



Annual Report
& Accounts
2020-2021



The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

- ▲ nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local authorities
- ▲ primary schools
- ▲ secondary schools
- ▲ special schools
- ▲ pupil referral units
- ▲ all-age schools
- ▲ independent schools
- ▲ further education
- ▲ independent specialist colleges
- ▲ adult learning in the community
- ▲ local authority education services for children and young people
- ▲ initial teacher education
- ▲ Welsh for adults
- ▲ work-based learning
- ▲ learning in the justice sector

We also:

- ▲ report to Senedd Cymru and provide advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the Welsh Government and others
- ▲ make public good practice based on inspection evidence

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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This document has been translated by Trosol (English to Welsh).

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Chief Inspector's foreword



The COVID-19 pandemic has changed people's lives on an unprecedented scale. It has had a huge impact on economies and caused major disruption to education systems worldwide and in Wales. The pandemic has tested our resilience and adaptability especially that of learners and their parents and carers. In particular, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff working in education and training, and all our stakeholders for the way they have dealt with and continue to deal with the current crisis.

At Estyn, the transition to remote working for all staff in spring 2020 went smoothly and continued throughout the year. We rapidly adjusted our work programme, suspending inspections and other visits, and diverting our resources to work collaboratively with the Welsh Government, regional consortia, local authorities and other stakeholders to develop the guidance, tools and support needed to help learning continue. We have contributed to almost all aspects of the national plan to support wellbeing and to ensure pupils can continue learning while they were unable to attend their usual school, PRU, college or other education and training provider. We have published a range of guidance to help educators face the challenges of the pandemic, including thematic reports and sector insights on supporting Wales to keep learning. This report provides details of that work and those publications.

During the year we also made 1,332 engagement phone calls or visits to nearly all primary, secondary, all age and special schools, and PRUs. We discussed their views about how they supported learners including vulnerable learners, about how they put into practice guidance to support pupils' learning, and about the local and regional support they received since the start of the pandemic. We also conducted pastoral calls and visits to maintained schools in a statutory category. In the post-16 sector also, we made engagement calls to all providers and partnerships to discuss approaches to continuing learning, including blended learning, and how providers and partnerships were providing support for learner wellbeing and engagement.

Sharing interesting and innovative practice has never been more important. This year, we published full effective practice case studies and shorter cameos relating to how providers were coping with the pandemic. We also published thematic reports in response to the Minister's annual remit letter. We published extensive and timely summaries of developments relating to the pandemic based on the evidence gathered from engagement calls and visits. At the request of the Welsh Government, we wrote letters to all local authorities and regional consortia capturing our conclusions on their work based on our engagement with stakeholders. We published a report based on the letters in January 2021 called '[Local authorities' and consortia support for schools and PRUs in response to COVID-19](#)'.

My Annual Report for the 2019-2020 academic year was launched in December 2020 and includes sector reports that provide a review of strengths and areas for development across education and training in Wales for the first part of the year as well as a thematic section on the impact of the pandemic during the second half of the academic year. One of our most downloaded thematic reports in 2020-2021 was [‘Preparing for the Curriculum for Wales – case studies and cameos from secondary, all-age and special schools’](#). It supports schools that are continuing to consider their planning for Curriculum for Wales, highlighting how they can build on strengths and remove barriers.

We are committed to continuing to support education reform and to helping strengthen and improve the Welsh education system. In spring 2021, we held the first in a series of webinars to help schools prepare for the Curriculum for Wales.

We are also committed to listening to and learning from our stakeholders. During the year, we continued to hold stakeholder fora, headteacher reference group meetings, and updates for Registered Inspectors through online meetings. We also strengthened our stakeholder engagement by setting up new parents and carers reference group, a teacher forum, and a youth work services forum.

Considering the circumstances, I am pleased that Estyn’s Civil Service people survey results in 2020 indicate that we retain a highly engaged workforce. Our engagement index places us fifth highest in engagement of the 106 departments completing the survey.

This is my last annual report and accounts as Chief Inspector and as always I am tremendously proud of my colleagues who have worked professionally and enthusiastically throughout this particularly challenging year. I would once again like to thank them for our significant achievement in 2020-2021 and also thank all our stakeholders for your continued support and feedback.

Take care and stay safe.

Meilyr Rowlands

Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales and Accounting Officer

The Accounting Officer authorised these financial statements in section 3 of this report for issue on 5th July 2021.

Section 1

The Performance Report



1.1 Overview

Our purpose

Estyn is Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. Our mission is to support excellence for all learners in Wales. We do this by providing an independent, high-quality inspection and advice service to the Welsh Government and the citizens of Wales. We are independent of, but funded by, the Welsh Government (section 104 of the Government of Wales Act 1998).

The COVID-19 pandemic changed people's lives, had a huge impact on economies and posed major challenges to education systems worldwide. In this time of crisis, the focus of our work has been on informing the development of national policy, supporting the education system to deliver continuity of learning, and contributing to the recovery of the Welsh education system.

Our activities

A strategic overview setting out our mission, vision and values together with our three strategic objectives is available on our website. The '[about us](#)' section on our website further explains the work we do in more detail.

Details of our [inspector roles](#) can be found on our website along with our [organisational structure](#).

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act

The Act sets out a shared purpose to achieve a better and lasting quality of life for us all. Although the duty does not apply to us (we are not a listed public body for the purposes of the Act), we nonetheless fully support the spirit of the Act. **Annex 2** of this report details how we contribute to the Act and how we continue to build the wellbeing goals and sustainable development principle into our governance and our operational delivery. The Annex references key projects, reports, survey results, policy and guidance, case studies, thematic reports, blogs and many other activities.

Performance summary

Each year we publish an [Annual Plan](#), which sets out the key activities for the year that support the delivery of our mission, objectives and reflect how we deliver our work.

Our plan for 2020-2021 was adjusted to meet the COVID-19 situation. We necessarily reduced some of our usual business activities such as inspection on which we report performance but continued to measure and monitor performance throughout the year to help:

- evaluate the effectiveness of our processes
- learn from experience
- improve performance
- make resource allocation decisions

'Achievement against performance indicators' is monitored on a quarterly basis by the our Strategy Board and the results are published throughout the year on our website.

Our Annual Report and Accounts 2019-2020 were produced within statutory timescales and Estyn's annual resource accounts were not qualified by external audit.

In 2020-2021, we achieved our expected performance level in most areas. The indicator gauge below indicates our level of performance throughout the report.



Performance:

not met	partially met	substantially met	met
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Key events during the year included

Summer 2020

Following the suspension of all inspection activity as result of the pandemic, we published advice for school and PRU leaders on how to continue with school and PRU business. In collaboration with the Welsh Government, regional consortia and ADEW we released 'Developing Approaches to Support Distance Learning'.

We published a range of guidance to help educators face the challenges of the pandemic, including thematic reports and sector insights on supporting Wales to keep learning. In conjunction with the four regional consortia we released 'Models of blended Learning' guidance to help returning to school from September.

Post-16 link inspectors made remote calls to leaders in all providers and partnerships about how they were supporting the wellbeing of learners and staff and continuing with learning.

We re-launched our website with a new design, layout and functionality.

Autumn 2020

We made 593 engagement phone calls to a broad sample of primary, secondary, all-age and special schools, and PRUs. We asked for their views about the local and regional support they received since the start of term, and how they supported vulnerable learners and put into practice guidance to support pupils' learning.

We also began pastoral visits to maintained schools in statutory category.

We resumed our stakeholder fora, but through online meetings, and also recommenced our headteacher reference group and termly updates for Registered Inspectors.

Post-16 link inspectors continued to make remote engagement calls to all providers and partnerships to discuss approaches to continuing learning, including blended learning, and how providers and partnerships were providing support for learner wellbeing and engagement.

We continued to publish blogs, FAQs, and improvement resources to support education and training.

We strengthened our stakeholder engagement by setting up a parents and carers reference group and a teacher forum.

Spring 2021

We hosted 19 events including stakeholder events and training courses (40 throughout the year).

We held the first in a series of webinars to help schools prepare for the Curriculum for Wales.

We met with representatives from youth work services in a new forum.

We invited teachers, tutors, trainers and assessors from the post-16 sectors to take part in four online forums to discuss remote and blended learning. We published three post-16 thematic reports – on partnerships between schools and with colleges for 16 to 19-year-olds, developments in remote and blended learning practice and support for learner mental health and emotional wellbeing.

We held our annual staff conference which focussed on well-being.

We continued to publish improvement resources and collaborate with stakeholder to support education and training. In conjunction with Edge Foundation, we contributed to Inspection across the UK: how the four nations intend to contribute to school improvement.

We continued with engagement calls – 634 made to maintained schools (including pupil referral units). We also made engagement calls to all post-16 providers and partnerships.

We sent individual letters to local authorities and the four regional consortia, capturing our conclusions based on our wide engagement with stakeholders.

1.2 Performance analysis

How we dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic

In response to the COVID-19 situation, we established and continued to keep foremost in our minds the following four priorities:

- the health and safety of our staff
- the wellbeing of all learners and the continuity of their learning
- the support needed by the leaders, teachers and other staff of the Welsh education system
- the maintenance of effective strategic and operational running of our organisation

We quickly developed a flexible strategy that covered the following five stages of response – **resolve, resilience, re-imagining, return and reform**.

Stage 1: Resolve – addressing the immediate health threat

Throughout March 2020, the impact of COVID-19 on the UK began to unfold. We suspended all of Estyn's inspection activity and joint inspections of non-maintained nursery settings with Care Inspectorate Wales from 16 March. Subsequently, the Welsh Government closed schools (except to provide care for the children of key workers and for vulnerable pupils) from Monday 23 March 2020.

At this time the decision was made to move all our staff to home working. Throughout the crisis, a prime concern was ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff. All our established meetings and governance structures continued remotely by digital means. We increased the frequency of our internal communications, established additional meetings of our senior management team and worked closely with our trade unions (FDA and PCS). We also increased our meetings with the education professional associations and trade unions, including ASCL, NAHT, NEU, NASUWT and UCAC, as well as bringing forward our usual joint meeting.

We ensured that all staff knew what they were supposed to do personally in terms of their work programme to ensure the completion of all inspection and thematic reports. Inspectors were encouraged where possible to move forward their research enquiry work (originally timetabled for our transition year, commencing September 2020). We also enabled individual staff to volunteer, for example to support local schools or authorities where they were able to do so.

A new approach to external communication was required. HMCI thanked education staff across Wales for their work under these difficult circumstances by video. We explained clearly on our website and through direct communication with education providers and our other stakeholders that we would not be promoting our publications such as thematic reports or provider inspection reports during this period, although these would still appear on our website. We did this to minimise the amount of information that leaders and others had to process, so they could give their full attention to tackling the immediate crisis.

Stage 2: Resilience – Supporting continuity of learning across education and training in Wales

During this second stage, our main priority was supporting the Welsh Government 'Continuity of learning' programme. This priority constituted a 'new purpose' for the organisation and was communicated clearly to staff.

The Welsh Government sought our support for providing 'Continuity of learning' for the vast majority of children and young people who were now not at school. This was a major programme of work, consisting of four Underlying Principles (UPs) and, initially, 12 'Deliverables' (Ds). In addition to Estyn and the Welsh Government, the programme involved local authorities and regions. We were asked to lead on two strands (UP2 – inclusion, and D7 – support for school leaders on how best to continue with school business) and to contribute to most of the other strands.

We established internal workgroups, involving most of our inspectors, some corporate staff, and all managers, as well as governance and accountability structures to manage these work-streams. Quick progress was made with the various work-streams and our support for all the strands was very well received.

Advice for schools and PRU leaders on continuing with school business (Deliverable 7) was published on 23 April 2020, on the Welsh Government website and [our website](#). School and PRU leaders are able to use this advice to build on what they've already achieved or as a reminder or reassurance. The advice included [Supporting continuity of learning for children and young people, as part of support to keep Wales learning](#).

We worked closely with local authorities and regional consortia to design a self-evaluation process for them to consider how they were supporting vulnerable learners. We used their feedback to identify examples of strong practice and areas where they needed more support or guidance in a report that we shared with ADEW and the Welsh Government.

We supported Welsh Government childcare colleagues and liaised with the Childcare Wales Learning and Working Mutually (CWLWM) consortium partners, who collectively form the key stakeholder organisations who support childcare in Wales, as well as Social Care Wales and Care Inspectorate Wales.

We offered our support to the post-16 and independent sectors. The Welsh Government published a '[Post-16 Resilience Plan for the Post-16 sector](#)' in May 2020 and established several task and finish groups to support the key delivery areas of the plan, involving working closely with Estyn and a wide range of post-16 stakeholders and organisations. We were asked to chair the group developing [guidance to support A-level provision in school sixth forms and further education colleges](#). We also contributed to work on developing [blended learning guidance for the post-16 sectors](#) and we continued to be part of a group looking at supporting wellbeing. Alongside this ongoing advice, we also published a range of cameos to bring to life how post-16 providers have approached their work during the crisis.

Stage 3: Re-imagining

On the 3 June 2020, the Minister for Education announced her wish for the increasing of operation of schools from 29 June 2020 and for further education colleges to re-open for certain groups of learners from 15 June 2020. Schools increased their operation for the last three weeks of the summer term in most local authorities, with three authorities adding a fourth week of schooling and one local authority continuing to only provide care due to a local outbreak.

At the request of the Director of the Education Department, Welsh Government, HMCI joined a group called 'COVID-19 response: Evidence for operation of schools – middle tier' to develop principles for making the decision on when and how schools should increase their operations.

Having contributed to the Continuity of learning programme, the next stage of our work was to re-establish contact with individual providers and services – a 'keeping in touch' strategy. We started with those needing the most support – providers causing concern. We did this carefully and sensitively and this approach was highly appreciated by those we contacted. We also built on the existing good relationships that we have with local authorities, further education colleges, work-based learning providers and adult learning partnerships through our link inspector contacts. In addition, we had regular contact with the new Initial Teacher Education (ITE) partnerships. This 'keeping in touch' allowed us to gather intelligence that we could then collate and feed back to the Welsh Government. We produced 'summary reports' based on these engagement phone calls, which were sent to the Welsh Government on 2 June 2020, 19 June 2020, 7 July 2020 and 17 July 2020 to provide independent, objective evidence on how schools have dealt with the challenges of the current crisis to support policy decision-making.

The 'keeping in touch' work was based on and benefited from the training and piloting we had done in the previous financial year on 'engagement visits'. Following our decision to suspend inspection on 16 March 2020, we considered whether engagement visits, which we intended to continue to pilot during the summer term 2020, should continue and whether this would be particularly useful during these circumstances. We made the decision to replace the engagement visits with phone calls. The focus of the engagement also changed, with a focus on how schools were coping rather than on curriculum reform, so that we could identify general challenges and support schools.

Towards the end of the summer term, the Welsh Government asked us to facilitate a group of headteachers and ADEW members to identify and publish a document to illustrate different models of full school opening – [Arrangements for September 2020 Planned approaches across maintained schools and PRUs](#). The focus was to share practical information/strategies to help schools and PRUs to help to minimise social contact between groups of pupils and staff, as the biggest challenge facing schools in returning to full operation in September.

Since March 2020, schools and other providers in Wales have opened or closed a number of times for all learners. This has obviously impacted on our operations and Annual Plan 2020-2021.

Stage 4: Return – restarting our work

In September 2020, schools and other providers opened to all learners with some operating a phased return with flexibility to focus on priority groups. Post-16 learners remained at home for the week after half term in November 2020 as part of the national ‘firebreak’.

All secondary schools and colleges in Wales moved to online remote learning for the last week of term before Christmas with many primary schools also closed this week. Wales went into a new lockdown on 20 December 2020. All post-16 learning continuing online from the start of the spring term 2021, except for the most vulnerable learners and those needing to attend for examinations. All schools across Wales also closed at the start of this term and moved to online remote learning, with the exception of provision for vulnerable children and children of critical workers.

Learners in further education colleges and work-based learning providers returned on site to complete assessments to demonstrate occupational or professional competence from 22 February 2020. A phased return of foundation phase pupils began on 22 February 2021 with all remaining primary school pupils and secondary pupils in qualification Years 11 and 13 able to return to learning on site on 15 March 2021. Other secondary years were able to return for check-ins. On 12 April all remaining learners were able to return to learning on site.

Autumn 2020 and Spring 2021 brought our engagement phone calls to the fore. We made calls to a broad sample of primary, secondary, all age and special schools, and PRUs. The main focus for each discussion was the wellbeing of pupils, staff and senior leaders. We asked for their views about the local and regional support they received since the start of term, and how they supported vulnerable learners and put into practice guidance to support pupils’ learning. We also began pastoral visits to maintained schools in statutory category.

In addition to publishing blogs and FAQs, we continued to publish improvement resources and collaborate with stakeholders to support education and training during the COVID-19 pandemic. [Arrangements for September 2020 Planned approaches across maintained schools and PRUs](#) was published in September 2020 and termly reports were published that summarised the findings from our engagement phone calls. In conjunction with Edge Foundation, we contributed to [Inspection across the UK: how the four nations intend to contribute to school improvement](#). We continued to publish thematic reports in Autumn 2020 and Spring 2021 including:

- [Preparing for the Curriculum for Wales – case studies and cameos from secondary, all-age and special schools](#)
- [Local authority and regional consortia support for schools and PRUs in response to COVID-19](#)
- [Post-16 partnerships](#)
- [Support for learners’ mental health and emotional wellbeing](#)
- [Developments in remote and blended learning practice](#)

In Autumn 2020 we resumed our stakeholder fora and our headteacher reference group and further strengthened our stakeholder engagement by setting up a parents and carers reference group and a teacher forum, all conducted through online meetings. We also resumed our termly updates for Registered Inspectors and held focus groups with post-16 colleagues. During Spring 2021 we met with representatives from youth work services in a new forum.

We held our first-ever webinar focusing on A level Welsh language in Autumn 2020 and held the first in a series of webinars to help schools prepare for the Curriculum for Wales in Spring 2021. Also, in Spring 2021, we held our annual all staff conference 'Feeling good and functioning well' focusing on wellbeing and resilience.

Stage 5: Reform – Advising on and contributing to long-term education reform

We have continued to provide the Welsh Government with advice on its education reform programme, including whether and how that programme will need to be adapted in light of the present situation.

In addition to our membership of the Welsh Government 'COVID-19 response' group, and ongoing full engagement with the 'continuity of learning', and 'Resilience Plan' for post-16 sectors, we are also part of the Welsh Government's research network group.

During 2020-2021, Estyn's support for education reform has included:

- focusing on curriculum reform in engagement calls and visits to schools and PRUs
- sharing the findings from engagement calls and visits through termly sector reports
- contributing to the Learning Forward planning process and operational delivery board
- jointly publishing 'The Journey to 2022'
- publishing a thematic report on secondary, special and all-age schools progress towards curriculum reform and holding a series of webinars to promote key messages
- publishing post-16 thematic reports on remote and blended learning practice and learner mental health and emotional wellbeing
- publishing blogs to share findings of thematic reports around curriculum reform and development
- contributing to policy forums
- providing a wide range of professional learning for all HMI to support and develop our approaches to inspecting curriculum and assessment
- monitoring actions taken and planning next steps for our support for curriculum reform through our curriculum project board
- regular support and attendance at Welsh Government's curriculum and assessment groups.
- regular support and attendance at the Welsh Government's Resilience Plan steering group and other working groups

We will continue to use all the work we do with education and training providers to encourage a strong focus on self-evaluation and reflection on how their provision has and will continue to adapt and change.

Performance against strategic objectives

Strategic Objective 1:

Provide public accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales

Our strategic three-phased 'transition plan' previously published in our [Annual Plan 2019-2020](#) was based on recommendations for Estyn in the independent '[Learning Inspectorate](#)' report. This transition plan, though needing some adaptation, placed us in a strong position to respond to the current crisis.

No inspections were carried out during summer or autumn term 2020. One Welsh for Adults sector inspection took place spring 2021.

Sixty-three inspection reports were published in summer 2020 following inspections that took place the previous term. No inspection reports were published in Autumn 2020. One further new inspection report was published in Spring 2021, for the National Centre for Learning Welsh.

In terms of our performance measures:

None of our 64 published inspection reports required substantial amendment after publication as a result of challenge and all were published in a timely manner.



No inspections during summer or autumn term 2020 One inspection in Spring 2021, where the provider expressed satisfaction with their experience of inspection and with the reliability and independence of judgement.



No formal complaints received about the inspection process.



Maintained schools and PRUs

Phase one of the transition plan was that the 2020-2021 academic year would be a 'transition year' for maintained schools and PRUs. Inspections of a sample of schools were to be replaced by 'engagement visits' to all schools. The main focus of these one-day visits was to explore how schools are planning and preparing for curriculum reform and for education reform more broadly.

The plan to partially suspend maintained school and PRU inspections for one year from September 2020 was not changed. We used 2020-2021 as a transition year, undertaking engagement phone calls and some visits where it was safe and practicable to do so.

In 2020-2021, we made engagement phone calls to a broad sample of primary, secondary, all age and special schools, and PRUs. The main focus was the wellbeing of learners, staff and the provider's community. We also learnt about how providers are approaching particular challenges of engaging and supporting their learners and their communities during these difficult times. We used this information to provide evidence and to advise the Welsh Government at a national level to support their decision-making. The aim of these engagement phone calls and visits focused on the response to the impact of the pandemic.

	Summer 2020 ⁽¹⁾	Autumn 2020 ⁽²⁾	Spring 2021 ⁽²⁾	Total 2020-2021
All age schools	3	22	0	25
Maintained special	9	28	20	57
Primary	48	371	578	997
Pupil referral unit	5	19	14	38
Secondary	40	153	22	215
Total	105	593	634	1332

⁽¹⁾ Summer 2020 calls were pilot calls.

⁽²⁾ Numbers for autumn and spring refer to reports produced. All engagement visits/calls should result in one report. Some providers were called more than once. Providers in a federation received a single call.

1,332 engagement calls/visits carried out to maintained schools and pupil referral units

Non-maintained nursery settings

We paused our joint inspection programme of non-maintained nursery settings in March 2020 in line with our Estyn-wide arrangements in response to the pandemic. This pause in our joint core inspection activity has continued throughout the 2020-2021 financial year, although we resumed aspects of joint follow-up activity in two settings in need of focused improvement during spring 2021.

During the autumn and spring terms we spoke to leaders in two-thirds of non-maintained nursery settings to learn about their experiences during the pandemic. The focus for each discussion was the wellbeing of children and staff and how settings supported learning and re-established provision following lockdown. We [published a report](#) capturing our findings in March 2021.

Independent schools

We did not carry out annual monitoring visits in 2020-2021. However, we have engaged with all independent schools and colleges at least once, undertaking 117 engagement phone calls with providers in this sector during the financial year. The focus of the calls were on the impact of the pandemic on the wellbeing of learners, the staff and the wider school community. The reports we produced, which were shared with the Welsh Government and other stakeholders, contained interesting cameos and case studies on how providers have responded to the particular challenges of engaging and supporting their learners and adapting their provision to include remote learning.

We have conducted a few visits to schools to respond to the Welsh Government for material change requests and to consider requests for registration. We have also carried out focus visits to a few schools to respond to safeguarding concerns.

Post-16 sectors

We paused our inspection arrangements in the post-16 sector from March 2020 in response to the pandemic. During the summer term 2020 our post-16 link inspectors made remote engagement calls to all providers. The main focus of these calls was the wellbeing of learners, staff and the provider's community, and we learned about the approaches they were taking to their work during this time. We used the information gathered to provide advice to the Welsh Government rather than judging or reporting on individual providers, and captured interesting insights about how providers and partnerships supported education and training in cameos on our website.

During the autumn and spring terms we engaged regularly with all post-16 providers, undertaking remote calls to leaders and managers. The calls focused on the impact of the pandemic on learner mental health and wellbeing and on approaches to remote and blended learning. We [published a report](#) capturing our findings from the engagement calls in the autumn term in December 2020. In January 2021, we conducted staff focus groups to find out how staff in post-16 providers have responded to the move to remote and blended learning and published two thematic reports in March 2021 on [remote and blended learning](#) and on [learner mental health and wellbeing](#).

Initial teacher education (ITE)

During the autumn term we engaged with ITE partnerships via our link inspector calls. These informal discussions were an opportunity to discuss how the partnerships were adapting their provision because of the pandemic and capture interesting approaches to their work. We also hosted our stakeholder forum with a particular focus on distance learning. In the spring term, we continued with our link calls but also undertook a virtual ‘try out’ with our peer inspectors. This was an opportunity to test our inspection methodology and gather feedback from ITE partnerships.

Local government education services

Our focus in the autumn term was on local authorities’ and regional consortia’s support for their schools and pupil referral units and their vulnerable learners during the pandemic period. This work resulted in us sending individual letters to all 22 local authorities and the four regional consortia, capturing our conclusions based on our engagements with officers and elected members. We also used the information from the engagement calls to schools and pupil referral units and the views of parents/carers, school leaders, governors, teachers and support staff and pupils through national surveys to inform this work.

We published an overarching thematic report based on all these engagements in January 2021. The report [‘Local authorities’ and consortia support for schools and PRUs in response to COVID-19’](#) directed the Welsh Government to work with regional consortia, local authorities and other partners to address the recommendations.

During the spring term, our work with local authorities and regional consortia focused on their responses to the recommendations from the thematic report.

We also carried out improvement conferences in three local authorities identified as causing significant concern in their local government education services inspection.

We published the following guidance relating to the COVID-19 pandemic during the 2020-2021 financial year based on evidence gathered from engagement calls, including cameos of interesting practice.

Advice and guidance published relating to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2021

Advice for school and PRU leaders and governors on how to continue with school and PRU business during the Covid-19 pandemic	April 2020
Key principles to support the continuation of school and PRU business	April 2020
Supporting wellbeing and learning during COVID-19 – approaches from primary schools	June 2020

<u>Supporting wellbeing and learning during COVID-19 – approaches from PRUs</u>	June 2020
<u>Supporting wellbeing and learning during COVID-19 – approaches from secondary schools</u>	June 2020
<u>Supporting wellbeing and learning during COVID-19 – approaches from special schools</u>	June 2020
<u>Cameos and ideas for continuity of school business during Covid-19</u>	July 2020
<u>Cameos and ideas from schools and PRUs on continuing with school business</u>	July 2020
<u>Insights into how independent schools and specialist colleges have responded during the COVID-19 pandemic</u>	July 2020
<u>Supporting wellbeing and learning during COVID-19 – approaches from adult learning in the community partnerships</u>	July 2020
<u>Supporting wellbeing and learning during COVID-19 – approaches from further education colleges</u>	July 2020
<u>Supporting wellbeing and learning during COVID-19 – approaches from work-based learning providers</u>	July 2020
<u>Arrangements for September 2020 Planned approaches across maintained schools and PRUs</u>	September 2020
<u>Engagement work: Primary sector update – autumn 2020</u>	December 2020
<u>Engagement work: Secondary sector update – autumn 2020</u>	December 2020
<u>Engagement work: All-age school sector update – autumn 2020</u>	December 2020
<u>Engagement work: Maintained special school and pupil referral unit (PRU) sector update – autumn 2020</u>	December 2020
<u>Engagement work: Post-16 sector update – autumn 2020</u>	December 2020
<u>Secondary sector interim report – January and February 2021</u>	March 2021
<u>Engagement work: Primary sector update – Spring Term 2021</u>	March 2021
<u>Engagement work: Non-maintained sector update – Spring Term 2021</u>	March 2021

Engagement work: Maintained special school and PRU sector update – Spring Term 2021	March 2021
Engagement work: Secondary sector update – Spring Term 2021	March 2021

We also published the following related blog posts.

Our support for Welsh education and training in the current climate	June 2020
Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) - how can schools support children and young people who live in difficult circumstances?	September 2020
Is your school one that puts families and communities at the heart of its work?	September 2020
Now learners have returned to schools and colleges, what part have we played and how will our role change in the future?	September 2020
What can schools and PRUs do to strengthen pupils' resilience?	September 2020
Working together to support teaching and learning during COVID-19	September 2020

And, we have contributed to the following publications.

In collaboration with Regional School Improvement Consortia, Central South Consortium, EAS, ERW, GWE Developing integrated approaches to support blended learning for the phased opening of schools	June 2020
In collaboration with Regional School Improvement Consortia, Central South Consortium, EAS, ERW, GWE Models of Blended Learning	?
In conjunction with Edge Foundation contributed to Inspection across the UK: how the four nations intend to contribute to school improvement	March 2021

We have also published thematic reports relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, which are listed under **strategic objective 2**.

Here are a selection of comments we have received regarding our reports, visits, and Estyn's response to the crisis following our work last year:

I have heard nothing but praise for Estyn during this period and how valuable they found your inspectors engagement in times of such uncertainty.

Welsh Independent Schools Council representative

Thank you for the collective advice and guidance today on returning to school in September, a precious document and valuable help.

(Feedback about the 'Arrangements for September 2020 planned approaches across maintained schools and PRUs' report)

School Chair of Governors

It was special to be able to show you around the school and to talk about what we've developed over the last few months.

I've thanked all the staff as I promised I would. People were complimentary about your manner with them and professional engagement. It means a lot to feel someone is genuinely interested in you and takes the time to have a quick chat. Hugely appreciated. Thank you.

Primary School headteacher

Throughout 2020-2021, we continued to engage with providers found to require [follow-up](#) at their core inspection. Due to the pandemic and the suspension of inspection activity in March 2020, inspectors did not visit providers in follow-up to monitor their progress formally.

Inspectors have supported providers in statutory follow-up through virtual conferencing. For example, HMI provided opportunities for the seven providers identified as needing statutory follow-up just before the pandemic to work with inspectors to agree a suitable post-inspection action plan. The school's leaders and local authority officers discussed the plan at a virtual meeting with HMI. For two

further schools, inspectors convened improvement conferences to strengthen the agreed action plans and take appropriate account of the changing situation.

Over the year, HMI have maintained virtual contact each half term with the 22 maintained schools and PRUs requiring special measures, in a pastoral capacity. In a few instances, where local conditions have allowed visitors on site, the HMI has made a short pastoral visit to the school or PRU. They visited classes where it was safe and appropriate to do so, and arranged socially distanced meetings with leaders, staff and pupils. In addition, HMI have maintained termly virtual engagement in a pastoral capacity with each of the 17 schools in significant improvement.

During the autumn term 2020, inspectors conducted 68 engagement calls or visits to maintained providers in statutory follow-up. During the spring term 2021, they made 74 pastoral calls or visits.

Estyn review and progress review

Due to the pandemic, we were not able to visit providers in Estyn review or progress review to monitor their progress. Following consultation with local authorities, in autumn 2020 we piloted a virtual panel arrangement for HMI and local authority officers to review the progress of these providers. We removed three providers from Estyn review (two secondary schools and one primary school) following discussion and agreement between HMI and the local authority. In spring 2021, we conducted further virtual reviews in 18 local authorities, resulting in agreement to remove 37 providers from Estyn review (25 primary schools, 11 secondary schools and one pupil referral unit). We reviewed a few providers across the different authorities where the panel agreed that the school had not made enough progress in addressing the recommendations from the core inspection. In six different authorities, the review panels decided to keep six primary schools and two secondary schools in monitoring for a further period of time.

We conducted a similar panel review with local authorities, to review the progress of non-maintained nursery setting in progress review. In Spring 2021, 14 non-maintained nursery settings were removed from progress review and two non-maintained nursery settings were removed from focused improvement.

Due to the pandemic, we were not able to visit providers or conduct desk-based reviews of the four post-16 providers in Estyn review. We have engaged with all post-16 providers across the year through engagement calls and through our remote thematic activity.

The tables below set out the number of providers going into and coming out of follow-up activity during the year.

Number of providers going into and coming out of follow-up, 2020-21					
Level of follow-up	In follow-up at the start of the year	Placed in follow-up from core during the year	Downgraded level of follow-up	Removed from follow-up during the year	In follow-up at the end of the year
Statutory and enhanced (special measures / significant improvement), focused improvement and re-inspection	45	0 ⁽²⁾	0	2	43
Estyn review / Estyn monitoring / Progress review / Local authority causing serious concern ⁽¹⁾	110	0 ⁽²⁾	0	54	56

⁽¹⁾ Includes only providers in progress review where Estyn had some involvement in the follow-up.

⁽²⁾ No core inspections happened during financial year 2020-2021.

56 providers removed from follow-up categories during the year.

Collaboration work

Our collaboration work over the course of the reporting period has included the following:

- We continued to liaise closely with other inspectorates to share intelligence and share approaches during the pandemic.
- We made two joint focused visits to independent schools causing concern with CIW.
- We collaborated with CIW on two focused improvement reviews of non-maintained nurseries, and held one joint panel meeting with CIW to review the progress of 18 non-maintained settings.
- We held multi-agency meetings for 12 secondary schools in special measures.
- We worked collaboratively with local authorities with 19 out of 22 local authorities having Estyn Review Panel Reviews for maintained schools, 10 local authorities for Non-Maintained Progress Review Panels, and two local authorities with regard to focused improvement.
- We joined two prison inspections led by HMI Prisons.

Inspection and validation

Despite pausing our intended plans to pilot our new inspection arrangements for schools and PRUs during summer 2020, we continued to develop our approaches to inspection. During the year, we engaged with a range of stakeholders, including our headteacher reference group, to make sure that our inspection arrangements take account of the impact of the pandemic as well as curriculum and additional learning needs reforms.

Strategic Objective 2:

Inform the development of national policy by the Welsh Government

In December 2020, we published [HMCI's 2019-2020 Annual Report on the quality of education and training in Wales](#).

The Report is web-based and accessible as a pdf document that can be read by online screen readers. It includes a sector reports section, that provides a review of strengths and areas for development across education and training in Wales. This sector part of the Report is based on inspection and other activity between September 2019 and March 2020.

With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic we decided to include a thematic section on the impact on the education and training sector in Wales from March to August 2020. We also published our engagement reports covering the autumn term on the same day as the Annual Report to provide a fully up-to-date picture of education and training in Wales.

HMCI Annual Report was published in December 2020, in line with the target date within our Annual Plan 2020-2021.



Evaluation of the Annual Report's digital reach unsurprisingly showed a decrease in engagement compared with the previous year, reflecting the difficult circumstances in which it was published. However, media coverage remained substantial.

During 2020-2021, we published 14 [thematic reports](#) on a range of topics in response to the [Minister's annual remit letter](#). A number of these reports related to the COVID-19 pandemic. These reports contained an overall total of 89 recommendations, with 29 recommendations for the Welsh Government.

All the 13 recommendations made to the Welsh Government in thematic reports published between April and December 2020 were accepted. Since 1 January 2021, the Welsh Government has altered its approach and has commented on the remaining 16 recommendations, rather than formally accepting or rejecting them.

All recommendations for improvement were accepted for implementation / commented on by the Welsh Government during the reporting period.

Thematic reports published in 2020-2021

Name	Date of publication
A level Welsh First Language	June 2020
Learner resilience - building resilience in primary schools, secondary schools and pupil referral units	July 2020
Community schools families and communities at the heart of school life	July 2020
Insights into how independent schools and specialist colleges have responded during the COVID-19 pandemic	July 2020
Business and social studies subjects at A level	August 2020
Celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion	October 2020
The Value of Youth Work Training	October 2020
Preparing for the Curriculum for Wales – case studies and cameos from secondary, all-age and special schools	November 2020
Local authority and regional consortia support for schools and PRUs in response to COVID-19	January 2021
Post-16 partnerships	January 2021
Welsh language acquisition: How Welsh-medium and bilingual settings and primary schools develop learners' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills	March 2021
English language and literacy in settings and primary schools	March 2021
Support for learners' mental health and emotional wellbeing	March 2021
Developments in remote and blended learning practice	March 2021

During 2020-2021, we continued to provide advice and support to the Welsh Government's Department of Education and the Department for Skills, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning as required, including participating in committees, working and advisory groups.

This participation included extensive involvement in supporting and providing guidance for Welsh Government's Continuity of Learning Plan and Post-16 Resilience Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Under strategic objective 1

we have listed **additional guidance** that we have published relating to the COVID-19 pandemic during the 2020-2021 financial year.

Throughout the year, senior management and HMI attended the Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Committee hearings:

- 17 September 2020 – Curriculum & Assessment (Wales) Bill
- 14 January 2021 – HMCI's Annual Report
- September 2020 - Oracy All - Party Parliamentary Group evidence session - How do other UK nations improve spoken language skills in schools?

Written evidence was given to the following Committee:

- CYPE – Curriculum & Assessment (Wales) Bill

We also used our extensive evidence base to respond to 37 consultations on a wide range of educational matters, including the Welsh Government's:

- Representatives for young people, and parents of children, lacking mental capacity
- Relaxation of School Reporting Requirements (Wales) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2021
- Draft Tertiary, Education and Research (Wales) Bill

The Welsh Government's consultation page can be found [here](#).

Consultation responses to other organisations include:

- Education Workforce Council: interim suspension orders
- Criminal Justice Joint Inspection programme - 2021-2023
- School categories according to Welsh-medium provision

You can view all our [consultation responses](#) on our website:

Responses to school reorganisation proposals¹

2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
43	33	30*

* received and responded to between September 2020 and end of March 2021

In 2020-2021, we responded to 30 school reorganisation proposals and concluded that all were likely to at least maintain educational standards and, in many cases, improve current educational provision. In one case, we commented that not enough clarity had been provided on the proposal.

Advice and support to the Welsh Government on other areas

In 2020-2021, we provided advice and support in the following other areas:

- responded and met all requests for advice in relation to independent schools and independent specialist colleges:
- 5 first registration visits to mainstream independent and independent special schools
- 16 material change visits
- 4 unannounced focused visits
- advice on an honours request

¹ Note: information calculated from 'date proposals received' in the school reorganisation log

Other events attended by inspectors

In addition, we attended ten virtual events during the year.

Date of event	Event Organiser	Details of event
01 June 2020	EAS	Secondary Headteacher meeting – virtual
04 June 2020	EAS	Secondary Headteacher meeting – virtual
11, 15 and 17 June 2020	EAS	Primary Headteacher meeting – virtual
17 June 2020		Webinar re: Coming to discuss purpose, priorities and phases of Inspectorate of Education's responses to the current crisis
20 October 2020	Public Health Wales	to be part of an expert panel for a Q&A session
11 December 2020	Aneurin Bevan University Health Board	Gwent Whole School Approach to Emotional Wellbeing Project
22 January 2021	CYDAG	To contribute and give an update on Estyn's annual remit and the work on the national evaluation and improvement resource
4 February 2021	Policy Forum Wales	To deliver a keynote address to the Policy Forum for Wales Keynote Seminar: Implementing the new curriculum in Wales
11 March 2021	British Council	Live event focusing on the quality of teaching and learning as both a measure and vehicle of Skills Systems effectiveness
25 March 2021	Westminster Education Forum	Keynote Seminar: The new Ofsted inspection framework - implementation progress, adapting to the impact of COVID-19, remote learning, and regulation of apprenticeship providers and FE colleges

Strategic Objective 3:

Build capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales

Information gathered from inspection and engagement work, and thematic survey work helps inform our building capacity work which includes effective practice conferences, stakeholder events, and publishing [improvement resources](#) on our website. Improvement resources include: [thematic reports](#), [effective practice](#) and [support to keep Wales learning](#).

During our engagement activity with schools and other providers throughout 2020-2021, we highlighted examples of interesting practice worthy of sharing. These examples were summarised into effective practice case studies. Initially, they were published on our website, supporting schools with remote learning and the numerous challenges of the pandemic. As the year progressed, further cameos (short summaries of notable practice), highlighted during engagement activity, were published on our website or included in our reports, and were designed to prompt thought and discussion among providers.

Education professionals and other stakeholders access our thematic report recommendations, guidance, including support to keep Wales learning, and effective practice case studies through a range of communication channels. We actively promote our resources through social media and our website using graphics and videos to boost engagement and attract the attention of busy headteachers, teachers and others who work in or support education and training.

One of our most popular thematic report in 2020-2021 was 'Preparing for the Curriculum for Wales – case studies and cameos from secondary, all-age and special schools'. It supports schools that are beginning to reconsider their planning for Curriculum for Wales, highlighting how they can build on strengths and remove barriers. We accompanied this report with a blog and series of webinars, which are continuing into autumn 2021.

21 effective practice case studies were published during 2020-2021, with 87,741 English and 9,299 Welsh page views for this area of the website during the financial year

92 cameos (short summaries) currently published on our website (as at May 2021) from further education colleges, work-based learning providers and adult learning in the community partnerships, with 5,692 English and 1,494 Welsh page views for this area of the website during the financial year

As a consequence of the pandemic, we moved to online events in 2020-2021.

We ran 40 events during the year with around 780 delegates attending in total. 32 stakeholder events (18 in 2019-2020). And 8 training activities for education and training professionals (29 in 2019-2020).

We have been on a learning curve in developing our approaches and value the feedback we receive from evaluation forms and use this to continually improve. We collated feedback from our training events and best practice conferences completed by delegates since October 2020, and received lots of positive feedback.

Here are some of the comments:

“It was very well organised and everyone had the chance to participate in the forum.”

“Thanks for keeping us up to date with developments in the sector and lovely to keep in touch with you all.”

“The session was very open. It was very interesting to hear different perspectives on how the last year has affected the sector.”

“Thank you, it felt [like] a 'wellbeing' lift as well as further instruction.”

92% of delegates indicated satisfaction in evaluation of our hosted events (100% for training events alone)



National Evaluation and Improvement Resource (NEIR)

During 2020-2021, we continued to support the development of the NEIR despite school-based piloting being paused during the pandemic. During this time, we worked with the Welsh Government to complete the following tasks:

- Aligning the digital platform to other Welsh Government platforms such as the professional learning journey (PLJ) resource, for example by structuring the way the platform works in the same way as other resources. This is to ensure that the resource is easy to use and accessible for all HwB users.
- Mapping alignment to other resources such as schools as learning organisations and the professional learning journey.
- Refining and reorganising prompts for the different aspects of the resource, that is leadership, teaching curriculum and wellbeing.
- Developing additional prompts to support schools and PRUs to evaluate and improve provision for blended learning.
- Developing interactive resources such as quizzes to support schools and PRUs to use the resource effectively with their staff and governors.
- Developing a set of frequently asked questions to ensure that messages about what the NEIR is and is not are clear and that myths in relation to evaluation and improvement are dispelled.
- Developing the resource bilingually.
- Strengthening the improvement content within the resource.
- Establishing draft criteria for capturing and quality assuring resources to populate the digital platform.

Peer inspectors

Peer inspectors (professional practitioners who have a managerial role in a school or provider) are an integral part of our inspection process in normal times. No peer inspectors were deployed as no inspections took place in the summer or autumn 2020 terms. However, we deployed two peer inspectors for the ITE 'try-out' in February 2021.

Link inspectors

Our system of link inspectors for further education, work-based learning, adult learning in the community, local authorities and regional consortia enabled us to maintain constructive working relationships with providers and share effective practice. They engaged with senior leaders to enable us to build our understanding of what is working well and the main challenges facing the respective organisations.

During the autumn term, our link work in local authorities and regional consortia focused on their work in supporting their learning communities through the pandemic. We captured their approaches in individual letters, which we sent to each local authority and regional consortia in January 2021. The work also contributed to an [overarching thematic report](#), which was also published in early January.

Celebrating excellent practice

This year, although we were unable to celebrate providers' excellence through a special awards evening, we still recognised their efforts. A framed certificate and letter from the Chief Inspector, as well as mention on our website, highlighted their success.

Our website

Making sure that our stakeholders – from education leaders and teachers to parents/carers – can find out about our work is one of our priorities. Taking advantage of a necessary upgrade to our website, we re-launched it with a new design, layout and improved useability. It's now much easier to search and discover our improvement resources: thematic reports, effective practice and all the support we published during the pandemic to keep Wales learning. Finding information about individual schools and other providers is also simpler. We always welcome feedback on our website as we continue to improve it.

1.3 How we deliver our work:

Building a better organisation and living our values

A great place to work

Throughout 2020-2021, we maintained our focus on being a well-run and efficient organisation that values its people, is seen as a great place to work and supports the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.



Our Employee Wellbeing and Engagement Group continued to identify, monitor and implement improvement actions relating to health and safety, wellbeing and engagement.

Our concern for the health and wellbeing of our people has been a priority area of focus. We reviewed our health and safety policies, published additional guidance and provided additional training, for example in relation to home working risk assessments, to support staff through the pandemic.

In September 2020 we signed up to the Time to Change Pledge. The Pledge underpins our commitment to recognising the importance of looking after our own and our colleagues' mental health. We are committed to taking action to embed mental health issues and awareness into everything we do and will continue to monitor progress to support this pledge. Our Time to Change Champions have established monthly coffee catch ups following the success of the 'Time to talk' sessions in February 2021.

During 2020-2021, we established a working group to develop our 'future ways of working'. This group, which included trade union representation, used feedback from all-staff surveys to help us understand how people were feeling and their experience of working through the COVID-19 pandemic, and reflect on how this might affect our future ways of working and culture.

We also took part in the Civil Service Pulse Survey in May 2020. Relative to the overall Civil Service response, we had favourable responses relating to the effectiveness of working arrangements and most of our people felt well supported during the COVID-19 pandemic. We followed this up with a survey to look at possible changes to the way we work and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The results gave us an insight into:

- the information and support they would like to receive as lockdown measures were relaxed
- positive changes people would like to see continued in the long-term

These insights have fed into the work being taken forward by the group.

Civil Service People Survey 2020:

Staff engagement score:
77% (civil service average was 66%)

Fifth highest engagement level of the 106 organisations completing the survey



The Engagement (People Survey) action plan has been developed by the Employee Wellbeing and Engagement Group and actions are being progressed.

Turnover for the year to date is 6.6% (compared to 7% in 2019-2020)

There were 8 leavers in the period: 6 inspectors and 2 corporate services members of staff

During 2020-2021, we also maintained our productive and professional relationship with the unions. We increased the frequency of meetings and worked collaboratively on key policies and risk assessments and guidance for safe use of office space and visits to providers. The FDA union sponsored the delivery of content for our staff conference on wellbeing, held virtually in January 2021.

Strengthening stakeholder engagement and overall communications

An [interim Stakeholder Engagement Strategy](#) was published in May 2020 and in light of the rapidly changing landscape it was updated in June 2021.

The activities and events set out below covered the following sectors:

- Non-maintained
- All-age schools
- Independent special, Independent mainstream, Independent specialist colleges
- ITE
- Federated schools
- PRU
- Primary
- Secondary
- Post-16

The following activities were carried out during 2020-2021:

Stakeholder meetings

We held more frequent meetings with a range of stakeholders to keep touch with the challenges facing professionals and get feedback to shape our approaches during the pandemic:

- the Welsh Government
- education unions
- representative organisations such as ADEW, Colegau Cymru and NTfW

Engagement work

We carried out engagement work with individual providers about their work during the pandemic:

- engagement calls
- link inspector discussions

We sought feedback in relation to experiences during the pandemic:

- questionnaires for staff, governors, school leaders, learners and parents during the autumn term
- teacher fora
- post-16 staff focus groups
- share positive letters from parents about their children's experience with the Welsh Government

Forged new links

We strengthened our structures to engage with key stakeholders on an ongoing basis:

- headteacher reference group to shape new inspection approaches for schools
- parent and carers reference group (171 members)
- carried out post-16 staff focus groups

Reviewed feedback mechanisms

We reviewed our questionnaires relating to schools during this year, though this work is not fully completed yet.

Re-started stakeholder fora and held webinars

We re-started our events programme: two webinars and 10 stakeholder fora, covering nearly all sectors during this period.

Digital channels

- We set up LinkedIn in autumn 2020
- We re-launched our website with new design and navigation

Social media

Engagement levels on social media are back to normal, with a revival since the initial dip at the beginning of the pandemic. This followed us resuming promotional posts about our work and sharing others' posts.

E-shots – Estyn update

Engagement with Estyn update e-shots continued to be positive and above the industry standard for the click-through rate to our website.

Learning together with organisations within Wales and our international partners

Each year we share practice and work collaboratively with a range of government organisations, inspectorates and other bodies involved in education inside and outside of Wales to develop our view of education systems across the United Kingdom and the world. Such joint work also progresses our own approaches to inspection and thematic working, supports our advice to the Welsh Government, and supports the implementation of government policy.

We work with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) and Audit Wales (AW). Together we are [Inspection Wales](#), a joint initiative between the four main inspection, audit and review bodies in Wales. During 2020-2021, the Heads of Inspectorates met virtually three times to oversee a shared programme of work and share responses to the pandemic.

We work informally with the Education Workforce Council, Qualifications Wales, the Wales Centre for Public Policy, and the Welsh Government's Knowledge and Analytical Services to share practice and information related to research topics on education and training in Wales. Regular meetings enable us to provide updates on our thematic review activities and engagement reports and discuss the research activity related to education and training priorities with the other national bodies.

The ability to arrange meetings virtually and attend webinars has enabled us to continue working closely with our peers in the UK and Ireland. We have held frequent meetings with our colleagues in the inspectorates of the UK and Ireland throughout the crisis. By working together effectively, the impact we can jointly have for people can be enhanced. This work has focused predominantly on the impact of the pandemic on education, training and wellbeing of learners, sharing practice on engaging with schools and providers, as well as supporting policy development during these unprecedented times.

As part of our commitment to support improvement by working with our peers, in 2020-2021 we continued to work collaboratively with members of the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates (SICI), which consists of 37 education inspectorates from across Europe. We have attended several workshops hosted online by SICI throughout the year, for example on how inspectorates have adapted their inspection and evaluation models during the pandemic, on remote teaching and learning and approaches to inspecting blended learning and assessment practices. In March 2021, we supported SICI by moderating a panel discussion on these areas of interest between five nations that was attended by around 115 delegates from around the world.

Despite the focus of recent times, we have also shared practice with our colleagues abroad in a wide range of areas. For example, we have shared our approaches to evaluating curriculum and provision for wellbeing in schools. We have established an 'Offshore' group with our colleagues in Ireland on youth work issues and inspection methodology in this field and have shared practice on models of inspection in the non-maintained sector.

New ways of working online have also allowed us to continue our work with the inspectorates of Estonia, Flanders, Malta, Cyprus, a secondary education provider in Spain and France's IH2EC on the "Better Inspection for Better Social Inclusion" (BIBESOIN) project. The project focusses on sharing practice and developing a self-evaluation and inspection framework to evaluate how mainstream schools ensure equity for children who are vulnerable to disadvantage. Since the start of the pandemic, the framework has been further enhanced to capture provision for vulnerable learners due to unexpected school closures, including access to specialist support and digital devices. The most recent virtual meeting, hosted by the Maltese inspectorate, focused on remote learning and reducing disparities in educational outcomes through digital learning and the use of educational games combined with artificial intelligence. We have made a significant contribution to the creation of the framework, which is in its fifth phase of development and ready for testing in schools in Cyprus, potentially, in 2021. Due to the pandemic, the online version of the toolkit will now not be available until 2022.

Skilled people

During the year, a number of organisational learning events took place including three professional learning weeks and an all-staff conference 'Feeling good and functioning well' focusing on wellbeing and resilience. However, our usual programme of learning and development activities was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Where possible we moved to virtual delivery.

The following professional development activities also took place in 2020-2021:

- induction for new joiners (adapted for virtual delivery)
- continued support to develop Welsh language skills
- focused activities to support people to adapt to the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and good mental health
- refresher training: health and safety, responsible for information, diversity and inclusion
- becoming disability confident
- attendance at professional seminars and conferences for both inspection and corporate services employees

HMI

In 2020-2021 we:

- developed a comprehensive professional learning and development (PLD) strategy for HMI and ensured that PLD activity for HMI continues to incorporate a wide range of approaches; this includes creating interactive distance learning modules to develop inspection practice and skills

- ensured that activities during PLD weeks continue to be aligned with the PLD strategy and include:
 - more time for HMI to engage with reading, self-directed study and reflection
 - more opportunities to discuss issues in small groups and to attend workshops of their choice
- focused on developing HMI knowledge and understanding of a *Curriculum for Wales* through a suite of modules
- supported HMI to take part in personal inquiry projects;

Corporate services

In 2020-2021 we:

- continued to support people with the challenges of working remotely including building resilience and participating in virtual meetings, and identifying priority areas of focus for learning and development
- collaborated with a group of Welsh Government Sponsored Bodies to provide access to a leadership development programme that includes essential management skills and strategic leadership
- carried out a refresh of mandatory civil service training
- trained four individuals as Time to Change Employee Champions, who provide additional support for our commitment to supporting good mental health in the workplace

Equality and employee welfare

During 2020-2021, we continued to raise awareness of equality and diversity. Our equality objectives cover how we consider equality when we inspect and regulate and how we will ensure that our own staff and those we contract with have equality of opportunity and are treated equally. We published our [Strategic Equality Plan 2020 - 2024](#) in September 2020 in line with new COVID-19 guidance.

Our work continued to ensure compliance with our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (Wales)

A number of our published thematic reviews and best practice case studies covered how equality and diversity issues can impact on learners and how providers can tackle these important issues, for example:

Thematic reviews

- [Celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion](#)
- [Celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion – training materials](#)
- [Insights into how independent schools and specialist colleges have responded during the COVID-19](#)
- [Learner resilience – building resilience in primary schools, secondary schools and pupil referral units](#)

- [Learner resilience – building resilience in primary schools, secondary schools and pupil referral units – training materials](#)
- [Community schools families and communities at the heart of school life](#)
- [Community schools - training materials](#)
- [Developments in remote and blended learning practice](#)
- [Support for Learners' mental health and emotional wellbeing](#)

Full details of our thematic reports can be found following this [link](#).

Effective practice

- [Children's interests lead learning activities](#)
- [Individual learning programmes are tailored to support learners' needs](#)
- [Structured approach to communication helps promote an inclusive learning environment](#)
- [Getting to know you](#)
- [Improving skills for young people with learning difficulties](#)
- [Supporting vulnerable groups of pupils](#)
- [Success with online individual learning plans](#)
- [Engaging and supporting parents and families](#)
- [A philosophy of inclusion](#)
- [Using Personal Centred Planning across the school](#)
- [Welcoming families from overseas](#)
- [An inclusive ethos and culture promotes effective pupil participation](#)
- [Learning Support Assistants lead on intervention programmes](#)
- [Support for wellbeing during transition from primary to secondary](#)
- [Reducing anti-social behaviour in the community](#)
- [Supporting pupils' individual learning needs](#)
- [Developing an outdoor education programme](#)
- [Meeting pupils' communication needs](#)
- [Improving the safeguarding process](#)
- [Improving staff and learner wellbeing](#)
- [Creating work relationships to support pupils' needs](#)
- [Developing pupils' independence and life skills](#)
- [Encouraging learning as a family](#)
- [Children's interests lead learning activities](#)
- [Welsh for adults partnership plays key role in promoting bilingualism](#)

Full details of our effective practice studies can be found using this [link](#).



Our concern for the health and wellbeing of was recognised by our re-accreditation of the Corporate Health Standard. This year's assessment was delayed from October 2020 to April 2021 and was carried out as a 'light-touch' process. The assessor fed back that "it seems as if the wellbeing of your staff has really taken centre stage in the last few years since I last visited the office".

Our Corporate Health Standard action plan is monitored by our Health, Safety, Employee Wellbeing and Engagement Group.

Actions taken to promote health and wellbeing included:

- promotion of health activities and awareness information with a strong focus on mental wellbeing and resilience
- training for managers on how to recognise issues and support mental wellbeing and resilience
- signing up to the Time to Change Pledge and trained four Mental Health Champions
- a strong focus on wellbeing and engagement so that employees are well supported while working from home and don't feel isolated
- undertaking pulse surveys to gauge the effectiveness of working arrangements and support during the COVID-19 pandemic
- developing a 'one stop shop' intranet site for wellbeing where employees can access information and support e.g. from employee assistance provider, our mental health first aiders and health champions
- developing a winter wellbeing toolkit that provided ideas on how employees could look after their health and wellbeing during the winter months
- focusing our staff conference on the theme 'Feeling Good and Functioning Well' and encouraging all employees to look after their wellbeing
- Launching a programme of regular coffee catch ups at our 'Time to talk' event in February
- referrals to occupational health services, including early referrals for mental health related issues
- provision of counselling through our Employee Assistance Provider

Welsh language standards

In the summer term, our eighth [Annual Report](#) on the corporate use of the Welsh language (for 2019-2020) was published, which included a progress summary and priorities for 2020-2021. In particular, the report highlighted how we continued our peer reviews within each team to review our progress in meeting Welsh language standards, and promoted opportunities for Welsh language learning. Despite having to close the office at the end of the reporting period, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we continued to engage bilingually, externally and internally, as normal. This included fully bilingual engagement through social media and redirecting our telephone switchboard to relevant staff working from home to ensure that we offered a bilingual telephone service.

Met the requirements of Welsh Language Standards

Comments and complaints

As may be expected, this year we did not receive any new stage 2 (formal) complaints, either regarding inspection work or for any other aspect of our work. In addition, we received only four informal complaints. Three of these were received in the first term and related to activity just prior to or just after the lockdown. The fourth related to a difference of opinion regarding aspects of one of our thematic reports. Each complaint was responded to fully, and within all deadline requirements.

Although this has been a quiet year for complaints, we have continued to review our policy and procedures, making updates to our guidance and carried out a series of briefing sessions for sector teams, advising them of the processes to follow when carrying out complaints investigations.

No formal complaints
All informal complaints were responded to within target deadline

Requests for information

This reporting year, Estyn received 14 requests, all of which were investigated and responded to within 20 working days. The number was a significant decrease from the previous year, and probably the result of the pandemic and lockdown as we were not undertaking most inspection and other activities that would normally generate requests. Due to the nature of the requests received and the ways we responded, we did not apply exemptions in respect of any newly received cases throughout this financial year. In 12 cases we released information in full, and in the other two cases there was no information that we held to release.

All requests investigated and responded to within statutory deadline

Details of FOIA requests and responses are published on our website and can be found [here](#).

Sustainability and biodiversity reporting



We were again re-accredited with the “Green Dragon Standard” Level 3 in January 2021.

We use the accreditation process proactively to identify opportunities to further improve our environmental management activities and set these out in our environmental policy. Here is a link to our [Environmental Policy 2021](#). Our Environmental action plan continues to be updated and monitored by the Service Delivery Group.

Our main impact on the environment usually arises from transport CO₂ emissions when our inspectors visit education and training providers. However, inspections were suspended in mid-March 2020 and all training events moved to a virtual format. Staff travel during this period was limited to essential engagement visits using personal cars in all but one case where travel was by rail. There was no hire car use or air travel during the period. Our total emissions from travel were 988kg (109,977kg in 2019-20) with 3,472 miles travelled during the period, compared to 356,129 in the previous year.

Electricity use reduced by 74% whilst the office was temporarily closed and the air conditioning was turned off for the entire reporting period. However, we continue to use clean energy and report zero emissions from electricity for the third year running.

CO₂ emissions from gas usage were also lower, 8,831kg (10,731kg in 2019-20), a reduction of 17.7%. Whilst this is not significant, it should be explained that we pay for a percentage of the overall gas usage within the building and other tenants were present for longer periods during the year.

Overall, our total CO₂ emission (transport, electricity and gas) in 2020-2021 was 9,819 kg – this is 92% lower than the previous reporting year primary due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our transport emissions as explained above.

Our emissions figures are based on our office environment. In light of a move to home working during the current crisis and potentially a longer-term move towards blending office and home working in the future, in 2021-2022 we will be investigating the impact of home working from an environmental reporting perspective.

This is also our third full reporting year of zero waste going to landfill.

Performance against environmental objectives for the period can be found in the latest Environmental Report on our website. Here is the [Environmental report \(including biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty reporting\) November 2020](#).

Our Environmental Report was published in November 2020 and includes our compliance with the section 6 duty of the Environment (Wales) Act. Our Environmental Policy 2021 is also published on our website.

Charity fund-raising

In 2020-2021, our staff continued to be enthusiastic supporters of charity events, raising over £4,800 for good causes, including Ty Hafan and Ty Gobaith.

The funding-raising event this year took place in July 2020 with many staff individually supporting the first ever Ty Hafan virtual Welsh3peaks challenge. There were two options:

- Walk or run the total distance that you would do if you were walking up the three mountains, Snowdon, Cadair Idris and Pen Y Fan – 20.35 miles or 32.7km or
- Complete the same number of vertical steps required to climb the three mountains (approx 27,638 which is 1,063 ascents) by walking up and down the stairs if you have them or making use of a sturdy step



Financial performance highlights

Results for the year

Our 2020-2021 'cash equivalent' funding of just over £11m from the Welsh Government remained unchanged for the second successive year. This level of funding, without additional grant funding as provided in 2019-2020, would have posed significant challenges for us to deliver our usual annual programme of work.

The restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on our use of resources in 2020-2021. As a consequence of suspending our planned inspection programme for the summer term and of replacing the majority of our other planned visits to providers with engagement phone calls, there was a considerable reduction in our spend on external inspector costs and on travel and accommodation expenses of our internal inspectors (HMI), as shown in the Note 4 to the Accounts Section of this report.

Grant funding that had been agreed in principle with the Education Directorate for 2020-2021 was cancelled. This funding was intended to support the recruitment of HMI needed to deliver the initial remit of activities we agreed with the Welsh Government. Changes to our annual plan arising from the limitations imposed by the pandemic meant that our work programme was refocused and the planned recruitment could be suspended. We also suspended recruitment of staff to replace individuals leaving Estyn in-year. The resultant reduction in staff numbers is reported in the charts showing the average and total number of full time equivalent staff on page 61 of the Accountability Report. In 2021-2022, we will resume our recruitment plans. Despite the decrease in total staff numbers there was a slight increase in our staff costs for 2020-2021² compared to the previous year – this is accounted for by the 2.5% pay award implemented in April 2021 in alignment with the award by the Welsh Government to its staff. Details of our remuneration policy and pay rates are available within our published [Pay Policy Statement](#).

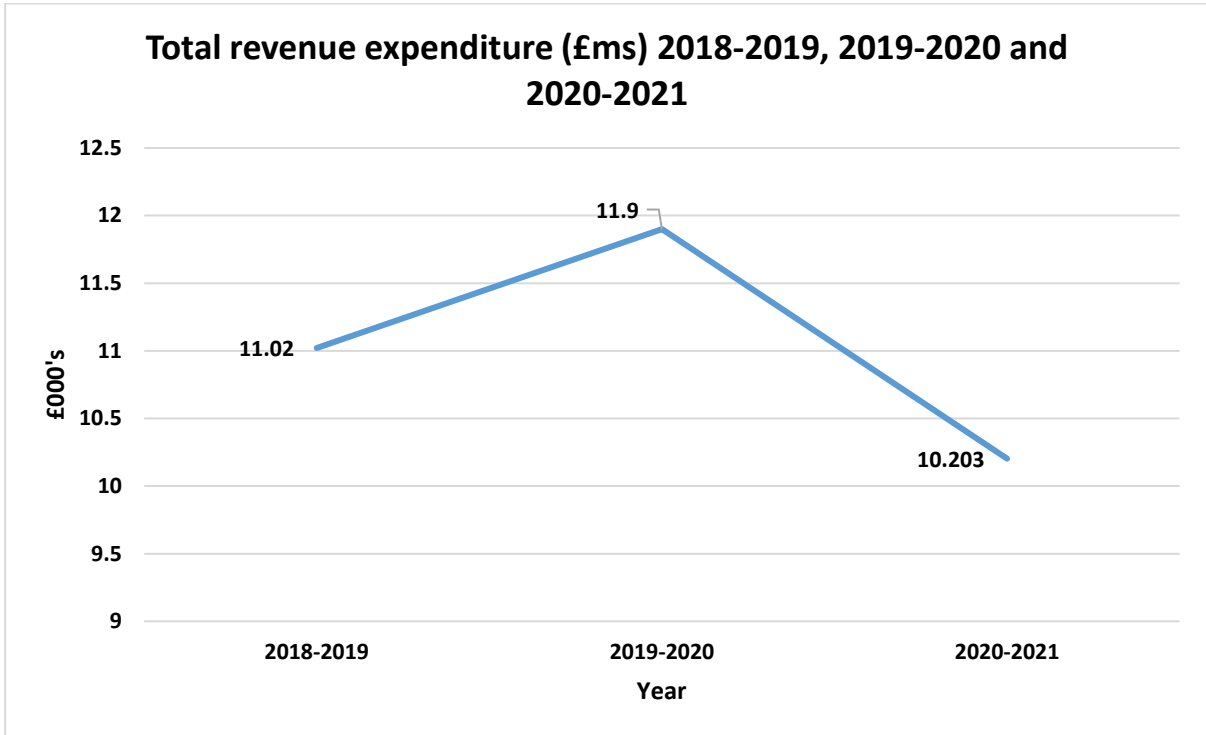
The overall savings in 'Other costs' (see Note 4 to the accounts for details) is largely due to the reduction in inspection activity. There were very few areas of expenditure that increased against the previous financial year. We used only £160k of the £281k capital funding budget allocated by the Welsh Government, the majority of this expenditure being used to renew mobile phones for inspection staff and to implement a new bilingual Virtual Inspection Room information system.

The Statement of Financial Position (SofFP) as at 31 March 2021 shows net liabilities of £100k (2019-2020: net liabilities of £157k). The change relates to the net effect of the increase/decrease in fixed assets and bank balance, debtors, provisions and accruals. It is not unusual for our SofFP to show a relatively small surplus or deficit position at the end of a financial year due to the high level of receivables and payables. Payables remained at a relatively similar level as in 2019-2020 with our main creditor being the Welsh Government for reimbursement of our salaries. At 31 March 2021, receivables were lower than for 2020 because, unlike the previous year, there were not salary reimbursements due from the Welsh Government for seconded staff and, also, no grant income due.

² Table 2, page 80

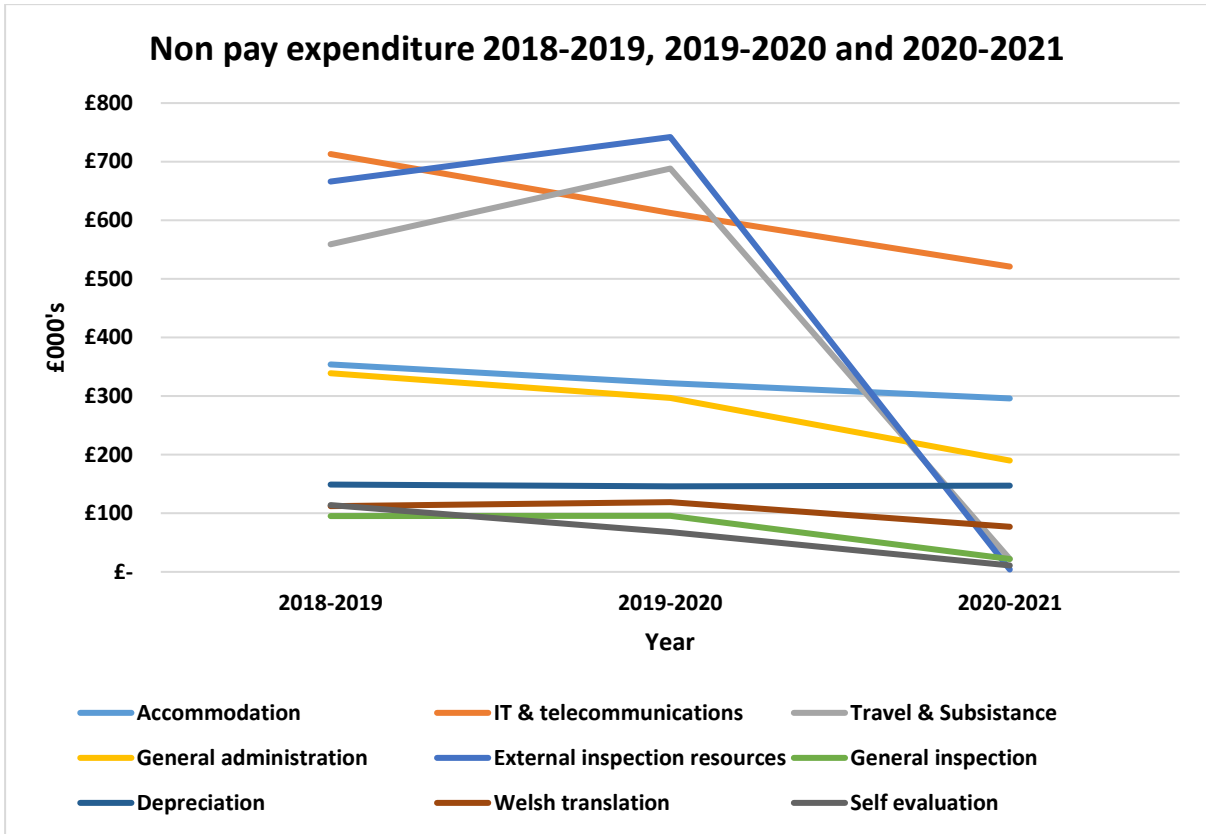
During 2021-2022, we will receive funding from the Welsh Government to meet our liabilities in line with the 'going-concern' basis adopted in the preparation of these financial statements. No losses or special payments have been incurred in 2020-2021 and there were no early departure costs. We made a compensation payment for a member of our staff who left under efficiency terms on health grounds.

Our budgeted expenditure for future years is determined by the Welsh Government and any long-term expenditure trends will be impacted by the increase or decrease in the funding available to us. COVID-19 will continue to affect our activities in 2021-2022.



Total expenditure (revenue and capital) by budget headings for 2020-2021





Section 2

The Accountability Report



2.1 Corporate governance report

The Directors report

Our **Executive Board**, comprised of executive members ([HMCI](#) and [strategic directors](#)), supports and assists HMCI in leading and managing Estyn corporately and has one sub-committee. Our **Inspection and Policy Advice Committee**, which is attended by HMCI and our directors, supports HMCI in leading and managing our inspection and policy advice work.

Our **Strategy Board (the Board)**, consisting of executive members and non-executive members ([non-executive directors](#)), sets and monitors our strategic agenda. The Strategy Board is chaired by a non-executive member and has two sub-committees, also chaired by non-executive members; the **Audit and Risk Assurance Committee** and the **Remuneration Committee**. A full record of [Strategy Board / Committee membership and attendance](#) can be found on our website.

Significant interests held by members

We maintain [a register of interest](#) for Board members. Declarations are also made by all permanent employees, secondees and temporary staff in line with our [managing potential conflicts of interest policy](#). No member of the Board holds directorship or other significant interests that might conflict with their management responsibility.

Personal data related incidents

There were no personal data related incidents to be reported to the Information Commissioner's Office during the year. Throughout 2020-2021, our Information Governance Group monitored and reviewed information governance arrangements across the organisation and provided oversight of compliance with policies and assurance processes within our [information governance framework](#).

Payment policy

In 2020-2021, we worked to achieve compliance with our responsibilities under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 to pay undisputed suppliers' invoices within 30 days of receipt of goods or services or valid invoice, whichever is the later. This policy is stated in the Terms and Conditions covering Estyn Contracts. We paid 99% of undisputed invoices within 10 days which is within target (95%). The 1% which did not get paid within 30 days related to an invoice that had been part received and unnecessarily delayed. The part payment process has since been clarified with all concerned.

99% of undisputed invoices were paid within 30 days (against a target of 100%)



99% of undisputed invoices were paid within 10 days (against a target of 95%)



Statement of accounting officer's responsibilities

The governance statement

Introduction

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of Estyn's policies, aims and objectives while safeguarding the public funds and assets for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me.

In discharging this overall responsibility, I have maintained proper arrangements for the governance of our affairs. We have a sound system of internal control that facilitates the effective exercise of our functions and includes arrangements for the management of risk. The principles of The Corporate governance in central government departments: Code of Good Practice 2017 (The Code), within our context as a non-ministerial department, are reflected in our governance arrangements. This annual governance statement outlines how we maintain good governance and explains the main challenges we face and how these are being managed.

The governance framework

I have established a governance framework that describes the systems, processes, culture and values by which our organisation is directed and controlled and by which we monitor the achievement of our strategic objectives and engagement with our stakeholders. Our [corporate governance framework](#) is published on our website.

Throughout 2020-2021, we maintained our governance arrangements and, indeed, increased the frequency of senior management team meetings and enhanced our communication methods in response to challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic situation. Our meetings moved to being held wholly-virtually with processes and protocols in place to ensure robust debate and constructive challenge. The diagram at the end of this statement succinctly illustrates the range and level of assurances that underpin our governance arrangements.

A clear statement of our purpose and vision is set out on our website and in our Annual Plan. The Annual Plan outlines our overarching vision and sets out our principal aims and objectives. Information on our performance and delivery against the Annual Plan is also published on our website. Early in 2020-21, we adjusted our plan to meeting the challenges developing from the pandemic situation – we refocused our activities in ongoing collaboration with the Welsh Government and other stakeholders.

Oversight is exercised through our Strategy Board and its sub-committees (Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and Remuneration Committee). Members were supported throughout the year with access to appropriate technologies, such as Microsoft Teams, to ensure business could be conducted securely and efficiently on a remote working basis.

During 2020-2021, the Strategy Board and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) met on a quarterly basis; all ARAC meetings were attended in full by all members. The Strategy Board has received sound external advice on strategic matters and risk management as part of the non-executive director role to provide challenge and support to our executive. Some of the key areas of review and discussion by the Strategy Board during 2020-2021 included:

- the change of focus in our work during the year, for example, the support given to continuity of learning
- our engagement (calls and visits) to help support providers and report on the impact of the pandemic
- strengthening of our relationships with stakeholders and managing expectations in relation to our accountability role
- the development of our future inspection arrangements
- HMCI's Annual Report

Each meeting concludes with a self-evaluation of the effectiveness of the meeting; our non-executive directors have confirmed they are content with proceedings and the quality of information presented and discussed at meetings, that they have appropriate input to agenda and have sufficient opportunity to raise any concerns. The Strategy Board is satisfied that our whistleblowing arrangements are effective; no whistleblowing cases were raised in 2020-2021.

We liaise with the Welsh Government on matters of financial management and accountability is managed through an Accounting Officer Agreement between HMCI and the Additional Accounting Officer designated by the Welsh Government, Andrew Goodall, Director General and Chief Executive Officer of NHS Wales. This link governance arrangement helps maintain our independence in training and education matters, although close links with the Welsh Government's Department of Education and Department of Skills Higher Education and Lifelong Learning continue to support a strategic and coherent approach on key matters and emerging priorities. Our non-executive directors have direct access to Helen Arthur, Director of Workforce and Organisational Development (Health and Social Services Group), whose role is to represent Mr. Goodall in his role as Estyn's Additional Accounting Officer within the Welsh Government.

Audit and impact

An annual report of the Chair of the ARAC is published on our website; the report highlights the key work undertaken during the year and comments on the internal audit reviews undertaken and reported to the committee. The Chair's report for 2020-2021 provides assurances on the quality of audit work and the effectiveness of the committee; the committee is satisfied that our arrangements for governance and risk management were appropriate throughout 2020-2021.

RSM continued to provide our internal audit service. All audit work moved to being done on a remote basis and we worked closely with audit staff to ensure that this did not hinder the effectiveness and quality of the service provided; elements of this form of 'remote' audit work provided greater flexibility and efficiency and will be embedded in our ongoing arrangements.

Our ARAC approved the 2020-2021 audit programme, continuing to use a risk-based approach to establish areas of coverage within a rolling three-year audit programme agreed with RSM. Progress against the audit plan was monitored and at the year-end an annual report of the Internal Auditor was considered. This report advised on the work undertaken during the year and furnished an overall view on the internal control environment for consideration by members of the ARAC. The outcome from the internal audit coverage informed the Head of Internal Audit's opinion on the overall adequacy of our internal control framework; '*the organisation has an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control*'. Work completed by our internal auditors during 2020-2021 resulted in reports that included an independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal control together with recommendations for improvement. All internal audit assurance reports were reviewed and the main issues arising discussed by the ARAC, which was satisfied that all management actions had been implemented or were being actioned.

Table 1
2020-2021 internal audit programme

Internal audit area	Assurance level	Number of enhancement actions agreed by management			
		High priority	Medium priority	Low priority	Total
1 Assurance Mapping of the Planning Team processes	Advisory				
2..Key financial controls	Substantial			5	5
3..Assets and inventories	Substantial			2	2
4 Human resources – mental health and equality arrangements	Substantial			3	3
5 Safeguarding framework	Substantial			6	6
6 Remote financial controls	Reasonable			4	4
7 Cybersecurity	Advisory		3	2	5
8 Travel and subsistence*	Substantial			1	1
Totals			3	23	26

* Audit work undertaken in 2019-2020 and reported in 2020-2021

Our Remuneration Committee met (with all members in attendance) during 2020-2021 and considered the review of Strategic Directors' performance undertaken by HMCI. Committee members also provided advice to HMCI regarding pay levels and allowances for our staff.

As in previous years, we ensured compliance with Managing Welsh Public Money, Cabinet Office Procurement Policy Notes and Welsh Dear Accounting Officer (DAO) letters. Our Corporate Services Director provided an assurance statement to each Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, which reported on the above and provided assurance on other relevant areas, such as procurement, the meeting of tax

obligations, adherence with the civil service recruitment principles and compliance with Cabinet Office reporting. During 2020-2021, we did not use any form of confidentiality agreement with its employees and workers.

We work closely with the Welsh Government but maintain our status as an independent body, therefore, as a non-ministerial department we are not subject to Ministerial Directions.

We maintain a [register of interest](#) for Strategy Board members, published on our website. No member of the Strategy Board held directorships or other significant interests that conflicted with their work responsibilities. A Register of Interest and Gifts and a Hospitality Register is maintained for all our permanent employees, secondees and temporary staff.

The above assurance areas were also covered within the regular assurance statement presented at each meeting of the ARAC, along with updates on fraud, information security, tracking against performance indicators, and financial matters impacting the annual accounts.

Managing risk

Our risk management system is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of our aims and objectives, and to evaluate the likelihood of these risks being realised and the impact should they be realised. For 2020-2021, risk registers continued to be maintained at a strategic level by our Executive Board (and further reviewed at Strategy Board), at a corporate level by our Directors Group and at operational levels by working groups, functional teams and project teams. Each risk has an individual owner responsible for detailing and recording the controls in place and further actions planned to mitigate the risk; there is also an escalation process in place to raise risks to a higher level of management. Risk owners provide assurance and evidence that key controls for managing risks are in place and are working effectively.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented a new set of risks and challenges. An enforced move to all our staff working from home presented a new dimension to risk. Risks to physical and mental wellbeing of staff, information security risks, an increased risk of fraud and a potential lessening of good governance, have all been subject to ongoing assessment and management.

All components of our governance structure continued to work effectively; an update on arrangements was provided to our ARAC in the May 2020 meeting, along with the regular review of our financial risk register. We used our internal audit service to review our remote financial controls and quickly implemented the small number of recommended improvements. Throughout the year we paid special attention to staff wellbeing and provided regular guidance and support, with wellbeing the focus of our annual staff conference, held virtually in January 2021. We were pleased to see our efforts externally recognised through the reaccreditation process for our Corporate Health Standard.

The pandemic also raised the profile and potential of cyber security threats – another risk area we gave greater focus to. We commissioned an advisory review by our internal audit provider to discuss a number of actions to strengthen our security

measures and continue to give this area close attention to ensure we have appropriate and proportionate measures, based on information and advice from sources such as the National Cyber Security Centre and the recent Audit Wales survey report.

Annual assurance statements for 2020-2021 completed by all our directors provided confirmation that there were no major concerns and that action had been taken where minor issues of control had been identified; there are no reportable breaches of security and no reportable losses of personal data in 2020-2021. Where appropriate, we also sought and received assurances received externally, for example from the Welsh Government in respect of the payroll and human resources services it provides to us under a formal service level agreement.

Significant governance issues

No significant issues have been identified during the year in relation to our overall governance framework. Internal audit reviews covered key areas of our business and it is pleasing to report that there were no significant areas of control weaknesses identified and only low-level recommendations raised in assurance reports.

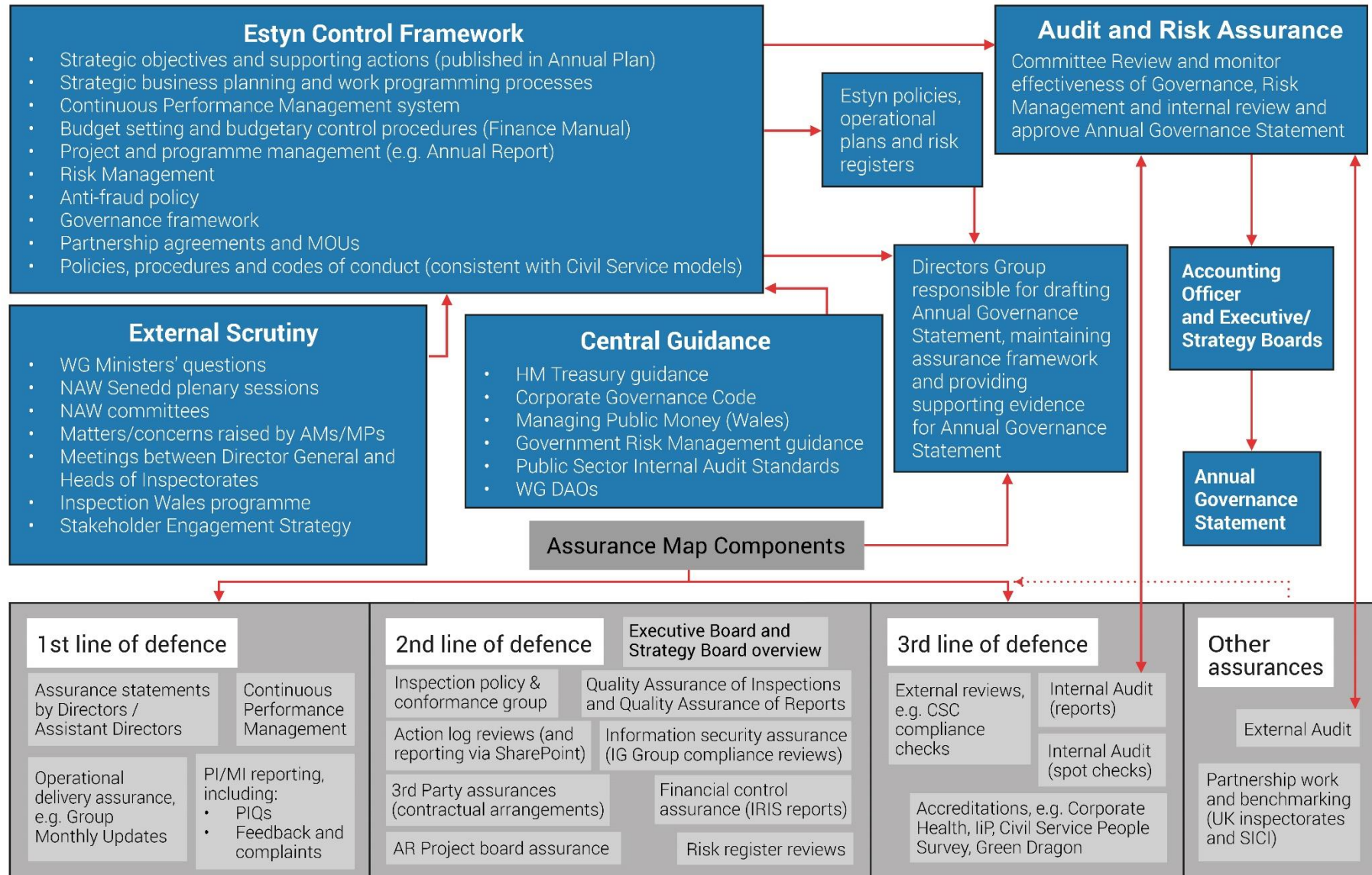
I take high confidence in our processes and our people. In this challenging period for everyone I am again delighted to see evidence of very high levels of staff engagement and commitment to our values and the civil service code.

Meilyr Rowlands

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales and Accounting Officer

5th July 2021

Our assurance and scrutiny framework



2.2 Remuneration and staff report

The remuneration of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is determined by the National Assembly for Wales under paragraph 3 of Schedule 2 to the Education Act 2005.

For other permanent senior staff members of the Board, remuneration was determined by Estyn's Remuneration Committee comprising the Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales and three non-executive directors, in accordance with Cabinet Office guidance on Senior Civil Service (SCS) remuneration.

In reaching its recommendations, the Estyn Remuneration Committee has regard to the following considerations:

- the need to recruit, retain and motivate suitably able and qualified people to exercise their different responsibilities
- benchmarking information available from Cabinet Office and other Government departments, including those closest to Estyn in location and work type
- the funds available to the department and the advice available annually from the Welsh Government
- Government policies for improving public service delivery and the role of performance management in securing and recognising value to the organisation and rewarding contributions to business and corporate objectives

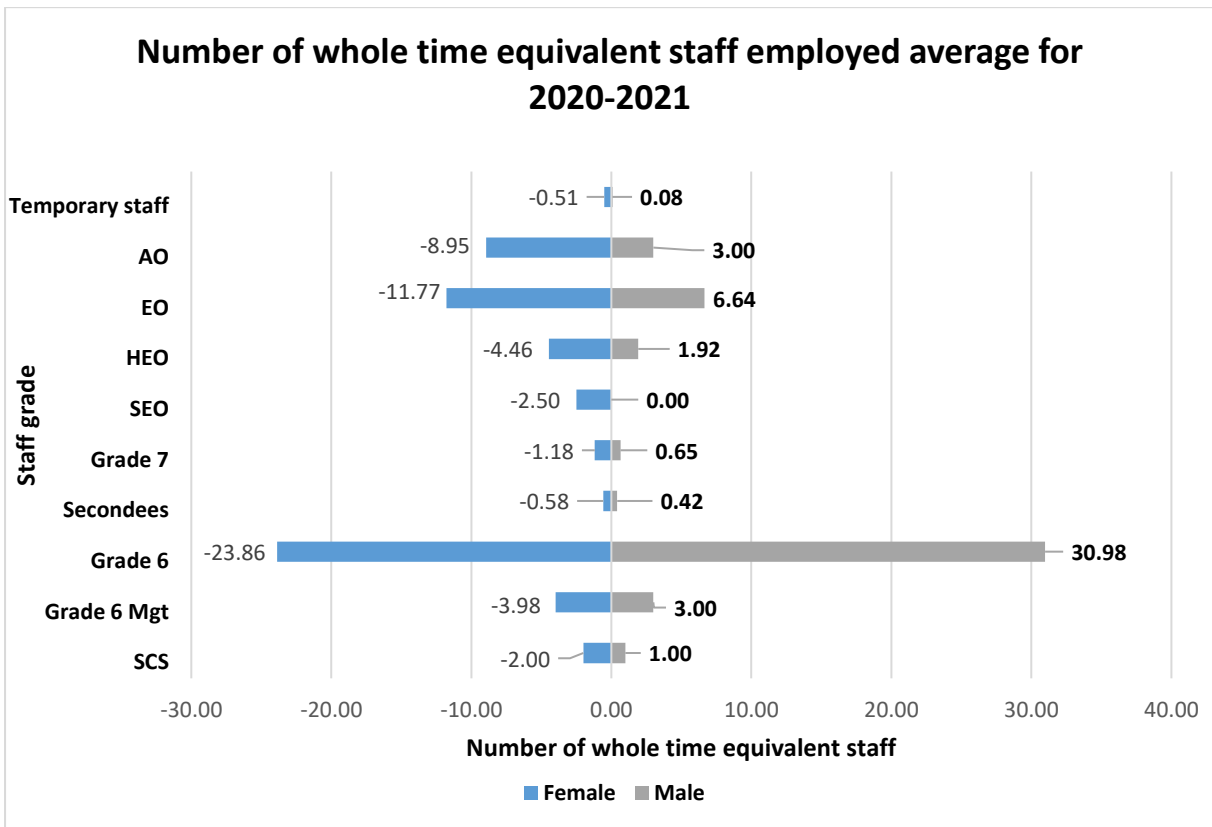
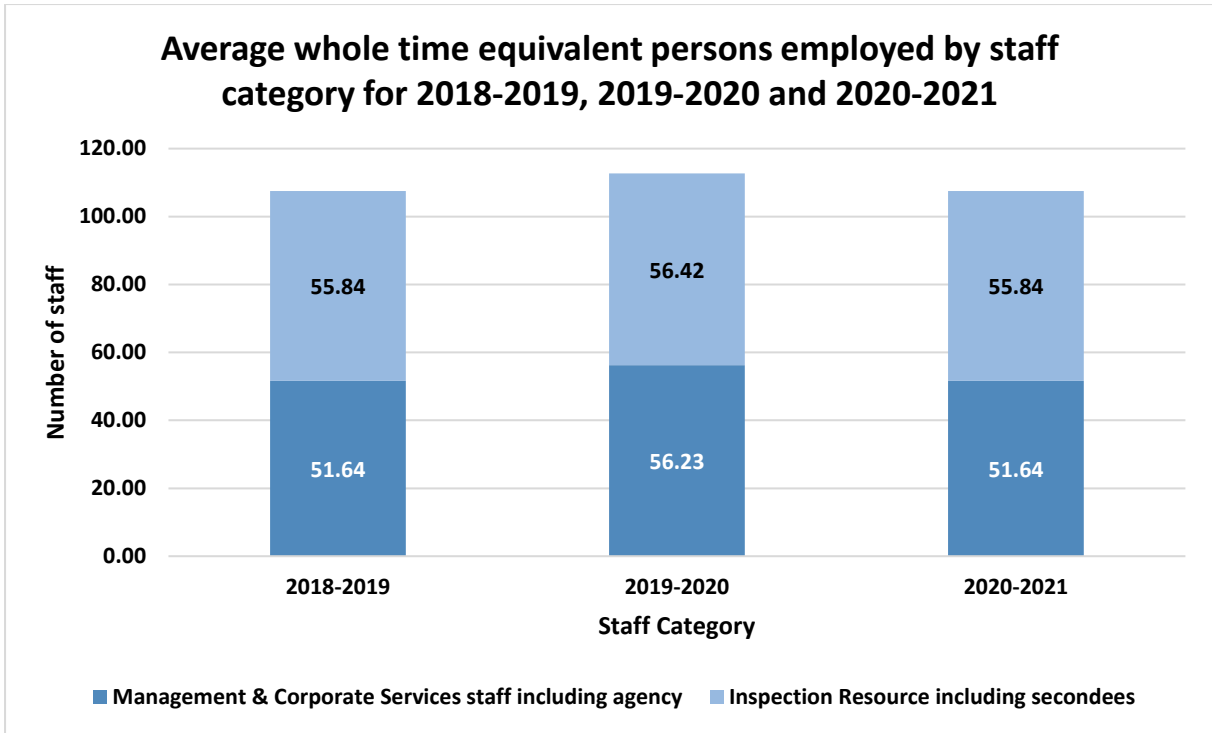
The Estyn Remuneration Committee takes account of the evidence available in respect of wider economic considerations and the affordability of its recommendations. Estyn has already streamlined its senior management as a consequence of budget cuts.

In agreeing pay awards for individual staff, the Estyn Remuneration Committee take particular regard of the following criteria:

- the individual's growth in competency
- challenge associated with the job
- confidence in the individual's future performance

No SCS staff bonuses were paid in 2020-2021.

In line with the pay award for the Welsh Government SCS officials (1st April 2020) Estyn SCS Band 1 officials were awarded a consolidated pay uplift of 2.5% effective from 1st April 2020.



Remuneration (including salary), benefits and pension entitlements

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the most senior officials (i.e. Board members) of Estyn.

Remuneration (salary, benefits in kind and pensions) ³										
Officials	2020-2021					2019-2020				
	Salary £000's	Non-Consolidated Performance Pay £000's	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	Pension benefits to nearest £1,000 ⁴	Total £000's	Salary £000's	Non-Consolidated Performance Pay £000's	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	Pension benefits to nearest £1,000	Total £000's
Meilyr Rowlands Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education & Training in Wales	115-120	-	-	52	165-170	110-115	-	-	29	135-140
Claire Morgan Strategic Director	85-90	-	-	35	120-125	85-90	-	-	34	115-120
Jassa Scott Strategic Director	85-90	-	-	43	125-130	85-90	-	-	55	140-145
Phillip Sweeney Corporate Services Director	80-85	-	-	29	105-110	75-80	-	-	31	105-110
Band of Highest Paid Director's Total Salary	115-120					110-115				
Median total	£74,730					£72,905				
Ratio using the mid-point of salary band	1.51					1.54				
Range of staff remuneration	£20,500-£117,594					£20,000- £114,475				

³ Audited

⁴ The value of pension benefits accrued during the year is calculated as (the real increase in pension x 20) + (the real increase in any lump sum) – (contributions made by the individual)

Salary

'Salary' includes gross salary; overtime; reserved rights to London weighting or London allowances; recruitment and retention allowances; private office allowances and any other allowance to the extent that it is subject to UK taxation. This report is based on accrued payments made by Estyn and thus recorded in these accounts.

Benefits in kind

The monetary value of benefits in kind covers any benefits provided by Estyn and treated by HM Revenue and Customs as a taxable emolument.

Pension entitlements for senior managers ⁵						
Officials	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/3/21 and related lump sum £000's	Real increase/ (decrease) in pension and related lump sum at pension age £000's	CETV at 31/3/21 £000's	CETV at 31/3/20 £000's	Real increase/ (decrease) in CETV £000's	Employer contribution to partnership pension account nearest £100
Meilyr Rowlands Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education & Training in Wales	60-65 plus lump sum of 185-190	2.5-5.0 plus lump sum of 7.5 - 10	1,429	1,392	52	-
Claire Morgan Strategic Director	25-30 plus lump sum of 0	0 – 2.5 plus lump sum of 0	392	350	22	-
Jassa Scott Strategic Director	30-35 plus lump sum of 0	0-2.5 plus lump sum of 0	422	382	21	-
Phillip Sweeney Corporate Services Director	20 -25 plus lump sum of 0	0 – 2.5 plus lump sum of 0	470	421	31	-

⁵ audited

Civil Service Pensions

Pension benefits are provided through the Civil Service pension arrangements. From 1 April 2015 a new pension scheme for civil servants was introduced – the Civil Servants and Others Pension Scheme or alpha, which provides benefits on a career average basis with a normal pension age equal to the member's State Pension Age (or 65 if higher). From that date all newly appointed civil servants and the majority of those already in service joined alpha. Prior to that date, civil servants participated in the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS). The PCSPS has four sections: three providing benefits on a final salary basis (classic, premium or classic plus) with a normal pension age of 60; and one providing benefits on a whole career basis (nuvos) with a normal pension age of 65.

These statutory arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted by Parliament each year. Pensions payable under classic, premium, classic plus, nuvos and alpha are increased annually in line with Pensions Increase legislation. Existing members of the PCSPS who were within 10 years of their normal pension age on 1 April 2012 remained in the PCSPS after 1 April 2015. Those who were between 10 years and 13 years and 5 months from their normal pension age on 1 April 2012 will switch into alpha sometime between 1 June 2015 and 1 February 2022. All members who switch to alpha have their PCSPS benefits 'banked', with those with earlier benefits in one of the final salary sections of the PCSPS having those benefits based on their final salary when they leave alpha. (The pension figures quoted for officials show pension earned in PCSPS or alpha – as appropriate. Where the official has benefits in both the PCSPS and alpha the figure quoted is the combined value of their benefits in the two schemes.) Members joining from October 2002 may opt for either the appropriate defined benefit arrangement or a 'money purchase' stakeholder pension with an employer contribution (partnership pension account).

Employee contributions are salary-related and range between 3% and 8.05% of pensionable earnings for members of classic (and members of alpha who were members of classic immediately before joining alpha) and between 4.6% and 8.05% for members of premium, classic plus, nuvos and all other members of alpha. Benefits in classic accrue at the rate of 1/80th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to three years initial pension is payable on retirement. For premium, benefits accrue at the rate of 1/60th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. Unlike classic, there is no automatic lump sum. Classic plus is essentially a hybrid with benefits for service before 1 October 2002 calculated broadly as per classic and benefits for service from October 2002 worked out as in premium. In nuvos a member builds up a pension based on his pensionable earnings during their period of scheme membership. At the end of the scheme year (31 March) the member's earned pension account is credited with 2.3% of their pensionable earnings in that scheme year and the accrued pension is uprated in line with Pensions Increase legislation. Benefits in alpha build up in a similar way to nuvos, except that the accrual rate is 2.32%. In all cases members may opt to give up (commute) pension for a lump sum up to the limits set by the Finance Act 2004.

The partnership pension account is a stakeholder pension arrangement. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 8% and 14.75% (depending on the age of the member) into a stakeholder pension product chosen by the employee

from a panel of providers. The employee does not have to contribute, but where they do make contributions, the employer will match these up to a limit of 3% of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer's basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.5% of pensionable salary to cover the cost of centrally-provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill health retirement).

The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are already at or over pension age. Pension age is 60 for members of classic, premium and classic plus, 65 for members of nuvos, and the higher of 65 or State Pension Age for members of alpha. (The pension figures quoted for officials show pension earned in PCSPS or alpha – as appropriate. Where the official has benefits in both the PCSPS and alpha the figure quoted is the combined value of their benefits in the two schemes, but note that part of that pension may be payable from different ages.)

Further details about the Civil Service pension arrangements can be found at the website www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk

Cash Equivalent Transfer Values

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies.

The figures include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the member has transferred to the Civil Service pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their buying additional pension benefits at their own cost. CETVs are worked out in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 and do not take account of any actual or potential reduction to benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

Real increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV that is funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period.

Compensation for loss of office**Exit Package: Reporting of Civil Service and other compensation schemes – exit packages**

Exit package cost band	Number of compulsory redundancies	Number of other departures agreed ⁶	Total number of exit packages by cost band
<£10,000	-	-	-
£10,000 - £25,000	-	-	-
£25,000 - £50,000	-	1	1
£50,000 - £100,000	-	-	-
£100,000 - £150,000	-	-	-
£150,000 - £200,000	-	-	-
Total number of exit packages	-	1	1

Meilyr Rowlands

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales and
Accounting Officer

5th July 2021

⁶ One member of staff received compensation under the civil service compensation scheme. Due to one payment being made, the total costs are not stated as this would identify the individual.

The average number of whole-time equivalent persons employed (including senior management) during the year was as follows:

Year	Permanently employed staff	Other ^[1]	Total staff
2019-2020	106.73	5.91	112.64
2020-2021	105.89	1.59	107.48

Staff sickness rates are as follows:

Headline staff measures		
Measure	2019-2020	2020-2021
Sickness absence rate	2.6%	2.3%
Proportion of staff accruing sickness absence	49.2%	24.8%
Average working days lost per employee	6.5	5.1
Average length of absence	6.1	13.2
Sickness absence occurrences (new)	112	39
Proportion of long term absence	49%	75%
Long term absence is the main reason for the significant increase in the length of absence		

Total sickness absence rate of 2.3% against a target of <4%



^[1] Other staff refers to secondees, fixed-term contract staff and agency staff.

2.3 Audit report

The Certificate and independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the Senedd

Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of Estyn: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and Training in Wales (Estyn) for the year ended 31 March 2021 under the Government of Wales Act 1998. These comprise the Statement on Comprehensive Net Expenditure, the Statement of Financial Position, the Statement of Cash Flows, the Statement of Changes in Taxpayers Equity and related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by HM Treasury's Financial Reporting Manual.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of Estyn's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of its net expenditure and application of resources, for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with HM Treasury directions issued under the Government of Wales Act 1998.

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects, the expenditure and income in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Senedd and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Basis of opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK (ISAs (UK)) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report. I am independent of the body in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinions.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the body's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of

accounting for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and other parts of the annual report that are audited and my auditor's report thereon. Legislation and directions issued to Estyn do not specify the content and form of the other information to be presented with the financial statements. The Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information in the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Report on other requirements

Opinion on other matters

As legislation and directions issued to Estyn do not specify the content and form of the other information to be presented with the financial statements, I am not able to confirm that the Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with guidance.

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of my audit, the information given in the Annual Report, including the Governance statement, is consistent with the financial statements.

Although there are no legislative requirements for a Remuneration Report, Estyn has prepared such a report and, in my opinion, that part ordinarily required to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with HM Treasury guidance.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the body and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Annual Report provided with the financial statements or the Governance Statement.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- proper accounting records have not been kept or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my team;
- the financial statements and the audited part of the Remuneration Report are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns;

- information specified by HM Treasury regarding remuneration and other transactions is not disclosed; or
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit.

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Accounting Officer is responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with the Government of Wales Act 1998 and HM Treasury directions made there under, for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view and for such internal control as the Accounting Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Accounting Officer is responsible for assessing the body's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless deemed inappropriate.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

My procedures included the following:

- Enquiring of management, Internal Audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to Estyn's policies and procedures concerned with:
 - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
 - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
 - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Considering as an audit team how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the posting of unusual journals.
- Obtaining an understanding of Estyn's framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks that Estyn operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on Estyn's operations.

In addition to the above, my procedures to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above;
- enquiring of management and those charged with governance about actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the Leadership team; and
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all audit team and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the Estyn's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

A further description of the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my auditor's report.

Responsibilities for regularity

The Accounting Officer is responsible for ensuring the regularity of financial transactions.

I am required to obtain sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income have been applied to the purposes intended by the Senedd and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

Adrian Crompton
Auditor General for Wales
6 July 2021

24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

Section 3

Financial statements



3.1 Statement of comprehensive net expenditure for the year ended 31st March 2021

	2020-2021				2019-2020
	Note	Budget	Actual Outturn	Net Total Outturn compared with Estimate (saving)/excess	Prior Year Outturn
Resources:		£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Staff costs	2	9,000	8,913	(87)	8,811
Depreciation	5a & 5b	200	147	(53)	146
Other costs	3	1,991	1,113	(878)	2,928
Auditors remuneration	3	32	32	-	27
Gross operating costs		11,223	10,205	(1,018)	11,912
Operating income	4	-	(2)	(2)	(11)
Operating Expenditure for the Year		11,223	10,203	(1,020)	11,901

Net expenditure is reported as a single segment in line within [Annual Plan 2020-2021](#)

Budget figures are stated as within Estyn's Annual Plan 2020-2021.

The notes on pages 77 to 88 form part of these accounts.

3.2 Statement of financial position as at 31st March 2021

Non-current assets	Note	2020-2021		2019-2020	
		£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
Property, plant and equipment	5a & b	281		268	
Total non-current assets		-	281		268
Current assets					
Trade and other receivables	7	152		335	
Cash and cash equivalents	8	1,190		1,273	
Total current assets			1,342		1,608
Total assets			1,623		1,876
Current liabilities					
Trade and other payables	9a&b	(1,547)		(1,821)	
Contribution received in advance	9 c	-		(36)	
Provisions within one year	10	(176)		(176)	
Total current liabilities			(1,723)		(2,033)
Total assets less current liabilities			(100)		(157)
Non-current liabilities					
Between two and five years	10			-	
Assets less liabilities					
			(100)		(157)
Taxpayers' equity:					
General Fund		(100)		(157)	
Total taxpayers' equity			(100)		(157)

3.3 Statement of cash flows for the year ended 31st March 2021

	Note	2020-2021 £000's	2019-2020 £000's
Cash flow from operating activities			
Net operating cost		(10,203)	(11,901)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions:			
Depreciation	5a&b	147	146
Other costs (provision)	11	-	-
Increase / (decrease) in trade and other payables	9 a&b	(274)	661
Increase/ (decrease) in contributions received in advance	9 c	(36)	36
(Increase) / decrease in trade and other receivables	7	183	58
Less movements not passing through the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure			
Use of VAT provision		-	-
Capital creditors	5 a&b	(12)	(57)
Net cash outflow from operating activities		(10,195)	(11,057)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	5 a&b	(148)	(207)
Net cash flow from investing activities		(148)	(207)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Net financing (from the Welsh Government)		10,260	11,719
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	8	(83)	455
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of year	8	1,273	818
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	8	1,190	1,273

3.4 Statement of changes in taxpayers' equity for the year ended 31st March 2021

	<u>2019-2020</u>
<u>Statement of Change in Tax Payers' Equity</u>	<u>£000's</u>
Balance as at 31 March 2019	<u>25</u>
Net operating cost for the year	(11,901)
Total recognised income and expense 2019-2020	(11,901)
Net Welsh Government Funding	11,719
	(182)
Balance as at 31 March 2020	(157)
<u>Changes in taxpayers equity 2020-2021</u>	
Total recognised income and expense for 2020-2021	(10,203)
Net Welsh Government Funding	10,260
	57
Balance as at 31 March 2021	(100)

The notes on pages 77 to 88 form part of these accounts.

Meilyr Rowlands

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales and
Accounting Officer

5 July 2021

3.5 Notes to the resource accounts

1 Statement of accounting policies

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) 2020-2021 issued by HM Treasury. The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context. Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, Estyn has selected the policy it judged to be the most appropriate to its particular circumstances, for the purpose of giving a true and fair view. The particular accounting policies adopted by Estyn for 2020-2021 are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items considered material in relation to the accounts.

In consultation with HM Treasury and the Welsh Government, we agreed a revised accounts direction in 2011-2012 which continues to be used.

1.1 Accounting convention

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to account for the revaluation of fixed assets and intangible assets at their fair value. Expenditure on services, licences and subscriptions which straddle more than one financial year are treated as costs within the financial year that a payment is made, where the individual transaction does not exceed £1000.

1.2 Property, plant and equipment and Intangible assets

Expenditure is capitalised where the asset purchased is expected to have a useful life extending over a number of years and the cost of the item(s) exceeds £1,000. Fixed assets are shown at cost less an allowance for depreciation (see note 1.3 below). Given that no property is held, it is the opinion of Estyn, that there is no material difference between the historic net book value of the assets and their fair value. Where the value of assets purchased at the same time of an identical type, e.g. laptops, they will be capitalised if the total value is over £10,000.

1.3 Depreciation

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the value of fixed assets by equal instalments over their estimated useful lives. A full year's depreciation is charged in the year of acquisition of an asset. Lives are as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| • IT Equipment | 3-5 years |
| • Furniture & Fittings | 5 years |
| • Office Equipment | 5 years |
| • IT Systems | 5 years |
| • Intangible Assets | 3 years |

Where an impairment of a tangible fixed asset has occurred the net impairment is charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure in the year in which it has occurred.

1.4 Provisions

Provisions are included in the accounts for liabilities that are likely or certain to arise but uncertain as to the amount or dates on which they will arise. Provisions are created or increased by making a charge to revenue expenditure in the year of creation. When the expenditure is actually incurred, the expenditure is charged directly to the provision. The provision included within these accounts are regarded as short term, within one year and medium term, between two and five years. All provisions are subject to annual review, to ensure they are still relevant and sufficient to fund the specific future liability.

The provision in the accounts is for the works required to restore the property back to its original condition prior to tenancy. This is a requirement of the lease agreement and the clause is activated when we vacates the building.

1.5 Operating income

Operating income is income that relates directly to the operating activities of Estyn.

It principally comprises fees and charges for services provided and other miscellaneous income. HM Treasury has issued a receipts direction allowing Estyn to retain such receipts.

1.6 Staff costs and other costs

The Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure is analysed between Staff and Other costs incurred in the undertaking of Estyn's purpose. The Welsh Government provides Estyn with a single budget line for Revenue expenditure and a separate budget line for Depreciation. Estyn has discretion to allocate its revenue budget in accordance with its operational requirements. For transparency, 'Other costs' are reported in Note 3 against sub totals for Administration expenditure and Programme expenditure.

1.7 Value Added Tax

Most of our activities are outside the scope of VAT and, in general, output tax does not apply and input tax on purchases is not recoverable. Irrecoverable VAT is charged to the relevant expenditure category or included in the capitalised purchase cost of fixed assets. Where output tax is charged or input VAT is recoverable, the amounts are stated net of VAT.

1.8 Pensions

Present and past employees are covered by the provisions of the Civil Service Pension Schemes, which are described in Note 3. The defined benefit elements of the schemes are unfunded and are non-contributory except in respect of dependents' benefits. Estyn recognises the expected cost of these elements on a systematic and rational basis over the period during which it benefits from employees' services by payment to the Principal Civil Service Pension Schemes (PCSPS) of amounts calculated on an accruing basis. Liability for payment of future benefits is a charge on the PCSPS. In respect of the defined contribution elements of the schemes, Estyn recognises the contributions payable for the year.

1.9 Early departure costs

Estyn is required to meet the additional cost of benefits beyond the normal PCSPS benefits in respect of employees who retire early. Estyn provides for this cost in full when the liability arises.

1.10 Operating leases

Operating lease rentals are charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure in equal amounts over the lease term.

1.11 Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalent is solely composed of the balance held at Estyn's bank accounts.

1.12 Going Concern Concept

Estyn is expected to remain in existence for the foreseeable future and will receive funding from the Welsh Government to meet all of its current liabilities when they mature in the 2021-2022 financial year. It has accordingly been considered appropriate to adopt a 'going-concern' basis for the preparation of these financial statements.

1.13 Accrued Leave

Staff annual leave accrual is accounted for within Table 2 - Staff costs. The accrual is a calculation to reflect the net annual leave owed or owing to staff at the year end. Movement in year is now charged as an accrual within salaries.

2 Staff costs

	Total 2020-2021 £000's	Permanently employed staff £000's	Others £000's	2019-2020 £000's
Wages and salaries	6,313	6,313		6,137
Social security costs	715	715		700
Other pension costs	1,729	1,729		1,698
Total net costs	8,757	8,757		8,535
Plus:				
Secondees in	91		91	296
Secondees out	(20)		(20)	(142)
Agency staff	24		24	91
NEDs costs	15		15	16
Early departure costs –in-year	-		-	-
Registered inspector costs ⁷	32		32	
Apprenticeship Levy	14		14	15
Total	8,913	8,757	156	8,811

Payments to Non-Executive Directors for 2020-2021		
Name	2020-2021 Total £000's	2019-2020 Total £000's
R Alexander	5	5
J Fabian	5	6
A Thomas	5	5
Total	15	16

The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) and the Civil Servant and Other Pension Scheme (CSOPS) – known as “Alpha” – are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes but (insert employer’s name) is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities.

The scheme actuary valued the PCSPS as at 31 March 2012. You can find details in the resource accounts of the Cabinet Office: Civil Superannuation [here](#).

For 2020-2021, employers’ contributions of £1.729m were payable to the PCSPS (2019-2020 £1.698m) at one of four rates in the range 26.6% to 30.3% of pensionable earnings, based on salary bands.

The Scheme Actuary reviews employer contributions usually every four years following a full scheme valuation. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of the benefits accruing during 2020-2021 to be paid when the member retires and not the benefits paid during this period to existing pensioners.

⁷ External registered inspector payments through payroll

3 Other costs

Expenditure	2020-2021 £000's	2019-2020 £000's
Rental under operating leases: accommodation	139	125
Other accommodation costs	157	197
IT & telecommunications	521	613
Welsh Government central services	18	17
Travel and subsistence	22	688
Auditor's remuneration – audit of accounts	32	27
General administration expenditure	182	296
Non-cash items:		
- change in provision for accommodation dilapidation	-	-
- tangible asset depreciation	147	146
Total general administration expenditure	1,218	2,109
Less: Operating income (Note 5)	(2)	(11)
Subtotal: Net administration costs	1,216	2,098
Local Education Authority and Associated costs	-	34
Post 16 education inspections and associated costs	-	-
School inspections and associated costs	4	708
General inspection related costs	40	168
Remit costs	-	14
Self-Evaluation Project direct costs ⁸	30	68
Subtotal: Programme costs	74	992
Total other costs	1,290	3,090
Total Other costs without Income and depreciation	1,145	2,955

Included in 'other accommodation costs' above are payments of £22k in relation to contracted cleaning services. For parts of the year Estyn's offices were closed and full cleaning services were not received.

In line with Welsh Government's Procurement Policy Notice (PPN) payments continued to be made during these periods. An extract from the guidance reads: "Contracting authorities should act now to support suppliers at risk so they are better able to cope with the current crisis and to resume normal service delivery and fulfil their contractual obligations when the outbreak is over" and "All contracting authorities in Wales should... continue to pay suppliers as quickly as possible, on receipt of invoices or in accordance with pre-agreed milestone dates, to maintain cash flow and protect jobs."

⁸ Includes practitioner time from schools, translation and communications costs

4 Income

Income	2020-2021 £000's	2019-2020 £000's
Registration fees	(1)	(2)
Miscellaneous	(1)	(9)
Total	(2)	(11)

As the amount of income is received is relatively small and can vary year on year, it is excluded from Estimate figures in the Statement of net comprehensive expenditure.

5a Property, plant and equipment

	IT equipment	Furniture & fittings	Office equipment	Total
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Cost or valuation				
At 1 April 2020	742	305	3	1,050
Additions	59	-	-	59
Disposals	(25)	-	-	(25)
At 31 March 2021	776	305	3	1,084
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2020	499	280	3	782
Charged in year	129	18	-	147
Disposals	(25)	-	-	(25)
At 31 March 2021	603	298	3	904
Carrying amount at 31 March 2021	173	7	-	180
At 1 April 2020	243	25	-	268

5b Intangible Assets

	Software	Training Materials	IT Systems	Total
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Cost or valuation				
At 1 April 2020	11	21	196	228
Additions	-	-	101 ⁹	101
Disposals	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2021	11	21	297	329
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2020	11	21	196	228
Charged in year	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2021	11	21	196	228
Carrying amount at 31 March 2021	-	-	101	101
At 1 April 2020	-	-	-	-

⁹ Asset still in development stage so no depreciation has been accounted for in 2020-2021.

6 Financial instruments

Whilst Estyn receives its money via the Welsh Government and not through the normal supply estimates, the majority of the financial instruments relate to contracts for non-financial items in line with their expected purchase and usage requirements and Estyn's exposure to credit, liquidity or market risk is therefore minimal. Estyn does not hold financial instruments that are complex or play a significant medium to long term role in the financial risk profile of Estyn.

Liquidity risk

Estyn relies primarily on funding from the Welsh Government for its resource requirements and is not therefore exposed to significant liquidity risks.

Interest rate and foreign currency risk

Whilst the bank balance that Estyn holds is material, the risk related to the balance is minimal as it is held within the Government Banking Service (GBS) set of bank accounts. All material deposits and all material assets and liabilities are denominated in sterling, so it is not exposed to interest rate risk or foreign currency risk.

7 Trade and other receivables

7a Analysis by type

	At 31/03/2021 £000's	At 31/03/2020 £000's
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Other receivables	-	197
Prepayments and accrued income	152	138
Total	152	335

7b Intra-Government balances

	At 31/03/2021 £000's	At 31/03/2020 £000's
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Balances with other central government bodies	21	218
Balances with local authorities	-	-
Balances with bodies external to government	131	117
Total	152	335

8 Cash and cash equivalents

	31 st March 2021 £000's	31 st March 2020 £000's
Balance	1,273	818
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	(83)	455
Balance at 31st March 2020	1,190	1,273

Estyn uses the Government Banking Service and operates one bank account. The NatWest account provides a BACS payment service, collection of BACS income and local banking facilities. The following balance was held at 31st March 2020 and 31st March 2021:

	31 st March 2021 £000's	31 st March 2020 £000's
Balance at NatWest	1,190	1,273
Total	1,190	1,273

9 Trade and other payables

9a Analysis by type

	31 st March 2021 £000's	31 st March 2020 £000's
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade payables	310	673
Payroll funding	1,237	1,148
Accruals & deferred income	-	-
	1,547	1,821

9b Intra-Government balances

	31 st March 2021 £000's	31 st March 2020 £000's
Balances with other central government bodies	757	853
Balances with local authorities	86	134
Balances with bodies external to government	704	834
Total	1,547	1,821

9c Contribution to costs received in advance

Contribution to costs received in advance	31 st March 2021 £000's	31 st March 2020 £000's
Balances with other central government bodies ¹⁰	-	36-
Balances with local authorities	-	-
Balances with bodies external to government	-	-
Total	-	36-

10 Provisions for liabilities

Accommodation refit: Obligations arising for refitting of leased office property to its original condition on termination of a lease

Provisions	Accommodation refit	Total
	£000's	£000's
Balance at 1 April 2020		
- Within one year	176	176
- Between two and five years	-	-
- After five years	-	-
Increase/(Decrease) in provision	-	-
Amounts utilised in the year	-	-
Remaining provision:	176	176
- Within one year	176	176
- Between two and five years	-	-
- After five years	-	-
Total provision as at 31st March 2021¹¹	176	176

¹⁰ Contribution to costs received in advance was repaid in 2020-2021 as no services were required by CIW as a result of the pandemic.

¹¹ Accommodation provision was re-assessed by a professional surveyor in March 2021.

11 Capital commitments

There are no capital commitments as at 31st March 2021.

12 Commitments under leases

Operating leases

	2021 Land & Buildings £000's	2020 Land & Buildings £000's
At 31 March 2021 Estyn was committed to making the following payments during future years in respect of operating leases expiring:		
- within one year	34	124
- between two and five years	-	-
- after five years	-	-
Total	34	124

IFRS16 issued in January 2016 but not effective until 1st April 2022, requires that all leases with a lease term of more than 12 months be recognised as assets and liabilities in financial statements. If this standard had been effective for 2019-2020, there would have been an increase in both assets and liabilities of £34k. The lease comes to an end in 2020-2021.

We are now on a rolling commitment period of 3 months, hold over period, as governed by the provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954. Our lease expired in February 2021 but under IFRIC 4 the current arrangement still considered a lease.

13 Other commitments

Estyn has not entered into any non-cancellable contracts (which are not operating leases) as at 31st March 2021 (there were no non-cancellable contracts as at 31st March 2020).

14 Contingent liabilities

There were no contingent liabilities as at 31st March 2021 (there were no contingent liabilities as at 31st March 2020).

15 Related party transactions

The Welsh Government is as a related party to Estyn. Material transactions with Welsh Government during 2020-2021 are:

- funding of £10.26m from Welsh Government (£11.719m 2019-2020)
- we paid Welsh Government £8.783m, mainly for reimbursement of staff salaries and corresponding deductions they pay on our behalf (£7.794m in 2019-2020)
- Welsh Government accruals for 2020-2021 were £748k (£725k 2019-2020) and there were no debtors (£196k 2019-2020).

No board member, key manager or other related parties have undertaken any

material transactions with Estyn during the year.

16 Events after the reporting period

There have been no events since the Statement of Financial Position date that affect the understanding of these financial statements.

Annex 1: Glossary of acronyms used in this report

ACES	Adverse childhood experiences
ADEW	Association of Directors of Education in Wales
ALC	Adult learning in the community
ALN	Additional learning needs
ARAC	Audit Risk and Assurance Committee
ASCL	Association of School and College Leaders
AW	Audit Wales
BACS	Bankers' Automated Clearing Services
BIBESOIN	Better Inspection for Better Social Inclusion
CETV	Cash Equivalent Transfer Value
CIW	Care Inspectorate Wales
CSOPS	Civil Servant and Other Pension Scheme
CWLWM	Childcare Wales Learning and Working Mutually
CYPE	Children, Young People and Education
DAO	Welsh Dear Accounting Officer letters
EAS	Education Achievement Service (South-East Wales consortium)
ERW	Education through Regional Working (West Wales consortium)
FAQ	Frequently asked question
FDA	Association of First Division Civil Servants
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FRem	Financial Reporting Manual
GBS	Government Banking Service
GwE	Gogledd Cymru (North Wales consortium)
HIW	The Health Inspectorate Wales
HMCI	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspector
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards
IPAC	Inspection and Policy Advice Committee
ISAs(UK)	International Standards on Auditing in the United Kingdom
ITE	Initial teacher education
LGES	Local government education services
NASUWT	National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers
NED	Non-Executive Director
NEIR	National Evaluation and Improvement Resource
NEU	National Education Union
NTfW	National Training Federation for Wales
PCS	Public and Commercial Services Union
PCSPS	Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme
PI	Performance Indicator
PLD	Professional learning and development
PLJ	Professional learning journey
PRU	Pupil referral unit
Rgl	Registered Inspector
RgNI	Registered Nursery Inspector
RI	Reporting inspector
SCS	Senior Civil Service
SEN	Special educational needs
SICI	Standing International Conference of Inspectorates
SoFFP	Statement of Financial Position

UCAC	Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru
UP	Underlying Principles
VAT	Value Added Tax
VIR	Virtual inspection room

Annex 2: Well-being of Future Generations Act report

About this report

It has been a rapidly changing and challenging year for our stakeholders and for us as the impact of COVID-19 unfurled. Our response to the pandemic has involved much partnership working, collaboration and involvement, finding innovative solutions and new ways of working, increasing our use of technology in delivering services and decreasing our carbon emissions. We have had to address the short-term recovery as well as manage longer-term challenges. Wellbeing has been at the centre of our work throughout the year.

This wellbeing report provides an update on our progress in contributing to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015¹² ('the Act'). The report shows how our strategic objectives are contributing to the wellbeing goals for Wales and explains how we are working in accordance with the sustainable development principle.

The Act

The Act sets out a shared purpose to achieve a better and lasting quality of life for us all. The shared purpose is represented by an integrated set of seven wellbeing goals.

A prosperous Wales

An innovative, productive and low-carbon society, which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and developing a skilled and well-educated population in an economy that generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

A resilient Wales

A nation that maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change.

A healthier Wales

A society in which people's physical and mental wellbeing is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

A more equal Wales

A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.

¹² [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) and the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015 The Essentials](#)

A Wales of cohesive communities

Attractive, safe, viable and well-connected communities.

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and that encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.

A globally responsible Wales

A nation that, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global wellbeing.

The Act also puts in place a '**sustainable development principle**', which tells organisations how to go about meeting their duty under the Act. The Act emphasises the value of preventing problems from occurring rather than addressing them after they emerge. It aims to merge policy issues, such as public health, education, climate change and economic prosperity, and mandates that all policy must contribute to sustainability and not undermine long-term goals.

There are five things that public bodies need to think about in applying the sustainable development principle.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The long term – the importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs• Prevention – how acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives• Integration – considering how the public body's wellbeing objectives may impact upon each of the wellbeing goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaboration – acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its wellbeing objectives• Involvement – the importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the wellbeing goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves |
|---|--|

Our 'wellbeing objectives'

Public bodies identified within the Act are required to develop wellbeing objectives and report on them.

We have been embedding the principle of sustainable development into the way we use our resources for many years. Although the duty does not apply to us (we are not a listed public body for the purposes of the Act), we nonetheless support the spirit of the Act – incorporating the wellbeing components and sustainable development principle into our planning, governance and operational delivery and into how we lead, communicate and involve our staff and stakeholders.

In May 2020, the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales published the first [Future Generations Report](#). The report analyses the progress of listed public bodies, including Welsh Government, in implementing the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act since it became law in 2015.

Our 'strategic objectives' – which drive everything we do – serve well as our 'wellbeing objectives' and help us to embed the Well-being of Future Generations Act across our organisation. For example, we link our strategic objectives to team and personal objectives.

Our strategic/wellbeing objectives are ongoing and will remain in our Annual Plans and Annual Report and Accounts for several years.

How we contribute to the Well-being of Future Generations Act

Strategic Objective 1:

[Provide public accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales](#)

Due to the rapidly changing and challenging period due to COVID-19, schools and other education and training providers opened or closed a number of times for all learners. In response to this we decided, in agreement with Welsh Government officials and Ministers, to suspend inspections from mid-March 2020. We then redeployed our inspectors on a range of activities to support providers and the Welsh education system. At this time, the senior management team and office-based staff moved to home working (HM Inspectors are always home working).

We were in a strong position to respond to the crisis, thanks to the 'transition plan' we had already published in our [Annual Plan 2019-2020](#). Set out in three phases, the first was that the 2020-2021 academic year (starting September 2020) would be a 'transition year' for maintained schools and PRUs. Inspections of a sample of schools were to be replaced by 'engagement visits' to all schools. We did not change our plan to partially suspend maintained school and PRU inspections and used 2020-2021 as a transition year, undertaking engagement phone calls.

Progress made to date

With inspections paused, the focus of our core work has changed, but our aim to developing ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives remains the same alongside prioritising people’s wellbeing.

From mid-March we redeployed staff to the Welsh Government and have been [Supporting continuity of learning for children and young people](#). The Continuity of Learning Plan is focused on learning remotely and aims to ensure that learning is broad and balanced, supports learners’ mental and emotional health and wellbeing, and enables all learners to make meaningful progress. We contributed to almost all aspects of the plan that aims to support wellbeing and ensure that pupils could continue learning while they are not able to attend their usual school, PRU, college or other education and training provider.

We published a range of guidance relating to the pandemic during the 2020-2021 financial year based on evidence gathered from engagement calls, including cameos of interesting practice. The guidance outlined below contributes significantly to the wellbeing goals for Wales.

How our guidance related to the COVID-19 pandemic contribute to the Welsh Government’s wellbeing goals

Our common purpose – the seven wellbeing goals for Wales



Guidance related to the COVID-19 pandemic published in 2020 -2021

Advice for school and PRU leaders and governors on how to continue with school and PRU business during the Covid-19 pandemic	1	2	3	4	5	6
Key principles to support the continuation of school and PRU business	1	2	3	4	5	6
Supporting wellbeing and learning during COVID-19 – approaches from primary schools	1	2	3	4	5	6
Supporting wellbeing and learning during COVID-19 – approaches from PRUs	1	2	3	4	5	6
Supporting wellbeing and learning during COVID-19 – approaches from secondary schools	1	2	3	4	5	6

Supporting wellbeing and learning during COVID-19 – approaches from special schools						
Cameos and ideas for continuity of school business during Covid-19						
Cameos and ideas from schools and PRUs on continuing with school business						
Insights into how independent schools and specialist colleges have responded during the COVID-19 pandemic						
Supporting wellbeing and learning during COVID-19 – approaches from adult learning in the community partnerships						
Supporting wellbeing and learning during COVID-19 – approaches from further education colleges						
Supporting wellbeing and learning during COVID-19 – approaches from work-based learning providers						
Arrangements for September 2020 Planned approaches across maintained schools and PRUs						
Engagement work: Primary sector update – autumn 2020						
Engagement work: Secondary sector update – autumn 2020						
Engagement work: All-age school sector update – autumn 2020						
Engagement work: Maintained special school and pupil referral unit (PRU) sector update – autumn 2020						
Engagement work: Post-16 sector update – autumn 2020						
Secondary sector interim report – January and February 2021						
Engagement work: Primary sector update – Spring Term 2021						
Engagement work: Non-maintained sector update – Spring Term 2021						
Engagement work: Maintained special school and PRU sector update – Spring Term 2021						
Engagement work: Secondary sector update – Spring Term 2021						

Our direct contribution to the well have being goals is fairly explicit across many of the goals. Regarding **a resilient Wales**, as a result of a move to online working with little travel, all organisations have increased capacity to deliver with the health and wellbeing advantage of not commuting. Online systems have led to increased paperless working with a positive effect on the environment. It is likely that such online working, and indeed extending this technology, will continue to a certain extent into the future increasing our contribution to a resilient Wales.

In terms of **a globally responsible Wales**, new ways of working online have allowed us to continue our work with the inspectorates of Estonia, Flanders, Malta, Cyprus, a secondary education provider in Spain and France's IH2EC on the 'Better Inspection for Better Social Inclusion' (BIBESOIN) project. The project focuses on sharing practice and developing a self-evaluation and inspection framework to evaluate how mainstream schools ensure equity for children who are vulnerable to disadvantage.

Strategic Objective 2:

Inform the development of national policy by the Welsh Government

We have a key role in informing and developing national policy. This includes producing the Chief Inspector's Annual Report and thematic reviews to inform national policy, and actively contributing to a number of Welsh Government working groups. A number of these thematic reviews related to the pandemic last year.

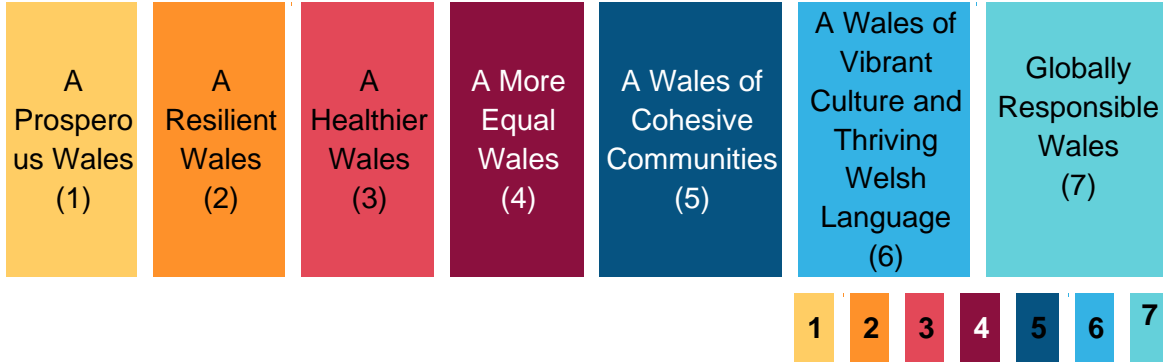
Progress made to date

The Chief Inspector's Annual Report contributes significantly to **a prosperous Wales**, and to many of the other wellbeing goals such as **a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales** and **a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language**. The Annual Report was published in December 2020 and included sector reports that provide a review of strengths and areas for development across education and training in Wales. It also included a thematic section recognising the impact of the pandemic on education and training.

Our thematic reviews and working groups contribute in various ways to the wellbeing goals. Our 2020-2021 thematic reports and their contribution towards the wellbeing goals are listed below.




How our thematic reports contribute to the Welsh Government’s wellbeing goals

Our common purpose – the seven wellbeing goals for Wales



Thematic reports published in 2020-2021

A level Welsh First Language	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Learner resilience - building resilience in primary schools, secondary schools and pupil referral units	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Community schools families and communities at the heart of school life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Insights into how independent schools and specialist colleges have responded during the COVID-19 pandemic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Business and social studies subjects at A level	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The Value of Youth Work Training	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Preparing for the Curriculum for Wales – case studies and cameos from secondary, all-age and special schools	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Local authority and regional consortia support for schools and PRUs in response to COVID-19	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Post-16 partnerships	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Welsh language acquisition: How Welsh-medium and bilingual settings and primary schools develop learners’ listening, speaking, reading and writing skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

English language and literacy in settings and primary schools	
Support for learners' mental health and emotional wellbeing	
Developments in remote and blended learning practice	

Strategic Objective 3:

Build capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales

In support of our mission 'to support education and training providers to develop a self-improving and learning culture' we have set ourselves a third strategic objective to '**build capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales**'.

Progress made to date

In support of a **prosperous Wales**, we aim to develop ambitious, capable learners who are ready to learn throughout their lives. To this end, and in support of a number of the other wellbeing goals, we build capacity in the delivery of education and training through effective practice conferences, stakeholder events, and publishing [improvement resources](#) on our website.

Improvement resources include [thematic reports](#), [effective-practice case studies](#) and [support to keep Wales learning](#).

As part of the Welsh Government's national mission for education, we have continued to work with partners to develop a project called [a national evaluation and improvement resource for schools \(NEIR\)](#). Our work aims to improve the education for children and young people and contribute to a **prosperous Wales**.

One example of an effective-practice case study that contributes to a **prosperous Wales** is [Using male role models to improve boys' writing skills](#). Also relevant is the thematic report [Preparing for the Curriculum for Wales – case studies and cameos from secondary, all-age and special schools](#).

We have published effective-practice case studies connected with a **healthier Wales**, for example [Support for wellbeing during transition from primary to secondary](#). In this case study, the school has fostered strong relationships with its partner primary schools, providing a clear focus on promoting the wellbeing and resilience of new pupils. Another relevant publication is the thematic report [Support for Learners' mental health and emotional wellbeing](#).

In support of a **Wales of cohesive communities**, [Local visits nurture pride in the community and an understanding of the world](#) is a case study that describes a setting that makes the most of its relationship with the local community to create learning experiences for the children. In addition, we have blogged, asking [Is your](#)

[school one that puts families and communities at the heart of its work?](#) and published thematic reports on [Post-16 partnerships](#) and [Community schools families and communities at the heart of school life](#).

Regarding a **Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language**, recent effective-practice case studies in this area include [Welsh for adults partnership plays key role in promoting bilingualism](#) and [New model for delivery of the Welsh BAC](#). Also worth noting is the blog [Our support for Welsh education and training in the current climate](#) and thematic reports [A level Welsh First Language](#) and [Welsh language acquisition: How Welsh-medium and bilingual settings and primary schools develop learners' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills](#) thematic reports.

In support of a more equal Wales the case study [Individual learning programmes are tailored to support learners' needs](#) highlights the college's approach to creating highly differentiated learning programmes. [A philosophy of inclusion](#) is a case study about a school that believes that each student is entitled to an individual pathway which, for many students, is being included in a mainstream setting for part of the week. Thematic reports in this area are on [Celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion](#) and [Learner resilience – building resilience in primary schools, secondary schools and pupil referral units](#).

A globally responsible Wales: as part of our commitment to support global improvement by working with our peers, in 2020-2021 we continued to work collaboratively with the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates (SICI), 37 inspectorates from across Europe. We attended several workshops hosted online by SICI, for example on how inspectorates have adapted their inspection and evaluation models during the pandemic, on remote teaching and learning and approaches to inspecting blended learning and assessment practices. In March 2021, we supported SICI by moderating a panel discussion on these areas of interest between five nations that was attended by around 115 delegates from around the world.

How we deliver our work

Building a better organisation and living our values

We aim to build upon the sound arrangements already in place to ensure that we effectively and efficiently use our budget in line with the framework and principles of Managing Welsh Public Money. We will also continue to develop staff within a supportive and trusting environment that will help maintain our high levels of engagement and further enhance our leadership capacity.

We work with other inspectorates in Wales, the UK and in Europe with a shared aim to support better outcomes for people, seeking always to protect their interests by reporting without fear or favour on the public services that fall within our remit. By working together effectively, the impact we can have jointly for people can be enhanced.

Our stakeholders are central to helping us to achieve our mission to support education and training providers to develop a self-improving and learning culture through our inspection and engagement, our advice, and capacity building.

Progress made to date

We are committed to a **prosperous Wales** and encouraging local wellbeing. Here are some examples of our everyday normal practice in this area. At Estyn, we support the living wage and all those directly employed by us are paid at rates above the living wage. We look to second staff into and out of Estyn and use local agency staff to share knowledge and develop transferable skills. We support membership of trade unions and involve unions in the ways that we consult with staff. Our procurement policy for goods and services considers sustainability and social value rather than cost alone. We use local suppliers of goods and services and pay suppliers promptly, having targets to monitor this. We also aim to use local Welsh venues for events. We annually calculate and publish our carbon footprint in our environmental report and have a target to reduce it to support the Welsh Government's ambition for a carbon-neutral public sector by 2030.

We recognise that the **health and wellbeing** of employees make an essential contribution to business success and help individuals to live life to the full. We publish a [Health and wellbeing policy, Policy and guidance for managing stress and wellbeing in the workplace](#) and provide an Employee Assistance Programme. Our promotion of the health and wellbeing of our staff has been recognised through the achievement of the Silver Award for the Corporate Health Standard.

We promote the benefits of regular exercise, supporting this with onsite showers, secure cycle storage and a Cycle to Work Scheme. We also offer staff a small amount of time in the working week to focus on activities that enrich their mental and/or physical health through a 'wellbeing hour'.

We value a work-life balance and consider all requests for flexible working, including part-time, part-year (term-time only), job share, compressed hours, annualised hours, and partial retirement. We provide time for staff to attend appointments relating to their health and wellbeing (including receiving the COVID-19 vaccines) and we reimburse staff the cost of the vaccination against flu.

We aim to develop a culture where staff can talk openly about mental health issues and in September 2020 we signed up to the Time to Change Pledge. Our Time to Change Champions have established monthly coffee catch ups for staff which focus on wellbeing.

An example of effective practice in this area is captured in our case study [Developing an outdoor education programme](#) which refers to a college that uses their outdoor education and activities programme to develop pupils' spiritual, intellectual and physical wellbeing. [Support for learners' mental health and emotional wellbeing](#) is a recent thematic report that provides an overview of how further education colleges, work-based learning providers and adult learning in the community partnerships have supported learners' mental health and emotional wellbeing during the pandemic.

All our activities aim to contribute to a **more equal Wales** where people can fulfil their potential. We have consulted on and developed our [Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024](#). Our [family-friendly policy](#) sets out the statutory and enhanced benefits and support that we will provide to employees who are parents and having a baby. Our [Flexible-working policy](#) offers a range of flexible working options including

home working, part-time, compressed hours, job sharing, part-year, annualised hours and flexi time. These are regularly communicated to staff and we monitor flexible working requests and outcomes.

The Welsh Government's report on [Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities, Contributions and Cynefin in the New Curriculum Working Group](#) maps a way forward in how – across each Area of Learning and Experience – the diverse experiences and contributions of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic peoples in Wales is made integral. We will be responsible for taking forward two recommendations in the report (42 and 43).

We produce effective-practice guidance on equality and diversity issues, examples of which can be found on our website searching under [the 'equality and diversity' tag](#).

We also produce an [Equal pay audit report](#) (every three years) as part of our wider commitment to monitoring equality and to provide analysis and recommendations in relation to the reward management, policy and practice of our staff.

Our commitment to a **Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language** is embedded in working practice and our [Welsh-language-policy](#) demonstrates how we meet the requirements of the Welsh language standards. We continue to develop and review our policies and procedures and support Welsh language training for staff in order to improve our Welsh language services. Welsh-speaking staff use the Cymraeg comma on their email signatures and wear its lanyards. Estyn's access points all have bilingual greetings. We also assess Welsh language need as part of developing job descriptions.

We use qualified translators that are members of Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru for Welsh translation and to develop bilingual information.

We are committed to a **Wales of cohesive communities**. Our staff are enthusiastic supporters of charity events, raising thousands of pounds for a number of good causes in recent years. In July 2020, many staff fund-raised for the first-ever Ty Hafan virtual Welsh3peaks challenge.

We support employees who want to contribute to the wider community. Therefore special leave with pay is usually allowed to enable employees to serve the community through volunteering, carrying out public duties, attending jury service or serving in the reserve forces.

An example of a **Wales of cohesive communities** is the case study [Pupils' life skills develop from their community work. Developments in remote and blended learning practice](#) is a recent thematic report that looks at the work of further education, work based learning and adult learning in the community providers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In terms of a **globally responsible Wales** and a **resilient Wales**, we have a focus on decarbonisation and sustainable consumption and production through the procurement of products and services and a commitment to reduce, re-use and recycle resources. It is in these areas that Estyn can make the greatest contribution to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and the section 6 duty of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Our [Environmental report \(including biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty reporting\) November 2020](#) includes what we have done to comply with the section 6 duty and provides details beyond this wellbeing report. The process of complying with the section 6 duty will help us to boost our contributions to the wellbeing goals.

Our senior management team is committed to influencing and promoting environmental responsibility within our operations. The Green Dragon Environmental Standard is awarded to organisations that can demonstrate effective environmental management and that are taking action to understand, monitor and control their impacts on the environment. Thanks to the support of our staff, we have been reaccredited to level 3 of this standard since 2007.

Sustainable-development principle:

Our work aims to ensure the five ways of working are embedded at the core of everything we do.

Some of our key work connects to all aspects of the 'sustainable-development principle' aiming to prevent problems, find long-term solutions, integrate with national policy, collaborate and involve people. For example, we always planned to partially suspend inspections in 2020-2021 and, during this year, to spend a day visiting each maintained school and PRU to see how far they are starting to plan for the new curriculum, and build a national picture of what is working well and any emerging challenges.

Due to the pandemic, these planned engagement visits (and our remit for 2020-2021) was re-purposed to support schools' recovery from the current situation. We captured learning and provided independent advice and evidence to support initial planning for continuity of learning in schools and post-16 sectors, and we informed future decision-making to support the education system's recovery from the pandemic.

Here are a few specific areas of our work which exemplify the five ways of working.

Involve and collaborate

We regularly **involve** and **collaborate** with external partners. We share practice and work with a range of government organisations, inspectorates and other bodies involved in education inside and outside of Wales in order to develop our view of education systems across the United Kingdom and the world. We work informally with the Education Workforce Council, Qualifications Wales, the Wales Centre for Public Policy, and the Welsh Government's Knowledge and Analytical Services to share practice and information related to research topics on education and training in Wales. We also continued to work collaboratively with members of the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates (SICI), which consists of 37 inspectorates from across Europe.

Self-evaluation is at the heart of the new evaluation and improvement arrangements that we are developing to support and align with the new Curriculum for Wales. We have continued to work in partnership with the Welsh Government, regional consortia and schools to develop the '[National Evaluation and Improvement Resource](#)' (NEIR). Collaboration and involvement continue to be key in developing and rolling out this resource for schools in Wales.

We also **collaborate** with a range of stakeholders to undertake our thematic reviews, most notably education providers and support services, and **involve** those with a stake in education improvement, including learners themselves.

During 2020, we published thematic reviews that contributed to our work on **collaboration**: [Community schools families and communities at the heart of school life](#) includes key messages and case studies to support schools to improve their community focus and harness the power of schools, families and communities working together. [Post-16 partnerships](#) is concerned with shared planning and provision between schools, and between schools and colleges.

Effective-practice case studies concerned with **involvement** and **collaboration** include [Children's interests lead learning activities](#) where staff have devised activities that build on children's interests and [Effective support helps learners become fluent Welsh speakers](#) where maintaining a positive working relationship with learners has helped the provider maintain a high retention rate.

We want to **involve** people in our work and aim to produce documents that are clear, accurate and in plain English and/or Welsh as standard for the public. It is essential that as wide an audience as possible can read and understand our publications. We continue to aim for a clear style of report writing that will help to achieve this.

While we always have pursued joint and **collaborative** working, we are exploring more effective ways to share knowledge and information, as well as closer co-ordination in planning and delivery of our work with other inspectorates in Wales and the UK.

We regularly **involve** and **collaborate** with staff and the trade unions. In 2020, we continued to have one of the highest engagement scores of all civil service organisations across the UK taking part in the annual Civil Service People Survey – [Civil Service People Survey: 2020 results](#).

Integration

Integrated thinking helps us to work **collaboratively** within Estyn and with other inspectorates and wider stakeholders to support improvement. We work jointly with other inspectorates and regulatory bodies, co-ordinating planning activities so that they result in proportionate programmes of work that avoid duplication and ensure that key risks and concerns are being examined. We work with CIW, HIW and Audit Wales together as [Inspection Wales](#).

Working with a range of external stakeholders, we have contributed to the following publications relating to the pandemic during the 2020-2021 financial year:

- In collaboration with Regional School Improvement Consortia, Central South Consortium, EAS, ERW, GWE:
 - [Developing integrated approaches to support blended learning for the phased opening of schools](#)
 - [Models of Blended Learning](#)
- In conjunction with Edge Foundation, contributed to [Inspection across the UK: how the four nations intend to contribute to school improvement](#)

We also published an overarching thematic report based on our engagement activities in January 2021. The report '[Local authority and regional consortia support for schools and PRUs in response to COVID-19](#)' directed the Welsh Government to work with regional consortia, local authorities and other partners to address the recommendations.

Internally, our impact assessments (equality and business, including environmental) ensure that we make the connections between issues and make decisions that have wider benefits.

Prevention

We recognise the value of preventing problems from occurring rather than addressing them after they emerge.

Much of our work around education reform focuses on prevention. Specifically, thematic inspections can help to identify what is working well, barriers to progress and provide case studies of emerging practice. For example, in 2020, we published a thematic review of [Preparing for the Curriculum for Wales – case studies and cameos from secondary, all-age and special schools](#).

New ways of working online have also allowed us to continue our work with the inspectorates of Estonia, Flanders, Malta, Cyprus, a secondary education provider in Spain and France's IH2EC on the 'Better Inspection for Better Social Inclusion' (BIBESOIN) project. The most recent virtual meeting, hosted by the Maltese inspectorate, focused on remote learning and reducing disparities in educational outcomes through digital learning and the use of educational games combined with artificial intelligence. We made a significant contribution to the creation of the framework which is in its fifth phase of development and ready for testing in schools in Cyprus, potentially, in 2021.

During an inspection, we consider whether the provider needs any further support. We call this [follow-up](#) activity which is a **preventative** approach. Throughout 2020-2021, we continued to engage with providers that we found required follow-up at their core inspection. However, due to the pandemic and the suspension of inspection activity in March 2020, inspectors have not visited providers in follow-up to monitor their progress first-hand. Inspectors have supported providers in statutory follow-up through virtual conferencing.

We worked collaboratively with local authorities, with 19 out of 22 local authorities having Estyn Review Panel Reviews for maintained schools; 10 local authorities for Non-Maintained Progress Review Panels; and two local authorities with regard to focused improvement. We held multi-agency meetings for 12 secondary schools in special measures. We collaborated with CIW on two focused-improvement reviews of non-maintained nurseries, and held one joint panel meeting with CIW to review the progress of 18 non-maintained settings. We also made two joint focused visits to independent schools causing concern with CIW.

Thematic inspections help to **prevent** problems in education and training from emerging or worsening by identifying and sharing policies or practices that will benefit learners and support the quality of educational and related provision.

The effective practice outlined in the thematic report [Learner resilience – building resilience in primary schools, secondary schools and pupil referral units](#) aims to help school leaders and staff to support their pupils' resilience in these difficult times. [The Value of Youth Work Training \(a sustainable model for Wales\)](#) is a thematic report that examines the issues around support for young people in Wales.

Long term

We have **long-term** challenges to face in education and training in Wales as we have never seen before as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. This is along with increasing work demands and uncertainty over future funding levels. Our [Risk](#)

[management policy and guidelines](#) help us to balance shorter-term and longer-term needs.

We aim to support positive outcomes in the **long term** both for current and future generations. During the next academic year, 2021-2022, we intend to continue to support the education system in renewing and reforming, and particularly we will help schools and pupil referral units plan and prepare for the Curriculum for Wales and ALN reform.

We will therefore focus on continuing with our engagement visits to schools and pupil referral units to support them on their curriculum journey. We will also monitor schools causing concern, and undertake agreed national thematic work. From spring 2022, we aim to pilot our new inspection arrangements in a small number of schools and PRUs. This will allow us to make sure the changes we have made support renewal and reform. We'll also be consulting on the information in our new inspection guidance documents and engaging with peer inspectors around these matters in the autumn term 2021.

Our published thematic work has a clear focus on the **long-term** needs of learners and the development of a sustainable education and training system to meet these needs. Examples include the range of sector reports about 'supporting wellbeing and learning during COVID-19' (links included above under strategic objective 1).

In terms of effective-practice case studies with a focus on the **long term**, [Creating a digital platform for the Welsh for Adults sector](#) is an example of a unique digital platform for the sector that has become a 'one-stop shop' for learners and has plans for future developments. [Developing pupils' independence and life skills](#) is a case study that describes a school that actively plans for the development of pupils' independence and life skills.