



Software Development Forum (SDF): 8 June 2023

The recorded minutes of the meeting held via Microsoft Teams

Meeting minutes

Date of issue: 28 July 2023

Version: 1.0

Audience	Members of the Software Development Forum (SDF), including the Welsh Government, software suppliers of school information management systems and limited local authority representatives.
Overview	This document is provided by the Welsh Government as an official account of the SDF meeting held on to support software suppliers in developing their school information management systems and to support local authorities ensure that they, and their schools in Wales, are able to submit data required to comply with statutory duties.
Further information	<p>Enquiries about this document should be directed to:</p> <p>Information Management Strategy Data Collections Team School Information and Improvement Branch Education Directorate Welsh Government Cathays Park Cardiff CF10 3NQ</p> <p>Tel: 0300 062 5014 E-mail: IMS@gov.wales</p> <p> @WG_Education</p> <p> Facebook/EducationWales</p>
Additional copies	This document can be accessed from the SDF pages of DEWi .
Related documents	All relevant documentation relating to the meeting and other development documents is available on the SDF pages of DEWi .

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1. Attendees

Welsh Government		
Gareth Thomas (GT) (Chair)	Head of School Workforce Statistics	Workforce Statistics Branch
Sam Fallick	Statistical Officer	Workforce Statistics Branch
Annie Rose Pickup	Higher Statistical officer	Workforce Statistics Branch
James Gilbert (JG)	IMS Programme Manager	Workforce Statistics Branch
Mike Maher (MM)	School Data Officer	Workforce Statistics Branch
Gavin Elias (GE)	Senior IMS Programme Manager	Workforce Statistics Branch
Sarah Angel (SA)	Snr. Pupil Information Policy Manager	School Information & Improvement Branch
Catrin Morris (CMo)	Senior Welsh in Education planning Officer	Welsh in Education Planning Branch
Stephen Hughes	Principal Statistician - Head of School Statistics	KAS
Richard Haithcock	Head of Renew and Reform	Curriculum, Assessment & School Improvement
Alex Ingram	Head of Assessment & Tests	Curriculum, Assessment & School Improvement
Rebecca Sayce	ALN Policy Manager	ALN
Rachel Thomas	ALN Policy Manager	ALN
Alison Tang (AT)	Personalised Assessment Technical Manager	Tests Branch
Julie McFenton (JM)	Senior Technical Delivery Manager	Hwb Service Branch
Local authorities and other government departments		
Rodel Currie (RC)	Cardiff Council	
Rhian Rickard-Frost	Cardiff Council	
Lewis John	Caerphilly County Borough Council	
Justin Denney	Ceredigion Council	
Adam Irvine (AI)	Ceredigion Council/Teacher Centre	
Sarah Irvine	Ceredigion Council	
Merlyn Cooper	Ceredigion Council	
Jayne Thomas	Neath Port Talbot Council	
Adam Hampson	Denbighshire County Council	
Deniz Kilic	Powys County Council	
Kevin Price (KP)	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	
John Tratnik (JT)	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	
Aled Rees	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	
Mike Jones (MJ)	City and County of Swansea Council	
Sara Herbert	Vale of Glamorgan Council	
HM Government		

Gerard Hassett	Department for Education
Software suppliers	
Sam Chatburn-Jones	Access
Steve Foster	Access
Dan Searle	Arbor
Zarina Khan	Bromcom
Frank Osayande	Bromcom
Marcus Le Brocq (MLB)	Caci
Phil Jones (PJ)	Capita ONE
Deborah Green (DG)	Capita ONE
Ian Ashcroft (IA)	Capita ONE
Niranjan Yedamakanti	Capita ONE
Sarah Chandler (SC)	Go4Schools
Cerys Furlong	Grouped
Andrew Rosser	iTeach
Nick Masefield	Method4
Tom Jones	ParentPay
Heidi Partridge	ParentPay
Richard Avery	ParentPay
Jim Haywood (JH)	ParentPay
Paul Walton (PW)	ParentPay
Ruth Vincent (RV)	ParentPay
Yvonne Killick (YK)	ParentPay
Jonathan Clatworthy	Wonde
Chris Wilson	Wonde

2. Introductions and apologies

GT opened the meeting.

GT informed the forum attendees the meeting would be recorded.

3. Minutes of 7 February 2023 meeting and actions

The minutes of the previous meeting from 7 February 2023 were agreed as an accurate record by the forum.

GT gave updates on the open actions from previous meeting:

Actions **SDF – 441, 448, 459, 464** and **465** have been closed.

Actions **SDF- 444, 445, 456, 457, 458, 463** and **466** remain open.

Actions **SDF – 454, 462** and **467** will be covered under the ALN agenda item.

4. 2223.3.n development update

4.1 Attendance data collections

GE an issue has been identified concerning NDC and Attendance, the virus scanner used by DEWi blocked a number of files though it would appear to the school that they had uploaded correctly.

The schools are being identified - the issue primarily concerns local authorities though suppliers should be aware of the problem.

Also, a validation issue has been identified concerning whether a 'ULN' flag or a 'unique learner number' flag was expected on a data element. The fix is being finalised and new XSLT file sets will be provided for suppliers.

The original deadlines are being reviewed to take these issues into account.

4.2 National data collection (NDC)

GE confirmed that all schools apart from special are required to complete the NDC return.

5. 2324.1.n development update

5.1 Post-16

GE modular CBDS will be updated over the coming weeks, an initial draft version had previously been released.

The main changes will be updating the post 16 learning providers and post 16 programmes list lookup tables.

Changes to school language categorisation to be discussed as separate item.

5.2 School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC)

GT - No significant changes, some tidying up of validation rules, but no new data or changes to the scope.

A spreadsheet tool has been shared with LAs to help schools collate and record supply data for the aggregated element for the 2024 collection - for schools to start from the 1st of September recording the data where it is expanded to include supply agencies and local authorities supply.

The removal of workforce data from PLASC is under review and plan will be confirmed at next SDF meeting.

Changes to school language categorization to be discussed as separate item.

6. 2324.2.n development update

6.1 Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC)

GE PLASC and EOTAS development intended to be done in second-half of July, early August.

XSLTs to be released mid to late August prior to start of academic year - no fundamental changes to PLASC or EOTAS.

Changes to school language categorization to be discussed as separate item.

JH queried the release of the specification.

GE the specification is expected to be released within the next month.

6.2 Educated Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS)

See above.

7. School language categorisation

CM - a review of schools in Wales identified that approximately 100 would change to a different category the remaining 1300 or so will go directly from remain as Welsh medium or English medium and so forth.

There is a medium term intention to consider whether there is a need to capture language data at pupil level in conjunction with a potential Welsh Language education bill amongst other things.

A steering group for the categorisation policy which includes the 8 local authorities that will be affected the most by this policy and the 8 local authorities who have noted this as a priority in terms of developing their Welsh in education strategic plan has been established.

The group has been discussing the schools that will record in more than one category and what other monitoring and data collection could be done by local authorities to ensure an accurate reflection of provision.

There has been discussion on the descriptors that will go with the category titles to ensure those are clear for local authorities and for schools.

GE - a proposal around this has been shared with suppliers and asked for feedback on developing this by September.

JT queried how schools should capture the data?

CM currently this would be decided at local authority level – though a Wales wide remit could be discussed by the steering group.

SA there is also existing guidance available for schools.

CM technical guidance in relation to PLASC will be updated.

PJ asked for confirmation that this was at school level only?

GE confirmed this for the coming year.

JH - unlikely it would be ready for September but expected it would be ready for the first relevant collection.

RV queried the timeframe for the final requirement? GE expected this to be available imminently.

8. Performance reporting update

SA - a plan of activity looking at future qualifications, data, how it is reported and how schools should look at and analyse the data is still in development.

The interim measures that were introduced in 2019 will continue to be used until the successors are in place.

PW will there be a review of the qualifications with a view to developing new qualifications? Are any changes such as to GCSEs and the change of grade sets to 9 to 1 that happened in England anticipated?

AI 28 June Qualifications Wales to publish their final decisions on reformed GCSEs which will be for first teaching September 2025 and first awarding in 2027.

This follows 3 consultations which confirmed that the reformed qualifications would maintain the GCSE brands and the grading will stay the same with pass grades of a starter G.

There will be a new configuration of GCSE qualifications within the suite.

[Learners in Wales to study new Made-for-Wales GCSEs from 2025 | Qualifications Wales](#)

[Made-for-Wales GCSEs | Qualifications Wales](#)

PW are the points behind those grades expected to stay the same? SA stated that this is under review.

ACTION SDF-468: WG to circulate Qualifications Wales decisions on reformed GCSEs.

9. Curriculum for Wales

RH gave an update on implementation, currently Curriculum for Wales has been introduced in all primary schools and around half of secondary schools. In September 2023 this extends to every secondary school in Wales for years 7 and 8 phasing up in a year on year basis.

There is a current focus on supporting schools with implementation.

There will be a full formative evaluation beginning in autumn.

An evaluation plan will be published in July to set out broad plans for formative evaluation.

There will be a national system of sample based assessments to help with monitoring at a national level learners achievement and learners progression.

AI gave an update on assessment.

JD queried if there is a time frame for providing guidance on summative assessment tracking and how it can feed into centralised systems?

Particularly in relation to summary assessment of a child for the purposes of vulnerable assessment profiles and ALN.

AI there were no current plans but acknowledged there is an issue and the matter would be given further thought.

10. Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (“the ALN Act”) implementation update and the Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021

RS the ALN implementation is underway with positive feedback from ESTYN and other stakeholders. A four year formative evaluation of ALN implementation began at the start of the year that will seek feedback from practitioners across the system initially through a survey with subsequent qualitative data later in the year.

PLASC 2023 ALN data showed a continuous decrease in ALN and SEN learners but an increase in IDPs.

After feedback from stakeholders implementation has been extended from three to four years.

For children who were due to move to the system from September 2023 to August 2024, this will now be from September 2023 to August 2025 – with the exception for children in year 6 and year 10 in the 2023/24 school year, who will have to be given an IDP or no IDP notice during that school year to facilitate transition.

SEN fields now need to be removed for the January 2026 PLASC rather than 2025.

There will be ongoing discussions with practitioners, LAs and other stakeholders on future ALN data collection requirements.

The working group will be meeting in due course.

The outstanding ALN actions are currently being addressed.

Grant terms and conditions for the third year of the online IDP development have been issued to local authorities.

ACTION SDF-469: WG to circulate IDP terms and conditions of grant.

11. Sex and gender identity related data

JG gave an update on the MA being prepared for the Minister.

There was a discussion on the potential difficulties and challenging timescale related to the changes.

12. UPN generator

GE Introduced the item and outlined a problem concerning the duplication of UPNs in relation to Hwb and user accounts. It is not possible for the UPN generator to create duplicate numbers (confirmed by GH DfE).

However, on occasion UPNs have been duplicated for different learners.

AT elaborated on this adding that two different learners at different schools in different age groups had the same UPN number.

PJ this maybe be related to a historical problem that has been resolved.

JH queried if this had been raised with the supplier as it should not be possible for a duplication to occur as a system error.

AT queried if there would be audit logs.

JH confirmed there would be audit logs.

JM there had been recent cases and would provide details.

MJ this has happened at Swansea – usually due to human error.

JH asked to be provided with case numbers to monitor the issue.

13. Any other business

Nothing was raised.

13.1 Next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to be arranged for 3 October 2023. and will take place between 13:30 and 15:00.