



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS, DOCUMENT

Permanent and fixed-term exclusions from schools: September 2022 to August 2023

Data on all pupils in maintained primary, middle, secondary and special schools and pupil referral units for September 2022 to August 2023.

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Introduction and overview

This release covers all permanent and fixed-term exclusions from maintained schools in Wales from September 2022 to August 2023. Comparisons are made with earlier academic years from 2011/12 onwards.

Data for the 2021/22 academic year was the first set of exclusions data since 2018/19 not directly affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The most recent data was collected in Spring 2024 and includes exclusions during the 2022/23 academic year.

As a result of the pandemic full or partial school closures in Wales took place for specific periods between September 2020 and April 2021. You can find more detail about when schools were closed in the [timeline of school closures \(Senedd Research\)](#).

The closures meant there were fewer exclusions between September 2020 and April 2021. Further information can be found in the data tables that accompany this release.

Exclusions are split by the length and type of exclusion. The 3 categories used are:

- Fixed-Term Exclusions: 5 days or less
- Fixed-Term Exclusions: Over 5 days
- Permanent Exclusions

Further detail can be found in [Definitions](#).

Exclusions are recorded as part of the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) for the previous academic year. So, this year, when the PLASC was collected for the 2023/24 academic year in Spring 2024, the exclusions data

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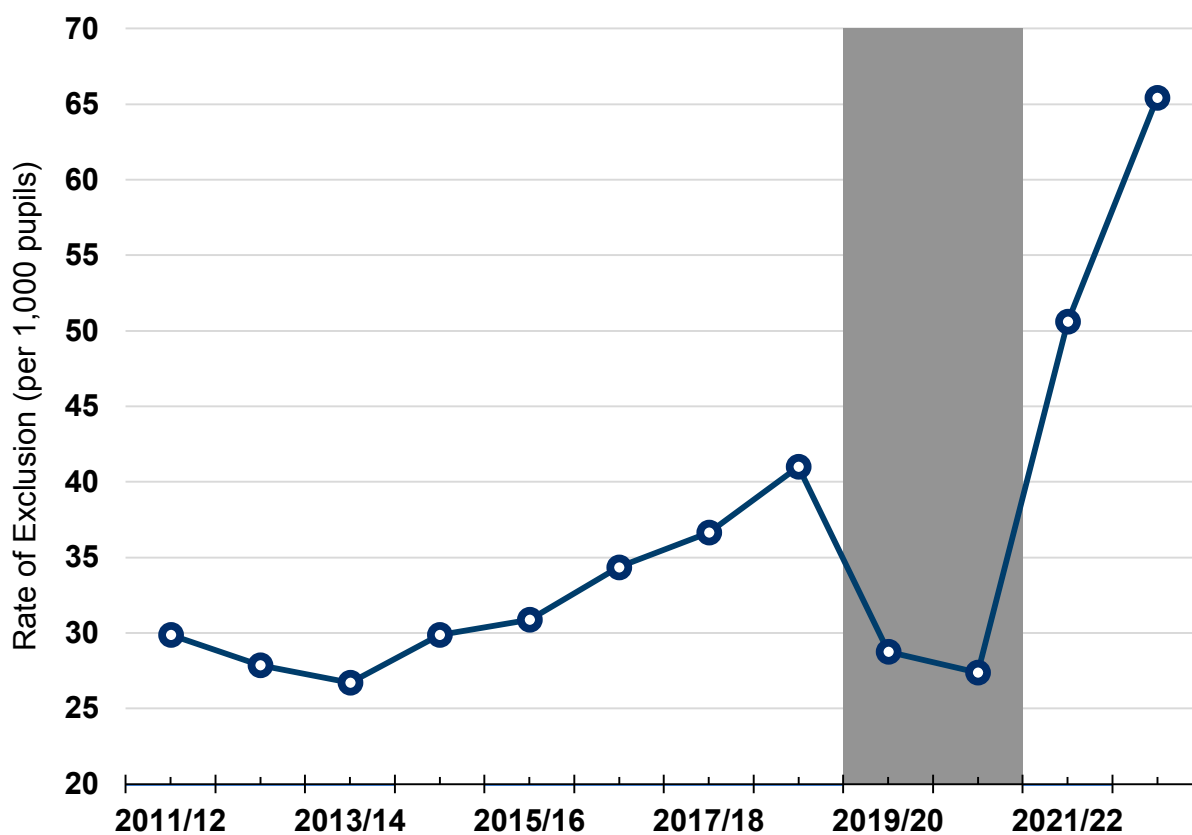
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refers to the 2022/23 academic year.

The figures below show the rate of exclusions per 1,000 pupils over time, the shaded areas show years affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 1: Rate of Fixed-Term Exclusions 5 days or less, 2011/12 to 2022/23



Description of Figure 1: A line graph showing the rate of fixed-term exclusions of up to 5 days per 1,000 pupils between 2011/12 and 2022/23. The rate increased slowly from 26.7 exclusions per 1,000 pupils in 2013/14 to 41.0 exclusions per 1,000 pupils in 2018/19. During the COVID-19 pandemic the rate dropped to 2013/14 levels. In the most recent year for which there is data, 2022/23, the rate has increased to 65.4 per 1,000 pupils, the highest value recorded.

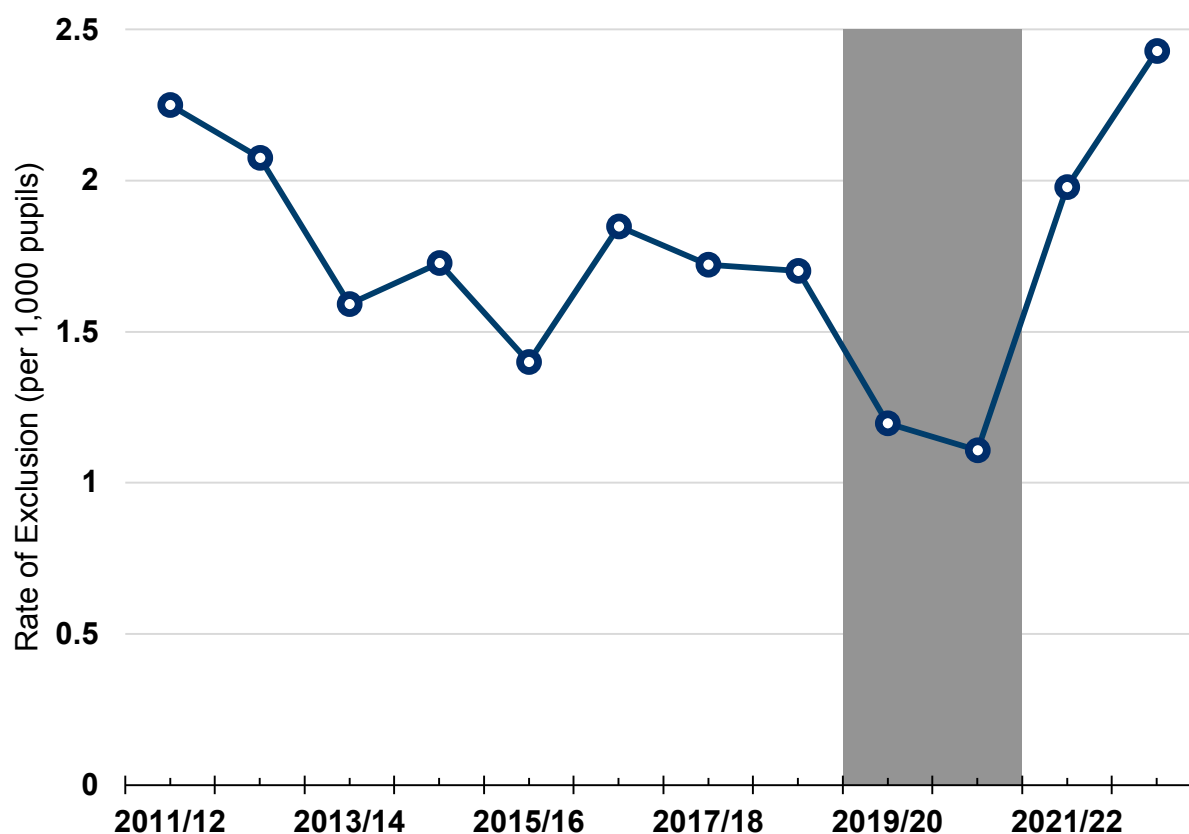
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Source: PLASC

Figure 2: Rate of Fixed-Term Exclusions over 5 days, 2011/12 to 2022/23



Description of Figure 2: A line graph showing the rate of fixed-term exclusions of more than 5 days per 1,000 pupils between 2011/12 and 2022/23. The rate is low. From 2.3 exclusions per 1,000 pupils in 2011/12 and steadily decreased to 1.7 per 1,000 pupils in 2018/19, falling again during COVID-19. In the most recent year for which there is data, 2022/23, the rate has increased to 2.4 exclusions per 1,000 pupils, the highest value recorded.

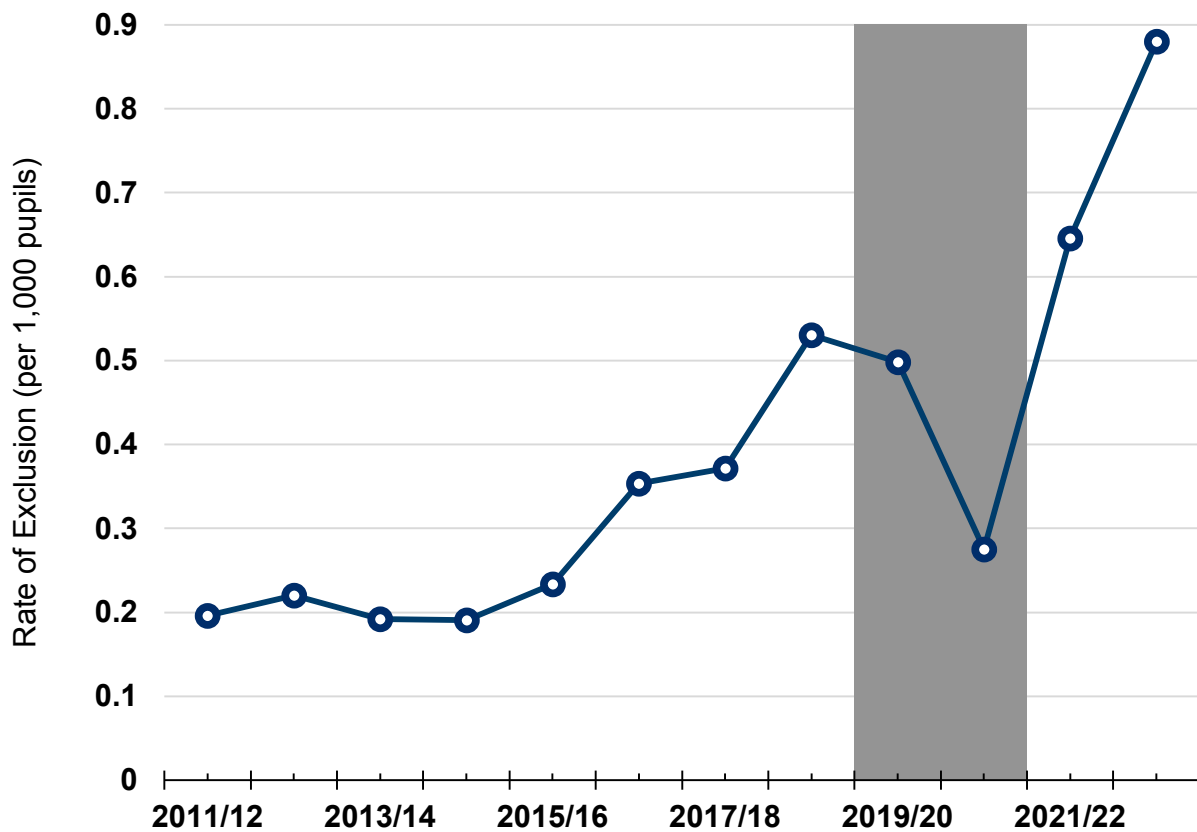
Source: PLASC

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Figure 3: Rate of permanent exclusions, 2011/12 to 2022/23



Description of Figure 3: A line graph showing the rate of permanent exclusions per 1,000 pupils between 2011/12 and 2022/23. The rate increased steadily from 0.2 per 1,000 pupils in 2011/12 to 0.5 per 1,000 pupils in 2018/19. It dropped to 0.3 per 1,000 pupils in 2020/21 during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022/23 it increased to 0.9 per 1,000 pupils, the highest value recorded.

Source: PLASC

Main points: maintained schools

In 2022/23, every type of exclusions has increased since 2021/22 and reached the highest rate since 2011/12.

- The rate of permanent exclusions has increased to 0.9 per 1,000 pupils in 2022/23, compared to 0.6 per 1,000 pupils in 2021/22.
- The rate of fixed-term exclusions of over 5 days has increased to 2.4 per 1,000 pupils in 2022/23, compared to 2.0 per 1,000 pupils in 2021/22.
- The rate of fixed-term exclusions of 5 days or less has increased to 65.4 per 1,000 pupils in 2022/23, compared to 50.6 per 1,000 pupils in 2021/22.

Types of school 2022/23

Secondary schools had the highest rates of exclusion for all exclusion lengths. This is a change from the pattern prior to COVID-19 when special schools had the highest rates of exclusions for fixed-term exclusions. The rate of secondary school exclusions has increased for all exclusion lengths between 2018/19 and 2022/23.

Primary schools had the lowest rates of exclusions for all exclusion lengths. This is the same as in previous years.

Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility

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

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The rate of fixed-term exclusions is almost 3.5 times higher for those eligible for FSM than those not eligible for FSM in 2022/23. For permanent exclusions the value is 3.9 times higher. This is a decrease from 2021/22 in both cases.

Special Educational Needs/Additional Learning Needs (SEN/ALN)

In 2022/23 the rate of fixed-term exclusions (5 days or fewer) by pupils with an SEN/ALN provision was 189.1 per 1,000 pupils compared to 45.0 per 1,000 without an SEN/ALN provision.

The rate of fixed-term exclusions (over 5 days) by pupils with an SEN/ALN provision was 7.4 per 1,000 pupils compared to 1.6 per 1,000 without an SEN/ALN provision.

The rate of permanent exclusions by pupils with an SEN/ALN provision was 2.4 per 1,000 pupils compared to 0.5 per 1,000 without an SEN/ALN provision.

Pupils can have more than one need, which means that when counting the number of pupils with each need the total number of pupils across all needs can be greater than the original number of pupils.

For example, if a pupil receives a fixed-term exclusions and has both the needs - Dyslexia and Moderate Learning Difficulties - that would count as 1 exclusion in each need and 1 pupil in each need.

Pupils with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) needs had the highest rates of exclusions in 2022/23:

- The rate of fixed-term exclusions for pupils with an ADHD SEN/ALN was

524.7 per 1,000 pupils.

- The rate of fixed-term exclusions with a BESD SEN/ALN was 459.3 per 1,000 pupils.

Pupils with a Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, and Severe Learning Difficulties need have the lowest rate of fixed-term exclusions. These pupils are the only group with SEN/ALN that have a lower rate of exclusions than pupils with no SEN/ALN.

The rate of fixed-term exclusions has increased for most needs between 2021/22 and 2022/23 as has the rate for those without SEN/ALN needs.

Ethnic background

We do not have data for the ethnic background of all pupils. Some pupils prefer not to provide the information, and for some the information wasn't obtained. For pupils that we do have information for:

- pupils with a Roma ethnic background have the highest rate of fixed-term exclusions (5 days or less)
- pupils with an Indian ethnic background have the lowest rate of fixed-term exclusions (5 days or less)
- pupils with a White ethnic background have the highest rate of fixed-term exclusions (over 5 days)
- pupils with a Chinese ethnic background have the lowest rate of fixed-term exclusions (over 5 days)
- pupils with a Mixed ethnic background have the highest rate of permanent exclusions
- pupils with a Chinese ethnic background have the lowest rate of permanent exclusions

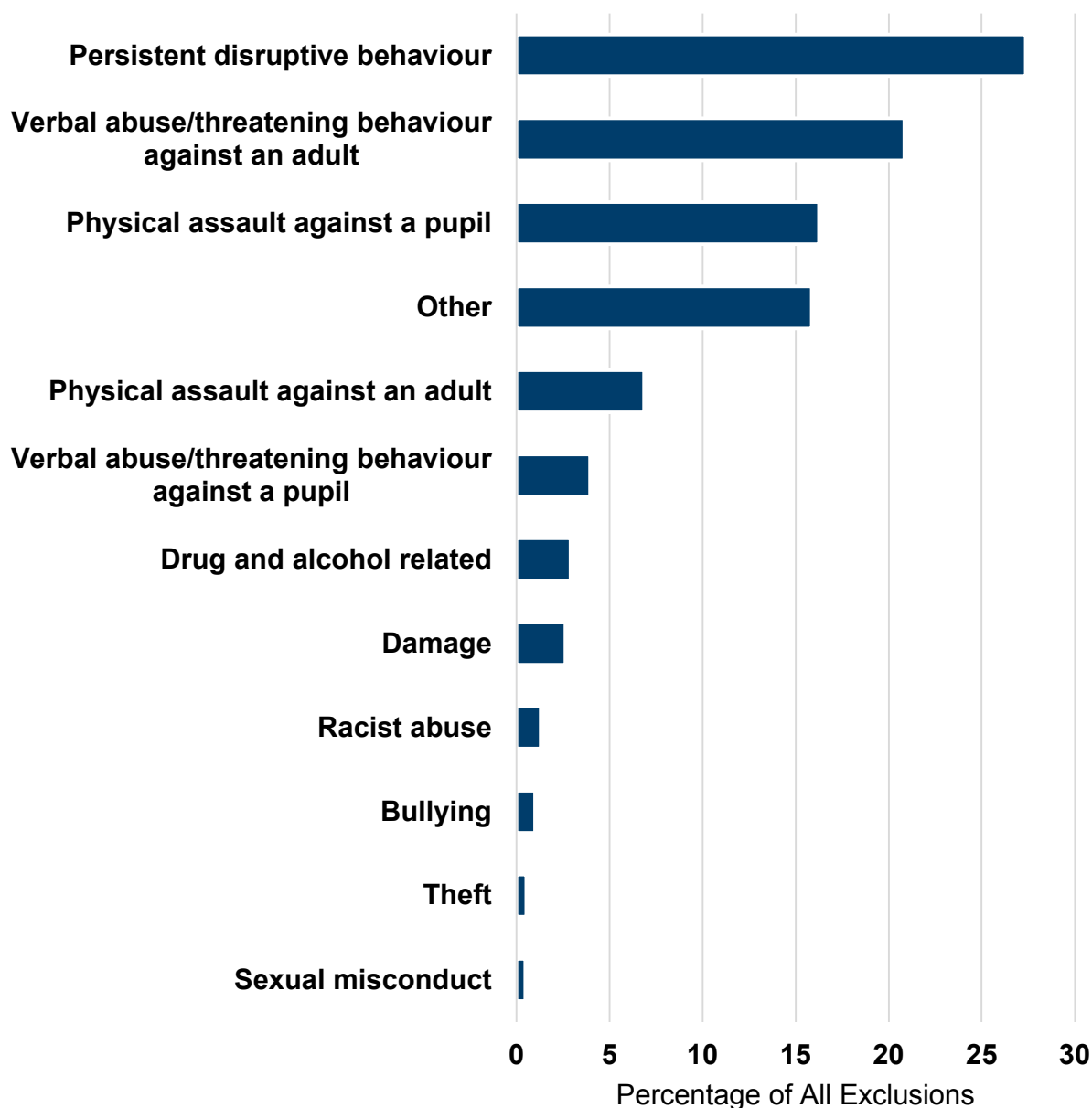
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Reasons for exclusions

Figure 4: Percentage of all exclusions by exclusion reason, 2022/23



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Description of Figure 4: A bar chart showing the reasons for exclusions as a percentage of all exclusions. The highest percentage of exclusions was for persistent disruptive behaviour (27.4%) and the lowest was for sexual misconduct (0.5%).

Source: PLASC.

[Note 1] This figure includes all exclusions, of all lengths, fixed-term and permanent.

The most common reason given for all exclusions in 2022/23 was 'persistent disruptive behaviour' at over a quarter of all exclusions (27.4%). The second most common reason was 'verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult' at 20.8% of all exclusions. These figures are very similar to those in 2018/19 and 2021/22.

Looking at specific lengths of exclusions

- 'Persistent disruptive behaviour' was the most common reason given for fixed-term exclusions of 5 days or less at 28.0% of those exclusions.
- 'Physical assault against a pupil' was the most common reason for fixed-term exclusions of over 5 days, at 25.2% of those exclusions.
- 'Physical assault against a pupil' was the most common reason for permanent exclusions, at 32.8% of those exclusions.

Definitions

Permanent exclusion

Refers to a pupil who is excluded and their name removed from the school

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register. This pupil would then be educated at another school or via some other form of provision.

Fixed-term exclusion

Refers to a pupil who is excluded from a school but remains on the register of that school because they are expected to return when the exclusion period is completed.

Managed move

An arrangement whereby parents/carers of pupils in danger of exclusion agree with schools and local authorities that it is in the best interests of their child that they be removed from the roll of the current school and placed in another educational establishment. Data for managed moves are not currently available.

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

A person has ALN/SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability (whether the learning difficulty or disability arises from a medical condition or otherwise) which calls for additional learning provision or special educational provision. Learners with ALN will have their needs identified in individual development plans (IDPs) which are statutory plans created under the ALN Act. Learners with SEN may have School Action, School Action Plus or a Statement, which will cease in August 2025 when the implementation of the ALN system is complete.

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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.

Implementation of the ALN system is ongoing, with children moving from the SEN system to the ALN system until August 2025. Learners with ALN will have their needs identified in IDPs maintained by either a school or a local authority.

Analysis of the data, along with feedback from local authorities suggest that the fall in ALN/SEN learners over the last three years is due to a systematic review by schools of their ALN/SEN identification and data, both in readiness for and during implementation of the ALN system. Learners supported through School Action and School Action Plus (those requiring the least amount of special educational provision) may no longer be identified as ALN/SEN in PLASC. This is either because their needs are short term, 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.

Additionally, schools were 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 also led to some pupils no longer being identified as ALN/SEN in PLASC. The 'General learning difficulties' category was removed from the 2023 and 2024 schools' censuses.

Welsh Government will continue to monitor the numbers throughout

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implementation of the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act and work with our partners to ensure the data presents an accurate reflection of the numbers and categories of learners with ALN in Wales.

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

The Welsh Government has committed to providing all primary school children in Wales with FSM by 2024. The rollout began in September 2022. 20 local authorities have now completed the rollout, and the remaining 2 local authorities are on track to complete the rollout by September 2024.

Whilst this rollout of FSM to those not previously eligible for them has started, the data presented in this release does not reflect the total number of pupils receiving FSM in January 2023. Instead, it includes only the number of pupils who are eligible for FSM 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 FSM policy. This was brought in to ensure that pupils have their free school meals protected during the Universal Credit rollout period.

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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 up to 31 December 2023 under the new eligibility criteria should also be transitionally protected.

Quality and methodology information

Further quality information can be found the [quality report](#) for this release.

Official statistics status

All official statistics should show the standards of the [Code of Practice for Statistics \(UK Statistics Authority\)](#).

These are accredited official statistics. They were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) in July 2010. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

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

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Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.

Statement of compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics

Our statistical practice is regulated by the OSR. OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

All of our statistics are produced and published in accordance with a number of statements and protocols to enhance trustworthiness, quality and value. These are set out in the Welsh Government's [Statement of Compliance](#).

These [accredited official statistics \(OSR\)](#) demonstrate the standards expected around trustworthiness, quality and public value in the following ways.

Trustworthiness

The data in this release relates to all maintained schools and EOTAS pupils in Wales, and is collected as part of the EOTAS and PLASC collections.

Data for maintained schools is derived from the PLASC returns supplied by schools open on census day, which is usually in January each year. The returns are authorised by headteachers and validated by local authorities. Independent schools complete an aggregate STATS1 return which is authorised by headteachers.

EOTAS data is derived from returns supplied by local authorities for pupils with a EOTAS provision during census week, which is usually in January each year. The returns are authorised and validated by local authorities.

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The data collection and validation are carried out between January and May.

These statistics are published in an accessible, orderly, pre-announced manner on the Welsh Government website at 9:30am on the day of publication.

This output adheres to the Code of Practice by pre-announcing the date of publication through the [upcoming calendar](#) web pages.

Quality

The published figures provided are compiled by professional analysts using the latest available data and applying methods using their professional judgement and analytical skillset. Statistics published by Welsh Government adhere to the Statistical Quality Management Strategy which supplements the Quality pillar of the [Code of Practice for Statistics \(UK Statistics Authority\)](#) and the European Statistical System principles of quality for statistical outputs.

PLASC and EOTAS are electronic collections of pupil and school level data. 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.

Due to the level of COVID-19 cases in January 2022, the 2022 census date was delayed to 15 February 2022. School closures between December 2020 and March 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic meant that the 2021 census date was delayed to 20 April 2021.

Last year we carried out additional validation of the data with local authorities on

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pupils eligible for free school meals. Please see our [Chief Statistician's update](#) on this.

This year we developed additional validation rules which helped to identify any issues with the FSM eligibility data at an earlier stage. We then worked with local authorities during the validation period to ensure that correct data was provided.

For EOTAS, we work closely with local authorities to ensure all data is validated before tables are published. Data is 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.

Value

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

This release is accompanied by an Open Document Spreadsheet which can be shared and reused widely and which complies with the [Government Analysis Function guidance on Releasing statistics in spreadsheets](#).

The commentary and notes in the release have been developed to try to make the information as accessible as possible to the widest range of users. Furthermore, all our school statistics outputs are published in Welsh and

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Comparability

England

[Attendance and Absence \(GOV.UK\)](#)

Scotland

[School Exclusion Statistics \(Scottish Executive\)](#)

Northern Ireland

[Pupil Suspensions and Expulsions \(Department for Education, Northern Ireland\)](#)

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being 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. Under section 10(8) of the Well-being of Future Generations

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Act, where the Welsh Ministers revise the national indicators, they must as soon as reasonably practicable (a) publish the indicators as revised and (b) lay a copy of them before the Senedd. These national indicators were laid before the Senedd in 2021. The indicators laid on 14 December 2021 replace the set laid on 16 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 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.

Contact details

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