

Distribution Sub-Group (2020) Paper 15 – Impact of 2020 PLASC pupil numbers on the settlement

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

Impact of 2020 PLASC pupil numbers on the settlement

Summary

1. This paper provides analysis of the latest pupil numbers taken from the January 2020 Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC).
2. Tables 1 compares the 2020 counts with 2019 for each Local Authority. Table 2 exemplifies the impact of the updated data on the 2020-21 Total SSA.

Views sought

3. DSG members are asked to consider whether or not to update to the latest PLASC data.

Related Papers

- Distribution Sub-Group (2019) - Paper 15: Impact of 2019 PLASC
- Distribution Sub-Group (2018) - Paper 19: 2018 PLASC data
- Distribution Sub-Group (2017) - Paper 08: Impact of the 2017 PLASC data

Background

4. The Settlement indicators relating to pupil numbers are updated on an annual basis using the latest Pupil Level Annual School Census. The data is a snapshot at January of the academic year.
5. The PLASC is the most accurate and robust source of data for pupil numbers and using this as a proxy for need to spend on education services ensures that the Settlement remains reactive to real movements in the number of pupils requiring education.
6. Updates to pupil numbers affect the following IBAs within the settlement:
 - Nursery and primary school teaching and other services;
 - Secondary school teaching and other services;
 - Secondary school transport services;
 - Adult and continuing education transport;
 - Education administration; and
 - General administration.

Analysis

Changes to the validation process as a result of COVID-19

7. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, whilst the vast majority of validation was completed on this data, the validation exercise for purposes of use in the settlement

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(the process that justified the exclusion of this data from the general settlement verification) was not undertaken this year.

8. There are usually only small changes as a result of this final step of validation and, in the 2019 data, there was a change of less than 100 pupils across Wales. The majority of this difference was as a result of duplicate pupils, which is an issue that already been dealt with for 2020. The data are still classified as national statistics.

Pupils Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS)

9. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, only 10 EOTAS returns were collected. As Knowledge and Analytical Services (KAS) decided to concentrate on cleaning the PLASC data as much as possible, there are still issues with these 10. It is not recommended to use this data for any purpose; therefore, this analysis is based on updating PLASC data only.

Changes to pupil numbers

10. Table 1 compares pupil numbers from the 2020 PLASC with the previous year. At the Wales level, overall pupil numbers have increased by 1,537 pupils to a total of 426,998 pupils. The increase was primarily driven by Cardiff's increase of 590 and Newport's increase of 386 pupils. There was a decrease in pupil numbers in Caerphilly (decrease of 119 pupils), Wrexham (decrease of 106 pupils) and Swansea (decrease of 81 pupils). Changes in percentage shares across Wales ranged from -0.05 percentage points to 0.10 percentage points.
11. At the sector level, nursery & primary school pupils decreased by 2,002 pupils, and secondary pupils increased by 3,539 pupils.
12. The main drivers of the decrease in nursery & primary school pupils are Swansea, Wrexham and Powys with 378, 280 and 195 pupils less than the previous year, respectively. Newport recorded the highest increase but of only 21 pupils. The shift in pupils across Wales results in a fall in their primary pupil share for Swansea of 0.09 percentage points and an increase in Cardiff of 0.08 percentage points.
13. The increase in secondary school pupils was primarily driven by Cardiff with an additional 627 pupils and Newport with an additional 365 pupils. No local authorities saw a decrease in secondary school pupil numbers; however, Ceredigion saw no overall change. Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taf see a decrease of 0.10 percentage points in their percentage share of secondary school pupils. Cardiff and Newport's relative shares increase by 0.14 and 0.11 percentage points respectively.

Impact on the Standard Spending Assessment

14. Table 2 in Annex A exemplifies the impact of the 2020 PLASC on the 2020-21 Total SSA
15. The changes in Total SSA are in line with the changes to pupil numbers as Cardiff and Newport's shares increased by 0.28 and 0.42 percentage points respectively, (£1.8m and £1.3m) whilst Caerphilly's share decreased by 0.28 percentage points (£1m).

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Conclusion

16. There are 1,537 more pupils overall in Wales in January 2020 compared with January 2019. There are 2,002 less pupils in nursery and primary schools and 3,539 more pupils in secondary schools than in 2019.
17. The exemplifications are based on the isolated effect of the PLASC pupil numbers on the 2020-21 Settlement. The exemplifications do not account for any other changes in data that will be made for the 2021-22 Settlement, for example: the impact of transfers in and out, for the impact of changes in formulae resulting from IBA reviews or any other structural changes to the overall formula.
18. A separate DSG paper will provide further analysis on the updated eFSM data and the distributional effect universal credit could be having on the data.

Recommendations

19. The group are asked to agree to use the 2020 PLASC pupils data in the calculation of the 2021-22 settlement and to roll forward the EOTAS pupils data from the 2020-21 settlement.

**Local Government Finance and Workforce Partnerships
Welsh Government**

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Annex A

Table 1 - Main settlement indicators of pupil numbers from 2019 PLASC compared to 2018 PLASC

Local Authority	Nursery and Primary schools ¹						Secondary Schools ²						All pupils ³					
	2019 PLASC		2020 PLASC		Difference		2019 PLASC		2020 PLASC		Difference		2019 PLASC		2020 PLASC		Difference	
	Pupils	Share	Pupils	Share	Pupils	Share	Pupils	Share	Pupils	Share	Pupils	Share	Pupils	Share	Pupils	Share	Pupils	Share
Isle of Anglesey	5,655	2.1%	5,600	2.1%	-55	0.00%	3,187	2.0%	3,253	2.0%	66	0.00%	8,842	2.1%	8,853	2.1%	11	0
Gwynedd	9,391	3.6%	9,273	3.5%	-118	-0.02%	6,276	3.9%	6,409	3.9%	133	0.00%	15,667	3.7%	15,682	3.7%	15	-0
Conwy	8,613	3.3%	8,607	3.3%	-6	0.02%	5,457	3.4%	5,472	3.3%	15	-0.06%	14,070	3.3%	14,079	3.3%	9	-0
Denbighshire	8,368	3.2%	8,299	3.2%	-69	0.00%	5,839	3.6%	6,010	3.6%	171	0.03%	14,207	3.3%	14,309	3.4%	102	0
Flintshire	13,232	5.0%	13,101	5.0%	-131	-0.01%	8,232	5.1%	8,396	5.1%	164	-0.01%	21,464	5.0%	21,497	5.0%	33	-0
Wrexham	12,357	4.7%	12,077	4.6%	-280	-0.07%	6,081	3.8%	6,255	3.8%	174	0.02%	18,438	4.3%	18,332	4.3%	-106	-0
Powys	9,746	3.7%	9,551	3.7%	-195	-0.05%	6,306	3.9%	6,452	3.9%	146	0.00%	16,052	3.8%	16,003	3.7%	-49	-0
Ceredigion	5,103	1.9%	5,047	1.9%	-56	-0.01%	3,613	2.2%	3,613	2.2%	0	-0.05%	8,716	2.0%	8,660	2.0%	-56	-0
Pembrokeshire	9,919	3.8%	9,902	3.8%	-17	0.02%	5,886	3.6%	5,955	3.6%	69	-0.04%	15,805	3.7%	15,857	3.7%	52	0
Cardiff	15,083	5.7%	15,010	5.7%	-73	0.02%	9,768	6.0%	9,988	6.0%	220	0.00%	24,851	5.8%	24,998	5.9%	147	0
Swansea	20,209	7.7%	19,831	7.6%	-378	-0.09%	12,364	7.6%	12,661	7.7%	297	0.02%	32,573	7.7%	32,492	7.6%	-81	-0
Neath Port Talbot	11,587	4.4%	11,596	4.4%	9	0.04%	7,743	4.8%	7,913	4.8%	170	0.00%	19,330	4.5%	19,509	4.6%	179	0
Bridgend	12,470	4.7%	12,418	4.7%	-52	0.02%	7,761	4.8%	7,915	4.8%	154	-0.01%	20,231	4.8%	20,333	4.8%	102	0
Vale of Glamorgan (The)	12,273	4.7%	12,217	4.7%	-56	0.01%	7,712	4.8%	7,944	4.8%	232	0.04%	19,985	4.7%	20,161	4.7%	176	0
Rhondda Cynon Taff	20,905	7.9%	20,762	7.9%	-143	0.01%	13,826	8.5%	13,960	8.4%	134	-0.10%	34,731	8.2%	34,722	8.1%	-9	-0
Merthyr Tydfil	5,419	2.1%	5,372	2.1%	-47	0.00%	2,921	1.8%	3,032	1.8%	111	0.03%	8,340	2.0%	8,404	2.0%	64	0
Caerphilly	15,913	6.0%	15,739	6.0%	-174	-0.02%	10,039	6.2%	10,094	6.1%	55	-0.10%	25,952	6.1%	25,833	6.0%	-119	-0
Blaenau Gwent	5,779	2.2%	5,665	2.2%	-114	-0.03%	2,846	1.8%	2,969	1.8%	123	0.04%	8,625	2.0%	8,634	2.0%	9	-0
Torfaen	8,269	3.1%	8,226	3.1%	-43	0.01%	5,479	3.4%	5,562	3.4%	83	-0.02%	13,748	3.2%	13,788	3.2%	40	0
Monmouthshire	6,718	2.5%	6,730	2.6%	12	0.02%	3,928	2.4%	3,958	2.4%	30	-0.03%	10,646	2.5%	10,688	2.5%	42	0
Newport	14,937	5.7%	14,958	5.7%	21	0.05%	8,727	5.4%	9,092	5.5%	365	0.11%	23,664	5.6%	24,050	5.6%	386	0
Cardiff	31,709	12.0%	31,672	12.1%	-37	0.08%	17,815	11.0%	18,442	11.2%	627	0.14%	49,524	11.6%	50,114	11.7%	590	0
Wales	263,655	100.0%	261,653	100.0%	-2002	0.00%	161,806	100.0%	165,345	100.0%	3539	0.00%	425,461	100.0%	426,998	100.0%	1537	0

Source: Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) and Pupils Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS), Welsh Government

¹Adjusted Nursery pupils & Primary pupils (maintained and EOTAS settings)

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²Secondary pupils in year groups up to and including year 11 (maintained and EOTAS settings)

³Nursery & Primary schools + Secondary schools

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Table 2 - Exemplification to show the impact of updated pupil numbers only on the 2020-21 SSA

LA Name	2020-21 SSA with the 2019-PLASC data	% share	2020-21 SSA with the 2020- PLASC data	% share	Difference	% change
Isle of Anglesey	142,316	2.3%	142,263	2.3%	-53	-0.04%
Gwynedd	254,380	4.1%	254,191	4.1%	-189	-0.07%
Conwy	229,516	3.7%	229,261	3.7%	-255	-0.11%
Denbighshire	205,890	3.3%	206,070	3.4%	180	0.09%
Flintshire	286,087	4.7%	285,924	4.7%	-163	-0.06%
Wrexham	256,883	4.2%	256,405	4.2%	-479	-0.19%
Powys	267,839	4.4%	267,406	4.3%	-434	-0.16%
Ceredigion	150,200	2.4%	149,766	2.4%	-434	-0.29%
Pembrokeshire	247,581	4.0%	247,514	4.0%	-67	-0.03%
Carmarthenshire	375,549	6.1%	375,670	6.1%	121	0.03%
Swansea	463,934	7.5%	463,152	7.5%	-782	-0.17%
Neath Port Talbot	292,996	4.8%	293,473	4.8%	477	0.16%
Bridgend	277,406	4.5%	277,571	4.5%	164	0.06%
The Vale of Glamorgan	244,317	4.0%	244,752	4.0%	435	0.18%
Rhondda Cynon Taf	494,615	8.0%	493,917	8.0%	-698	-0.14%
Merthyr Tydfil	122,423	2.0%	122,612	2.0%	189	0.15%
Caerphilly	366,320	6.0%	365,279	5.9%	-1,041	-0.28%
Blaenau Gwent	145,116	2.4%	145,123	2.4%	7	0.00%
Torfaen	186,317	3.0%	186,249	3.0%	-68	-0.04%
Monmouthshire	160,273	2.6%	160,228	2.6%	-46	-0.03%
Newport	309,475	5.0%	310,769	5.1%	1,294	0.42%
Cardiff	668,213	10.9%	670,052	10.9%	1,839	0.28%
Wales	6,147,646	100.0%	6,147,646	100.0%	0%	0%