

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Cyllid wedi'i dargedu i wella canlyniadau addysgol | Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes

TF 07

Ymateb gan: Gwasanaeth Addysg ar y Cyd Consortiwm Canolbarth y De
Response from: Central South Consortium Joint Education Service

Pupil Deprivation/Development Grant, PDG

100% of PDG funding received by the consortium is allocated to schools. There is no top slicing/centrally retained element of the grant.

We have for a number of years employed a strategic lead for 'Closing The Gap'.

'Closing The Gap' has been and remains a priority as evidenced by our business planning and the fact that it is a performance management objective for staff.

We have a strategy, supportive guidance for schools and monitor the use of PDG through schools' improvement planning and self evaluation reports.

Challenge advisers focus on pupils entitled to free school meals, eFSM, when looking at the tracking of pupil progress and target setting.

Data commentaries for the consortium and for each of the five local authorities has a section on outcomes for eFSM learners. Until this summer, outcomes for eFSM learners have improved year on year for most key performance measures. This year's changes to GCSE seem to have impacted disproportionately on eFSM learners.

Whilst the monitoring of pupil outcomes is one way of monitoring impact, there are a number of issues:

- The focus just on eFSM learners is problematic for a number of reasons:
 - Changes in entitlement to FSM
 - It's not just the eFSM learners that experience poverty
 - Culturally schools find it difficult to positively discriminate for a particular group of learner
- The way in which the impact of PDG is measured is problematic in that it is measured largely through threshold measures in specific areas as opposed to progress measures and impact on softer but essential areas such as confidence, resilience and aspiration. Further, our research showed the importance of emotional/pastoral support and

engagement with parents. The impact of this is not best measured by academic threshold measures.

- Some schools have developed creative and effective ways of focussing on removing barriers to learning and improving outcomes for eFSM learners.
- Where numbers of eFSM learners are few, the comparison of the performance of a small group of learners with that of a large group of learners is statistically limited.
- Pupils often belong to more than one group. In the current system no recognition is given to those eFSM learners that have significant additional learning needs. Their progress is still measured by threshold measures rather than the progress they make despite their difficulties.

PDG is a valuable source of funding for many schools. It has undoubtedly raised the focus on the barriers to learning that poverty can cause.

Our wider work on this issue includes

- Stepping into Business pilots funded – enterprise programmes supported for six (pilot) schools serving communities with high eFSM
- 24 Business Class partnerships in place with Business in the Community – eFSM data and categorisation information shared with BiTC to prioritise programme take up for schools in most challenging circumstances.
- School Improvement Groups, SiGs have focussed on closing the gap.
- Our professional learning offer includes support in closing the gap.
- Two headteachers in the region are our Associated Headteachers for closing the gap

It is important to note that consortia are just part of the provision. Local authorities have a range of services to support these vulnerable pupils including attendance, ALN support, youth service and social services.

PDG LAC

The grant is allocated to the consortium to distribute to local authorities and schools.

Welsh Government PDG LAC Funding £1,523,750

The key actions come under the following headings:

1. Support for Children placed outside of Wales

The out of Wales commitment stands at £28,700 (2%). Funding for children placed outside of Wales will be accessed in the same way as schools access funding within the region

2. Strategically Delivered Support

The consortium will strategically support Looked After Children in education. The region will work to raise attainment of Looked After Children by:

- Providing a regional training programme for schools and Local Authorities
- Providing support for cluster / transition training for schools

Training programmes will be devised according to the identified needs across the region as well as consideration of local needs. Training programmes will be evaluated and will have identified outcome measures.

3. Support for School to School Working

The Consortium will identify hub schools that will be able to provide school to school training programmes as well as bespoke support, advice and guidance to schools across the region in order to build capacity across the region. The Hub schools will sign up to an SLA which will identify the intended outcomes of the support / training provided. All support will be evaluated to show evidence of impact.

4. Bursary

The Consortium will establish a bursary fund to ensure needs can be supported across the region. Schools will identify the intended impact measures of the additional funding and will be expected to provide evaluative comments following the implementation of the funding.

5. Targeted Support for schools

The Consortium will support individual schools needs. Schools will be expected to include this funding within SIP with identified outcomes measures.

As the corporate parents, local authorities take the lead on this. For this region, Esther Thomas is the lead Director for LAC. She works with the LAC lead officer from each of the five local authorities. They determine policy and how the grant is best spent. A strategic lead has been appointed.

Tracking of progress and target setting for LAC pupils is in place. Comparing the performance of such a comparatively small group of pupils with that of the whole cohort brings statistical challenges. Provision is often bespoke to learners and progress captured within personal education plans, PEPS, for each looked after child. As with eFSM learners,

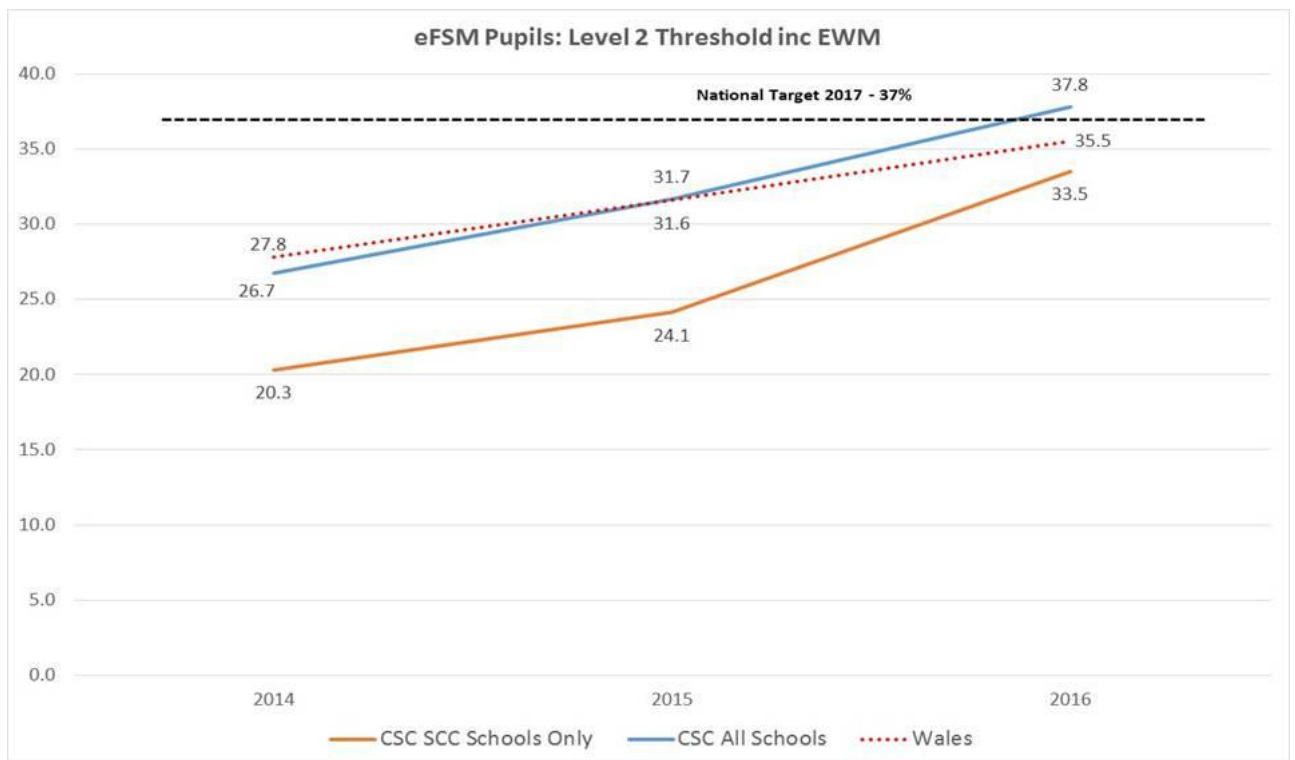
impact can be measured in a range of ways other than threshold academic performance measures.

It is important to note that consortia are just part of the support. Local authorities have a range of services to support these vulnerable pupils including attendance, ALN support, youth service and social services.

School Challenge Cymru, SCC

This region had 16 SCC schools.

The rate of improvement in these schools was compared with non SCC schools to give an indication of impact. For example:



Since the end of SCC funding, we have worked to take the most effective elements from SCC and integrate these into our systems. This has included the development of Accelerated Progress Leads for our most vulnerable schools