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# Current literacy and dyslexia provision in Wales

A report on the benchmarking study



## Research

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# Current literacy and dyslexia provision in Wales

<b>Audience</b>	Local authorities and schools.
<b>Overview</b>	<p>The Welsh Government commissioned a literature review, auditing and benchmarking exercise to respond to the recommendations of the former Enterprise and Learning Committee's <i>Follow-up report on Support for People with Dyslexia in Wales</i> (2009).</p> <p>This work was conducted by a working group, which comprised of experts in the field of specific learning difficulties (SpLD) in Wales including the Centre for Child Development at Swansea University, the Miles Dyslexia Centre at Bangor University, the Dyscovery Centre at the University of Wales, Newport, the Wrexham NHS Trust and representatives from the National Association of Principal Educational Psychologists (NAPEP) and the Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW).</p> <p>This document provides an audit and benchmark of effective practice, and research into different approaches, for all stakeholders across Wales.</p>
<b>Action required</b>	None – for information only.
<b>Further information</b>	<p>Enquiries about this document should be directed to:</p> <p>Additional Needs Branch Support for Learners Division Department for Education and Skills Welsh Government Cathays Park Cardiff CF10 3NQ</p> <p>Tel: 029 2082 6044 Fax: 029 2080 1044 e-mail: <a href="mailto:AdditionalLearningNeedsBranch@wales.gsi.gov.uk">AdditionalLearningNeedsBranch@wales.gsi.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Additional copies</b>	<p>This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at <a href="http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/researchandevaluation/research/?lang=en">http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/researchandevaluation/research/?lang=en</a></p>
<b>Related</b>	<p><i>Research into literacy and dyslexia provision in Wales: Literature</i></p>

# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Part A: Overview of main findings</b>	<b>5</b>
A1. Definitions of dyslexia	5
A2. Structure of dyslexia services	5
A3. Screening and identification	5
A4. Assessment	6
A5. Overlapping disorders	7
A6. Intervention	8
A7. Funding arrangements	9
A8. Training	10
A9. Welsh language support	11
A10. English as an additional language	12
A11. Parental involvement	13
A12. Voice of the pupil	14
A13. Data collection	14
<b>Part B: Detailed findings</b>	<b>15</b>
B1. Methodolgy	15
B2. Definitions of dyslexia	17
B3. Key roles and responsibilities for dyslexia	19
B4. Screening and identification	23
B5. Assessment process	25
B6. Intervention	28
B7. Areas of special focus	31
B8. Working together	33
B9. Overlapping disorders	37
B10. Training	39
B11. Data collection	41
B12. Funding	42
B13. Welsh language support	43
<b>Part C: Tables and statistics</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Appendix 1: List of abbreviations</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Welsh resources</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Assessments</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Appendix 4: Interventions</b>	<b>60</b>

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## **Background**

In 2006 the Welsh Assembly Government established an external reference group for Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs) with representation from local authorities (LAs), schools and the voluntary sector. A questionnaire was sent to all LAs requesting information on their provision for children with SpLDs.

In July 2007, a cross party rapporteur group was established by the Enterprise and Learning Committee to consider approaches to the assessment and treatment of dyslexia in Wales. The Dyslexia rapporteur group consulted with the SpLD reference group to ensure the work of the two groups was complementary.

In June 2008, the rapporteur group published a report, "Support for People with Dyslexia in Wales", summarising the findings of the group from July 2007 to April 2008. Following recommendations from this group, a 3-stage approach was agreed: - a literature review, a benchmarking exercise and an evaluation of intervention approaches. The first two stages in this process were then planned with the third to be considered when the results of the other two were completed.

Representatives from the Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW) met with the external reference group in June 2009 and volunteers formed a Benchmarking Working Group to undertake the work necessary to fulfil the requirements of the benchmarking component of the 3-stage approach. It comprised representatives from the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), the National Health Service (NHS), Bangor University, Swansea University, National Association of Principal Educational Psychologists (NAPEP), ADEW, The Dyscovery Centre (University of Wales, Newport) and local authority personnel interested in being part of the process of the data collection.

It was decided that the data would be collected in two phases:

#### Phase One

A questionnaire would be sent to all the local authorities to gather initial data on definitions of dyslexia, numbers of pupils identified, types of specialist provision and methods of data collection.

#### Phase Two

Key personnel within each local authority would be requested to participate in a semi-structured interview giving them the opportunity to discuss their provision for dyslexia in more depth. The interview would cover screening and identification, assessment and provision, monitoring of progress, and other related areas including availability of resources, training, funding and good practice. In all areas any differences between English and Welsh medium education would be highlighted.

Both the questionnaire and the interview schedule were circulated for comment in December 2009 and January 2010 to SpLD regional meetings across Wales and to other organisations known to have an interest in dyslexia. A pilot interview was conducted with one local authority. The questionnaire and interview schedule were amended as a result of the consultation process and pilot until a consensus was reached.

In January 2010, the questionnaire, in English and Welsh, was sent out to all 22 local authorities. All authorities returned the completed questionnaire (100% completion rate).

A total of 21 interviews were conducted by Benchmarking Working Group members between March and May 2010, with Gwynedd and Anglesey combining to be interviewed together. The local authority that participated in the pilot subsequently completed additional questions from the final version for consistency.

This report contains a summary of the information gathered from the local authorities during the benchmarking exercise and reflects the variability of provision for dyslexia across Wales.

#### **Context**

The information in this report is based wholly on material supplied by the local authorities at the time of interview. It does not reflect changes that have taken place since that date.

## Part A: Overview of main findings

### A1. Definitions of dyslexia

The definition most frequently used is that of the British Psychological Society:

*“Dyslexia is evident when a child continues to demonstrate great difficulty in acquiring accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling over a period of time. This focuses on literacy learning at the word level and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities. It provides the basis for a staged process of assessment through teaching.”*

The general trend in all local authorities is to avoid the use of the label ‘dyslexia’, preferring either ‘specific literacy difficulties’ or ‘dyslexic tendencies’. Several emphasised that they aim to support all children with literacy difficulties and a ‘diagnosis’ is not necessary to access additional provision.

### A2. Structure of dyslexia services

The structure of LA personnel involved in the provision of dyslexia services varies considerably across Wales, with seven of the 22 authorities indicating they are currently undergoing restructuring. The arrangements for support at secondary school differ from those at primary school in every case.

In regards to primary schools, there is a common theme of moving away from a centralised team of specialist teachers towards emphasising appropriate training at school level. The stated aim is to give schools the ability and confidence to identify and support the majority of pupils with dyslexia within the classroom, although only five authorities have made extensive progress down this path.

Where reliance is still on a more centralised approach, the responsibility for identification/assessment of dyslexia tends to fall to either a specialist teacher from a central team or an educational psychologist. These then draw up a programme of direct intervention, but with an element of training for the school involved, e.g. including a TA in the programme with the expectation that they will continue the intervention with the child between specialist sessions.

Secondary schools usually employ their own specialist dyslexia staff. Six authorities provide specialist units for secondary pupils with severe dyslexia. Of these, two indicated that they are reviewing the need for these centres, preferring to emphasise early intervention and outreach services.

### A3. Screening and identification

When asked about identification of literacy difficulties, five of the 22 LAs responded that they have a centrally-led policy requiring some type of annual screening in their schools. This tends to be for literacy in English and/or Welsh, plus Maths, with one LA piloting screening at the level of phonological awareness.

Of the remaining LAs, most reported that some type of screening/assessment does take place at school level. Others stated that classroom teachers have been shown to be adept at identifying children that are showing signs of difficulties and will specifically screen those children to get an indication of where their difficulties lie and to determine whether they need further, more specific, assessment.

In Early Years/Reception, the emphasis is on teacher observation combined with checklists of signs of potential difficulties. Some of these are commercially available products, while others are developed by the LA for use by schools across the authority.

At Primary School level, reading assessments tend to start in Yr2 or Yr3. They may occur annually, with all authorities stating that they require the schools to report on the assessments at least twice during the Primary School years.

The problem of adequately identifying potential literacy difficulties in Welsh Medium schools due to the lack of suitable materials was highlighted. While 'Prawf Darllen Cymru Gyfan' is utilised in 14 of the authorities, the range of screening materials available in English is far more extensive. Some LAs have devised their own Welsh tools, while others wait until pupils start learning English in Yr3 before they screen them.

At Secondary School level, LAs report that many schools use CATs and other standardised tests as screening tools to identify pupils with possible literacy difficulties. Some schools then choose to use a more specific dyslexia screening tool such as DST-S, but the majority of the LAs believe it is extremely unusual for a pupil not to have been picked up at Primary School if they were having literacy difficulties.

#### A4. Assessment

School Action (SA) is the first level of additional support available to a pupil with literacy difficulties. A specific programme is put in place for the pupil within the classroom with identified targets written into an Individual Education Plan (IEP). This may involve an Educational Psychologist (EP) or an advisor from the LA to help with the design of the support, but it is implemented within the class situation.

All authorities require evidence to see that this support has been adequately provided before a pupil is considered for additional provision at the School Action Plus (SA+) level. The detail of the requirements varies across the authorities, but all have a minimum of two IEPs and further evidence to show that a pupil is not making adequate progress despite being given appropriate learning opportunities.

When assessing a pupil for further provision, the majority of LAs still use a discrepancy model, in that they compare the pupil's non-verbal cognitive results to their reading and/or spelling scores, or they look for considerable differences in attainment between one core subject and another.

Approximately half the authorities use a cut-off score, usually based on a standardised reading test such as NARA, below which a pupil may be deemed eligible for additional support, although several

emphasised that this is flexible and other factors are taken into account. The cut-off ranges from a standardised score of 70 (2<sup>nd</sup> percentile) to 81 (10<sup>th</sup> percentile).

Reading scores are the main criteria in all the authorities, and some, though not all, also look at spelling and maths scores. Where a local authority has a limited number of places to offer, the criteria are applied most stringently, with one authority selecting a set number of 'worst' cases to receive provision.

The small number of LAs that don't apply the discrepancy model tend to be those with an emphasis on providing training at school level to enable all children with literacy difficulties to receive support without the need for a 'label' of dyslexia. In these authorities the majority of support occurs in the classroom with advice from the LA and only those pupils with severe and persistent difficulties will receive external support, occasionally accompanied by a statement.

Just over half the authorities decide on the provision of additional support in a panel or planning meeting where full documentary evidence is presented of a pupil's strengths and weaknesses, together with the intervention received at SA and the pupil's progress in response. The frequency of this occurring varies from fortnightly to twice a year, with the majority meeting at least half-termly. Where provision is school-based, a panel is not required.

#### A5. Overlapping disorders

The majority of LAs do not automatically screen for other developmental difficulties if a pupil is identified with dyslexia, though they expect the EP's assessment to look at the whole child and highlight other potential problems.

Six authorities use screening tools that examine a range of different areas of development and can flag where a pupil is showing signs of overlapping disorders. These are most commonly used in Early Years/Reception to alert teachers to potential difficulties and the need for further assessment. No LA reported screening for overlapping developmental difficulties in secondary schools.

Classroom observation is the most commonly used method of detecting potential developmental difficulties such as DCD (dyspraxia), ADHD and ASD. In a small number of LAs the teacher has access to specific screening materials to further investigate the difficulty.

Following consultation between the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo), the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) and parents/guardians, the school then refers directly to a health professional such as a paediatrician, an occupational therapist, a physiotherapist or the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). ADHD and ASD are most frequently mentioned as disorders for which specific multi-agency pathways have been established within an authority.

Speech, language and communication difficulties are generally referred to Speech and Language Therapy and many authorities report a close working relationship with this service.

A small number of local authorities have a specific advisor to assess and give support for numeracy difficulties which may indicate dyscalculia. In general there is less knowledge on how to provide for

dyscalculia, with one authority stating that they don't accept referrals for numeracy difficulties to their central Learning Support team as they do not have the capability to give specialist advice.

#### A6. Intervention

The amount and frequency of additional provision varies widely across Wales. It may take place in the classroom, it may involve a pupil being withdrawn from their class and given one-to-one instruction by a specialist teacher, or it may require the pupil to attend a specialist dyslexia centre.

##### ***Primary level***

Several LAs mentioned their belief that short, frequent sessions are advantageous when supporting primary level children. The most frequent and unobtrusive interventions were reported in authorities where provision is school-based and pupils receive 5 to 10 minutes of intense, targeted support several times a day within their classroom setting.

In the majority of LAs, support is provided in sessions of 30 to 40 minutes, once or twice a week, with a specialist teacher, though this often takes place with a Learning Support Assistant (LSA) or Teaching Assistant (TA) present so they can continue the programme with the pupil on a daily basis. This support takes place either on a one-to-one basis or in small groups of similar need.

The most disruptive intervention for a primary school pupil was in one authority where support is given in specialist centres attached to specific primary schools. If the school a pupil is attending doesn't have a specialist centre, they are required to move to a school that does, with transport provided by the LA if the pupil lives outside the catchment area.

##### ***Secondary level***

In many authorities the secondary schools are responsible for their own SEN provision with funding delegated to them for this purpose. The majority employ dyslexia specialist teachers, but approximately half the local authorities provide additional specialist assistance.

Two authorities reported that they give specialist support to secondary schools for statemented pupils, with the school providing for those at SA+.

The length of sessions correlates with the 50 to 60 minute lesson times at secondary level and takes place once or twice a week, though this varies according to the individual school. Support can be more difficult to arrange due to the nature of the curriculum and reluctance of older pupils to be withdrawn.

Seven local authorities have specialised units that pupils with more severe dyslexia can attend on a full or part time basis. All provide support for secondary level pupils, with four authorities also offering primary level centres. To access these facilities a pupil must have persistent, severe difficulties despite targeted school-based intervention. Three authorities expressed the desire to move away from this form of provision, with the expertise of the specialist teachers being used in an outreach role to better utilise their skills and support pupils in the mainstream school setting.

### ***Pupil Referral Units***

The situation with regards to identification and provision for dyslexia within Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) was not clear in a number of the local authorities due to a lack of data. Half the authorities reported some screening taking place on entry to the PRU, though none was specifically for dyslexia. Several authorities commented that with the focus on targeting behaviour, the possible contribution of dyslexia to the pupil's difficulties could be overlooked.

Where pupils attend a PRU part-time, they would continue to be eligible for LA support as provided by that authority when attending their mainstream school. Four authorities provide direct intervention for pupils in the PRU, while most give advice to PRU staff, some of whom have dyslexia qualifications.

With regards to exiting support, the majority of authorities have defined levels of competency to be attained, such as standardised scores in reading, and to a lesser extent spelling, though these levels are not the same in every authority. Discretion is applied, however, with authorities considering the likelihood of the pupil continuing to access the curriculum if additional provision is withdrawn.

In areas with a large Welsh-speaking population and in Welsh-medium schools, language issues are also taken into consideration, with some authorities requiring the pupil to meet the exit criteria in Welsh and English, while others place priority on either home language or language of the school.

Three authorities provide support for a predetermined period of time, at the end of which direct intervention ceases with advice being given to the school to continue the programme.

### ***A7. Funding arrangements***

A large proportion of secondary schools across Wales receive delegated funding for Special Education Needs (SEN) and dyslexia support is included within this. This allows them to plan their intervention strategies, employing their own specialist teachers, buying in support from external providers like the Miles Dyslexia Centre, Bangor, or paying for support from the local authority SpLD service. Many authorities, however, retain some central funding to provide support for secondary pupils with statements.

### ***Delegated funding***

Nine local authorities delegate funding to all or some primary schools. In the main these are authorities that don't have a specific central SpLD service for dyslexia. They either emphasise school-based support or pass responsibility to the schools to buy in the specialist support they require. Where the school-based support is combined with a comprehensive programme of staff training, the authorities state that it has reduced the rate of statementing and increased teachers' capacity to provide suitable intervention within the classroom.

### ***Centrally held funding***

Seven authorities hold all their funding centrally, with three of these ring fencing funds for dyslexia or specific literacy difficulties. All except one of these authorities have a central team of specialist teachers who provide direct intervention for pupils with dyslexia.

The contrasting authority has no central team but provides comprehensive training and expects schools to give support within the classroom from their own SEN budget. The funds held centrally buy services from a specialist teacher when this is required by a statement or in other exceptional cases.

### **A8. Training**

All local authorities offer dyslexia-related training to the schools in their area, but there is considerable concern about the reduction in traditional sources of funding for training, such as the Better Schools Fund (BSF) and the General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW). Although there is movement towards empowering teachers and other classroom staff with the skills needed to identify and support dyslexic pupils at the school level, this relies upon a well-trained, capable cohort of teachers. Many local authorities expressed concern at the lack of basic knowledge of how to teach literacy apparent in newly trained and less experienced teachers. Several authorities provide training specifically in an effort to remedy this.

The type of accredited training on offer in local authorities varies widely. Examples may include:

- Dyslexia-focused modules within university accredited post-graduate qualifications, e.g. MA Education
- Approved Teacher Status (ATS) accredited by the British Dyslexia Association
- Associate Member of the British Dyslexia Association (AMBDA)
- Local Education Authority Partnership (LEAP) courses for LSAs and TAs
- Accredited Learning Support Assistant (ALSA) accredited by the British Dyslexia Association

Some funding is available from the authorities, with the remainder being made up by the school or self-funding.

All authorities offer unaccredited training at whole school level, in Twilight and Inset sessions. This includes dyslexia awareness training, in how to use assessment materials and how to select age-appropriate intervention programmes. As well as official training sessions, schools are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities for informal training when a specialist teacher is working with specific children.

Approximately half the local authorities are confident they can provide identical training opportunities in Welsh and English. Others, primarily located in areas with a low percentage of Welsh speakers, offer

the same training to Welsh medium schools, but the training is carried out in English with handouts in Welsh.

### ***Database of training and qualifications***

Only three local authorities maintain an up-to-date database of all teachers in their area with dyslexia qualifications, though several have plans in progress to achieve this. Others hold lists of teachers and classroom assistants that have attended courses run by the authority. Where databases are in place, they are used to target training towards schools that are under-represented by qualified classroom staff.

### **A9. Welsh language support**

Eight of the local authorities have Welsh-speakers at a managerial level within their service provision for dyslexia. The large majority provide at least some measure of support in Welsh to Welsh-medium schools in terms of assessments by Educational Psychologists and additional provision by specialist teachers. This capability is higher in the areas with a larger Welsh-speaking population, as would be expected. Where this is not available, it is generally due to the authority being unable to attract suitably qualified Welsh-speakers to the locality. Six authorities do not have a Welsh-speaking Educational Psychologist. Some of these are able to access a Welsh-speaker from a neighbouring authority if needed.

While all authorities support early identification of potential literacy difficulties, two factors make this hard to implement at the Foundation Phase in Welsh medium schools. Firstly, as mentioned above, not all authorities have suitably qualified Welsh speaking professionals able to carry out assessments. The range of materials for screening and assessing children at this age in Welsh is limited in comparison to that which is available in English. Local authorities supplement this by making their own screening materials and using non-language elements of English cognitive assessments with the explanations given in Welsh. Where standardised assessments are available, the standardisation can be an issue depending on the language background of the child, i.e. English speaking home, Welsh speaking home, or bilingual English and Welsh.

Once English has been introduced in Year 3, most authorities test children in both English and Welsh. Where a child appears to have literacy difficulties, further assessments are carried out. These assessments may take place in both languages or only one as is deemed appropriate for the particular child. Factors taken into account include whether the school is Welsh or English medium, how long the child has been learning in that medium and the home language background of the child.

Three authorities assess solely in English regardless of the language of the school due to lack of Welsh-speaking personnel.

The most common tools used to assess literacy in Welsh are Prawf Darllen Cymru Gyfan and Profion Glannau Menai.

### ***Decision making process for provision***

All authorities except one report that the same criteria to receive additional support are applied regardless of whether that support is needed in Welsh, English or both languages.

Where provision is given in both Welsh and English, there is little consistency of approach and from the literary review documentation it appears that there is a lack of research to consult for guidance. Intervention strategies include: alternate lessons; alternate weeks; and blocks of instruction in one language until exit criteria reached, then support in the other. Consideration is given to parental preference, the home language of the pupil and the language of education in the school, when choosing whether to give one language preference over the other in terms of additional provision. Of the authorities that provide support in both languages, the majority continue support in one language where exit criteria are reached for the other.

Teachers at Welsh medium schools are offered the same training opportunities as those in English medium, though seven authorities are unable to provide this training in Welsh, instead offering the training in English with Welsh handouts.

The lack of parity between the range of assessment tools and interventions available in English and those available in Welsh was highlighted as a problem across the authorities. The same two or three assessments and interventions tend to be used in the majority of authorities. Some authorities have translated English resources, but it was noted that materials also have to be adapted and modified in order to make them appropriate for use in Welsh.

Over half the authorities mentioned developing their own resources, either at the local authority level for use in all schools, or individually by specialist teachers and staff within the Welsh medium schools.

It was a frequent comment that there is no central bank of available resources, so a strong possibility exists that time and effort is being duplicated with the creation of similar resources at a local level across Wales.

Another area of concern, especially in relation to Welsh medium secondary schools, is the scarcity of IT resources in Welsh, e.g. voice recognition programmes and text readers. It was commented that while these are starting to be available, in general they are not of good quality and Welsh medium pupils with SEN are unable to get the same support in their GCSE and A-level years as they would in English.

### **A10. English as an additional language**

Pupils classified as 'EAL' i.e. those that don't have English or Welsh as their first language, are unevenly distributed across Wales with one LA reporting 26% of the school population and other authorities having "very few". Those authorities with larger numbers have systems in place to integrate EAL pupils, including links with multi-ethnic support services. The pupil's progress is monitored according to the five stages of English language acquisition and where progress is not as expected, further investigations take place. Wherever possible, these assessments take place in the home language of the pupil.

There is concern at the lack of appropriate assessment materials and authorities report that it can be difficult to determine whether literacy difficulties are due to the stage of learning English or a specific learning difficulty. It is acknowledged that commonly used assessment tools may be inappropriate due to cultural bias.

Authorities are aware that the percentage of EAL children receiving additional support for dyslexia is lower than the national average, pointing to the possibility that some are being overlooked.

With the large number of home languages in some of the authorities, it is difficult to produce information on literacy difficulties and dyslexia in all the relevant languages.

#### A11. Parental involvement

All LAs expect schools to take responsibility for involving parents as recommended in the SEN Code of Practice. Parental consent is required before any additional assessment of a pupil can occur. Six LAs mentioned the working relationship between parents and schools as an area of particular strength.

Parents are able to participate in any of the stages of dyslexia support, from the initial raising of a concern, through the assessment process, to providing a supportive role at home in consultation with the school or specialist teacher. They are invited to attend review meetings, and are kept informed of their child's progress.

The range of resources available to a parent varies considerably across Wales. One authority has a 'Parent Pack' which parents can borrow through the schools. This contains ideas for games to play and activities and materials to support literacy. It is available in English and Welsh. Other LAs have booklets or leaflets that either explain how literacy difficulties are supported in that particular authority, or give advice on how a parent can support a child's learning at home. In the majority of authorities these are available in English and Welsh. One authority stated that they tend not to use leaflets or booklets as they prefer face-to-face discussion with parents.

While all authorities encourage the sharing of knowledge with parents on an individual basis, there is inconsistency in the availability of organised training for those parents who want to understand more about dyslexia or to learn effective ways of supporting their child's literacy within the home. In a few LAs there is considerable emphasis on increasing the knowledge and skill of parents. This may be through formal training events such as workshops, or informal discussion opportunities, for example parent evenings or coffee mornings. In other authorities the onus is on the schools to provide workshops but the LA may contribute to these. Just over one third of the authorities mentioned the importance of their partnership with SNAP Cymru as a source of information and training for parents.

Parents' preferences may also be sought when intervention is being considered for a pupil with literacy difficulties in both Welsh and English. Several authorities mentioned that they decide on language priority based on whether the school is English or Welsh Medium, what language is spoken at home and the opinion of the parents.

#### A12. Voice of the pupil

There is consistency across the authorities in their support for the involvement of the pupil in their own assessment and learning programme. In the Early Years, the child is less likely to have their difficulties explained to them, or be involved in decisions with regards to interventions, though their reactions would be monitored and taken into account. As they get older, in consultation with their parents, the reasons for the assessment are clarified and the pupil is encouraged to express their perceptions of their own strengths and weaknesses by participating in the process of drawing up a child-friendly Individual Education Plan.

Older children may trigger the assessment process themselves by expressing personal concern about a weakness in their literacy skills. Their opinions are considered with regards to the type of intervention they receive, especially when they reach an age where they are reluctant to be withdrawn from class and seen as different from their peers.

When making a decision on the language of provision, i.e. priority given to Welsh or English, older pupils' preferences may be taken into consideration.

Pupils' opinions are sought as part of the monitoring of additional support, and intervention programmes may be altered in consideration of their views. When a decision is being made on whether a pupil is able to exit a particular programme, the pupil's thoughts are included in the consultation process.

At Secondary level, an EP or Specialist Teacher may meet with a pupil after an assessment and discuss the outcome of the report with them. A number of authorities state that the type of support is different with older pupils. There is more of a tendency to give them strategies to help them optimise their strengths and manage their own difficulties and less one-to-one intervention.

#### A13. Data collection

The majority of the LAs do not keep their own statistics on pupils receiving support for dyslexia at School Action, School Action Plus or Statement, but rely on schools sending their figures through from the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) held in January. Schools vary in their understanding and interpretation of the PLASC codes, so figures cannot be relied upon for comparisons.

The LAs all report concerns with the accuracy of this data. The PLASC codes do not contain enough specific categories. Pupils with dyslexia are likely to be included with other difficulties such as dyscalculia and DCD under Specific Learning Difficulties.

While the PLASC Guidelines allow for a secondary difficulty to be recorded, most LAs state that schools only record the primary difficulty. This is a particular problem with data from Pupil Referral Units where the primary difficulty is likely to be behavioural and other specific learning difficulties are not recorded.



- AFASIC Cymru
- I CAN – Children’s Communication Charity
- Dyslexia Action
- PATOSS – The Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties
- SNAP Cymru – Parental Support Service
- Dyspraxia Foundation
- ADDISS – Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service
- National Autistic Society Cymru
- College of Occupational Therapy
- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists – online forum

The questionnaire was amended to reflect contributions and the final version distributed in English and Welsh to the LA key contacts in January 2010. The authorities were requested to complete and return the questionnaire before the second phase of the benchmarking. All questionnaires were returned.

### ***Phase Two***

Seven members of the Working Group volunteered to conduct interviews with the local authorities. A draft interview schedule was composed and circulated to the interested parties for comment as above.

The draft was used to conduct a pilot interview with one local authority. Feedback from this pilot was relayed to the Working Group for consideration.

In February 2010, the Working Group met to amend the draft incorporating suggestions received. The final version was translated into Welsh. An overview of the questions was sent to the key contacts to enable them to prepare information and invite relevant LA personnel to attend the interview.

Interviews were conducted between March and May 2010 with one interviewer and one research assistant present. All authorities were given the opportunity to be interviewed in English or Welsh, with one interview taking place in Welsh. A total of 21 interviews were held. Gwynedd and Anglesey combined to be interviewed together.

The number of LA personnel present in the interviews ranged from two in six LAs to fifteen in one, with the majority having four or less. The title roles of the personnel also varied, though commonly there was at least one person who fulfilled a role such as manager of SpLD services or advisory teacher for dyslexia, plus a representative of the Educational Psychology Service.

The interviews took between two and three hours and were recorded for accuracy. The recordings were only used to aid the information gathering process and all participants were assured of anonymity.

The local authority that took part in the pilot supplied answers to the additional and amended interview questions to ensure consistency across all the authorities.

## B2. Definitions of dyslexia

Of the 22 local authorities, nineteen refer to the definition of dyslexia given by the British Psychological Society in 1999:

*“Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty. This focuses on literacy learning at the ‘word level’ and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities. It provides the basis of a staged process of assessment through teaching.”*

One authority gave a detailed explanation of how this definition fits within their inclusion strategy:

*“It includes under the term “at risk of dyslexia” all children with persistent literacy difficulties who do not have another well identified primary need. It also suggests that the problem is “severe and persistent and has resisted the usual teaching methods.” This puts the onus on schools to examine carefully the teaching methods they have used, both whole class and individual/small group intervention, and, in the light of this, to evaluate the effectiveness of such strategies for a wide range of children with literacy difficulties, as well as to examine the nature and severity of the difficulties experienced by children with persistent literacy difficulties.*

*It requires schools to make reasonable adjustments to support such pupils, in line with the Disability Discrimination Act.*

*It fits with the staged Code of Practice.*

*The importance of schools carrying out assessment, both standardised, and more dynamic, diagnostic, observational and interactive, as well as through teaching, to inform planning, is also evident.*

*Further, this definition invites “joined up working” with other professionals, in that it does not see “dyslexia” as a discrete entity, a sub-set of literacy difficulties, but rather as synonymous with persistent literacy difficulties. Thus dyslexia can be seen as a school improvement issue and the importance of joined up strategic planning between different professionals can also be seen.*

*The importance of good, inclusive, whole school practice to support pupils with persistent literacy difficulties to access the curriculum at a developmentally and cognitively appropriate level is emphasised.”*

Three authorities use the definition given by the British Dyslexia Association in 2004:

*“Dyslexia is best described as a combination of abilities and difficulties that affect the learning process in one or more of reading, spelling, writing. Accompanying weaknesses may be identified in areas of processing, short-term memory, sequencing and organisation, auditory and/or visual*

*perception, spoken language and motor skills. It is particularly related to mastering and using written language, which may include alphabetic, numeric and musical notation.*

*Some children have outstanding creative skills, others have strong oral skills. Some have no outstanding talents. All have strengths.*

*Dyslexia occurs despite normal intellectual ability and conventional teaching. It is independent of socio-economic or language background.”*

In addition to the definitions above, further comments on the definition of dyslexia were:

*“Children with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) (for example Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia) may have significant difficulties in reading, writing, recording, spelling, manipulating numbers or spatial skills which are not consistent with their general level of performance and persist despite appropriate learning opportunities. The assumption is therefore that children with SpLD show one or two areas of very specific difficulty with the basic skills curriculum, although these difficulties may affect access to other areas which rely on these skills.”*

*“Dyslexia is a commonly encountered learning difficulty, affecting about 1 in 10 of the population. At any time most teachers will have at least one dyslexic pupil in their class. Different learners have problems at different levels. Some experience significant barriers to learning in acquiring literacy; other learners encounter more general learning difficulties, affecting memory and organisation skills. These difficulties are symptoms of a discrete disorder and although Dyslexia cannot be ‘cured’ the effects can be significantly alleviated by early identification and intervention through the development of appropriate teaching and learning environments.”*

*Dyslexia is recognised as “one type of specific learning difference that can be supported by identifying what inclusive mainstream strategies are required to empower learners, whilst acknowledging the individual differences between pupils and their learning preferences.”*

Two authorities defined dyslexia in terms of their criteria for accessing additional provision.

In one authority the pupil would need a standard score of ninety or above on the British Picture Vocabulary Scale (BPVS) to establish that they are of at least average cognitive ability, combined with significant difficulties in either reading or spelling despite diligent support at the level of School Action. Significant difficulties are recognised when a pupil attains the tenth percentile or below on the Graded Non Word Reading Test or is spelling at a level at least eighteen months below their peers.

In the other authority, reading scores on or below the tenth percentile are an indicator, but numeracy can also be considered a criteria if the pupil scores on or below the fifth percentile. The pupil’s profile from the Special Needs Assessment Profile (SNAP) is used to further investigate areas of weakness. SNAP was mentioned by several authorities, with one describing it as useful for picking up comorbidity issues as well as suggesting strategies for support.

An additional definition of dyslexia is used in one authority to assist specialist teachers in selecting interventions for pupils with difficulties.

*'A large body of scientific evidence now shows that dyslexia is a neuro-developmental disorder with a genetic basis. Dyslexia is characterised by phonological processing impairments, evident across the life span, which affect reading acquisition. These may occur in the absence of other language deficits or in combination with more general delays in language and non-verbal skills. For those with severe phonological deficits, reading and spelling impairments may be persistent and resistant to treatment.'* Professor Snowling, University of York, 2005

The vast majority of local authorities do not distinguish between the terms “specific literacy difficulties” and dyslexia.

One authority that did distinguish did so on the basis of persistence, describing “specific literacy difficulties” as more short-term and possibly due to missed learning opportunities, whereas dyslexia is viewed as more of a constitutional, long-term difficulty. This theme was extended by another authority that emphasised the severe and persistent nature of dyslexia despite good teaching and targeted intervention.

The majority of the authorities, while having a working definition of dyslexia, are reluctant to apply the label to a pupil and prefer to refer to “literacy difficulties”. The term dyslexia is more likely to be used by an educational psychologist in discussion with parents who would prefer a diagnosis.

### B3. Key roles and responsibilities for dyslexia

There are three main structures in place in local authorities for the delivery of dyslexia services:

- A. A central team of specialist teachers who provide direct intervention in schools
- B. A central team of specialists who give advice and guidance to schools enabling them to carry out the necessary intervention
- C. Specialist centres for dyslexia

Many authorities incorporate aspects of all three structures, aiming to increase knowledge in schools while providing direct support for the more severe cases.

### **Management**

Across Wales there is a wide array of different titles given to the person who holds responsibility for dyslexia support. Several authorities use a title that portrays the management level of the role, e.g.

Manager Dyslexia/SpLD Services, Senior ALN Manager or ALN Advisor/Specialist Teacher Team Manager, while others reflect the general purpose of the position, such as Advisory Teacher for Dyslexia, Curriculum Improvement Officer and Pupil Support Officer.

In the majority of LAs, as well as determining the strategic direction of the dyslexia service and, in some cases, managing a central team of specialist teachers, these officers also have an advisory role within schools. Some give direct intervention to pupils if required. In one authority the manager is solely responsible for the assessment of pupils referred by schools for literacy difficulties and makes all decisions on their additional provision.

### ***Specialist Teachers***

Approximately half the LAs have a central team of specialist teachers. Not all of these are full-time, with a few authorities hiring the teachers on an hourly basis depending on need. Two authorities have teams comprising fourteen or seventeen members, but the majority have four to seven. All except two authorities include Welsh-speaking members.

The specialist teachers usually hold dyslexia qualifications, either at Masters level or an accredited award such as Approved Teacher Status (ATS) or Associate Member of the British Dyslexia Association (AMBDA). All are experienced teachers of children with literacy difficulties.

The responsibilities of the central team are similar in all the authorities. Each operates within a number of schools, often in clusters, and has two main objectives – to provide advice and strategies to schools so that teachers can give additional support to pupils with literacy difficulties, and to provide direct small group or one-to-one intervention to pupils at School Action Plus or with a statement. Other duties include whole school training, support for SENCos, participation in review meetings and consultation with parents.

The specialist teachers also play a role in the identification and assessment of dyslexia. This may be through training the school in the evaluation of literacy difficulties and the administration of specific assessments, or it may be direct assessment to enable a targeted programme to be put in place without the need for an educational psychologist.

### **Specialist teachers in Secondary Schools**

The majority of LAs delegate funding for Special Educational Needs (SEN) to secondary schools. These schools either employ their own qualified specialist teachers or buy in dyslexia support services as needed. This may be from the local authority central team or from an external provider. Some of the authorities have a Service Level Agreement or formal monitoring process in place to ensure the funding is being spent appropriately, but the onus is on the schools to organise suitable intervention.

As well as providing direct one-to-one or small group intervention, the specialist teachers may teach study skills, organisational techniques and specific curriculum-based support.

### **Specialist teachers in SEN Units**

Seven local authorities provide SEN Resource Units at secondary level. These are usually attached to secondary schools. Pupils may attend full or part time, depending on authority and the severity of their dyslexic difficulties. The traditional role of the specialist teachers in these units has been to provide direct support for the pupils attending, but three of the authorities are reviewing that role and hoping to better utilise the expertise of the teachers by moving them towards provision of an outreach service.

At a primary level, four authorities fund specialist teachers in SEN Resource Centres. Pupils attend these centres part-time. The teachers provide direct intervention to children with more severe difficulties and give advice to schools on literacy support and resources.

### ***Educational Psychologists***

Educational psychologists (EPs) play an important role in the identification and support of pupils with dyslexia, though the majority of LAs do not require a formal assessment by an EP to instigate support for literacy difficulties.

Many EPs work a model of time allocation to schools in their area, with schools taking the lead in prioritising the pupils according to need. EPs can be involved in classroom observations, formalised cognitive assessments and discussions with parents. They may also contribute to staff training and advising teachers on appropriate targets in Individual Education Plans.

EPs work closely with the central staff responsible for specific learning difficulties in each local authority. Where an authority has a moderation panel for making decision on additional provision for learning difficulties, the EP is a key member of the panel.

Six authorities have no Welsh-speaking EPs. Two of these are able to use the services of an EP from a neighbouring authority. Local authorities state that while their EPs may speak Welsh during an assessment, they are often restricted to using English standardised assessments due to a lack of appropriate Welsh language tests.

### ***School Staff***

#### **Head Teacher**

The role of the Head Teacher is one of overseeing the process of literacy support and ensuring it functions effectively. Their approval is required in authorities where the pupil is withdrawn from the

classroom for direct intervention and their cooperation is key in those authorities that encourage a whole school approach to literacy.

Head Teachers are responsible for making sure their staff have adequate levels of training in the identification and support of pupils with learning difficulties. Where funding is delegated to the school, the Head Teacher is required to employ suitably qualified dyslexia specialist teachers.

In smaller schools, the Head Teacher may also fulfil the role of Special Educational Needs Coordinator.

### Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

SENcos play a key role in schools in all LAs with regards to identification of dyslexia and communication with parents. They are often the first person a classroom teacher consults when a pupil appears to have literacy difficulties. They can assist with putting IEPs in place and carrying out diagnostic tests prior to a pupil being seen by an EP. If new screening or intervention tools are introduced to a school, the SENCo is often the person who receives initial training in their use and disseminates this knowledge amongst the school staff.

They are aware of the procedures that need to be followed within their specific authority in order to request additional support for a pupil, and play a role in monitoring a pupil's progress from the time their difficulties have been raised. The SENCo may give direct support to individual pupils or small groups at School Action (SA) or School Action Plus (SA+) under guidance from an EP or specialist teacher, but this is less likely in schools where the SENCo is also a full time classroom teacher.

### Class Teacher

The class teacher is often the first person to raise concerns about the literacy development of a pupil. They are expected to put differentiation in place within the classroom, to set appropriate targets within an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in consultation with SENcos or EPs, to carry out basic standardised assessments and to monitor a pupil's progress at School Action (SA) level before seeking additional support for a pupil at the level of School Action Plus (SA+).

If a programme of direct intervention by specialist teachers is put in place, the class teacher is expected to actively support the programme between sessions reinforcing what the pupil is learning.

In those authorities that don't have a central team of specialist teachers, the role of the class teacher is pivotal. A high level of training is emphasised in these authorities, aiming to empower the class teacher to support the pupil within the classroom as much as possible.

Concerns were expressed in a number of authorities that teacher training institutions are not providing adequate training in the teaching of basic literacy and that the local authorities are compelled to fund additional training in this area.

### Teaching Assistants (TAs) / Learning Support Assistants (LSAs)

The role of TAs/LSAs varies between local authorities and schools, but in many schools they play an important part in the provision of additional support for literacy difficulties. An appropriate programme is established by an EP or specialist teacher but is often carried out by a TA/LSA.

Where dyslexia training is provided to schools by the local authority, TAs/LSAs are given the same training opportunities as teachers. Several authorities report TAs/LSAs with accredited qualifications in dyslexia such as Open College Network (OCN) courses or Accredited Learning Support Assistant (ALSA).

Where direct intervention is provided by a central team of specialist teachers, the specialist tries to involve a TA/LSA in the support sessions allowing for continuity of the programme between sessions and increasing its effectiveness.

Other contributions of TAs/LSAs may include monitoring pupil progress, liaising with SENCOs and parents, and taking part in observational assessment and reviews of IEP targets.

### B4. Screening and identification

#### **Screening**

Five local authorities have a centrally led requirement that schools universally screen pupils at specific stages. The formalised screening tends to start in Year 2 or 3 and occur annually until Year 7 or 8, covering literacy (reading and spelling) and numeracy.

Some authorities use commonly available standardised tests, such as the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) assessments or Cognitive Ability Test (CAT) scores, with Prawf Darllen Cymru Gyfan used for assessing literacy in Welsh. Others use a combination of checklists and observation, especially during the Foundation Phase, to screen for a range of potential learning difficulties.

One authority is piloting a new screening system testing phonic knowledge and awareness, looking at blending and segmenting at the auditory level and the link to grapheme representation.

Another authority has developed its own universal screening tool in response to parental concerns that schools weren't recognising pupils' difficulties. It is used annually from reception through to Year 6 and is being trialled in Years 7 and 8. This guides class teachers in what to look for in terms of general development in all areas of special educational need and suggests appropriate follow-up actions where a difficulty is flagged.

Where not centrally led, most authorities report that some form of regular screening takes place at the school level. Some authorities provide literacy kits or checklists, but it is the school's decision whether to use them. In the Foundation Phase, many schools use the British Picture Vocabulary Scale (BPVS) to highlight possible underachievement. Below Year 2 the emphasis is on observation guided by checklists and experienced teachers become adept at noticing potential difficulties in this age group.

A number of authorities report that schools tend not to screen for literacy in Welsh medium primary schools until Year 3, when English is introduced. Others do screen this group, but in Welsh only. One authority questioned the validity of this data, stating that it did not appear to reflect later literacy ability.

The most commonly used screening tool in Welsh medium schools is Prawf Darllen Cymru Gyfan. Several authorities indicated that this was due to a lack of choice rather than a preference, stressing the lack of parity between materials available in English and those available in Welsh. Some authorities and schools prefer to make their own screening materials in Welsh.

In secondary schools, Year 7 CAT scores are commonly used to highlight a literacy difficulty that could be dyslexic in nature, though authorities report it would be unusual for this not to have been detected at primary level. If further investigation is required, schools tend to use a specific dyslexia test such as the Dyslexia Screening Test – Secondary (DST-S).

### [Pupil Referral Units \(PRUs\)](#)

The PRUs in several authorities conduct a baseline literacy and numeracy screening when a pupil first enters, but more than half rely on test results supplied by the school. Concerns were raised by a number of authorities that these prior tests may not give a true picture of the pupil's abilities due to disengagement from the assessment process within the school environment.

No local authorities report that PRUs screen for other specific learning difficulties.

Authorities mentioned that the emphasis on emotional and behavioural issues in the PRUs might lead to underlying SpLDs, such as dyslexia and speech and language difficulties receiving less attention.

## ***Identification***

Concerns about a pupil's literacy tend to be raised by the class teacher or a parent/guardian. Older pupils may refer themselves. Initially the responsibility lies with the school to put measures in place to assist the pupil. They may be put on the Special Educational Needs register and given small group or one-to-one instruction. The majority of local authorities have someone in an advisory role that can guide the teacher in setting up an appropriate programme to take place at the level of School Action (SA).

Authorities require the school to monitor the progress of the pupil and gather information that can assist in determining whether they need additional support. Most authorities mention the need for the school to demonstrate that despite appropriate strategies and good learning opportunities a pupil has failed to make sufficient progress before additional support can be requested.

## **B5. Assessment process**

There is variability across Wales in relation to the exact procedure to be followed to initiate a request for additional support from the local authority where a pupil has literacy difficulties, but in all cases this is done in consultation with a parent/guardian. In the local authorities without a central team of specialists the request is generally for advice, though in specific cases the local authority may provide some direct intervention as part of their strategy to increase capability within the schools.

In one authority the request is made via a phone call to the SpLD Manager by the school SENCo to discuss concerns. The SpLD Manager examines the IEPs and evidence of class assessments, giving consideration to progress made over time. An EP may be asked to do further assessments to add to the picture of the pupil's difficulty. A diagnosis of dyslexia is not essential for the pupil to receive additional support, but there must be evidence that the pupil is of at least average IQ, while functioning at a level of literacy two years below his/her chronological age.

The majority of authorities have set forms to be completed which guide the SENCo and class teacher as to the evidence they need to gather and supply. These forms collate information from a variety of educational, health and social services to give a comprehensive picture of the pupil and their strengths and weaknesses.

Dyslexia assessments may be carried out by either specialist teachers, educational psychologists, or a combination of the two. The results of these assessments, together with data gathered by the school, inform the programme set up for the pupil.

### ***Moderation Panel***

Just over half the authorities have a panel that meets to discuss individual cases and decide on the allocation of extra provision. This provision varies based on the needs of the pupil, but can include specific training to school staff, direct intervention from a specialist teacher employed by the LA, or extra funding for the school to purchase resources or employ additional staff with dyslexia qualifications.

The frequency of panel meetings varies between authorities from fortnightly to three times a year. The composition of the panel also varies, but in general includes members representing educational psychologists, head teachers, specialist dyslexia teachers and SpLD and Inclusion managers. In most authorities the panel is multi-agency, with representation from health and social services as required. A parent advocate from an organisation such as SNAP Cymru may also be present.

If a parent/guardian or school disagrees with the decision of the panel, all authorities have an appeal process which starts with a meeting to discuss the outcome and the reasons for the decision. The opportunity is extended to gather additional evidence and ask the panel to reconsider, followed by a formal application to a tribunal hearing if still dissatisfied.

If a pupil doesn't meet the criteria of the panel for additional support above the School Action level, all authorities offer advice to enable schools to set up individual programmes to meet the pupil's needs under School Action.

While all LAs state their resolve to provide adequate support for dyslexic pupils within their own maintained schools, ten have a small number of pupils placed in independent and nine in out-of-county schools for this purpose. It is generally the moderation panel that makes this decision following representation from a parent or as a result of a SEN Tribunal directive.

### ***Entry and Exit Criteria***

Approximately half the LAs use a cut-off score based on a standardised reading test such as NARA to determine whether a pupil is eligible for additional support. Comparisons are made between the pupil's non-verbal or cognitive performance, using tests such as BPVS or CAT scores, and their level of literacy according to the discrepancy model. Several authorities emphasised that the score is seen as a guideline. Flexibility is applied taking the pupil's emotional well-being into account when making decisions.

The reported entry criteria cut-off scores demonstrate a lack of consistency in the patterns of testing. Six LAs gave 2<sup>nd</sup> percentile or below (standardised score of 70), three gave 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> percentile (74 or 75) and three gave 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> percentile (79 to 81).

Assessments include reading accuracy, comprehension and rate, spelling, and in some authorities, numeracy. Although most LAs include spelling in their overall assessment process, five stated that they

do not provide additional support for spelling difficulties unless the pupil also meets the entry criteria for reading.

Additional support continues for a set period of time in three authorities, ranging from twenty weeks to three terms. Subsequently the school is expected to continue to support the pupil with advice or training as needed.

Other authorities monitor the pupil's performance and regularly assess their progress until they have reached exit criteria set by the authority. Some examples are: a functional reading age of 9+ at Key Stage 3, a Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) score raised above the 8<sup>th</sup> percentile, reading and spelling standardised scores of 85. Two LAs gave exit criteria of 5<sup>th</sup> percentile that would still fall below the entry criteria of other authorities.

Several authorities emphasised the need to ensure the pupil is confidently accessing the curriculum rather than adhering strictly to the cut-off criteria.

The majority of local authorities consider both reading and spelling scores in their decision to exit a pupil from additional support. The remainder base the decision on adequate reading scores, but give advice to the class teacher on continuing support for spelling.

If a pupil is receiving support for Welsh and English, but reaches the exit criteria in only one language, authorities vary in their continuation of provision for the other. Two authorities continue provision in the weaker language, while others prioritise either the language of the school or the language of the home. The opinions of parents and the pupil may also be taken into consideration.

### ***Language of Assessment***

The majority of LAs conduct assessments in Welsh or English according to the language of the school, the background of the pupil, and, in the case of Welsh assessment, the availability of appropriate tests and an assessor with adequate Welsh language skills. The lack of standardised assessments in Welsh, especially for older pupils, was a comment common to all authorities.

Where an assessment has been standardised for English, it is administered in English but the instructions may be given in Welsh. If the pupil is attending a Welsh medium school, but the home language is English, the assessment is likely to be bilingual.

## B6. Intervention

### **Primary Schools**

Intervention varies across Wales depending on whether it is provided by a central team of specialist teachers, is predominantly school-based or is bought in from an external provider.

Over half the authorities provide direct intervention by a central team of specialist teachers. The pupils are taught either individually or in small groups. The session times vary from 30 minutes three times a week to 60 minutes once a week, with 40-45 minutes once or twice a week being most frequently reported.

Three authorities buy in specialist provision from an external provider. The local authority provides advice and the school supports the pupil at School Action level, but if there is a need for additional support, the authority funds sessions with the external provider.

In four authorities primary pupils are given direct intervention in specialist centres funded by the local authority.

In a small minority of authorities all provision is school-based. Classroom teachers and TAs/LSAs are trained in the delivery of intervention programmes, and sessions are typically short and frequent within the classroom setting.

### **Intervention Programmes**

A wide variety of programmes to support pupils with literacy difficulties in English are in use at a primary level across Wales. Several authorities recommend specific interventions to schools and provide training in their use, e.g. 'Teaching Talking' and the 'Programme of Phoneme Awareness Training' (POPAT). While individual schools make the decision on which interventions to use, local authorities encourage them to choose programmes that are phonic-based and multi-sensory.

Specialist teachers tend not to stick to specific programmes, but select from several to tailor the intervention based on an assessment of the needs of the pupil.

The same range of intervention programmes is not available in Welsh. There are Welsh versions of some programmes, e.g. POPAT, but authorities are aware that programmes cannot be just translated. They need to be adapted to make them appropriate for the acquisition of literacy in Welsh.

Several authorities are creating their own Welsh resources, with an emphasis on phonological awareness for the early years and the transition into English literacy in Year 3.

A complete list of all resources mentioned by the local authorities can be found in the Appendices.

### ***Secondary Schools***

Less than half the local authorities provide direct intervention to secondary schools from their central team of specialist teachers unless the pupil is on a statement requiring it or the school chooses to buy in LA support. In the majority of authorities, most secondary schools employ their own specialist teacher.

The sessions at secondary level tend to be 50-60 minutes in duration, to correspond to the timetable, and occur once or twice a week.

Intervention is given in small groups or individually, although several authorities mentioned that older pupils may be reluctant to be withdrawn from class, preferring to be supported within the curriculum areas by a LSA/TA.

The majority of local authorities delegate funding to secondary schools for the support of pupils with literacy difficulties. Schools that don't employ their own specialist teachers buy in support, from either the local authority or an external provider.

In some schools the emphasis of the provision changes as the pupil nears GCSE, switching from literacy support to study skills and organisational techniques.

### **Intervention Programmes**

The emphasis with pupils at secondary school level is on computer-based interventions. Authorities mentioned a variety of programmes to assist with reading, spelling and numeracy (see appendix). One difficulty often raised was the lack of appropriate reading material for older pupils, especially reluctant boy readers. There is a need for more literature with content of interest to older children, but written in a style suitable for pupils with literacy difficulties.

Some schools use Information Technology to assist pupils to access the curriculum independently. Authorities mentioned text-to-speech, voice recognition, touch typing and mind mapping software as examples of what is available. One authority attributed a lack of adequate assistive technology in schools to insufficient funds.

Authorities mentioned concerns about the lack of parity between English medium and Welsh medium interventions. While there are programmes available, there is not the range of choice in Welsh. In Information Technology the same problem exists, with authorities reporting difficulties finding appropriate software in Welsh.

## **Specialised Units**

### Primary Level

Four authorities provide specialist dyslexia centres at a primary level. These are restricted to pupils with a 'significant need'. Two authorities say this will typically be a standardised reading assessment of < 70, or below the 2<sup>nd</sup> percentile, though progress over time, observation and other test results are all considered.

Pupils attend these centres part time, remaining enrolled in a mainstream school. They may stay at their current school and be transported to the centre for their sessions, or change enrolment to the primary school linked to the centre.

The time spent in the centres ranges from 75 minutes twice weekly to five mornings per week. Pupils are taught in small groups where their needs are similar, or given one-to-one lessons.

The majority of these centres are English medium. One authority has bilingual centres, and one authority has one Welsh medium centre.

### Secondary Level

Seven authorities have a specialist resource centre that secondary pupils with persistent difficulties can attend. In three authorities pupils need to have a statement, but others give criteria, such as, at least average cognitive ability with standardised reading and/or spelling scores below the 1<sup>st</sup> percentile. These are pupils that cannot access learning in their local school without an exceptional amount of modification to the curriculum and additional support in class.

Pupils spend a varying amount of time in the centres depending on their needs, accessing general curriculum areas in the mainstream secondary school to which the centre is attached.

Three of the authorities mention that specialist staff are also available to give advice and conduct assessments as part of an outreach service to mainstream schools.

### ***Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)***

More than half of local authorities do not provide direct intervention for dyslexia to the PRUs, unless the pupil is attending part-time. In this case, if the pupil is already receiving support in the mainstream school, it will continue.

A small number of authorities do provide direct intervention from their central team of specialist teachers. This is offered on the same basis as to the mainstream schools. If the pupil has already been receiving support, the authority attempts to keep them with the same teacher.

Approximately half the authorities mentioned that PRU staff include teachers trained in supporting dyslexic pupils. This may be training provided by the local authority, or a formal qualification such as the Approved Teacher Status from the British Dyslexia Association.

While two authorities describe their PRUs as bilingual and a few authorities report Welsh-speaking staff, the vast majority of the PRUs are English medium. Most local authorities lack knowledge on the provision of literacy support for pupils from Welsh medium education in the PRUs.

## B7. Areas of special focus

### ***Transition***

#### Foundation Phase to Primary

Local authorities were not asked about transition arrangements from Foundation Phase to Primary, but a couple of authorities specifically mentioned this as a period needing careful consideration. One reported that SENCOs pay special attention to the transition from play-based to more formal learning as this can be difficult for some children. Another authority has created a 'Transition Pack' to record a profile of each pupil's strengths and difficulties.

#### Primary to Secondary

Transition arrangements between primary school and secondary school are similar in all authorities across Wales. Secondary school SENCOs are invited to attend the Year 6 annual review for pupils on the SEN register. Information on the pupils' strengths and difficulties are passed to the secondary school, via the SENCO, the SpLD team or in a 'Transition File' that travels with the pupil.

Visits are organised for all Year 6 pupils to familiarise themselves with the secondary school. In several authorities extra visits are arranged for pupils with specific learning difficulties, together with their parents.

SENCOs have most of the responsibility for making other secondary school staff aware of which pupils have difficulties and how they can be supported in class.

One authority referred to a Transition Summer School that is offered to Year 6 pupils with Additional Learning Needs. During a transition planning meeting, pupils are identified that would benefit from attending the summer school.

## Secondary to Further Education

Most authorities have similar procedures for the transition from secondary school to Further Education (FE). This involves a transition meeting in Year 9 to which college representatives may be invited if the pupil knows which college they are going to.

Careers Wales was specifically mentioned by several authorities as providing assistance from Year 9 onwards, with schools also expected to make their own arrangements with the colleges in many cases.

A couple of authorities raised difficulties with the assessment procedures at the level of Further Education. One authority stated that the universities sometimes request up-to-date psychological reports on pupils and questioned why the universities themselves are not doing this if it is a requirement. Another expressed concern at the necessity for a 'diagnosis' in order for a pupil to receive support, with this being against the policy of most local authorities.

## In and out of Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)

Approximately half the authorities referred to a close working relationship between the schools and the PRU as the main means of effecting a successful transition between the two education providers.

In authorities where direct intervention is provided to PRUs from a central team of specialists, the authority attempts to keep the same tutor with the pupil to provide continuity of support.

Several authorities mentioned an 'information package', an accumulation of test results, observations and reports, that accompanies the pupil into the PRU, giving PRU staff a picture of the pupil's history.

Authorities provided less information about the process of transition from a PRU back into mainstream schooling, where this occurs. One authority has a 'Reintegration Worker' that accompanies a pupil for six weeks to assist their reintegration.

Whether a pupil returns to mainstream schooling often depends on their age, with some authorities stating that pupils rarely return from PRUs operating at KS4.

## ***English as an Additional Language (EAL)***

The number of pupils in Wales with English as an additional language varies greatly between the different LAs from a maximum of 26% in one area to "very few" in others. This category only includes pupils whose first language is other than English or Welsh.

More than half the authorities have an EAL team that is available to give assistance and advice to schools. There is generally close collaboration between the EAL team and learning support services, with several authorities mentioning the use of a specific flowchart to aid in determining whether a pupil's

literacy difficulties could be attributed to a specific literacy difficulty or a reflection of their stage of acquiring English.

External Migrant Education services are used by approximately half the authorities. Several mentioned that the structure exists for the migrant service to contact the local authority if it is suspected that a pupil has a specific literacy difficulty, but that this rarely happens.

While a few authorities were aware of EAL team members with dyslexia/SpLD training, this appears to be sporadic. Where it was mentioned, it was comprehensive, e.g. in one authority training on dyslexia is given not only to the external Migrant Education service workers, but also to the schools with significant numbers of EAL pupils where that service is active.

The majority of local authorities report difficulties in supporting EAL pupils. Many of these stem from a lack of confidence in their ability to identify dyslexic tendencies in these pupils. Shortages of resources such as bilingual books plus suitable assessment tools are also of concern.

At the time of interview, one authority was trialling an identification process in schools to assist teachers in determining whether a problem with literacy could be attributed to a lack of sufficient English or a more general literacy difficulty.

### ***Examination Requirements***

In all authorities except one, the secondary schools are responsible for organising examination access for pupils that qualify for concessions. Schools commonly have one or more staff members that have undergone training for this purpose, but can also request assistance from the Additional Learning Needs management or the Educational Psychology Service.

Where there is no qualified staff member in a school, the assessment is generally done by an Educational Psychologist. In one authority all assessments for exam concessions are carried out this way.

Not all authorities stated the assessments used. Where they did, the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT 3/4) was the most frequently cited.

Two authorities noted that a Welsh language online assessment of reading speed and accuracy for pupils at Year 10 level is now available.

### ***B8. Working together***

#### ***Interagency Communication***

Local authorities report substantial cooperation with other agencies such as health and social services. In some authorities this is an informal arrangement, while others have formal mapped out pathways.

Representatives from health are included in the central team for setting strategies relating to dyslexia in several authorities. All authorities refer to other agencies for more information if necessary when assessing a pupil's strengths and difficulties. Professionals from these agencies may be invited to attend moderation panel or review meetings when they have been involved in a specific case.

Several authorities referred to pathways specifically targeting the early years.

Other multidisciplinary pathways mentioned by a small number of authorities include police and youth offending teams.

### **Speech, language and communication difficulties**

Almost all authorities state that they work very closely and have a good relationship with the Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) services. Several mentioned regular multi-disciplinary meetings to discuss strategies or particular cases. Two authorities are jointly conducting a three year project with SALT setting up an outline strategy for the delivery of integrated services. This allows Speech and Language Therapists to work jointly with teachers in the classroom providing complementary support for children with speech, language and communication difficulties.

### **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)/ Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD)**

Procedures for cooperating with health services to diagnose and support pupils with ADHD or DCD vary between the different authorities. The important contribution of occupational therapy was mentioned, with several authorities reporting regular meetings between education and physical therapy services. One authority lacks a paediatric occupational therapist and this was mentioned as a concern. A small number of authorities stated that they have formalised pathways for ADHD and/or DCD, with three in the process of establishing these.

### **Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

The majority of authorities reported specific multiagency pathways or protocols for diagnosing and supporting pupils with ASD. Some authorities described these as complex and detailed. Agencies or professionals that contribute to structures include: Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), clinical psychologists, paediatricians, Autism Cymru and Speech and Language Therapy.

A few authorities mentioned that they have separate pathways depending on the age of the pupil. Early years pathways may be coordinated by a paediatrician, with CAMHS taking responsibility for the older pupils.

### ***Parental Involvement***

There is consistency across Wales in terms of parental involvement, with all authorities reporting that they attempt to involve parents in all aspects of identification and provision of support for literacy difficulties. In most cases the parent would already have had input into the Individual Education Plan (IEP) that is required to be put in place before seeking additional support.

When a concern about their child's literacy is raised directly with the local authority, parents are usually directed back to the school as the first point of contact, often to the SENCo. If parents are not satisfied with the response from the school, they are able to bring their concerns back to the LA.

Before any assessments can take place, the reasons are explained to the parents and their permission sought. They are also asked to give approval for any information sharing or assessments that are needed from other agencies such as health.

Parents are invited to be present at assessments and receive reports from Educational Psychologists and Specialist Teachers, informing them of the results and setting out the planned provision to support their child. Part of the provision involves suggesting ways parents can support their child at home to complement their targeted learning programme.

### **Sharing Knowledge**

All authorities have means of sharing information on dyslexia with parents. In addition to the regular meetings that take place, authorities have a range of materials that can help parents understand their child's difficulties and how to support them. The nature of this material varies across Wales, though it usually covers suggestions on how parents can support their child at home and a description of how the services for supporting dyslexia work in that authority.

The range of material includes leaflets and brochures explaining dyslexia/literacy difficulties, books and commercially produced resources that may be loaned to parents, and 'Parent Packs' of games and suggested activities for supporting the child's learning.

The majority of authorities indicate that their material is available in Welsh and English. Three authorities have leaflets in English only.

Authorities with larger EAL populations expressed concern at the lack of information available to parents from non English/Welsh speaking homes.

### **Availability of Training**

In just over half the authorities, parents are able to attend training sessions or workshops on supporting literacy difficulties. In some of these authorities, the sessions are organised by the schools, but in others the local authority plays a more direct role.

Several authorities mentioned the support groups that are run by parents themselves or in conjunction with organisations such as SNAP Cymru. One authority has a system of lunchtime 'drop in' centres set up by secondary schools, but also open to parents of primary school children. These groups are usually formed where there is demand from parents.

### **Parental Influence**

In line with the Code of Practice, parent's views are taken into consideration in all areas relating to the identification, assessment and support of pupils with literacy difficulties. In one LA, input from parents was instrumental in the authority devising a screening tool to identify potential learning difficulties.

Parent's views are also taken into consideration in five authorities where the level of community bilingualism is relatively high and a priority needs to be placed on the language of support. Consideration is given to the language of the home as well as the language of the school.

### ***Voice of the Pupil***

Across Wales there is a consensus that the pupil needs to understand the assessment and support process at a level commensurate with their age. Younger children tend to be assessed with games and observation so are likely to be less aware of the process. Their reactions to support programmes are monitored and the support adjusted to suit their needs.

Primary pupils gradually become more involved in the process, though how much information they are given depends on the child and their parents. Authorities state that they may not mention dyslexia to the child, but try to give them an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, and encourage them to give feedback on the intervention.

Several authorities mentioned the use of child-friendly Individual Education Plans to involve the pupil in the setting of their own targets.

Where pupils feel strongly about the intervention they are being given, this can lead to the changes in the way the support is provided. It was mentioned by several authorities that older pupils are reluctant to be withdrawn for one-to-one support and alternatives have to be set in place. As part of their feedback, pupils may indicate what is more or less helpful in the programme they are following. All authorities state that the support should be flexible with specialist teachers responding according to what works best for the pupil.

#### B9. Overlapping disorders

While authorities acknowledge the likelihood of overlapping developmental disorders, very few automatically screen for other disorders when dyslexia is suspected. Authorities that do a general screening in the early years take a holistic approach and try to get a picture of the whole child, which may indicate the presence of overlapping disorders. If an Educational Psychologist is involved in the assessment process, there is an expectation that they would detect any other difficulties and the school would be advised to consult with the parent and refer the pupil to the appropriate professional.

#### **Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD)**

It is generally felt that the school would notice potential difficulties in this area and initiate the referral process in consultation with the parents. This could go through the school nurse or an Educational Psychologist, but would then involve health services, for example, occupational therapy, physiotherapy or a paediatrician.

A small number of authorities have programmes in place in schools for assessing and supporting pupils with movement difficulties.

#### **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

When a school suspects that a pupil may have ADHD, in most authorities they would either contact the Educational Psychology Service for a referral or advise the parents to go directly to Health through their GP. They would be referred on to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) or a paediatrician.

One authority is developing a specific screening tool for ADHD to be used in schools across the county, while a few others mentioned baseline assessment tools such as the use of Connor's. In general, these are used to gather information to be passed on to Health, but can be also be used to assist the school to support the pupil.

A clear multi-agency pathway was described by one authority where ADHD is suspected. The preliminary observation and screening is done at school level, followed by further assessments coordinated by the community paediatrician. If indicated, the case would then be referred to CAMHS for formal identification.

### **Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

Six authorities indicated that they have specialists within education that can assist in the diagnosis and/or support of pupils with ASD. In most cases this is an EP with expertise in ASD, or an Advisory Teacher that specialises in that field, but two authorities mentioned teams that offer support or assessment to schools.

In the majority of authorities, the school refers to Health through the School Nurse or through the EP Service. The pupil is then assessed in compliance with the multi-agency pathways that are in place within the authority.

### **Speech, Language and Communication Disorders**

Approximately half the local authorities mentioned that they use a screening tool for speech and language difficulties, primarily in the early years. Two that were commonly named were 'Teaching Talking' and the Afasic checklist. Children flagged as having difficulties from these screening tests would then be referred either directly to the Speech and Language Therapy service, or via the Educational Psychology service after further tests to assess their nonverbal cognitive ability.

Several authorities mentioned the possibility of a connection between speech and language difficulties and dyslexia. In one, they are viewed as being on the same continuum. Interventions are coordinated by the Advisory Teacher for Dyslexia with advice from Health professionals. In others, pupils with speech and language difficulties are assessed for dyslexia as part of the overall information gathering prior to referral.

If a pupil appears to have difficulties but does not meet the criteria for referral to SALT, they are expected to be supported at school level.

Several authorities emphasised the close working relationship between schools, the local authority and the Health services.

## Dyscalculia

Very few authorities mentioned screening specifically for dyscalculia taking place when a pupil is having numeracy difficulties. One indicated that SENCOs have been trained in the use of the Butterworth Screening Tool and this is followed up by support at the level of School Action Plus by peripatetic specialist teachers. Another authority stated that the schools and SENCOs have received extensive training in the identification and support of pupils with dyscalculia.

A computer-based Dyscalculia Screener was preferred in two authorities, but the majority did not specify the tests used. The lack of adequate numeracy assessments in Welsh was mentioned as a difficulty.

A small number of authorities provide direct intervention for dyscalculia by their central team of specialist learning support teachers. The majority prefer to give advice and/or training to schools and enable the school to provide the needed support. One authority indicated that they didn't have anyone adequately qualified to give advice for dyscalculia and this was a concern.

## B10. Training

There were two issues concerning training that were frequently stressed by local authorities.

The first concerns the lack of expertise in the teaching of literacy displayed by Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs). Without confidence in their own abilities, teachers risk becoming over-reliant on intervention by a specialist teacher – a situation described as a “culture of dependence” by one local authority. Many authorities emphasised their focus on delivering training to schools to empower the teachers to provide adequate support within the classroom.

The second issue of concern is funding. At the same time as the local authorities are trying to raise the level of expertise in the schools, the sources of funding relied upon are diminishing, making it difficult for training programmes to continue.

## **Current Levels**

In most authorities it is not known exactly how many teachers and learning assistants have accredited dyslexia qualifications. Three authorities maintain up-to-date databases of all qualified staff within the

county and three others have this in progress. Others have a record of the number of dyslexia trained staff within each school so they can target training towards those with low numbers, but don't keep details of the individuals.

### ***Availability of Training***

#### **Accredited**

Over half the authorities offer some form of accredited training in dyslexia. This includes SEN modules in university based Master of Education courses, qualifications with the British Dyslexia Association (BDA), LEAP and OCN courses. The courses are available for teachers and LSAs or TAs.

#### **Unaccredited**

All local authorities offer a wide range of unaccredited training to school staff. It is provided by qualified specialist teachers, educational psychologists, SENCOs and, in a small number of authorities, bought-in consultants. The length and type of training tends to vary according to the need of the school, but includes twilight sessions, INSET days and whole school training.

The majority of authorities provide training in the 'dyslexia friendly classroom'. This can be delivered as whole school training, or is disseminated through SENCOs with appropriate qualifications.

Other frequently offered training focuses on the early identification of dyslexia or that which increases expertise in the use of particular screening tools, assessments and interventions.

Training is often provided as the result of a request from a school or cluster, but several authorities keep a record of course attendees and target schools with fewer trained staff.

Incidental training happens frequently in all the authorities where a specialist teacher works in a classroom or with a TA/LSA. Knowledge is passed on during the process of supporting a pupil, adding to the capacity of staff within the school

#### **Teaching Literacy**

An area of concern mentioned by several authorities relates to a lack of knowledge on how to teach the basics of literacy amongst Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs). Seven authorities report training specifically aimed to redress this deficiency, but improving the expertise of teachers and raising their confidence in their ability to teach literacy and support pupils with difficulties is a commonly mentioned goal across Wales.

### **Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)**

Five local authorities report PRU staff with accredited dyslexia qualifications. PRU staff are able to access unaccredited dyslexia training in half the authorities, with several authorities offering opportunities to undertake the same training as primary or secondary schools as appropriate.

### **Welsh Medium**

Training for Welsh medium schools is available in Welsh in most authorities. Five authorities provide all their training in English but where possible supply handouts in Welsh. If the training is to SENCOs, there is an expectation that the Welsh-speaking SENCO will pass on the training to staff in the Welsh medium schools. Several authorities only provide some training in Welsh, but note that this is an area they are hoping to improve.

### **Resources**

Over half the authorities have training packs or materials that can be distributed to schools or used in conjunction with training events. These vary from commercially available information, such as the Derbyshire File (English and Welsh versions), to bespoke materials specifically made by the authority for training purposes. Other authorities put together materials as they need them for their training sessions.

#### **B11. Data collection**

Difficulties in collecting accurate statistics for pupils with specific learning difficulties were reported by the majority of authorities.

Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) figures, which are recorded by the schools, have no code to denote pupils with dyslexia. These pupils are grouped together under the SpLD code with difficulties such as dyscalculia, DCD, ADHD and literacy difficulties that are not dyslexic in nature but have another cause such as developmental delay.

Doubts were expressed as to the reliability of the PLASC data, when the categorisation of a pupil can depend on a subjective judgement by the person appointed by a school to complete it. Several authorities mentioned that they are working with schools to establish some consistency.

Other problems with PLASC data included:

- Only one major need and one secondary need can be recorded per pupil
- Pupils over the age of 16 are not covered
- It lacks any aspect of tracking over time to enhance evaluation of the effectiveness of intervention programmes

Over half the authorities indicated that they use systems such as EMS/ONE or TRIBAL, or have developed their own databases, to keep figures on those pupils receiving intervention at the level of School Action Plus or above.

In one authority, where all support is school-based, schools are responsible for keeping their own statistics on pupils with dyslexia with this data not held at authority level.

#### B12. Funding

For the most part, funding for dyslexia support comes out of the general SEN or ALN budget allocated to each local authority. Only a few authorities ringfence funding specifically for dyslexia. Those that delegate funds to schools for this purpose have procedures in place to monitor its use.

##### ***Primary Schools***

Just over half the authorities hold funding centrally for additional provision to primary schools. In most cases this corresponds with those authorities that have a central team of specialist teachers. Those that delegate funding to primary schools still hold an amount centrally to cover statemented pupils and unusual cases, for example one authority uses central funds to investigate possible dyslexia in EAL pupils. Additional TAs or LSAs may also be funded centrally.

Two authorities attributed a reduction in the level of statementing to the delegation of funds.

##### ***Secondary Schools***

The majority of local authorities delegate funds to secondary schools for dyslexia. They are expected to employ their own specialist teachers and organise additional provision for pupils with literacy difficulties. As for primary schools, some funds are retained centrally to provide for statemented pupils or those with exceptional needs.

Where the local authority has a central team of specialist teachers, the schools have the option of buying into this support.

In authorities where there are dyslexia units at secondary level attached to certain schools, other secondary schools may be given additional funds to compensate. One authority mentioned additional funding where secondary schools are providing support in both English and Welsh.

### ***Training Costs***

Over half the authorities use a portion of their SEN funding to provide dyslexia training to schools, in combination with other sources such as the Better Schools Fund (BSF) or the General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW). All authorities stressed their concern that these sources are drying up and schools are increasingly finding it difficult to fund training for their staff.

Finding the funding for supply teachers while staff are receiving training was mentioned as a particular difficulty.

### ***B13. Welsh language support***

#### ***Human Resources***

Almost half the local authorities have a Welsh speaker among those managing the service for dyslexia. Three out of every four can provide the services of a Welsh speaking Educational Psychologist, and only three<sup>1</sup> authorities do not have a Welsh-speaking specialist teacher for dyslexia.

#### ***Identification and Assessment***

Many authorities express difficulties when it comes to identification of dyslexic tendencies in a Welsh medium situation due to a lack of suitable screening tools. Two authorities that were fairly confident of their screening procedures have developed their own. Others mentioned that they use tools such as the Welsh version of the British Picture Vocabulary Scale or Prawf Darllen Cymru Gyfan, but are dissatisfied with the lack of parity with English medium resources.

Three authorities are only able to assess pupils in English, with the majority assessing in Welsh and/or English as required. This varies in line with the home language background of the pupil. Where the pupil is from an English-speaking home and is not confident in Welsh, they are likely to be assessed in English. Where they are confident in Welsh, the assessments are usually done bilingually to get a more accurate picture of their ability.

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<sup>1</sup> One of the three had a Welsh speaker in training at the time of interview

Three authorities raised the issue of the Foundation Phase, where the pupil is learning to read and write in Welsh, but may be from an English-speaking home. One authority that only assesses in English chooses not to screen pupils until they have commenced reading in English in Year 3. The others indicated that they screen in Welsh, but one of these commented that the resulting data do not appear to reflect later literacy ability.

Issues raised concerning resources for Welsh medium screening and assessment include:

- The lack of standardised tests/assessments in Welsh, particularly cognitive assessments
  - This was noted as a greater problem for older pupils, i.e. Profion Glannau Menai only tests to the end of Yr 7
- Tests may not be standardised on the different home language situations of the pupils, for example, both parents speaking Welsh, both parents speaking English, a bilingual household but socialising mainly in English etc
- Prawf Darllen Cymru Gyfan doesn't adequately address North/South language differences

### ***Intervention***

Several authorities expressed frustration at the lack of research into the best strategy for supporting dyslexic pupils in a bilingual setting while acknowledging that this is a complex issue. The strategies for intervention varied widely between authorities.

Three authorities target one language at a time. Which language is chosen initially depends on the language of the school, the language of the home, the preference of the parents, and, if the pupil is older, the preference of the pupil. In two of these authorities, when the pupil reaches the exit criteria for the initial language, they then receive support in the other language. One authority gives preference to the language of the home and ends intervention when the pupil reaches the exit criteria in that language.

Other authorities attempt to support both Welsh and English at the same time by using a pattern of alternating languages: blocks of support, alternate weeks, or alternate lessons.

In most authorities where bilingual support is available, support can continue in one language if the pupil has met the exit criteria in the other. Two authorities only provide support in one language, with the school expected to continue provision in the other. One of these authorities bases the exit criteria on the language of the home and the other on the language of the school.

## ***Resources***

Common to all authorities across Wales was concern at the limited resources available to provide additional support for dyslexia in the Welsh language. In some authorities this is exacerbated by a lack of awareness of the professional resources that have been produced by other authorities. Half the authorities gave examples of materials they have produced ranging from simple sheets of Welsh phonics to graded literacy programmes and complete sets of published reading books.

Three authorities mentioned the need to focus on appropriate development of English phonics when literacy in English is introduced in Yr3. One of these is developing specific materials to reduce phonic/grapheme confusion at this stage.

## Part C: Tables and statistics

**Table 1 – Pupils in Special Placement for Dyslexia**

	Primary Pupils	Secondary Pupils	FE Pupils
10 LAs with pupils in Independent Schools	2	13	8
9 LAs with pupils placed out of county	1	*18	6
<i>* 2 of these pupils were sent to a Welsh Medium facility, the remainder to English Medium</i>			

**Table 2a – Primary School Dyslexia Provision**

Aspect of Provision	Number of LAs
Direct support provided by central team of specialist teachers	11
Direct support provided by specialist teachers within dyslexia centres	4
Direct support provided by casual specialist teachers employed by LA as needed	2
Direct support provided by central team with main function other than dyslexia	2
Direct support provided by external bought in service	3
School-based direct support	6
<i>NB: LAs may use more than 1 of the above methods of provision as required</i>	

**Table 2b – Secondary School Dyslexia Provision**

Aspect of Provision	Number of LAs
Direct support provided by central team of specialist teachers	9
Direct support provided by specialist teachers within dyslexia centres	7
Direct support provided by central team of specialists for statemented pupils	2
Direct support provided by external bought in service	3
School-based direct support	18
<i>NB: LAs may use more than 1 of the above methods of provision as required</i>	

**Table 3 – Welsh Medium Support Personnel**

Area of Responsibility	Number of LAs		
	Yes	No	Not Stated
Welsh speaker included in management	8	12	2
Welsh speaker amongst Educational Psychologists	16	6	0
Welsh speaker amongst providers of direct intervention *	18	4	0
<i>* 1 LA only has Welsh speakers in some of its specialist centres</i>			

**Table 4 – Local Authority led Screening**

Type of Screening	Number of LAs
Screening for literacy difficulties (1 in English only)	5
Screening for numeracy difficulties	4
Screening for all potential learning difficulties	1
Screening for phonic knowledge and awareness	1
<i>NB: LAs report that screening often takes place in schools but is not centrally prescribed</i>	

**Table 5 – Pupil Referral Units**

Support for Specific Learning Difficulties	Number of LAs		
	Yes	No	N/A
Dual-registered, support continues in mainstream school	6	15	1
LA provided specialist dyslexia support within the PRU	6	15	1

**Table 6 – Entry Criteria Guidelines for Direct Intervention**

<b>Entry Criteria</b>	<b>Number of LAs</b>
None – all supported	4
Pupil underperforming – observation, test results, discrepancies between subjects	4
8 <sup>th</sup> / 10 <sup>th</sup> percentile or below, standardised score of 79-81	3
4 <sup>th</sup> / 5 <sup>th</sup> percentile or below, standardised score of 74-75	3
2 <sup>nd</sup> percentile or below, standardised score of 70	6
Set number of places annually for most serious cases	1
Not specified	1

**Table 7 – Exit Criteria Guidelines for Direct Intervention**

<b>Exit Criteria</b>	<b>Number of LAs</b>
None – supported according to need of pupil	4
Reading (and Spelling) Score above 4 <sup>th</sup> / 5 <sup>th</sup> percentile, standardised score of 75	2
Reading (and Spelling) Score above 8 <sup>th</sup> / 9 <sup>th</sup> percentile, standardised score of 79	5
Reading (and Spelling) Score above 16 <sup>th</sup> percentile, standardised score of 85	1
Reading Age 9+, Spelling Age 9	2
Consideration of targets, reading age compared to chronological age, progress	3
None – supported in set blocks of time	2
Not specified	3

**Table 8 – Welsh Language Literacy Support**

Aspect of Support	Number of LAs			
	Yes	No	Not Stated	N/A
Assessment available in Welsh (resources permitting)	19	3	0	0
Intervention available in Welsh (resources permitting)	18	4	0	0
Support continues until exit criteria reached in both languages	12	3	3	4

**Table 9 – Primary School Intervention**

Frequency of Intervention	Number of LAs
School-based – short, frequent sessions according to needs of pupil	5
45 - 60 minutes per week, in 1 session	3
1 - 2 hours per week, in 1 session	2
1 - 2 hours per week, in 1 - 2 sessions	8
1.5 - 3 hours per week, in 2 - 3 sessions	2
2 - 5 hours per week, in 3 - 5 sessions	1
1 half day, twice a week	1
<i>NB: These figures are given as typical examples and will vary within each LA</i>	

**Table 10 – Secondary School Intervention**

<b>Frequency of Intervention</b>	<b>Number of LAs</b>
50 - 60 minutes per week, in 1 session	3
45 - 180 minutes per week, in 1 - 3 sessions	3
90 - 120 minutes per week, in 2 sessions	6
2 - 3 hours per week, in 2 sessions	1
2.5 hours per week, in 5 sessions	1
Varies according to timetable of school	5
Not specified	3
<i>NB: In most LAs Secondary Schools arrange their own support – these figures are estimated by the LAs</i>	

**Table 11 – Support for Pupils with English as an Additional Language**

<b>Aspect of Support</b>	<b>Number of LAs</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Not Stated</b>
Cooperation with EAL team	13	9
Cooperation with Migrant Services	10	12
EAL support staff with dyslexia/specific learning difficulty qualifications	3	19
EAL v SEN training to school staff	3	19
LAs reporting difficulties with EAL v SEN identification and support	11	11

**Table 12 – Interagency Working**

Other Agency	Number of LAs	
	Yes	Not Stated
Close working relationship with Speech and Language Therapy	20	2
Established pathway to Occupational Therapy	12	10
Multidisciplinary protocol for Dyspraxia (DCD)	15	7
Multidisciplinary protocol for ADHD	13	9
Multidisciplinary protocol for ASD	17	5
Links with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	12	10

**Table 13 – Parental Involvement**

Aspect of Involvement	Number of LAs		
	Yes	No	Not Stated
Invited to participate in identification/assessment/support	22	0	0
Written information on support for dyslexia available in English	19	2	1
Written information on support for dyslexia available in Welsh	13	3	6
Training for parents school/parent led	7	0	15
Training for parents organised by local authority	7	11	4

**Table 14 – Dyslexia Training**

<b>Aspect of Training</b>	<b>Number of LAs</b>		
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not Stated</b>
Accredited dyslexia training offered to school staff	15	7	0
Unaccredited dyslexia training offered to school staff	22	0	0
Twilight sessions which build capacity in dyslexia awareness/support	20	2	0
INSET /whole school training in dyslexia awareness/support	19	3	0
Dyslexia specialist or training available to PRU staff	12	0	10
Same training available in Welsh and English	13	8	1

**Table 15 – Data Collection**

<b>Methods of Data Collection</b>	<b>Number of LAs</b>		
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not Stated</b>
PLASC figures from schools	20	2	0
TRIBAL/EMS/ONE	13	9	0
LA/EPS database	9	13	0

**Table 16 – Funding for Dyslexia Provision**

Aspects of Funding	Number of LAs		
	Yes	No	Not Stated
Funding delegated to Secondary Schools *	16	6	0
Funding delegated to all/larger Primary Schools	10	12	0
Funding ring fenced for dyslexia	7	11	4
Concern expressed that reduction in BSF will impact on training	10	0	12
Concern expressed that reduction in GTCW will impact on training	7	0	15
<i>*In some LAs some funding is also held centrally for specific purposes such as training</i>			

## **Appendix 1: List of abbreviations**

ALN	Additional Learning Needs
ALSA	Accredited Learning Support Assistant
AMBDA	Associate Member British Dyslexia Association
ATS	Approved Teacher Status
BPVS	British Picture Vocabulary Scales
BSF	Better Schools Fund
CAT	Cognitive Ability Test
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
GTCW	General Teaching Council for Wales
IEP	Individual Education Plan
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
OCN	Open College Network
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
SA	School Action
SA+	School Action Plus
SALTSA	Speech and Language Therapy Support Assistant
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SNAP	Special Needs Assessment Profile
SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulties
TA	Teaching Assistant

## Appendix 2: Welsh resources

The following Welsh resources were mentioned during the interview process, though this does not constitute a comprehensive list of all resources used. Those with \* were developed by Local Authorities:

Name of Resource	Number of LAs
Asesu Darllen a Sillafu – Ar lefel y Gair * - paper-based assessment tool	1
Bangor Dyslexia Test – Welsh version	4
British Picture Vocabulary Scales – Welsh version	3
Blwch Ffonolegol - Phonology Box	1
Blwch Llythrennedd - Literacy Box	1
Cychwyn Eto * - Basic Literacy Course Books with reading books	2
Cymorth o’r Cwm – Welsh version of ‘Skill Teach’: diagnostic and teaching materials of phonic skills and sight vocabulary	3
DEST-W – Dyslexia Early Screening Test – Welsh version	1
Dyfal Donc - Welsh version of the ‘Catch Up’ intervention programme	5
Derbyshire File for dyslexia friendly schools (Welsh version)	3
Llythrennau a Synau* - loosely based on “Letters and Sounds”	1
O Gam i Gam – Phonics programme	2
Pitrwm Patrwm – Early learning books	4
Programme of Phoneme Awareness Training (POPAT) – Welsh version	5
Prawf Darllen Cymru Gyfan – (All Wales Reading Test) – Welsh version	16
Prawf Geirfa Cymraeg – receptive language test for Welsh/English bilingual pupils	2
Profion Glannau Menai – Reading and spelling assessment	15
Reading Reflex – some of the phonics material is translated into Welsh	1
SAIL – Early literacy invention – Welsh version	1
Sgiliau Ffonoleg – phonological awareness intervention	1

Name of Resource	Number of LAs
Sioni'n Siarad – 'Talking Teddy': structured speaking and listening programme for nursery/reception children	1
Special Needs Assessment Profile (SNAP) – Welsh version	1
STARS – Reading, writing, phonemic awareness and spelling intervention programme – Welsh version	1
Word Shark – literacy skills building game – in English with Welsh words input	3

## Appendix 3: Assessments

Local authorities, schools and educational psychologists use a wide range of assessments when a pupil is experiencing difficulties with literacy. The following assessments were mentioned during the interview process but do not constitute a comprehensive list of all assessments used. Those with \* are only used by educational psychologists in some LAs.

Name of Assessment	Number of LAs
Access Reading Test	1
Advanced Level Information System (CEM – Durham University)	1
All Wales Reading Test	12
Ann Arbor Learning Inventory	1
Asesu Darllen a Sillafu – ar Lefel y Gair	1
Aston Index	4
Bangor Dyslexia Test	4
Bangor Dyslexia Test - Welsh	4
* British Ability Scales (BAS)	20
British Picture Vocabulary Scales (BPVS) – English version	12
British Picture Vocabulary Scales (BPVS) – Welsh version	3
Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs)	11
Coloured Progressive Matrices	2
Daniels and Diack Graded Spelling Test	1
Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting (DASH)	1
Diagnostic Reading Analysis	3
Dyslexia Checklist (LDA)	1
Dyslexia Early Screening Test	7
Dyslexia Portfolio	1

<b>Name of Assessment</b>	<b>Number of LAs</b>
Dyslexia Screening Test	6
Dyslexia Screener	1
Dyslexia Screening Test – Secondary	1
Dyslexia Screening Test – Junior	3
Edinburgh Reading Test	2
Graded Non Word Reading Test	2
Helen Arkell Spelling Test	1
Junior Cognitive Ability Tests	1
Listening and Literacy Index	1
Lucid Assessment System for Schools (LASS)	5
Lucid CoPS – Cognitive Profiling System	5
Macmillan Reading Analysis	2
Madeleine Portwood Dyslexia Screening	1
MidYIS Reading Test	2
Naglieri Matrices	1
Neale Analysis of Reading Ability (NARA)	17
NFER Group Reading	11
NFER Maths	9
NFER Non Verbal Tests	4
*Phonological Assessment Battery (PhAB)	7
Prawf Darllen Cymru Gyfan	16
Prawf Geirfa Cymraeg	1
*Profion Glannau Menai	15

<b>Name of Assessment</b>	<b>Number of LAs</b>
Ravens Matrices	4
Salford Sentence Reading Test	1
Single Word Spelling Test	4
Skilled Teach	1
Special Needs Assessment Profile (SNAP)	2
Special Needs Assessment Profile (SNAP) – Welsh version	1
Suffolk Reading Scale 2	2
Teaching Talking	5
The Crichton Vocabulary Scale	1
Thames Valley Phonological Test	1
Vernon's Graded Word Spelling Test	3
* Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT)	15
* Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC)	18
* Wechsler Objective Reading Dimension (WORD)	1
Working Memory Test Battery for Children (WMTB-C)	1
Wide Range Assessment Test (WRAT)	17
Wide Range Intelligence Test (WRIT)	7
York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension (YARC)	2§
Year Eleven Information System (Yellis)	1
Young's Parallel Spelling Test	8

§ - 7 additional LAs were testing/considering the use of YARC at time of interview

## Appendix 4: Interventions

The following intervention programmes were named during the interview process, but they do not constitute a comprehensive list of all interventions used across Wales. They also may be used by more local authorities than just those that mentioned them.

Name of Intervention	Number of LAs
Accelerated Learning – the ALPS Approach (Alistair Smith and Nicola Call)	1
Active Literacy Kit – (The Dyslexia Institute)	1
Alpha 2 Omega	7
Beat Dyslexia	6
Brain Cogs	1
Catch Up	6
Chalkface resources	1
Clicker 5	4
Cumbrian Reading Intervention	1
Cychwyn Eto	2
Cymorth o’r Cwm	2
Daily Diary	1
Dandelion Readers	1
Direct Instruction	1
Direct Phonics	6
Dyfal Donc	5
First Steps	2
Hickey Multisensory Language Course	2
Jolly Phonics	3
Kidspiration Mindmapping	1

<b>Name of Intervention</b>	<b>Number of LAs</b>
Letters and Sounds	1
Lexia Learning	3
LEXON computer program	1
Lifeboat Read and Spell Scheme	2
Literacy Activity Builder	1
Mastering Memory	2
Memory Booster – in English and Welsh	2
Morphographs	1
Nessy	7
New Phonic Blending	1
Number Shark	8
Numicon	1
O Gam i Gam	2
On The Edge reading materials	1
Overcoming Dyslexia	1
Phonic Code Cracker	2
Phonological Awareness Training (PAT)	5
Pitrwm Patrwm	2
Precision Teaching	4
Programme of Phoneme Awareness Training (POPAT) – in English and Welsh	5
Rainbow Reading	1
Rapid Reading	2
Read Write Inc	3

<b>Name of Intervention</b>	<b>Number of LAs</b>
Read Write Inc Fresh Start	1
Reading Booster – in English and Welsh	1
Reading for Meaning	1
Reading Recovery	1
Reading Reflex	1
SAIL – in English and Welsh	1
Sgiliau Ffonoleg	1
Sioni'n Siarad	1
Sound Linkage	1
Speech Links / Language Links	1
Spelling Do it Yourself	1
Spelling Made Easy	2
Stairway to Spelling	1
STARS – in English and Welsh	1
Starspell	1
Start-to-Finish Literacy Starters	1
Success Maker	8
Super Spell	1
Talking Teddy	1
Teaching Handwriting Reading And Spelling Skills (THRASS)	1
Toe by Toe	9
Upskill	1
Units of Sound	7

<b>Name of Intervention</b>	<b>Number of LAs</b>
Word Shark	16
Word Wasp	4