

Distribution Sub-Group (2021) Paper 12 – Impact of 2021 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 2021 PLASC pupil numbers on the settlement

Summary

1. This paper provides analysis of the latest pupil numbers taken from the April 2021 Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC).
2. Tables 1 compares the 2021 counts with 2020 for each Local Authority. Table 2 exemplifies the impact of the updated data on the 2021-22 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 (2020) - Paper 15 - Impact of 2020 PLASC pupil numbers on the settlement

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 Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) would usually take place in January, but school closures between December 2020 and March 2021 due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic meant that the census date was delayed to 20 April 2021.
5. Due to the data being collected later this year the data used within this paper is still provisional as 6 schools were unable to submit data in time and the data has not undergone validation.
6. 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.

Distribution Sub-Group (2021) Paper 12 – Impact of 2021 PLASC pupil numbers on the settlement

7. 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

Pupils Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS)

8. The timings of DSG meetings has meant that the EOTAS data collection has not been incorporated within this paper as the data is unavailable until 7 July. This will be considered in the September DSG.

Data and validation

9. For the purposes of this analysis, we have used the 2020 PLASC data for the 6 schools that did not submit any data, to avoid any distortions in the financial implications. We have included the financial implication without these school included to illustrate this decision.
10. Once these schools have submitted during the validation stage we will use the latest data. Generally the validation exercise does not result in a large change to the distribution, but these figure will be subject to change due to their provisional nature.

Changes to pupil numbers

11. Table 1 shows the provisional relative change in each of the main settlement pupil categories between 2021 and 2020 PLASC.
12. For the primary pupils and modelled nursery school pupils indicator we see a relative change of between a 0.07 percentage point decrease in Wrexham to a 0.05 percentage point increase in Cardiff. For context, in 2021-22 this data set was used to distribute £969m of Standard Spending Assessment (SSA), therefore a 0.01 percentage point change would equate to £96k change in SSA.
13. For the Secondary school pupils in year groups 7 to 11, the relative changes range from a decrease of 0.11 percentage points in Caerphilly to an increase of 0.27 percentage points in Cardiff. This data set was used to distribute around £740m in 2021-22 settlement.
14. The changes in third column are relatively small and then changes in the final column ranged from a 0.23 percentage point decrease in the pupils in year 10 and 11 in Caerphilly to an increase of 0.30 percentage points in Cardiff.

Distribution Sub-Group (2021) Paper 12 – Impact of 2021 PLASC pupil numbers on the settlement

Redistribution of Aggregated External Finance (AEF)

15. Table 2 in Annex A exemplifies the impact of the 2021 PLASC on the 2021-22 Total AEF. The changes in AEF range from a £2.7m (or 0.6%) increase in Cardiff to a £1.2m (or 0.5%) decrease in Caerphilly.

Conclusion

16. The provisional exemplifications are based on the isolated effect of the PLASC pupil numbers on the 2021-22 Settlement. The exemplifications do not account for any other changes in data that will be made for the 2022-23 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.
17. A separate DSG paper will provide further analysis on the updated eFSM data.

Recommendations

18. Despite these figure being provisional the group are asked to agree to use the 2021 PLASC data and the EOTAS pupil's data, when they become available, in the calculation of the 2022-23 settlement.

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

Distribution Sub-Group (2021) Paper 12 – Impact of 2021 PLASC pupil numbers on the settlement

Annex A

Table 1 – Relative change of main settlement indicators of pupil numbers from 2021 PLASC compared to 2020 PLASC

	Primary school pupils and modelled nursery school pupils	Secondary school pupils in year groups 7 to 11	Population aged 11 to 15 (projected) and secondary school pupils in year groups 12 to 14	Secondary school pupils in year groups 10 and 11
Isle of Anglesey	0.00%	0.01%	0.03%	-0.03%
Gwynedd	-0.02%	0.02%	0.01%	0.08%
Conwy	0.01%	-0.04%	0.01%	0.02%
Denbighshire	0.02%	0.04%	0.03%	0.07%
Flintshire	-0.06%	-0.06%	0.00%	-0.14%
Wrexham	-0.07%	0.06%	-0.01%	0.16%
Powys	0.02%	-0.07%	0.02%	-0.09%
Ceredigion	0.03%	-0.10%	0.02%	-0.15%
Pembrokeshire	-0.01%	-0.01%	-0.01%	0.01%
Carmarthenshire	0.01%	-0.05%	-0.02%	-0.07%
Swansea	-0.02%	-0.06%	0.01%	-0.10%
Neath Port Talbot	0.02%	-0.04%	-0.02%	0.01%
Bridgend	0.03%	-0.02%	0.01%	-0.02%
Vale of Glamorgan	0.02%	0.04%	0.03%	-0.01%
Rhondda Cynon Taf	-0.03%	0.06%	0.04%	0.19%
Merthyr Tydfil	0.00%	0.03%	-0.01%	0.04%
Caerphilly	-0.02%	-0.11%	0.00%	-0.23%
Blaenau Gwent	-0.01%	-0.01%	-0.01%	0.00%
Torfaen	-0.01%	-0.06%	-0.20%	-0.04%
Monmouthshire	0.00%	0.00%	0.01%	-0.04%
Newport	0.04%	0.08%	0.03%	0.01%
Cardiff	0.05%	0.27%	0.01%	0.30%
Wales	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Distribution Sub-Group (2021) Paper 12 – Impact of 2021 PLASC pupil numbers on the settlement

Table 2 - Exemplification to show the impact of updated pupil numbers only on the 2021-22 AEF¹

Authority	2020 PLASC (1)	2021 PLASC adjusted (2)	(2)-(1)	(2)/(1)-1	2021 PLASC raw (3)
Isle of Anglesey	104,825	104,934	109	0.1%	103,641
Gwynedd	194,793	194,824	31	0.0%	190,930
Conwy	166,906	166,759	-147	-0.1%	166,973
Denbighshire	158,632	159,213	582	0.4%	158,956
Flintshire	206,778	205,699	-1,079	-0.5%	206,018
Wrexham	188,856	188,670	-186	-0.1%	188,938
Powys	191,897	191,515	-382	-0.2%	191,372
Ceredigion	109,658	109,164	-494	-0.5%	109,295
Pembrokeshire	179,387	179,197	-190	-0.1%	179,432
Carmarthenshire	284,820	284,472	-349	-0.1%	284,849
Swansea	352,642	351,932	-709	-0.2%	352,418
Neath Port Talbot	236,680	236,640	-40	0.0%	236,937
Bridgend	212,192	212,337	145	0.1%	212,645
The Vale of Glamorgan	168,316	168,850	534	0.3%	169,155
Rhondda Cynon Taf	404,375	404,664	288	0.1%	405,192
Merthyr Tydfil	101,476	101,712	236	0.2%	101,837
Caerphilly	292,367	291,129	-1,239	-0.4%	291,513
Blaenau Gwent	120,361	120,204	-157	-0.1%	120,330
Torfaen	146,340	145,656	-684	-0.5%	145,865
Monmouthshire	101,483	101,478	-5	0.0%	101,638
Newport	240,796	241,838	1,041	0.4%	242,201
Cardiff	487,913	490,609	2,696	0.6%	491,361
Wales	4,651,494	4,651,494			4,651,494

¹Note that the final column shows the impact of not including data for the 6 missing schools