

## ***Distribution Sub-Group (2025) Paper 08 – Impact of 2025 PLASC pupil numbers on the settlement***

***This discussion paper has been written by officials of the Welsh Government. Ministers have not had an opportunity to comment on the contents. Exemplifications of changes are provided simply to inform discussion by DSG members. They are not Welsh Government proposals or statements of Government policy for or against changes.***

### **Impact of 2025 PLASC pupil numbers on the settlement**

#### **Summary**

1. This paper provides analysis of the latest pupil numbers taken from the [January 2025 Pupil Level Annual School Census \(PLASC\)](#) and exemplifies the impact of the updated data on the 2025-26 Settlement.
2. This analysis excludes updated EOTAS figures, which will be published at a later date and subsequently incorporated into the overall pupil numbers. These figures are expected to have only a marginal impact on distribution.

#### **Views sought**

3. DSG members are asked to consider whether the latest PLASC data should be used in the 2026-27 Settlement.

#### **Related Papers**

4. Distribution Sub-Group (2024) Paper 10 – Impact of 2024 PLASC pupil numbers on the settlement.
5. Distribution Sub-Group (2023) Paper 13 – Impact of 2023 PLASC pupil numbers on the settlement.
6. Distribution Sub-Group (2022) Paper 13 – Impact of 2022 PLASC pupil numbers on the settlement.
7. Distribution Sub-Group (2021) Paper 12 - Impact of 2021 PLASC pupil numbers on the settlement.

#### **Background**

8. The PLASC is the most accurate and robust source of data for pupil numbers and using this as a proxy for need to spend on education services ensures that the Settlement remains reactive to real movements in the number of pupils requiring education.
9. Censuses are based on pupil numbers as of January in the relevant year.
10. Updates to pupil numbers affect the following Indicator Based Assessments (IBAs) within the Settlement:
  - Nursery and primary school teaching and other services;
  - Secondary school teaching and other services;
  - Secondary school transport services;
  - Adult and continuing education transport;
  - Education administration; and

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- General administration.

### **Analysis**

#### **Changes to pupil numbers**

11. **Table 1** and **Table 2** in Annex A show PLASC numbers for 2025 and 2024 respectively. **Table 3** shows the relative change in pupil numbers and the financial impact on the Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) element.
12. For the primary pupils and modelled nursery school pupils' indicator, relative changes range from a 0.06 percentage point decrease in Flintshire to a 0.10 percentage point increase in Newport. For context, in 2025-26 this dataset was used to distribute £1,147m of Standard Spending Assessment (SSA), therefore a 0.01 percentage point change would equate to £114.7k change in SSA.
13. For the Secondary school pupils in year groups 7 to 11, the relative changes range from a decrease of 0.11 percentage points in Carmarthenshire to an increase of 0.07 percentage points in Isle of Anglesey. This dataset was used to distribute around £933m of Standard Spending Assessment (SSA), therefore a 0.01 percentage point change would equate to £93.3k change in SSA.
14. For the population aged 11-15 and secondary pupils in year groups 12-14, the relative changes range from a decrease of 0.06 percentage points in Rhonda Cynon Taff to an increase of 0.12 percentage points in Cardiff. This data set was used to distribute around £57m of Standard Spending Assessment (SSA), therefore a 0.01 percentage point change would equate to £5.7k change in SSA.
15. For the secondary school pupils in year 10 and 11, the relative changes range from a decrease of 0.24 percentage points in Carmarthenshire to an increase of 0.12 percentage points in Ceredigion. This dataset was used to distribute £90m of Standard Spending Assessment (SSA), therefore a 0.01 percentage point change would equate to £9.0k change in SSA.

#### **Redistribution of Aggregated External Finance (AEF)**

16. **Table 4** in **Annex A** exemplifies the impact of the 2025 PLASC on the 2025-26 total Aggregate External Finance (AEF). The changes in AEF range from a £1,547k (or 0.47%) increase in Newport to a £1,231k (or 0.33%) decrease in Carmarthenshire.

### **Conclusion**

17. The exemplification is based on the isolated effect of the PLASC 2025 pupil numbers only on the 2025-26 Settlement. The exemplifications do not account for any other data changes that will be made for the 2026-27 Settlement, for example: the impact of transfers in and out, for the impact of changes in formulae resulting from IBA reviews or any other structural changes to the overall formula. For the purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that the 2025-26 top-up figures allocated to certain local authorities under the floor funding calculations remain unchanged.

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**Recommendations**

18. For the 2025-26 Settlement, DSG agreed to use the 2024 PLASC data. The group is asked to agree to the use of 2025 PLASC data in calculating the 2026-27 Settlement.

**Local Government Finance Policy and Sustainability Division  
Welsh Government**

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## Annex A

**Table 1 – PLASC numbers 2025**

	Numbers					Proportion				
	Primary pupils and modelled nursery school pupils	Secondary school pupils in year groups 7 to 11	Population aged 11-15 and secondary school pupils in year groups 12 to 14	Secondary school pupils in year groups 10 and 11	Pop 16-18 other than at school	Primary pupils and modelled nursery school pupils	Secondary school pupils in year groups 7 to 11	Population aged 11-15 and secondary school pupils in year groups 12 to 14	Secondary school pupils in year groups 10 and 11	Pop 16-18 other than at school
Isle of Anglesey	4977	3613	4584	1404	1676	2.03%	2.08%	2.19%	2.06%	1.92%
Gwynedd	8444	6630	7374	2631	3209	3.44%	3.81%	3.53%	3.85%	3.68%
Conwy	7834	5720	7336	2213	2616	3.19%	3.29%	3.51%	3.24%	3.00%
Denbighshire	8019	6391	6751	2525	2600	3.26%	3.67%	3.23%	3.70%	2.98%
Flintshire	11824	8588	10462	3438	4446	4.81%	4.93%	5.00%	5.03%	5.10%
Wrexham	11032	6760	8693	2629	4592	4.49%	3.88%	4.16%	3.85%	5.27%
Powys	9187	6341	8057	2485	3377	3.74%	3.64%	3.85%	3.64%	3.87%
Ceredigion	4643	3598	4212	1429	1582	1.89%	2.07%	2.01%	2.09%	1.81%
Pembrokeshire	9139	6375	7941	2497	3562	3.72%	3.66%	3.80%	3.66%	4.08%
Carmarthenshire	14161	10270	12655	3916	5211	5.76%	5.90%	6.05%	5.73%	5.98%
Swansea	19207	13681	15738	5321	6800	7.81%	7.86%	7.53%	7.79%	7.80%
Neath Port Talbot	10742	7937	8976	3107	4813	4.37%	4.56%	4.29%	4.55%	5.52%
Bridgend	11368	8319	10227	3222	3560	4.63%	4.78%	4.89%	4.72%	4.08%
The Vale of Glamorgan	11564	8310	10244	3340	3173	4.71%	4.77%	4.90%	4.89%	3.64%
Rhondda Cynon Taff	19191	14478	16562	5667	6642	7.81%	8.32%	7.92%	8.30%	7.62%
Merthyr Tydfil	5199	3116	3657	1176	1953	2.12%	1.79%	1.75%	1.72%	2.24%
Caerphilly	14405	10232	11645	4057	5373	5.86%	5.88%	5.57%	5.94%	6.16%
Blaenau Gwent	5494	3167	3915	1247	2146	2.24%	1.82%	1.87%	1.83%	2.46%
Torfaen	7769	5695	5922	2224	3220	3.16%	3.27%	2.83%	3.26%	3.69%
Monmouthshire	6492	4162	6072	1671	2273	2.64%	2.39%	2.90%	2.45%	2.61%
Newport	15201	9963	12217	3901	4103	6.18%	5.72%	5.84%	5.71%	4.70%
Cardiff	29885	20716	25814	8205	10281	12.16%	11.90%	12.35%	12.01%	11.79%
<b>Wales</b>	<b>245,777</b>	<b>174,062</b>	<b>209,054</b>	<b>68,305</b>	<b>87,208</b>					

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**Table 2 – PLASC numbers 2024**

	<b>Numbers</b>					<b>Proportion</b>				
	Primary pupils and modelled nursery school pupils	Secondary school pupils in year groups 7 to 11	Population aged 11-15 and secondary school pupils in	Secondary school pupils in year groups 10 and 11	Pop 16-18 other than at school	Primary pupils and modelled nursery school pupils	Secondary school pupils in year groups 7 to 11	Population aged 11-15 and secondary school pupils in	Secondary school pupils in year groups 10 and 11	Pop 16-18 other than at school
Isle of Anglesey	5,184	3,507	4,459	1,334	1,684	2.07%	2.00%	2.17%	1.95%	1.99%
Gwynedd	8,632	6,683	7,343	2,593	3,052	3.44%	3.82%	3.57%	3.78%	3.60%
Conwy	8,050	5,720	7,329	2,191	2,505	3.21%	3.27%	3.56%	3.20%	2.96%
Denbighshire	8,098	6,444	6,624	2,550	2,539	3.23%	3.68%	3.22%	3.72%	3.00%
Flintshire	12,226	8,711	10,389	3,482	4,340	4.87%	4.98%	5.05%	5.08%	5.12%
Wrexham	11,179	6,710	8,616	2,659	4,475	4.46%	3.84%	4.19%	3.88%	5.28%
Powys	9,417	6,470	7,977	2,618	3,309	3.75%	3.70%	3.88%	3.82%	3.91%
Ceredigion	4,818	3,633	4,151	1,355	1,533	1.92%	2.08%	2.02%	1.98%	1.81%
Pembrokeshire	9,248	6,426	7,784	2,477	3,464	3.69%	3.67%	3.78%	3.61%	4.09%
Carmarthenshire	14,493	10,512	12,473	4,098	5,039	5.78%	6.01%	6.06%	5.98%	5.95%
Swansea	19,512	13,707	15,333	5,412	6,668	7.78%	7.84%	7.45%	7.89%	7.87%
Neath Port Talbot	11,027	8,120	8,892	3,122	4,688	4.40%	4.64%	4.32%	4.55%	5.53%
Bridgend	11,703	8,276	10,123	3,172	3,507	4.66%	4.73%	4.92%	4.63%	4.14%
The Vale of Glamorgan	11,781	8,379	9,964	3,304	3,020	4.70%	4.79%	4.84%	4.82%	3.57%
Rhondda Cynon Taff	19,648	14,577	16,425	5,644	6,463	7.83%	8.33%	7.98%	8.23%	7.63%
Merthyr Tydfil	5,336	3,200	3,591	1,315	1,924	2.13%	1.83%	1.75%	1.92%	2.27%
Caerphilly	14,811	10,186	11,567	4,016	5,376	5.90%	5.82%	5.62%	5.86%	6.35%
Blaenau Gwent	5,581	3,168	3,821	1,249	2,097	2.22%	1.81%	1.86%	1.82%	2.48%
Torfaen	7,919	5,694	5,784	2,205	3,145	3.16%	3.25%	2.81%	3.22%	3.71%
Monmouthshire	6,543	4,141	6,040	1,655	2,194	2.61%	2.37%	2.94%	2.41%	2.59%
Newport	15,264	9,944	11,901	3,949	4,061	6.08%	5.68%	5.78%	5.76%	4.79%
Cardiff	30,424	20,736	25,165	8,157	9,626	12.13%	11.85%	12.23%	11.90%	11.36%
<b>Wales</b>	<b>250,894</b>	<b>174,944</b>	<b>205,751</b>	<b>68,557</b>	<b>84,709</b>					

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**Table 3 – Relative change percentage points and SSA element (£000's) 2025 vs 2024 PLASC numbers**

	Relative Change Percentage Points (pp)										
	Primary pupils and modelled nursery school pupils (pp)	SSA Element (£'000s)	Secondary school pupils in year groups 7 to 11 (pp)	SSA Element (£'000s)	Population aged 11-15 and secondary school pupils in year groups 12 to 14 (pp)	SSA Element (£'000s)	Secondary school pupils in year groups 10 and 11 (pp)	SSA Element (£'000s)	Pop 16-18 other than at school (pp)	SSA Element (£'000s)	Difference Value (£'000s)
		1,147,162	(pp)	933,183	(pp)	57,114	(pp)	90,076	(pp)	4,226	
Isle of Anglesey	-0.04	-500	0.07	567	0.03	-5	0.11	71	-0.07	784	-276
Gwynedd	0.00	-69	-0.01	-113	-0.04	-6	0.07	52	0.08	1,116	-559
Conwy	-0.02	-310	0.02	256	-0.05	-21	0.04	58	0.04	3,703	11
Denbighshire	0.04	334	-0.01	-80	0.01	11	-0.02	-23	-0.02	-1,906	541
Flintshire	-0.06	-753	-0.05	-292	-0.04	1	-0.05	-11	-0.03	-183	-1,128
Wrexham	0.03	178	0.05	212	-0.03	-7	-0.03	-43	-0.02	1,285	109
Powys	-0.02	-71	-0.06	-390	-0.02	6	-0.18	-140	-0.03	-1,135	-396
Ceredigion	-0.03	-381	-0.01	-72	0.00	1	0.12	104	0.00	-145	-345
Pembrokeshire	0.03	308	-0.01	-59	0.02	0	0.04	54	0.00	-49	-114
Carmarthenshire	-0.01	-27	-0.11	-955	-0.01	-3	-0.24	-211	0.03	490	-272
Swansea	0.04	385	0.02	371	0.08	9	-0.10	-70	-0.07	-1,588	1,929
Neath Port Talbot	-0.02	-120	-0.08	-695	-0.03	-11	-0.01	4	-0.02	2,037	-384
Bridgend	-0.04	-247	0.05	533	-0.03	6	0.09	97	-0.06	-1,161	-799
The Vale of Glamorgan	0.01	224	-0.02	-90	0.06	15	0.07	70	0.07	-2,852	-502
Rhondda Cynon Taff	-0.02	-151	-0.01	-66	-0.06	-21	0.06	68	-0.01	3,710	-131
Merthyr Tydfil	-0.01	-90	-0.04	-400	0.00	-1	-0.20	-193	-0.03	238	197
Caerphilly	-0.04	-502	0.06	23	-0.05	-6	0.08	-16	-0.19	1,139	-1,342
Blaenau Gwent	0.01	130	0.01	87	0.02	-1	0.00	2	-0.01	262	725
Torfaen	0.00	32	0.02	207	0.02	4	0.04	41	-0.02	-671	188
Monmouthshire	0.03	289	0.02	104	-0.03	5	0.03	3	0.02	-980	-300
Newport	0.10	1,124	0.04	390	0.06	15	-0.05	-26	-0.09	-2,690	1,804
Cardiff	0.03	214	0.05	460	0.12	8	0.11	108	0.43	-1,405	1,044
<b>Wales</b>											

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**Table 4 - Exemplification to show the impact of updated pupil numbers only on the 2025-26 AEF**

<i>£'000s</i>				
Unitary Authority	Settlement 2025-26	PLASC Adj Settlement 2025-26	Difference Value  PLASC 2025	Difference %  PLASC 2025
Isle of Anglesey	135,881	136,019	138	0.10%
Gwynedd	248,390	248,251	-139	-0.06%
Conwy	219,010	218,996	-14	-0.01%
Denbighshire	215,251	215,500	248	0.12%
Flintshire	275,984	274,897	-1,088	-0.39%
Wrexham	249,508	249,860	352	0.14%
Powys	251,461	250,847	-614	-0.24%
Ceredigion	144,225	143,865	-359	-0.25%
Pembrokeshire	233,534	233,848	314	0.13%
Carmarthenshire	375,692	374,462	-1,231	-0.33%
Swansea	468,409	469,124	715	0.15%
Neath Port Talbot	306,177	305,333	-844	-0.28%
Bridgend	276,528	276,926	398	0.14%
The Vale of Glamorgan	224,448	224,672	224	0.10%
Rhondda Cynon Taff	521,329	521,158	-172	-0.03%
Merthyr	133,144	132,441	-704	-0.53%
Caerphilly	373,900	373,384	-516	-0.14%
Blaenau Gwent	154,534	154,759	225	0.15%
Torfaen	192,216	192,507	292	0.15%
Monmouthshire	135,248	135,662	414	0.31%
Newport	329,322	330,869	1,547	0.47%
Cardiff	674,886	675,698	812	0.12%
<b>Total Unitary Authorities</b>	<b>6,139,078</b>	<b>6,139,078</b>		