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Report author: CSC Senior Management Team

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ISSUE: CCS SELF-EVALUATION REPORT 2021/22

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report provides stakeholders with an overview of the context of Central South Consortium, as well as a summary of the findings from self-evaluation activity undertaken within CSC. The report presents an evaluation of progress as well as identifies strengths and areas for future development. In addition, the focus areas for inclusion within the 2022-2025 Business Plan are identified for consideration.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended members of the management board:

- Note the content of the report
- Comment on the identified areas of focus for inclusion within the CSC Business Plan 2022/2025

3.0 BACKGROUND

The Central South Consortium (CSC), established in September 2012, is a Joint Education Service for five Local Authorities:

- Bridgend
- Cardiff
- Merthyr Tydfil
- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Vale of Glamorgan

The Consortium acts on behalf of the five Local Authorities to develop a school improvement service that challenges, monitors, and supports schools to raise standards and provide the best provision for all learners in the region.¹

Education in Wales is undergoing a significant transformation with the introduction of a new Curriculum for Wales from September 2022 and the implementation of the ALN transformation programme. The Journey to rollout identifies what needs to happen nationally to support the realisation of Curriculum for Wales in schools.

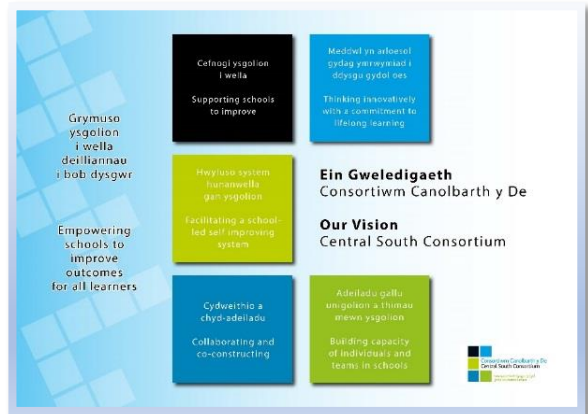
The Welsh Government published the Renew and Reform Plan in June 2021, setting out their priorities to support learners' wellbeing and progression in response to the Pandemic. CSC and other partners continue to work closely together to support schools to implement reform, in addition to the remit for consortia as outlined in the legal agreement.

¹ As set out in the legal agreement April 2015 for the provision of school improvement services

3.1 CONTEXT

Working with stakeholders from across the region, the vision for CSC remains: ***“Empowering schools to improve outcomes for all learners”***. This is even more essential in the current climate.

Our Business Plan is designed to meet the priorities of schools, Local Authorities and Welsh Government, against a backdrop of a new curriculum, new accountability frameworks, new approaches to supporting children with additional learning needs, the implementation of schools as learning organisations, and the establishment of a National Professional Learning Charter as well as changes to the way in which Estyn will inspect schools and Local Authorities. The delivery strategy within CSC is outlined within the Central South Wales Challenge and has been developed considering the challenges schools are facing.



The Central South Wales Challenge (CSWC) was launched in January 2014 to drive school improvement across the region. This strategy developed and led by school leaders from across the region is the CSC’s approach to developing a school-led system, designed to meet school improvement needs and priorities of schools. The implementation of this strategy is reviewed annually with our partners.

Further information regarding the region of CSC can be found below:

- Nearly one third of all Wales’s school age children are in schools in Central South Consortium, with just over 152,000 learners (Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) 2021)
- There are just under 400 schools in the region with over 8,000 teachers and nearly 7,500 learning support staff (PLASC 2021)
- The pupil teacher ratio in the region is 19:3 which is slightly above the national ratio of 19:2. The regional ratio is the 2nd lowest when compared against the other regional consortia ratios. (PLASC 2021)
- In the region, 11% of people aged three or over say they can speak Welsh compared to the Wales average on 19% (Census, ONS, 2011)
- The School Workforce Annual Survey (SWAC) Welsh Language ability analysis shows that for CSC just under 50% of staff have Welsh skills of either “No Skills” or “Entry Level” skills. This is the highest proportion across all other Regions in Wales for these skill levels.
- The percentage of pupils of compulsory age eligible for free school meals is 25.1% for CSC, which is higher than the national percentage of 22.9%. This level of eligibility is the highest of the four regions (PLASC 2021)

- The percentage of pupils aged 5 or over, whose ethnic background was identified as minority ethnic origin is 17.9% in CSC, which compares against a Wales percentage of 12.2% (PLASC 2021)
- 2,555 children in the region are looked after (CLA) by an LA, which represents 35.2% of Children Looked After in Wales (31 March 2021 Looked After Children Census)

3.2 CSC INSPECTION

The previous [Estyn Inspection](#) was undertaken in February 2016 and provided the following recommendations:

1. Ensure that schools improvement services address the variability of performance across schools and Local Authorities, particularly at key stage 4.
2. Improve the accuracy of the evaluations of schools by challenge advisers to ensure a greater focus on improving teaching and leadership.
3. Strengthen the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the impact of school improvement work
4. Evaluate progress against regional consortium's operational plans more effectively.

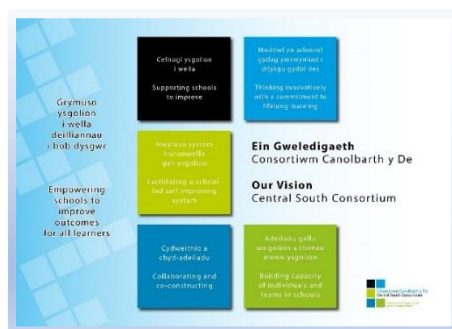
A subsequent [Estyn monitoring visit](#) took place in September 2017. During the monitoring visit there was found to be strong progress in addressing three out of the four recommendations, with satisfactory progress made against the recommendation 'Evaluate progress against regional consortium's operational plans more effectively'.

3.3 CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM PRIORITIES 2021/22

Vision, priorities, objectives, focus and principles

Working with stakeholders from across the region the vision for CSC remains: ***"Empowering schools to improve outcomes for all learners"***. This is even more essential in the current climate.

The Business Plan is designed to meet the priorities of schools, Local Authorities and Welsh Government, against a backdrop of the pandemic, a new curriculum, new accountability frameworks, new approaches to supporting children with additional learning needs, the implementation of schools as learning organisations, the work of the National Academy for Educational Leadership, and a National Approach to Professional Learning (NAPL), as well as changes to the way in which Estyn will inspect schools and Local Authorities. The delivery strategy within CSC is outlined within the Central South Wales Challenge and has been developed considering the challenges schools are facing.



4.0 SELF-EVALUATION INTRODUCTION

Self-evaluation is integral to all aspects of the work of CSC, to ensure Business Plan priorities are appropriate. Self-evaluation and Business Planning processes are comprehensive and have been developed and refined over the past few years.

This self-evaluation report provides an assessment of the performance of CSC during the financial year 2021/22. The areas identified for further development within this report (as well as the recommendations from the annual effectiveness and efficiency report) will be incorporated into the operational plans for the priority areas within the CSC Business Plan in 2022-25

In order to develop a framework for the report, we have combined Estyn's Guidance for Inspectors: [What we Inspect – Local government education services for inspections from 2021](#), as well as the Guidance for the Inspection of Regional Consortia (Jan 2016)

For the purposes of this report, CSC strategic activity has been subdivided into the following areas:

- Support for School Improvement
- Professional Learning
- Leadership & Safeguarding

4.1 SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY

Although a self-evaluation report has not been produced for several years (as it is no longer a requirement for Estyn), CSC has continued to undertake a wide variety of self-evaluation activity.

Each year, a report is taken to governance groups outlining the approach to self-evaluation and reporting on the work of CSC. A copy of the report for 2021/22 can be found [here](#). Further detail can be found in the Evaluation in Central South Consortium: roles & responsibilities report, [accessed here](#).

A more detailed overview provided in Annex A

5.0 FOCUS FOR 2022/23 SUMMARY

As a result of all self-evaluation activity across the organisation the following areas have been identified for inclusion within the Business Plan for 2022/23:

Support for School Improvement

- Continue to refine CSC reporting processes to provide assurance to Local Authorities regarding the progress of the region's schools in the absence of categorisation and aggregated pupil level assessment information.
- Support all schools to have effective evaluation and improvement processes, which address external and internal accountability measures
- Continue to work with LAs to review the Intervention strategy for schools causing concern annually to ensure responsibilities for all parties are clear

- Refine brokerage to Identify short, medium, and long term expected impact of any brokered support, who will monitor and how it will be recorded
- Support schools in developing effective practice around exclusions, school refusal, home tuition and reduced timetables.
- Work with LAs to Identify roles and responsibilities in the adoption of the statutory framework to the whole school approach to mental health and well-being.

Professional Learning

- Ensure all schools are supported in their preparations for Curriculum for Wales and the wider education reforms through high-quality professional learning, guidance, and resources.
- Further development and alignment of professional learning, guidance and resources to support all elements and principles of the CSC Enabling Equity and Excellence document.
- Further develop the effective use of data, evaluation, and intelligence to inform professional learning and support for school improvement.
- Refine the professional learning and support at all levels along the professional pathway.
- Further strengthen partnership working with schools, Local Authorities, other middle tier organisations and Welsh Government to ensure a coherent and high-quality professional learning offer to all schools.

Leadership & Safeguarding

- Maintain a financially viable service that meets the needs of schools and LAs, ensuring our BP is built on the LA priorities and brings the 5 LAs together into one regional service, and that this is reflected in our legal agreement
- Further develop the evaluation processes to include the views of stakeholders
- Develop a reporting cycle that meets the needs of LAs in a manageable and meaningful way, ensuring that there are clearly articulated audience and purpose for each report and that this is built into staff workplans not added in an ad hoc manner.
- Continue to provide support and PL for staff (responding to effective evaluation) across the organisation to ensure we maintain highly effective professional teams that embody the vision of CSC while providing high quality services to schools.
- Further develop a culture of safeguarding across CSC.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

CSC has developed a framework for self-evaluation based upon the guidance provided by Estyn on the Inspection of Local Authorities².

² It should be noted that this framework does not cover all areas of the LA framework.

As a result of extensive self-evaluation activity, strengths and areas of development have been identified. From this analysis, a series of focus areas have been identified for inclusion within the planning for 2022/23.

Self-evaluation activity will continue across the organisation to ensure any areas of development identified because of evaluation activity, is incorporated into the planning cycles.

7.0 IMPLEMENTATION

The focus areas for 2022/23 will be shared with the drive teams for inclusion with the operational plans, with associated activities to meet the priorities developed. Operational plans will identify the success criteria and milestones for each area of focus to ensure CSC can report on progress with agreed priorities.

In addition, the priorities for Local Authorities as well as national priorities will be incorporated into the operational planning for CSC once success measures have been agreed.

8.0 SCHOOL FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Monitoring and reporting schools' progress

- How well does the consortium **know its schools**, and **challenge** them on their performance?
- How well does the consortium **support schools to plan for improvement**?
- How well does the consortium **support schools with curriculum reform** and other changes to national policy?
- How has the consortium **supported schools during the COVID 19 pandemic** and the following recovery period, and how effective has that been?

Brokering Support

- How effective is the **availability** and **quality of support** provided to schools?

Intervention in schools causing concern

- How well does the consortium **intervene** in its schools where necessary to **promote good outcomes** for all learners?
- How effectively are **schools causing concern** being **monitored** so that shortcomings are identified at an **early stage**?
- How **swiftly** and **successfully** are issues addressed in **schools causing concern** as a result?
- How many schools are placed in a **statutory category** or in receipt of follow-up activity and the **length of time** they remain in that category?

Vulnerable Learners

- How effective is the **availability** and **quality of support** provided to schools in **reducing the impact of poverty**?
- How well do **school improvement services** take account of **learners' wellbeing** and the **progress of vulnerable learners** when considering the nature of **challenge** and **support** to provide to schools and PRUs?

Partnership Working

- How effective is **CSC's CSWC** in developing **collaborative partnerships**?
- How effective is the **professional learning** in **CSC supporting peer partnerships and collaboration**?
- How effectively do **CSC and LAs work in partnership** focused on school improvement?
- How effectively to **CSC projects** meet **local and national** educational priorities?

8.1 SELF-EVALUATION ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT POSITION

Strand Heading	Monitoring and reporting schools' progress including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing schools well and challenging them on their performance • Supporting schools to plan for improvement • Supporting schools with curriculum reform and other changes to national policy • Supporting schools during the COVID 19 pandemic and the following recovery period
Evaluation	
<p>The consortium has good systems and procedures for understanding, challenging, and supporting all schools in partnership with the Local Authorities. The comprehensive use of these systems and procedures has ensured good outcomes for nearly all learners across the region. Nearly all schools maintain or are developing high quality leadership.</p> <p>Within the previous inspection framework cycle, most Estyn inspection outcomes in the region have aligned to judgements skilfully made by improvement partners and other front facing consortium staff.</p> <p>The consortium and Local Authorities have successful systems for sharing data and other information with schools in a timely way that purposefully supports improvement planning (being mindful of the implications of the non-statutory Welsh Government Evaluation, Improvement and Accountability Guidance). Data and information shared with schools reflects changing national guidelines and requirements. Improvement Partners (IPs) use a variety of questions to challenge and monitor schools on their use of school held pupil level evidence to aid improvement; this includes attainment data such as External Examinations Data, pupil progress data, quantitative targets, national test information, attendance information and considers the performance of vulnerable groups.</p> <p>All schools are supported positively by the consortium in partnership with the Local Authorities to develop meaningful self-evaluation processes that support learning and improvement. A review of self-evaluation processes takes place yearly as part of the Improvement Partners' schedule of key tasks. Where procedures are not focused on learning and improvement, further support is offered via the CSC Professional Learning (PL) Offer or, in consultation with the Local Authority (LA), brokered via school-to-school means and the collaborative components of the revised Central South Wales Challenge (CSWC) model. CSC Improvement Partners and Strategic Advisers (SAs) play an important role in the continued development of self-evaluation, sharing their own expertise and knowledge to powerfully develop school's processes of monitoring, evaluation and reporting as well as ongoing improvement planning. Schools have been supported and challenged to adapt their self-evaluation activities throughout the pandemic which has ensured that needs of all learners were continuing to be addressed.</p> <p>The improvement partners provide valuable challenge on behalf of the LA to ensure support is appropriate and that there is a measurable impact against the schools' improvement priorities. Improvement Partners provide termly progress evaluations on the school's progress in meeting its improvement priorities informed by first-hand evidence gathering and including the beneficial identification or amending of support as necessary. These evaluations are captured in the School Improvement Partnership Log (SIPL) for the school using either an 'on track' or 'off track' record.</p> <p>Systems and processes to monitor 'schools causing concern' are strong. Where a school is causing concern, information is collected from a range of triangulated sources including first-hand evidence gathered via improvement partners, strategic advisers, and local authority officer monitoring visits to the school. Decisions about how best to support the schools are</p>	

then made using this information and follow the region's Intervention Strategy guidelines. The decision-making process and subsequent recommendations include input from the local authority's Education Directorates.

All schools receiving enhanced levels of support are required to attend and present at half-termly or termly progress review meetings / school improvement forums. These meetings are attended by Local Authority officers, the Principal Improvement Partners, the school's Improvement Partner, the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors. Progress review meetings are highly effective at ensuring that progress is being made as they focus on reviewing the following:

- *the judgement of the progress made against each of the Estyn recommendations / further areas to develop since the core inspection or School Improvement Priorities, the actions taken*
- *evaluation of the impact of those actions on improving outcomes with supporting evidence and next steps. This includes the evaluation of the effectiveness of the support, making revisions, identifying any further actions and commission additional support where necessary. The impact of these focused and robust systems for ensuring progress is clear.*

For example, during the previous Estyn Inspection framework cycle, 41 schools were placed in Estyn Review, or Monitoring categories and this has reduced to 3, including 13 schools that were removed during the last year; and between 2016 and 2021, many of the 157 schools which were in 'red' or 'amber' support categories have moved to receiving core support with only a {very few} (35) schools currently receiving enhanced support.

To help get a more precise overview of all schools, changes have been made to the way in which improvement partners work with all schools. Support takes the form of 'core' or 'enhanced' support that is provided in a fair way that is inversely proportional to needs of the school. All schools receive a basic minimum allocation of days and further time is allocated based on the support needs identified. This minimum is: Primary/Nursery 7, Special/PRU 10, Secondary 10; this is a more responsive and purposeful approach to early identification of support.

A particularly good feature is the way in which Consortium Principal / Improvement Partners and Local Authority Area Leads meet on a regular basis to share intelligence of all schools, identifying any risks, concerns by exception and support actions. This thorough approach enables delivery partners to recognise need for early intervention and possible escalation.

The Local Authorities hold the consortium to account for its work in a worthwhile manner. The consortium attends annual scrutiny meetings with local elected members and attends numerous partnership meetings. The local authority and the consortium hold formal performance meetings, on a termly basis, to monitor performance and drive improvements where required.

Evidence

<p>IA5/KQ3 Inspection analysis and Case Studies used for Scrutiny Reports</p> <p>ESTYN and categorisation</p> <p>123/159 inspection outcomes in line with categorisation outcomes. See section 4 LA Performance Reports.</p> <p>CSC Framework for School Improvement</p> <p>Principal Improvement Partner (PIP) QA of SIPL documents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA Blended Learning Reports Nov 2020, • LA Distance and Digital Learning Reports June 2020. • Progress of Enhanced Support • School Reports to Chief Execs. • CSC Improvement and Accountability • PIP QA of SIPL documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSC Improvement and Accountability and Evaluation and Evolving Role of IP docs • PIP QA of SIPL documents • Joint visits PIPs & IPs to schools • Minutes / Information Logs from these meetings. • Scrutiny Reports
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CSC Self-Evaluation March 2022 Stakeholder Report

<p>Joint visits PIPs & IPs to schools</p> <p>Target setting / tracking progress</p> <p>Reporting of priorities to LAs</p> <p>Peer partnerships, Self-Evaluation Peer Group,</p> <p>Reports on Current Education Provision to LA Cabinets 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint visits PIPs & IPs to schools • Progress review reports. • Categorisation and Estyn Category / follow-up removal analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA Performance Reports and meeting minutes
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Strand Heading	Brokering Support	
Evaluation		
<p>The consortium has developed systems and processes over time to track and monitor the provision of support across all areas of the organisation. However, these processes have on times been fragmented and opportunities to report effectively to stakeholders has been variable.</p> <p>These include areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support from the strategic team• School to school support• Resource board requests for vulnerable schools requiring additional capacity funding• Regional Leads of Governance <p>During autumn term 2021, work commenced to centralise all requests for support and harness the use of technology to introduce efficiencies in recording the support priorities, notifications and construction of support plans.</p>		
Evidence		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LA performance reports• Minutes of progress meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brokerage database• Support plans	

Strand Heading	Intervention in schools causing concern
Evaluation	
<p>All meetings to review the progress of enhanced support schools in all Local Authorities continue to follow the procedures within the framework. The role of the senior leaders, including the chair of governors in providing evidence relating to progress and pupil outcomes continues to be the focus of all progress meetings. This has contributed to the pace and rate of improvement in most schools. However, in a minority of school’s progress remains too slow. These schools are receiving intensive support and where necessary additional leadership capacity has been added including mentoring, support, and a regional leader of governance.</p> <p>Work to support, challenge and intervene in schools causing most concern is robust drawing on the Central South Wales Challenge and underpinned by the ‘Intervention Strategy: Schools Causing Concern.’ The Local Authorities’ have used their statutory powers to bring about significant improvement in a few schools. Greater consistency is becoming more evident, however, there have been a few schools in the region who have reached stage 3 of the strategy, have not made appropriate</p>	

progress, and are not progressed to stage 4. Principal Improvement Partners work together to ensure that recommendations made to Local Authorities regarding schools causing most concern is consistent across the region.

CSC works closely with the directors in each authority to maintain an ongoing dialogue about schools where the concerns are such that the authority is recommended to consider use of their statutory powers of intervention. Schools subject to statutory powers are recorded in the termly LA performance report.

Evidence

- Intervention strategy for schools causing concern
- Framework for school improvement
- Improvement, evaluation, and accountability

- LA Performance Reports
- Individual school progress reviews

- LA Warning notices
- Brokerage spreadsheet
- Resource board requests
- RLG Deployment

Strand Heading	Vulnerable Learners
Evaluation	
<u>How do we identify need?</u>	
<p>We have used a broad range of information both during Covid-19 and the following recovery period to inform the nature of support for vulnerable learners across the region. For example, Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG)/ PDG Children Looked After (CLA) cluster evaluations, local authority generated data reading and writing data, national recommendations and engaging with various stakeholders including the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG). The Central South Consortium enabling equity and excellence document is integral to supporting schools in realising the national mission however further work needs to be carried out to gain an accurate understanding of the needs in the system and fully support our schools in realising the national ambition of achieving equity and excellence.</p>	
<u>What do we provide?</u>	
<p>Reviewing and evaluating the use of the PDG and PDG CLA grants indicated that there was a need to identify and share effective practice in relation to vulnerable learners. As a result, Central South Consortium are providing professional learning opportunities to support and challenge schools in raising attainment for disadvantaged youngsters including the Writing Revolution and Reading Reconsidered.</p>	
<p>Central South Consortium continue to support schools to identify effective practice in well-being and the support of vulnerable learners. Various initiatives and projects such as the local authority well-being leads meetings and the use of appreciative enquiry help to address the national recommendation in embedding the framework of a whole school approach to mental health and well-being.</p>	
<p>Central South Consortium support schools' leaders in developing robust self-evaluation processes with a specific focus on the quality of the provision and practices for inclusion and teaching, and the impact these have on the well-being and outcomes of all learners. For example, the enabling equity and excellence document is used by improvement partners to support effective self-evaluation in schools to improve an aspect of provision. Schools have also been invited to be part of a project linked to the self-evaluation of additional learning needs pupils.</p>	
<p>Central South Consortium also work in partnership with Local Authorities and other stakeholders to identify and share effective practice. National, cross-regional, and Local Authority groups meet regularly to identify best practice in relation</p>	

to vulnerable learners and have provided national professional learning opportunities where appropriate, these include attendance, exclusion, and well-being officers.

Central South Consortium offer appropriate professional learning to support vulnerable learners. The professional learning offer support to a variety of stakeholders and compliments the professional learning offer provided by Welsh government and Local Authorities. For example, Reading Reconsidered, the Writing Revolution, CLA levels 1,2 and 3 and the middle leadership development. However further work needs to be completed to audit the professional learning offer to ensure it is fit for purpose and is responding to the needs of the system. The professional learning offer needs to support the principles of the enabling equity and excellence document.

Evaluation of engagement and impact

Whilst there is a comprehensive program related to improving outcomes for vulnerable learners including the support from improvement partners, strategic team support specific, and the professional learning offer we acknowledge that evaluating the impact of our work in schools is an area for development.

Evidence

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDG Summary Evaluations • PDG LAC Cluster evaluations • Objective 3 • SIPL • Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Readiness survey • PL attendance figures/evaluation of PL (includes next steps) • Evaluation of ALN pilot work with use of their toolkit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciative inquiry • LA reports • Reading/writing • Attendance • Exclusions • CPAG • ALN pilot 	<p>Various groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project plan (Attendance, Exclusions, Well-being and EOTAS, Enabling) • Equity and Excellence and Equity (EEE) • whole school approach • professional learning • staff well-being) • Whole school approach • National regional and local (nurture, More Able and Talented (MAT), PDG, Well-being, Adoption UK, ALN, CLA, Building blocks). <p>PL evaluations from across CSC. PDG CLA, Reading Reconsidered, the Writing Revolution, leadership pathways.</p>
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Strand Heading	LA / School / CSC Partnership / Joint Working
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilising CSC's CSWC to develop collaborative partnerships • Developing professional learning linked to peer partnership and collaboration • Combined CSC and LA partnership approaches focused on school improvement • Combined funding and projects to meet local and national educational priorities
Evaluation	
<p>The local authority (LA) and Central South Consortium (CSC) work proactively alongside schools to ensure that they carry out honest and thorough self-evaluation, through rigorous, enquiry-based analysis of the evidence available, as part of a culture of continuous improvement. Most schools identify clear, manageable improvement priorities as a consequence and improvement priorities are drawn together in a single, strategic school development plan. Where the need is greater, the LA and CSC offer more intensive support.</p>	

Strong partnership working is reflected in how CSC and the LA support schools in an 'enhanced support' category. These schools are required to attend and present at either half-termly or termly progress review meetings. These meetings are attended by local authority officers, the principal improvement partner, the school's improvement partner, the headteacher and the chair of governors. Progress review meetings are highly effective at ensuring that progress is being made. The impact of these focused and robust systems for ensuring progress is clear in the reduced number of schools in an Estyn monitoring or statutory category.

The consortium has strong partnerships with Local Authorities to effectively support school improvement. There is close alignment between CSC's and the LA's Business Improvement Plans to ensure objectives appropriately support and challenge school improvement.

Local Authorities utilise CSC funding through the LA Annexe Plans to reflect national and LA specific priorities and the impact of this work evidence strong partnership working through cluster-based approaches to improve learning outcomes.

Communication channels are used effectively between the LA, CSC and schools to develop and widen professional learning for all school-based staff. As a result, school leadership is strengthened, curriculum development and pedagogy are deepened and schools are better able to ensure ongoing, sustained school improvement.

School to school working is being skilfully developed through the work of improvement partners to strengthen schools' self-evaluative processes and improve outcomes for learners. This is demonstrated through strong peer partnership and collaborative approaches which form part of CSC's 'Central South Wales Challenge' model. CSC's work is pivotal in developing school improvement groups (SIGs), cluster working and school leader and practitioner networks.

Local Authority and Scrutiny meetings provide valuable challenge for Consortia to quality assure provision, standards and outcomes across all schools. This process ensures there is clear understanding of local and national educational needs and how CSC and Local Authorities can work in partnership to address those needs effectively.

CSC works effectively with Local Authorities to identify local educational needs through developing LA focussed projects. For example, Consortia is supporting RCT LA in raising standards of writing across both primary and secondary schools. This learning deficit was recognised following the impact of Covid, and funding has been jointly provided by CSC and the LA to support schools in developing writing approaches to improve learner outcomes.

CSC has effective working partnerships with local Health Boards and poverty action groups; as a result, schools are well supported to develop strategies to reduce the impact of poverty and provide appropriate support for vulnerable learners.

Evidence

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IP support / SIPL evidence logs • Progress Review Reports • Business Plans (CSC / LA) • LA Annexe Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSC's PL Offer / CSWC • CSWC / PL models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA Performance / Scrutiny Reports • LA focussed projects Child Poverty Action Group / NHS health boards
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8.2 SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT: STRENGTHS & AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Strand Heading	Monitoring and reporting schools' progress including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing schools well and challenging them on their performance • Supporting schools to plan for improvement • Supporting schools with curriculum reform and other changes to national policy • Supporting schools during the COVID 19 pandemic and the following recovery period
Strengths	Areas for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agreed purpose of monitoring and reporting schools' progress is focused on empowering schools to improve outcomes for all learners and to develop as learning organisations • First- hand evidence gathering aligned with school MER processes • Sharing of school level intelligence and information with LA partners leading to agreed actions for challenge and support • Supporting school improvement to move out of Estyn categories • Few schools in Estyn Follow up categories • Vulnerable Schools receive a bespoke agile approach supported by additional funding through resource board • All school receive support for priorities regardless of support category 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing assurance to Local Authorities regarding the progress of the region's schools in the absence of categorisation and aggregated pupil level assessment information. (LA Performance reports, scrutiny reports) • Sharing information with elected members and supporting their understanding • Exemplar SIPLs which allow for flexible consistency • Mechanism for updating CfW development to inform LAs and WG <p>Continue to develop robust evaluation, improvement and accountability arrangements that support a self-improving system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly all schools having timely, broadly evidenced and robust self-evaluation processes as part of a culture of continuous improvement. These to productively inform school improvement priorities and development plans, and respond to the challenges and opportunities of learning and well-being as a result of the Covid pandemic • Nearly all schools having effective evaluation and improvement processes, which address external and internal accountability measures

Strand Heading	Brokering Support
Strengths	Areas for Development

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New centralised database populated by online request form affords improved consistency and efficiency • Automatic notifications to consortium officers improve timely responses to requests • Intended impact / change to behaviours resulting from the support are captured at the request stage to support the evaluation of the work • Project Manager dedicated to monitoring and progressing requests has oversight across all areas • Support plan template has been developed to bring consistency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to refine and test process stages • Support plan approval / QA • Consistency of evaluation following provision of support • Long term evaluation of related progress in schools • Stakeholder evaluation for refinements to process
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Strand Heading	Intervention in schools causing concern
Strengths	Areas for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IP Knowledge of schools • Skills, expertise and knowledge of CSC staff team • Impactful school improvement partnership work • Implementation of Intervention strategy by CSC colleagues • Bespoke approach to supporting all school improvement priorities • Brokering appropriate support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review how evidence is shared to recommend move to stage 4 of intervention strategy • Improve recording of conversations with LA about need for change in support status • Identify short, medium and long term expected impact of any brokered support, who will monitor and how it will be recorder • Consider a shared responsibility to schools causing most concern in the region

Strand Heading	Vulnerable Learners
Strengths	Areas for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a shared responsibility and strategy for vulnerable learners across Central South Consortium • Schools acknowledge that equity will be a key driver for schools supporting vulnerable learners • Collaboration with schools, Local Authorities and other stakeholders • Provide a comprehensive overview of the impact of PDG and PDG CLA grants • Quality of support from CSC in terms of professional learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit of the professional learning offer identify gaps to support the principles of the enabling equity and excellence document • Professional learning linked to supporting pastoral leads in schools • Focus groups about PL linked to various stakeholders linked to EEE and vulnerable learners • Support schools and Local Authorities in effective practice linked to pupils who transition from exclusions school refusal, home tuition and reduced timetables.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSC have a clear regional approach for equity and excellence • Good engagement between LA/CSC/Transformational Lead in trialling the self-evaluation framework for ALN • Well-received guidance on ALN in mainstream schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify roles and responsibilities in the adoption of the statutory framework to the whole school approach to mental health and well-being • Continued roll-out of the EEE implementation plan
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Strand Heading	LA / School / CSC Partnership / Joint Working
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilising CSC's CSWC to develop collaborative partnerships • Developing professional learning linked to peer partnership and collaboration • Combined CSC and LA partnership approaches focused on school improvement • Combined funding and projects to meet local and national educational priorities
Strengths	Areas for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of CSWC PL and networking Offer, school to school support, development of regional leads of governance/system leaders, PEER enquiry work, facilitation of cluster-based work • Effective partnership working to support school improvement and meet local and national educational priorities • Impactful peer partnership and collaborative models • Support for bespoke educational projects relevant to specific LAs • Commitment to work with tier 1 and tier 2 partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widen the scope of the collaborative models to influence school change and impact school leadership approaches • Closer alignment between LA priorities and CSC Business Plan (improve timelines)

8.3 SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FOCUS 2022/23

Continue to refine CSC reporting processes to provide assurance to Local Authorities regarding the progress of the region's schools in the absence of categorisation and aggregated pupil level assessment information.

Support all schools to have effective evaluation and improvement processes, which address external and internal accountability measures

Continue to work with LAs to review the Intervention strategy for schools causing concern annually to ensure responsibilities for all parties are clear

Refine brokerage to identify short, medium, and long term expected impact of any brokered support, who will monitor and how it will be recorded

Support schools in developing effective practice around exclusions, school refusal, home tuition and reduced timetables.

Work with LAs to Identify roles and responsibilities in the adoption of the statutory framework to the whole school approach to mental health and well-being.

9.0 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Supporting school improvement.

- How well does CSC **meet the needs of local schools**?
- How well does CSC **support schools to plan for improvement**?

Supporting schools to share good practice and learn from other schools.

- How well does the regional consortium support schools to **share good practice** and learn from other schools?
- How effectively do local government education services **share good practice**, learn from others, and **contribute to professional learning communities** more widely?

Supporting schools during the COVID 19 pandemic and the following recovery period.

- How well has CSC **adapted to support schools** during the **COVID 19** pandemic?

Supporting schools with national priority areas such as literacy, numeracy, digital competence, Welsh language development and changes to qualifications.

- How effective is the **availability and quality of professional learning and support** provided to schools?
- How effective are **partnership arrangements** with schools?
- How effective is the availability and quality of **support** provided to schools in **changes to qualifications**?

Professional pathways - Supporting effective professional learning at all levels in schools.

- How well has CSC identified the **overall management development needs of school governors**?

Supporting schools with curriculum reform and other national priority areas such as reducing the impact of poverty.

- How well does CSC **support schools with curriculum reform** and other changes to national policy
- How effective is the availability and quality of support provided to schools in reducing the **impact of poverty**?
- How well do CSC take account of **learners' wellbeing and the progress of vulnerable learners** when considering the nature of challenge and support to provide to schools and PRUs?

9.1 SELF-EVALUATION ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT POSITION

Strand Heading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting school improvement • Supporting schools to share good practice and learn from other schools • Supporting schools during the COVID 19 pandemic and the following recovery period
Evaluation	
<p>A wide and varied range of professional learning (PL) is offered to practitioners and leaders at all levels, including school governors. CSC strives to ensure an equitable offer for all schools across the region. All PL is evidence informed, close to practice and aligned to the National Mission, the National Approach to Professional Learning (NAPL) and to the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership (PSTL) and the Professional Standards for Assisting Teaching (PSAT). The CSC professional learning (PL) offer is responsive to local, regional and national needs, informed through a wide range of data, intelligence and evaluation.</p> <p>All schools in the region engage with the Central South Wales Challenge (CSWC). The CSWC is a partnership of all schools in the region working together to develop a self-improving system. This is based on improvement being driven 'by schools, for schools' and provides delivery structures and networks through which most regional professional learning opportunities are offered. The CSWC is refined annually to meet the evolving needs of schools and the wider system. It was refined June 2021 to reflect the significant challenges on schools due to COVID, and to promote and support further opportunities for collaboration within and across schools to share good practice and learn from and with one another.</p> <p>The CSWC includes components that are categorised broadly into two areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional learning collaborations: • All schools in the region are allocated collaboration funding to support participation in collaborative working within and beyond their school. Collaborations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clusters – nearly all schools in the region are engaged in cluster working. Within the evaluations, the professional learning positively influenced the participants and many others in their own settings when the learning had been shared and applied to create goals. In the clusters that can show behavioural changes there are common threads of openness, criticality, reflection and collaboration. • School improvement groups (SIGs) – during 2020-21 80% of schools are engaged in a SIG. This is an approximate decrease of 10% of schools from previous years, cited by these schools as due to additional pressures on their time in responding to COVID. Participants in SIG, both leaders and practitioners, view themselves as involved in bringing about changes in their practice. Many SIGs report effective collaborative structures where time and support is provided to allow teachers to work together on implementing new practices. • Networks – these include termly synchronous network meetings focused on Areas of Learning and Experience (Areas), pedagogy, enquiry and qualifications. Networks are co-facilitated by 27 lead practitioners and CSC strategic advisers. Since April 2020, 1300+ practitioners from 65% of schools across the region have engaged with these networks. The networks and related materials are also made available asynchronously for those who are unable to attend the live sessions. The Welsh medium primary and secondary networks, Y Ffed and Gyda'n Gilydd, and the special schools' network also receive additional funding to plan and facilitate PL where their specific needs are not fully met through the CSC PL offer. There are almost 70 school across the region engaged in these networks. • School-to-school partnerships – during 2020/21, 16 schools across the region supported other schools in areas of school improvement. In all partnership there is evidence of behavioural changes at either practitioner or leadership level. • Peer partnerships - A few known Central South Consortium (CSC) schools are involving peers to successfully enhance their self-evaluation and school improvement priorities in line with the Welsh Government School 	

Improvement draft guidance framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability. School awareness has been raised in an appropriate manner through the sharing of the "Developing a Peer Partnership Approach to School Evaluation and Improvement" and associated case studies via the CSC website and conversations between Headteachers and Improvement Partners. Despite the number of significant strategic and operational challenges presented by COVID-19, established partnerships have successfully maintained their evaluative cultures and sustained all levels of collaboration within their networks in adapted ways. Fledgling new peer partnerships are beginning to be brokered.

- The collaboration funding also supports schools to engage with the National Networks, Talk Pedagogy, and self-facilitated networks to promote schools sharing good practice and learning from and with each other, within and beyond their school.

- **Professional learning opportunities**

This includes a wide variety of synchronous and asynchronous PL events and programmes across the professional pathway, from induction to leadership. These are co-constructed and facilitated by lead practitioners and school leaders from across the region in partnership with the CSC curriculum and professional learning team.

Year	No. delegates	Diff previous year	% schools
19/20	8018	n/a	95%
20/21	9500	+18.5%	100%
21/22 Apr - Oct	7857	+ 370% same period 20/21	100%

Engagement in PL events and/or programmes has increased over the past 3 years. Engagement in the summer term 21 significantly increased from previous years due to high engagement in the CSC Curriculum for Wales PL cross-regional programme and regional networks. Around half of participating practitioners engage in asynchronous professional learning opportunities.

An increasing number of regional funded collaboration projects also support PL for schools. During 2021, almost 40 projects were available to all schools across the region total £340,000 of funding for schools to participate in these PL opportunities.

CSC produces a wide variety of PL resources, materials and guidance to support schools and share practice in all areas. This includes guidance documents, online communities, blogs, vlogs, podcasts, poster packs, FAQs, etc. Engagement in these is also increasing.

In direct response to the situation arising from COVID-19, a number of professional learning opportunities, both synchronous and asynchronous, were rapidly developed to support schools in continuity of learning. These focused primarily on:

- well-being
- pedagogy
- the use of digital technology
- specifically distance/blended learning systems and processes.

A number of regional guidance documents were also produced during 2020 in response to supporting the evolving needs of schools. All documents were aimed to provide synthesised research and ensure consistency in the shared language, knowledge and understanding across the region. In line with the Central South Wales Challenge (CSWC) and our regional strategy for school improvement. Improvement partners and strategic officers used these effectively with schools to support decision making and in brokering professional learning and support as required to meet the needs of the school.

In Feedback received on the professional learning and guidance provided, nearly all practitioners stated that there would be a significant change to practice and that the learning would have a strong impact on pupils in their settings.

Evidence

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional learning offer Engagement spreadsheet and analysis Evaluation CSWC 20/21 Effectiveness and Efficiency Report 19/20 Effectiveness and Efficiency Report 20/21 Local authority termly reports Local authority annual reports CSC Business Plan 20/21 Annual Report CSC Business Plan 19/20 Annual Report Curriculum Area Strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSC RARS Plan CSC RCT Literacy Plan SIG Evaluation Report 19/20 Cluster Evaluation Report 19-20 Hubs Evaluation Report 19-20 Networks booklet 21-22 Collaborative project booklet 21-22 Lead practitioners and Hub booklet 21-22 Evaluation in CSC: roles and responsibilities Sept 21 CSC Professional Learning Handbook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSC PL How to guides Blogs Podcasts Blended learning guidance documents Teaching models document Schools' Annual Survey Estyn Narrative: COVID end reform evidence LA reports Scrutiny reports Scrutiny presentations Blended learning guidance
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Strand Heading	Supporting schools with curriculum reform and other national priority areas such as literacy, numeracy, digital competence, Welsh language development and changes to qualifications
Evaluation	
<p>In CSC, all PL relates to supporting schools in the realisation of the new curriculum. There are explicit PL opportunities that are focussed specifically on aspects of Curriculum for Wales, but it is also embedded in all PLO.</p> <p>Professional learning opportunities and support for schools at all levels are aligned Curriculum for Wales: The journey to curriculum roll-out and the cross-regional Curriculum for Wales professional learning programme. A very few schools (5%) in the region are less engaged in the journey to curriculum roll-out.</p> <p>Since November 2020, over 80% of schools in the region have engaged in the professional learning programme for Curriculum for Wales (CfW) and the wider reforms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 2100 senior leaders from 81% of schools have engaged with the senior leaders' programme, including almost 1000 with curriculum design and development modules in summer 2021 modules. 3400 middle leaders from CSC schools have engaged with the asynchronous middle leaders' programme. 1300 practitioners from 65% of schools across the region have engaged with termly network meetings focused on sharing practice in all Areas of Learning and Experience (Areas), pedagogy and enquiry. 	

- Over 1000 governors from CSC schools have engaged with the governors' programme.

62 practitioners from 57 schools across the CSC region are currently participating the cross-regional curriculum design PL programme. All PL resources, materials and guidance developed from the programme will be made available to all schools in Wales.

PL evaluations demonstrate changes to practitioner behaviour in preparation for CfW and the wider reforms. School self-evaluation activities demonstrate progress towards the implementation of CfW and the wider reforms. However, many leaders and practitioners report the pressure of time to engage meaningfully in curriculum reform, particularly linked to additional pressures from COVID. This is most acute in Welsh medium schools due to their inability to secure supply cover.

Bespoke support: CSC provides bespoke support to all schools and clusters across the region as required to support their realisation of curriculum reform. This is particularly targeted at schools who are less engaged or have less developed practice.

CSC Curriculum for Wales Website: To support practitioners in curriculum design, CSC has developed a specific website. The focus of the website uses the design thinking model aligned to the phases of WGs journey to curriculum roll-out to support schools in the process of curriculum design. All regional Curriculum for Wales PLO, resources, materials and guidance are also available through the website. Engagement and feedback related to this website and the design thinking model has been very positive.

CSC Curriculum for Wales community: There are currently almost 1100 members in this online regional community. It provides an interactive platform for practitioners to access resources, materials, PLO and guidance related to Curriculum for Wales. Members can also participate discussions with other members to share ideas and receive peer support.

CSC collaborative funded projects: There are almost 40 regional collaborative funded projects related to supporting schools in their journey to curriculum roll-out.

Curriculum for Wales survey: Curriculum realisation is a core focus of school improvement conversations in all schools undertaken by CSC Improvement Partners (IPs). During the summer term 2021, IPs worked with school leaders to complete a CfW survey. SWOT analysis reports of the survey for the regional and each local authority were published in autumn 2021 and used to inform PL opportunities. Analysis of the CfW survey, triangulating with IPs perceptions of each school were used effectively to identify schools with less developed practice, providing targeted bespoke support. This intelligence has also been used to identify schools with emerging practice to share across the region and Wales.

Literacy: As result of engaging with professional learning focused on literacy, nearly all participants considered that, their practice had changed in some way. In a majority of cases, this change in practice has been to adapt at least one of the strategies modelled and apply it in their own classroom, e.g. The explicit teaching of vocabulary using the frayer model. Around half of practitioners reported that the learning from the programmes has resulted in a more fundamental change to practice. An additional proxy indicator is that many practitioners have expressed that they have developed their own subject knowledge as a result of engaging with the literacy PL . Many participants reported that the learning from the LLC professional learning offer had been communicated in some way to others in their settings and that the learning from the programme has begun to be used in their settings outside of their own classroom. In a few cases, training linked to the programme had already taken place in their own settings and as a result, participants were beginning to see changes across their school.

STEM, including numeracy: Most (~91%) of practitioners evaluated that engagement with professional learning enhanced their knowledge and skills and that this would be appropriate for use in their setting. Many (~85%) participants felt that engagement with professional learning was appropriate to their needs and skill level. Schools engaging in formal networking opportunities evaluated that they now more able to appropriately determine curriculum pathways for all learners and provide timely and effective interventions.

Digital competence: Most participants reported the PL enhanced their knowledge of the subject matter. Many (82%) reported that the professional learning was appropriate to needs and skill level and that it was relevant to their daily role. Many responded that they would recommend the professional learning to others. Most practitioners evaluated that they had a clearer understanding of the ways digital can support blended learning, direct teaching and digital competence. Practitioners stated that they particularly valued seeing examples shared from other settings and gaining insight into effective practice within blended learning. Practitioners found video content supported their understanding of the DCF strands with example activities being a popular feature. A few requested further support around the use of digital with younger pupils (FP).

Around half of the practitioners anticipated a moderate to high level of effort being required to put this professional learning into practice. Many planned to use what they had learned in their roles with very few being unsure. Most participants reported that the professional learning would lead to at least some change in their practice. A majority reported the expected a good level of change or significant change. Many planned to use what they had learned in their current role. Many of the practitioners planned to meet with colleagues to discuss their professional learning with around half planning to meet with senior leaders. A majority planned to trial different approaches in their practice based on the professional learning.

Welsh language development: Participants evaluated that the content of the PL programme was appropriate for their needs and skill level. Nearly all participants stated that the programme enhanced their knowledge and skills of how to develop their teaching and learning in this area. Many participants stated that the PL was appropriate to their needs and skills level. In addition, they state that the PL provided content that was relevant to their daily job and enhanced their knowledge of the subject matter. Many practitioners stated that their personal language skills improved and this had therefore influenced their behaviour and has subsequently impacted positively upon the quality of teaching and learning.

Nearly all participants in the network meetings stated that they were confident about their knowledge of the topic and that their own capacity to lead had increased. Many participants stated that the network meetings supported them to meet with colleagues and senior leaders to discuss professional learning and to create a whole school action plan to further develop this area.

Other curriculum areas and qualifications PL: Practitioners' response to the PL received was positive in nearly all cases. 84% of delegates reported that the PL enhanced their knowledge of the subject matter. 77% of delegates felt confident or very confident in their knowledge of the professional learning topic following the programme. Nearly all participants considered that, as result of attending the PL, their practice had changed in some way. 77% reported that the PL was appropriate to their needs and skill level. 75% evaluated that the PL was relevant to their daily work. 72% would recommend the professional learning they accessed to others.

98% of delegates plan to use the professional learning or are already using it in their current role and around half of these felt that it would take a significant effort to be able to do this. 78% of delegates report that the PL is linked to their school improvement plan – this can be taken as a proxy of impact as part of a strategic approach to improvement. Half of delegates felt that the PL would have a significant impact on learners in their setting with a further 38% feeling that there would be some impact.

Evidence

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional learning offer Engagement spreadsheet and analysis Evaluation CSWC 20/21 Effectiveness and Efficiency Report 19/20 Effectiveness and Efficiency Report 20/21 Local authority termly reports Local authority annual reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSC Business Plan 20/21 Annual Report CSC Business Plan 19/20 Annual Report Curriculum Area Strategies CSC RARS Plan SIG Evaluation Report 19/20 Cluster Evaluation Report 19/20 Hubs Evaluation Report 19/20 Networks booklet 21/22 Collaborative project booklet 21/22 Lead practitioners and Hub booklet 21/22 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SIPLs CFW survey SWOT analysis regional and LA reports CFW report to WG December 2021 CfW website CfW community area CfW resources and newsletters Blogs Podcasts Schools' Annual Survey reports
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Strand Heading	Professional pathways - Supporting effective professional learning at all levels in schools
Evaluation: Teaching Assistant Learning Pathway(TALP) PL and support:	
<p>Due to COVID-19, all national PL and support for teaching assistants (TAs) and higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs) was through an e-learning offer. The number of TAs applying for selection onto the Aspiring HLTA programme is increasing year on year and there have been noticeable increases in the number of TAs joining the regional PL network and other TALP programmes as a result of effective multi-stranded communications. The target of 25 TAs successfully gaining HLTA status was exceeded by over 100%, as 54 new HLTAs entered the system during 21/22. Evaluations of all PL was very positive and linked to examples of impact on classroom practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2019 -2020: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 131 TAs engaged in PL opportunities 27 TAs achieved HLTA status 2020 – 2021: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 200+ TAs engaged in PL opportunities 31 TAs achieved HLTA status 59 TAs on Cylch 3 of the Aspiring HLTA programme 2021 – 2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 54 TAs gained HLTA status <p>The CSC offer for teaching assistants includes a special schools programme for TA that was co-constructed with 6 special schools. This is currently in its pilot stage for roll-out during 2021/22. Bespoke Foundation Phase and ALN programmes for TAs are currently in development.</p> <p>A TALP twitter account was created to engage and support TAs with 136 followers in 2020 increasing to 200+ in 2021. A Google classroom was created with 167 TAs actively engaging in 2020 and over 200+ in 2021. This is now being developed into a CSC TA Community.</p>	

All schools and cluster can request bespoke PL based on the Assisting Teaching Standards, Curriculum for Wales and aspects of Pedagogy.

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) National and regional professional engagement opportunities

CSC works in very close partnership with ITE providers and ITE schools. The regional consortia ITE lead sits on the Strategic Leadership Boards of the HEIs and has been a contributor in the accreditation process. They also advise on and monitor the selection/deselection and progress of schools within the partnerships.

During 2020/21, 181 schools across the region supported student teachers in partnership with 4 ITE providers to deliver a range of ITE programmes and routes. 20% of these schools are Welsh medium. By November 2021, the number of ITE schools increased to 189.

In 20/21, almost 200 ITE graduates engaged actively with PL in CSC in the Teams network space compared to 147 during 19/20.

Strengthened 'bridging activities' helped mitigate the impact of COVID on the student teacher's opportunity to work face to face in school and learn from other teachers. A more robust Career Entry Profile in the PLP, a richly resourced PL Strategy document and an ITE Graduates Teams space supported pan-Wales activities and region-specific networking for all students during 2020/21.

During 2020, the Cardiff Partnership submitted a modification request to EWC accreditation board to allow placements to take place in Special Education Needs schools. CSC fully supported this request and this was approved.

Induction national and regional professional learning

Engagement in national PL has increased year on year for induction stakeholder groups:

- 100% of all external verifiers (EVs) in both 20/21 and 21/22, an increase of 8% from 19/20
- 65% of all induction mentors (IMs) in 21/22 compared to 48% in 20/21, and 27% in 19/20 - an overall increase of 28% in three years
- 81% of all newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in 21/22 compared to 78% in 20/21, and 72% in 19/20 - an overall increase of 9% in three years

250 NQTs in schools across the region attended the e-Aspire/Anelu programme in 20/21 compared to 220 who attended the face face in 219/20. 177 short-term supply NQTs across the region attended the e-Aspire/Anelu programme compared to 108 19/20. The enhanced programme, together with Think Like A Teacher helped to address the impact of COVID-19 on the early practitioner's limited classroom experiences and opportunities to learn from experienced practitioners.

Evaluations by NQTs were very positive and critically reflective. 93% NQTs indicated that the PL will impact on learning and teaching in their own practice. 97% of attendees stated that the session on managing the learning environment and behaviours and building positive relationships for learning was directly relevant to their current role.

An enhanced PL offer focusing on the skills of the mentor available to IMs has seen engagement rise over time. IMs have recognised and welcomed the increased support and capacity for IMs to create resources, share practice and facilitate PL themselves has also increased.

Enhanced communication and support of EVs has been evidenced through monthly bulletins and regular networking opportunities. The introduction of a 'buddy system' where experienced EVs have been matched with a new EV to coach them through the process of induction has been successful.

New, high quality Welsh resources to support both national and regional PL for Welsh Medium schools have been produced and feedback from school is very positive.

Regular impact reviews of induction profiles demonstrate that levels of meaningful engagement in the statutory process increase over time in response to the support offered by CSC. The number of follow up actions during the moderation

period in relation to induction profile validation in June/July 2021 was nearly 50% less than the previous year attributed to the ongoing profile reviews raising issues much earlier.

Evidence

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level impact summary 2019 – 2020 • Director's report 2020 - 2021 • R and E report 2020 – 2021 • Area plan Business Plan 2021 – 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional learning offer • Engagement spreadsheets and analysis • Programme evaluation spreadsheets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA report on Aspire/Anelu and e-Aspire/e-Anelu • Induction survey analysis • Induction profile impact summary • Moderation and pass data
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Evaluation: Leadership

Leadership programmes:

CSC has developed a portfolio of endorsed leadership development opportunities based on a national pathway of professional learning. This suite of professional learning is equipping leaders across the region with the knowledge, experiences, and skills to be effective in their roles. This ensures the development of inspirational leaders that are well prepared and supported to lead their schools through educational reform as set out in Our National Mission. Leadership PL programmes are shared with schools via the CSC communications strategy. Detailed overviews are shared to support schools identify the most appropriate programme for the individual at the relevant point in their career. Improvement Partners (IPs) also work with schools to identify leaders who would benefit from participation in the leadership programmes.

CSC delivered the full suite of leadership programmes, from middle leader to experienced headteacher. A system leader programme has been developed and is being piloted during 2021/22 to complete the leadership pathway. CSC continues to facilitate assessment for NPQH. In line with recommendations from Our National Mission Oct 2020, the delivery of NPQH has been reviewed and refined to enable the 2021 cohort to apply their leadership experience in the context of the pandemic.

All leadership programmes have received endorsement from the National Academy for Educational Leadership (NAEL), demonstrating the high standard of the programmes provided.

Applications for the programme 2021-22 have exceeded places and are currently fully subscribed. All programmes provide participants with the support of a leadership coach. These coaches are also able to access the national coaching and mentoring programme to ensure they are effective in this role.

All leadership programmes are evaluated using an online form after each module for participant feedback. This immediate feedback on the session is shared with facilitators and supports in refining the programme delivery. Detailed end of programme evaluations are analysed and inform development and next steps.

National Professional Qualification for Headship:

During 2020/21, NPQH assessment was successfully undertaken online via Teams. 81% of candidates met the criteria (22 met/5 not yet met). A full evaluation report was written and distributed to LA directors. Of the 5 CSC candidates who had not yet met, there was no pattern in the reasons and all received detailed feedback.

Since 2011, analysis has been carried out of NPQH candidates moving into headship positions. For school leaders with NPQH for 3 years or more 73% have since gained a head teacher post and 27% have not gained headship to date.

Coaching and mentoring: CSC has developed a strategy to embed coaching and mentoring (C&M) across the region, strengthening support for participants on the leadership pathway programmes and supporting leaders at all levels in their current role. Since 2020, 122 staff from schools and CSC have completed the national C&M trainer programme to facilitate training across the region. 49/58 clusters now have an identified facilitator with this PL targeted for ALNCOs, IMs and RLGs. A comprehensive package of training is now offered to schools through lead practitioner led PL, and to CSC and LA staff through staff facilitators. Since 2020, 214 additional CSC and school-based staff have engaged in the C&M PL programme. Coaching and mentoring is being strengthened further with 82 participants who have received the training taking their learning further by undertaking a formal qualification. 82 delegates are undertaking ILM L3, 5 or 7.

Evidence

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|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency and Evaluation Report • Leadership opportunities document • Programme evaluation forms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle Leaders end of programme evaluation • Senior leaders end of programme evaluation • NPQH report 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPQH destination report 2011-21 • NAEL endorsement • Case studies from schools |
|---|--|--|

Evaluation: School Governors

School Governors: CSC recognises the role and significance of school governance as essential in contributing to strong leadership and effective school improvement. During 2020/21, existing Central South Consortium (CSC) Governance projects were further consolidated, and new school support processes developed.

The delivery of mandatory PL for governors is delegated by the five Local Authorities to CSC. All new governors have to attend the mandatory professional learning - New Governor, Understanding Data and New Chair of Governors. In addition to the mandatory training, CSC also provides PL for governors in relation to key areas of the national reform agenda e.g., Curriculum for Wales updates and Schools as Learning Organisations. During the pandemic, governor PL has been delivered through a blend of synchronous and asynchronous events. The content of the PL was reflective of the challenges faced by schools. In 20/21 levels of engagement were 45% higher than the previous 3-year average.

Overall, 81.5% of respondents evaluated that the governor PL was relevant to their role, with 44.8% stating that they would adjust their practice based on their learning. This percentage rose to 72.2% in relation to the new chair of governors training. In addition to course evaluations governors were also asked to complete a survey to evaluate the effectiveness of the PL offered in meeting their needs as a governor. This survey was analysed, and the information was used to identify next steps in refining the CSC PL offer. The majority of responses to the online PL offer were very positive. Areas for development were identified and refinements will be made as a result, e.g. timings of the sessions.

A governor self-evaluation toolkit has been developed and piloted across the region. This will be shared with all schools in the spring term 2022.

During 2020/21, Regional Leaders of Governance (RLGs) was established. The support of these experienced governors is brokered by schools in partnership with IPs. Since 2020, 5 RLGs have been deployed to support school governing bodies across the region. All RLGs also support the facilitation of training to governing bodies. 5 RLGs are undertaking

Strand Heading	Supporting schools with curriculum reform and other national priority areas such as reducing the impact of poverty.			
Evaluation				
<p>strategies to support national priority areas are clear, coherent and well understood. A clear regional approach is in place through the launch of the Enabling Equity and Excellence document. This document has been refined following beneficial partnership work with all stakeholders, and through support by UCL Institute of Education.</p> <p>A comprehensive CSC professional learning offer is offered to all schools with a strong focus on vulnerable learners. There is increasing engagement over time from schools with the PL that relates to vulnerable learners. During 2020-21, around half of schools in the region (48.7%) engaged in PL events relating to vulnerable learners. This is an increase of over 12% in the number of participants when compared with 2019-20.</p> <p>Positive feedback is evident in relation to the PL relating to vulnerable learners. Evaluations from participants from 20/21 PL demonstrate: Most now feel more confident about the subject matter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most report that the PL enhanced their knowledge of the subject matter.• Many report that the PL was appropriate to their needs and skill level and felt that the professional learning was relevant to their daily work.• Many would recommend the PL they accessed to others.• Nearly all (99.45%) plan to use the PL or are already using it in their current role.• Many (70%) did not recognise there were any barriers to applying what they had learned.• Majority (65%) report that the PL is linked to their school improvement plan – this can be taken as a proxy of impact as part of a strategic approach to improvement.• Many (82%) evaluated that the professional learning would have a some or significant impact on learners in their setting.				
Evidence				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CSC Business Plan 2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CSC Enabling Equity and Excellence document• CSC Enabling Equity and Excellence implementation plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional learning programme and resources• Attendance figures for professional learning• Professional learning evaluations	<p>the national coaching and mentoring programme. They will then facilitate this to other governors in the region. They are also supporting the facilitation of an introduction to coaching available to all schools.</p>	
Evidence				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PL evaluations• Governor survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PL engagement reports• Governor toolkit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PLG papers• RLG brokered support plans and evaluations		

9.2 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING: STRENGTHS & AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT

Strand Heading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting school improvement • Supporting schools to share good practice and learn from other schools • Supporting schools during the COVID 19 pandemic and the following recovery period
Strengths	Areas for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide variety of PL opportunities aligned to local, regional and national needs and along all milestones of the professional pathway. • Equity of access to high-quality PL for all practitioners and school leaders, including governors. • CSWC enabling a self-improving system for professional learning and collaboration for all schools across the region. • Increased engagement in PL events and/or programmes. • Increased recruitment of CSC staff and lead practitioners to support Welsh Medium schools, particularly for Curriculum for Wales PL and support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further development of CSC staffing capacity, roles and responsibilities to meet regional PL needs, particularly in relation to pressures on school with lead practitioners due to COVID and to meet the needs of schools in curriculum reform. • Further development of PL opportunities to support/align to all areas of the Enabling Equity and Excellence document. • Further refine the Central South Wales Challenge model to meet evolving regional and national needs, e.g. TALP, curriculum reform. • Further refinement of the brokerage systems and processes for supporting schools. • Further develop effective use of PL data, evaluation, and intelligence to inform school improvement PL and support, including shared understanding of 'impact' and strategies for longer term evaluation. • Further ensure coherence between CSC, LA and WG PL opportunities.

Strand Heading	Supporting schools with curriculum reform and other national priority areas such as literacy, numeracy, digital competence, Welsh language development and changes to qualifications
Strengths	Areas for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum for Wales embedded in all PL across the region. • Since November 2020, over 80% of schools in the region have engaged in the professional learning programme for Curriculum for Wales (CfW) and the wider reforms. • Development of the design thinking model and the CSC website in providing support for all schools in curriculum design and development. • Regional collaborative projects across all areas of the curriculum. All projects over-subscribed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further development of CSC staffing capacity, roles and responsibilities to meet regional PL needs, particularly in relation to pressures on school with lead practitioners due to COVID and to meet the needs of schools in curriculum reform. • Curriculum team to further support and advice for curriculum

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PL evaluations strong, with 98% of delegates already using or planning to use the learning in their current role. • Engagement with Welsh language development PL strong with one third of schools engaged between April and December 2021. In programmes that raise practitioner's Welsh language competence, nearly all report improved skills and many plan to change their practice. 	<p>reform in all pathways programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further development of PL for school improvement staff to ensure they continue to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to support CfW development in schools. • Further development of PL programmes to support curriculum design for schools and clusters.
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Strand Heading	Professional pathways - Supporting effective professional learning at all levels in schools	
	Strengths	Areas for Development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened 'bridging activities' helped mitigate the impact of COVID on student teachers' opportunity to work face to face in school and learn from other teachers. • An increased number of NQTs (81%, +7% over 2 years) and induction mentors (72%, +45% over 2 years) engaged with CSC PL opportunities ensuring information, resources and support resulted in consistency in terms of process as evidenced by induction profile evaluation, and improvements in practice as evidence by evaluations. • Nearly all (93%) of all eligible NQTs passed induction in the region in 2020/21, with 7% being given an extension and 0% failures. • The target number of TAs gaining HLTA status was achieved and more than doubled with 54 TAs achieving HLTA status, an increase of over 100% from the previous year. • Evaluations from all leadership programmes demonstrates the positive impact on developing the leadership skills of the participants and the impact on learners through the practical leadership experience tasks undertaken. • Evaluations demonstrate that support received from leadership coaches is effective and enhances the leadership programmes offered. • 88 leaders in CSC have gained NPQH in the last 3 years and are yet to be appointed so are in a position to take up headship across the region and beyond. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending reach for TALP PL to increase engagement of teaching assistants in professional learning. • Development of professional pathway for career development of TAs – cross-regional/national . • Professional learning opportunities related to induction statutory reform. • Refine the governor survey to inform the professional learning offer for governors. • Further development of the governor toolkit and planning for PL and support for governing bodies on its implementation.

Strand Heading	Supporting schools with curriculum reform and other national priority areas such as reducing the impact of poverty.	
Strengths		Areas for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear regional approach in place – Enabling Equity and Excellence. • Increasing engagement from schools in the professional learning programme - 2020/21 +12% in schools attended professional learning on vulnerable learners • Positive feedback received in relation to the professional learning programme - 99.5% using or planning to use the learning in their role. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further work to ensure coherence and avoid duplication and gaps in the PL offered by CSC and LAs focusing on well-being and vulnerable learners. • Enabling Equity and Excellence implementation plan to be agreed by CSC governance and implemented. • Further development and alignment of professional learning, guidance and resources to support all elements and principles of the Enabling Equity and Excellence document. • Consideration in developing professional learning linked to supporting pastoral leads in schools.

9.3 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOCUS 2022/23

- Ensure all schools are supported in their preparations for Curriculum for Wales and the wider education reforms through high-quality professional learning, guidance, and resources.
- Further development and alignment of professional learning, guidance, and resources to support all elements and principles of the CSC Enabling Equity and Excellence document.
- Further develop the effective use of data, evaluation, and intelligence to inform professional learning and support for school improvement.
- Refine the professional learning and support at all levels along the professional pathway.
- Further strengthen partnership working with schools, Local Authorities, other middle tier organisations and Welsh Government to ensure a coherent and high-quality professional learning offer to all schools.

10.0 LEADERSHIP & SAFEGUARDING

Quality and effectiveness of leaders and manager

- How well have leaders and managers established and communicated a **clear vision** and **appropriate aims, strategic objectives**, plans and policies that focus on **meeting all learners' needs**?
- How clearly and transparently does the consortium **communicate its vision**, intentions and expected outcomes to schools, learners and other **relevant stakeholders**?
- How **aware** are **stakeholders**, including schools, partners, elected members and officers, of (and **fully committed to achieving**) the **targets** for the consortium's education services?
- How well do staff at all levels **understand and discharge their roles** and responsibilities?
- How well do staff **collaborate** in driving forward **strategic priorities** and plans for education services?
- How effective is the **relationship** between the consortium, its schools, and other partners in terms of **their impact on outcomes for learners** in the county?
- **How effective has the leadership of elected members and officers been in securing effective and efficient service delivery** that impacts on standards and the quality of education and training for all children and young people?
- How well does the consortium's Business Plan set out the consortium's **strategic vision**, aims and priorities and how they comply with the requirements of relevant Welsh Government guidance and respond appropriately to **local, regional, and national priorities**?
- How effectively do **elected members** and other **supervisory boards** scrutinise performance, **challenge** underperformance and **inform** the continuous improvement of service delivery and policy development?
- How well do leaders and managers **promote**, and provide support for, **staff wellbeing**, including that of headteachers?

Self-Evaluation processes and improvement planning

- How effectively does the '**golden thread**' of **education and training** run through the various layers of plans, policy agreements and other initiatives through the regional consortium to local authorities and schools?
- How accurately do leaders and managers know the **strengths and weaknesses** of the consortium's education services as a result of well-established **processes for self-evaluation, monitoring and quality assurance**?
- How effective is the quality of data / data analysis?
- How effective are the consortium's own **monitoring of the impact of its performance management arrangements**?
- How well does the consortium involve, and take account of the **views of, stakeholders in its self-evaluation and improvement-planning processes**, including children and young people, parents, service deliverers and partners?

- How well has/did the consortium **evaluated its work during the COVID-19** pandemic?
- How well has the consortium **responded to recommendations from previous inspection reports, thematic reports** and other relevant reports from inspectorates and regulators?

Professional learning

- How well do staff, at all levels, **keep up to date with knowledge** about their areas of responsibility, including learning from good practice?
- How well does the consortium's staff **promote and engage in professional learning** through structured learning opportunities, research, and collaborations with professional networks in Wales, the UK and internationally?
- How well do staff develop their **leadership skills** through **structured learning opportunities**?
- How well are the consortium's **performance management** arrangements used to **identify** the professional learning **needs** of staff?
- How well does the consortium **evaluate** the appropriateness and impact of **professional learning** in motivating staff and improving their performance?

Safeguarding

- How well does the consortium **promote a culture of safeguarding** in schools and other providers that supports **all learners' wellbeing**?
- Does the consortium have appropriate arrangements in place to ensure that **all partnership work** undertaken, co-ordinated or funded by the consortium **adheres to high standards of safeguarding**?
- Does the consortium have **robust procedures** for **staff training** and that all staff know how to respond to **child protection** issues? How well does the consortium fulfil its duty to **prevent learners from being drawn into terrorism, by preventing radicalisation and extremism**?
- Does the consortium have **robust procedures** for checking the **suitability of staff** and others who are in contact with children, including the maintenance of a record of all staff working with children and the outcomes of **appropriate safer recruitment checks**?

Use of resources

- How effectively does the consortium **allocate resources to its priorities**?
- How **fairly** does the consortium **fund schools** based on the needs of learners and the contexts of schools?
- How effective is the consortium's most recent **review** of its **funding arrangements for schools**?
- How well does the consortium deploy and **ensure effective use of specific grant funding** to schools and other providers?

- either directly or through a regional consortium or other partnership arrangement?
- How well does the consortium assure LAs that it is providing **value for money from the regional arrangements?**
- How effectively does the consortium **deploy its own resources?**
- How effective is the consortium in **making good use of the funding** it receives?

10.1 SELF-EVALUATION ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT POSITION

Strand Heading	Quality and Effectiveness of Leaders and Managers
Evaluation	
<p><u>Vision, aims etc (incl. quality of consultation)</u></p> <p>Leaders and managers within CSC have developed in partnership a coherent vision that guides the work of all teams within the organisation. Our guiding principle is to empower schools to improve outcomes for all and this is embodied in our Central South Wales Challenge and in our school improvement work. All staff within the organisation and our stakeholders are aware of our vision, <i>however we need to ensure that this is clearly demonstrated in our work with schools and LAs.</i> Our staff work with schools to provide support and challenge, working in partnership with schools to implement the school's individual priorities alongside the LA priorities. The majority of our staff are clear on our objectives, and this is articulated in our internal PL.</p> <p>PL and internal meetings ensure that our staff have a clear understanding of the needs of each school in the region, and this is shared effectively with LAs to support LAs carry out their statutory functions (this will be covered in area 1)</p> <p><u>Professionalism and ways of working (expectations of staff / motivation / professional values / collaboration)</u></p> <p>Leaders have set high expectations for staff and this is evident in the induction programme and the documentation that supports staff across the organisation. All staff understand their roles and carry out their roles in line with expectations. Line management systems are in place to support staff and there are opportunities to further develop staff skills (PL, national and cross regional working parties, AOEA accreditation, coaching & mentoring training etc). Positive feedback has been received from schools, governors, and LA about the working arrangements that have been put in place. Schools continue to be challenged and supported but in a sensitive way given the current situation. Progress reviews show that schools are making progress. Staff have positive relationships with schools and work well to promote the local and regional agendas. <i>We need to ensure that there is cross organisational clarity around roles and responsibilities of all staff. We now have a who's who document outlining the roles and responsibilities of all staff in the organisation, however we need to ensure that this is used more widely and updated regularly and that we clarify any misconceptions staff may have around other people's roles.</i></p> <p>CSC is a collaborative organisation, staff at all levels form part of the Business Plan drive teams. Staff have the opportunity to develop their leadership skills and take responsibility across the organisation. Throughout the year our PL programme enables staff to work collaboratively to review our progress and identify ways forward to overcome barriers to progress. The BP drives our operational work.</p> <p>Performance development has been developed in conjunction with staff. Clear guidelines and protocols have been developed to promote well-being and ensure effective ways of working in a virtual environment. Many staff follow these protocols. Leaders model the behaviours they expect from staff, leaders are active participants in all staff development and promote the wellbeing of staff, <i>however leaders do not always follow the well-being protocols themselves.</i> Staff are engaged in the developments across the organisation and work well together, this can be seen in the professional challenge that is offered through the BP review meetings and the range of working parties that contribute to our developments across the organisation, i.e., SIPL, PD, repository etc.</p>	

Leaders continue to ensure that staff have a voice in guiding the direction of the organisation. We continue to implement the consortia as a learning organisation survey annually and this feeds into our Business Plan and operational ways of working. CSC is an empowering organisation and staff are involved across all of our developments, this has included PD. ***We need to ensure that more staff contribute to the surveys and that they can see the impact of their feedback.*** This year there was clear feedback to all staff from the CLO working party.

Staff also have access to Welsh language learning and during 2021/22, 2 members of staff have undertaken the advanced course, with a further 4 members of staff undertaking the intermediate course.

Meeting Local (LA Annex), Regional & National Priorities

CSC has a clearly defined Business Planning process that meets the requirements of our legal agreement; ***however, we need to ensure that the LA priorities are an integral part of the process at the early planning stage.*** This Business Plan guides the work of the organisation and there are clear processes in place that monitor and challenge the progress towards achieving our success criteria. Our Business Plan is underpinned by a series of very detailed operational plans with key milestones, that guide our work and are reviewed regularly. Termly there are formal review meetings that confirm the progress meetings. These are attended by the drive team, CSC senior leaders and more recently LA directors. This is an opportunity to challenge the evidence that is presented by the drive teams. ***Our monitoring processes will continue to develop to ensure that our stakeholders are more involved in our monitoring and review processes. We have also agreed to move to a three-year Business Plan to ensure that there is a better focus on sustainable long-term improvements and impact.***

We produce an annual Effectiveness and efficiency report, and this is a comprehensive review of the funding that has been received and focuses on the impact of several strands of our work. This draft report is shared with our stakeholders and their comments and contributions feed into the final draft that is shared with joint committee. Alongside this we also produce a few reports that shares the impact of our work across the region, ***however we now need to rationalise these reports and ensure that we produce reports that share the effectiveness of the organisation alongside the progress of schools across each LA.***

We ensure that recommendations from national reports are built into our Business Plan and cross referenced in our work, ***however we need to ensure that this is manageable and regularly reviewed.***

Risk Management

Within CSC we have a comprehensive risk register which is reviewed regularly, and mitigations are put in place to address these and to ensure they are monitored regularly. ***We now need to ensure that our risk register links to LA and WG registers.*** Alongside this formal risk register we also analyse all of the strands of activity within the Business Plan and mitigations are put in place to address these. This may include adding additional PL, reviewing school activity, providing additional resources to support etc. We have responded positively to particular risks associated with covid altering provision to ensure that school staff had access to digital support and learning resources, a range of PL was moved to become asynchronous to allow flexible access. (covered in area 2?) and some PL was paused.

CSC Governance (inc decision making, identification of priorities, programme of work)

In 2021 we implemented our revised governance structure which was developed with stakeholders on the back of the ISOS review. All of the governance groups have clearly defined terms of reference and link back to the CSC management board. A member of the board sits on each of the governance subgroups. We have also instigated a partnership group to bring all stakeholders together on a regular basis. ***Our next step is to ensure that there is effective two-way communication between all the groups and that our governance structures support our strategic planning. We need to consider ways to further engage members of our joint committee. We also need to ensure that our staff have a better understanding of the governance and scrutiny arrangements across CSC.*** We now have outcomes from governance meetings on SLT agenda

to enable better communication and feedback. Staff at all levels are also welcomed to attend meetings as observers, ***however this rarely happens for staff other than SLT.***

Recent changes to the governance structures and organisation within CSC are being embedded and ***these will continue to be reviewed to ensure that they are fit for purpose and meet the needs of the organisation and LAs.***

Through our Business Planning processes we review the progress that has taken place in each area, this also gives an opportunity to ensure that our offer meets the strategic priorities of the organisation, the LAs and WG, ***moving forward we intend to have closer links to the LA priorities.*** Our BP goes through a formal public consultation process.

Scrutiny Arrangements & Effectiveness / Training for Members

Officers attend regular LA scrutiny meetings to present and share the work of the organisation. These sessions provide an opportunity for elected members to question and scrutinise the work of CSC and the impact this has had on their schools. Training and briefing sessions are also held that support the work of scrutiny committees and share our principles and ways of working. This work is also corroborated by schools in scrutiny meetings. ***We need to work with our LAs to further develop the information that is shared with scrutiny committees to enable them to hold LA and CSC officers to account for the work in their schools.***

Within CSC we have a series of evaluative reports that are created and feed into the forward planning of our work. These reports are well received at our governance meetings, these included Effectiveness and Efficiency reports, equity and excellence documentation, (covered in section 2)

Staff Wellbeing

Leaders have enabled a range of staff working parties that have shaped our way of working, including promoting wellbeing and ways of working. Staff have access to a wide range of support in terms of wellbeing, occupational health, mentoring and coaching support. We have maintained flexibility in ways of working that promote wellbeing and work life balance.

Evidence

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Plan 2021/22, included LA priorities and this is regularly reported on • Business Plan Implementation Plan • CSWC documentation & website • Governance Structures & terms of reference • LA Estyn reports • HR Charter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal PL and staff supporting documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Handbook ○ SI framework ○ Who's Who? ○ PL programme • CLO Survey & report analysis • Induction survey report & next steps • Partnership working – scrutiny reports, Estyn letter re blended learning, CSWC, cross regional working, LA reports (changed over time due to feedback) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA priorities reported on in the evaluation of the BP Objectives, regional recommendations. • PIPs on SMT in LAs – partnership is seamless • Training materials (Members)
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Strand Heading	Self-Evaluation processes and improvement planning
Evaluation	
<u>Understanding of the organisation's strengths and weaknesses</u>	
<p>There is a well-established Business Planning process in place that incorporates the golden thread of the priorities outlined within the Business Plan through to the operational and areas plans. Success measures and outcomes are identified within the various levels of planning.</p>	
<p>CSC has an annual cycle of self-evaluation activity which involves all internal staff as well as external stakeholders. Self-evaluation processes are in place to capture staff views and identify strengths and areas for development. AS a result of self-evaluation activity, the areas for development transpose into themes within the priority areas of the Business Plan with corresponding outcomes and success measures.</p>	
<p>CSC staff are presented with a summary of the findings from self-evaluation in January each year and during staff sessions, these are further developed to identify the priority areas for improvement with the next Business Planning cycle. <i>However, this could be further developed to ensure the local authority areas for development are incorporated at an earlier stage as well as the recommendations for improvement from annual reports. This process would further benefit from the refinement of the operational planning templates.</i></p>	
<u>Processes for self-evaluation, monitoring and QA</u>	
<p>An annual cycle of self-evaluation and monitoring and reporting is agreed by the Members of the Joint Committee on an annual basis. This outlines the various self-evaluation activities throughout the year and the processes for reporting progress and impact.</p>	
<p>As part of the process for monitoring the progress of the BP, impact review meetings take place on a termly basis with the SLT drive team members and members of the SMT in CSC and recently LA Directors. Evaluation of progress and impact of the actions within the BP are presented and challenged as well as identification of barriers and proposed next steps outlined. <i>However not all Directors have attended these sessions and so further development of this process needs to take place.</i></p>	
<p>Reports are compiled following impact review meetings and are presented for challenge at Joint Committee and other CSC governance group meetings. <i>However, monitoring of performance outside of CSC's governance should be considered as well as engagement with pupil voice.</i></p>	
<p>In addition to the reporting of progress & impact with the Business Plan, there are other formal processes for challenging performance of the work of the consortium. This includes LA performance reporting, scrutiny reporting on specific themes (such as Curriculum for Wales readiness) as well as reports to WG. Staff at CSC are also encouraged to provide feedback from staff induction & CLO surveys which are used by senior management for improvement planning. <i>However, not all staff engage with these surveys and so the CLO group are considering other methods of engagement</i></p>	
<u>Reporting processes (in relation to corporate performance management)</u>	
<p>During COVID, performance management processes were suspended. During this time a working party was established to review the performance development arrangements and present proposals for improvement. Following a period of consultation with CSC staff, members of HR and unions, a revised performance development process was launched in July 2021. All members of CSC staff undertake performance development to ensure the continuous development of individuals. Individual objectives are identified and monitored as part of the cycle of performance development as well as an</p>	

expectation of all staff to engage in appreciative enquiry. ***However, as this is a new performance development process, it is too early to evaluate the impact upon individual and the workforce.***

On a half termly basis, performance is monitored against Business Plan priorities and reported on a termly basis to relevant governance groups. Each term the senior management team produce a report on the progress made against success measures for priority areas as a result of impact review meetings whereby aspects leads present evidence of progress to members of the drive teams, members of SMT and senior officers in LAs. ***However, although this is presented for challenge and scrutiny to Members of Joint Committee, further work is required to ensure scrutiny by LA scrutiny committees.***

Engagement with stakeholders in self-evaluation

The development of our Business Plan and performance monitoring arrangements is a collaborative process in which the Local Authority officers are involved. Likewise, Local Authority Directors have recently been invited to attend our Business Planning impact review meetings to provide comment and challenge. ***However (as above) not all Directors have attended these sessions and so further development of this process needs to take place.***

CSC provides its stakeholders with several governance reports each term to evidence the progress made against our Business Plan and stakeholders are given the opportunity to provide feedback on the reports during governance meetings that are held. ***However, further clarification and work is required to ensure that the reports meet the needs of stakeholders and to reduce the amount of reporting undertaken by CSC. Further work is also required with our stakeholders to ensure that we develop an appropriate quality of evidence in reaction to accountability.***

Link between self-evaluation and improvement planning

Comments received during self-evaluation processes are used to plan for improvement within the service. For example, Local Authority Directors have suggested improvements to impact review processes which have been considered and actioned. Likewise, CSC staff feedback has been used to drive improvement to systems and internal processes. ***However, further work is required to ensure that data analysis is used to inform improvement planning in a more systematic way.***

Business Planning (allocation of resources to priorities & link to LA priorities)

CSC's budget is drafted in parallel with the Business Planning process and prioritised in accordance with the needs identified through self-evaluation activities. These needs represent the specific needs of the region as well as the priorities identified by Welsh Government. Local Authorities' specific needs are incorporated into the Business Plan, ***although further work will need to be undertaken to ensure these priorities are embedded and systematically monitored and progress reported aligned to the needs of the LAs and corporate reporting requirements.***

Individual priority plans contain relevant detail regarding the resourcing implications for each aspect of the plan. The allocation of resources is linked directly to national needs (as per terms and conditions of grant funding) as well as the specific needs of the region (as identified through effective self-evaluation activity and undertaken in conjunction with stakeholders including: all staff, headteachers (RSG), governors and Directors. Consultation takes place with stakeholders, and in line with the governance arrangements of CSC, the BP is approved by the five Local Authorities' directors and ratified by Joint Committee members, prior to publication. ***However, when reviewing the legal agreement in 2022, further consideration should be given to the timeline for publication of the BP to ensure self-evaluation activities (of both the LA and CSS) and the confirmation of grant funding are known prior to developing the activities within the operational plans.***

CSC is able to rapidly deploy resources to where they are most required in an efficient way but also drawing from across the regional footprint. For example, a school identifies as requiring support involved:

- *Brokering support from APL and additional coaching for middle leadership*
- *Identifying schools to school support for curriculum, teaching and learning development*
- *Providing an RLG to support the governing body*
- *Providing focused support for specific PL in literacy & numeracy*

- Directing the IP to oversee, monitor and quality assure the process

Evaluation of the work of CSC during COVID

The role of the consortia in supporting learning changed since the initial repurposing of Schools in March 2020. The initial focus was on distance learning and digital skill acquisition, to blended learning support. Schools continued to have a named improvement partner throughout the lockdown periods with IPs initially focusing on the wellbeing of HTs, teaching and support staff and children and young people.

CSC repurposed support initially to research and production of [Distance Learning Considerations for Schools guidance](#). And development of appropriate resources this lead [A Resource to Support Distance Learning](#). Staff undertook a substantial exercise to curate and collate a wide variety of resources to support schools and parents/carers in distance learning across all subjects and phrases. The CSC website was developed to ensure up-to-date information, resources and guidance were easily accessible to schools. The [Blended Learning Guidance](#) was developed to support the planning of learners returning to school. The [Roadmap to blended Learning](#) was produced as a direct identified school need.

Reports were provided to Chief Executives detailing the work undertaken to support schools, Local Authorities and CSC staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, outlining the impact of the work of the consortium. Additional reports & presentations were provided to Estyn, Welsh Government and LAs on the support provided during the pandemic, and the impact of this support. Termly progress / impact reports in respect of the Business Plan were presented to all governance groups across CSC – the progress of specific support in light of COVID-19 is outlined within such reports. **However, the recommendations from the Estyn thematic review have been incorporated into the operational planning of CSC and further progress reports will be produced later in the year.**

Evidence

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycle of self-evaluation activity • Joint Committee report 'Monitoring and Reporting the work of CSC' May 2021 • Self-Evaluation activity & reports • Impact review meetings – reports • Reports to Chief Execs (re CSC work during COVID) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA performance reports • Reports to WG on support for blended learning / distance learning • Presentations to Estyn on the work of consortia during the pandemic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estyn thematic report LA & Regional Consortia Approach for Schools and PRUs in response to Covid 19 • Reports to JC re FOI / SAR • RCT Complaints Policy • CSC Performance Development proposals & templates
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Strand Heading	Professional learning
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Evaluation

Professional Learning of CSC Staff (internal / accredited)

Professional learning activities have been very effective in developing the skills of most staff which enables them to work more productively with schools and Local Authorities on improving processes and outcomes in schools. The extensive uptake of professional learning opportunities, both within CSC and by nearly all schools, is developing skills and knowledge throughout the region. **However, clearer internal quality assurance processes would improve consistency and develop a stronger focus on the impact of professional learning on outcomes in schools.**

Nearly all staff maintain strong knowledge about their areas of responsibility as a result of a culture of high expectation around professional learning. This is facilitated through CSC's induction programme and new professional development processes, for example. CSC has developed many platforms through which good practice can be shared with the

organisation, including using leading educational experts and reflecting on highly effective school practice. **However, refinements are required to ensure staff joining mid-year receive a similarly high-quality provision.**

Nearly all relevant staff develop their leadership skills effectively through a variety of structured and purposeful professional learning opportunities. CSC offers a good range of opportunities for professional learning for staff. For example, nearly all staff in CSC have had access to effective coaching and mentoring programmes developing their knowledge and skills in leadership and many school-facing advisors have undertaken AOEA adviser accreditation. **However, it needs to develop ways to identify how these programmes have improved practice and the support offered to schools.**

CSC involves its LA partners at all stages of its self-evaluation and improvement planning. This provides a clear focus on the priorities of all stakeholders and enables clear scrutiny of impact. **However, the use of LA priorities earlier in the improvement planning process would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of this process.**

PL for LA Staff / wider stakeholders

Use of research / professional networks

CSC affords an appropriate range of opportunities for staff to have access to professional networks, such as the Education Services and Associate of Education Advisors. **However, further work is needed on developing greater flexibility of approach for individuals and in ensuring there is enough time to maximise the benefit of this professional learning.**

CSC has developed strong learning communities and has successfully developed a culture of collaboration across most of its partner organisations including its schools, the Local Authorities and for its own staff. The Central South Wales Challenge ensures that there is a strong focus on developing a learning communities and collaboration. Within CSC there is also a strong learning community. For example, CSC strongly promotes the principles of the Consortia as a Learning Organisation approach and staff at all levels work collaboratively with the common focus of school improvement. **However, CSC could develop an audit of access and awareness of professional learning for other stakeholders and map opportunities to secure even more cohesion.**

Collaborative PL

A particular strength of CSC is the way it shares good practice effectively across its schools, LAs and other key bodies. There are well established platforms for sharing, for examples podcasts, newsletters, bulletins and twitter. Engagement data shows that these are accessed by a large audience. A further strength is the way that CSC learns from a wide field of national and internal experts in a range of areas, drawing on their expertise. For example, during the lockdown period officers from CSC worked with experts from the USA to develop their blended learning guidance for schools. **However, the Talk Pedagogy platform needs to be fully established to share strong school to school practice more broadly across the region.**

Performance Development arrangements

CSC has developed an innovative performance development model which is strongly focused on the Consortia as a Learning Organisation model and which enables most staff to develop their own learning needs well. **However, it needs to develop the evaluation of this work to ensure that it focuses well on the outcomes and impact.**

Impact of PL

CSC has a comprehensive programme of professional learning for all staff within the organisation. This includes whole organisation PL as well as bespoke PL for teams and individuals as identified within performance development processes. **However, more systematic evaluation of the impact of the PL is required.**

Succession Planning

A strength of professional learning is the way that it is linked to succession planning within CSC. For example, the CSC Business Plan identifies how it will develop staff internally and how it uses the Central South Wales Challenge to allow

school-based staff to gain an insight into the way CSC works. **However, as the new system of Business Planning and professional development are in their infancy, we are yet to see its full impact.**

Evidence

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction Programme • PL Calendar • Sharing of PL (informal in meetings) • AoEA programme & networks • Support for accredited quals (within HR Charter) • Coaching and mentoring programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Learning (regular & intensive) • Staff accessing external national programmes • Collaboration across PD priorities • Performance Development processes (inclusion of appreciative enquiry) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLO survey – (National & Internal) – follow up presentation • Bulletins • Digital Public Services (WG) network • Forward planner
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Strand Heading

Safeguarding

Evaluation

Safeguarding Culture

CSC promotes a culture of safeguarding in schools as well as the safeguarding of staff. This can be evidenced by the inclusion of annual training for all staff in the consortium as well as the annual updating of the safeguarding policy. Sessions are led with staff as part of the induction process on the processes for safeguarding within the consortium, as well as questions included as part of the recruitment process for all school improvement staff.

CSC engages consultants to add capacity to the workforce. Contracts for consultant include expectations regarding DBS status. **However, all staff contracts need to have an expectation added with regards to safeguarding within their contract agreement.**

Safeguarding guidance / policies

Safeguarding is the responsibility of all members of CSC. The organisation has appropriately trained safeguarding leads who have developed an effective policy aligning to the All-Wales guidelines as well as Estyn guidelines on safeguarding. The policy provides appropriate guidance to all staff members with detailed procedures for dealing with safeguarding concerns. This policy is renewed on an annual basis. The organisation has a named lead (and deputy) for safeguarding who are Level 3 trained **however this training will need to be refreshed in 2022.**

The lead for safeguarding (Deputy Managing Director) provides support to managers and teams through the provision of advice and guidance in the application of safeguarding procedures and adherence to policies. The lead (and deputy lead) liaises with the leads in each of the Local Authorities within CSC to ensure local procedures are adhered to.

Professional Learning (Child Protection / Prevent)

Child Protection training is provided to all staff at the beginning of each year (include the details here) as well as PREVENT / Radicalisation training. All staff are expected to attend this training and additional sessions (as well as access to pre-recorded professional learning) are arranged to ensure full compliance with this. **However, further development of the annual training needs to ensure both greater alignment to the Welsh context and the specific nature of the work of CSC.**

Safer Recruitment

Recruitment to CSC is managed by RCT as the host authority for the region. Criminal record checks are one part of recruitment practices adopted from RCT as well as other pre-employment checks to assess the suitability of individuals. CSC is committed to safe recruitment practices and senior managers recognise that this fits into an overall approach to safeguarding. **However more specific training on safer recruitment practices is required for all staff in the organisation.**

All staff employed as school facing staff must have a current DBS in place to ensure their suitability to work with children. **However, this is not automatically refreshed once joining the organisation and relies upon HR support to remind officers to renew to ensure compliance with the regulations.**

Evidence

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSC Safeguarding policy • Professional Learning programmes (Child Protection / Prevent) • Professional Learning registers of attendance • MD letter to schools (Sept 2021) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSC School visit policy • Recruitment processes (RCT as host authority) • DBS Records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office Accommodation – Visit protocols / office adaptations & guidance / lone working procedures • Emergency contact logs
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Strand Heading	Use of resources
Evaluation	
<u>Allocation of resources linked to priorities</u>	
<p>CSC's budget is drafted in parallel with the Business Planning process and prioritised in accordance with the needs identified through self-evaluation activities. These needs represent the specific needs of the region as well as the priorities identified by Welsh Government. Local Authorities' specific needs are incorporated into the Business Plan, although further work will need to be undertaken to ensure these priorities are embedded and systematically monitored and progress reported aligned to the needs of the LAs and corporate reporting requirements.</p> <p>Individual priority plans contain relevant detail regarding the resourcing implications for each aspect of the plan. The allocation of resources is linked directly to national needs (as per terms and conditions of grant funding) as well as the specific needs of the region (as identified through effective self-evaluation activity and undertaken in conjunction with stakeholders including: all staff, headteachers (RSG), governors and Directors. Consultation takes place with stakeholders, and in line with the governance arrangements of CSC, the BP is approved by the five Local Authorities' directors and ratified by Joint Committee members, prior to publication. However, when reviewing the legal agreement in 2022, further consideration should be given to the timeline for publication of the BP to ensure self-evaluation activities (of both the LA and CSS) and the confirmation of grant funding are known prior to developing the activities within the operational plans.</p> <p>CSC is able to rapidly deploy resources to where they are most required in an efficient way but also drawing from across the regional footprint. For example, a school identifies as requiring support involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brokering support from APL and additional coaching for middle leadership • Identifying schools to school support for curriculum, teaching and learning development • Providing an RLG to support the governing body • Providing focused support for specific PL in literacy & numeracy • Directing the IP to oversee, monitor and quality assure the process 	

Effective grant funding for schools

The value of grants from WG for 2021/22 was approximately £92m. The main grants received by Welsh Government are the Regional Consortia School improvement Grant and the Pupil Development Grant. Schools receive various allocations from these grants based on agreed formulas and PLASC data sets. For example, EIG is based on current year Plasc on a varying lump sum per sector and a £ per pupil. The Professional Learning Grant is based on a £ per FTE teacher. PDG is based on prior year pupil and £1,150 per eFSM pupil, PDG CLA is based on current LA data set. Collaboration funding is provided based on current year PLASC a £6,000 lump sum and a £100 per FTE teacher.

There is a strong commitment to delegating funding to schools. Terms and conditions for the Education Improvement Grant element of the RCSIG state that delegation must reach a minimum of 80% with CSC consistently reaching over 93%

Sound financial planning

Arrangements to monitor and report expenditure against the revenue budget and grant funding are robust. CSC has effective arrangements to secure comprehensive auditing of accounts and day-to-day processes which have been subject to both external and internal audit with positive results. Arrangements for managing regional grants are robust and ensure consistency of approach to regional funding streams and compliance with terms and conditions.

Budget holders are responsible for ensuring all financial commitments are eligible and aligned to the agreed operational plans and each budget holder operates within a scheme of delegation. A financial timetable ensures regular contact with each budget holder to challenge progress and ensure accountability, as well as Termly impact reviews with the Managing Director, Deputy Managing Director to provide additional challenge. LA Directors are invited to attend these meetings.

Monitoring of the financial position by the Deputy Managing Director, Business Manager and Senior Accountant is regular and provides a clear view of spending against budget. The senior accountant and representative of the Section 151 officer in the host authority work in partnership to ensure confidence in the implementation of all financial procedure rules.

The medium-term financial plan for CSC was approved by Joint Committee on 15 July 21. This document sets out how Medium Term Financial Planning (MTFP) is an essential component of effective financial management, a cornerstone of good governance and an enabler of service delivery and service improvement within the constraints of available resources. The updated MTFP was been constructed using the following planning assumptions: (a) The 2021/22 approved Revenue Budget used as the baseline year; (b) Employee costs based on the current staffing structure in place and a 2% pay award assumption each year for financial years 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25; (c) Other employee related costs: no change to Pension Fund contribution rates over the period to 2024/25 and no change to the funding mix of employee costs between core and external grant; and (d) Non-pay inflation applied using the forecasted Consumer Prices Index rates as included within the latest Bank of England Monetary Policy Report i.e. 2022/23 of 1.9%, 2023/24 of 1.8% and 2024/25 of 1.9%. The Consortium's MTFP has now been refreshed and the Chief Executives of constituent Local Authorities have recommended an indicative revenue budget, for financial modelling purposes, through to financial year 2024/25

Effectiveness and Efficiency / Impact of the work of CSC

Effective arrangements have been implemented which take account of the core funding at a level set by the Welsh Government through the National Model for School Improvement. They involve a proportionate contribution from each of the Local Authorities using agreed indicator-based assessments, published annually by the Welsh Government as part of the local government revenue settlement. The service operates within a budget of £3.6 million (a shortfall of £1.8 with national model), which includes a cut of 5% in 2016 / 17 and further cuts of 5% in 2017 / 18, 2% cut in 2018/19, 3% cut in 2019/20, 5% cut in 2020/21 and 1% cut in 2021/22. The remaining funding comes from Welsh Government education grants, some of which are retained centrally to provide specific support in line with the requirements of the consortium, Local Authorities and schools and delegated funding for services provided by the Local Authorities (including support for

non-maintained foundation phase settings). To ensure compliance with terms and conditions of the specific grants, appropriate SLAs have been devised to include a costed development plan.

The Joint Committee exercises good overall responsibility for approving spending against priorities and arrangements for holding officers to account for the impact of resources on outcomes.

The service regularly reviews its provision to secure improvement and operate as efficiently as possible. Through the commissioning of external evaluation and internal reviews several services have been restructured to realise efficiency savings, improve quality and release funds to schools in line with the commitment to a school-led system. (Examples include management of change and exploring opportunities to generate additional income etc). The service has demonstrated the ability to take difficult decisions in the interests of greater effectiveness and efficiency. Examples include the review of IP deployment model. This has resulted in reducing the number of Improvement Partners from 36.3 FTE to 21.5 FTE and achieving efficiency savings of circa £0.280k over the past 9 years.

In addition, CSC promotes partnership working where possible. Examples include supporting a regional sensory project to raise attainment and exploring and entering SLA arrangements with other Local Authorities outside of the region to further promote and engage in our funded activity to increase economies of scale, e/g Outdoor Education service.

However, further development on how to gather evidence on the impact of the work of the consortium and the reporting mechanisms needs to take place

Internal / External audit

Central South Consortium is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of those functions. One aspect of governance is the system of internal control and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's Internal Audit Service undertake audit work each year to independently assess the adequacy of this area from a financial administrative perspective. This work is undertaken in line with the Legal Agreement for the Central South Consortium. Based on the work undertaken, a report is presented to the Joint Committee to outline any issues identified during the year, no recommendations for improvement were deemed necessary in respect of the Consortium's internal control arrangements over recent years.

Audit Wales act as our external Audit service providing an expert opinion on the 'truth and fairness' of the Joint Committee's financial statements for the financial year; and an assessment as to whether the Joint Committee's Narrative Report and Annual Governance Statement is prepared in line with the CIPFA Code and relevant guidance and is consistent with the financial statements. They also have responsibility for responding to questions and objections about the accounts from local electors and identify material misstatements that might result in a reader of the accounts being misled. To date no material financial risks have been found and accounts signed off as true and accurate in line with the set deadlines. In September 2021, the Audit Manager praised the accuracy and quality of CSC's work during the public Joint Committee meeting and confirmed the financial statements gave a true and fair view of the financial position of Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee as at 31 March 2021 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and have been properly prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020-21.

In line with complying with our host authority financial procedure rules we also comply with their Contract Procedure rules to ensure value for money while procuring goods and services.

Responses to COVID 19 pandemic

In response to Welsh Government's challenge to realign resources to fund the additional expense of covid-19, CSC faced the challenge of identifying circa £1m of efficiency savings before receiving the RCSIG grant award for 2020/21. This was

achieved by SMT and the Drive Teams scrutinising the Business Plan to prioritise activity and release funding where possible.

Our seconded staff were also given the opportunity to return to their respective schools while still under our contract to provide direct support to the front-line staff, ensuring learners in our region received optimum support in unprecedented times.

CSC were quick to react to the new requirement of home working and worked closely with RCT IT department to ensure all staff had access to remote IT equipment. The transition to agile working was smooth and managed quickly to support staff with everything they needed to carry out their work at home. the additional cost of increased agile IT kit was offset by savings achieved from less running costs at the office.

Moving forward and recognising the advantages of agile working, SC are in discussions with RCT Corporate Estates staff to explore possible downsize of office and realignment of fixed desks to a hot desk approach, this way of working will bring further efficiency savings in the future.

Risk Management

The consortium has a risk management policy to ensure that risks are identified and managed appropriately. The approach is embedded within the annual governance cycle to ensure clarity regarding policy and process. A review is included as part of the Business Planning cycle and any amendments to the risks as recorded in the register are presented to Joint Committee for review and approval. ***However, further development is required to align to corporate reporting processes in LAs and the risks identified by LAs / WG in partnership with CSC***

LA Scrutiny of Consortia

The Joint Committee for CSC as well as the Local Authorities scrutiny committees formally scrutinise the impact if CSC in its annual review of effectiveness and efficiency. In addition, there are regular performance meetings with Local Authorities to scrutinise the work of the consortium. These include:

- Senior leaders in LAs meet with Principal Improvement Partners and Improvement partners on a regular basis
- LA Performance Meetings (with senior LA officers)
- School Improvement forums (with senior LA officers)
- The CSC Management board meets on a monthly basis and this includes senior officers from the LA where regular reports are presented for scrutiny on both performance of the work of CSC as well as financial monitoring.
- Regular attendance at LA scrutiny meetings
- Impact review meetings (LA Directors present)

Evidence

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Statement of Accounts (2020/21) here • Audit of financial statements (2020/21) here • JC Minutes from Audit report here • Joint Committee Budget reports - September 21 here December 21 here • Joint Committee Grants Report – July 21 here December 21 here • Internal Audit report 2020/21 here 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource Board summaries / evaluations here • Framework for school improvement (IP deployment) Guidance on T&Cs for IPs here • LA performance reports (brokered support) here • Effectiveness & Efficiency report 2019/20 here • CSWC evaluation reports (SIGs etc) • Grant letters here 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggregated funding spreadsheet 2021/22 here • BP Annual reports / termly reports. BP Summer Progress here BP 2021/25 here • Risk Management protocols & policy/ JC reports here • Management of change documents – justifies staffing structures here
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10.2 LEADERSHIP & SAFEGUARDING: STRENGTHS & AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Strand Heading	Quality and Effectiveness of Leaders and Managers
Strengths	Areas for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Leaders / Managers have established a clear vision involving all stakeholders over time, which encompasses partnership working</i> • <i>External review of governance taken place and taken forward (also in AGS)</i> • <i>Professionalism of staff within CSC</i> • <i>CSC Culture</i> • <i>PL programmes – including opportunities to develop coaching and wellbeing</i> • <i>AOEA opportunities to engage more broadly in education.</i> • <i>Bespoke professional qualifications and opportunities supported financially and with time.</i> • <i>Welsh language development opportunities.</i> • <i>Team on CLO</i> • <i>Staff wellbeing group</i> • <i>Online protocols / etiquette / protected hour</i> • <i>Flexibility of working patterns</i> • <i>Quality of report writing / presentations to scrutiny</i> • <i>Changes to processes as a result of feedback eg LA priorities within the BP</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all staff model the CSC vision in their day to day working and that we develop a regional organisation that works across 5 LAs effectively to support all LAs • Further develop our communications to ensure that all corporate key messages are communicated effectively • Further develop our evaluation processes right across the organisation, to ensure it is effective, manageable and that it leads the work of the organisation moving forward. We also need to consider how we engage stakeholders in this process. • Review how we can tie our governance groups together and ensure that JC hear from schools and staff on a more regular basis on a range of areas including the establishment of HT focus groups. • Raise the profile of our governance groups across the organisation ensuring that all staff are aware of the processes, and can have access to the forward planners, agendas etc. Governance feedback now on SLT agenda. Support staff to engage with the organisation ensuring that they have the time and capacity to complete the CLO and induction surveys and ensure that leaders value the feedback from staff. • Continue to raise the profile of staff roles within CSC particularly Business Support roles / responsibilities. Including the development of interactive staffing structures / through the lens of a school (onion diagram) – including clear contact information for schools • Work with LA teams to develop greater understanding of governance and operational structures and how we provide information to enable LAs to hold us to account. Have greater clarity from LAs on their scrutiny cycle and ensure that our reporting is manageable and concise meeting the needs of LAs and being mindful of staff workload. • Continue to create the environment where staff are supported and want to come to work – creating

	<p>balance for individuals that enables them to manage the pressures of work while maintaining high expectations in a manageable way. Review what does not need to be done moving forward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-energise the staff wellbeing group • Risk management – aligning with LA / WG
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Strand Heading	Self-Evaluation processes and improvement planning
Strengths	Areas for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation processes are in place across CSC. • CSC work in a transparent manner in partnership with their stakeholders. • Stakeholders have been involved in implementing the processes that are currently in place. CSC listen and amend process based on stakeholder feedback E.g., Performance Development. • Processes are in place in conjunction with an ongoing training plan to ensure that we comply with FOI/SAR. CSC has improved links with our host authority for advice/guidance regarding FOI/SAR. • CSC has strengthened relationships with stakeholders to ensure that we respond to areas of concern in a timely manner and prevent escalation. • Processes are in place to capture recommendations from thematic reports and as used in development of our Operational Plans. • Robust process in place for dealing with complaints. Formal complaints are dealt with at the informal stage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joining the local, regional and national priorities (including regional recommendations) to produce a cohesive plan we can monitor and evaluate. • Working with JC and other governance structures to develop appropriate quality of evidence regarding accountability. • Clarity of purpose of CSC – Universal offer in Legal Agreement. • Clarity of reports – reducing the amount of reporting we do to ensure it meets the needs of stakeholders. • Consideration to be given to the monitoring of performance outside of CSC's governance as well as engagement with pupil voice. • Ensure that all stakeholders engage in self-evaluation. • Ensure the regional recommendations genuinely impact upon our work. • Better use of data analysis to inform improvement planning. • Ensure the regional recommendations genuinely impact upon our work • Ensure the progress against recommendations from Estyn's thematic report on support for schools during COVID are shared

Strand Heading	Professional Learning
Strengths	Areas for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction programme (evolved from direct feedback from new starters and internal staff), move to virtual, recording of sessions • High expectations to engage in PL • Shift to PD from PM – engagement with staff to revise the process • Continuation of the CLO survey and additional surveys • Developing skills of staff (within BP process as an example) to support succession planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation, outcome and impact of internal PL & PD (multiple sources of evidence) • Alignment with CLO findings • Evaluation / QA of colleagues – capture, consistency, MER cycle • Quality of induction for new starters that begin mid-year • Time / capacity to access professional networks – designated time or own personal PL? • Talk School Improvement Team (internal) – linking into Talk Pedagogy (direct response from CLO) • PD identifying future career progression

Strand Heading	Safeguarding
Strengths	Areas for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual programme of professional learning in Child Protection and PREVENT / radicalisation (synchronous and asynchronous PL available to ensure all staff undertake the professional learning) • Safeguarding is embedded into the recruitment process which questions incorporated into all interviews for staff working directly with schools • Regular and timely updates to COVID protocols to ensure the safety of all staff (including school visit protocols and use of office accommodation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 3 training for safeguarding leads • Commission Child Protection professional learning and co-construct to ensure Welsh / CSC context • Continue to develop the culture of safeguarding across the whole organisation • Review internal recruitment processes in conjunction with RCT as host authority to ensure safer recruitment practices are adhered to. Arrange for further professional learning for CSC staff to ensure greater awareness and understanding of these practices across the organisation. • Refresh all emergency contact information and ensure this access is available to SMT as well as HR personnel. Establish a schedule for refreshing this information. • Liaise with RCT as host authority regarding the rolling refresh of DBS and establish an annual process for ensuring no change to DBS status • Develop, consult and publish lone working protocols (in the use of the Valleys Innovation Centre) to include consistent use of diaries to support safeguarding • Revise staff contracts to include a reference on the expectations of safeguarding within their contract of employment.

Strand Heading	Use of Resources
Strengths	Areas for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparent & robust financial management (as confirm by Audit Wales and RCT internal audit teams) • Confidence of Section 151 Officers • Maximisation of grant funding to schools / • Regional formula for EIG grant allocations / transparent deployment of resources • Economies of scale from regional working E.g., higher calibre recruitment, comprehensive support across all curriculum areas, focus on areas of the greatest need – collective accountability, broader PL offer, ability to respond to national priorities e.g., Covid-19 • Consistency of approach for all LAs while retaining bespoke support to LAs. • Effective use of resources to respond to the COVID pandemic... continuation of support to schools, named IP for all schools, rapidly adapted to a virtual world • CSWC – broker across a wider range of schools – share good practice across a wider range of schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop processes to monitor and report the effectiveness and efficiency of CSC and the impact of the work of CSC. • Review the reporting schedule and ascertain whether they are fit for purpose • Refresh the medium-term financial plan to ensure future sustainability • Continue to work with Welsh Government to develop a medium-term financial plan for grant funding • Establish improved processes for dealing with Awards of Funding received in the final quarter of the financial year. • Work with RCT Legal Services to review and amend the legal agreement to align more closely to CSC / LA self-evaluation activity and grant funding notification • Review staffing requirements related to expectations of national priorities • Embed LA priorities (and known regional recommendations from published reports) within CSC BP at the beginning of the planning process • Review systems and processes for risk Management • Create Central repository to improve transparency and access to information

10.3 LEADERSHIP & SAFEGUARDING FOCUS 2022/2023

- Maintain a financially viable service that meets the needs of schools and LAs, ensuring our BP is built on the LA priorities and brings the 5 LAs together into one regional service, and that this is reflected in our legal agreement.
- Further develop the evaluation processes to include the views of stakeholders.
- Develop a reporting cycle that meets the needs of LAs in a manageable and meaningful way, ensuring that there are clearly articulated audience and purpose for each report and that this is built into staff workplans not added in an ad hoc manner.
- Continue to provide support and PL for staff (responding to effective evaluation) across the organisation to ensure we maintain highly effective professional teams that embody the vision of CSC while providing high quality services to schools.
- Further develop a culture of safeguarding across CSC.