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Research to establish a baseline of the special educational needs system in Wales: Annex C. Analysis of LA data request responses

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

Research to establish a baseline of the SEN system in Wales:
Annex C. Analysis of LA data request responses

Hefin Thomas, Brett Duggan, Dr Alison Glover, Jennifer Lane
(Arad Research)

Dr Carmel Conn, Dr Kathy Evans, Sharon Drew, Amanda
Kelland (University of South Wales)



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Available at: <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/research-establish-baseline-special-educational-needs-system/?lang=en>

Views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

For further information please contact:

Schools Research

Knowledge and Analytical Services

Welsh Government

Cathays Park

Cardiff

CF10 3NQ

Tel: 0300 025 0377

Email: SchoolsResearch@gov.wales

Annex C. Analysis of LA data request responses

A data request pro forma was circulated to all LAs in September 2017 (See Annex 1).

Responses were received from all 22 LA education departments between September 2017 and March 2018. Analysis of this data is outlined below.

Use of IDPs

Eight out of the 22 LAs noted that they currently used IDPs. Of these eight:

- Four LAs noted that IDPs are currently used with learners eligible for statements of SEN;
- Three indicated that IDPs were used with learners at school action/early years action;
- Five LAs noted IDPs were used with learners at school action plus/early years action plus.

Among the eight LAs indicating they were using IDPs, two noted they were at a very early stage of developing or piloting IDPs and one noted they were using them but did not hold any data on the number of IDPs. The remaining five LAs were able to provide data showing that there were currently 578 IDPs in place across these areas (an average of 116 in each).

LAs were also asked what monitoring data was held in relation to IDPs. Eight LAs provided responses to this question, of which:

- Two LAs described being in the early stages of piloting IDPs but did not provide information on monitoring;
- One indicated no monitoring data was held apart from the IDP itself. This LA noted that termly and annual IDP review meetings do take place;
- Two LAs described local IDP forums they had established to review IDPs;
- Three LAs noted that IDPs were monitored by schools as well as by LAs through termly, biannual or annual reviews.

Among the LAs noting they were not using IDPs, some indicated they were planning to start using IDPs. One LA noted they were not using IDPs but reported that some schools in their

area were starting to pilot them. In addition, some LAs noted they were using or encouraging the use of one-page profiles with learners.

Statutory assessments

LAs were asked about the number of requests for statutory assessments in their area over the last three years. Responses show an increase in total number of requests for statutory assessments in each year from 2342 in 2014/15 to 2689 in 2016/17.

Table 1. LA responses to the question ‘How many requests for statutory assessments were received by your LA during the last three academic years?’

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Total number of requests	2342	2553	2689
Average number of requests per LA	106	116	122

N=22

Source: LA data request

The number of statutory assessments taking place across Wales also increased between 2014/15 and 2016/17. However, the number of assessments fell between 2015/16 and 2016/17. Furthermore, the percentage of requests that led to a statutory assessment was slightly lower in 2016/17 than it was in 2014/15.

Table 2. LA responses to the question ‘How many statutory assessments have taken place in your LA during the last three academic years?’

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Total number of statutory assessments	1511	1759	1670
Average number of statutory assessments per LA	69	80	76
Percentage of requests that reached assessment	65%	69%	62%

N=22

Source: LA data request

LAs were asked to provide an estimate of staff time spent undertaking various processes related to statutory assessments and reviews. Almost all LAs provided responses to these

questions although some outlined the challenges associated with providing these estimates. The difficulties in providing such estimates are highlighted by the relatively large range of responses to each question.

Table 3. LA responses to the question ‘Please provide your best estimate of the average number of hours of LA staff time spent on each statutory assessment.’

	Number of responses*	Average number of hours	Range
Please provide your best estimate of the average number of hours of LA staff time spent on each statutory assessment.	19	21h 58m	3-37h
How much staff time is spent in preparing a statement once a statutory assessment has determined that a learner needs one? Average number of hours spent in preparing a statement	20	6h 35m	2-22h
Please provide your best estimate of the average number of hours spent by LA staff on a typical annual review of a statement of SEN. (This may include time spent attending annual review meetings and administration)	20	5h 42m	1h 45m – 15h 45

*Two LAs provided a single response

N=19/20/20

Disagreements

LAs were asked how many disagreements, appeals and tribunals were dealt with by the LA in the last 12 months. The following questions were included in the data request:

- How many disagreements relating to statutory processes (from statutory assessment through to the issue of a final statement of SEN) were recorded in your LA in the last 12 months? Please include any appeals that were recorded within this figure.
 - Number of disagreements relating to statutory processes
- How many disagreements relating to other aspects of the ALN/SEN system were recorded in your LA in the last 12 months?
 - Number of disagreements relating to other aspects of ALN/SEN processes
- How many appeals relating to ALN/SEN were recorded in your LA during the last 12 months?
 - Number of appeals relating to ALN/SEN

Although most LAs did seek to provide data in relation to each question, several LAs noted that they did not hold the data in the format requested. Some LAs noted that it was difficult to provide the data in a robust way. The variations in data held and comments from LAs mean that the data should be considered indicative rather than a precise measurement of the current situation.

Table 4. LA responses to questions on the number of disagreements, appeals and tribunals*

	Number responding to question	Total number	Average per LA
Number of disagreements relating to statutory processes	19	436	24
Number of disagreements relating to other aspects of ALN/SEN processes	15	221	15
Number of appeals relating to ALN/SEN	19	123	6
Number of appeals reaching the Tribunal stage	20	39	2

*Several LAs noted that they did not record information on disagreements in the format requested and some indicated that they did not record disagreements until they reach appeal stage.

N=19/15/19/20

LAs were asked to try and quantify the time spent dealing with disagreements and appeals.

The following questions were asked:

- Please provide your best estimate of the number of hours of LA staff time spent dealing with disagreements relating to ALN/SEN per week?
 - Average number of hours per week dealing with disagreements relating to ALN/SEN per week
- Please provide your best estimate of the number of hours of LA staff time spent dealing with appeals relating to ALN/SEN per week?
 - Average number of hours per week dealing with appeals relating to ALN/SEN per week?

Most LAs noted that it was difficult to quantify the time spent on disagreements. These LAs noted that the amount of work would depend on the nature of the disagreement or appeal and work related to meetings, dispute resolution, liaising with legal services, and administration, such as writing the case statement. Some noted that they did not collect or

hold this data. The variations in data provided and comments from LAs mean that the data should be treated as indicative rather than a precise measurement of the current situation.

Table 5. LA responses to questions on the time spent dealing with disagreements, appeals and tribunals

	Number responding to question	Total number	Average per LA	Range
Average number of hours per week dealing with disagreements relating to ALN/SEN per week	14	471	34	2.5-112.5 hours
Average number of hours per week dealing with appeals relating to ALN/SEN per week	12	281	26	0.5 hours – 148 hours

N=12/14