

Distribution Sub-Group (2024) Paper 14 – eFSM data options for the 2025-26 Settlement

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

Eligible for Free School Meals (eFSM) data within the settlement

Summary

1. This paper provides analysis of the eligible for Free School Meals (eFSM) pupil numbers taken from the [January 2024 Pupil Level Annual School Census \(PLASC\)](#).
2. This paper summarises our options for eFSM data for the 2025-26 settlement following on from decisions to use a 3-year average (2021, 2022 and 2023) of those pupils recorded as eFSM or Transitionally Protected (TP) for the 2024-25 settlement

Views sought

3. DSG members are asked to consider the analysis and options discussed throughout the paper and agree on an option for use in the 2025-26 settlement.

Related Papers

4. Distribution Sub-Group (2023) Paper 19 – eFSM data decision for the 2024-25 settlement
5. Distribution Sub-Group (2023) Paper 10 – Eligible for Free School Meals (eFSM) within the settlement.
6. Distribution Sub-Group (2022) Paper 09 – Eligible for Free School Meals (eFSM) within the settlement.
7. Distribution Sub-Group (2021) Paper 14 – eFSM on the settlement
8. Distribution Sub-Group (2020) Paper 16 – Assessing the impact of universal credit on the 2020 PLASC FSM data
9. Distribution Sub-Group (2019) Paper 16 – Assessing the impact of universal credit on the PLASC FSM data
10. Distribution Sub-Group (2018) Paper 11 - Free School Meals indicator analysis

Background

11. Eligibility for Free School Meals (eFSM) is used as a proxy of deprivation in the assessment of relative need to spend on teaching and other services in the local government settlement but is not used as a proxy for the need to spend on school meals. More information on the background can be found in papers from previous years.

Options

12. The analysis summarises **3 options**:
 - a) **Option 1**: Use the latest data 2024 PLASC data. Pupils recorded as eFSM or TP.

Distribution Sub-Group (2022) Paper 12 – eFSM on the settlement

- b) **Option 2:** Use the latest 3 year average (2022, 2023 and 2024) of the PLASC data. Pupils recorded as eFSM or TP. The advantage of using an average of the dataset is that it smooths out volatility.
- c) **Option 3:** Use the latest 4 year average (2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024) of the PLASC data. Pupils recorded as eFSM or TP. The advantage of using an average of the dataset is that it smooths out volatility.

Analysis

Data

- 13. **Table 1** in **Annex A** shows the number and share of pupils in **primary school** eligible for Free School Meals (eFSM) or those recorded as transitionally protected (TP) by local authority.
- 14. **Table 2** in **Annex A** shows the number and share of pupils in **secondary school** eligible for Free School Meals (eFSM) or those recorded as transitionally protected (TP) by local authority.
- 15. **Table 3** shows an exemplification of each of the options. **Further analysis is summarised in the attached spreadsheet.**

Conclusion:

- 16. The exemplifications are based on the isolated effect of the FSM data on the 2024-25 Settlement. FSM data on EOTAS pupils are **not included** in the analysis. Other than the change to the FSM data, the exemplifications do not account for any other changes in data that will be made for the 2025-26 Settlement, or the impact of transfers in and out.
- 17. DSG members are asked to consider and discuss the analysis included in this paper and agree on an option for the FSM data for the 2025-26 settlement.

Distribution Sub-Group (2022) Paper 12 – eFSM on the settlement

Annex A

Table 1 - Number of primary school pupils eFSM or TP for each option by local authority and year

	Numbers						Proportions					
	2021	2022	2023	2024	3- Year Average	4- Year Average	2021	2022	2023	2024	3- Year Average	4- Year Average
Isle of Anglesey	1,123	1,120	1,167	1,172	1,153	1,146	1.77%	1.70%	1.71%	1.76%	1.72%	1.73%
Gwynedd	1,683	1,770	1,904	1,778	1,817	1,784	2.66%	2.68%	2.78%	2.67%	2.71%	2.70%
Conwy	2,185	2,273	2,301	2,161	2,245	2,230	3.45%	3.44%	3.36%	3.25%	3.35%	3.37%
Denbighshire	2,123	2,210	2,307	2,290	2,269	2,233	3.35%	3.35%	3.37%	3.44%	3.39%	3.38%
Flintshire	2,794	2,933	3,053	2,957	2,981	2,934	4.41%	4.44%	4.46%	4.45%	4.45%	4.44%
Wrexham	2,882	2,985	3,122	3,068	3,058	3,014	4.55%	4.52%	4.56%	4.61%	4.57%	4.56%
Powys	1,514	1,654	1,739	1,723	1,705	1,658	2.39%	2.50%	2.54%	2.59%	2.55%	2.51%
Ceredigion	985	1,018	1,055	1,017	1,030	1,019	1.56%	1.54%	1.54%	1.53%	1.54%	1.54%
Pembrokeshire	2,083	2,130	2,080	2,000	2,070	2,073	3.29%	3.22%	3.04%	3.01%	3.09%	3.14%
Carmarthenshire	3,198	3,436	3,663	3,445	3,515	3,436	5.05%	5.20%	5.35%	5.18%	5.25%	5.20%
Swansea	5,531	5,686	5,900	5,701	5,762	5,705	8.73%	8.61%	8.62%	8.57%	8.60%	8.63%
Neath Port Talbot	3,513	3,583	3,636	3,529	3,583	3,565	5.55%	5.42%	5.32%	5.31%	5.35%	5.40%
Bridgend	3,178	3,317	3,389	3,280	3,329	3,291	5.02%	5.02%	4.95%	4.93%	4.97%	4.98%
The Vale of Glamorgan	2,270	2,330	2,432	2,343	2,368	2,344	3.58%	3.53%	3.56%	3.52%	3.54%	3.55%
Rhondda Cynon Taff	5,552	5,713	5,820	5,722	5,752	5,702	8.77%	8.65%	8.51%	8.60%	8.59%	8.63%
Merthyr Tydfil	1,452	1,591	1,687	1,671	1,650	1,600	2.29%	2.41%	2.47%	2.51%	2.46%	2.42%
Caerphilly	3,819	4,057	4,298	4,259	4,205	4,108	6.03%	6.14%	6.28%	6.40%	6.28%	6.22%
Blaenau Gwent	1,756	1,791	1,798	1,743	1,777	1,772	2.77%	2.71%	2.63%	2.62%	2.65%	2.68%
Torfaen	2,391	2,514	2,569	2,499	2,527	2,493	3.78%	3.81%	3.76%	3.76%	3.77%	3.77%
Monmouthshire	1,080	1,107	1,188	1,136	1,144	1,128	1.71%	1.68%	1.74%	1.71%	1.71%	1.71%
Newport	3,837	4,000	4,155	4,166	4,107	4,040	6.06%	6.05%	6.07%	6.26%	6.13%	6.11%
Cardiff	8,385	8,844	9,146	8,851	8,947	8,807	13.24%	13.39%	13.37%	13.31%	13.35%	13.33%
Wales	63,334	66,062	68,409	66,511	66,994	66,079						

Distribution Sub-Group (2022) Paper 12 – eFSM on the settlement

Table 2 - Number of secondary school pupils eFSM or TP for each option by local authority and year

	Numbers						Proportions					
	2021	2022	2023	2024	3- Year Average	4- Year Average	2021	2022	2023	2024	3- Year Average	4- Year Average
Isle of Anglesey	707	686	736	862	761	748	1.84%	1.63%	1.57%	1.75%	1.65%	1.70%
Gwynedd	1,075	1,193	1,334	1,319	1,282	1,230	2.80%	2.83%	2.85%	2.68%	2.79%	2.79%
Conwy	1,282	1,471	1,632	1,751	1,618	1,534	3.34%	3.49%	3.49%	3.56%	3.52%	3.48%
Denbighshire	1,371	1,557	1,734	1,852	1,714	1,629	3.57%	3.70%	3.71%	3.77%	3.73%	3.69%
Flintshire	1,745	1,923	2,101	2,182	2,069	1,988	4.55%	4.56%	4.50%	4.44%	4.50%	4.51%
Wrexham	1,479	1,656	1,850	1,990	1,832	1,744	3.85%	3.93%	3.96%	4.05%	3.98%	3.95%
Powys	975	1,079	1,171	1,346	1,199	1,143	2.54%	2.56%	2.51%	2.74%	2.61%	2.59%
Ceredigion	550	637	718	775	710	670	1.43%	1.51%	1.54%	1.58%	1.54%	1.52%
Pembrokeshire	1,222	1,369	1,490	1,566	1,475	1,412	3.18%	3.25%	3.19%	3.18%	3.21%	3.20%
Carmarthenshire	2,036	2,252	2,538	2,632	2,474	2,365	5.31%	5.35%	5.43%	5.35%	5.38%	5.36%
Swansea	3,383	3,609	4,114	4,340	4,021	3,862	8.82%	8.57%	8.80%	8.83%	8.74%	8.76%
Neath Port Talbot	2,068	2,260	2,488	2,631	2,460	2,362	5.39%	5.36%	5.32%	5.35%	5.35%	5.36%
Bridgend	1,766	1,970	2,231	2,339	2,180	2,077	4.60%	4.68%	4.77%	4.76%	4.74%	4.71%
The Vale of Glamorgan	1,334	1,531	1,774	1,857	1,721	1,624	3.48%	3.63%	3.80%	3.78%	3.74%	3.68%
Rhondda Cynon Taff	3,392	3,580	3,896	4,135	3,870	3,751	8.84%	8.50%	8.34%	8.41%	8.41%	8.50%
Merthyr Tydfil	802	877	995	1,038	970	928	2.09%	2.08%	2.13%	2.11%	2.11%	2.10%
Caerphilly	2,418	2,667	2,907	2,999	2,858	2,748	6.30%	6.33%	6.22%	6.10%	6.21%	6.23%
Blaenau Gwent	884	978	1,038	1,129	1,048	1,007	2.30%	2.32%	2.22%	2.30%	2.28%	2.28%
Torfaen	1,563	1,655	1,811	1,868	1,778	1,724	4.07%	3.93%	3.88%	3.80%	3.86%	3.91%
Monmouthshire	628	674	816	826	772	736	1.64%	1.60%	1.75%	1.68%	1.68%	1.67%
Newport	2,375	2,611	2,852	3,007	2,823	2,711	6.19%	6.20%	6.10%	6.12%	6.14%	6.15%
Cardiff	5,322	5,890	6,509	6,728	6,376	6,112	13.87%	13.98%	13.93%	13.68%	13.86%	13.86%
Wales	38,377	42,125	46,735	49,172	46,011	44,102						

Distribution Sub-Group (2022) Paper 12 – eFSM on the settlement

Table 3 – Exemplification for each option by local authority on the 2024-25 settlement (AEF)

					£'000					
	Settlement 2024-25	Option 1:	Option 2:	Option 3:	Difference Value			Difference %		
					Option 1:	Option 2:	Option 3:	Option 1:	Option 2:	Option 3:
Unitary Authority										
Anglesey	127,586	127,735	127,583	127,641	149	-3	55	0.12%	0.00%	0.04%
Gwynedd	233,317	233,156	233,312	233,300	-160	-5	-17	-0.07%	0.00%	-0.01%
Conwy	203,526	203,470	203,542	203,529	-57	16	3	-0.03%	0.01%	0.00%
Denbighshire	200,795	200,981	200,873	200,828	187	78	33	0.09%	0.04%	0.02%
Flintshire	258,527	258,330	258,396	258,397	-198	-131	-130	-0.08%	-0.05%	-0.05%
Wrexham	232,865	233,056	232,932	232,898	192	67	34	0.08%	0.03%	0.01%
Powys	235,865	236,221	236,029	235,971	356	164	106	0.15%	0.07%	0.04%
Ceredigion	135,286	135,368	135,344	135,323	82	57	37	0.06%	0.04%	0.03%
Pembrokeshire	218,870	218,575	218,694	218,744	-296	-176	-126	-0.14%	-0.08%	-0.06%
Carmarthenshire	350,646	350,576	350,680	350,608	-70	34	-38	-0.02%	0.01%	-0.01%
Swansea	435,021	435,034	434,977	435,031	13	-44	10	0.00%	-0.01%	0.00%
Neath Port Talbot	285,594	285,531	285,575	285,640	-63	-19	46	-0.02%	-0.01%	0.02%
Bridgend	258,925	258,936	258,960	258,942	12	35	18	0.00%	0.01%	0.01%
Vale of Glamorgan	209,781	209,903	209,879	209,832	122	98	51	0.06%	0.05%	0.02%
Rhondda Cynon Taff	485,567	485,378	485,360	485,509	-189	-207	-58	-0.04%	-0.04%	-0.01%
Merthyr	123,492	123,593	123,531	123,480	101	40	-12	0.08%	0.03%	-0.01%
Caerphilly	348,864	348,925	348,894	348,845	61	30	-19	0.02%	0.01%	-0.01%
Blaenau Gwent	144,044	143,976	143,996	144,035	-67	-48	-9	-0.05%	-0.03%	-0.01%
Torfaen	178,733	178,599	178,686	178,734	-133	-47	2	-0.07%	-0.03%	0.00%
Monmouthshire	126,019	126,034	126,031	126,021	15	12	2	0.01%	0.01%	0.00%
Newport	304,045	304,261	304,127	304,119	216	82	74	0.07%	0.03%	0.02%
Cardiff	623,158	622,886	623,125	623,095	-272	-32	-62	-0.04%	-0.01%	-0.01%
Total Unitary Authorities	5,720,524	5,720,524	5,720,524	5,720,524						

Option 1: Use the latest data 2024 PLASC eFSM or TP

Option 2: Use the 3 year average eFSM or TP

Option 3: Use the 4 year average eFSM or TP