Welsh-medium education through late immersion: mapping the provision in Wales

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Author: Katharine Young

For further information, please contact:

Research.Welsh@gov.wales

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Glossary

Acronym/Key word	Definition
EIG	Education Improvement Grant
Foundation Phase	Curriculum for children aged 3-7
KS2	Key Stage 2: Years 3-6, 7-11 years old
KS3	Key Stage 3: Years 7-9, 11-14 years old
Regional Education Consortium/Consortia	A body providing education services to support schools within a region. There are four consortia: GwE (North Wales); ERW (South West and Mid Wales); CSC (Central South Consortium), and EAS (South East Wales).
WESP(s)	Welsh in Education Strategic Plan(s)

1.   Introduction

1.1   This report presents the findings of a mapping exercise examining Welsh-medium education through late immersion (for latecomers) in different areas in Wales. The Welsh Language Research Branch, in Welsh Government's Knowledge and Analytical Services, was commissioned to undertake the mapping exercise by the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Division. The research took place between January and April 2021.

1.2   The aim of immersion education in Wales is to introduce the Welsh language to learners who do not speak Welsh at home, so that they are able to follow their education through the medium of Welsh. In immersion education across Wales, learners who do not speak Welsh at home are educated within the same classrooms as learners who speak Welsh at home. In 2020, 39% of Year 1 learners in Welsh-medium education spoke Welsh at home, and 22% of Year 1 learners in bilingual schools spoke Welsh at home.[1]

1.3   When learners begin immersion education at a later stage than the Foundation Phase, they undertake an intensive period of language acquisition in order to be able to continue with their education through the medium of Welsh. If this intensive provision is offered within a designated unit, the learner is then transferred back to a mainstream Welsh-medium school (or stream).[2] For the purposes of this mapping exercise, the term 'late immersion education' was used to cover a variety of models and types of provision, used at different entry points within the primary and secondary sectors. This report does not distinguish between 'mid immersion', 'late immersion' and 'intensive immersion education'. The information in the Background section below provides an overview of how different entry points to Welsh-medium (and bilingual) education have been delivered and trialled

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[1] See StatsWales Pupil Level Annual School Census Data - Number of Pupils according to medium of school and Stats Wales Pupil Level Annual School Census Data - the Welsh Language. In Welsh-medium schools, Foundation Phase learners are taught through the medium of Welsh, and at least 70% of the Key Stage 2 curriculum is taught through the medium of Welsh. Bilingual schools have different sub-categories, depending on the percentage of the subjects taught through the medium of Welsh, and whether the same provision is offered through the medium of English or not Defining schools according to Welsh-medium provision.

[2] In this report, the term 'mainstream' is used to describe a bilingual or Welsh-medium education setting to which latecomers return after completing a period of late immersion education.

in Wales. This needs to be borne in mind in relation to the term 'late immersion' in this report.

1.4   Those who receive late immersion provision are referred to as 'latecomers'. The term is defined in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans Regulations (2019: 7) as 'children (aged 7 years or over) who do not speak Welsh but wish to access Welsh-medium education after the end of the foundation phase'.

Background

1.5   Opportunities for learners to receive immersion education at entry points later than the beginning of their statutory education have existed in Wales for a number of decades. Provision for latecomers originally developed in areas with high rates of Welsh speakers, for primary age learners. The purpose of establishing language centres was to support learners who had moved to the area to acquire the language in a short period of time, so that they could follow their education through the medium of Welsh, thereby ensuring that Welsh remained the main language of communication for the primary schools in the areas concerned. These centres have continued to develop their provision since they were established in the 1980s. Further development was seen in the 1990s as a late immersion project was implemented at Ysgol Uwchradd Maes Garmon, Mold, for year 7 learners who had not received Welsh-medium education at primary school (Williams 2002). In 2004, Gwynedd opened the first language centre for latecomers in the secondary sector.

1.6   Building further on the experience that had developed as a result of this provision, a series of intensive immersion education and language learning projects were piloted during the period 2003-2008. The programme was established following the visit of Jane Davidson, the then Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning, and her delegation, to Newfoundland and Labrador and New Brunswick in 2001 (National Assembly for Wales 2001). The purpose of the visit was to learn more about models of immersion education, and language learning through intensive methods, aimed at developing learners' French language skills. Following the visit a group of

experts, already established by the Welsh Language Board, was asked to explore the feasibility of adapting the intensive Core French Model for a pilot in Wales, in order to offer a second entry point to Welsh-medium education. In subsequent years the projects developed by the (then) Welsh Assembly Government and the Welsh Language Board piloted models that involved intensive periods of learning Welsh at the end of KS2 and also during years 3, 4 and 5 (Welsh Government 2008; Williams 2008). Estyn found in an evaluation of the pilot projects (2006: 20) that the features common to success in Welsh immersion programmes were as follows:

- 'fluent teachers who are good models for the target language and make learning fun;
- pace and variety in the teaching and learning;
- securing continuity and progress in Welsh-medium learning across the curriculum at secondary level;
- good targeted support to schools from local education authorities;
- good liaison between all agencies; and
- close links between schools and parents.'

1.7 Late immersion education provision is now available in authorities beyond those in west Wales i.e. in local authorities and areas with lower percentages of Welsh speakers. This provision offers a second entry point for learners who wish to move from the English-medium sector to the Welsh-medium sector, and for learners who have moved to Wales. It is the language policy of individual local authorities that determines whether learners must attend the late immersion education provision if they are to be able to go to the Welsh-medium school they wish to attend.

1.8 The type of provision that local authorities offer varies, in terms of duration of the provision, the age of the learners receiving the provision, and the intensity of the programme (Welsh Government 2011). Funding that was previously a series of small grants for specific purposes, including one for the Welsh language, was re-structured into one grant, the Education Improvement Grant (EIG) in 2014-2015, to give local authorities flexibility to move money across the education sector within their county as necessary.

There is no recent research that considers the effects of these changes on the provision of late immersion education.

1.9   The Welsh Government intends to add to its understanding of how late immersion education is delivered, and the factors associated with this. The findings of this study are intended to contribute to informing the Welsh Government's discussions with local authorities, as they plan provision in the light of the policy context below, and consider options for expanding provision in the future.

Welsh Government policy context

1.10   The Welsh Government's aim in its *Cymraeg 2050* strategy is to reach a million speakers by the middle of the century (Welsh Government 2017). The provision of later entry points to Welsh-medium education (i.e. later than early immersion education) is a key part of achieving this aim. The first theme of the strategy ('Increasing the number of Welsh speakers') states:

> 'Every local authority also has the opportunity to develop access points for Welsh-medium provision, whether in the primary or secondary sector, through specific provision for those accessing Welsh-medium education at a later stage. A number of models are already in operation throughout Wales. We need to improve our understanding of what models provide the most effective provision, and take steps to increase this provision over time.' (Welsh Government 2017: 38).

1.11   As part of the strategy to reach a million speakers, the Welsh Government has stated its commitment to 'consider the role of late language immersion centres in supporting the Welsh-medium sector and whether such support should be available in all local authorities' (Welsh Government 2020: 28). This report builds on work that has been undertaken over recent decades to try to understand what models of late immersion education are in place across Wales, together with the factors and considerations associated with these models.

1.12   Since 2013, local authorities are required to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), showing how the local authority will improve the planning process and standards of Welsh-medium education in its area. In

2019, new regulations for WESPs came into force.[3] As part of the new regulations, each local authority is required to provide a statement 'setting out the local authority's arrangements with regard to their provision for latecomers to Welsh-medium education, including how and when information is provided to parents and guardians' (Welsh Government 2019: 7). Since 2019, local authorities have a statutory duty to report on their provision, where they had no previous duty to do so.

1.13   Schools in Wales are working towards realising a Curriculum for Wales from 2022 onwards. Following the announcement of the Minister for Education and Welsh Language in July 2021 secondary schools will be allowed to delay introducing the new curriculum until 2023. The curriculum offers a new focus on learning that supports every learner's progress, empowering schools and teachers to take ownership of their own curriculum, within a national framework. The emphasis will be on assessment that supports progression along a continuum of learning, rather than on outcomes at the end of specific stages. The concept of a language learning continuum provides the basis for progression in the Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience. Learners will progress from having little or no language skills and knowledge towards being proficient in the languages they are learning. For Welsh, settings and schools will need to consider the learning descriptions that are most appropriate for their learners.

1.14   To support the implementation of the new WESPs, the Welsh Government wishes to simplify school categories according to their Welsh language provision. Local authorities will be encouraged, as they consider which proposed category best describes the schools in their area, to identify opportunities to increase Welsh-medium provision across all school categories. In some cases this could lead to a school changing category. The development of immersion education provision for later entry points in

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[3] In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019 were amended. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 ('the 2020 Regulations') came into force on 1 December 2020 and made changes that have led to the start date of the next WESP round being moved from 1 September 2021 to a year later (to September 2022).

schools will be a key part of the planning of Welsh-medium provision following the introduction of the new language categories, with the aim of delivering a higher proportion of the curriculum through the medium of Welsh in schools over time (Welsh Government 2017). The Welsh Government consulted on non-statutory guidance, *School categories according to Welsh-medium provision*, between 14 December 2020 and 26 March 2021. The guidance is expected to be published in the autumn term 2021.

Research aim and objectives

1.15   The aim of this mapping exercise was to form a picture of the late immersion education provision that existed in some local authorities at the time, and to understand some of the challenges and opportunities for local authorities and schools in offering the provision. The findings are intended to add to the evidence base required by the Welsh Government in order to provide strategic direction for the future development of provision.

1.16   The objectives of the research were to examine:

• the circumstances and needs that different models of provision address;

• the structure and content of the different models (e.g. designated language centres, units, provision within schools);

• current provision in the context of how provision has evolved over time; and

• plans for future provision.

The study also identifies some considerations relating to the extent to which existing mechanisms allow the effectiveness of the models to be assessed.

Research areas

1.17   The specification for the mapping exercise outlined key areas for examination. These areas provide a structure for reporting on the findings.

Challenges and opportunities associated with different models of provision

1.18   This encompasses the ability of local authorities to meet the needs of 'latecomers' through the provision, and the factors that may be facilitating and hindering this.

Current arrangements for measuring learner outcomes and the effectiveness of the provision offered

1.19   This includes developing an understanding of the mechanisms and sources of evidence currently used by local authorities, consortia and other bodies to (i) measure learners' education and linguistic outcomes, and (ii) assess the effectiveness of the various models being implemented.

1.20   It should be noted that it was not within the scope of this research to measure the effectiveness of late immersion education provision.

Content of the report

1.21   The report is structured as follows. Chapter 2 describes the research methodology. Chapter 3 presents the findings of the study in terms of mapping the provision of late immersion education in different local authorities in Wales, and presents what are seen as the main challenges and opportunities associated with the different models of provision. This chapter also outlines the extent to which existing mechanisms allow the effectiveness of the models to be assessed. Chapter 4 presents the conclusions of the research, together with considerations for future research and policy development priorities.

2. Methodology

2.1 Evidence for the study was gathered through desk-based research and semi-structured interviews with participants. The methods used are described below.

Desk-based research

2.2 Desk-based research was completed between January and April 2021. This entailed examining and analysing relevant policy documents and administrative data (including local authority WESPs for the 2017-2020 period), and publications and literature to situate the work in its policy context.

Interviews

2.3 Interviews were conducted between January and March 2021. They were conducted with Welsh Government and local authority officials, officials from the four regional education consortia, and Estyn. All interviews were conducted over Teams video conferencing software in order to comply with social distancing requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants (excluding Welsh Government officials) received a privacy notice and supporting information about the project, explaining the aim and objectives of the research, and their contribution to it. The privacy notice stated that participants were contributing to the study voluntarily, and all participants received an assurance that they would not be identifiable from the evidence they provided.

2.4 The interviews were conducted in Welsh or English, in accordance with participants' preferred language. Each interview lasted about an hour. All interviews were recorded to facilitate the taking of detailed notes of their content. The interview topic guides are provided in the annexes to this report.

2.5 The interview topic guides covered the following areas:

• Funding and resources;

• Transport and accessibility;

• Capacity, and mechanisms to address supply/demand;

• Practitioner expertise and training;

• Collaboration and partnership working (in advance of, during and following late immersion provision);

• Ongoing support for learners on completion of intensive immersion provision;

• Integration of learners in their home school environment, and implications for language policies of schools (use of Welsh as a medium of teaching and learning across the curriculum).

2.6   Six interviews were conducted with Welsh Government policy officials as part of the initial scoping of the research. The content of those interviews was used to help produce the topic guides used with local authorities, regional education consortia and Estyn.

Interviews with local authorities, regional education consortia and Estyn

2.7   Interviews were conducted with local authorities based on inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Table 2.1). Owing to the tight timescale of the project, it was important that the criteria reflected what was practically possible within the time available. The criteria were based on discussions and interviews with internal government officials and scrutiny of local authority WESPs for the period 2017-20. The areas of research focused on specific aspects of provision or plans for developing the provision in the future. For that reason, it was decided to include local authorities offering late immersion provision, authorities where provision has changed fairly recently, or authorities currently planning provision. It was decided to exclude local authorities that have not identified developments in relation to their late immersion education provision in their WESP progress reports or in their 2017-2020 WESPs. It was also decided to exclude local authorities that do not offer late immersion education provision and have no plans to establish provision. It was assumed that those local authorities would not yet have a firm understanding of their plans.

Table 2.1: Criteria for including/excluding local authorities in the research study

Include	Exclude
Local authorities piloting 'innovative' provision i.e. responding to the demand for immersion provision in a different way from provision in schools and in designated centres	Local authorities: • that have not identified developments in their late immersion education provision in their WESP progress reports or in their WESPs; • that do not offer provision and have not indicated in their WESPs or in their discussions with the Welsh Government Welsh Language Division that they are interested in establishing provision;
Local authorities that have recently established provision i.e. since the evaluation of the Welsh Language Board / Welsh Government pilot projects in 2008	
Local authorities where provision is well established	
Local authorities that have seen a recent growth in the numbers of children attending the provision	
Local authorities where the county is interested in developing provision in their 10-year WESPs	
Local authorities where late immersion provision has recently been reduced or ceased	

2.8   Fourteen local authorities were identified based on the above criteria. The officials invited to interview had different roles within the local authorities because of varying internal structures in each authority. All the officials were involved in the provision of late immersion education at a strategic level. Ten local authorities were available to participate in the research within the time available to complete the project.

2.9   Invitations were sent to officials who were the main point of contact for the Welsh Government on issues relating to Welsh in Education and WESPs. In some cases, those officers also included other officers from their organisation in the interview, and some asked for others in their organisation to be interviewed instead of them. The number of officers participating in the interviews ranged from one to four.

2.10   Interviews were conducted with officials in the four regional education consortia (GwE; ERW, CSC and EAS), and with Estyn.

Analysis

2.11   Following the interviews, detailed notes were made on their content. The detailed notes of the fieldwork were analysed under headings derived from the interview topic guides. Owing to the semi-structured nature of the interviews, additional areas also arose as a result of the responses. Those additional areas were highlighted in the analysis of the detailed notes from each interview.

Ethics

2.12   The study was undertaken in accordance with the principles of Government Social Research (GSR). An ethics checklist was completed at the beginning of the research process, and the list was reviewed during the study.

Constraints and challenges, and other considerations in relation to the methodology

2.13   In addressing the findings of the research, consideration must be given to the constraints and challenges associated with the methodology adopted.

2.14   The mapping exercise does not provide a complete picture of late immersion provision in Wales, as it was not possible to interview all local authorities. The circumstances and experiences of local authorities that do not have late immersion provision are not included. It should not be assumed that these local authorities do not plan to offer late immersion education provision in their next 10-year WESPs, and it has not been possible to examine whether there were any specific reasons why they have not yet developed the

provision. It is possible that these authorities could have offered views that would have further enriched the research.

2.15   Owing to time constraints, it was not possible to interview the 14 local authorities that were invited to take part. If more local authorities had been included in the research, it would have been possible to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the situation in Wales.

2.16   Owing to differences in local authority structures and regional education consortia, the job titles and responsibilities of participants varied. As a result, not everyone interviewed had the same level of involvement in the provision, which may have influenced their ability to address all areas to the same level of detail, or from the same perspective.

2.17   The number of participants in the interviews ranged from one to four. It needs to be borne in mind therefore that not all were one-to-one interviews, and that this may have affected the dynamics of the interview; for example, the interviews where more than one was present may have affected the willingness or ability of some to share information or views, as others were also present.

COVID-19

2.18   The fieldwork took place between January and March 2021. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, education was in the midst of a period of adjustment. The need to be sensitive to the circumstances of the participants was a key consideration during the research project.

Reflexive research

2.19   This research project was a mapping exercise, aimed at increasing understanding of how late immersion education provision is offered within local authorities in Wales, and some of the challenges and opportunities facing local authorities in offering the provision. Although the study presents factual findings for the most part, elements of the work are more qualitative in nature.

2.20   Very little research in the field of education can be free of the researcher's values (Carr, 2000). For that reason, there is a need to be reflexive in

conducting research: without attempting to understand the researcher's influence on the investigation process itself, ethical research cannot be carried out (Holmes 2020). The researcher's social beliefs were therefore taken into account in carrying out the research in an attempt to be transparent and honest about any possible bias relating to the research. The following positionality statement was put forward:

'Having moved to Wales in year 6, I was provided with late immersion education before I was able to join mainstream Welsh-medium education. I recognise that this may affect my interest in the subject, and my enthusiasm in collecting data for the project.'

2.21   With the aim of ensuring that the research was conducted without bias, the researcher held detailed discussions with other members of the research team about the methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. Regular records of the research process were compiled, and quality assurance processes were followed, that included a review of the initial and final drafts of the report by a reader in the Welsh Government.

3.   Findings

3.1   The findings are presented below under the headings identified at the start of the project, and used in the analysis of the data collected. Some additional areas were raised through the interviews that had not been identified when drafting the project topic guides. Those areas are also presented here. It is important to note that the evidence presented is based on the information gathered from participants during the period January – March 2021; that is, it offers a picture of the situation that existed at the time.

Provision

3.2   The provision of late immersion education varies between local authorities. An outline of provision in the 10 authorities interviewed is presented below.

Swansea Local Authority

3.3   Swansea local authority delivers peripatetic late immersion education provision, through three half-day sessions a week in four different schools. Latecomers in years 3 and 4 receive late immersion provision in the local authority. Up until two years ago, the county had a centre and a team of *athrawon bro* to support provision for latecomers, but because of cuts in funding, peripatetic arrangements were introduced to replace them.

Wrexham Local Authority

3.4   Wrexham local authority has also implemented a peripatetic model for two years, offering support to latecomers in eight primary schools. This involves supporting individual learners, or small groups at similar levels of learning, for one session a week lasting around 45 minutes. The period of provision can last six months, or longer if the latecomers need more support. There is also support for KS3 latecomers in the county's Welsh-medium secondary school.

Newport Local Authority

3.5   Late immersion education provision is offered in Newport local authority in a designated centre within a primary school in the authority, while a new school, and an immersion unit, is expected to open in 2023. Up to eight year 1- 6 latecomers receive late immersion education for a term, for four and a

half days a week. Learners spend Friday afternoon in their home school, to make contact with their peers. Support is offered to latecomers at KS3 in the Welsh-medium secondary school.

Denbighshire Local Authority

3.6   Currently in Denbighshire local authority, KS2 latecomers are supported in Welsh-medium schools, while the county is awaiting a designated training centre, with a room dedicated specifically to latecomers. The exact arrangements for the new provision are yet to be determined.

Carmarthenshire Local Authority

3.7   In Carmarthenshire local authority, late immersion provision is offered by the Welsh Language Development Teacher Team. The team travels around schools to support latecomers at KS2. A new centre is under construction in the county, and it is expected that KS2 and KS3 latecomers will receive late immersion education provision there for four days a week.

Blaenau Gwent Local Authority

3.8   Blaenau Gwent local authority do not currently offer late immersion education provision, but are considering planning provision as part of their first 10-year WESP. They expect demand to increase as the county expands its Welsh-medium education provision.

Ceredigion Local Authority

3.9   In Ceredigion local authority, there are three designated centres for KS2 and Foundation Phase latecomers. The provision is offered four days a week, and lasts for a term. The centres can accept up to 12 or 16 latecomers at any one time (depending on the location). KS3 and sometimes KS4 latecomers are supported in the county's Welsh-medium secondary schools, but the demand for that type of provision is low.

Pembrokeshire Local Authority

3.10   In Pembrokeshire local authority, there are three centres for KS2 latecomers that offer provision for two days a week, and learners attend for two years. A continuity course, for a day a week, is provided over a period of one year.

3.11   In Gwynedd local authority there are four primary language centres that cater for 7-11 year olds, and one secondary language centre for years 7, 8 and 9. The centres cater for 16 children (with the exception of one site where there is a capacity of eight). The latecomers at KS3 attend a course for eight weeks, and the primary learners for 10-12 weeks.

Conwy Local Authority

3.12   There is a language centre for KS2 latecomers in Conwy local authority; the latecomers receive the provision for a term (10-12 weeks). The centre can receive up to 12 latecomers at one time, but capacity can be extended to up to 24 if there is increased demand. Latecomers who make the transition between English-medium primary education and Welsh-medium secondary education in the county receive immersion provision in secondary school in the form of a series of taster sessions in year 6 and intensive immersion in years 7 and 8.

Challenges and opportunities

3.13   One of the aims of the study was to seek to understand how local authorities and schools offer or plan the provision of late immersion education. Some challenges faced by authorities and schools were highlighted, as well as factors that were seen as opportunities for future provision. It should be noted that the findings include evidence from each group of participants interviewed (Welsh Government policy officials, local authority and regional education consortia officials and Estyn), and what is seen as a challenge or opportunity can vary according to the participant.

Funding

3.14   Since funding for the Welsh language was included within the EIG in 2014-15, the Welsh Government is dependent on local authorities and individual regional education consortia to earmark funding for the development of late immersion education provision. The conditions of the EIG state that the grant funding has to be used to support the delivery of local authorities' Welsh in Education Strategic Plans, as they work towards the aims of *Cymraeg 2050*.

3.15 Several interviewees noted that late immersion provision is not prioritised in the same way by all local authorities, with this resulting in some counties spending more on the provision than others.

3.16 In some cases, funding for late immersion education provision is allocated by the regional education consortia. This means that money is allocated to local authorities within the region. It was noted in the interviews that not all local authorities receive the same amount of funding, and concern was also expressed about the possibility of allocations changing in the future as more counties develop their provision. In other cases, the EIG funding is delegated to schools, and it is then the schools' decision as to how they use the funding.

3.17 Other challenges associated with funding issues were noted. One matter that often arose in the interviews were the high costs of the provision, particularly compared to relatively small numbers of latecomers receiving the service. Some interviewees referred to the fact that the provision requires revenue investment as well as capital funding: although capital funding has been useful for some local authorities that have recently built new settings, it was noted that revenue funding is needed to employ teachers.

3.18 It was noted by some that it was difficult for local authorities to allocate funding for late immersion provision in the face of financial constraints over recent years. An observation was also made about the fact that it is not within the nature of government grants to meet inflation, and that receiving the same amount towards the provision corresponds to a reduction in real terms, as it does not meet costs that are increasing annually.

Resources

3.19 Another area discussed in the interviews were the resources used to teach in late immersion education provision. Some noted that there are many resources available, but that difficulties can arise in selecting the most suitable resources for the specific needs of learners in different centres.

3.20 According to the evidence gathered through the interviews, regional education consortia have a role in sharing resources to support their region's schools. For example, as part of the recent work of the Central South

Consortium, they have created a resource pack with the support of the staff of the immersion unit in Cardiff, to be shared among local authorities receiving latecomers. The purpose of this work is to support Welsh-medium schools in integrating latecomers into the mainstream. This resource pack will be allocated to local authorities, in conjunction with guidance on how to use them to support school staff. Following an investment by ERW in the service for all teachers of Welsh as a second language in the region, Swansea local authority has been using phonics scheme resources in their peripatetic late immersion education provision.

Transport and accessibility

3.21   During the interviews several issues were raised relating to transport to provision, and the accessibility of provision. The local authorities that provide transport for their latecomers to attend a centre noted that the transport costs are the most significant cost in the budget for the provision. Of the authorities interviewed, Newport, Ceredigion, Conwy, Denbighshire, Gwynedd and Carmarthenshire offer, or plan to offer, transport for their latecomers to reach their centres. It was noted by some that there were benefits to offering peripatetic provision as this saved on the travel costs of latecomers.

3.22   One factor identified by some authorities was that journey times (as well as travel costs) were a challenge for them in planning late immersion provision. One county, for example, noted that some latecomers travel for up to an hour and a half each way to the late immersion provision. Some authorities reported that the school day would have to be shorter owing to transport time to centres, in their plans for the provision. A few local authorities noted that one element contributing to this situation is the fact that health and safety regulations in relation to transport mean that the taxi service has to transport the latecomers to the centre from their home school rather than from their homes. For some authorities, transport therefore reduces further the length of the school day.

3.23   However, not all of the authorities that were interviewed saw challenges when discussing transport. An example was provided of an authority

considering creating a system of working alongside the authority's secondary schools and borrowing their minibuses to transport latecomers to the centre. As late immersion is provided on the secondary schools' campus, there are no additional travel costs for KS3 latecomers in Ceredigion.

3.24   Another issue raised in the interviews was the accessibility of late immersion education provision in rural areas. One authority noted that the lack of transport links in the area had to be a consideration for them as they planned their provision, and another authority indicated that the rural nature of the county can be a barrier to latecomers attending late immersion provision.

Non-statutory provision

3.25   One issue identified by some local authorities was the fact that there is no statutory requirement for latecomers to attend late immersion; that is, local authorities are dependent on the goodwill of parents to commit to their children receiving provision for latecomers if they are new to the Welsh-medium sector. This was a feature in those local authorities where the provision is seen as essential in order for latecomers to be able to follow their education through the medium of Welsh. According to some of those interviewed, schools are successful in explaining that the latecomers would not be able to follow the content of the mainstream lessons without first attending the centre.

3.26   It was also noted, however, that some parents can be unwilling for their children to go to a centre because they do not want their children to 'miss out' on experiences they would have in the school.

Planning provision

3.27   One of the local authorities interviewed had used evidence from other countries to inform their planning for late immersion provision. Others reported that they had consulted with or visited late immersion providers elsewhere in Wales in order to plan their own provision. Policy officers interviewed indicated that they referred leaders in some local authorities to officers in other authorities in drawing up their WESPs in order to support their planning of late immersion provision. Some local authorities had planned their provision on the basis of what was practically possible within

the confines of local authority funding and in consultation with the authorities' schools and headteachers.

3.28   Some of those interviewed noted, however, that there was a lack of research in the field to support local authorities in planning their late immersion provision.

Forward planning of provision

3.29   Of the interviews conducted, all authorities indicated that they measure the demand for late immersion provision on the basis of applications for places from the schools where the learners are currently placed. One authority reported using a survey to measure the demand for Welsh-medium education locally in trying to plan ahead for late immersion education provision, but that the survey response rate had been very low. Other authorities reported that they had developed literature and pamphlets for parents to explain the benefits of bilingualism to try to attract more into the Welsh-medium sector. We do not know whether this marketing has supported authorities to forward plan for demand for late immersion provision. Many noted that the provision is a responsive service, which hinders forward planning.

3.30   For example, officers in some authorities noted that it is not possible to plan for people's movements, and therefore there is often no definite pattern in the demand for their centres. Similarly, people's movement out of the authority cannot be foreseen. For example, one authority noted that they saw a loss of investment in terms of money and time in the case of individual latecomers who, over time, move out of the area, or the country. It was noted in several interviews that there is a clear element of risk in the forward planning of late immersion provision, particularly in growing new provision (which is very costly), because authorities do not know what the demand will be in the future.

3.31   However, it was stated that one thing that can be planned to some extent is growth in demand for a late immersion centre when a new Welsh-medium school opens in the area; Pembrokeshire reported that they had recently experienced this.

Determining capacity

3.32   The evidence gathered during the interviews showed that the capacity of the provision is determined in different ways by local authorities. In some areas capacity is based on the size of classrooms at the provision. In another county, the capacity of provision is determined according to the staff available. One authority noted that they were not aware of a specific methodology used to determine the maximum number of latecomers that could be accommodated at their centres, but that the numbers that have been accepted have proved successful in the past, in terms of learners working in pairs and the number of staff available.

3.33   One authority noted that setting a maximum capacity was useful in developing a new kind of provision. According to one authority, keeping capacity low as the service is developed is advantageous, as focussing on fewer schools makes it easier to offer a more intensive service to the latecomers. The authority expressed concern that the provision would not be as effective if there were to be a substantial increase in capacity.

3.34   However, not all the authorities questioned determine a maximum capacity for their late immersion provision. One authority noted that they did not want to put a ceiling on the number of latecomers who could benefit from their service, as the county's aim is to increase numbers in order to increase the number of Welsh speakers in the county. The authority noted that offering the provision virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic had made it easier to reach more learners and to increase class sizes.

Multi-use provision

3.35   Some authorities use the late immersion resource or setting for other purposes, when there is no demand for provision for latecomers. For example, the Carmarthenshire centre is used to educate latecomers as well as offering other Welsh language services. Welsh for Adults courses, Welsh courses for latecomers' parents, transition courses between the primary and secondary sector, and Sabbatical Scheme courses to improve teachers' Welsh language skills, are held at the centre.

3.36   In Ceredigion, in order to ensure that late immersion provision continues even when demand is low, it is the county's policy to offer the provision to latecomers who have already received late immersion education and who have returned to their schools, but who would benefit from 're-visiting' the intensive course to strengthen their language skills. In Swansea local authority, latecomer teaching groups include also other learners in the Welsh-medium sector wishing to improve their language skills.

3.37   Other interviewees referred to the possibilities in relation to offering late immersion provision to learners that are not 'latecomers' but who could need support to develop their Welsh language skills at various points of their education journey.

Practitioner expertise and training

3.38   Of the authortiies interviewed most staff currently working in the provision have been working in late immersion education for a long time – some for fifteen years or more. According to one of the officers interviewed it will be a challenge to ensure that there are sufficient specialists for the future with the necessary skills to provide late immersion education. They noted that key practitioners were retiring and that good practice and expertise needed to be transferred to the next generation of practitioners.

3.39   One issue identified (amongst others) in the interviews with the policy officials interviewed was that the Welsh Government is aware that there is little research or information on training for teachers in relation to immersion methods. It was noted that there is little information available about the type of training that local authorities or regional education consortia offer to practitioners in the field of immersion. Amongst the recommendations in its thematic report on Welsh language acquisition, Estyn (2021: 35) states that 'local authorities and regional consortia should provide training to deepen practitioners' understanding of how learners acquire the Welsh language, and in effective language immersion methodology'.

3.40   Late immersion education was described as '*niche*' by one participant, in that 'there's no need to train hundreds of people at any one time to provide that type of education' as the number of latecomers is relatively low. In order to

ensure that good practice is transferred, they suggested that teacher training providers, local authorities and consortia could work together to provide training for practitioners, and that national training could be held virtually.

3.41 Funding for professional learning is currently allocated by the Welsh Government through local authorities or consortia, and they do not report specifically on training for late immersion. The professional standards for teaching and leadership were published in September 2017 and teachers are required to work towards the standards in developing their practice. The aim of the professional teaching standards is to support teachers to take advantage of their personal professional learning, and inform an analysis of professional learning needs, by increasing dialogue between leaders and practitioners. Under the new standards practitioners could highlight their need for training on aspects of immersion to their managers. An evaluation of the implementation of standards is now underway on behalf of the Welsh Government.

3.42 Some local authorities train the practitioners working in the centres in post. For example, in one authority, as there are two members of staff at each centre, every new teacher has a mentor. Once the teacher has run the course for a term, the units of work are repeated each term. In another county new practitioners spend a period of time shadowing an experienced practitioner as part of their training.

Measuring learners' progress

3.43 Some late immersion providers assess the progress of latecomers by using specific quantitative assessments. For example, in Gwynedd the general expectation is for latecomers to be able to reach curriculum level 2 in oracy by the end of their time in their language centres, whilst Conwy local authority expects its latecomers to reach level 3 in order to assimilate into the mainstream.

3.44 Some local authorities use progress tracking methods to measure latecomers' progress. One local authority reported that research had been carried out by the county, which involved following latecomers' education journey after they had attended the centre, in order to measure their

progress over time. In another local authority, there has recently been work to look at the progress of latecomers at KS3.

3.45   On the basis of the evidence gathered, it appears that methods of measuring progress are not systematic in all the authorities interviewed. In several counties, monitoring currently takes place 'naturally'; that is, staff look at the latecomers' language standard when they arrive at the centre, and compare it with where they have reached by the end of their time at the centre. Some authorities reported that, although they do not collect quantitative data during the period of late immersion, they work towards national levels and consider a range of sources of evidence of progress, for example recording oral work, and keeping a record of written work. In some authorities, there are open evenings for latecomers at the end of their time in the provision to demonstrate their oral skills, and some authorities indicated that reports of latecomers' progress were prepared for parents and teachers.

3.46   Some authorities reported that they were beginning to develop new plans for measuring progress in the future. One county indicated that they are considering developing a system where it is possible to track more regularly in order to report on learners' progress, and to look in more detail at what kind of support learners would need to help their progress. Another county noted that they were reviewing the process of measuring progress, by working with learners' schools.

3.47   Whilst noting that all providers' monitoring processes are the same, it is also important to note that the linguistic situation in the schools to which learners transfer or return also varies. When latecomers complete their period of late immersion, some return to bilingual education, and some to Welsh-medium education, and there may be different expectations in terms of their attainment on that basis.

Ongoing support for learners

3.48   Two types of aftercare are offered in the local authorities interviewed: an outreach service where the teachers at the late immersion provision offer additional support to latecomers who have returned to school, and extending the period of provision for latecomers who are not yet ready to transfer to the

mainstream. For example, in Newport and Conwy authorities, aftercare contact is maintained after learners return to their schools, and they are monitored for a period of time. If additional support is needed during that period, the authority is able to provide it.

3.49 In Wrexham, where the service is peripatetic rather than offered through a designated centre, aftercare is offered on the basis of extending the duration of provision. After the learners have returned to their mainstream classes, the co-ordinator gives them a pack of resources to work on with a classroom assistant. If the class teacher considers that a learner needs further help, the co-ordinator is available to return to the school to provide additional support. In Swansea, where provision is also now peripatetic, in the past learners accessed the provision for a longer period if they were not ready to enter the mainstream, although this rarely happened (and if it did it was for specific reasons). The intention is to continue this arrangement under the new system.

3.50 However, not all authorities offer an aftercare service as part of their late immersion education provision. One local authority noted that it is not possible to offer an aftercare service, because the teachers at the provision prioritise new latecomers. This authority noted that the lockdown during COVID-19, however, had shown that it was possible to offer aftercare virtually (see the section on the impact of the pandemic for further examples of this). Another authority, currently offering aftercare, stated that they wished the home school to take more responsibility for the latecomers to help integrate learners into their mainstream education.

The involvement of the regional education consortia in the provision

3.51 There are different levels of involvement in latecomers' provision on the part of regional education consortia. Below is a summary of the consortia's work in relation to late immersion provision, based on the evidence gathered in the interviews.

3.52 CSC has worked with a designated centre for latecomers in Cardiff to create and distribute a package of resources for Welsh-medium primary schools in the region that receive latecomers. The region intends to develop resources

for latecomers who are in transition between year 6 of the English-medium sector and year 7 of the Welsh-medium sector. CSC is part of discussions and fora relating to local authority WESPs in the region, where late immersion education is discussed at times. The consortium noted that CSC does not lead on immersion provision, but supports local authorities and schools to offer the provision. The consortium does not collect any data on the provision, and no evidence was collected that discussions take place at consortium level about late immersion provision specifically.

3.53   The South East Wales Education Achievement Service (EAS) is involved in some discussions of the local authority WESP forum in the region, and in discussions with individual schools about planning late immersion education provision. The consortium noted that they also network more widely with local authorities who offer provision in order to share experiences with the region.

3.54   GwE supports the local authorities in its region to meet the objectives of their WESPs, but because the region's needs for late immersion education are so different from east to west, planning for the provision takes place in local authorities. Late immersion provision is discussed in school cluster discussions, but the consortium is not involved in designing the model or in collecting data on latecomers. ERW does not deal specifically with late immersion provision.

The involvement of Welsh Government in the provision

3.55   In interviews with policy officials they indicated that they were in regular contact with local authorities as part of the wider work regarding WESPs, and that discussions about late immersion could arise from that work. Policy officials attend local authority WESP fora. Some authorities, however, noted that the Welsh Government is not involved in the planning of late immersion provision.

Collaboration between local authorities

3.56   Several interviews showed that local authorities had a strong desire to work with other authorities on late immersion provision. There were examples of authorities meeting to hold joint discussions, and sharing good practice.

However, on the basis of the evidence gathered, not all local authorities interviewed work in partnership with other authorities. Some stated that the characteristics and needs of each county are different, which means that everyone's late immersion provision is very different. One participant noted that everyone 'works in the dark' in terms of their own provision.

Other partners

3.57 Some local authorities give priority to establishing and maintaining wider partnerships in the provision of late immersion. A number of the authorities authorities interviewed said that good partnerships with the headteachers of individual schools was also needed, to maintain and reinforce the immersion work required by latecomers on their return to the mainstream.

COVID-19

3.58 Overall, local authorities reported that COVID-19 had affected the number of latecomers in late immersion education provision. Some authorities reported that numbers had fallen significantly (in late immersion education as well as the Welsh-medium sector more widely) over the lockdown period. Some saw that a large number of parents were moving their children from late immersion education provision to the English-medium sector because they did not feel that there was enough linguistic input available virtually. However, other authorities had seen a growth in numbers since lockdown.

3.59 Other observations were also received about the provision of late immersion in the light of the pandemic. Some noted that the lockdown period had highlighted the fact that more learners (not only latecomers) could benefit from late immersion provision. For example, in one interview it was stated that mainstream learners could take advantage of late immersion provision to strengthen their language skills if Welsh is not spoken at home. In another interview it was suggested that, in future, a resource pack used for latecomers within the region could be used with learners who do not speak Welsh at home.

3.60 Many interview participants drew attention to the hard work of late immersion teachers during the pandemic, and this was much praised.

3.61   Another point that arose were the benefits of using technology to maintain contact between late immersion stakeholders. One authority referred to opportunities to use technology to maintain the provision, including the fact that headteachers of Welsh-medium schools had attended the live streaming sessions of the provision during lockdown, and had seen the activities and the range of strategies in the lessons for the first time. Another authority noted that technology had led to increased contact between the centre and the home, with parents seeing their children's progress directly as they took part in the lessons from home.

3.62   A number of comments were also provided about the potential new opportunities for blended learning and live streaming through the use of technology to maintain and expand late immersion provision. For example, one participant said that blended learning could reduce the need for resources such as staff and specific rooms and that some aspects of the provision could be offered online. Another participant said that it would be possible for some latecomers who are not willing to travel to the late immersion centre to take advantage of the provision virtually. Some said that virtual teaching during COVID-19 had introduced different ways of delivering aftercare. There was also one observation that the pandemic had been an opportunity to modernise the resources used with latecomers.

3.63   However, some local authorities reported that, in their view, the standard of the provision offered online was not as high as that of face-to-face provision.

Measuring the impact of the provision

3.64   The extent to which the late immersion provision currently offered allows the effectiveness of the models to be assessed is outlined below.

Measuring the impact of the provision by assessing latecomers' progress

3.65   From the evidence gathered, the impact of the provision is measured in the majority of local authorities interviewed by assessing learners' progress. In some local authorities, narrative evidence is used to measure this progress. A number of the local authority officers interviewed were keen to share the stories of latecomers who had been through late immersion, and who were now fluent in Welsh. Some referred to the achievements of individual

learners, such as writing stories and competing at the Urdd Eisteddfod. Some authorities mentioned that they held public open evenings to show parents and other children that latecomers had been successful in learning the language. It was clear from the interviews that officers were very proud of the provision they offered, and in some cases expressed admiration at the progress made by learners.

3.66 In some of the local authorities interviewed, teachers at the learners' schools provide regular feedback to the centres on the progress of latecomers, and one officer interviewed said that a close relationship had been established between schools and the language centre in order to facilitate communication about the latecomers' progress. In the opinion of one of the participants, given the absence of robust official data to measure the impact of late immersion education provision, narrative evidence of learners' progress is better than nothing.

3.67 In one local authority, the officer interviewed visits the late immersion setting and noted that it is possible to 'see oracy improving and confidence growing' in the latecomers attending the provision.

3.68 In some cases, authorities measure learners' progress quantitatively during their time in late immersion provision. Conwy indicated that they expected latecomers to reach level 3 by the end of their time at the centre. In Gwynedd, latecomers are generally expected to reach level 2 orally in Welsh at the end of their time in the provision.

3.69 In relation to Welsh-medium education, and provision for latecomers as part of this, Estyn recently noted:

'In general, external sourced materials to assess learners' language acquisition skills through the medium of Welsh is limited. Therefore, assessments outcomes of current available materials do not lead to useful information when measuring learners' progress, particularly when considering the progress that they make from their varied starting points. As a result, leaders and practitioners do not have a sound enough grasp of the progress made by individual learners and groups of learners, for

example latecomers and learners who come from Welsh speaking homes.' (Estyn 2021: 74).

3.70   One of the local authorities interviewed commissioned a piece of research to track the education journey of learners after they had attended late immersion provision and returned to their schools, in order to measure the impact of the provision. According to the authority, the research showed that latecomers made clear progress in Welsh after leaving the centre. Without purposeful tracking of latecomers on their return to the mainstream, however, there is no system in place that distinguishes learners who have attended late immersion provision from their peers in the mainstream. In another interview it was noted that the county was currently considering developing a system where latecomers can be tracked along key stages more regularly and more formally.

Measuring the impact of the provision through questionnaires

3.71   Officers in one local authority reported that they had asked for feedback on the late immersion provision by distributing a questionnaire to parents and teachers in the light of COVID-19, with the aim of adapting the provision if necessary.

4.   Conclusions and considerations for the future

4.1   This mapping exercise has shown that the models for delivering late immersion education in different parts of Wales vary. Some offer peripatetic provision, some offer provision within the school itself, and others offer provision in designated centres. All local authorities interviewed face some challenges in offering or planning late immersion provision.

4.2   Several interviewees noted that the running costs of the provision were high, particularly in the context of the relatively small numbers of latecomers using the service. It was reported that not all local authorities allocate the same amount of funding because provision is not prioritised in the same way in all counties, and that some counties spend more on the provision than others. Some authorities are facing cuts in the funding received via the EIG; the type of provision offered is often driven by the amount of funding allocated for the provision. Some authorities reported that planning transport to late immersion centres can be challenging because of the cost, and in some cases learners' time in late immersion is reduced owing to transport arrangements.

Consideration for the future:

When planning to expand late immersion provision, consideration could be given to whether it is necessary to develop a more detailed understanding of how much funding local authorities, consortia and schools allocate for late immersion provision, and what proportion of that funding is spent on transport costs.

4.3   Some local authorities were concerned about parents who are reluctant to send their children to centres because attending the provision is not a statutory requirement.

Consideration for the future:

Local authorities could consider using their county's language policies and their WESPs to encourage parents to choose to send their children to late immersion centres. The Welsh Government could support this through their work with local authorities on developing their WESPs

and by emphasising the importance of the centres in maintaining the language policies of individual schools.

4.4   Staff in late immersion provision are very experienced in some local authorities where provision is long-standing, with some having worked in the field for over 15 years. On the basis of the evidence gathered it would appear that it could be a challenge to ensure specific training for late immersion teachers who are new to the work. This will be important as some local authorities begin to plan for new provision. In some areas, practitioner training takes place in-house in settings. The Welsh Government does not receive information on the type of training that local authorities or regional education consortia offer to practitioners in late immersion education provision.

Consideration for the future:

Methods of gathering information about the nature of training that local authorities or regional education consortia offer to practitioners in their late immersion provision could be considered. This could provide a basis for developing a comprehensive picture of the training offered, and for ensuring consistency and high standards for training across Wales.

4.5   In terms of offering ongoing support to latecomers, some of the local authorities interviewed offered an outreach service to provide further support, and others offered to extend the length of the provision if latecomers needed further support. In some cases, latecomers are not supported through a programme of aftercare on their return to the mainstream.

Consideration for the future:

Consideration could be given to whether arrangements for aftercare following a period of late immersion need to be formalised or harmonised, with the aim of ensuring that learners receive the most appropriate support. As part of this, the role of teachers in supporting latecomers returning to the mainstream could be considered.

4.6   Although links exist between local authorities, regional education consortia and the Welsh Government in relation to late immersion provision, the evidence gathered during the mapping exercise suggests that the nature of these links is varied and complex. In the main, local authorities take a strategic lead on all aspects of planning provision. Some participants noted that they worked together and shared resources by building relationships between authorities, and between authorities and the regional education consortia.

Consideration for the future:

The authorities interviewed have a great deal of experience in planning and delivering late immersion education. Possible ways to facilitate further collaboration between local authorities could be considered as well as with, and between, regional education consortia.

4.7   There was evidence that the COVID-19 pandemic had presented an additional challenge to local authorities in terms of planning and offering their provision. Overall, however, participants saw that there could be opportunities in the future to expand their late immersion provision, and the aftercare they provide, by using virtual teaching techniques, thus reducing the need for physical classrooms. On a different but related matter, some of the local authorities interviewed noted that the setting for late immersion provision is also used for other purposes when there is no demand for provision for latecomers.

Considerations for the future:

- **Consideration could be given to ways to learn from the experiences gained from COVID-19 and to exploring the potential of blended learning and language learning techniques through virtual methods, when planning late immersion provision and subsequent support for learners.**

- **Also for possible consideration is whether there is potential for more providers of late immersion education to offer their settings for other uses when there is no demand for the provision.**

4.8 The evidence from this mapping exercise suggests that there are variations in the ways in which the effectiveness of late immersion education provision is measured and interpreted. One of the objectives of this study was to examine the extent to which late immersion delivery mechanisms allow the effectiveness of provision to be measured. All authorities interviewed that offer late immersion provision stated that they believed that their model was effective in creating new speakers.

4.9 The impact of the provision is mainly measured by the progress observed in the linguistic ability of the latecomers. As in one of the findings of the final evaluation of the immersion and intensive language teaching pilot projects (Welsh Government 2008: 129), a number of participants believed that it is learners' ability to reach a 'linguistic threshold', namely the point at which learners acquire the language skills needed to assimilate effectively in Welsh-medium classes, which proves that the provision has worked. On the basis of the evidence gathered, it appears that this progress towards a threshold is not recorded in the form of robust data in all cases. There is instead a dependency on narrative evidence from teachers. Nevertheless, some local authorities said that the provision needed more formal methods to track progress, in order to measure its impact on learners' progress over time. There was one example of an authority using a questionnaire to collect information about the impact of the provision.

Consideration for the future:

Currently, some local authorities use national level data to measure learners' progress. As new curriculum and assessment arangements are implemented from 2022 onwards, the aim of tracking the progress of learners receiving late immersion provision will give rise to new questions. As possible ways of tracking progress over time are discussed, the use of the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) to indicate whether a pupil is currently receiving late immersion provision, or has received such provision in the past, could also be considered.

4.10   In order to measure the effectiveness of late immersion provision robustly, the data and evidence used must be reliable, consistent and appropriate for the task. At present, there is no systematic way of measuring whether the different types of provision are effective. There are a range of elements, in addition to learner progress data, that can contribute to our understanding of the effectiveness of late immersion education provision: the factors that influence the progress of latecomers in Welsh are many and complex. Amongst other issues, consideration would need to be given to the aftercare provision and support given to learners after their return to the mainstream.

Considerations for the future:

- **Developing a theory – or theories – of change could provide a useful basis for planning, and measuring the effectiveness of, late immersion programmes in the future. This would provide an opportunity to examine the relationship between the aims and objectives of models or programmes and the medium and longer term aims they are intended to meet. This would also provide an opportunity to identify and test the assumptions associated with the programmes and models, and to identify the external factors which could influence the implementation of the programmes.**

- **Developing theories of change would also provide a means of highlighting the types of evidence (qualitative and quantitative), and the data sources, which could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the impact and effectiveness of the programmes.**

4.11   During the mapping exercise there was no clear evidence that local authorities had used the evaluation of the immersion and intensive language teaching pilot projects (Welsh Government 2008) in planning their provision – although it should be noted that this was not asked directly in the interviews with local authorities. Some participants offered observations about a lack of research evidence to support local authorities in planning their provision. On the basis of the evidence gathered it appears that the priority for local authorities is to plan and deliver provision that meets local needs. These findings highlight the need to take the following into account: broadening the evidence base and research carried out on Welsh language

late immersion provision; facilitating access to the evidence and encouraging local authorities to use it; and demonstrating an understanding of local needs – in conjunction with the evidence – when developing provision for the future.

Considerations for the future:

- **Attention should be given to the need for more research and evidence as a basis for developing policy in Welsh-medium late immersion provision.**
- **Consideration should be also be given to methods of ensuring that regional education consortia and local authorities use research and evidence when planning new provision, and to refine and develop further the late immersion provision which already exists.**
- **It should be borne in mind that effective provision could look different in different parts of Wales. In planning the provision, and when evaluating its effectiveness, local needs and circumstances should be a central consideration.**

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Annex A – Topic Guides for Welsh Government policy officials

Topic guides were produced for the officials interviewed in the Welsh Government to reflect their different functions. The interviews covered the following areas:

- General information about the participant and their role in relation to the development of late immersion education;
- Developing WESPs and collaboration with local authorities;
- Working in partnership with other stakeholders in developing the late immersion provision.

Annex B – Topic guide for local authority officers

In every interview with officers external to the Welsh Government the following areas were discussed at the beginning of the interview:

- Establish the language for the interview;

- Introducing the researcher, overview of role;

- Objectives and nature of the research;

- Reiteration of the conditions of their participation and ensuring that they had read the privacy notice;

- Indicate that they would have an opportunity to ask about the research at the end of the interview;

- Inform them that if a question arises that they are unable to answer in full or at all, that is fine (questions will be tailored for individual participants).

[SECTION 1 – General information about the participant]

1a Which local authority do you work at?

1b What is your role there?
    What main responsibilities do you have with that role?

[SECTION 2 – Description of the provision for latecomers (models, numbers, funding and transport]

2a Can you explain what the provision for latecomers is in your local authority (if any)? (If none, jump to Section 6)

    Does the provision exist in a designated Centre or within a secondary or primary school or some other arrangement?

2b What age/key stage are the pupils attending the provision?

    Is there any reason why you offer the provision to this age group?

2c What model(s) do you use for the provision you offer?

    Full-time or part-time? (i.e. how many days a week and for how long?)

    Why did you choose this model?

    Did you consider other models?

What are the pros and cons of your model of provision?

Is there anything you would change?

What? Why?

Is there anything about the model that needs improving?

How? How would that improve it?

2ch Approximately how many pupils can access the provision for latecomers?

How do you set a capacity?

Have you realised that numbers have gone up or down substantially over the last few years? Why, do you think?

Have you ever had any issues with numbers (too few or too many)?

How did you overcome those issues?

2d How is the provision funded?

2dd Does the local authority provide transport to the pupils who attend late immersion education?

Of those attending the provision, how many use the transport and how many make their own arrangements?

Do they travel far?

Have you heard of any pupils experiencing difficulties with accessing the immersive education or the transport?

[SECTION 3 – Access and latecomers in the local authority]

3a Starting from the beginning of the process; what happens when a child arrives at a school/a Welsh-medium school in your local authority for the first time after reception?

Who starts the discussion about the possibility of offering late immersion provision to a pupil?

What is the role of the parents in this process?

How do parents come to know that the provision is available?

[in instances where there is a choice between WM education and other provision]:

> In your experience, what makes parents choose for their children to attend WM education (after reception)?

3b How do you assess the demand for latecomer provision in your local authority?

> How do you receive information about the numbers needed/the numbers of applications for spaces/ and the area where there is demand?

> Have there been any changes to the need over recent years? More or less need for the provision? Why, in your opinion?

[SECTION 4 – practitioners and staffing]

4a How many practitioners work towards supplying the provision in the authority?

4b How are they appointed/recruited?

> What skills and what type of experience do you look for when appointing?

4c What is the profile and skills of the staff who are responsible for the provision?

> Have they had any training to do their role? Who provides that training?

[SECTION 5 – measuring pupil progress, and aftercare]

5a What methods and what type of evidence is used to measure the progress of pupils during their time spent in the late immersion centre/ unit/ class?

> Linguistic progress and educational progress?

5b How is progress reported at the end of their time in the late immersion centre/ unit/ class?

5c What happens to this information at the end of this period?

5ch When the pupils leaves the late immersion centre/ unit/ class and return to their school, are there any arrangements in place to support them?

> After care plan or similar?

> What is included in that provision?

> How long does it last?

[SECTION 6 – planning the contents of the provision]

6a How did you go/are you going about planning what type of provision needed by latecomers in your local authority?

6b What type of evidence do you use to plan the appropriate provision?

    Do you read reports or evalutations by WG or Estyn? Which ones? Which other documents?

6c To what extent do you work with others in the planning process?

Local authorities?

Welsh Government?

Language or education forums?

Regional Education Consortia?

Schools and teachers?

Parents?

Local residents/ community?

6ch How do you know if the provision for latecomers is working?

    What data and evidence do you use to know this?

    To what extent do you see that the provision needs to be adapted according to pupil needs?

    How do you plan for any adaptations?

6d Thinking about the planning of the provision, what in your opinion are the opportunities relating to the planning work for latecomer provision? That is to say, in your opinion, is there anything that works well in terms of the latecomer provision in your LA?

6dd What are the challenges in your opinion?

    How have you responded to these challenges?

[SECTION 7 – Latecomer provision in the context of the pandemic]

7a What has happened to pupils who were attending latecomer provision before lockdown?

Is the provision still available to them?

How? Face-to-face or online?

7b Has COVID-19 made you think differently about the provision of latecomer education?

[SECTION 8 – General experiences of managing the provision]

8a What have you learnt since first offering the provision in your local authority?

8b What advice would you give to local authorities as they start to prepare and deliver the provision?

[SECTION 9 – Questions]

9a Is there anything else you want to add before we end?

9b Do you have any questions about this research?

Thank you for your time.

Annex C – Topic guide for regional education consortia officers

Annex B provides an outline of the areas discussed at the beginning of the interviews with regional education consortia officers.

[SECTION 1 – General information about the participant]

1a Which consortium do you work at?

1b What is your role there?

  What main responsibilities do you have with that role?

[SECTION 2 – the consortia and late immerison provision]

2a What is the provision for late immersion in the region?

2b In what contexts is late immersion education discussed in the consortium?

  In which policies of strategic plans is the provision discussed?

  Which forums/committees?

  Which officers at consortium level are involved with those elements?

2c What is the role of the consortium in terms of developing or planning the provision for latecomers in different LAs?

  What is the role of the consortium in deciding on the specific model of provision?

  Does the consortium offer support or advice to schools/counties in terms of the provision? Can you describe how this happens?

  What are the sources and evidence you use to provide that support/advice?

  To what extent is that work related to the WESP?

2ch Looking at the local authorities in your region, what has been discussed in the past and what is being discussed and developed at the moment in terms of late immersion provision?

  What main themes have come up?

  What challeneges and opportunities have come up during these discussions?

2d Does the consortium have a role in distributing funding for the late immersion education?

      Can you describe this process?

2dd Does the consortium receive any information about the late immersion provision in the region from the LAs?

      What type of information?

      Does local authorities provide updates on changes or adaptations to the late immersion provision? How often? In what form?

2e Is the consortium involved in preparing resources or developing teaching methods in the late immersion provision?

2f Does the consortium collect any data / evidence about the late immersion provision in the region?

      On what?

      What happens to that data/ evidence?

2ff At the consortium level, are you involved with the standard of the late immersion provision?

      What is the role of the consortium in that?

      What type of information or evidence do you use to come to conclusions about how effective the provision is?

2g Does the consortium have a role in training practitioners who deliver the late immersion provision?

      How is that training organised?

      Who provides the training?

[SECTION 3 – Relationships]

3a What is the relationship between local authorities in the region in relation to the late immersion provision?

What is discussed in this setting?

What's the nature of that dialogue?

3b What is the relationship of the consortium with other regional education consortia in relation to the late immersion provision?

What is discussed in this setting?

What's the nature of that dialogue?

3c What is the consortium's relationship with WG in relation to the late immersion provision?

What is discussed in this setting?

What's the nature of that dialogue?

[SECTION 4 – Wider role of the consortium in terms of the provision for late immersion]

4a Apart from what we've already discussed, is the consortium part of any wider work involving the field of late immersion education?

[SECTION 5 – Questions]

5a Is there anything more you would like to say about your role in latecomer immersion education?

5b Do you have any questions about this research?

Thank you for your time.

Annex D – Topic guide for Estyn representative

Annex B provides an outline of the areas discussed at the beginning of the interview with the Estyn representative.

[SECTION 1 – General information about the participant]

1a What is your role in Estyn?

    What are the main responsibilities involved in that role?

[SECTION 2 – Estyn and inspecting the provision for latecomers]

2a How is the provision considered within the inspection framework?

2b Does Estyn inspect centres/units for latecomers in a similar way to how schools are inspected?

    If not, why is it different?

2c When you inspect (Welsh-medium) schools do you pay any particular attention to the provision for pupils who have been to a Centre or unit for latecomers?

    If so, which aspects do you pay attention to?

2ch Is there anything you can say about the processes that schools and counties use to plan the provision?

2d Is there anything you can say about the content and quality of the provision you see?

2dd How much attention do immersion programmes or courses receive in final reports, usually?

[SECTION 3 – Support and advice for schools]

3a Aside from the inspection process, does Estyn offer support or advice to schools/counties in terms of the provision for latecomers?

    How does this happen?

    What are the sources and the evidence used for this?

[SECTION 4 – Estyn's wider role in terms of the provision for latecomers]

4a Aside from the topics we've already discussed, is Estyn part of any wider work which includes the area of late immersion?

[SECTION 5 – Questions]

5a Is there anything you'd like to add about your role, or Estyn's role in terms of the immersion provision for latecomers?

5b Do you have any questions about this research?

Thank you for your time.