Local authority special educational needs specialist services workforce data: an analysis

Local Government Data Unit – Wales
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Audience

Governing bodies and staff of all maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools and pupil referral units (PRUs); local authorities (LAs); health boards; parents/carers and interested organisations.

Overview

This report sets out the findings of a data collection exercise about the current local authority specialist services workforce.

Action required

This document should be brought to the attention of managers and relevant staff, LAs, governing bodies and education and health professionals working with education settings.

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

Further information

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This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at
gov.wales/educationandskills

Related documents

An assessment of special educational needs (SEN) workforce development requirements (2015)

Contents

Key findings

The services

Collaborative working exists in both the educational psychology (EP) and sensory impairment (SI) services. This ranges from sharing posts through to formal arrangements to deliver services. This appears to be more common in the sensory impairment service.

The sensory impairment service covers the key specialisms of visual impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) and multi-sensory impairment (MSI). While some posts also cover other impairments, data collected indicated that the majority of sensory impairment posts, nearly 90%, cover only one of the three key impairments. The majority of sensory impairment services stated that they were **meeting current demand** with their existing workforce and expected to meet future demand.

Educational psychology services are broader than sensory impairment services, covering all forms of SEN. Some services reported that they were meeting current demand. Similarly, some services reported that they expected to meet future demand. However, most services felt that they **weren't meeting current demand** and did not expect to meet future demand for Cognitive learning disabilities.

Over the next five years, sensory impairment services expect to have around 15 **vacancies** in visual impairment services, 15 in hearing impairment services and five in multi-sensory impairment services.

Around 80% of posts in both EP and SI services specified Welsh as either essential, needing to be learnt or desirable. 25% of EP services post holders and 20% of SI services post holders could deliver services through the medium of Welsh. Most services reported **not being able to meet current demand for Welsh** in most specialisms. Services expected to meet future demand for Welsh in some specialisms.

Services in Braille and British Sign Language (BSL) were provided through sensory impairment services. Around two fifths of sensory impairment posts were required to provide a service in Braille and in BSL.

Overall, the **biggest challenges identified** for both services were finance, future demand and recruitment. Service provision through the medium of Welsh was also noted as a concern.

The priority for workforce planning across both services was **training to create candidates to fill vacancies and to replace staff who were leaving**. They also wanted to prioritise succession planning and recruitment, and commented on the need to consider regional or national approaches to these.

The workforce

There were 115 posts (94.4 full-time equivalent (FTE)) in sensory impairment services and 187 posts (153.1 FTE) in educational psychology services.

At the time of the collection, around 4% of posts were vacant in each service. There were five vacancies across sensory impairment services and seven across educational psychology services. The **low number of vacancies** suggests that recruitment is not an issue for sensory impairment or for educational psychology services.

The workforce shows a **gender bias** being predominantly female. 84% of educational psychology post holders and 92% of sensory impairment post holders are female.

45% of sensory impairment post holders and 52% of educational psychology post holders were **part-time**. Due to the qualifications and/or experience needed for this workforce, there are very few post holders aged 25 or under. Nearly a quarter of educational psychology post holders (41 people) and sensory impairment post holders (25 people) were **aged over 55** and, therefore, within around ten years of state retirement age. These age patterns are similar when considering the workforce across settings, specialisms and language. Succession planning will need to take this into account.

The **workforce is highly qualified**. Around 95% of educational psychology post holders (163) and 70% of sensory impairment post holders (77) are qualified to post-graduate level.

The pupils

Analysis of pupil data suggests the proportion of pupils with SEN has remained similar over recent years. However, the overall number of pupils has increased over recent years and pupil projections indicate it is expected to continue to increase in the future. This means the **number of pupils with SEN is increasing and is expected to increase in future years**.

Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) suggests 23% of all pupils had a special educational need in 2016/17. 3% of all SEN pupils had either a visual impairment, hearing impairment or multi-sensory impairment. Assuming similar proportions of pupils with SEN and the expected increase in pupil numbers, the number of pupils in Wales with a **sensory impairment need is expected to increase by around 100 over the next five years**.

> Around 22% of pupils in Welsh medium settings have SEN. These pupils could require **services through the medium of Welsh**. The proportion of pupils educated in Welsh medium settings with SEN varies across regional consortia areas. Thus, planning Welsh medium service provision should be tackled at both the regional and local authority level.

Background and purpose

Background

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales)Act[1] creates the legislative framework to improve the planning and delivery of additional learning provision. A highly skilled workforce is central to this.

In 2014, the Welsh Government commissioned the People and Work Unit to conduct research into the workforce planning of special educational needs specialist services[2] One of the recommendations from this report was to undertake further data collection around the specialist services workforce.

In 2017, Data Unit Wales was commissioned to develop, collect and analyse data on the workforce of local authority specialist services.

The purpose of this collection and analysis was to provide Welsh Government and other stakeholders with evidence from which to better understand the current specialist support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and whether this might need to change in the future. The specific objectives were to:

- establish the current picture of the specialist services workforce, by local authority; and
- provide a future projection of supply and demand for specialist services.

All local authorities were asked to take part in a data collection exercise about the current SEN specialist services workforce. Local authorities were asked whether they felt they were meeting current demand for these services and whether they expected to be able to meet future demand.

The purpose of this collection and analysis is to help Welsh Government and other stakeholders better understand current specialist support provision for children with special educational need and how this might need to change in the future.

This report sets out the findings from the workforce data collection exercise and from an analysis of data about pupils with SEN.

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[1] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2018/2/contents/enacted

[2] http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/22888/1/150330-sen-en.pdf

Methodology

Methods

Our analysis of the local authority special educational need specialist services workforce focused on two key datasets; the data we collected about each local authority's SEN specialist services workforce and the data on pupils with SEN taken from the Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC). Details of the methods employed in collecting and analysing the data, the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches and any implications are detailed below.

Scope of the data collection

SEN specialist services are the teams within local authorities directly responsible for delivering special educational provision. The collection was limited to those roles within the SEN specialist services which the Welsh Government would be able to support in terms of skills development and training through the workforce development component of the Additional Learning Need (ALN) transformation agenda. To this end, only those posts within specialist services that require the post holder to hold a specific qualification, other than qualified teacher status, were included. Specifically:

- staff that provide specialist support and/or advice in relation to sensory impairments (visual impairment, hearing impairment and/or multisensory impairment); and
- educational psychologists.

Heads of service, service managers and other support staff within specialist services (including teaching assistants and challenge advisors) who do not require a specific specialist qualification to undertake their role were excluded. As the collection was limited to the workforce of local authorities, staff employed directly by schools were also excluded, as were staff employed by the NHS, unless they were providing additional services directly purchased by the local authority and where there was a service level agreement in place.

The collection was spilt into two parts. The first part asked local authorities to provide information about each of the relevant posts/post holders, such as length of service, qualifications, etc. The second part asked for the service's views on their ability to meet both the current and potential future demand on the service.

A copy of the data collection form can be found in Annex A.

Understanding the data collection

To test the robustness of both the dataset and the data collection form, we undertook a pilot data collection with a selection of local authorities[3]. Following this exercise, we refined the dataset and improved the data collection form to ensure the final data was as robust as possible. Rather than repeating the collection process for those authorities who took part in the pilot collection, we were able to use the data already provided. While this meant that the data was collected over two periods, one quickly followed the other and we revisited the earlier collection to make sure

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[3] Flintshire, Carmarthenshire and Torfaen.

definitions were consistently used. This minimised any potential impact on the comparability between the data collected as part of the pilot and that collected as part of the all-Wales roll-out.

In order to ensure that the data collected was consistent and robust across all local authorities, we provided further guidance on how to interpret the data items. However, this guidance was limited to the quantitative data. To successfully collect accurate and consistent information on complex areas such as vacancies and expectation to meet demand would require a more rigorous set of guidance. Indeed, the intention was not for local authorities to undertake complex statistical modelling to understand the likely demand on their service both now and in the future, but to 'tap into' the intelligence and professional insight of those leading these services. However, it is unclear how local authorities interpreted 'vacancies' and 'meeting demand' or what evidence the responses were based on. This, inevitably, limits the reliability of the information. Nevertheless, the findings from this data collection are indicative of the issues that services are dealing with and the views of the local authorities provide useful evidence about how it 'feels' on the ground.

To further ensure the data collected was of an appropriate quality, we implemented a thorough validation process. This comprised of in-form validation functionality at the point of data entry as well as an individual and collective review of the data on receipt. This enabled us to address the issues we identified with the workforce data and ensure we had a robust set of data on which to base our analysis. As with any new collection, it is likely that an element of inconsistency remains due to local interpretation. We do not believe that this has had an impact on the reliability of the analysis.

It is also important to note that we were only able to validate the quantitative data. As mentioned previously, the subjective nature of the service's feedback meant we were unable to verify its consistency and accuracy. We have ensured we have taken this into account when referring to this information in the analysis, but still believe it provides useful information alongside the quantitative data.

There were also gaps in the information provided by services about their current and future ability to meet demand as not all questions were answered by all services. The level of non-response was assessed and determined not to impact on the overall findings. Individual question level non-response is noted throughout the analysis. The level of non-response for individual questions did not impact on the reliability of the analysis.

Further information on the collection activity, including further details of the validation process, can be found in Annex B.

What became clear from the collection was that there is no consistent approach across Wales in terms of how specialist services are delivered. Some local authorities had formal collaborative arrangements in place to deliver a joint service, while others had less formal arrangements, sharing posts across one or more authorities. Neither was there consistency between how educational psychology (EP) services and Sensory Impairment (SI) services were run, with some local authorities working collaboratively for one specialist service, but choosing to deliver the other locally. These differing approaches meant that a local level analysis was not appropriate. Therefore, most of our analysis focuses on the national level. There is no formal requirement to work to the regional education consortia, however we have used these areas to provide some sub-national analysis and referred to them as the regional consortia footprint areas. The regional consortia

footprint areas are shown in Table 1. More information on the collaborative arrangements can be found in Annex C.

Table 1: Regional consortia footprint areas

Regional consortia footprint	Local authorities
GwE	Conwy County Borough Council Denbighshire County Council Flintshire County Council Gwynedd Council Isle of Anglesey County Council Wrexham County Borough Council
ERW	Carmarthenshire County Council Ceredigion County Council Neath and Port Talbot County Borough Council Pembrokeshire County Council Powys County Council City and County of Swansea
Central South Consortium Joint Education Service	Bridgend County Borough Council Cardiff Council Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council
South East Wales Education Achievement Service	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Caerphilly County Borough Council Monmouthshire County Borough Council Newport City Council Torfaen County Borough Council

The workforce data collection exercise captured data from all 22 local authorities enabling us to produce an overall Wales analysis. It has identified the local collaboration that exists and highlighted the complexity of the structures and delivery of the services. It should not be assumed that all services work in similar ways or that it would be helpful for them to do so.

It is also important to note that the data collection captured the workforce information at a point in time. Therefore, posts and the demography of the post holders are specific to that point in time. Care should be taken when interpreting the analysis relating to exact numbers. Percentages are given throughout the analysis to provide a more general overview of the workforce.

Scope of the SEN pupil analysis

In addition to the data collection, data from the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) was analysed to understand demand for services. This was combined with the pupil projections data, allowing some estimation of potential future demand for services.

The SEN status of pupils is recorded within PLASC and has been used to estimate the number of SEN pupils in maintained settings in Wales. This SEN pupil data reflects the SEN pupils that are covered by the SEN specialist services included in the SEN specialist workforce data collection. It includes pupils within maintained nursery primary, secondary and special schools. It does not include further education pupils.

PLASC records the language of the school against the pupils within the school. This definition has been used as a proxy for SEN pupils educated through the medium of Welsh. Further details on PLASC data can be found in Annex D.

Pupil projection data for all schools (maintained and independent) has been used to support workforce planning. The pupil projections are the officially recognised means of planning for pupil population change. Where possible Welsh speaker projections have been included to account for possible changes to the number of SEN pupils requiring SEN specialist services through the medium of Welsh. All projection data is subject to error and caution is advised when interpreting these figures as they are included as indicative of what might happen and do not take into account changes in policy or circumstance.

PLASC data relates to a point in time which loosely matches the point at which the workforce data collection was undertaken. The numbers of pupils are estimates and care should be taken when interpreting the analysis relating to exact numbers. Percentages are given throughout the analysis to provide a more general overview of the pupil population. Further details on the use of pupil projections data to estimate future demand can be found in Annex F.

Our analysis of SEN pupil data from PLASC assumes that if a SEN pupil has a need then support is needed from the SEN specialist workforce. It makes no assumptions about the level or intensity of this support. Similarly, where a pupil has multiple SEN no assumption is made as to how these needs are supported by the SEN specialist services. It is not possible to understand from this data the demand that is placed on the service as a direct result of each SEN pupil and their needs. Instead an assumption that each SEN pupil need is equal has to be made.

Similarly, it assumes that an SEN pupil in a Welsh medium setting would receive SEN specialist services through the medium of Welsh.

Understanding the SEN pupil analysis

More detailed explanations of the work undertaken on the PLASC data, pupil projections and Welsh medium pupils is given in Annex D and Annex F. The analysis of current and projected pupils in this report was designed to provide detail on the current and potential demand for SEN specialist services. The data available is subject to disclosure control and rounding. This means it is only indicative of the number of SEN pupils.

PLASC does not include further education pupils. The specialist services workforce data does include those working within further education but only where these staff also work in other settings.

The SEN categorisation of pupils in PLASC adheres to a set of categories that do not match the specialisms of the SEN specialist workforce data. A mapping of these categories to specialisms is given in Annex D. A pupil may have more than one need and the complexity of their needs is not recorded in the data. It is assumed that if a pupil has a need they have a need for specialist support. A further need will also require specialist support and in effect will double the specialist support needed in this analysis. The practical way in which these needs are addressed is likely to take account of multiple needs and will deal with the pupil as a whole and not as a series of needs. Therefore, an increase in pupil need does not mean a direct increase in the number of specialist staff required.

The demand for SEN services through the medium of Welsh is estimated using the language of the school recorded for each SEN pupil. The assumption that a service should be delivered in the same language as that recorded for the school is likely to have overestimated the actual need for SEN services through the medium of Welsh. Some schools will be bilingual and may be recorded as being Welsh medium schools within PLASC.

As an indication of demand for services a ratio of pupil need to full-time equivalent staff member has been calculated. This is reported for sensory impairment staff and educational psychology staff separately. This assumes that there is no overlap between support for pupils from the two services, which is not likely to be the case. These ratios do not imply that this is an adequate working level of staffing, even when services report that they are meeting current demand. They are provided only as a proxy of supply versus demand.

To better understand future demand for services pupil projections have been used. The assumptions within this are that the percentage of SEN pupils within the overall population will remain the same. There is some evidence that the proportion of different needs within the SEN population are changing but a clear pattern for this hasn't been established. Assuming a constant proportion for future estimates reflects the lack of certainty around these changes and is a recognised methodology in such circumstances. Further details on the use of projection data is given in Annex F. All estimates for future SEN pupil numbers are subject to error and should be interpreted with caution.

Projections for the number of SEN pupils requiring a specialist service in the medium of Welsh are a combination of the number of pupils expected and the change in the proportion of pupils speaking Welsh. The proportion of pupils expected to speak Welsh is derived from projections of Welsh speakers produced by Welsh Government. There are many assumptions in both sets of projections and therefore estimates for the demand for SEN specialist services through the medium of Welsh are subject to further error. These estimates are included in the analysis for indicative purposes only.

Understanding this report

The information contained in this report provides initial findings around the SEN specialist workforce and the SEN pupil population. It brings together these different data sources to paint a picture of supply and demand. Each data source has strengths and weaknesses and limitations in the context of this work. Care should be taken when interpreting findings and figures as these are subject to the assumptions and error outlined above.

Summary

Workforce

The data collected identified 94.4 FTE sensory impairment specialist (SIS) posts and 153.1 FTE educational psychology posts across Wales. In February 2017, these were held by 110 and 180 post holders respectively (five sensory impairment posts and seven educational psychology posts were vacant at the time). Table 2 shows the number of posts and FTE posts by the different roles in each service.

Table 2: Posts and FTE of reported SEN staff by specialist service and role (2017)

	Role	Posts	FTE
Sensory impairment specialists	Advisory teacher	65	54.2
	Specialist teacher	26	21.1
	Specialist officer	23	18.1
	Trainee/work placement	1	1.0
	Total	**115**	**94.4**
Educational psychologists	Principal educational psychologist	16	15.2
	Senior educational psychologist	26	22.5
	Educational psychologist	130	101.4
	Assistant educational psychologist	8	8.0
	Trainee educational psychologist	7	6.0
	Total	**187**	**153.1**

Source: SEN workforce data collection

Key findings about the sensory impairment services workforce and the educational psychology workforce include:

- nearly 50% of post holders were part-time;
- nearly 90% of posts had permanent contracts;
- nearly 90% of post holders were female;
- nearly 80% of post holders are aged 55 or younger; and
- nearly 90% of post holders were qualified to post graduate level.

In addition, at the time of the collection there were five vacant SIS posts (4%) and seven vacant EP posts (4%), which suggests there are no major issues around recruitment and retention.

At the time of the collection, 95% of posts covered preschool/early years settings, primary, secondary and special schools. Over three quarters of post holders worked within pupil referral units and less than 2% of staff worked within further education settings.

Braille and British Sign Language (BSL) skills are not required in the EP service. Within sensory impairment services 41% of FTE posts were required to provide a service in Braille and 38% of FTE posts were required to provide a service in BSL.

Views on the SEN workforce generally which were collected as part of the research can be found in Annex E.

Meeting demand

SEN specialist services were asked if they felt they were meeting current demand and if they expected to meet future demand. Overall, sensory impairment services felt they were meeting current demand and expected to meet future demand. Most SEN specialist services felt that they were meeting current demand in specific learning difficulties and physical and medical difficulties and that they expected to meet future demand for these specialisms. Most services felt that they weren't meeting current demand and expected not to meet future demand in the remaining specialisms.

Table 3 shows the number of SEN specialist services that reported they were meeting current demand and that expected to meet future demand.

Table 3: Number of SEN specialist services meeting current and future demand

Specialism	Current need		Future need	
	Meeting	Not meeting	Meeting	Not meeting
Behavioural learning difficulties	7	11	8	10
Specific learning difficulties	13	6	12	7
Cognition and learning needs	9	10	9	10
Visual impairment	11	8	12	8
Hearing impairment	11	7	11	8
Multi-sensory impairment	11	5	9	7
Autistic spectrum disorder	5	14	8	11
Physical and medical difficulties	13	5	11	7
Speech, language and communication difficulties	9	10	9	10

Those highlighted in yellow show the majority of services

Welsh language demand

Nearly 80% of posts in SEN specialist services required services to be delivered through the medium of Welsh (desirable or essential). 17% of educational psychology posts and 11% of sensory impairment posts were classified as essential to providing services though the medium of Welsh.

Over three quarters (76%) of all post holders that provide services through the medium of Welsh were aged 50 or under.

Overall, around 22% of pupils in Welsh medium education settings have SEN, although there were differences across collaborative working areas.

Overall, SEN specialist services felt they weren't meeting current demand for services delivered through the medium of Welsh. Many services also expected not to meet this demand in the future. Table 4 shows the number of services that reported meeting current demand for services delivered through the medium of Welsh and those that expected to demand in the future.

Table 4: Number of SEN services meeting current and future demand for services delivered through the medium of Welsh

Specialism	Current Welsh medium need		Future Welsh medium need	
	Meeting	**Not meeting**	**Meeting**	**Not meeting**
Behavioural learning difficulties	9	8	10	7
Specific learning difficulties	12	7	12	7
Cognition and learning needs	8	11	11	8
Visual impairment	12	8	10	10
Hearing impairment	9	10	8	11
Multi-sensory impairment	6	9	7	8
Autistic spectrum disorder	8	11	8	11
Physical and medical difficulties	6	12	10	8
Speech, language and communication difficulties	9	10	8	11

Those highlighted in yellow show the majority of services

One service commented they needed "More training of specialists through the medium of Welsh".

Sensory impairment

Current workforce

There were 94.4 full time equivalent (FTE) sensory impairment specialist (SIS) posts in Welsh local authorities at the time of the collection. Within the Sensory impairment service there are a range of roles, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Posts and FTE of reported SIS staff, by role (2017)

	Posts	FTE
Advisory teacher	65	54.2
Specialist teacher	26	21.1
Specialist officer	23	18.1
Trainee/work placement	1	1
All sensory impairment service roles	*115*	*94.4*

Source: SEN workforce data collection

Vacancies

Of the 115 posts, five were vacant (4%) at the time of the collection. This suggests vacancies are not an issue within sensory impairment (SI) services. Three of the five vacancies were reported to be for hearing impairment (HI). The specialism was not provided for the other two vacancies. Four of the five vacancies were for advisory teachers. These vacancies were spread across collaborative areas and were all permanent posts.

Contract type

At the time of the data collection, services reported that nearly all SIS post holders were on permanent contracts (92%). There were eight post holders on temporary contracts. Five of those on temporary contracts were in one collaborative working area and accounted for 29% of posts.

Qualifications

At the time of the collection, 77 SIS post holders (73%) were qualified to post-graduate degree level. Eight post holders (8%) were qualified to graduate level, 18 (17%) to NVQ level 3 and two (2%) held QTS qualifications. There were post-graduate qualified SIS post holders in all collaborative areas, except Anglesey and Gwynedd. 12 of the 18 reported NVQ level 3 qualified staff were in one collaborative area.

Settings

At the time of the data collection, services reported around 93% of SIS posts covered early years, primary, secondary and special school settings. 96% of SIS posts covered special schools with 69% covering pupil referral units. Only two SIS posts (2%) covered further education, these were both in the same collaborative area.

Specialisms

Only those posts, or post holders, working within three specialisms - visual impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or multi-sensory impairment (MSI)- are included in the analysis of the SI services. Only two SIS post holders were reported to work across all three specialisms. The remaining SIS post holders

(111) were reported to have at least one of three specialisms. Specialisms were not given for two vacant posts.

11 SIS posts were reported to cover more than one of the three specialisms. At the time of the data collection, there were 56 SIS posts reported to cover the VI specialism; 55 SIS posts reported to cover the HI specialism; and 15 SIS posts reported to cover the MSI specialism.

27% of VI post holders (15), 15% of HI of post holders (8) and 27% of MSI post holders (4) were aged over 55 at the time of collection.

Welsh language

SI services reported that 75.7 FTE posts (80% of all FTEs) across Wales required the post holder to be able to deliver a service through the medium of Welsh; of these, 11.7 FTE posts were classed as Welsh being essential and the rest as Welsh being desirable or needing to be learnt. At the time of data collection, services reported that there were three vacant posts that required the post holder to deliver a service in Welsh (2 where Welsh was essential, 1 where Welsh needed to be learnt) and two posts where Welsh was desirable.

10 of the 11 post holders (91%) in the posts where Welsh is essential were able to provide the service in Welsh.

Of the 22 post holders that provided a service through the medium of Welsh, 17 post holders (77%) were aged 55 or younger.

Braille and British Sign Language

At the time of the collection, SI services reported that 36.7 FTE posts (39% of all FTEs) were required to deliver a service through the medium of Braille. There were no vacant posts that were required the post holder to deliver Braille. There were 48 post holders that were required the post holder to deliver a service through the medium of Braille and 53 post holders in total that were able to do this. Of the 53 post holders that were able to provide a service through the medium of Braille, 12 were aged over 55 (23%) at the time of the data collection.

At the time of the data collection, services reported that 36.4 FTE posts (39% of all FTEs) were required to deliver a service through the medium of BSL. There were two vacant posts that required post holders deliver a service through the medium of BSL. There were 44 post holders that were required to deliver a service through the medium of BSL and 40 post holders that were able to do this. Of those post holders that were able to provide a service through the medium of BSL, eight were aged over 55 (20%).

Demographics

Not all information was given for the 110 post holders working in SI services.

At the time of the collection the workforce was predominantly female (101 females compared to 9 males).

Services reported that 23% of the SIS workforce were aged over 55 (25 post holders). These post holders were spread across the collaborative working areas, which suggests no single area has more of an issue with an aging workforce than another. 23% of the workforce were aged 40 or under, while the largest proportion of the workforce (55%) were aged between 41 and 55 years.

Around 45% of all reported SIS post holders (50) were part-time at the time of the collection. 7.5 FTE posts were covered by 13 female part-time post holders aged over 55.

Meeting demand

Local authorities were asked if they felt their current staffing levels were meeting demand for each specialism and whether they felt they expected to meet demand in the next five years. They were also asked how many staff they would employ (including Welsh speaking staff) to meet demand per specialism and how many vacancies they expect to have in the next five years.

To further understand the services' expectation to meet future demand we have estimated future SEN needs based upon a number of assumptions. Further information and data can be found in Annex F.

The SIS in this data collection are those that have a specialism in either visual impairment, hearing impairment or multi-sensory impairment. The ratios for the sensory impairment service have been calculated using only these categories of SEN.

The ratio for Wales was 50 pupils with SEN per FTE sensory impairment specialist in 2016/17. The ratios at regional consortia footprint level ranged from 39 pupils with SEN per FTE sensory impairment specialist in the Central South to 79 pupils with SEN per FTE sensory impairment specialist in South East Wales. For the sensory impairment service, the authorities within South East Wales work collaboratively, which may explain why their ratio is higher.

A ratio with a smaller number of pupils per FTE sensory impairment specialist might suggest a higher quality service but this may not be the case. The appropriate number of pupils per SIS should be based on a variety of elements including location, language requirements, joint working and other skills. These ratios serve only to suggest that specific geographical areas have different requirements and may serve as the basis of discussion around service improvement.

Sensory impairment services workforce

The SI service covers the three specialisms of VI, HI and MSI. The staffing levels and future needs of these services were reported on by those services that gave either a response:

- for the local authority;
- for the SI service only; or
- which specifically gave information on VI or HI.

The responses received cover all the collaborative working areas, but some of these may have submitted a response for each authority within the collaborative working area. This means that a collaborative working area made up of two authorities may have two submissions which contradict each other.

As vacancy and staff needs were collected for each specialism it cannot be assumed that each one requires one full time equivalent (FTE) post. For example, the requirement for one VI post and one HI post could be met in a variety of ways such as one FTE post, a number of part-time posts or two FTE posts. Therefore, a total number of posts or vacancies over the next five years for SI services cannot be properly estimated. Responses were received from all of the collaborative working areas, although some areas gave additional information for parts of the service. Table 6 shows the number of staff services stated they would need to meet demand.

Table 6: Reported number of vacancies and staff required to meet Sensory impairment demand by specialism (service view)

	Estimated vacancies in the next 5 years	Estimated additional staff required to meet demand
Visual impairment (VI)	15	17
Hearing impairment (HI)	15	13
Multi-sensory impairment (MSI)	5	5

Source: SEN workforce data collection

Visual impairment needs

In 2016/17 across Wales pupils with SEN had over 1,400 VI needs. Of the 19 services that provided a response for VI, most (11) reported that they were meeting current demand. Most of the services (12 of 20) stated they felt they expected to be able to meet demand in 5 years' time. Some services felt that whilst they were meeting current demand, they reported that they didn't expect to be able to do so in the future and vice versa.

Within the consortia footprint areas, with the exception of the GwE consortia, there was an even split in the number of services that responded whether or not they expected to be able to meet future VI demand in 5 years' time. In the GwE consortia footprint area more (4 of 5) services reported that they expected to be able to meet future demand.

VI needs accounted for around 1% of all SEN in 2016/17. Assuming this percentage remains constant, the number of VI needs is expected to increase by around 30 over the next five years.

Services were asked how many staff they would need to employ to meet future service demand. Overall, 17 staff were specified within VI. This was evenly spread across the consortia footprint areas.

VI services also reported they expected to have a total of 15 vacancies over the next five years. These were spread across the consortia footprint areas.

Hearing impairment

Across Wales in 2016/17 pupils with SEN had around 3,100 HI needs. Of the 18 services that provided a response, most (11) reported they were meeting current demand and most (11 of 19) reported that they expected to be able to meet future demand.

Across the consortia footprint areas, Central South was the only area with a majority (3 of 4) of services that reported they weren't meeting current demand, a majority (3 of 4) also stated that they did not expect to be able to meet future demand.

The consortia footprint of ERW had equal numbers of services that reported they expected to be able to and not able to meet future demand and those. In the GwE consortia footprint area, all four services reported they expected to meet future demand. In South East Wales 3 of the five services reported that they expected to meet future demand.

HI needs accounted for around 2% of all SEN in 2016/17. Assuming this percentage remains constant, the number of HI needs is expected to increase by less than 70 over the next five years.

Across Wales, HI services reported they would need 13 additional staff to meet future demand in HI services. These staff were needed across all the consortia footprint areas.

HI services stated that they expected to have 15 vacancies over the next five years. This was fairly evenly spread across three of the consortia footprint areas, with GwE expecting to have only one vacancy during this time.

Multi-sensory impairment

In 2016/17, across Wales pupils with SEN had around 150 MSI needs. Of the 16 services that responded for MSI, most (11) reported they felt they were meeting current demand and most (9 of 16) that they expected to meet future demand.

Within the GwE consortia footprint area, most services (3 of 4) reported they were meeting current MSI demand and all services expected to meet future demand.

In the ERW consortia footprint area, most services (3 of 5) reported they were meeting current MSI demand, but most (3 of 5) expected not to be able to meet future demand.

Only two of the four services responded for the Central South consortia footprint area. One of these services reported they were meeting current MSI demand, but both services reported that they did not expect to be able to meet future demand.

In the South East Wales consortia footprint area most (4 of 5) services stated that they were meeting current MSI demand. Most (3 of 5) of the services expected to be able to meet future demand.

MSI needs accounted for around 0.1% of all SEN in 2016/17. Assuming this percentage remains constant, the number of MSI needs is expected to increase by less than five over the next five years.

In total, MSI services expected to need five additional staff to meet future demand for services. These staff were needed across the consortia footprint areas.

MSI services also expected to have five vacancies across Wales in the next five years. These were needed across the consortia footprint areas.

Workforce planning

Overall sensory impairment services reported they were meeting current demand for services and expected to be able to meet future demand.

VI services across Wales expected to have around 15 vacancies in the next five years. There were 15 post holders aged over 55 years at the time of the collection that may contribute to the vacancies. They anticipate recruiting for 17 posts and would require 13 Welsh speaking posts to meet demand.

HI services across Wales expected to have around 15 vacancies in the next five years. There were eight post holders aged over 55 years at the time of the collection that may contribute to the vacancies. They anticipate recruiting for 13 posts, but would require 14 Welsh speaking post holders to meet demand.

The demand for MSI services is much lower and this is reflected in their workforce numbers. Again, there is not much cross over in specialisms with VI or HI. At the time of the collection, 4 post holders were aged over 55 years. MSI services expected to need to recruit around five posts to meet demand. This may cover the five vacancies that they anticipate, but is less than the 9 post holders with Welsh language skills they require to meet Welsh language demand.

There is little overlap between the posts in each of the key specialisms so there is a need for around five additional posts across Wales. This is slightly higher than the predictions created from pupil numbers alone.

The biggest challenge for these services, as reflected in their comments (Annex C), is the replacement of current staff and making sure that as the current workforce retires, there is a plentiful supply of skilled staff. The demographic of the sensory impairment service is predominantly female. The part-time element of the reported workforce tended to be those aged under 50. In the older age bands (those aged over 50 years) most staff were in full-time posts. This creates a challenge to understand the numbers of new staff to be trained.

Educational psychology

Current workforce

At the time of the collection, there were 153.1 full time equivalent (FTE) posts in local authority educational psychology services in Wales. Within the educational psychology service there are a range of roles, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Posts and FTE of reported EP staff, by role (2017)

	Posts	FTE
Principal educational psychologist	16	15.2
Senior educational psychologist	26	22.5
Educational psychologist	130	101.4
Assistant educational psychologist	8	8.0
Trainee educational psychologist	7	6.0
All Education Psychology roles	*187*	*153.1*

Source: SEN workforce data collection

Vacancies

Services reported that of the 187 posts, seven were vacant (4%). five were permanent, one fixed term and one temporary. This suggests that vacancies are not a general issue across educational psychology services in Wales. Five of the seven vacancies were in one collaborative area, accounting for 22% of its FTE workforce.

Contract type

Services reported that 86% of post holders (156) were on permanent contracts. 7% of post holders (11) were on temporary contracts and 5% of post holders (9) were on fixed term contracts. There were 3 post holders on secondment into a service and one who was contracted as agency staff at the time of the collection.

Qualifications

Of those in education psychologist (EP) posts 96% (163 post holders) were qualified to post-graduate degree level. Across Wales, 7 EP post holders (4%) held a graduate qualification as their highest relevant qualification. These post holders were either in assistant educational psychologist or trainee educational psychologist posts at the time of the collection.

Specialisms and settings

We established that educational psychologists are considered 'generalists' and, therefore, cover all specialisms. However, there are two authorities who have a different approach, one authority said their "*…sensory specialism is with the sensory team supported by the EPs as necessary*"; the other authority said "*…we do not currently have an EP who specialises in sensory impairment. However, we do have specialist teachers in this field*."

At the time of the collection, more than 95% of EP posts covered early years, primary, secondary and special school settings. Just under 90% of EP posts covered pupil referral units. Only three EP posts (2%) covered further education, these posts were all in the same collaborative working area.

Welsh language

124.7 FTE posts (81% of all FTEs) across Wales required the post holder to be able to deliver a service in Welsh; of these, 25.7 (17%) were classed as Welsh being an essential requirement and the remaining posts as desirable. 3 posts were vacant at the time of the collection, one where Welsh was essential and 2 where it was desirable.

30 of the 31 post holders (97%) in the posts where Welsh is essential were able to provide the service in Welsh.

Of the 45 post holders that provide a service in Welsh, 38 post holders (84%) were aged 55 or younger.

Braille and British Sign Language (BSL)

At the time of the collection there were no posts across education psychology services where Braille or BSL were required, however there was one EP that could provide a service through the medium of BSL.

Demographics

Information was collected on 180 educational psychology services post holders. Not all information was given for all post holders.

Across Wales the EP workforce is predominantly female 84% (152 females compared to 28 males).

23% of EP post holders (41) were aged over 55 at the time of the collection. These post holders were spread geographically across Wales which suggests an aging workforce isn't a particular issue for any one collaborative working area. As you might expect, given a postgraduate qualification is required for most education psychology posts, there are only 2 post holders aged under 26.

All EPs working in further education were aged 55 or younger.

Around half of all post holders (94) were part-time. For those post holders aged over 55, 16 post holders account for 10 FTE posts.

Meeting demand

Local authorities were asked if they felt their current staffing levels were meeting demand by each specialism and whether they felt they were likely to meet demand in the next five years. Services were also asked how many staff they would employ to meet demand per specialism and how many vacancies they expect to have in the next five years.

To reconcile the services' expectation to meet future demand, we have estimated future SEN needs based upon a number of assumptions. Further information and data can be found in Annex F.

Educational psychologists (EPs) work across all specialisms and are required to support all SEN. Therefore, the number of SEN for all specialisms are included in the ratio.

For Wales, there were 303 pupils with SEN (Statement or School Action Plus) per full time equivalent (FTE) EP in 2016/17. At the regional consortium footprint level, the ratios range from 267 pupils with SEN per FTE EP in Central South Wales to 336 pupils with SEN per FTE EP in GwE.

EP specialisms

While the EP service covers all the specialisms the following analyses focuses on their ability to meet current and future demand in the services other than visual impairment, hearing impairment and multi-sensory impairment.

There were 21 services that provided information on either some, or all, of these other specialisms[4]. This covered all the collaborative working areas. Responses received are assumed to relate to specialist provision for the EP part of these services in the following analysis.

As vacancy and staff needs were collected for each specialism, and EP posts cover most if not all specialisms, it cannot be assumed that each one requires one full time equivalent (FTE) post. Therefore, a total number of posts or vacancies over the next five years for EP services cannot be properly estimated.

Table 8 shows the number of staff services reported they would need to meet demand.

Table 8: Reported number of vacancies and staff required to meet Education Psychology demand by specialism (service view)

	Estimated vacancies in the next 5 years	Estimated additional staff required to meet demand
Cognitive learning disabilities	27	33
Specific learning disabilities	21	24
Behavioural learning difficulties	18	53
Physical and medical difficulties	15	25
Autistic spectrum disorder	16	37
Speech, language and communication needs	17	30

Source: SEN workforce data collection

Cognitive learning disabilities

Across Wales pupils with SEN had over 59 thousand cognitive learning disabilities needs in 2016/17. 10 of the 19 services that responded stated they were not able to meet current demand.

In the South East Wales consortia footprint area all five services stated they were meeting current demand. In contrast, in the Central South consortia footprint area, none of the four services stated they were meeting current demand.

These patterns were similar for their expectations to be able to meet future demand for services.

Cognitive learning disabilities accounted for around 43% of all needs in 2016/17 and this may be part of the reason that 10 of the 19 services that responded stated they were not meeting current demand in this specialism. However, PLASC data indicates cognitive learning disabilities have been in decline in both volume and percentage over recent years.

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[4] Responses for services included in this part of the analysis are those that were received from a single local authority or from the EP service specifically.

Assuming the percentage of cognitive learning disabilities needs remains constant, the number of cognitive learning disabilities needs is expected to increase by around 1,300 over the next five years.

Across Wales, the services that provided a response stated that they expected to have around 27 vacancies for cognitive learning disabilities staff over the next five years. They also stated that they would need around 33 staff to be able to meet demand.

Specific learning disabilities

In 2016/17 across Wales pupils with SEN had over 10 thousand specific learning disability needs. Most (13 of 19) services that responded stated they were meeting current demand. However, this was not the case in the Central South consortia footprint area where most (3 of 4) services stated they were not meeting current demand.

These patterns were similar for their expectations to meet future demand for services.

Specific learning disabilities accounted for around 8% of all needs in 2016/17. Assuming this percentage remains constant, the number of specific learning disabilities needs is expected to increase by around 220 over the next five years.

Across Wales, the services that provided a response stated they expected to have around 21 vacancies over the next five years for specific learning disability staff. They also stated that they would need around 24 staff to be able to meet demand.

Behavioural learning difficulties

In 2016/17 across Wales, pupils with SEN had over 25 thousand behavioural learning difficulties needs. Most (11 of 18) services that responded stated they were not able to meet current demand.

This was not the case in the ERW consortia footprint area where three of the four services stated they were meeting current demand.

These patterns were similar for their expectations to meet future demand for services.

Behavioural learning difficulties accounted for around 18% of all needs in 2016/17. Assuming this percentage remains constant, the number of behavioural learning difficulties needs is expected to increase by around 550 over the next five years.

Across Wales, the services that provided a response stated they expected to have around 18 vacancies over the next five years for behavioural learning difficulties staff. They also stated they would need around 53 staff to be able to meet demand.

Physical and medical difficulties

In 2016/17 across Wales, pupils with SEN had around seven thousand physical and medical difficulties needs. Most (13 of 18) services stated they were meeting current demand.

This was not the case in the Central South consortia area where three of the four services reported not meeting current demand.

These patterns were similar for their expectations to be able to meet future demand for services.

Physical and medical difficulties needs accounted for around 5% of SEN in 2016/17. Assuming this percentage remains constant, the number of physical

and medical difficulties needs is expected to increase by around 150 over the next five years.

Across Wales, the services that provided a response stated they expected to have around 15 vacancies over the next five years for specific learning disability staff. They also stated that they would need around 25 staff to be able to meet demand.

Autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)

Across Wales pupils with SEN had around 7 thousand ASD needs in 2016/17. Most (14 of 19) services that responded stated they were not able to meet current demand. three of the five services in the South East Wales consortia footprint area stated they were meeting current demand.

In contrast, all four services in South Central consortia footprint area and all five services in the GwE consortia footprint area stated they were not able to meet current demand.

Most (11 of 19) services stated they expected not to be able to meet future demand for services.

ASD accounted for 5% of needs in 2016/17. Assuming this percentage remains constant, the number of ASD needs is expected to increase by around 150 over the next five years.

Across Wales, the services that provided a response indicated they expected to have around 16 vacancies over the next five years for ASD staff. They also stated they would need around 37 staff to be able to meet demand.

Speech, language and communication needs

In 2016/17 across Wales, pupils with SEN had over 23 thousand speech, language and communication needs. Most (10 of 19) services stated they were not able to meet current demand. In contrast, all five services in the South East Wales consortia footprint area stated they were meeting current demand.

9 of the 19 services that responded across Wales stated they expected to be able to meet future demand. This was similar across the consortia footprint areas.

Speech, language and communication needs accounted for around 17% of all needs in 2016/17. Assuming this percentage remains constant, the number of speech, language and communication needs is expected to increase by around 500 over the next five years.

Across Wales, the services that provided a response indicated that they expected to have around 17 vacancies over the next five years for speech, language and communication staff. They also stated that they would need around 30 staff to be able to meet demand.

Other EP specialisms

Information was provided on other EP specialisms by only six services. In general, these services stated that they were not meeting the current demand and half expected to meet future demand. No services in the GwE consortia footprint area provided a response.

Workforce planning

There was a great deal of uncertainty across Wales around EP services' ability to meet current demand. Some consortia footprint areas responded they were, but there were consortia footprint areas that stated clearly that they weren't. This was also the case with meeting future demand.

Overall, around 40 EP post holders could be expected to retire in the next 10 years (those aged over 55 years at the time of collection), of which nine are expected in the next five years (those aged over 60 years). This would suggest a number of vacancies will be as a result of retirements.

The number of posts that the services that responded suggested they would need to meet demand across EP services was high. Services reported needing somewhere between 25 and 50 staff to meet demand. The specialisms in which the most staff will be required are Cognitive learning disabilities, ASD and Behavioural learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils with these needs has increased over recent years.

Welsh language services

Current workforce

Educational psychology (EP)

Across EP services in Wales, 124.7 FTE posts (81% of all FTEs) required the post holder to be able to deliver a service in Welsh (desirable or essential); of these, 25.7 (17%) FTEs were classed as Welsh being an essential requirement and the remaining FTE posts as desirable. At the time of collection there were three vacant posts that required the post holder to deliver a service in Welsh (1 where Welsh was essential and 2 where Welsh was desirable).

30 of the 31 post holders (97%) in the posts where Welsh was essential were able to provide the service in Welsh.

Of the 45 post holders that provide a service in Welsh 38 post holders (84%) were aged 55 or younger.

Sensory impairment (SI)

Across SI services in Wales, 75.7 FTE posts (80% of all FTEs) required the post holder to be able to deliver a service in Welsh; of these, 11.7 (12%) FTEs were classed as Welsh being essential and the rest as Welsh being desirable or needing to be learnt. At the time of collection there were five vacant posts that required the post holder to deliver a service in Welsh (2 where Welsh was essential, 2 where Welsh was desirable and 1 where Welsh needed to be learnt).

10 of the 11 post holders (91%) in the posts where Welsh was essential, were able to provide the service in Welsh.

Of the 22 post holders that were able to provide a service in Welsh, 17 post holders (77%) were aged 55 or younger.

Meeting demand

The language of the school is recorded within PLASC allowing an analysis of where Welsh language provision may be required. Across Wales, 22.7% of all pupils were in Welsh medium settings. This has remained constant over recent years.

The percentage of pupils within local authorities in Welsh medium settings varies. In Gwynedd 91% of pupils are in Welsh medium settings and in Blaenau Gwent fewer than 3% of pupils are in Welsh medium settings. A table of the percentage of pupils in Welsh medium settings by local authority can be found in Annex F. This highlights that demand for services in Welsh must be considered locally. When looking at the regional consortia footprint level this variation is somewhat masked. Table 9 shows the percentage of pupils in Welsh medium settings for the regional consortia footprints.

Table 9: Percentage of pupils in Welsh medium settings, by regional consortia footprints

	Number of pupils	% of pupils
GwE	37,014	36.5
ERW	39,727	30.9
Central South	21,271	14.5
South East Wales	7,833	8.7
Wales	105,845	22.7

Source: SEN workforce data collection

To understand whether SEN provision differs by language, it is important to consider the Welsh medium SEN pupils as their own population rather than as a sub-population of all SEN pupils.

In 2016/17, 20.7% of pupils in Welsh medium settings had an SEN requirement, compared to 23.2% of pupils in other settings (those not specified as Welsh medium, including special and nursery schools). The percentage of SEN pupils within each SEN provision type (School Action, School Action Plus and Statement) was also similar for pupils in Welsh medium settings and pupils in other settings. The type of SEN for pupils in Welsh medium settings was also broadly similar, although there were small differences in behavioural learning difficulties, specific learning difficulties and ASD.

In 2016/17, there were 21,908 pupils with SEN in Welsh medium settings. These pupils had around 27,400 special educational needs, giving an average of 1.25 needs per SEN pupil. This compares to an average of 1.31 needs for pupils in other settings. This small difference could be a result of the school language, or smaller numbers which were subject to disclosure. Assuming it is a language difference then the projected number of Welsh medium SEN needs should be calculated accordingly. Table 10 shows the number of additional staff services stated they would need to meet demand for Welsh medium services.

Table 10: Reported number of staff required to meet demand for Welsh language services, by specialism (service view)

	Estimated additional staff required to meet demand
Specific Learning Difficulties	9
Behavioural learning difficulties	16
Cognition and learning needs	18
Visual Impairment	13
Hearing Impairment	14
Multi-sensory impairment	9
Physical and medical difficulties	13
Autistic Spectrum Disorders	14
Speech, Language and Communication Needs	14

Source: SEN workforce data collection

Specialist support services were asked if they felt their current staffing levels were meeting demand for Welsh language services for each specialism and whether they felt that they were likely to meet demand in the next five years. Services were also asked how many staff they would need to employ to meet demand for services through the medium of Welsh per specialism and how many vacancies they expect to have in the next five years.

To reconcile the services' expectation to meet future demand we have estimated future SEN needs based upon a number of assumptions. Further information and data can be found in Annex F.

Meeting demand for services through Welsh

Visual impairment

In 2016/17 across Wales, pupils with SEN had around 300 VI needs in Welsh medium settings. 12 of the 20 VI services across Wales stated that they expected to be able to meet demand for services through the medium of Welsh in the future.

Across the consortia footprint areas, around half (3 of 5) of the services in the South East Wales consortia footprint area stated they expected to be able to meet future demand for services through the medium of Welsh and three out of the four services in the Central South consortia area stated they expected to meet demand for services through the medium of Welsh in the future. Both GwE and ERW had a majority of services that stated they expected not to be able to meet future demand services through the medium of Welsh.

In total, VI services in Wales stated they expected to need 13 staff to meet demand for services through the medium of Welsh.

VI needs accounted for around 1% of all needs in Welsh medium settings in 2016/17. Assuming this percentage remains constant, the number of VI needs is expected to increase by around five over the next five years.

Hearing impairment

In 2016/17 across Wales, pupils with SEN had around 600 HI needs in Welsh medium settings . 9 of the 19 services stated they were currently meeting demand for services though the medium of Welsh. This was not evenly spread across the consortia footprint areas. In the ERW consortia footprint area most (5 of 6) services stated they were meeting demand for services through the medium of Welsh. In the Central South consortia footprint area, none of the four services felt they were meeting demand for services through the medium of Welsh. In the remaining two consortia footprint areas it was more evenly split.

Around half (11 of 19) of the services stated they weren't expecting to meet demand for services through the medium of Welsh in the future. None of the four services in the Central South consortia footprint area were expecting to meet future demand for services through the medium of Welsh.

In total, HI services in Wales stated they expected to need 14 staff to meet demand for services through the medium of Welsh. Seven of these staff were identified in the South East Wales consortia footprint area with none required in the GwE consortia footprint area.

HI needs accounted for around 2% of all needs in Welsh medium settings in 2016/17. Assuming this percentage remains constant, the number of HI needs is expected to increase by around ten over the next five years.

Multi-sensory impairment

In 2016/17 across Wales, pupils with SEN had around 15 MSI needs in Welsh medium settings . Most (9 of 15) services felt they weren't meeting current demand for MSI services through the medium of Welsh. Only one of the four services responded within the Central South consortia footprint area and this service felt it was meeting current demand for Welsh services. This service also expected to be able to meet future demand for services through the medium of Welsh. Over half (8 of 15) of the services stated they did not expect to be able to meet future demand for MSI services through the medium of Welsh.

In total, services stated they expected to need nine staff to meet demand for services through the medium of Welsh. These staff would only be needed in the South East Wales consortia footprint area (6) and the ERW consortia footprint area (3).

MSI needs accounted for around 0.1% of all needs in Welsh medium settings in 2016/17. Assuming this percentage remains constant, the number of MSI needs is expected to increase by less than five over the next five years.

Cognitive learning disabilities

In 2016/17 across Wales, pupils with SEN had around 12,000 cognitive learning disability needs in Welsh medium settings. Most (11 of 19) services stated they felt they weren't meeting current demand for cognitive learning disability services through the medium of Welsh. Within the ERW consortia footprint three of the five services stated they felt they were meeting current demand.

Most (11 of 19) services stated they felt that they expected to meet future demand for services through the medium of Welsh. In the GwE consortia footprint area most (3 of 5) services stated they didn't expect to meet future demand for services through the medium of Welsh. This was also the case in the South Central consortia footprint area (3 of 4).

In total, services stated they expected to need 18 staff to meet demand for cognitive learning disabilities services through the medium of Welsh. These staff were spread across the consortia footprint areas.

Cognitive learning disability needs accounted for around 44% of all needs in Welsh medium settings in 2016/17. Assuming this percentage remains constant, the number of cognitive learning disability needs is expected to increase by around 250 over the next five years.

Specific learning disabilities

In 2016/17 across Wales, pupils with SEN had around 3,000 specific learning disability needs in Welsh medium settings. Most (12 of 19) services stated they felt they were meeting current demand for specific learning disability services through the medium of Welsh. Within the GwE consortia footprint three of the five services felt they weren't meeting current demand. Within the South Central consortia footprint area half (2 of 4) of the services felt they were meeting current demand for services through the medium of Welsh.

Most (12 of 19) services expected to meet future demand for services through the medium of Welsh. In the South Central consortia footprint area half (2 of 4) of the services expected to meet future demand for services through the medium of Welsh.

In total, services stated that they expected to need nine staff to meet demand for specific learning disabilities services through the medium of Welsh. These staff were spread across the consortia footprint areas, but none were expected for the GwE consortia footprint area.

Specific learning disability needs accounted for around 11% of all needs in Welsh medium settings in 2016/17. Assuming this percentage remains constant, there may be a slight increase in this need in the next five years.

Behavioural learning difficulties

In 2016/17 across Wales, pupils with SEN had around 4,400 behavioural learning difficulties in Welsh medium settings. Most (9 of 17) services stated they felt they were meeting current demand for behavioural learning difficulties needs services through the medium of Welsh. Within both the GwE and the South East Wales consortia footprint areas, three of the five services felt they weren't meeting current demand.

Across Wales, most (10 of 17) services stated they expected to meet future demand for services through Welsh. However, in the GwE consortia footprint area most (3 of 5) services didn't expect to meet future demand for services through the medium of Welsh. This was also the case in the South Central consortia footprint area (3 of 4).

In total, services stated they expected to need 16 staff to meet demand for behavioural learning difficulties services through the medium of Welsh. These staff were spread across the consortia footprint areas, with only one expected in the GwE consortia area.

Behavioural learning difficulties accounted for around 16% of all needs in Welsh medium settings in 2016/17. Assuming this percentage remains constant, there may be a slight increase in this need in the next five years.

Physical and medical disabilities

In 2016/17 across Wales, pupils with SEN had around 1,200 physical and medical difficulties in Welsh medium settings. Most (12 of 18) services stated they felt they weren't meeting current demand for physical disability services through the medium of Welsh. Most (10 of 18) services stated that they felt that they expected to meet future demand for services through the medium of Welsh.

In total, services stated that they expected to need 13 staff to meet demand for physical disability services through the medium of Welsh. These staff were spread across the consortia footprint areas, with the exception of the GwE consortia footprint area where they stated that they didn't need any staff to meet future demand.

Physical and medical difficulties accounted for around 4.4% of all needs in Welsh medium settings in 2016/17. Assuming this percentage remains constant, there may be a slight increase in this need in the next five years.

Speech, language and communication difficulties

In 2016/17 across Wales, pupils with SEN had around 4,900 speech, language and communication difficulty needs in Welsh medium settings. Most (10 of 19) services stated they felt they weren't meeting current demand for speech, language and communication difficulty services through the medium of Welsh. Within the ERW and South East Wales consortia footprints areas three of the five services felt they were meeting current demand.

Most (11 of 19) services stated they didn't feel they expected to meet future demand for services through the medium of Welsh. In the ERW consortia footprint area most services stated they expected to meet future demand through the medium of Welsh (3 of 5).

In total, services stated they expected to need 14 staff to meet demand for speech, language and communication difficulties services through the medium of Welsh. These staff were spread across the consortia footprint areas, but none were expected in the GwE consortia footprint area.

Speech, language and communication difficulty needs accounted for around 18% of all needs in Welsh medium settings in 2016/17. Assuming this percentage remains constant, there may be a slight increase in this need in the next five years.

Autistic spectrum disorders (ASD)

In 2016/17 across Wales, pupils with SEN had around 750 ASD needs in Welsh medium settings. Most (11 of 19) services stated they felt they weren't meeting current demand for ASD services through the medium of Welsh. Within the ERW consortia footprint three of the five services stated they felt they were meeting current demand.

Across Wales, most (11 of 19) services stated they didn't feel they expected to meet future demand in Welsh. In the ERW consortia footprint area most (3 of 5) services stated they did expect to meet future demand for ASD services through the medium of Welsh.

In total, services expected to need 14 staff to meet demand for ASD services through the medium of Welsh. These staff were spread across the consortia footprint areas.

ASD needs accounted for around 3% of all needs in Welsh medium settings in 2016/17. Assuming this percentage remains constant, there may be a slight increase in this need in the next five years.

Workforce planning

The majority of both the SI and EP services reported they were not meeting current demand for services through the medium of Welsh. The SI service did not expect to meet future demand. Some specialisms within the EP service are more confident about meeting current demand and about meeting future demand in some specialisms.

This issue is probably best tackled at a collaborative working area level as the demand for services delivered through the medium of Welsh vary at this level. The percentage of posts where the ability to speak Welsh was essential needed in an area could be estimated by the Welsh medium pupil percentages provided in Annex F. At the time of collection there were some collaborative working areas that had posts where the ability to speak Welsh was essential in either service. Within these collaborative working areas, one SI service and one EP service did not require Welsh language in any of their posts. The services were not in the same collaborative working area.

In looking at the number of staff in post who are able to provide a service through the medium of Welsh and the number of pupils who may require services through the medium of Welsh at the collaborative working area level, we are able to understand where there may be disparity between the supply and demand.

Across Wales, six EP services and three SI services had no staff in post able to provide a service through the medium of Welsh. All of these areas have pupils with SEN in Welsh medium settings. In the other EP and SI services across Wales, the level of Welsh provision to Welsh medium pupils seems proportionate. Further information is available in Annex F.

Challenges and priorities

Challenges

24 specialist support services provided responses to the challenges for services. Services could choose up to three challenges, but not all services did.

Table 11 shows the three main challenges identified for each of the consortia footprint areas and for Wales as a whole.

Table 11: Challenges identified by specialist support services, by consortia footprint area

Area	Challenges
Wales	1. Finance (13 responses)
	2. Future demand (12 responses)
	3. Recruitment (9 responses)
GwE	1. Finance
	2. Recruitment
	3. Service provision in Welsh
ERW	1. Future demand
	2. Finance
	3. Recruitment
Central South	1. Recruitment
	2. Finance
	3. Current demand
South East Wales	1. Future demand
	2. Training and development
	3. Finance and succession planning (joint)

Source: SEN workforce data collection

Further details of the challenges identified at regional consortium footprint area showing how many services chose them can be found in Annex G.

Priorities

Services were also asked about their highest priority for workforce planning. 21 responses were received. Across Wales the three most frequently identified priorities were:

1   training to create candidates to fill vacancies and to replace staff who are leaving (8 responses);
2   succession planning (4 responses); and
3   recruitment of staff (3 responses).

This pattern was followed in the ERW and Central South consortia footprint areas.

However, for the GwE consortia footprint area the top three priorities were:

1 recruitment of staff;
2 succession planning; and
3 training to create candidates to fill vacancies and to replace staff who are leaving.

While for the South East Wales consortia footprint area the top three priorities were:

1 retention of existing staff;
2 succession planning; and
3 training and development of existing staff.

Further details of the priorities identified at the regional consortium footprint area showing how many services chose them can be found in Annex G.

Recommendations

Collaborative working has been observed in both EP and SI services. The benefits of this should be further investigated as there is some suggestion this collaboration gives a smaller and more flexible workforce for these areas. This could be undertaken as either a qualitative study or informal discussion and sharing of best practice.

There is a significant **gender bias** in the workforce. This will have an effect on staffing numbers as a proportion of the female workforce is likely to take maternity leave that will need to be covered. Encouraging more males into the workforce may alleviate this issue. However, shared parental leave is available and may be taken up by male staff. Proper workforce planning will need to take into account absences of these types. There is also an associated issue with part-time staff. The number of part-time staff increases with age until around 40 years and then decreases again. Having more part time staff in this section of the workforce means that more staff need to be trained to allow for this.

Further investigation into the number of males in the workforce could be undertaken. As some of the workforce draws from existing teaching staff it may be that there is little scope to increase the number of males.

The percentage of pupils with SEN appears to be stable over time. However, the overall number of pupils is projected to increase. This means that the number of pupils with SEN will also increase over the next five years. As many services felt they weren't meeting current demand this problem is likely to be exacerbated by the increase in SEN pupil numbers. Services also commented that the needs of pupils are becoming more complex. **Addressing services' ability to meet current demand** will substantially contribute to their ability to meet future demand.

The **recording of SEN within PLASC** has changed for the 2016/17 collection. This should provide a more robust assessment of need. Monitoring of the stability of the estimates provided for all needs should be undertaken.

Service provision through the medium of Welsh in both services is lacking or absent in some collaborative working areas. Some pupils with SEN in Welsh medium settings appear not to have access to service provision through the medium of Welsh. Services are aware they are not meeting demand for services through the medium of Welsh. Further investigation could be undertaken into the reasons why post holders who are able to provide services through the medium of Welsh are not available in these areas. The feasibility of post holders who are able to provide services through the medium of Welsh being shared between local authorities should be investigated and a review of the number of people undertaking training who are able to speak Welsh and their outcomes would be beneficial.

Services reported their top priority for workforce planning was around "**training to create candidates** to fill vacancies and to replace staff who were leaving". This suggests that there is concern around the pool of candidates with appropriate qualifications. Further investigation could be undertaken to understand enrolment and outcomes for the relevant qualifications to potentially increase the pool of candidates in Wales.

This workforce data collection highlights that the services feel that they are not currently meeting demand and have concerns for meeting future demand. This is

similar to the findings of the Welsh Government report (2014)[5]. It would be sensible to **collect workforce data on a regular basis** to monitor the impact of any training strategies and changes to the SEN pupil numbers. Further considerations for a future collection can be found in Annex H.

One service commented "Consideration of mechanisms to maintain up to date knowledge and skills for existing staff supported by a clear strategy to build capacity across the system and to ensure robust arrangements for succession planning".

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act is of concern to the services. Comments were received around the challenges to suggest that "demand will increase with the ALN Bill". Further investigation into the potential **demand for services following the ALN Bill** needs to be undertaken to understand how to plan for service provision in addition to the increase that is required to meet current demand.

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[5] http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/additional-learning-special-educational-needs/transformation-programme/workforce-development/workforce-planning-sen-specialist-services/?lang=en

Annex A: Data collection form

The data collection forms were shared with local authorities in February 2017. Please click on the image below, where you will be able to see an example of the form. Note, the Isle of Anglesey has only been used as an example and the form does not contain any data.

Annex B: The data collection – our approach

In 2016, we worked with Welsh local authorities, Welsh Government (WG) and the WLGA to develop and collect data about the workforce of local authority specialist support services.

There were two key phases to this work:

Phase 1: developing and undertaking a pilot data collection exercise;

Phase 2: undertaking an 'all-Wales' data collection exercise, building on lessons learned during the pilot.

The pilot exercise

The first step in developing the dataset was to meet with the WLGA and WG to fully understand the purpose and remit of the collection. To define the dataset, we needed to work directly with local authorities. For the purposes of the pilot, it was important we had not only a geographical mix of authorities, but also a mix of approaches to managing their specialist support service. WLGA and WG, therefore, put us in touch with three local authorities, one from each region, including one authority from the South-East Wales consortia which delivers a consortia wide sensory impairment service. The pilot local authorities were Flintshire, Carmarthenshire and Torfaen.

We initially met with representatives from Carmarthenshire County Council inclusion team to learn more about the workforce and the type of data we could collect. This proposed dataset was then refined by a working group which was made up of representatives of the pilot local authorities and Welsh Government.

In developing the dataset, we were very mindful to ensure the scope and coverage were well defined and the individual data items were clear and focused. For instance, having originally discussed collecting information on every staff member/post within an authority's specialist support service, it quickly became clear this would be a big undertaking for the authorities. We, therefore, narrowed the definition to focus on those areas where Welsh Government were able to support skills and training provision. As a result, the collection focused on those posts within specialist support services that require the post holder to have specific specialist qualifications in order to undertake the role. Specifically:

- Educational Psychologists; and
- staff that provide support and/or advice in relation to sensory impairments (visual impairment, hearing impairment or multisensory impairment).

We also agreed that staff employed directly by schools should be excluded as should staff employed by the NHS, unless they were providing additional services that have been directly purchased by the local authority and where there was a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place.

One of our biggest challenges was the potential duplication and double counting across authorities. This was mainly due to the different working arrangements and collaborations that are in place across authorities. After much discussion we decided that where a post is shared across a number of local authorities, the authority that has lead responsibility for that post/member of staff should record the information.

Once the questions were agreed we developed a bilingual data collection form. We were mindful of the need to encourage a high response rate, so we made the form as simple and easy to use as possible.

We were also conscious of the need to encourage accurate, robust data. We therefore added 'sense checking' functionality to the form which would highlight potential issues with the data and prompt users to check that the data they were entering was correct.

The pilot collection took place between 31 January 2017 and 10 February 2017, during which time we were on hand to support the authorities and answer any questions.

Given the potential sensitivity of the data, the forms were returned to us using our online secure data transfer tool, Emyr, and were stored in a restricted area of our server.

The all-Wales 'roll-out'

Having reviewed the pilot data, we reconvened the working group. As a result of the positive feedback from the local authorities on the ease of collecting the data and using the form, as well as our findings from reviewing the submitted data, we were able to further refine both the dataset and data collection form.

For instance, we refined the list of roles to include in the collection, removing heads of service, service managers and support staff as well as teaching assistants and challenge advisors.

We also added some additional sense checking functionality to the data collection form to improve the user experience.

At the same time WLGA were liaising with the Association of Directors of Education Wales (ADEW) network and their inclusion sub-group to make sure that all local authorities were aware of the work and prepared to engage.

The all-Wales collection took place between 21 February 2017 and 10 March 2017[6]. Once again, we were on hand to support the authorities through the process and answer any questions they may have.

Most authorities were able to meet the agreed deadline, although a few saw significant delays[7]. It was important to ensure we had a complete picture of provision across Wales so significant time and resource went into ensuring we received returns from all authorities.

On receipt of the local authority returns, we undertook an analysis of the quality and accuracy of the data. As anticipated, there were some 'common' issues. For instance:

- **Interpretation**: several specialist support posts/members of staff that didn't have a sensory impairment specialism had been included in the returns. These were removed with the agreement of the local authorities.

  Conversely, the majority of authorities reported that all their EP staff covered *all* specialisms. This allowed us to carry out additional

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[6] At the same time the three pilot authorities (Flintshire, Carmarthenshire and Torfaen) were asked to refine their data to make sure it matched the revised definitions.

[7] One authority was almost 2months late in submitting the data.

validation in this area to establish a consistent, accurate picture of EP provision across Wales;

- **Incomplete data**: there were a lot of gaps in the returns on initial receipt. We were able to work with all except one of the authorities to ensure we received all outstanding information;

- **Duplication**: early in the collection there were elements of double counting between some of the collaborative authorities. We were able to cross reference local authority submissions and liaised with them as required to ensure posts were only included once.

We were able to resolve the majority of these issues with the local authorities. However, as this is the first year of the collection it is likely there remains an element of inconsistency across the data, mainly due to interpretation[8].

The complete dataset was finalised in May 2017.

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[8] One authority's return remains incomplete as they did not respond to any of our subsequent communication. Despite the gaps we were able to include the authority in the analysis. Where necessary we will note where the analysis isn't based on a complete set of returns.

Annex C: Collaborative working

There are some posts and post holders that work across a number of local authorities through collaborative arrangements. These are summarised in Table 12.

Table 12: Summary of collaborative working

Authority	Educational psychology service	Sensory impairment service
Isle of Anglesey	Collaboration between the Isle of Anglesey* and Gwynedd	Collaboration between the Isle of Anglesey* and Gwynedd
Gwynedd	Collaboration between the Isle of Anglesey* and Gwynedd	Collaboration between the Isle of Anglesey* and Gwynedd
Conwy	Local delivery	Local delivery
Denbighshire	Local delivery	Collaboration between Denbighshire, Flintshire*, Wrexham
Flintshire	Local delivery (shared Principal Education Psychologist between Flintshire and Wrexham)	Collaboration between Denbighshire, Flintshire*, Wrexham
Wrexham	Local delivery (shared Principal Education Psychologist between Flintshire and Wrexham)	Collaboration between Denbighshire, Flintshire*, Wrexham
Powys	Local delivery	Local delivery
Ceredigion	Local delivery	Shared Advisory teacher between Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.
Pembrokeshire	Local delivery	Local delivery
Carmarthenshire	Local delivery	Shared Advisory teacher between Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.
Swansea	Local delivery	Shared Advisory teacher between Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.
Neath Port Talbot	Local delivery	Shared Advisory teacher between Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot. Shared Specialist Officer between Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend.
Bridgend	Local delivery	Shared Specialist Officer between Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend.

The Vale of Glamorgan	Local delivery	Shared VI service between the Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff
Cardiff	Local delivery	Shared VI service between the Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff
Rhondda Cynon Taf	Collaboration between Rhondda Cynon Taf* and Merthyr Tydfil	Merthyr Tydfil share Rhondda Cynon Taf's sensory impairment advisory teachers
Merthyr Tydfil	Collaboration between Rhondda Cynon Taf* and Merthyr Tydfil	Merthyr Tydfil share Rhondda Cynon Taf's sensory impairment advisory teachers
Caerphilly	Local delivery	Regional consortia
Blaenau Gwent	Local delivery	Regional consortia
Torfaen	Local delivery	Regional consortia
Monmouthshire	Local delivery	Regional consortia
Newport	Local delivery	Regional consortia

*Lead authority

This analysis takes account of these relationships where possible.

# Annex D: Special educational needs (SEN) of pupils

The Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) collects pupil level data for schools in Wales in January each year. It includes the SEN provision type and needs of each pupil.

Prior to 2016/17, PLASC recorded the major SEN as compulsory and secondary SEN as optional. As secondary need was optional only the major need was published. From 2016/17 all SEN was recorded. Pupil counts of less than five are subject to disclosure control.

Understanding current demand

SEN provision type comprises School Action, School Action plus and Statements. Figure 1 shows the number of pupils with SEN provision over the last five years by category of provision.

Figure 1: Number of SEN pupils by SEN provision type
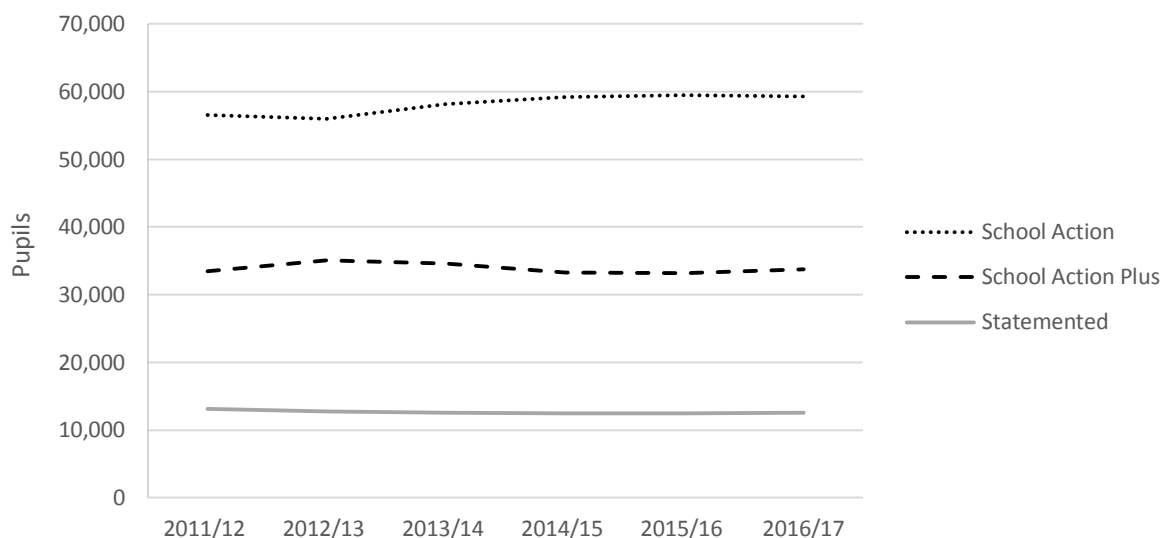
Source: PLASC, Welsh Government

Overall, the number of pupils with SEN provision has increased slightly with those categorised as School Action contributing to this the most. The total number of pupils has decreased over this time. The proportion of pupils with SEN provision compared to the school population has remained fairly constant over recent years.

Table 13 gives the percentage of pupils in each local authority in each SEN provision category for 2016/17 (totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding). The percentages vary by local authority with just under 80% of all pupils in Wales receiving no SEN provision.

In Wales, around 3% of all pupils had a statement of SEN (12,602), 7% had School Action Plus status (33,711) and 13% had School Action status (59,264). In 2016/17 there were 466,508 pupils in Wales.

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Table 13: Percentage of pupils by SEN provision type by local authority, 2016/17

	School Action	School Action Plus	Statement	No SEN
Isle of Anglesey	12	9	3	76
Gwynedd	9	10	3	78
Conwy	9	11	2	77
Denbighshire	11	11	2	75
Flintshire	13	5	2	80
Wrexham	11	6	3	81
Powys	11	6	2	80
Ceredigion	21	6	2	71
Pembrokeshire	17	7	2	74
Carmarthenshire	16	9	3	71
Swansea	15	6	4	74
Neath Port Talbot	15	8	4	74
Bridgend	13	5	2	80
Vale of Glamorgan	10	5	2	83
Rhondda Cynon Taf	16	6	2	75
Merthyr Tydfil	17	10	3	71
Caerphilly	11	8	2	79
Blaenau Gwent	9	9	3	79
Torfaen	10	9	1	79
Monmouthshire	9	6	2	83
Newport	10	7	4	79
Cardiff	12	6	3	79
Wales	*13*	*7*	*3*	*77*

Source: PLASC, Welsh Government

In 2016/17 there were 105,577 pupils in Wales with SEN. Overall, there were 136,995 SEN needs in 2016/17. This gives an average of 1.3 needs per SEN pupil.

The PLASC SEN categories are different to the specialisms that were used in the workforce data collection. To analyse the supply and demand for the services the SEN categories have been mapped to the workforce specialisms. The details of this are shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Mapping of SEN to SEN workforce specialisms

SEN need	Workforce Specialism
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties	Behavioural Learning Difficulties
Dyscalculia Dyslexia Dyspraxia	Specific Learning Difficulties
General learning difficulties Moderate learning difficulties Profound & multiple learning difficulties Severe learning difficulties	Cognition and Learning Needs
Visual impairment	Visual Impairment
Hearing impairment	Hearing Impairment
Multi-sensory impairment	Multisensory Impairment
Autistic Spectrum Disorders	Autistic Spectrum Disorders
Physical and medical difficulties	Physical and Medical Difficulties
Speech, language and communication difficulties	Speech, Language and Communication Needs

Grouping these needs by the workforce specialisms shows that each category shows a different trend over time. Figure 2 shows the total SEN over time for each specialism.

Figure 2: Special Educational Needs by workforce specialism as a percentage of all Special Educational Need

Source: SEN workforce data collection

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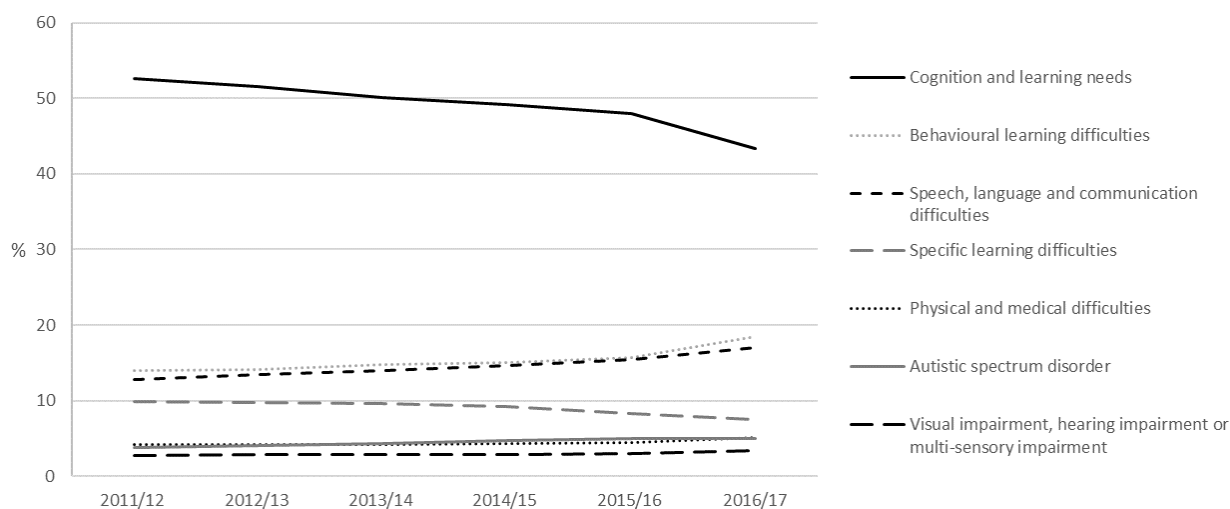
Services were asked for any additional comments on their workforce or staffing issues that could be addressed by national workforce planning.

The following comments were received from services that gave a single response:

> *More training of specialists through the medium of Welsh. A proportion of training course places should be reserved for Welsh speaking candidates.*

> *"The LA also provides core funding for three QTODs who work in resource bases for CYP with HI within the LA. These staff are employed by the respective schools. Should there be a need to replace any of these staff, there is little to no capacity within the current workforce to do so. One TOD is due to retire within the next 5 years. It is not possible to access supply cover when a specialist teacher is absent due to lack of availability of teachers with the mandatory qualification - QTVI; QTOD; QTMSI.*

> *ECPS - Adequate Financing to meet requirements/demand. Ensure enough training for ECPS. Encourage Welsh speaking candidates or time to learn Welsh. Expand the number of ECPS in LAs to address increased activity for 19 to 25 years. Understand the key role played by EPs in capacity building of educational settings to identify and meet ALN, the considerable expertise and skills in co-collaboration and problem solving to work at all levels of fulfilling the ALNET bill and Code of Practice"*

> *National training initiatives.*

> *The recruitment and retention of educational psychologists is notoriously difficult and as a result of this succession planning is obviously a challenge. In order to address some of these difficulties it would be wise to consider regional approaches to meeting future needs.*

> *Consideration of mechanisms to maintain up to date knowledge and skills for existing staff supported by a clear strategy to build capacity across the system and to ensure robust arrangements for succession planning*

The following comments were given by SI services (as a whole, or part of a service):

> *A training and recruitment strategy similar to 'Springboard to Specialism' would ensure that gaps could be filled more readily by specialist staff rather than untrained teachers who need to deliver services without the necessary skills available to them from the outset.*

> *[we have] already informally offered support for teaching practices and mentoring to a number of teachers - to the extent of supporting the recruitment and training of a teacher for the [another authority] when this has proved impossible for them to achieve independently.*

We have unilaterally recruited 3 members of staff, including a Welsh speaker and capacity for the [another authority]. We are happy to recognise that the large size of [authority] makes this easier for us than for other authorities, and keen to continue to support training and development across smaller authorities where mentoring, supervision, and the maintenance of a qualified service is more challenging due to the small size of teams. However, this does have an impact on our ability to meet our own service needs, and recognition of our role in a more formal capacity would be very helpful.

Training for Welsh teachers on mandatory courses. Ringfenced funds for training / CPD / equipment. We also employ Braille support Assistants who have to undertake a qualification in Braille, to enable them to modify and transcribe work. We also employ communicators who are a minimum of level 2 BSL.

The issue of Specialist Teacher shortages in both VI & HI has been raised for many years - the situation especially for HI is at a critical state for the workforce.

Annex F: Understanding future demand

The Welsh Government produce pupil projections. The latest pupil projections are 2017-based and project pupil numbers forward to 2033. Errors associated with the projections will be amplified for estimates that are produced further away from the base year. That is, the projection method used means the estimates for 2033 are less reliable than those nearer to 2017. Therefore, the projected SEN pupil numbers in this report are for three, five and ten years' time (2020, 2022 and 2027) only.

The pupil projections estimate an increase in pupils in all schools (maintained and independent) of around 3% (11,900) by 2027.

To project forward it is necessary to make some assumptions about how the SEN population may change during this period. The proportion of SEN pupils within the school population has remained stable over time. In 2016/17, 22.6% of all pupils had some SEN provision. Therefore, when creating the projections, it is assumed that around 22.6% of all pupils in future years will also need SEN provision.

The percentages of all pupils classified as School Action (12.7%), School Action Plus (7.2%) or Statemented (2.7%) have also been stable over time. Using these percentages, the numbers of SEN pupils in future years can be estimated.

Table 15 shows the number of SEN pupils for Wales for 2017 as well as the projected number of SEN pupils for 2020, 2022 and 2027 by SEN provision category. This shows an overall increase of around 2,700 SEN pupils by 2027.

Table 15: Projected Special Educational Need pupils, by type (2017 based)

		Projected		
	2017	**2020**	**2022**	**2027**
Statemented	12,602	12,756	12,875	12,927
School Action Plus	33,711	34,122	34,442	34,580
School Action	59,264	59,987	60,550	60,791
All SEN	*105,577*	*106,866*	*107,867*	*108,297*

Source: PLASC and pupil projections

Future demand by specialism

As the number of pupils is projected, not the need, the projected need is calculated using the 2016/17 ratio of SEN pupils to need. To be able to project future demand by specialism the percentage of need within each specialism is applied to projected need. There are some issues with the robustness of the PLASC SEN data used prior to 2016/17 and the change in reporting in 2016/17 means that attempting to predict potential changes over time (trend) for each specialism may be unwise. Therefore, the percentage of need by specialism is assumed to be constant over time and is set at the percentages for 2016/17. The projected number of special educational needs are shown in Table 16.

Table 16: Projected Special Educational Need by Specialism (2017 based)

	2017	Projected		
		2020	2022	2027
Behavioural learning difficulties	25,267	25,575	25,815	25,918
Specific learning difficulties	10,299	10,425	10,522	10,564
Cognition and learning needs	59,418	60,143	60,707	60,949
Sensory impairment (VI, HI, MSI)	4,712	4,770	4,814	4,833
Autistic spectrum disorder	6,918	7,002	7,068	7,096
Physical and medical difficulties	7,034	7,120	7,187	7,215
Speech, language and communication difficulties	23,347	23,632	23,854	23,949
All SEN	*136,995*	*138,667*	*139,967*	*140,525*

Source: PLASC and pupil projections

Future demand for Welsh language

To support Welsh Government strategy to have one million Welsh speakers by 2050, a set of Welsh speaker projections[9] has been produced. These are based on Census 2011 data for ages three and above. These projections are for people in Wales and doesn't specifically give estimates for pupils. Therefore, the number of Welsh medium SEN pupils can't easily be estimated. Errors will be associated with any estimates and care should be taken when interpreting them.

The percentage of pupils in Welsh medium education settings varies dramatically by local authority. Table 17 shows the percentage of pupils in each local authority that are in Welsh medium settings (primary, middle and secondary) in 2016/17. The language of schools is not recorded in PLASC for nursery or special schools. Not knowing the language of pupils in special schools means not knowing the language of those SEN pupils. This will increase the error associated with these projections.

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[9] www.statswales.gov.Wales/Catalogue/Welsh-Language

Table 17: Percentage of pupils in Welsh medium education settings (primary, middle and secondary), 2016/17

	% of pupils in Welsh medium settings
Isle of Anglesey	90
Gwynedd	92
Conwy	24
Denbighshire	34
Flintshire	6
Wrexham	13
Powys	29
Ceredigion	75
Pembrokeshire	20
Carmarthenshire	59
Swansea	14
Neath Port Talbot	16
Bridgend	8
Vale of Glamorgan	13
Rhondda Cynon Taf	20
Merthyr Tydfil	9
Cardiff	16
Caerphilly	16
Blaenau Gwent	3
Torfaen	13
Monmouthshire	3
Newport	3
Wales	*23*

Source: PLASC

Welsh medium service delivery is needed in every local authority, but not at the same level. Some authorities already share SI posts that are able to deliver services through the medium of Welsh.

Projecting the number of pupils in Welsh medium settings is, therefore, best done at a Wales level only. Assuming the percentage of pupils in Welsh medium settings remains constant at 23%, the number of SEN pupils in Welsh medium settings can be estimated for three, five and ten years' time. However, the Welsh Government has set out a strategy for reaching one million Welsh speakers by 2050[10]. This gives a target figure of 30% of all pupils in Welsh medium settings by 2031.

Table 18 shows the projected number of pupils with SEN in Welsh medium settings by SEN provision category. This suggests there will be an increase of around 560 SEN pupils in Welsh medium settings by 2027, if the percentage of pupils in Welsh medium education remains constant or 720 SEN pupils by 2031, if

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[10] http://gov.wales/topics/welshlanguage/welsh-language-strategy-and-policies/cymraeg-2050-welsh-language-strategy/?lang=en

the percentage of Welsh medium pupils increases in line with the Welsh Government target.

Table 18: Projected number of pupils with a Special Educational Need in Welsh medium settings by SEN provision category (2017 based)

| | 2017 | Projected | | | |
		2020	2022	2027 [1]	2031 [2]
Statement	1,362	1,379	1,391	1,397	1,407
School Action Plus	7,346	7,435	7,505	7,535	7,587
School Action	13,200	13,361	13,486	13,539	13,634
All SEN	*21,908*	*22,175*	*22,382*	*22,471*	*22,628*

Source: PLASC and pupil projections

[1] assumes 23% of SEN pupils in Welsh medium settings

[2] assumes 30% of SEN pupils in Welsh medium settings

Annex G: Challenges and priorities

The number of responses for each challenge, overall and by consortia footprint area is shown in Table 19.

Table 19: Challenges, by consortia footprint area

	GwE	ERW	Central South	South East Wales	Wales
Finance	3	4	4	2	13
Future demand	0	6	2	4	12
Recruitment	2	3	4	0	9
Succession planning	1	2	2	2	7
Training and development	1	0	2	3	6
Current demand	1	1	3	0	5
Service provision in Welsh	2	1	2	0	5
Restructuring/reorganising	1	1	1	0	3
Service reconfiguration	0	0	1	0	1

Source: SEN workforce data collection

Table 20 shows the top workforce priority selected for each of the services by consortia footprint area.

Table 20: Priorities, by consortia footprint area

	GwE	ERW	Central South	South East Wales	Wales
Training to create candidates to fill vacancies and to replace staff who are leaving	1	3	4	0	8
Succession planning	1	2	0	1	4
Recruitment of staff	2	0	1	0	3
Retention of existing staff	0	0	1	1	2
Training and development of existing staff	0	0	0	1	1
Other	0	0	2	1	3

Source: SEN workforce data collection

Annex H: Considerations for future data collection

There are many positives to be taken from the data collection exercise. There was a high level of participation from most local authorities. In addition, feedback from local authorities suggested they found the process straightforward.

However, the collection exercise and subsequent analysis has identified a number of areas for further consideration if such a national data collection exercise is repeated.

Scope of the collection

We were very clear this collection would focus on just those specialist support staff that required a specific qualification to do their role. As such, the collection, and subsequent analysis, was limited to education psychologists and sensory impairment specialists.

Going forward, it may be appropriate to consider focusing on other specialisms to get an understanding of the level of provision and whether it is sufficient to meet need.

Participation

Although we worked with the WLGA to ensure relevant local authority officers were prepared for the collection, having more detailed discussions about plans, expectations and potential issues in advance of a collection should ensure that it runs smoothly and help avoid such delays. It should also give the services a better understanding of the data they are being asked to provide, thus reducing the time taken to validate and finalise the data.

Equally, collecting information about the entire specialist support services workforce to have a complete picture of provision and its sufficiency could be considered. Although it is important to consider the capacity required to undertake such a collection for both the data providers and the data collectors.

Analysing qualitative information

Analysing the qualitative information, submitted in the 'Further Information' section of the form, has proved more difficult than anticipated. In future collections we would recommend refining this section to make it easier to analyse.

Local analysis

In any future data collections, we would recommend exploring local analysis of the data as well as national analysis. This should not only give the local authorities a tangible output for their efforts, but will also help them better understand their workforce and what action might be needed to make sure it is sustainable locally/regionally. One option would be to enhance the data collection form to include a 'profile' of the workforce based on the data provided. Again, the way in which authorities respond on behalf of their services, particularly regarding shared services, will need to be considered.

Taking account of other data

We are aware that educational psychologists collect and share a variety of workforce data. The extent to which the collections could be better aligned should be explored.

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