and gaining access to different learning environments; and
- narrowing of the gap between poverty and attainment.

While it is not possible to attribute all improvements to the policy of wider choice, the Group was of the opinion that, in combination with other factors, it is having a positive effect on learners at KS4. The Group considered that this was supported by overarching trends in performance and attainment data. Consequently, the Group consensus was that the positives of wider choice outweigh the negatives, which are mainly operational challenges and can be mitigated through sharing best practice.

3.2 The balance between general and vocational courses

The Group considered the minimum size of the overall local curriculum offer and whether 5 was the right number of vocational courses that should be offered and what the overall balance should be.

The size of the offer

The Estyn report 'Wider choice and the learning core'²³ stated that the increased availability of vocational qualifications has had a positive impact on students, including improvements in attainment, attendance and behaviour, especially amongst those who are at risk of disengagement.

The Group considered the improvements against key performance indicators and it was acknowledged that, while 14-19 cannot claim to be wholly responsible for the improvements as there are other variables (such as the transformation agenda), it has certainly had an impact, most notably in enabling students to get better outcomes in vocational courses and staying engaged with education.

When evaluating a local curriculum offer, the Group noted that Estyn considers whether the needs of the learners are being met and whether it is varied enough. The number of courses offered therefore is not the main focus, although since the introduction of the Measure, it has been tracked by the Welsh Government. Reference is also made in the Children and Young People Committee's report to the then Minister for Education and Skills (Leighton Andrews AM) informing the Committee that while there needs to be a meaningful choice, the focus should be more on quality.²⁴

Furthermore, analysis of a local curriculum offer against attainment using national comparator data has revealed that it is difficult to correlate between the number of courses offered and performance of the school – i.e. in terms of attainment at the L2 inclusive threshold, learners at schools that offer the minimum of 30 courses are not necessarily disadvantaged when compared to learners at schools that offer in excess of 40 courses. Equally, the Group noted it is difficult to track trends in attainment based on the nature of the KS4 offer, such as the balance between 'traditional' and 'non-traditional' subjects, even when schools with high FSM eligibility were on average providing a wider range of course options to their learners. Wider choice, vocational options, and NEET prevention activities may increase learner engagement and in turn support wider developmental needs – such as improved literacy and numeracy skills. But direct links from those outcomes through to improved A* to C grades within the L2 threshold were less easy to track, and this is supported by the analysis of attainment by FSM groups at different ends of the spectrum in section 2.2.

In light of findings from the Learner Voice Survey (2009) that, 'if student demands for courses are met, motivation and satisfaction increases' (section 2.2), the Group considered whether reducing the minimum requirements would have an effect on engagement. The Group was of the opinion that a reduced minimum could have a positive effect if balanced with an increased emphasis on the quality of the offer (this extends both to the quality of teaching and range and relevance of courses being provided).

The Group also considered the need to be realistic and ways of ensuring that the quality / quantity balance is maintained within an environment of decreasing dedicated funding resource. It was agreed that the minimum number of course choices needs to reduce to allow all schools in Wales local flexibility to ensure improved quality of provision. Also, it was stressed that in managing any reduction providers and regional network coordinators should ensure there are no detrimental effects on any particular groups of learners through schools increasing emphasis on the quality of the courses offered, and the quality of the range of choice within the overall offer. There was recognition that some smaller rural schools, and some Welsh medium / bilingual schools in particular, were currently stretched to meet the requirements of the Measure, and that a slightly smaller minimum offer could result in finite resource in those institutions being channelled into supporting the quality of provision and enhancing learner outcomes.

The Group was also mindful of the analysis undertaken on the Careers Wales Online course offer and take up data for 2012/13, and the offer data that was available for 2013/14, and how that was supported by funding through the 14-19 grant. It was noted that while all schools and colleges currently meet the terms of the Measure for the 30 course choices, there was some notable variation between the number of courses offered across schools and across LA areas. The Group paid particular note to the analysis that showed 51 schools would have fallen below the 30 choice

²³ [Estyn: Progress in implementing a wider option choice \(2010\)](#)

²⁴ [Inquiry into the Implementation of the Learning and Skills \(Wales\) Measure 2009 – Report](#)

minimum in 2012-13 without 14-19 grant funding support, but with only 5 schools being unable to meet the terms of a reduced legal requirement of 25²⁵. And, that the average number of courses taken up by KS4 learners in Caerphilly (the lowest take up figure across LAs) was some 26 courses in 2012/13.

With this in mind, the Group considered the implications of reducing the minimum number of courses offered to 25 and whether this posed a risk to the gains made since the introduction of the Measure (as noted in 3.1). The Group noted that with a minimum offer of 30 course choices, the average offer being made by schools is currently some 37 courses. Consequently, the Group stressed that reducing the requirement from 30 to 25 course choices (just below the lowest take up figure available) would only represent the minimum number of courses that should be offered by all secondary schools in Wales, and that schools were free to continue to offer more choice if they were able and felt it was in the interests of their learners.

Recommendation 1

Regulations under the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 should be brought forward as a matter of urgency to reduce the minimum number of courses required to form a local curriculum offer at KS4 to 25.

The Children and Young People Committee's report did not identify the need for a review of the minimum number of courses that should form a local curriculum offer post-16, although the Group raised the risk of there being some implications for gaps in progression if the minimum number at KS4 is reduced and advised that the impact should be tested by the Welsh Government.

The vocational element

The Group highlighted the need for more emphasis on each course being part of a 'genuine' offer and noted that levers (funding or legislative) would need to remain to ensure that vocational qualifications were not undervalued, despite non-GCSEs contribution to performance measures being limited to 40% going forward. The Group also noted changes in train resulting from the Review of Qualifications and WBQ developments (section 2.4), which would directly impact on the number of courses currently being offered as the value of the WBQ, currently 3 choices, is likely to reduce to 1 from 2015. The Group reflected on the current position but recognised that there may be further developments and the need for these to be considered by Welsh Government officials in implementing any changes to the 14-19 Learning Pathways policy as a consequence of this review, to ensure that they are in tandem.

Reducing the minimum number of vocational courses offered to 3 should respond to a possible diminished motivation for schools to offer as many vocational courses, but the Group felt it was essential that those that do run provide quality and cost effectiveness and also provide learners with a quality course which can keep them motivated and engaged in education. The Group also considered in tandem to such a reduction in the minimum requirement for vocational courses, that the introduction of IVETs be used as an opportunity to expand the number of learners accessing vocational provision at KS4. This issue is explored later in the report at section 3.6.

Consequently, in order to ensure a quality and balanced local curriculum offer, the Group suggested that curriculum planners should:

- consider the needs of the learners and the subjects that are most likely to engage them. This can be done by sampling learner opinion and offering 'taster sessions' if necessary, which should address issues with the lack of guidance being available surrounding some courses;
- routinely take into account available LMI and local and regional skill needs and priorities in building the local curriculum offer, so that the learners future employability is enhanced through

²⁵ The source of this data is Careers Wales Online. The data is entered by schools.

a meaningful course offer (including advice being provided to learners on LMI so they can readily see why the local curriculum offer has been constructed in that way); and

- ensure that all courses included within the curriculum offer are accessible to learners, and that they will provide a relevant and meaningful qualification which leads to further learning and employment.

Recommendation 2

Regulations under the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 should include a minimum number of 3 vocational courses required to form a local curriculum offer at KS4. The Group further recommends close monitoring of impact and that the Welsh Government remits Estyn to undertake an evaluation of the quality and relevance of local curriculum offers in a sample of schools.

3.3 The local curriculum points

In light of evidence presented and Group members' professional experiences, it was agreed that the scoring system should no longer be employed for the following reasons:

- in practical terms, due to the way the point system is comprised, it often results in a requirement of more than 30 courses being offered in order to meet the minimum score, which in some instances is resulting in increased pressure on schools with no tangible benefits for learners;
- as highlighted in section 2.4, one of the recommendations from the Review of Qualifications was that in the future there should be changes to performance thresholds (14-16), with the non-GCSEs contribution limited to 40% and no qualification worth more than two GCSEs in equivalence terms. This may have implications for the minimum points score of 260 that is currently set for vocational provision at KS4.
- the scoring system is considered by many schools and colleges as an added burden and no longer a major consideration when putting together the local curriculum offer. It was originally introduced to safeguard the provision of L1 courses in order to meet the needs of a range of learners, and while it served that purpose initially, it is no longer necessary as providers are now routinely delivering local collaborative provision with entry level / level 1 elements geared to learner need.

Recommendation 3

As the points scoring system contained within the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 has now served its purpose and no longer contributes to the process of local curriculum planning in a practical sense, new Regulations should be used to withdraw this requirement at both KS4 and post-16 as soon as possible.

3.4 Course accessibility in rural areas and smaller schools/the impact on Welsh-medium and bilingual schools

The Group discussed the current legal requirements and it was noted that schools facing the most challenges to meet the terms of the Measure generally have the same characteristics:

- rural – further in distance from the nearest provider; and
- bilingual or Welsh-medium – can be problematic as collaborative courses offered will be determined by whether they can be delivered in Welsh.

It was suggested that pressures to meet the terms of the Measure and such factors as these can contribute to the course offer at times not being a genuine choice for learners, but rather an exercise in meeting the requirements of legislation. The issue of the local curriculum offer possibly not being genuine was also raised by the Children and Young People Committee in their report. However, evidence from take up data captured by Careers Wales Online indicates that this was not a widespread issue, and that the vast majority of courses offered are in fact taken up by learners and run (see section 2.2 *take up data*).

Another key point reflected on was the number of schools whose offer would fall below 30 should grant funded provision be removed. The Group noted that, interestingly, there was no obvious disparity between urban and rural areas, but that some 51 schools across Wales would fail to meet the requirements of the Measure had funding been withdrawn in 2012-13, and 24 in 2013-14. Although it was highlighted that the analysis did not account for travel costs for courses that may not necessarily be grant funded but are delivered in collaboration and transport costs covered by 14-19 grant monies. Equally, it was noted that the analysis only considered provision as a desk exercise and that there was, in practice, scope to transition to alternative less costly arrangements over time, with less impact on schools' ability to meet legal requirements.

A similar desk exercise was undertaken for the Group based on 2013-14 plans on the grounds that the legal requirement was a minimum offer of 25 courses, of which 3 vocational. The analysis of Careers Wales Online data showed that under 2013-14 arrangements for funding support, only 5 schools would have failed to meet this reduced requirement. And that would have been without any notice and transitional arrangements which allowed the schools to meet the Measure via alternative planning arrangements.

The Group recognised that schools in these categories generally have more of a challenge operationally in meeting the requirements of the Measure, but the conclusion drawn from the data and anecdotally was that it is not insurmountable, as long as there are good arrangements in place

The BMG learner travel review found that some local transport partnerships work well and have built on existing partnerships to ensure that clusters of schools within which learners travelled are geographically coherent and offer adequate learner choice. Where collaborative provision worked well, this was due to regular meetings, which help to ensure effective communication and decision-making regarding course offers.

The Group also reflected on the fact that the Welsh-medium grant has provided greater fairness of opportunity and so changes implemented will not create any additional challenge provided that the percentage of funding ring-fenced for Welsh-medium course provision is not disproportionately reduced.

Recommendation 4

A ring-fenced element of the funding for 14-19 Welsh-medium courses will need to be in place and equity of provision will need to be protected.

3.5 14–19 learner travel

The Group reflected on the findings from BMG's travel review and noted that, overall, learners are positive about the courses they travel to and that they will continue to travel in order to study these if necessary. This was despite reported problems of some learners missing the first 5-10 minutes of lessons or increased tiredness due to delays with transport or lengthy travel times. The most commonly used form of transport is externally contracted private buses/coaches and the Group were concerned that in some rural areas taxis are hired.

The Group noted that good relationships and frequent and effective communication between schools and LA transport officers led to higher satisfaction with transport arrangements. As a consequence, the Group agreed that regional co-ordinators should share examples of best practice to enable other regions / LAs to consider the feasibility of adopting similar approaches.

The Group were also interested in BMG's findings which supported some of the 14-19 network co-ordinators reports of Welsh-medium schools (particularly in rural areas) finding it challenging to find appropriate partner organisations within easy to travel distances.

Welsh Government data

The Welsh Government collects information on grant expenditure and the proportion of the regional 14-19 grant allocations currently spent on transport. In 2013-14 transport accounted for some 9% of the total grant and despite the budget reducing over recent years, transport costs have not reduced in real terms due to operators' costs and increased volume of transport.

The Group were interested in sight of more detail on 2013-14 grant expenditure on transport and consequently 14-19 network co-ordinators were asked to supply more detailed costings for collaborative courses that are running from September 2013. Breaking down the figures to this level enabled the Group to gauge how the recommendation in respect of the future number of courses offered as part of a local curriculum offer will impact on transport. It also provided information on any disparity across Wales.

Projected forward figures showed that regional network plans are anticipating a similar level of spend on transport to be maintained in support of learners already undertaking local collaborative courses at KS4, and at post-16, in 2014-15. The Group was concerned by this ongoing dependency on the grant for transport costs, and the proportion of funding being applied in this area. It was recognised, however, that with a reducing minimum size of the local collaborative offer to learners, there should be a corresponding reduction in the volumes of learners travelling between learning institutions in order to meet legal requirements.

The Group was also interested to note the regional and local variations in how 14-19 grant funding is being applied in terms of support for course provision and associated transport costs. It was recognised that some LAs had opted to use the grant primarily for transport, while others had focussed their funding more on the costs of courses. It was further recognised that the arrangements for public transport available locally would impact the flexibility available to LAs and schools in their transport planning. However, the Group remained of the opinion that there were opportunities to share best practice between LA areas and regions on transport planning, and further work should be taken forward in this area with a view to reducing costs over the coming year.

Recommendation 5

There should be a more consistent approach between LAs and across regions in how local curriculum student transport is managed and funded during the school day, including the sharing of models of good practice with the aim of reducing transport spend.

The alternatives to travel

The BMG research (section 2.4) into learner travel noted that over one third of respondents to the study used alternative methods to learner travel in their local curriculum planning. These included use of timetabling solutions, VLEs, and peripatetic teachers. Some schools did not consider such methods as appropriate solutions, but others recognised the need to explore alternatives in recent years. This was particularly the case since more investment has gone into IT solutions and VLEs, and as more schools have positive experiences of peripatetic teachers (25% of schools reported using such means, providing between 1 and 12 courses). The Group noted that one of the reasons

why some schools had not fully explored such options was due to the 14-19 grant funding for travel being available.

Recommendation 6

Greater use of timetabling solutions, peripatetic teachers, and evolving virtual learning environments (VLEs) should be made by schools and colleges to reduce learner travel and associated costs.

3.6 The Review of Qualifications

The recommendations from the Review of Qualifications were considered by the Group in the context of possible implications and impact on the KS4 local curricula.

Regulations provide that learners are entitled to choose to study a volume of courses the equivalent to 9 GCSEs, although many schools permit their learners to elect a higher number of GCSEs or equivalent. The viability of certain courses in future years was reflected on and it was determined that, regardless of the number of courses offered by schools, the expectation is that most learners will take both of the new mathematics GCSEs and the new WBQ from 2015 (which the Group noted were still under development). Consequently, it is likely that learners will have access to fewer choices.

Further to this, as noted in section 2.4, the increasing emphasis on core subjects, the L2 inclusive threshold, and the WBQ will also have an impact in the context of learners being restricted in their options. In view of the fact that the WBQ will be the main performance measure going forward, the Group recognised that there might be less of an incentive for schools to offer a broad range of subjects in future.

As noted in section 2.4, a recommendation in the Review of Qualifications was that learners should undertake a programme of learning post-16. Colegau Cymru welcomed the Learning Area Programme approach post-16 in a statement following the publication of the report, stating that 'colleges see merit in offering a packaged programme of learning to individual learners, rather than the current approach of funding a range of individual qualifications'²⁶.

The development of IVETs

The Group reflected on the recommendation from the Review of Qualifications that the definitions from the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training for Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) and Continuing Vocational Education and Training (CVET) should be adopted when grouping qualifications.

The Group noted that the policy of allowing IVETs only at pre 16 was being introduced, in part, as there were concerns from stakeholders that qualifications designed for different age groups and settings were being delivered in schools and issues with repetition of learning. The Group was also concerned that narrower choice at KS4, most notably in terms of vocational options, could restrict the ability of learners to progress into vocational options post-16. Consequently, the Group felt the development of more generic IVETs for KS4 learners across the 5 subject domains would develop a broader vocational understanding and skills in support of progression to qualifications post-16. Other benefits to developing generic IVETs in conjunction with considering local and regional skill needs and priorities when building the local curriculum offer are that the qualifications would complement the adoption of a programme of learning approach post-16 and provide an opportunity for improved coherence over different learning phases.

The Group noted that the Essential Employability Skills in the revised WBQ are likely to include:

- Literacy (Communication)

²⁶ [Colegau Cymru November 2012](#)

- Numeracy
- Digital Literacy
- Personal Development
- Team-working
- Organisational Skills
- Thinking and Solving Problems.

As a consequence, this provides an opportunity for learners to gain generic skills relevant to employment outside of their chosen subjects.

Recommendation 7

Generic vocational two-tiered (L1 and L2) IVET qualifications based within or across sectors should be developed through the Review of Qualifications stakeholder framework and in conjunction with industry and awarding organisation representatives, in order to deliver a broader options base for IVETs at KS4 and better facilitate progression to post-16 learning in a vocational context (CVETs).

The Group considered the way that IVETs are marketed to be particularly important in order to help change perceptions and also to make clear that they do not lead directly to occupational competence. Reference is made (at section 2.4) to the importance placed by learners on parental guidance when making course choices and, consequently, the Group considered it important that communications sought to advise parents of the planned changes to vocational courses at KS4, alongside communicating the value of such learning as a route to further study and employment.

Recommendation 8

A broader communications strategy should be developed around 14-19 changes, including connectivity across other DfES policy developments such as changes to vocational qualifications, so that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the synergies and interactions between current educational policy developments.

The competency question

In considering new approaches to KS4 qualifications, and the emphasis on IVETs that would not generally contain competency based elements to the qualification, the Group were concerned that some specific and essential learning elements might be lost.

It was noted that certain competency based qualifications were, in fact, essential for learner development at KS4. These may also support learners' part-time or work experience activity within that age group. Examples of such competency based qualifications that would be appropriate for KS4 learners were noted as basic food hygiene and health and safety certification.

Recommendation 9

In taking forward the IVET approach at KS4, some flexibility should be included in the qualifications categorisation arrangements to ensure that appropriate qualifications that attest to generic competencies (eg basic food hygiene) can be studied by, and funded for, KS4 learners.

3.7 The potential impact of the end of 14–19 funding on sustainability

The Group considered the interdependence between the 14-19 grant and wider choice at KS4 and established that funding does need to be maintained in some form, but could be realistically reduced to a more appropriate level taking into account the funding streams that have become available to schools since the grant was introduced, the core funding to schools through the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and the new post-16 funding system.

Changes to 14-19 funding

Estyn provided evidence to the Children and Young People Committee's inquiry²⁷ and highlighted that schools do not always have sustainable plans in place to contribute to costs for additional vocational course provision and transport. At present, these costs are largely met from the 14-19 grant, and so this casts doubts about the sustainability of collaborative provision at this time if the grant is significantly reduced or abruptly ends; though it was recognised that transitional arrangements would need to be brought into play in managing any change process.

Welsh Medium provision

In discussing priorities, the Group recommended that a ring-fenced element of the 14-19 grant to fund Welsh-medium courses will need to remain and that equity of provision will need to be protected (see section 3.4).

The learning coach function

The key features of the learning coach function are to support young people with: study skills, learning styles, breaking down barriers to learning, facilitating choice between options and solving problems. Learning coaching is a function which can be provided by an individual or by a team, and the Group noted that there were a range of models currently in operation across Wales.

The Group emphasised that the learning coach function provided an invaluable service to learners, but considered the proportion of the grant continuing to be spent on learning coaching to be relatively high given that this function is now well embedded in school and college operations, and suggested that there might be potential for funding to be realigned from this area. It also came to light that some schools were using their current Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) resources to fund learning coaching activity, rather than the 14-19 grant, so there is currently no consistent funding approach across Wales. Indeed, the Group noted that resources available to schools directly had evolved considerably during the period that the 14-19 grant had been in operation, and there was now a greater local delegation to schools to facilitate this flexibility.

It was felt that the pump priming through the 14-19 grant since 2006 has succeeded in embedding the function within the operation of schools and colleges, and that continued stand alone funding for learning coach provision would no longer be appropriate for what is now a core function within providers. The Group also noted that Estyn was in the process of reviewing for the Welsh Government the range of learner support services available, including the learning coach function, and will be reporting in the spring 2014 on the outcome of that study in schools. It was recognised that this study would be important in taking forward work on the range of learner support available locally, and how that could best be harmonised.

Given the value the Group placed on the learning coach function, it was considered that the costs associated with the training of new staff should remain part of 14-19 funding during 2014-15 and co-ordinated alongside 14-19 business by regional consortia. However, the costs for the delivery of the function itself would be best met via budgets delegated to schools. The Group recognised that this arrangement should be reviewed after 12 months (when budget planning for 2015-16), in the light of Estyn's findings from their review of learner support services during 2013/14.

²⁷ [Inquiry into the Implementation of the Learning and Skills \(Wales\) Measure 2009 – Report](#)

Recommendation 10

As a reflection of the evolution of school budgets since the introduction of 14-19 grants, for example the School Effectiveness Grant (SEG) or Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG), only the costs for staff training associated with the learning coach function should be supported through the 14-19 funding. Other costs associated with the learning coach function should be harmonised within wider funding streams to schools.

Transition to harmonised funding

It was recognised that wholesale changes to the way 14-19 grant funding was distributed in the short term could disrupt the planning and delivery of the local curriculum offer for learners. Transitional arrangements were likely to be necessary, particularly for the ongoing financial support for those learners already undertaking courses. However, in order to reduce administrative costs and better align with recommendations from the review of the future delivery of education services in Wales, new arrangements for funding through regional level structures would need to be put in place, and supported by clear planning guidance for local curriculum planners.

Recommendation 11

Moving forward, the Welsh Government should consider transitional arrangements that would move towards the harmonisation of the 14-19 grant for KS4 provision into other regional level funding streams, taking into account the recommendations from the review of the future delivery of education services in Wales, thus also realising efficiencies around administrative costs due to economies of scale.

The Group were also of the opinion that, due to the new post-16 funding system, which now will be focused on Learning Area Programmes, funding for post-16 course provision would best be met through that mechanism.

Recommendation 12

For post-16 learners starting programmes of study from September 2014, the costs associated with the delivery of activities including course provision (as currently subsidised by the 14-19 grant), should be met solely through the new post-16 funding system.

Future levels of funding

The Group deliberated long and hard on what the likely minimum levels of funding were to ensure sustainability of delivery, while also taking into account the recommended reductions to the legal minimum size of the KS4 course offer. It was clear to the Group that ongoing resource was required for the delivery of local collaborative provision at KS4 over and above that available through core funding to schools.

The Group noted that in terms of course provision the 14-19 grant supports largely vocational options and, consequently, vocational courses were at greater risk in an environment of reducing public resource. Nevertheless, the Group agreed that front-line services to children should be prioritised, and a key part of this was the vocational experience offered to 14-16 year olds.

The high level of activity currently being funded through 14-19 resources around engaging learners in the education system pre and post 16 was also highlighted, and the value placed on support systems which enable learners to remain in mainstream learning and not become NEET. The support work undertaken via 14-19 networks was important in this regard, as an area of activity that should not be lost during transition into new arrangements. Indeed, the Group was mindful of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework, and the need for the 14-19 agenda to actively contribute to its implementation over the coming years.

The Group recognised that learners already undertaking generally 2 year courses through local collaborative arrangements needed their existing course provision protected. Consequently, transitional arrangements would need to be put in place and fully funded to enable those learners to complete their studies.

When considering the likely requirements for future funding in this area, the Group analysed current provision and how that would be impacted by the various recommendations throughout this report: the scaling back of transport spend; pro rata reductions to grant administration through harmonisation; use of alternative school budgets for learning coach delivery; and alignment with the new post-16 funding system for learners starting courses from September 2014. With such developments in mind, the Group was of the view that a 2 staged approach to minimum funding levels could and should be adopted to protect provision for learners already undertaking courses.

Recommendation 13

Transitional arrangements to be put into place for 2014-15 to ensure the implementation of changes to 14-19 policy and programmes, whilst protecting provision for those learners already undertaking courses, with a minimum funding level of £10 million. For 2015-16 and beyond the minimum level of funding could be set at £8 million as new harmonised arrangements come into effect.

3.8 The views of learners

The Group noted BMG's findings and similar results of learner views surveys submitted by network coordinators, and the caveats around the scope of these surveys. It was highlighted that the majority of learners are influenced by family members or teachers when making subject choices at KS4, with less reliance being placed on more informed and/or impartial sources such as Careers Wales. As a consequence, the Group was of the opinion that parents should be considered key stakeholders in the delivery of the KS4 local curriculum, and that this adds weight to the need for a broad-based communications strategy, as recommended at section 3.5.

61% of learners in the sample surveyed reported being very or fairly satisfied with the choices available. While this number is not low, the Group considered that satisfaction could be increased in future if more learners were able to access their chosen combination of subjects, or feel more engaged in the options process. The Group were of the opinion that reducing the minimum course offer to 25 and the introduction of generic IVETs at KS4, as recommended at section 3.2 and section 3.5 respectively, should enable schools to develop a more flexible column system to help facilitate this.

One of the clear messages from the various pieces of evidence on learner views was that, overall, vocational courses are valued and appreciated.

3.9 Regional co-ordination

The Group agreed that responsibility for supporting and challenging the quality of local curriculum offers (and following up with schools if necessary) should be assumed by co-ordinators at the regional level.

In conjunction with the recommendations from the review of the future delivery of education services in Wales, an opportunity was recognised for the regional tier to play a greater role in ensuring a strategic approach to 14-19 provision, and providing a degree of challenge and support to local planners within schools, colleges and work based learning providers in bringing that about. Such a role would involve regional coordinators, with the support of the Welsh Government, quickly evolving current functions so that they could assess proposed local curriculum offers, monitor school performance in meeting the terms of the Measure, and continue to actively support the implementation of the Youth Engagement and Employability Framework. In so doing, coordinators would wish to ensure plans meet the employment and skills needs of the local area, that local anomalies over course pricing (for example) were removed, that best use of local collaborative arrangements continued to be made, that the offer would continue to engage learners particularly those most at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training, and that proposals for delivery of learning were cost effective and not duplicative.

The Group also felt that regional coordinators should seek to harmonise roles, systems and processes across the 4 regions, and target direct support to those schools most in need. It was felt that this role would complement that of managing more harmonised funding streams to schools via the regional structure.

Recommendation 14

That the Welsh Government over the next 12 months works closely with regional network coordinators and consortia leads, to develop the evolving role of the regions in managing 14-19 delivery and associated funding in a more robust and consistent way, including the preparation of clear revised 14-19 guidance for stakeholders.

Annex A: Task and Finish Group membership

Sector	Name	Role
English-medium school	Claire Armitstead (Chair)	Headteacher, Rhyl High School
Welsh-medium school	Owain ap Dafydd	Headteacher, Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni
Bilingual school	Brian Jones	Headteacher, Ysgol David Hughes
Training provider	Shirley Davis-Fox	Managing Director, ISA Training
	<i>replaced by</i> Berni Tyler	Operations Director, ISA Training
Careers Wales	Del Thomas	Policy Manager
Employer	Roy Jones MBE	Community Manager, ScottishPower Ltd.
Local Authority	Karen Evans	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion
FE College	Nicola Gamlin	Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality), Coleg Gwent
	<i>replaced by</i> Guy Lacey	Deputy Principal, Coleg Gwent

Observers

Estyn	Catherine Evans	Lead Inspector for Secondary Sector
Estyn	Sue Halliwell	Lead Inspector for 14-19 / Wellbeing

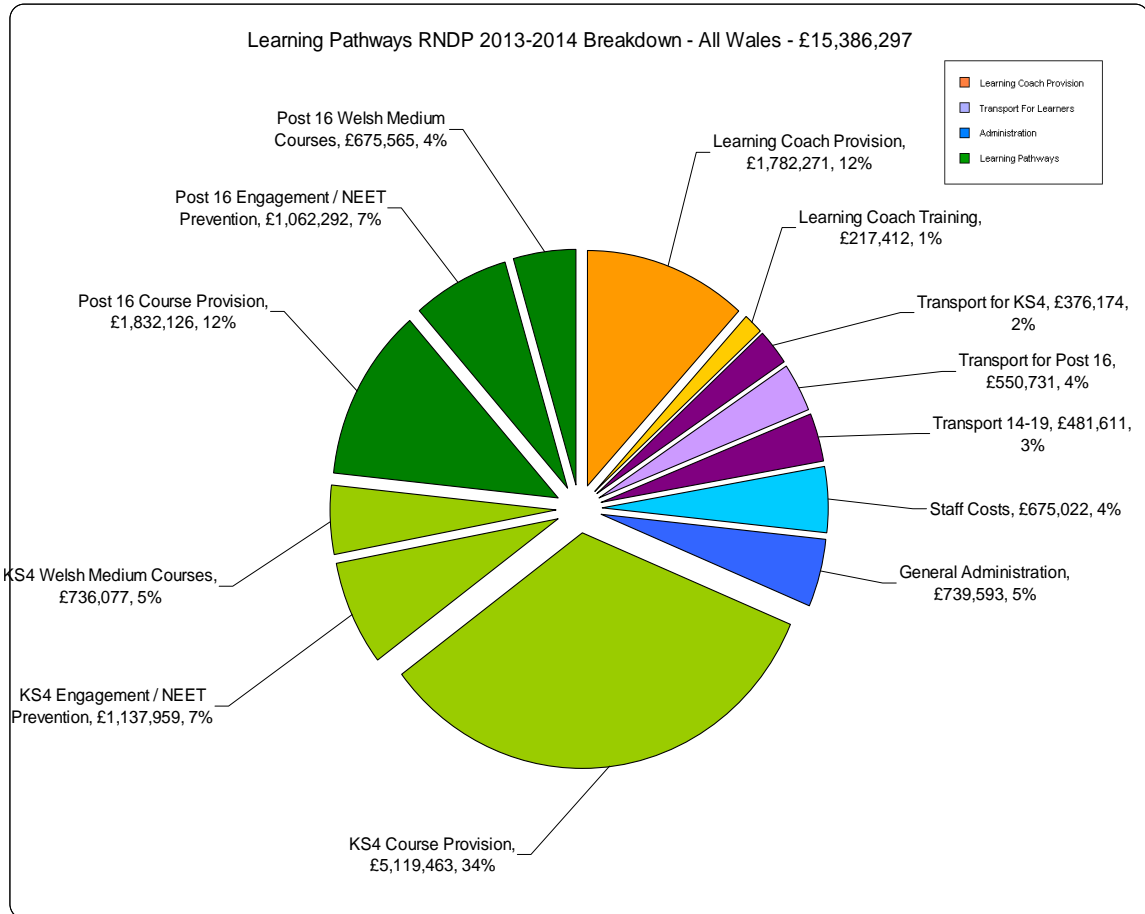
Annex B: Glossary of terms

14-19 Grant	The stand alone Welsh Government grant to Local Authorities in support of the 14-19 Learning Pathways policy and the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009.
Careers Wales	A wholly owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government, Careers Wales is responsible for impartial careers advice and guidance to learners.
Continuing Vocational Education and Training (CVET)	CVET is defined as education or training after initial education and training – or after entry into working life.
DfES	The Department for Education and Skills.
Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology (DMST)	The Deputy Minister is part of the Welsh Government and supports the Minister for Education and Skills, with specific responsibilities for skills and technology.
Domains	Qualifications are grouped in to 5 subject areas known as domains. These include: Domain A: Maths, Science and Technology; Domain B: Business, Administration and Law; Domain C: Services to People; Domain D: Creative Arts, Media, Culture and Language; and Domain E: Humanities and Social Services & Preparation for Life / Work.
Estyn	The educational inspectorate in Wales.
Free School Meals (FSM)	Pupils eligible for free school meals.
General	General courses include a wide range of general subjects that are not directly related to a job area, such as GCSEs.
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education.
Group	The Task and Finish Group.
Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET)	IVET is defined as general or vocational education and training carried out in the initial education system, usually before entering working life, which does not lead to occupational competence.
KAS	The Knowledge and Analytical Services Department of the Welsh Government, responsible for government research and statistics.
Key Stage 4 (KS4)	The National Curriculum is applied to 4 key stages of pupil development and KS4 is designed for pupils aged 14-16.
L2 inclusive	One of the headline performance indicators. The L2 inclusive threshold is equivalent to 5 A*s to C GCSEs including English/Welsh and mathematics – including vocational.
Learning Area Programmes	Learning Area Programmes rather than individual qualifications will be at the core of the new post-16 funding system.

Learning Coach	The key features of the learning coach include: breaking down barriers to learning and helping 14-19 year olds to develop appropriate study skills.
LMI	Labour Market Intelligence.
Local Authorities (LAs)	The 22 unitary authorities in Wales.
Local Curriculum	The Measure places a duty in Local Authorities in Wales to form local curricula for learners in KS4.
Measure	The Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009.
Minister for Education and Skills	Welsh Minister with responsibility for education in Wales, part of the Welsh Government Cabinet.
NAfW	National Assembly for Wales.
NEET	Young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training.
Network Coordinators	14-19 network coordinators within Local Authorities and at the regional level.
NQF	Qualifications in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) are given a level from entry level to level 8. Qualifications at the same level can be very different in terms of content and the length of time they take to complete.
PDG	<p>The School Effectiveness Grant (SEG) and the Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) are the Welsh Government's principal means of providing financial support for the three national priorities for schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving standards in literacy; • improving standards in numeracy, and • reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment <p>PDG is used for targeted interventions to support pupils from deprived areas and not for more general actions, which may be considered under the SEG.</p>
Post-16 Funding System	Following the Post-16 Planning and Funding Review, which focussed on designing the operation of the new system, a new planning and funding system is being introduced in the 2014/15 academic year
QCF	There are three different types of qualification in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF): Award, Certificate and Diploma. The title of a qualification will tell you its size and level (range from entry level to level 8).
Review of Qualifications (RoQ)	The Review of Qualifications for 14-19 year olds in Wales ran from September 2011 to November 2012. The key aims were to identify the qualifications that are most relevant and also consider issues related to assessment and measurement of performance. In January 2013 it was announced that the Welsh Government broadly accepted all of the Review's recommendations.
RSG	The Welsh Governments distributes funding in the form of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) to local authorities using a commonly agreed formula. Local authorities are responsible for deciding how they spend their allocation of RSG on the services for which they are responsible, which includes schools.

SEG	The Welsh Government provides School Effectiveness Grant (SEG) funding to improve standards in literacy, numeracy and reduce the impact of poverty on educational achievement in all schools.
Training	In the context of this report training encompasses: people on work-based learning and people not enrolled on an education course but who carried out job-related training away from the work-place in the previous 4 weeks.
Transformation Agenda	The Welsh Government's strategy for Educational Transformation aims to modernise and streamline education. Through the All Age Transformation Programme the Welsh Government is committed to developing and implementing an improved education and training system.
Vocational	Vocational courses offer a more practical learning have an emphasis on developing practical skills and knowledge that relate directly to specific job roles or sectors.
VLEs	Virtual Learning Environments.
Welsh Baccalaureate (WBQ)	The Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification is nationally approved and currently offered at Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced levels. A steering group and a number of working groups are working on a revised Welsh Baccalaureate to be introduced from September 2015.
Welsh Government	The elected Government of Wales.

Annex C: All-Wales 14–19 grant breakdown 2013–14



Annex D: 14–19 linkages across policy areas

