



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

## BACKGROUND

# Permanent and fixed-term exclusions from schools: quality report

This report covers the general principles and processes leading up to the production of our statistics.

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## Context

### Policy and operational

Updated guidance on **Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units (Circular No: 171/2015)** was issued in April 2015 and provides guidance on exclusions and appeals procedures. The procedures set out in this guidance apply to all maintained schools and PRUs and all pupils in them. It is for individual schools to determine their behaviour policies and to work with their local authority on exclusions. Differing practices operating within the guidelines will affect the varying rates across Wales.

### Data source and coverage

Since January 2013 exclusions data have been collected in the January **Pupil-Level Annual School Census (PLASC)**. It was not possible to publish these new data immediately because their quality had to be evaluated. Now that the quality of the data has been confirmed, the pupil-level exclusions data obtained from the January PLASC are being used as the basis of this statistical first release. Pupil numbers used to calculate exclusion rates are also taken from the January PLASC and the Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS) collection.

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The data collection is carried out by Knowledge and Analytical Services within the Welsh Government.

The exclusions information in this Statistical First Release relates to the number of permanent and fixed-term exclusions of pupils of all ages from maintained primary, secondary and special schools and pupil referral units during the whole academic year. Only permanent exclusions upheld by the Governing Body's Pupil Discipline Committee are included in the data since they are collected after the outcome of all independent appeals have been finalised.

Data are collected from maintained primary, secondary and special schools in the January PLASC and also for pupil referral units from the EOTAS collection following the academic year during which the exclusions took place. For example, exclusions for the 2017/18 academic year were collected in the January 2019 PLASC. If two schools merge before the next January PLASC, the schools' exclusions data will be submitted by the new school. If a school closes before the next January PLASC, the exclusions data from that school are not provided.

Pupil numbers used to calculate rates of exclusions within this Statistical First Release include all full-time and part-time pupils in maintained primary, secondary and special schools, and pupils in pupil referral units. They only include pupils from schools that were still open to provide exclusions data in the next January PLASC. In the event that a newly-merged school provided exclusions data, all schools that merged to form that school will also be included in the totals.

Data relate to the number of exclusions, not the number of pupils excluded. For example, a pupil excluded twice during an academic year would appear twice for that year.

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# Quality information

## Relevance

The statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government to monitor educational trends and as a baseline for further analysis of the underlying data. Some of the key users are:

- ministers and the Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales
- the Department for Education in England
- other government departments
- local authorities
- Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and Training in Wales
- Wales Audit Office
- Education Directorate
- other areas of the Welsh Government
- the research community
- students, academics and universities
- individual citizens and private companies

These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these are:

- advice to Ministers
- local authority comparisons and benchmarks
- to inform the education policy decision-making process in Wales
- to inform ESTYN during school inspections
- contributes to the Core Strategic Indicators
- international benchmarking
- the education domain of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation
- to assist in research in educational attainment

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## Accuracy

Various stages of automated validation and sense-checking are built into the data collection process to ensure a high quality of data.

## Timeliness and punctuality

The data are collected in the January following the academic year in which the exclusions took place. Following the collection of the data and quality assurance, they are published at the earliest possible date. Because the data collection has moved from a local authority survey that used to take place in November to the January PLASC the publication date is later than the previous exclusions statistical release.

## Accessibility and clarity

This Statistical First Release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics section of the Welsh Government website.

## Comparability and coherence

The 2013/14 edition of this Statistical First Release moved to using data collected in a new way via the January Pupil-Level Annual School Census (PLASC). Caution should therefore be taken when comparing data in this new statistical release and the old report called 'Exclusions from Schools in Wales'. It is not advised to compare rates in or before the 2013/14 edition with later editions of this Statistical First Release. Comparable figures can be produced on request.

To calculate the rate of exclusions per 1,000 pupils, the number of exclusions were divided by the number of pupils with 'main' or 'current' enrolment status reported by all schools in January PLASC, ignoring the marginal effect of closed schools. This method is simpler, easier for our users to replicate and understand

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and allows us to produce more timely data.

Due to the effect that the implementation of different behaviour management and exclusion intervention practices, such as managed moves, have on the number of exclusions, comparisons over time and between local authorities should be interpreted with caution.

Exclusions data for Wales are based on the number of exclusions during the academic year whereas Northern Ireland publish the number of pupils excluded, so the two sets of data are not directly comparable. Information on the number of pupils excluded in Wales is available on request.

## National Statistics status

The **United Kingdom Statistics Authority** has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the **Code of Practice for Statistics**.

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

The designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in July 2010 following a **full assessment against the Code of Practice**. Since the

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latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics. We have made the following improvement:

- produced a shorter format release that highlights key messages while maintaining the previous level of data in supplementary tables

## Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the wellbeing goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

## Further details

England publish exclusions data for state-funded primary, secondary and special schools in the statistical release entitled '[Permanent and fixed-period](#)

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**exclusions in England: 2017 to 2018**'.

Scotland publish exclusions data for maintained primary, secondary and special schools biennially in the statistical bulletin '**Summary statistics for schools in Scotland**'.

Northern Ireland publish the **number of pupils expelled or suspended from primary, post-primary and special schools**.

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