



## **Curriculum for Wales evaluation plan 2023**

## For further information please contact:

Schools Research Branch  
Social Research and Information Division  
Knowledge and Analytical Services  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ  
Email: [SchoolsResearch@Gov.Wales](mailto:SchoolsResearch@Gov.Wales)



@WG\_Education



Facebook/EducationWales

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## Section 1 – introduction

1. The Welsh Government has committed to undertaking a rigorous and transparent evaluation of [our curriculum and assessment reforms](#) (the reforms) in Wales.
2. The purpose of the Curriculum for Wales evaluation plan 2023 (the plan) is to describe the intended approach to evaluating the reforms. The plan provides a framework for how we will gather evidence from across the school system to help us to understand how the reforms are working and to examine the extent to which they are having the desired impact for all learners, regardless of their background or needs.
3. We will use the evidence to understand what's working well, and why. We will share this with the wider system to promote learner progress, school improvement and teacher confidence. Doing this will help us to see when things are not progressing as we would expect, and why. We can then work with system partners to focus support and guidance in the right places.
4. It is critical to curriculum implementation that we are able to gather a range of practitioners' perspectives in the course of this evaluation. This will ensure we are seeing a complete picture of implementation, and that we have the right information to inform our ongoing support for schools and settings for reform. We are very conscious of the pressures on schools and settings. To minimise the amount of practitioner time we draw on for the evaluation we will:
  - a) take a sampling approach so that only a subset of schools will be invited to participate in each of the studies
  - b) carefully prioritise and phase work over a number of years so that only the most important questions are asked at any given time
  - c) where possible, align and integrate Curriculum for Wales evaluation projects with other evidence gathering to provide a holistic picture, reduce burden on participants and make the best use of resources
  - d) co-construct research tools with practitioners, so that they are meaningful and engaging for participants to respond to
  - e) ensure that participation in any research or evaluation activity is entirely voluntary
5. We recognise that curriculum implementation will be a long-term process and we must continue to evaluate its effectiveness over the longer term. This plan will be a living document, reviewed annually to coincide with the [Curriculum for Wales annual report](#). It will be adjusted to take account of shifting priorities as we gain a better understanding from evaluation and other evidence.

6. This plan presents a description of our proposed approach.
- Section 2 provides the background to the evaluation, with a focus on the '[Scoping study for the evaluation of the curriculum and assessment reforms in Wales: final report](#)' (evaluation scoping study) which has provided the foundation for our approach to evaluating the reforms.
  - Section 3 provides an overview of the main evaluative studies under development and the rationale for prioritising these.
  - Section 4 summarises the information being captured from across the school system which is relevant to our understanding of the curriculum reforms.
  - Section 5 identifies where further development is needed, with reference to the recommendations made in the evaluation scoping study.
  - Section 6 briefly reflects on understanding longer term impacts.

## Section 2 – background

7. In July 2022, the Welsh Government, published [Scoping study for the evaluation of the curriculum and assessment reforms in Wales: final report](#), developed by Arad Research in partnership with The Open University in Wales, (evaluation scoping study).
8. The aim of the evaluation scoping study was to articulate the theory of change, assumptions, and evidence underpinning the curriculum and assessment reforms. This information would then be used to develop recommendations for a robust monitoring and evaluation programme.
9. A key focus of the report is the programme theory of change, which explains how the process of reform is intended to achieve its aims and objectives, by making explicit the expected inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts, as well as the assumed links between them.
10. [Section 3](#) of the evaluation scoping study sets out the programme theory of change including:
  - activities for practitioners and the resulting short-term outcomes of these
  - activities of practitioners (for example changes to practice)
  - activities delivered by the system and the resulting short-term outcomes of these
  - medium-term outcomes for learners, practitioners, parents and carers
  - longer-term outcomes (societal), including links to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 [Well-being Goals](#)
11. [Table 11](#) of the scoping study presents the research and evaluation questions that the Welsh Government should ask in order to explore the extent to which the mechanisms in the theory of change are happening as expected.
12. A key finding of the report is that the existing available data would provide insufficient evidence to fully answer the research and evaluation questions. Consequently, there is a need to design and deliver a programme of research and evaluation that produces the necessary data and insights to understand the effectiveness and outcomes of the curriculum reform process.
13. The authors recommend a comprehensive suite of studies which, collectively, enable an examination of the progress and impact of the curriculum reforms over time. Nine studies were proposed, some of which emphasised a broad and long examination of the success of the curriculum reforms and some of which recognise the importance of an in-depth investigation of more focused aspects of the work. The studies are as follows.

Evaluation scoping study number	Title	Purpose	Simplified research or evaluation question
1	Formative and process evaluation of curriculum realisation (large scale and long-term)	To monitor and evaluate the extent to which Curriculum for Wales is realised and the processes that support its realisation.	Is the whole curriculum reform working as we want and expect?
2	National sampling study (a large-scale, ongoing programme of assessments to understand learner progress and any variations for particular groups. Designed on a sample basis to disassociate from school performance.)	<p>To provide regular national-level assessments of learner attainment across all areas of learning and experience (Areas) and other Curriculum for Wales elements to determine system priorities and examine system improvement rather than high stakes tests for participating schools.</p> <p>To identify trends in educational performance at a national level and for particular groups of children (for example, learners experiencing different types of disadvantaged and/or vulnerability).</p>	Are our children across the country doing (increasingly) well?
3	National cohort study: 'Growing up with the Curriculum for Wales'	To build a picture of what it is like to learn under the Curriculum for Wales, and how curriculum progress occurs, by following a single cohort of learners over the course of their entire schooling or curriculum experience.	What does the curriculum journey for learners on the 'receiving end' of the Curriculum for Wales look like year in year out?

Evaluation scoping study number	Title	Purpose	Simplified research or evaluation question
4	National study of schools as learning organisations (SLO)	To examine progress being made across the system towards becoming SLOs. To understand the relationship between SLOs and the development and/or improvement of the human capital, social capital and professional practice in support of Curriculum for Wales aspirations.	Are schools well placed as learning organisations to embrace changes demanded by the Curriculum for Wales?
5	System coherence review	To review the extent to which, and how, system-level activities are conducive to and supportive of the realisation of Curriculum for Wales; high-quality and improving professional practice.	Is everything we're doing coherent with Curriculum for Wales aspirations?
6	Case studies: Curriculum elements foci	<p>To develop an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of how settings and practitioners are supported and responding to the Curriculum for Wales and the impact of those efforts on professional practice and children and young people.</p> <p>They could potentially build on the findings of other studies (particularly Study 1), exploring aspects of realisation in a focused way, providing recommendations on</p>	<p>What really goes on? How do the words in the Curriculum for Wales framework guidance come to life in practice?</p>



Evaluation scoping study number	Title	Purpose	Simplified research or evaluation question
		effective practice and support needs relating to specific curriculum elements.	
7	Case study research: Theory of change activities and/or outcomes foci	To develop an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of the activities and outcomes aimed at supporting Curriculum for Wales realisation and the relationship between them.	Are the things we thought would support Curriculum for Wales to be realised working in the ways we expected?
8	Intervention studies: Research and development	To provide high quality interventions, using a research and development approach, to build capabilities and improve conditions that are known to need improving.  To learn about the conditions under which interventions can be effective and scaled.	Are our initiatives aimed at improving practice working, and what can we learn from them?
9	Practitioner enquiry collaborations	To enable teachers and schools in partnership with external experts to carry out and learn from robust professional enquiry and to synthesise findings from across practitioner enquiries in ways that enable the wider system to learn from those insights.	What are practitioners learning from their enquiries and what does that learning mean for the system?

14. The authors also recommended a set of principles that should underpin the programme of research and evaluation and the component studies within it. The research and evaluation should:
- a) examine whether the vision and requirements set out in the national Curriculum for Wales framework are realised through the actions of schools and the wider education system
  - b) have learners – and understanding learner progression – at its heart
  - c) focus on activities, outcomes and the relationships between them
  - d) take a whole-system view and focus on understanding system change/improvement
  - e) take a long view, including longitudinal research designs alongside other methodologies
  - f) take a broad view – incorporating detailed research into novel aspects of the reform alongside more established (traditional) challenges
  - g) inform system learning continuously – and include both planned and responsive activity
  - h) recognise the diverse linguistic contexts across the system and reflect the commitments by the Welsh Government and partners to support learners' Welsh language skills development
  - i) build trust in the evaluation process – among those who contribute to it and among audiences for the research
  - j) use efficiencies and draw on existing expertise to support the evaluation process
15. In our document '[Scoping study for the evaluation of the curriculum and assessment reforms in Wales: government response](#)' we:
- accepted the authors' approach and findings
  - acknowledged the need for an ambitious and wide-ranging programme of research, monitoring and evaluation proportionate to the scale of our transformational curriculum
  - committed to considering the recommended programme of work in the development of our evaluation approach
  - agreed that the research and evaluation activity should be underpinned by the principles set out in the evaluation scoping report

## Section 3 – evaluation studies under development

16. In line with the resources available, we propose focusing on 5 of the 9 studies proposed in the short term, as well as elements of a further 2 studies.
- a) The ‘formative evaluation’ will provide us with the broad qualitative and quantitative picture of how the reforms are working, how practice is changing and how these changes are being experienced by practitioners, learners and their families.
  - b) This will be complemented by a limited number of ‘deep-dive case studies’ on:
    - i. specific priority curriculum elements (for example, areas of learning and experience, cross-curricular skills, mandatory cross curricular elements)
    - ii. specific theory of change activities and/or outcomes (for example, initial teacher education, professional learning, leadership)
  - c) The ‘national sample-based monitoring’ will provide us with a rolling picture of learner attainment and national progress across the curriculum.
  - d) The ‘cohort study’ – not yet started – will provide us with a longitudinal view of a cohort of learners’ experiences, progression and achievements up to age 25. This will assess the extent to which the four purposes are being realised within and beyond 3 to 16 education. Note that, due to the scale of such a study, we would be reliant on external funding, for example research council funding, to progress this work.
  - e) At the heart of reforms is a recognition that learner progress is directly influenced by the extent to which professional practice is high-quality and improving. Such improvements are supported by practitioners embedding robust professional enquiry into their practice. A ‘synthesis of practitioner enquiry findings’ generated through the [National Professional Enquiry Project](#) will ensure the learning from practitioners across the system is harnessed and provides insight that benefits all.
  - f) At setting level the formative evaluation will gather evidence from practitioners and leaders in relation to how they interact with the wider system. At national level a more strategic ‘review of system coherence’ – not yet started - will focus on the functions, actions and views of stakeholders.
17. While each of these studies alone provides only a partial picture, taken together, they give us a range of perspectives and types of information which, triangulated with a broader suite of information from across the education system, including wellbeing, attainment and school improvement information, we can use to understand progress at a national level and inform support to the system and policy development going forward.

18. It is important to know how Curriculum for Wales is supporting all our learners. In particular, how the curriculum supports our ambition to tackle the impact of poverty on educational outcomes, is inclusive of learners with additional learning needs (ALN) and ensures they can progress to their potential, and supports other groups with protected characteristics appropriately. We must also ensure that studies are representative of the variety of schools, settings and staff we have in Wales.

19. These tables set out the focus and timings of the 5 key studies, and associated elements, that are in development:

### **Multi-year formative evaluation along with deep dive case studies**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Link to evaluation scoping recommendations:</b>	<p>Study 1 – ‘Formative and process evaluation of curriculum realisation’</p> <p>Some elements of studies 6 and 7 embedded in the formative evaluation to reduce burden on schools and make best use of limited resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study 6 – ‘Case studies: curriculum elements foci’</li> <li>• Study 7 – ‘Case study research: Theory of change activities and/or outcomes foci’</li> </ul>
<b>Key research and evaluation questions this study will answer, linked to programme theory of change:</b>	<p>These overarching questions will frame the work, but will not all be taken forward in the first stages of the evaluation. We will need to prioritise according to time and to minimise burdens on schools and settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent are the aspirations of the Curriculum for Wales framework being realised?</li> <li>• What are the trends in progress towards Curriculum for Wales aspirations?</li> <li>• To what extent is the human capital, social capital, and conditions in settings supporting professional practice conducive to Curriculum for Wales aspirations?</li> <li>• To what extent is activity across the system supporting the development of human capital, social capital and conditions in settings in ways that support Curriculum for Wales aspirations to be realised over time?</li> <li>• How is the work of those across the education system supporting the realisation of Curriculum for Wales aspirations?</li> <li>• To what extent does curriculum realisation</li> </ul>

Element	Details
	<p>vary for schools, settings and practitioners?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are curriculum implementation efforts helping practitioners to support learners with ALN and those experiencing different types of disadvantage and/or vulnerability?</li> <li>• How are learners with ALN and those experiencing different types of disadvantage and/or vulnerability experiencing the curriculum and why?</li> </ul> <p>Deep Dive questions – curriculum elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is working well for school and setting leaders, practitioners and learners across a range of topics?</li> <li>• Why, in what ways and for whom is it working?</li> <li>• What are the barriers to, and facilitators of, success for school leaders, practitioners and learners?</li> <li>• Why, in what ways, and for whom are these barriers and facilitators being experienced?</li> <li>• To what extent is the support available, including professional learning, guidance and other resources, meeting leaders' and practitioners' needs and enhancing professional practice and leadership in ways that support Curriculum for Wales aspirations?</li> <li>• What further support is needed?</li> <li>• Detailed topic-specific questions (for example, what are schools and settings doing about particular issues; how are resources being used in practice?)</li> </ul>
<b>Sample:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practitioners, (leaders, teachers and learning support workers)</li> <li>• Learners</li> <li>• Parents and carers</li> </ul>

Element	Details
	<p>Large quantitative samples will be used to ensure generalisability. Boosted samples will be used for some groups of learners and their parents and carers in order to draw conclusions about the varied experiences and outcomes for different groups to support equity.</p>
<p><b>Timings:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procure summer 2023</li> <li>• Commence autumn 2023</li> <li>• Run until academic year 2027 to 2028 in first instance</li> <li>• Reporting regularly from academic year 2023 to 2024</li> <li>• Annual reporting expected, with different populations and / or foci each year to reduce burden on research participants</li> </ul>

**National sample-based monitoring, (subject to feasibility study in the 2023 to 2024 academic year)**

Element	Details
<p><b>Link to evaluation scoping recommendations:</b></p>	<p>Study 2 – ‘National sampling study’</p>
<p><b>Key research and evaluation questions this study will answer, linked to programme theory of change:</b></p>	<p>This study will utilise sample assessments across Curriculum for Wales areas of learning and experience and skills in a multi-year cycle, focusing on specific elements each year. We will ensure that this approach is guided by principles aligning with Curriculum for Wales. In particular, this study will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discern national standards and progress in learning</li> <li>• tell us whether we are equipping learners with skills for later life</li> <li>• maintain and promote the purpose of assessment and not create perverse incentives</li> <li>• allow us to understand gaps in learner progress and attainment nationally</li> </ul>

Element	Details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognise the continuing importance of qualifications within a wider context</li> <li>• support national improvement</li> <li>• allow progression and attainment to be considered as part of a broader, holistic picture of our learners</li> <li>• be developed in a way that fully accounts for the bilingual nature of education in Wales</li> </ul> <p>Specific questions to be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do outcomes from sample assessments tell us about where learners are in relation to the broad age expectations set out in the Curriculum for Wales framework, across the curriculum areas of learning and experience and skills?</li> <li>• How do these outcomes differ for different types of learners?</li> <li>• To what extent do sample assessment outcomes indicate national progress over time, including increased equity in attainment?</li> </ul>
<b>Sample:</b>	Stratified random sample of settings and random sample of learners from each setting to form representative national sample and to enable sub-group analysis.
<b>Timings:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement of feasibility study autumn 2023</li> <li>• Commence feasibility study autumn 2023</li> <li>• Procurement of study design phase autumn 2024</li> <li>• Piloting phase from academic year 2025 to 2026</li> </ul>



## Cohort study

Element	Details
<p><b>Link to evaluation scoping recommendations:</b></p>	<p>Study 3 – ‘National cohort study: ‘Growing up with the Curriculum for Wales’</p>
<p><b>Key research and evaluation questions this study will answer, linked to programme theory of change:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For learners:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How are learners in Wales experiencing the curriculum across the whole education system and beyond?</li> <li>○ How is their experience of curriculum supporting learners to progress towards Curriculum for Wales aspirations?</li> <li>○ How do learners understand their own progress and how does this influence their approach to their own learning?</li> <li>○ How are progression trajectories and outcomes associated with learner and school-level variables?</li> <li>○ What factors optimise curriculum experience and progression for learners? (For example, teaching practices.)</li> <li>○ How has Curriculum for Wales contributed towards the achievement of the national wellbeing goals and the Cymraeg 2050 goal of a million Welsh speakers?</li> <li>○ To what extent is there equity in the experiences of learners and why?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• For parents and carers:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How are parents and carers enabled or supported to understand their child’s progression in learning?</li> <li>○ What role(s) do parents and carers play in supporting their child’s learning?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Sample:</b></p>	<p>Representative single large sample of learners and their parents or carers recruited before they start school and followed throughout their schooling and beyond. Potentially, a sample of older learners recruited before they start Year 7 so that experiences and outcomes at secondary level can be understood earlier.</p>

Element	Details
<b>Timings:</b>	Assess options for implementing this study including funding opportunities. Assuming feasibility, we expect this to take at least 2 to 3 years before fieldwork commences to allow for development and piloting. In the interim learner experience data will be provided mainly by the formative evaluation and other learner surveys such as the WISERD multi-cohort study.

## Practitioner enquiry synthesis

Element	Details
<b>Link to evaluation scoping recommendations:</b>	Study 9 – ‘Practitioner enquiry collaborations’
<b>Key research and evaluation questions this study will answer, linked to programme theory of change:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do insights from practitioner enquiries show about the strengths and needs of the system in order for Curriculum for Wales aspirations to be realised?</li> <li>• What are the implications for the system based on insights from practitioner enquiries related to Curriculum for Wales realisation efforts?</li> <li>• How do practitioners work collaboratively with others to build capability and shape their agency in ways conducive to curriculum improvement and learner progress?</li> </ul>
<b>Sample:</b>	Synthesis of professional enquiry outputs to include both those who are experienced with and new to professional enquiry.
<b>Timings:</b>	<p>Since 2018, the Welsh Government has worked with schools, school improvement services and higher education institutions (HEIs) on a <a href="#">national programme of teacher professional enquiry</a>.</p> <p>Further development work will happen in 2023 to agree how findings from across practitioner enquiries will be synthesised in ways that enable the wider system to learn from those insights.</p>

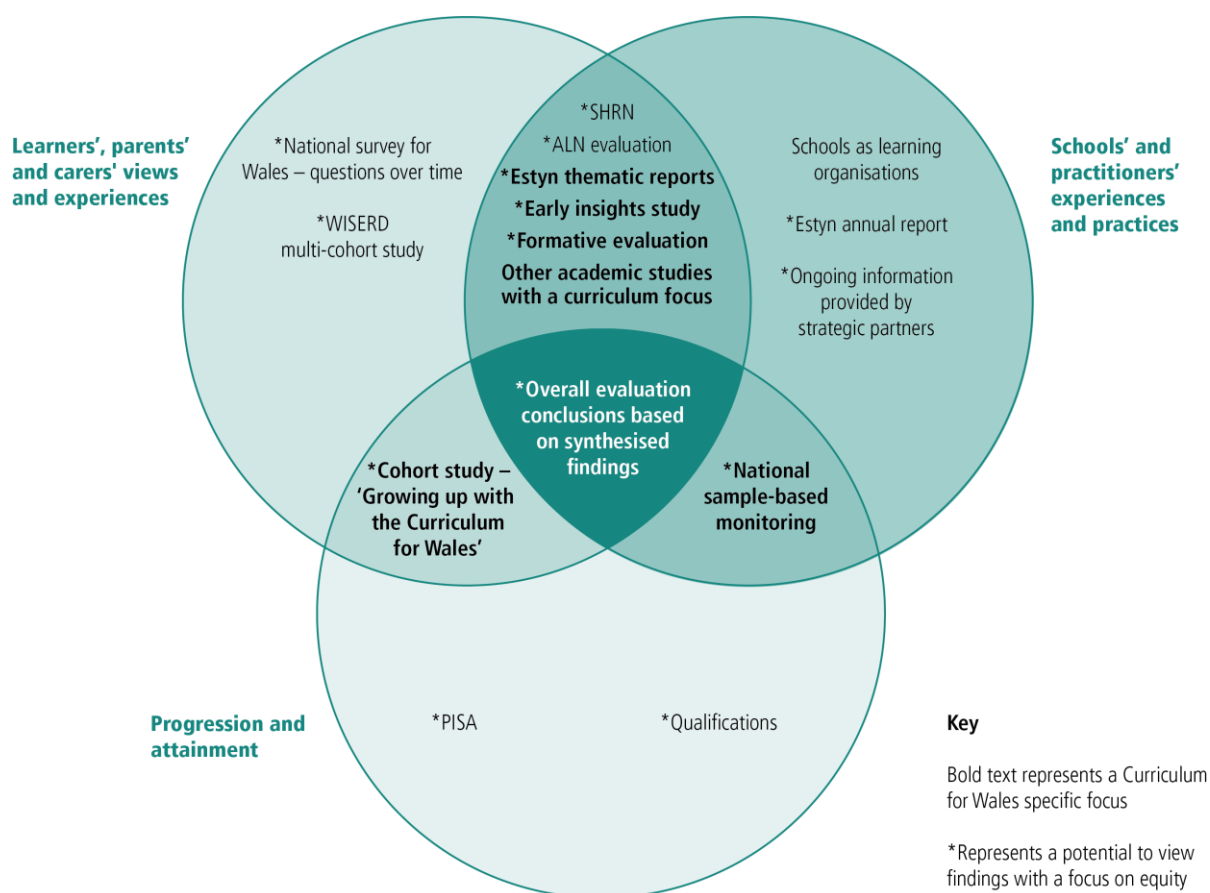
## System coherence review

Element	Details
<b>Link to evaluation scoping recommendations:</b>	Study 5: 'System coherence review'
<b>Key research and evaluation questions this study will answer, linked to programme theory of change:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent and how are system-level activities conducive to and supportive of high-quality and improving professional practice, and the realisation of Curriculum for Wales aspirations?</li> <li>• To what extent is there common understanding of the roles and responsibilities of different parts of the system in supporting curriculum change?</li> <li>• How do partners within the system collaborate to support curriculum change?</li> <li>• How effectively and strategically is the system working to increase confidence and capabilities (among practitioners and partners) to realise Curriculum for Wales aspirations?</li> </ul>
<b>Sample:</b>	<p>Official documents relating to all system activities and elements of the theory of change.</p> <p>Stakeholders responsible for designing and writing the documents and for related communication work. This will not involve research with schools and settings; how they interact with the wider system will be captured as part of the formative evaluation.</p>
<b>Timings:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phase one: academic year 2023 to 2024</li> <li>• Phase 2: Some 3 to 4 years into curriculum implementation in order to examine how the wider systems has adapted to the reforms</li> </ul>

## Section 4 – other data sources

20. While the currently available data within the system would provide insufficient evidence to answer the research and evaluation questions on curriculum reform specifically, we are mindful that curriculum reform is a far-reaching change which will fundamentally change the experiences of learners, practitioners and schools. We are working to ensure that other data sources and evaluation plans are aligned appropriately with the Curriculum for Wales evaluation to ensure that we have a coherent understanding of education reforms more widely. These will be especially important to provide information on progress in the short term before the larger, Curriculum for Wales specific studies produce findings and to ensure a streamlined, learner-centred approach.
21. The types of evidence sources include:
- a) Welsh Government administrative datasets, for example qualifications, attendance, exclusions and labour-market data
  - b) longitudinal and long-run education survey data, (for example the [WISERD Education Multi Cohort Study](#); [Student Health Research Network \(SHRN\)](#); [Pupil destinations survey](#))
  - c) other research and evaluation studies being undertaken by the Welsh Government, strategic partners and academics that are relevant to curriculum reform
  - d) studies and data relating to the workforce and professional and practitioner development and leadership
  - e) ongoing information provided by strategic partners such as Estyn and school improvement services
  - f) other attainment data, for example Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)
22. We have committed to the development of a new [information ecosystem](#) which supports our reformed school improvement arrangements and underpins Curriculum for Wales aspirations. The above information sources will be part of this ecosystem. We are working with schools and settings and other education partners to consider how information is used within the system to improve educational standards as well as this evidence contributing to a national picture of progress towards meeting the objectives of the curriculum reforms.
23. These data sources are managed by a variety of organisations including the Welsh Government and other education stakeholders. Where possible, we will work with data managers to optimise the relevance and alignment of these data sources to the Curriculum for Wales evaluation.
24. The following diagram gives a limited overview of a range of information sources in scope, showing the Curriculum for Wales-specific evaluation studies in the context of the wider information landscape:

## Evidence projects contributing to Curriculum for Wales evaluation



25. The Curriculum for Wales evaluation programme will work with Administrative Data Research (ADR) Wales, our Welsh Government and higher education partnership, to take advantage of de-identified data linking research opportunities. ['ADR Wales planned programme of work for 2022 to 2026'](#) sets out the intention to make use of school-, setting-, practitioner- and learner-level data. Curriculum for Wales survey data will be uploaded to the Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) databank to:

- improve efficiencies, avoiding repeating data collection across multiple studies
- offer insights into the conditions and environmental factors that play a part in supporting outcomes for learners, practitioners, schools and settings

26. We will aim to synthesise the evidence annually to produce an overall picture to inform future Curriculum for Wales annual reports.

## **Section 5 – further development work required**

28. The following studies are recommended by the evaluation scoping study but are not under development by the Welsh Government in the short term. Where resources allow, we will work with strategic partners and academics to ensure that where their work is aligned to these recommended studies, it can be maximised to contribute to our understanding of how Curriculum for Wales is working.

Evaluation scoping study numbers	Title	Question	Background and future development steps
4	National study of schools as learning organisations (SLO)	Are schools well placed as learning organisations to embrace changes demanded by Curriculum for Wales?	<p>The Welsh Government launched the Schools in Wales as learning organisations (SLO) approach in 2017 to support schools to prepare for the Curriculum for Wales. In 2018, in their document '<a href="#">Developing schools as learning organisations in Wales</a>' the OECD found that the majority of schools were developing as learning organisations and using the SLO model as the basis for continuous development.</p> <p>Data is being collected through schools' self-evaluation of their use of the SLO toolkit.</p> <p>However a national evaluation of SLO is required to provide an independent assessment of the model's implementation and effectiveness.</p> <p>Further development work is necessary to determine how a national picture can be provided as part of the SLO programme, or whether this question can best be answered as a 'deep dive' within the formative evaluation.</p>

Evaluation scoping study numbers	Title	Questions	Background and future development steps
6 and 7	<p>Case studies: Curriculum elements foci</p> <p>Case study research: Theory of change activities and/or outcomes foci</p>	<p>What really goes on? How do the words in the Curriculum for Wales framework guidance come to life in practice?</p> <p>Are the things we thought would support Curriculum for Wales to be realised working in the ways we expected?</p>	<p>A number of important projects are already established, or in development and these will provide critical insights into how elements of the reform are happening in practice.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the <a href="#">Camau i'r Dyfodol Project</a></li> <li>• a pilot of the Understanding by Design™ framework</li> <li>• an appreciative enquiry project with practitioners which is at an early scoping phase</li> </ul> <p>Although other studies will somewhat be covered by embedding them in the formative evaluation, we are unlikely to be able to cover more than 3 to 4 deep dives a year. This may leave gaps or a significant time lag in achieving understanding, so careful prioritisation will be needed.</p>



Evaluation scoping study numbers	Title	Question	Background and future development steps
8	Intervention studies: Research and development	<p>Are our initiatives aimed at improving practice working, and what can we learn from them?</p> <p>(Provide high quality interventions under research and development conditions to learn about the conditions under which interventions can be effective and scaled).</p>	<p>Although we recognise the importance of establishing what interventions work in which contexts and how these can be scaled, there are no Welsh Government studies in development in the short term. In the longer term we may be able to work with academics or institutes to run appropriate trials, or build in a programme of activity, subject to resources.</p>

29. Additionally, we recognise that as learners move on to the next stages of their education and careers from academic year 2027 to 2028, it will be important to understand perspectives and experiences of employers and other parts of the education and skills sectors. These sectors will be considered more fully in future iterations of this evaluation plan, as we have concentrated our initial plans on those that are most immediately affected by the curriculum reforms in the near term.

## Section 6 – impact evaluation and attribution

30. We recognise that we must evaluate the impact of the reforms – not just how they are being implemented and early outcomes, but the extent to which the four purposes are being realised and their contribution to the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 Wellbeing Goals.
31. Two of the studies outlined will contribute a great deal to our understanding of the impacts of the curriculum reforms:
- Study 2 – National sample-based monitoring’ which will investigate the attainment of skills and knowledge across the breadth of the curriculum
  - Study 3 – Cohort study which would follow a cohort of learners from aged 4 to 25, and would be critical to our understanding of the experiences, contexts and factors that influence the extent to which the four purposes are realised for individuals and what it means for their lives after compulsory education
32. Additionally, it will be important to link de-identified learner administrative and sample-based data to economic, work and health-related records in the SAIL databank, so that longer term outcomes can be assessed. We will work with ADR Wales to do this.
33. Given how complex and multi-faceted education reform is, we will be reliant on a range of information and analysis to evaluate the impact of our reforms and it will be challenging to specify direct causal links. For example, we will need to recognise the role of other reforms within the education system, such as ALN, qualifications and post 16 education reforms, the Child Poverty Strategy, the Young Person’s Guarantee and Cymraeg 2050 in contributing to any observed impacts, as well as other external factors such as ongoing impacts of the pandemic and other economic and social factors. Our focus will continue to be on improved education standards and aspirations for children and young people and the evaluation programme will contribute extensively to understanding the different factors underpinning this.