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Consultation – summary of responses

16 to 18 local curricula guidance

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

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Overview

This report presents a summary of the views and perspectives presented by respondents to draft 16 to 18 local curricula guidance.

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.

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Additional copies

This summary of responses 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: [16 to 18 local curricula guidance](#)

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Introduction

As of April 2026, statutory duties relating to the formation of local curricula offers for 16 to 18 year old learners in Wales transferred from Welsh Ministers to Medr.

Draft guidance has been developed to outline the statutory duties of Medr and curriculum planners (local authorities, schools and Further Education Institutions (FEIs)) in relation to these functions, as well as the wider factors to be considered when developing meaningful local curriculum offers for 16 to 18 year old learners in Wales. This guidance is issued under section 20 of the Tertiary Education and Research Act 2022 (the TER Act), and Medr must have regard to it when exercising its functions under the Learning and Skills Act 2000 (the 2000 Act).

The UK Government has consulted on changes to post-16 qualifications in England, including the introduction of V Levels and T Levels. While these reforms may affect the qualifications and courses available to learners, they should not impact the content of the 16 to 18 local curricula guidance.

Consultation process

The consultation period ran from 3 February 2026 until 31 March 2026.

The consultation sought views on whether the draft guidance was appropriate, balanced and clearly set out the duties of Medr and curriculum planners in developing local curriculum offers for 16 to 18 year old learners in Wales.

The consultation consisted of 11 questions in total, six of which asked the respondent to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the proposal (using a Likert scale - a rating system used in research questionnaires to measure people's attitudes, opinions, or perceptions). Each question provided respondents with the opportunity to express their views using an open text comments box, and an additional open-ended question was included in the response form to capture any further comments not addressed elsewhere. The consultation also contained two questions relating to the Welsh language, one question on equality considerations, and one question on the impact on the education workforce.

Consultation responses

A total of 30 responses were received to the consultation using the response form template. This included one response that was received shortly after the closing date, and this response has been considered in our analysis of responses.

Two additional responses were received, which did not directly answer the consultation questions. Whilst these responses will not be included in the Likert responses, they have been considered and reflected in this summary of responses.

The Welsh Government welcomes the responses to the consultation and thanks all those who took the time to contribute.

Summary of Responses

Question 1 – Medr’s role in the formation of 16-18 local curricula

To what extent do you agree that the guidance for Medr on local curricula for 16 to 18 learners (‘16 to 18 local curricula guidance’) clearly sets out Medr’s role in the formation of local curricula?

Response	Response total	Percentage of responses
Strongly Agree	2	6.67%
Agree	23	76.67%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	3	10.00%
Disagree	2	6.67%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%

Of the Likert responses received for Question 1, 83% were positive, 10% were neutral and 7% were negative.

Responses were overwhelmingly positive, with strong agreement that Medr’s strategic role is clearly defined within the guidance. Respondents broadly welcomed the positioning of Medr as a single coordinating body and system leader, and there was clear support for the emphasis on collaboration, partnership working, learner choice and inclusion. The transfer of responsibilities was generally well understood, and the guidance was seen as providing a clear statutory framework to support the development of coherent local curricula.

While respondents were supportive of the strategic clarity provided, some highlighted a need for further detail on how these arrangements will operate in practice. Respondents raised questions regarding decision-making processes, accountability, and how collaboration between organisations will function, including the management of disagreement and escalation.

Some respondents also highlighted wider system considerations that may impact the formation of local curriculum offers, including capacity constraints, workforce shortages, financial pressures and transport barriers. In addition, some respondents identified a lack of clarity and consistency in the use of terminology such as “must” and “should”, suggesting that roles and responsibilities could be more clearly defined.

Welsh Government response

We welcome the broad support for the guidance and the clear consensus that it effectively sets out Medr’s strategic role in the development of 16 to 18 local curricula.

The Welsh Government recognises the importance of providing sufficient clarity on operational matters, including decision-making processes, accountability frameworks and escalation arrangements. In response to the feedback received, revisions have

been made to strengthen aspects of the guidance where appropriate, including improving clarity and consistency in the use of terminology.

The guidance is intended to provide a clear strategic framework for Medr and curriculum planners, rather than detailed operational instruction. More detailed processes relating to implementation, including collaboration arrangements and escalation procedures, will be developed by Medr through supporting operational guidance. This approach ensures that the statutory guidance remains focused and proportionate, while allowing flexibility for local delivery.

A clear definition of the terms “must” and “should” is already included within the guidance, and all instances have been reviewed to ensure consistency. Where appropriate, more generalised language has been replaced.

The Welsh Government will continue to work closely with Medr to ensure it has a clear understanding of its statutory responsibilities under the TER Act.

Question 2 – Vision setting for 16-18 local curricula

To what extent do you agree that the 16 to 18 local curricula guidance will support the vision for 16 to 18 learning set out within it?

Response	Response total	Percentage of responses
Strongly Agree	2	6.67%
Agree	20	66.67%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	6	20.00%
Disagree	2	6.67%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%

Of the Likert responses received for Question 2, 73% were positive, 20% were neutral and 7% were negative.

Responses were generally very positive, with respondents welcoming the vision set out in the guidance. There was strong support for the learner-centred, inclusive and collaborative approach, alongside the emphasis on progression pathways, curriculum breadth and parity between academic and vocational routes. Respondents broadly agreed that the vision aligns well with the Curriculum for Wales and wider long-term ambitions for a coherent and flexible post-16 system.

While there was clear support for the overall direction of travel, some respondents emphasised that the successful delivery of this vision will depend on how it is implemented in practice. As in question one, concerns were raised regarding accountability, decision-making processes and the mechanisms for resolving disagreements between partners.

Respondents also highlighted challenges relating to the practical delivery of curriculum breadth and viability, particularly in the context of rural provision, smaller cohorts and Welsh-medium pathways. More broadly, recurring system pressures—including funding constraints, workforce capacity, transport barriers and declining learner numbers—were identified as key risks that could affect the extent to which the vision can be realised consistently across Wales.

Welsh Government response

We welcome the overall support for the vision set out in the guidance, and the recognition that it reflects a learner-centred, inclusive and coherent approach to 16 to 18 learning.

The Welsh Government acknowledges the concerns raised regarding implementation and recognises that achieving the full ambition of the vision will depend on effective collaboration, strategic planning and appropriate system capacity. While these challenges are noted, the principle of ensuring that learners have access to a broad and balanced range of opportunities remains a central policy priority.

Previous guidance set expectations regarding curriculum breadth, including a target of 30 courses with a minimum number of vocational options. It will now be for Medr, through its operational guidance, to establish expectations for curriculum breadth and to support local partners in developing sustainable and appropriate offers.

The Welsh Government has also reviewed and strengthened elements of the guidance in response to consultation feedback, including improving clarity around accountability and reinforcing alignment with the 14–19 continuum.

We will continue to work closely with Medr and partners to support implementation and to ensure that the vision is realised in a way that is both ambitious and deliverable across different local contexts.

Question 3 – Formation of local curricula

To what extent do you agree that the 16 to 18 local curricula guidance helps you understand the factors and priorities that Medr should take into account when working with local authorities, schools and further education institutions (FEIs) to form local curricula?

Response	Response total	Percentage of responses
Strongly Agree	3	10.00%
Agree	19	63.33%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	5	16.67%
Disagree	3	10.00%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%

Responses were generally very positive, with respondents welcoming the strong emphasis on collaboration and system-wide planning. Many agreed that the guidance clearly identifies key factors and priorities that should inform local curriculum development, including learner demand, labour market needs, Welsh-medium provision, inclusion and additional learning needs (ALN), as well as progression pathways. The learner-centred approach and alignment with economic priorities were also viewed positively.

However, while respondents broadly agreed that the relevant factors have been clearly set out, a consistent theme was concern about how these priorities would be balanced in practice where tensions arise. Respondents highlighted a number of potential trade-offs, including:

- learner demand versus financial viability
- Welsh-medium ambition versus workforce capacity
- inclusion and breadth versus sustainability of small cohorts
- institutional autonomy versus area-level collaboration and planning

These responses indicate that, although the guidance provides clarity on *what* factors should be considered, there is less clarity on *how* decisions will be made when competing priorities and delivery constraints are encountered.

As reflected in responses to other questions, respondents also highlighted the need for greater operational clarity, including clearer processes for decision-making, prioritisation and managing disagreement between partners.

Welsh Government response

We welcome the overall positive response and the recognition that the guidance clearly identifies the key factors and priorities that should inform the formation of local curricula.

The Welsh Government acknowledges the feedback regarding how these factors will be balanced in practice, particularly where there are competing priorities or delivery constraints. The guidance is intended to set out the key considerations that Medr

must take into account at a strategic level, rather than to prescribe detailed methodologies for decision-making in all circumstances.

More detailed approaches to balancing priorities, including how local partners will work together to address competing demands, can be developed by Medr through its operational guidance. This will enable flexibility in responding to local contexts while maintaining a consistent national framework.

The Welsh Government has considered the feedback received and has strengthened elements of the guidance where appropriate, including improving clarity around roles and expectations. We will continue to work closely with Medr and partners to support effective implementation and ensure that local curricula are developed in a way that is both learner-centred and deliverable.

Question 4 – Curriculum breadth and progression

To what extent do you agree that the expectations of Medr and other organisations within the 16 to 18 local curricula guidance will lead to the formation of local curricula that provide learners with a broad choice of qualifications, which will enable them to progress onto their chosen next steps in education or employment?

Response	Response total	Percentage of responses
Strongly Agree	1	3.33%
Agree	15	50.00%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	11	36.67%
Disagree	2	6.67%
Strongly Disagree	1	3.33%

Of the Likert responses received for Question 4, 53% were positive, 37% were neutral and 10% were negative.

Responses indicated a general level of support, with respondents agreeing in principle that the expectations set out in the guidance could support the development of local curricula that offer a broad range of qualifications and progression pathways. The emphasis on collaboration, learner choice and alignment with labour market needs was widely welcomed.

Respondents highlighted a gap between policy ambition and practical delivery, expressing concerns about whether breadth and quality of provision can be achieved consistently across Wales.

A key theme was the potential for geographical inequality. Respondents noted that learners in rural or less well-resourced areas may have more limited access to provision than those in urban settings, raising concerns about equitable access to a broad curriculum.

Practical delivery challenges were also raised. These included funding pressures, workforce capacity, infrastructure constraints and declining learner numbers, all of which were seen as limiting the ability of providers to sustain a diverse and viable curriculum offer. Transport and accessibility were also identified as significant barriers, particularly where learners are required to travel between sites, with implications for cost, timetabling, attendance and participation.

While collaboration was widely recognised as essential to achieving curriculum breadth, many respondents noted that it can be complex to implement in practice. Challenges relating to timetabling, funding arrangements, shared delivery models and coordination between institutions were highlighted. Some respondents also raised concerns that achieving breadth at a local or regional level could, in some cases, reduce the range of options available within individual institutions, with potential implications for learner experience and provider sustainability.

Finally, respondents emphasised the importance of high-quality advice, information and guidance to enable learners to navigate a more complex system and access the full range of available opportunities. They noted the importance of ensuring that all learners, particularly those who are more vulnerable or harder to reach, are able to benefit from these arrangements.

Overall, while the principles underpinning the guidance were supported, respondents emphasised that successful implementation will depend on addressing these practical and systemic challenges to ensure that all learners can access a genuinely broad and coherent curriculum offer.

Welsh Government response

We welcome the overall support for the principles set out in the guidance, particularly the emphasis on collaboration, learner choice and progression.

The Welsh Government recognises the concerns raised regarding the extent to which a broad and equitable curriculum offer can be delivered consistently across Wales. Feedback highlights a range of practical challenges, including funding pressures, workforce capacity, transport and accessibility, and the complexities associated with collaborative delivery models. These factors are acknowledged as key considerations in the implementation of local curricula.

The guidance is intended to establish the strategic framework within which local curricula will be developed. Many of the issues raised—particularly those relating to delivery models, coordination between partners and practical implementation—are operational in nature and will be addressed through detailed guidance developed by Medr, supported by ongoing engagement with providers and local partners. Medr will also set expectations for curriculum breadth, now that they have responsibility for the formation of local curricula, and will be able to take account of local context, capacity and sustainability.

The Welsh Government also recognises the importance of ensuring that learners are able to access provision and make informed choices. The guidance has been strengthened to reflect considerations such as travel and accessibility, as well as utilising online solutions to broaden offers. We will continue to work closely with Medr and partners to support implementation and to ensure that the emerging local curriculum model delivers a broad, coherent and accessible offer for learners across Wales.

Question 5 – GCSE resits and Essential Skills Wales

To what extent do you agree with the proposed policy within the 16 to 18 local curricula guidance on the use of English, Mathematics and Cymraeg GCSEs and of Essential Skills Wales qualifications within post-16 programmes?

Response	Response total	Percentage of responses
Strongly Agree	3	10.00%
Agree	22	73.33%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	4	13.33%
Disagree	1	3.33%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%

Of the Likert responses received for Question 5, 83% were positive, 13% were neutral and 4% were negative.

Strong support for this policy was demonstrated, with respondents welcoming the focus on a more flexible and learner-centred approach to the development of literacy, numeracy and Welsh language skills. In particular, there was strong support for discouraging untargeted GCSE resits, with respondents highlighting the potential negative impact of repeated resits on learner wellbeing, confidence and motivation.

Essential Skills Wales (ESW) qualifications were widely viewed as a credible and valuable alternative, offering a more applied and flexible approach for learners, particularly those following vocational pathways. Respondents generally supported the availability of both GCSE and ESW routes, emphasising the importance of maintaining flexibility to meet diverse learner needs and progression goals.

Alongside this support, concerns were raised regarding funding, staffing and delivery capacity, as well as the need to ensure that English, Mathematics and Cymraeg qualifications are effectively integrated into broader study programmes so that they support, rather than detract from, learners' main programmes of study.

Respondents also highlighted the importance of recognising diverse learner starting points and ensuring that progression pathways are realistic and achievable. Some noted that GCSE requirements may act as a barrier to progression for certain learners, particularly where these are not directly aligned to their chosen pathway. Further clarity was requested on how the policy will be implemented in practice, including expectations on providers and accountability arrangements.

Welsh Government response

The Welsh Government welcomes the strong level of support for this policy and the emphasis placed by respondents on a flexible, learner-centred approach to the development of essential skills.

We recognise the importance of both GCSE and Essential Skills Wales qualifications in supporting learner progression and acknowledge the need for flexibility in how

these are delivered to meet individual learner needs and starting points. It is important that these qualifications are integrated effectively within study programmes so that they support, rather than detract from, learners' wider learning and progression goals.

Respondents raised a number of practical considerations, including funding and staffing capacity. In response to these concerns, guidance wording has been strengthened, highlighting that funding and staffing will be key enablers in the delivery of local curricula and Medr will need to take account of this policy as they develop their operational guidance. These issues, along with wider questions around implementation and delivery models, are operational in nature and will be considered as part of the detailed guidance and arrangements developed by Medr and providers.

We will continue to work with Medr and partners to monitor the use of different qualifications and success rates of learners achieving L2 passes in English/Cymraeg and/or Maths as policy is implemented.

Question 6 – Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales and Skills qualifications

To what extent do you agree with the proposed policy within the 16 to 18 local curricula guidance on the use of skills qualifications within post-16 programmes, including the Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales and Skills Suite qualifications?

Response	Response total	Percentage of responses
Strongly Agree	5	16.67%
Agree	13	43.33%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	8	26.67%
Disagree	3	10.00%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
Skipped	1	3.33%

Of the Likert responses received for Question 6, 60% were positive, 27% were neutral and 10% were negative – One respondent skipped this question.

Responses generally supported the policy intention around the Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales (AdvSBW), with many respondents recognising its value in supporting progression and employability through the development of transferable skills. Positive feedback was also provided on the flexibility and tailoring offered through the inclusion of Skills Suite qualifications.

However, a number of respondents raised concerns regarding how the qualification is implemented in practice. In particular, there was a strong concern that, while not formally compulsory, the AdvSBW may be perceived as effectively mandatory in some institutions due to expectations, monitoring or funding arrangements. Respondents also highlighted variation in how the qualification is delivered across providers and raised concerns about workload and learner experience, including the potential for learner disengagement where the qualification is not well aligned with their main programme of study.

There was a general view that skills qualifications should complement, rather than compete with, learners' main programmes of learning, and that flexibility should be maintained to allow providers to design programmes appropriate to different learner needs and contexts. Concerns were raised regarding delivery capacity, staff expertise and the need for greater clarity around the status and expectations associated with the qualification.

Some respondents highlighted the potential for overlap with wider enrichment activity such as volunteering, work experience or the Duke of Edinburgh Award. A few respondents called for a more coherent approach to skills development across post-16 provision.

Welsh Government response

We welcome the feedback received and the overall support for the inclusion of skills qualifications within the guidance, including the Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales (AdvSBW). These qualifications have been developed to provide learners with valuable opportunities to develop and evidence the transferable skills valued by higher education institutions and employers.

The Welsh Government recognises the concerns raised by respondents regarding how the qualification may be perceived and implemented in practice, including issues relating to workload, delivery and consistency across providers. While no post-16 qualification is compulsory, we acknowledge the importance of ensuring that providers retain flexibility in how programmes are designed and delivered, taking into account the needs of their learners.

The AdvSBW forms part of the broader curriculum offer for 16 to 18 learners and is intended to complement, rather than replace, learners' main programmes of study. While enrichment activities such as volunteering or the Duke of Edinburgh Award provide valuable opportunities for skills development, the AdvSBW is a recognised qualification designed in collaboration with employers to support progression.

Responsibility for how these qualifications are delivered sits with schools and FEIs. The Welsh Government will continue to work with Medr and partners to support a consistent understanding of the purpose and status of the qualification.

Question 7 – Workforce impact

We would like to know your views on the effects that the policy outlined in the 16 to 18 local curricula guidance will have on the school and FEI workforce, including any impact it might have on workloads.

All respondents provided feedback for this question. While some respondents highlighted potential longer-term benefits of a more collaborative approach to curriculum planning, many expressed concern about the impact on workforce capacity and workload.

Respondents consistently identified several key pressure points, including increased demands associated with joint planning, collaboration across institutions, cross-site delivery, Welsh-medium provision, new qualification delivery, and data-sharing and monitoring requirements. These demands were expected to be particularly significant during the early stages of implementation.

There was a strong view that the policy would lead to increased short- to medium-term workload across schools, FEIs and local authorities, with concerns raised about capacity within an already stretched workforce. Respondents also highlighted the need for additional professional learning and upskilling, particularly in relation to collaborative working, digital delivery and new qualifications.

Workforce challenges relating to Welsh-medium and ALN provision were frequently raised, including the availability of suitably qualified staff and the need for a more strategic, national approach to workforce planning. Concerns were also expressed about administrative complexity, including timetabling, travel between sites, and coordination across partners.

Several respondents emphasised the importance of a phased implementation approach, additional funding to support collaboration time, and mechanisms to monitor and manage workload pressures. While there was recognition that collaboration may lead to longer-term efficiencies, respondents noted that these benefits would depend on sufficient resourcing, effective coordination and sustained support for the workforce.

Welsh Government Response

The Welsh Government recognises the concerns raised by respondents regarding the potential impact of the policy on workforce capacity and workload across schools, further education institutions and local authorities. A workforce Impact assessment has been undertaken that highlights the concerns raised in the responses. We also note that the guidance does not place any new statutory duties on schools, FEIs or local authorities. The duties on them within the Learning and Skills Act 2000 remain in place.

We acknowledge that there may be increased workload pressures during the initial stages of implementation as new local curriculum arrangements are developed, now that Medr rather than Welsh Ministers have responsibility for the formation of local curricula for 16 to 18 year olds. We have discussed with Medr ways in which

changes can be introduced incrementally during 2026/27, building in opportunity for engagement with and feedback from curriculum planners as collaborative structures and working arrangements are put in place, where they do not already exist. This will help shape development of Medr's operational guidance. Workforce capacity will be an important factor in the sustainable delivery of local curricula and will continue to be considered through wider workforce planning and policy activity.

The local curriculum approach is intended to support more efficient use of resources over time by reducing unnecessary duplication and enabling providers to focus on areas of strength. However, we recognise that realising these benefits will depend on effective collaboration, workforce capacity and clear implementation arrangements.

While collaboration between providers has been a feature of the system since the introduction of the Learning and Skills Measure, we recognise that expectations will evolve as Medr assumes responsibility for the formation of local curricula, alongside its wider strategic duty to promote collaboration and coherence. We will continue to work with Medr and partners to monitor workforce impacts and ensure that implementation is rolled out in a manageable and proportionate way.

Question 8 – Equity and diverse needs

We would like to know your views on the effects that the policy outlined in the 16 to 18 local curricula guidance will have on the diverse needs of individual learners, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who share protected characteristics (as set out under the Equality Act 2010).

93% of respondents provided feedback to this question. While respondents broadly welcomed the learner-centred and inclusive principles set out in the guidance, a number of concerns were raised regarding the potential impact on equitable access and learner participation.

The most frequently cited concern related to transport and travel, with respondents highlighting that increased reliance on multi-site delivery could disproportionately affect disadvantaged learners, those living in rural areas and learners with caring responsibilities. Concerns were also raised that travel costs, timetabling and accessibility could create barriers to participation and negatively impact attendance and safeguarding.

Respondents emphasised that, without appropriate mitigations, these factors could risk widening existing inequalities between learner groups and across different areas of Wales. There were also concerns that multi-provider delivery models may be more difficult for vulnerable learners to navigate without sufficient support.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision was identified as a particular area of concern, with respondents noting that capacity in the post-16 sector is already under pressure. Concerns were raised regarding the availability of specialist support, clarity of responsibilities, and the need for sufficient resourcing to meet increasing demand. More broadly, respondents highlighted the importance of ensuring that wider learner support, including mental health, safeguarding and pastoral provision, is not adversely affected by system changes.

Respondents also highlighted the need for improved pre-16 data sharing to support effective learner placement and early intervention, alongside the importance of high-quality advice, information and guidance to help learners navigate more complex local curriculum arrangements.

Finally, some respondents called for greater clarity and assurance through mechanisms such as impact assessments and the introduction of minimum learner entitlements, to ensure a consistent and equitable offer across Wales.

Welsh Government Response

We welcome the feedback provided and the strong support for the learner-centred and inclusive principles set out within the guidance. Ensuring that local curricula meet the diverse needs of all learners, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those attending traditional schools and colleges with additional learning needs (ALN), remains a central priority for the Welsh Government.

We recognise the concerns raised regarding equitable access to provision, particularly in relation to transport, geographical variation and the increased complexity associated with multi-site delivery models. These factors have the potential to impact learner participation and must be carefully considered as part of local curriculum planning. The guidance has been strengthened to reflect the importance of accessibility and inclusion, and we expect these considerations to be embedded within Medr's approach to planning and oversight.

Respondents also highlighted pressures within the ALN system, including capacity, specialist provision and clarity of responsibilities. The Welsh Government acknowledges these challenges and the importance of ensuring that local curricula are designed in a way that supports learners with a wide range of needs.

Many of the issues raised - particularly those relating to transport arrangements, data sharing, and local coordination of support services - are operational in nature. These will be addressed through detailed operational guidance and local implementation arrangements developed by Medr in collaboration with partners.

The Welsh Government will continue to work closely with Medr and stakeholders to ensure that the principles of equity and inclusion are realised in practice, and that all learners are supported to access and benefit from local curriculum offers, regardless of their background, location or individual needs.

Question 9 – Welsh language (equality)

What, in your opinion, would be the likely effects of the 16 to 18 local curricula 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.

90% of respondents provided a response to this question. Responses were generally positive, with a broad consensus that the guidance strengthens the status of Welsh as a core planning duty and presents opportunities for collaboration to expand Welsh-medium and bilingual provision.

However, respondents emphasised that the extent to which these ambitions can be realised in practice will depend on addressing a number of significant challenges. Workforce capacity was identified as a key issue, particularly in relation to shortages of Welsh-medium staff and gaps in vocational and technical provision. Several respondents also cautioned against an over-reliance on online or blended delivery models, noting that these may not be suitable or attractive for all learners.

Concerns were raised regarding the potential for Welsh-medium provision to become more limited or unevenly distributed, including risks that Welsh language opportunities may be concentrated in fewer locations or narrower subject areas. This could result in reduced accessibility for some learners, particularly in rural areas, and raises concerns about Welsh being treated less favourably than English.

Some respondents highlighted the need for clearer expectations, including the potential for minimum entitlement levels for Welsh-medium and bilingual provision, and stronger alignment with Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs). There were also calls for sustained investment in the Welsh-medium workforce, improved data and monitoring, and clearer communication of available pathways to ensure learners are aware of and able to access Welsh-medium opportunities.

Welsh Government response

We welcome the generally positive response to the emphasis placed on the Welsh language within the guidance, including the recognition of Welsh-medium and bilingual provision as a core component of local curriculum planning.

The Welsh Government acknowledges that, while the guidance establishes a strong policy framework, the extent to which these ambitions can be realised will depend on a range of contributing factors. In particular, respondents highlighted workforce capacity, variability in provision, and accessibility—especially in rural areas—as key risks to ensuring that Welsh is not treated less favourably than English.

We recognise the importance of ensuring that learners are able to access Welsh-medium and bilingual opportunities across a broad range of pathways, including vocational and technical education. The guidance reinforces Medr's role in supporting the development of Welsh-medium provision and promoting opportunities for learners to continue their education through the medium of Welsh.

The Welsh Government is committed to supporting this ambition through wider policy and workforce planning activity, including initiatives to strengthen the Welsh-medium workforce and increase the availability of Welsh-medium qualifications. These actions will be critical in ensuring that provision can be expanded in a sustainable and equitable way.

Respondents also highlighted the importance of clear expectations, effective monitoring and alignment with Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs). These issues will be considered as part of Medr's operational guidance and wider implementation arrangements, ensuring that local curriculum planning reflects both national ambitions and local context.

We will continue to work closely with Medr and partners to ensure that Welsh-medium and bilingual provision is strengthened across the post-16 system, supporting more learners to develop their Welsh language skills and to continue learning through the medium of Welsh post-16.

Question 10 – Welsh language (strengthening)

In your opinion, could the 16 to 18 local curricula 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?**

80% of respondents provided a response to this question. Responses indicated broad support for strengthening the guidance to further enhance the status and use of the Welsh language within local curricula.

Respondents generally emphasised that maximising positive effects on the Welsh language will depend on ensuring that Welsh-medium and bilingual provision is treated as a core element of curriculum planning rather than a supplementary consideration. Several respondents highlighted the importance of embedding clear expectations that local curricula must actively maintain and develop Welsh-medium pathways, ensuring that learners are not required to switch to English-medium provision in order to access their chosen courses.

A recurring theme was the need for greater clarity and consistency in expectations. Respondents called for stronger national direction, including the potential introduction of minimum entitlements for Welsh-medium and bilingual provision and clearer definitions of what constitutes equitable provision across different contexts. In particular, concerns were raised about gaps in vocational and technical Welsh-medium provision and the need to ensure parity with academic pathways.

Workforce capacity was also identified as a key factor in enabling positive outcomes. Many respondents highlighted the need for sustained investment in recruitment, training and professional learning to expand the Welsh-medium workforce, particularly in specialist and vocational subject areas. Linked to this, respondents noted the additional costs associated with delivering bilingual provision and developing appropriate resources.

Collaboration was widely viewed as an important mechanism to support Welsh-medium provision, particularly in areas with smaller learner numbers. However, respondents emphasised that collaborative and digital delivery models should be used to expand access rather than replace local provision, and that reliance on these approaches should be carefully balanced to ensure quality and accessibility for learners.

Several respondents highlighted the importance of stronger planning, monitoring and accountability mechanisms. Suggestions included the introduction of Welsh language impact assessments as part of local curriculum planning, improved data collection on participation and outcomes, and clearer alignment with Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs).

Finally, respondents emphasised the importance of high-quality advice, information and guidance to ensure that learners and their families are aware of Welsh-medium and bilingual opportunities. There were also calls to recognise Welsh language skills more explicitly as an employability asset and to strengthen links between Welsh-medium provision and labour market opportunities.

Welsh Government response

We welcome the constructive feedback provided on how the guidance could be strengthened to support the Welsh language further.

There is clear support for ensuring that Welsh-medium and bilingual provision is embedded as a core element of local curriculum planning, rather than treated as a supplementary consideration. The Welsh Government agrees with this principle and has reflected this in the strengthening of relevant sections within the guidance.

We acknowledge the calls for greater clarity and consistency in expectations, including the potential for minimum entitlement levels and clearer definitions of equitable provision. The guidance sets out the strategic expectation that Welsh-medium and bilingual opportunities should be planned and expanded where possible; the detailed implementation of these expectations, including how provision is configured at local level, will be developed through Medr's operational guidance.

Workforce capacity remains a critical factor in the delivery of Welsh-medium provision. The Welsh Government recognises the need for sustained investment in recruitment, training and professional learning to support the expansion of the Welsh-medium workforce, particularly in vocational and specialist subject areas. This will be taken forward through wider workforce planning activity.

Collaboration between providers will be key to strengthening Welsh-medium provision, particularly in areas where learner numbers are lower. The guidance supports collaborative approaches to delivery, including the use of digital and blended models where appropriate. We agree, however, that these approaches should be used to enhance access and choice for learners where possible, rather than as a substitute for developing local provision.

We also recognise the importance of effective planning, monitoring and accountability mechanisms. Medr will have a central role in ensuring that Welsh-medium provision is considered within local curriculum development, supported by appropriate data and engagement with partners.

The Welsh Government will continue to work with Medr and stakeholders to ensure that the guidance supports the long-term ambition of increasing Welsh-medium participation and strengthening the role of the Welsh language across all post-16 pathways.

Question 11 – General comments

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

57% of respondents who completed the consultation response form took the opportunity to provide additional comments, highlighting a number of cross-cutting themes across the consultation.

These included concerns relating to declining learner numbers, financial sustainability across both further education institutions and school sixth forms, transport inequity, variability in teaching quality, and the cumulative burden of ongoing reform on system capacity. Respondents emphasised that these wider systemic pressures will have a significant impact on the deliverability of the guidance.

A recurring theme was the need for greater clarity in relation to roles, responsibilities and decision-making processes, particularly regarding Medr's function within the system. Respondents called for clearer accountability arrangements, greater transparency in decision-making, and more explicit guidance on how collaboration will operate in practice.

There were also calls for improved system infrastructure, including sustainable funding models to support collaboration, investment in workforce capacity, and access to robust baseline data to inform curriculum planning. Respondents emphasised the importance of regular monitoring and review mechanisms, alongside clearer expectations to ensure consistency and equity across Wales.

More broadly, respondents highlighted the importance of ensuring that the implementation of the guidance is realistic and phased, with sufficient consideration given to existing system pressures, regional variation and the need to maintain a high-quality and sustainable post-16 offer.

Welsh Government Response

Responses to the cross-cutting themes raised through this question have been addressed within the individual analysis of earlier questions.

Welsh Government response

The Welsh Government is grateful to everyone who took the time to respond to this consultation. As a summary document, some of the issues raised in individual responses may not have been reflected fully, but each response has been carefully considered, and due consideration has been given to all recommendations.

The Welsh Government acknowledges the challenges that Medr and curriculum planners will face as they start to deliver local curricula offers under this guidance and will support Medr in the development of their operational guidance, to mitigate them.

This summary of responses will be published alongside the final guidance and any associated impact assessments.