

**Number: WG54424**

Welsh Government  
Consultation – summary of response

## Curriculum for Wales framework guidance

Responses to consultation on annual updates to the Curriculum for Wales framework guidance, 2026.

March 2026

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.  
This document is also available in Welsh.

## Overview

The statutory Curriculum for Wales (CfW) framework guidance has been updated annually since 2022. As the spring term is the most suitable point in the academic year for such updates, the consultation was held from 5 January to 2 February 2026.

All proposed updates this year focus on the 14-16 learning guidance section of the Framework. These changes are designed to reflect updated information on the following within the guidance:

- Made for Wales Science GCSEs
- National 14 to 16 Qualifications Offer
- Reference to Seren Academy
- Self-evaluation and improvement
- A new education data and information ecosystem

## Action required

This document is for information only.

## Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

14 to 16 learning guidance published in September 2024.

## Contact details

For more information:  
14 to 16 Curriculum for Wales learner pathways  
Learner Pathways Division  
Tertiary Education Directorate  
Welsh Government  
Cathays park  
King Edward VII Avenue  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

email: [Dysqu.14-16.learning@gov.wales](mailto:Dysqu.14-16.learning@gov.wales)

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## **Additional copies**

This summary of response and copies of all the consultation documentation are published in electronic form only and can be accessed on the Welsh Government's website.

Link to the consultation documentation: [hyperlink](#)

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## **Background to consultation**

1.1 The consultation sought views on proposals to make specific and limited changes to the 14 to 16 learning guidance in spring 2026. The guidance was published in September 2024, prior to the introduction of the Wave 1 new GCSE subjects in Wales in September 2025.

1.2 In September 2026, Wave 2 of the new made for Wales GCSEs will be introduced, including new GCSE science qualifications. In September 2027, Wave 3 will introduce VCSEs (Vocational Certificate of Secondary Education) the Skills Suite, the Personal Project, and Foundation qualifications to complete the National 14 to 16 Qualifications suite.

1.3 Following the publication of the guidance in September 2024, it now needs updating to reflect the phased implementation of the National 14 to 16 Qualifications suite and the ongoing development of 14 to 16 Curriculum for Wales (CfW) policy. The updates required are detailed as follows:

### **Made for Wales Science GCSEs**

1.4 Qualifications Wales, in its role as independent regulator, announced its decision to continue to listen to the education sector and undertake a further consultation in autumn 2028 on the suite of GCSE Science qualifications available to learners in Wales. Consequently, they also confirmed that separate Science GCSEs in biology, chemistry and physics will continue to be available to schools and learners, pending the outcome of that consultation.

1.5 From September 2026, schools will therefore be able to offer their learners the existing separate Science GCSEs and new, reformed GCSEs in The Sciences (double award) and Integrated Science (single award). As only taking one or two of the separate sciences would not offer learners the breadth of learning offered by the new integrated Science GCSEs, the draft changes included an expectation that schools deliver all three separate science GCSEs in biology, chemistry and physics to those learners who are taking them in place of the integrated Double or Single Award GCSEs in The Sciences.

1.7 The updates to guidance reflected the changes to the Science GCSE and how Welsh Government subsequently expects the suite of Science GCSEs from September 2026 to be used by schools.

### **National 14 to 16 Qualifications Offer**

1.8 When the 14 to 16 Learning Guidance was published in September 2024, it detailed that, all learners should make their qualification choices from the National 14 to 16 Qualifications offer from September 2027. The guidance did not detail explicitly that this includes Vocational Certificates of Secondary Education (VCSEs), the Skills Suite and a Personal Project, and Foundation Qualifications. An amendment was proposed to clearly reflect the availability of these qualifications in addition to GCSEs from 2027.

### **Reference to Seren Academy**

1.9 The guidance has been updated to signpost schools to consider the opportunities provided to learners through the Seren Academy.

## Self-evaluation and improvement

1.10 The self-evaluation and improvement section within the guidance has been updated to advise that schools could also consider the Youth Engagement Progression Framework, which sets out a process for organisations to work together to identify 11 to 18-year-olds at risk of disengaging from learning, or who are at risk of youth homelessness, and provide them with the support they need.

## A new education data and information ecosystem

1.11 As a result of the new 14 to 16 Learner Entitlement Indicators Framework being publicly [consulted](#) on between January–March 2025, the revised 14 to 16 learning guidance now reflects how this forms one aspect of the information and evidence that should be used at the different levels of the school system for evaluation, improvement and accountability purposes, in alignment with our [approach to using data and information to support learning and improvement](#), and confirms the new reporting arrangements will be introduced in 2027.

## Engagement with consultation

2.1 The [consultation](#) was published on the Welsh Government website between 2 January – 5 February 2026. It was promoted through the usual digital communications channels.

2.2 Overall, the responses to the consultation were mostly positive. Of the 7 questions, questions 1 to 4 asked for a rated response described below:

1.	Strongly agree
2.	Somewhat agree
3.	Neither agree nor disagree
4.	Somewhat disagree
5.	Strongly disagree

2.3 Two responses were received during the consultation. These responses were submitted by Estyn and the Association of School and College Leaders Cymru (ASCL Cymru).

## Responses to consultation questions

**Question 1: Do you agree that the guidance is clear about Welsh Government’s expectations with regards to the use of science qualifications for 14 to 16-year-old learners, following the decision by Qualifications Wales to continue offering triple science?**

**Somewhat agree = 2**

### Summary of responses

Both responses agree clarity has improved but is not sufficient on its own. Specific issues were raised on:

- Simultaneous Welsh-medium availability for specifications, assessments and resources.
- Clear expectations about progression from different qualification routes into AS / A level sciences
- Equity of access to high-quality science provision

## **Welsh Government Response**

We agree that the provision of bilingual qualification materials and resources is an important issue. As the provision of qualification materials and resources is a responsibility of awarding bodies, regulated by Qualifications Wales, this would not be in scope for statutory Curriculum for Wales (CfW) guidance for schools. Both WJEC and Qualifications Wales have confirmed, however, that all new qualification specifications, sample assessment materials and resources for Wave 1 and 2 GCSEs have been provided bilingually at the same time. Qualifications Wales will continue to monitor the delivery of specifications and materials for Wave 3 qualifications so that this condition continues to be met by all awarding bodies.

The guidance is clear that The Science (double award) qualification provides a suitable foundation for AS / A level study of the sciences. Qualifications Wales has similarly been clear in all published materials and communications that learners will be able to successfully progress on to Science A/AS level qualifications having taken either the new double award or the existing separate GCSEs.

Qualifications Wales are planning to consult on the future suite of Science GCSE qualifications in autumn 2028. Following that decision, Welsh Government will review this guidance to clarify our expectations on the use of the science qualifications that will be available to schools from September 2031.

## **Question 2: Do you agree that the guidance makes clear that VCSEs, Skills Suites and Foundation qualifications will be available from September 2027?**

**Somewhat agree = 2**

### **Summary of responses**

Respondents agreed that the timeline for the introduction of VCSEs, Skills Suites and Foundation qualifications is clear.

One respondent, while detailing strong support for a broad and inclusive qualifications offer that values vocational, applied and skills-based learning, highlighted the need to ensure a genuine parity of esteem for these qualifications.

The importance of further timely guidance to support schools was noted, both with regard to the suitability of courses for different learners and on how to select the most appropriate learning pathway for pupils within and beyond school settings. The necessity of providing support and training for the workforce in the delivery of these qualifications was also emphasised, ensuring that Welsh-medium and English medium training and resources are available at the same time.

## **Welsh Government Response**

Welsh Government officials are engaging with relevant stakeholders to understand and discuss how guidance can be further strengthened to better support delivery going forward. We also expect awarding bodies to publish supporting materials for their VCSE qualifications in line with their approved specifications, starting with the publication of specifications in September 2026.

### **Question 3: Do you agree that the updates to the guidance make clear that future reporting arrangements for 14 to 16 learning have been built around the 14 to 16 Learning Entitlement?**

**Somewhat agree = 2**

#### **Summary of responses**

Both responses somewhat agreed but raised broader concerns relating to potential workforce/administrative burdens and the risk of returning to performance driven measures; the potential impact of data collection; and successful implementation of the Framework.

One particular reference was made for clearer alignment between reporting arrangements and national improvement processes.

## **Welsh Government Response**

The guidance reaffirms that the new reporting arrangements are being designed to support improvement and not to return to a performative system driven by 'high-stakes' accountability. The alignment with the information ecosystem principles provides a clear basis for using data and information to support learning and improvement, without placing additional burdens upon the workforce.

In response to the call for clearer alignment between reporting arrangements and national improvement processes, Welsh Government officials recognised this as an issue that needed to be addressed in addition to the amendments already proposed. As a result, further narrative will be added to the current amended guidance in response to this consultation comment, setting out more explicitly how the LEIF (Learner Entitlement Indicator Framework) fits in with the wider data picture and across aspects of evaluation, improvement and accountability, clarifying that the purpose of reporting 14 to 16 learning data and information at a school level to a public audience is to support transparency and meaningful communication of information.

Officials have worked closely with the education sector to refine the design of the indicators. They will continue to do so as the LEIF is implemented and wider reporting arrangements are developed, including the future All Wales Core Data Sets to support self-evaluation and improvement planning. The Welsh Government will work with schools to ensure they are ready and equipped to adapt to the new arrangements. Impact assessments, including that focussing on the workforce, will continue to be reviewed as we proceed to these next steps.

Work is underway to develop digital tools and systems that will support and facilitate the reporting and effective use of data.

**Question 4: Do you agree that the updates to the guidance make clear that new reporting arrangements will be introduced in 2027?**

**Somewhat disagree = 1**

**Strongly agree =1**

**Summary of responses**

In relation to the 'somewhat agree' response, no supporting narrative was provided. The response which stated 'strongly agree' confirmed that they felt the guidance was clear on the introduction of reporting arrangements in 2027. However, they added there was a need for the finalised reporting arrangements to be communicated in a timely manner to support the understanding and implementation of these.

**Welsh Government Response**

Further clarity on the new 14 to 16 reporting arrangements has been added to the [Hwb web page](#) since this consultation took place. Officials continue to work closely with the education sector to support readiness for the new reporting arrangements in a timely manner and will work with schools to ensure they are equipped to adapt to the new arrangements. Work is underway to develop digital tools and systems that will support and facilitate the reporting and effective use of data.

**Question 5 What, in your opinion, would be the likely effects of this section of the Curriculum for Wales guidance on the Welsh language? We are particularly interested in any likely effects on opportunities to use the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English. Do you think that there are opportunities to promote any positive effects? Do you think that there are opportunities to mitigate any adverse effects?**

**Summary of responses = 1**

The same issue already raised through the response to question 1, around the importance of qualification specifications, assessments and resources being made available in Welsh at the same time as English, was highlighted again.

Further suggestions included monitoring qualifications by language; using partnerships/clusters to support Welsh medium science pathways; and testing reporting templates with Welsh-medium schools first.

**Welsh Government Response**

We have outlined how we are addressing the comments on simultaneous Welsh-medium availability for specifications, assessments and resources within the response provided to question 1.

Although some of the Welsh medium suggestions are not directly relevant to address within this guidance, Welsh Government will consider them as part of the wider work to enhance delivery of Welsh medium education.

**Question 6: In your opinion, could these proposed amendments to the Curriculum for Wales Framework guidance be formulated or changed so as to: have positive effects or more positive effects on using the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English; or mitigate any negative effects on using the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English?**

### **Summary of responses = 1**

Only one response provided comments on this question, raising the issue of bilingual parity in qualification/resource provision. This has been considered in our response to question 1 and detailed the follow up action. They also called for the promotion of Welsh language progression within science, vocational and applied pathways.

### **Welsh Government Response**

The issue of promoting Welsh-language progression within science, vocational and applied pathways is more relevant to the current consultation on 16 to 18 local curricula, where Welsh-language progression is a core theme. We will therefore consider this feedback as part of the analysis of responses to that consultation (which closes on 31 March).

**Question 7: We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:**

### **Summary of responses = 2**

One response highlights that the successful implementation of the new reporting system will rely on early access to clear guidance, system readiness, professional learning, and alignment with inspection and accountability frameworks. Schools will need adequate lead-in time to adjust their systems and processes, especially given the scale of simultaneous reforms to qualifications, curriculum and data, alongside pressures from limited funding and ongoing recruitment and retention challenges.

The other response highlighted the importance of schools having clarity about future science qualifications. They also emphasised that resources, training, and professional learning are essential for delivering the qualifications well.

### **Welsh Government Response**

A full response addressing the issues noted under question 7 relating to the successful implementation of the new reporting system is provided in the Welsh Government summary response to questions 3 and 4.

In relation to Science GCSEs, schools are now able to plan with certainty to 2031. Qualifications Wales's planned consultation on the future suite of science qualifications will take place in 2028 and determine the science GCSEs available to schools from September 2031.

Acknowledging the importance of high-quality resources and professional learning being available to schools delivering new qualifications, during 2025 and 2026 Welsh Government has provided significant funding to WJEC and Adnodd to support the delivery of in-person professional learning and the production of bilingual resources.

## **Next steps**

3.1 Following analysis of the consultation feedback and consideration of our policy priorities, one additional amendment is proposed to the guidance beyond those outlined in the original consultation document. This is covered in the Welsh Government response at question 3, which confirms that as a result, further narrative will be added to the current amended guidance in response to this consultation comment, setting out more explicitly how the LEIF fits in with the wider data picture and across aspects of evaluation, improvement and accountability and how we will be supporting schools through implementation of the new reporting arrangements.

3.2 While several points raised fell outside the formal scope of the consultation, respondents highlighted several issues relating to the practical application of the guidance. The actions both planned and underway to address this feedback is detailed in each specific question within the Welsh Government response.

