



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

STATISTICS

# Pupils educated other than at school: September 2022 to August 2023

Data relating to pupils known by local authorities to be receiving education outside of school from September 2022 to August 2023.

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# Introduction

This release covers data on pupils receiving Education Other than at School (EOTAS), including at Pupil Referral Units (PRU). It includes data by age, gender, and the type of provision.

This report covers a time both during and after the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The most recent data in this report relates to the situation as of 17 January 2023 when the EOTAS census was taken. Please see the quality section for information on the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on this data collection in the last few years.

The EOTAS Census covers pupils that local authorities (LAs) place in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), or other forms of alternative provision referred to as Educated Other Than at School (EOTAS). It is the equivalent of the **Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC)**, but for children educated outside school.

This release also has information about children who have been notified to local authorities by parents as being home educated. These children are not included in the EOTAS Census, and data is provided in the final section of this publication.

For more detailed definitions about the criteria for EOTAS and categories of EOTAS provision see **definitions and criteria**.

This publication often uses the number of pupils in every 1,000 (rates) to compare groups. These numbers are calculated by dividing by the number of pupils in the EOTAS group by the number of pupils in the same group in the whole student population.

For example, if in a local authority in 2022/23 there are:

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- 500 EOTAS pupils in the local authority
- 50,000 PLASC and EOTAS pupils combined in the same local authority

Then there are 10 EOTAS pupils in every 1,000 pupils in that local authority.

In Wales, in 2022/23 there are 5.1 in every 1,000 pupils with EOTAS provision

The local authority in our example is greater than the Wales number, so there are proportionately more EOTAS pupils in that local authority than in Wales.

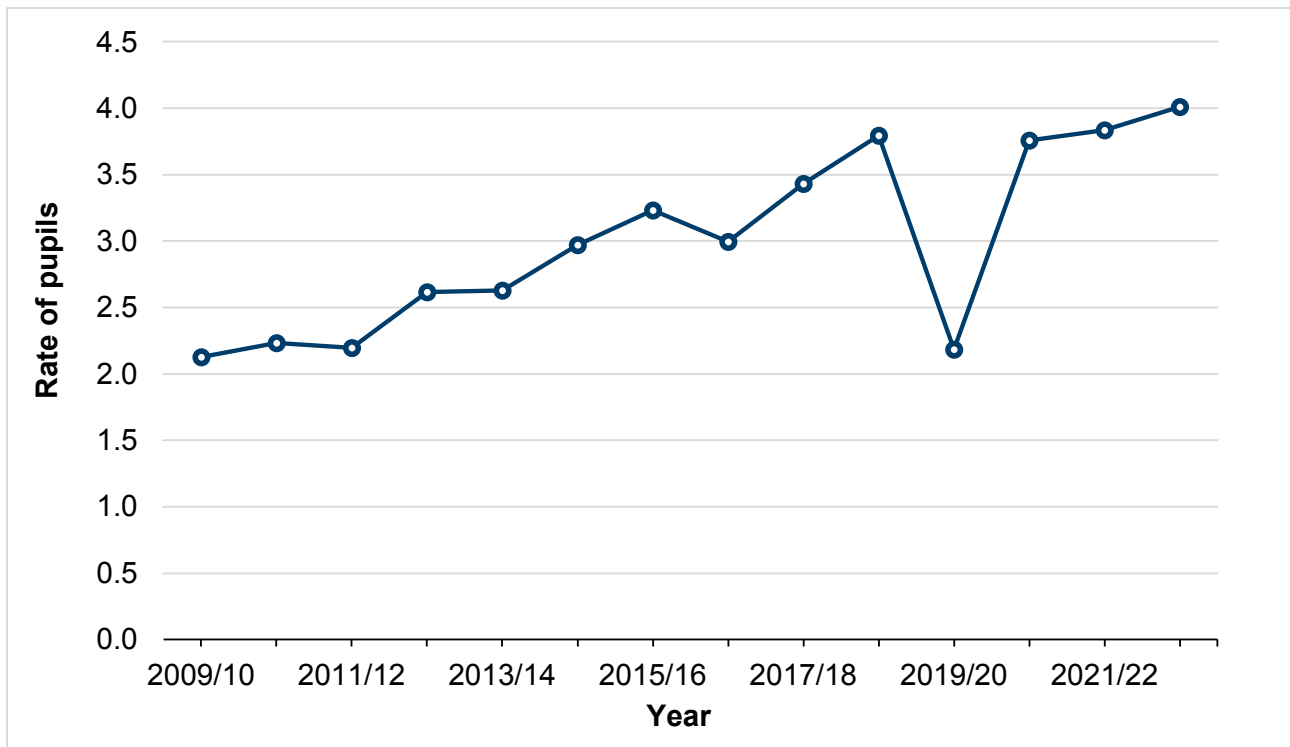
## EOTAS pupils

There are 2,396 pupils receiving some type of EOTAS provision. That's 5.1 of every 1,000 pupils in Wales which is down from a high of 5.6 of every 1,000 pupils in 2010/11.

There are 1,891 EOTAS pupils mainly educated outside school. That is 4.0 of every 1,000 pupils in Wales, which is up from 2.1 of every 1,000 pupils in 2009/10. The number of EOTAS pupils mainly educated outside school appears to be trending upwards, having nearly doubled proportionately since 2009/10, which you can see in Figure 1. Since the start of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, there has been no change in the long-term trend, apart from pupils in Elective Home Education.

The percentage of EOTAS pupils mainly educated outside school is 78.9%, up from 42% in 2009/10.

**Figure 1: Rate per 1,000 pupils mainly educated outside school, 2009/10 to 2022/23**



Description of Figure 1: A line chart showing a long-term upward trend in the rate per 1,000 pupils of those mainly educated outside school, 2009/10 to 2022/23. There is a sharp dip in the rate in 2020 due to the first national lockdown in Spring 2020 during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Source: EOTAS Pupil Census and PLASC

Many EOTAS pupils are still on roll at maintained schools.

Of the 2,396 EOTAS pupils in 2022/23:

- 728 had 'subsidiary' enrolment status in a maintained school, which means

their main education was 'other than at school'

- 505 had 'main' or 'current' enrolment status in a maintained, which means that their main education was in a maintained school

The focus in this release will be on the 1,891 EOTAS pupils mainly educated outside school. A combination of the:

- 728 pupils with subsidiary enrolment, i.e. they spend some time in school
- 1,163 pupils exclusively educated outside school

Pupils with 'main' or 'current' enrolment status are included in the Schools' Census publication.

## Local authorities

Merthyr Tydfil had the highest rate of EOTAS pupils in 2022/23 with 9.0 of every 1,000 pupils mainly educated outside school.

Pembrokeshire's EOTAS numbers have increased the most since 2009/10, going from a rate of 0.5 of every 1,000 pupils to 8.0 of every 1,000 pupils in 2022/23. The rate is now 12 times greater than in 2009/10. This is due to an increase in the number of pupils being recorded as subsidiary enrolment at a maintained school, as opposed to being recorded as main or current enrolment status.

## Special educational needs and additional learning needs (SEN/ALN)

In 2022/23, there are, proportionately, significantly more pupils with SEN or ALN

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mainly educated outside school than in the general student population.

## **The rates of EOTAS pupils for each category of SEN or ALN provision**

### **Statement of SEN**

- 57.6 of every 1,000 pupils

### **School Action Plus**

- 32.1 of every 1,000 pupils

### **Local authority maintained Individual Development Plan (IDP)**

- 68.1 of every 1,000 pupils

Compared to an average of 4.0 of every 1,000 pupils in the general pupil population. For information on the categories of SEN or ALN pupils, please see the information in [definitions and criteria](#).

In 2022/23 the rate of pupils mainly educated outside school with SEN / ALN increased compared to 2009/10. The 2009/10 rate was 8.1 of every 1,000 pupils, compared to 24.9 of every 1,000 pupils in 2022/23.

In 2022/23, a Statement of Special Educational Needs is the most common SEN provision for pupils mainly educated outside school.

## Free School Meals (FSM)

Pupils are eligible for **free school meals** if their parents or guardians are in receipt of certain means-tested benefits or support payments.

There has consistently been a higher rate of pupils with FSM mainly educated outside school than in the general population. The rate peaked in 2017/18, with 8.4 of every 1,000 pupils eligible for FSM mainly educated outside school and is 8.3 of every 1,000 pupils in 2022/23.

42.4% of pupils mainly educated outside school were eligible for free school meals in 2022/23, compared to 20.3% of pupils in school (PLASC) eligible for free school meals.

## EOTAS provision

Since pupils may attend more than one educational provision in a week, some pupils may be counted against more than one provision. So, the number of enrolments (1,904) is higher than the number of pupils mainly educated outside school (1,891 pupils).

In 2022/23 there were 949 enrolments at pupil referral units, which accounted for 49.8% of all EOTAS enrolments. Pupil referral units are still the most common provision for EOTAS pupils. The percentage of pupils in PRUs has been relatively constant since 2009/10.

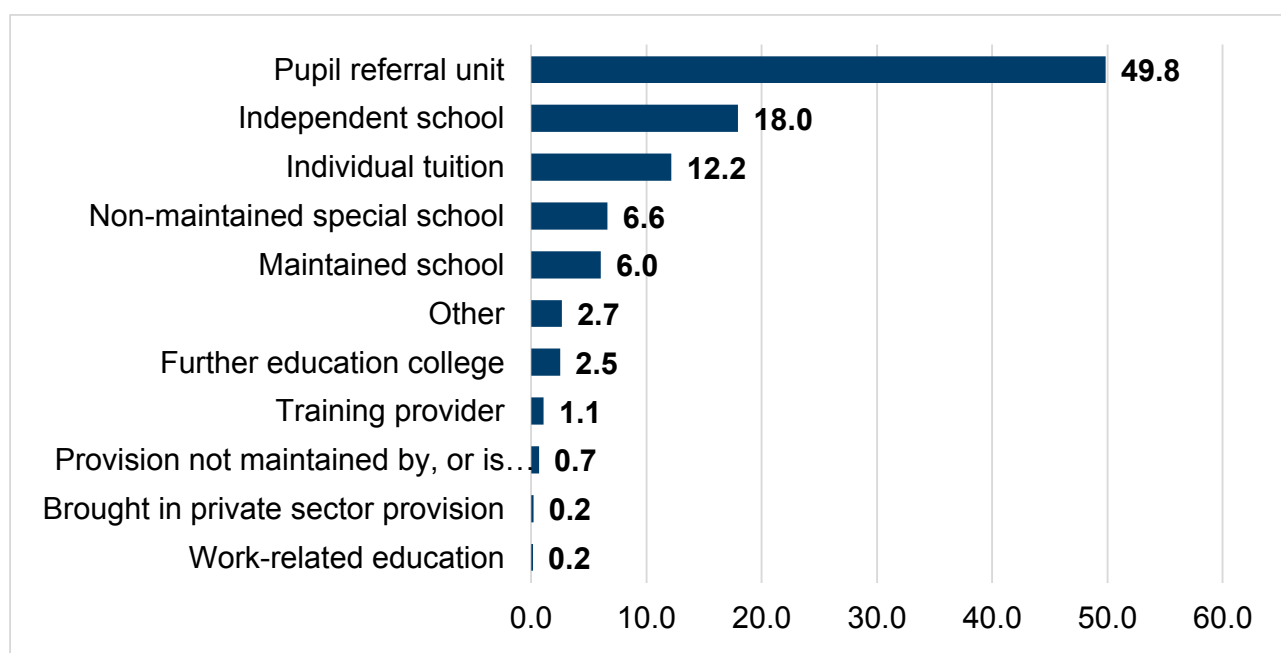
Work-related Education has declined from 3.9% in 2009/10 to too low to be reported in 2022/23.

The average number of hours of education provided to pupils mainly educated



outside school was 21.5 hours. Pupils enrolled in a further education college received the highest average number of hours of provision, with an average of 24.8 hours provided per pupil.

## Figure 2: Percentage of pupil enrolments, by educational provision, 2022/23



Description of Figure 2: A bar chart showing that the largest number of pupil enrolments (49.8%) are in Pupil Referral Units, followed by independent schools (18.0%) and individual tuition (12.2%).

Source: EOTAS Pupil Census and PLASC

Since 2009/10 the use of both individual tuition and independent schools has increased. Independent Schools are now the second most used provision for EOTAS pupils during 2022/23.

# Elective home education

In the 2022/23 academic year 5,330 children were known to be electively home educated in Wales. This number isn't included in the total EOTAS pupil numbers later in this release.

The rate of elective home educated pupils in 2022/23 is 11.1 of every 1,000 pupils, up from 1.6 of every 1,000 pupils in 2009/10, and the rate has increased each year since then. The rate increased in all local authorities.

Carmarthenshire had the highest rate, at 26.1 of every 1,000 pupils. Ceredigion had previously consistently reported the highest rate of home educated children since 2009/10 for both girls and boys.

In 2022/23 the rate in Carmarthenshire has reached:

- 27.8 of every 1,000 pupils for females
- 24.4 of every 1,000 pupils for males

The highest proportional growth was in Blaenau Gwent, with an increase to over 30 times the rate of home educated pupils it had in 2009/10.

The most common age for home educated pupils is 15.

In 2022/23 there were:

- 30.3 of every 1,000 15-year-old female pupils were electively home educated
- 24.4 of every 1,000 15-year-old male pupils were electively home educated

From 2009/10 to 2022/23, there have been increases in the rates of elective home education across all age groups, with the largest increase in the 5-year-old age group. In 2022/23 the rate of 16-year-old pupils being home educated

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has increased to 32 times that in 2009/10.

Parents voluntarily notify their local authority that they are home educating their children (unless they have withdrawn their child from school). This means the data might not include all electively home educated children.

## Definitions and criteria

### Education Other than at School (EOTAS)

The main criterion for inclusion in the EOTAS census is pupils that a Welsh Local Authority has a financial responsibility for and if not included in this census collection would not be picked up via PLASC. However, some pupils may be included in the EOTAS census and on a school PLASC (for maintained primary, secondary, and special schools).

This collection focuses on children receiving education funded by a Local Authority other than at school as defined in [Section 19\(1\) of the Education Act 1996 UK legislation](#). i.e. those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion or otherwise may not for any period receive suitable education.

### Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)

[Section 19 \(1\) of the Education Act 1996 \(UK legislation\)](#) requires Local Authorities to make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at schools or otherwise for children of compulsory school age who, for whatever reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless suitable arrangements are made for them. [Section 19 \(2\) \(UK legislation\)](#) states that any school established to provide

education for those children and is not a county [community] or special school, shall be known as a “Pupil Referral Unit”.

## **Independent schools**

Schools which charge fees and may also be financed by individuals, companies, or charitable institutions.

## **Special schools**

Special schools, both day and boarding, provide education for children with SEN who cannot be educated satisfactorily in mainstream schools.

## **Special educational needs (SEN)**

### **Pupils with statements**

Pupils for whom the authority maintains a statement of SEN under Part iv of the Education Act 1996. A statement may be issued by the local authority after assessment of a child’s needs.

### **School action**

When a class or subject teacher identify that a pupil has SEN they provide interventions that are additional to or different from those provided as part of the school’s usual curriculum.

## **School Action Plus**

When the class or subject teacher and the SEN Co-ordinator are provided with advice or support from outside specialists, so that alternative interventions additional or different to those provided for the pupil through 'School Action' can be put in place. The SEN Co-ordinator usually takes the lead although day-to-day provision continues to be the responsibility of class or subject teacher.

## **Individual Development Plans**

Individual Development Plans (IDPs) are statutory plans created under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, which came into force on 1 September 2021. A learner may have either a school maintained IDP or a local authority maintained IDP.

## **Additional learning needs (ALN) and special educational needs (SEN)**

A child has special needs if they have learning difficulties which requires special educational provision to be made for them. A learning difficulty means that the child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than most children of the same age or that the child has an impairment or health condition or is using British Sign Language and needs different educational facilities from those that the school generally provides for children. Pupils with SEN may have Statements issued by the local authority or may have their needs identified by the school. In the latter case they come under one of two further categories: School Action or School Action Plus.

### **ALN/SEN definitions.**

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# Changes to special educational needs data following the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018

The **Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021 (the ALN Code) and regulations** came into force on 1 September 2021 to ensure children and young people aged 0 to 25 can access additional support to meet their needs that is properly planned for and protected, with learners at the heart of the process.

Children are moving from the SEN system to the ALN system in groups over 3 years, to ensure enough time for nurseries, schools, pupil referral units and local authorities to discuss the support needed and to prepare plans.

Implementation of the ALN Code has taken place in partnership with education transformation leads, delivery partners and education establishments, with a programme of learning and development, and creation of new statutory roles in local authorities, schools, and the health service.

The 2022 schools census represents the first submissions from dedicated ALN Coordinators across Wales, as part of the Implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.

Analysis of the data, along with feedback from local authorities suggests that the fall in ALN/SEN pupils in 2022 is due to a systematic review by schools of their ALN/SEN registers in readiness for the rollout of the ALN system. Those pupils with low level needs, who were not identified as having a recognised ALN/SEN, were removed from the register.

Schools were also asked to stop using the 'General learning difficulties' category and to reassess an appropriate category of need for such pupils. This category had become a catch-all for those requiring catch up support, with minor needs

and/or where multiple needs existed, instead of its original intent, which was to capture learners awaiting assessment. This has led to some pupils being removed from the register if they were identified as not having ALN/SEN. The 'General learning difficulties' category will be removed from the 2023 schools census.

Additionally, many pupils on School Action Plans (those requiring the least amount of special educational provision) have been removed from the ALN/SEN register. This was either because their needs were short term but they remained on the register, or they do not require provision additional to, or different from, that which is provided for other learners, that can be addressed as part of holistic provision.

Welsh Government will continue to monitor the numbers of learners with ALN/SEN throughout ALN system implementation and work with our partners to ensure the data presents an accurate reflection of the numbers and categories of learners with ALN/SEN in Wales, and to ensure that their needs are being met.

## Free school meals

Pupils are eligible for **free school meals** if their parents or guardians are in receipt of certain means-tested benefits or support payments.

## Universal primary free school meals

As part of the Co-operation Agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru, **all primary school children in Wales will get free school meals by 2024**. The rollout began in September 2022 with most local authorities delivering free school meals to Reception aged children from the start of the

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autumn term (September 2022) and extending the offer to years 1 and 2 no later than the start of the summer term (April 2023).

Whilst this rollout of free school meals to those not previously eligible for them has started, the data presented in this release does not reflect the total number of pupils receiving free school meals in January 2023. Instead, it includes only the number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals if their parents or guardians are in receipt of certain benefits (as reported in previous years) or those who are transitionally protected. Please see the [free school meal information guide](#) for full details of eligibility criteria and benefits.

## Transitional protection for free school meals

On 1 April 2019 the Welsh Government introduced a new transitional protection for free school meals policy. This was brought in to ensure that pupils have their free school meals protected during the Universal Credit rollout period.

This protection applies to individual pupils and will continue until the end of their current schools phase, being the end of primary school or end of secondary school.

Any pupil that was eligible for free school meals on the introduction of the policy on 1 April 2019 should also be transitionally protected. In addition, any pupil that has become eligible at any point during the Universal Credit rollout under the new eligibility criteria should also be transitionally protected.

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# Quality and methodology information

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

Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- added to and refined information about dimensions of quality and described links to policy.
- produced the latest release in a new format to include charts which provide further insight into some of the key information.
- made more data available on StatsWales.

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

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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.

This section provides a summary of information on this output against five dimensions of quality: Relevance, Accuracy, Timeliness and Punctuality, Accessibility and Clarity, and Comparability. It also covers specific issues relating to quality of 2022 data and describes the quality management tool applied to this area of work.

## Relevance

These statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government. Some of the key users are:

- ministers and the Senedd Research in the Senedd
- members of the Senedd Cymru/Welsh Parliament
- education policy in the Welsh Government
- other areas of the Welsh Government
- Estyn
- 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
- to inform the education policy decision-making process in Wales including school reorganisation
- to inform Estyn during school inspections
- the education domain of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation
- to assist in research in educational attainment

## Accuracy

The Welsh Government works closely with local authorities in order to ensure all data are validated before tables are published. Data are collated into an electronic return and submitted to the Welsh Government through DEWi, a secure online data transfer system developed by the Welsh Government. Various stages of automated validation and sense-checking are built into the process to ensure a high quality of data.

Starting in 2011/12, following the collection of the data an additional validation period was carried out in which local authorities were sent summary tables of their data and asked to check that they were correct. While most of the data were confirmed to be correct, these checking periods highlighted problems with several local authorities' data which were resolved, further improving the accuracy of the data.

The 2019/20 data collection was not completed due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. For this reason, only 14 local authorities were able to submit data, so the data only relates to those authorities.

## Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) / School Census (STATS1 Return)

Schools' data are derived from the Pupil Level Annual School Census returns and STATS1 returns supplied by schools open on Census day in January each year. The returns are authorised by headteachers and validated by Local Authorities. The teacher sickness absence data is collected directly from the local authorities in January each year. School closures between December 2020 and March 2021 due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic meant that the 2021 collections were delayed to April. Due to the level of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases in January 2022, the date of the 2022 census was postponed

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to 15 February 2022.

PLASC is an electronic collection of pupil and school level data provided by all maintained schools in January each year. Schools record data on pupils and the school throughout the year in their Management Information System (MIS) software. This data is collated into an electronic PLASC return and submitted to the Welsh Government through DEWI, a secure online data transfer system developed by the Welsh Government. Various stages of automated validation and sense-checking are built into the process to ensure a high quality of data to inform policy making and funding.

## Timeliness and punctuality

This release is published each year around the end of July, with a delay this year because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic. Local Authorities are provided with a period to upload data and respond to validation queries prior to the publication of results.

## Accessibility and clarity

This Statistical First Release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics section of the Welsh Government website. It is accompanied by an Open Document Spreadsheet and [more detailed tables on StatsWales](#), a free to use service that allows visitors to view, manipulate, create and download data.

## Comparability

Here is the latest available data for:

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## England

[Statistics: school and pupil numbers \(Department for Education\)](#)

## Scotland

[Statistics and research \(Scottish Government\)](#)

## Northern Ireland

[Education statistics \(Department of Education\)](#)

## 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 Senedd Cymru. 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 [Wellbeing of Wales report](#).

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

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**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.

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