



Reserves held by schools in Wales at 31 March 2016

20 October 2016
SFR 139/2016

Key points

- The overall level of reserves held by schools in Wales was £64 million at 31 March 2016, the equivalent of £142 per pupil (table 1). This is an increase of 0.9% compared with the previous year (table 2). Reserves in primary schools accounted for £51 million or 79% of the total (table 4).
- Compared to the previous year, the overall level of positive reserves increased by £2.1 million and the level of negative reserves increased by £1.5 million. These figures combine to show an increase of £0.6 million in total reserves (table 2).
- The level of reserves as a percentage of delegated schools expenditure was 3.0%, no change compared to the previous year (table 2).
- Swansea had the highest level of reserves as a percentage of delegated school expenditure at 6.3% and Cardiff had the lowest at 1.0% (table 2).
- 138 primary, 65 secondary, 7 special, 1 nursery and 2 middle schools in Wales had negative reserves totalling £15 million. The remaining 1,395 schools had positive reserves, 206 of which had reserves in excess of 10% of their total delegated expenditure (tables 3 and 4).

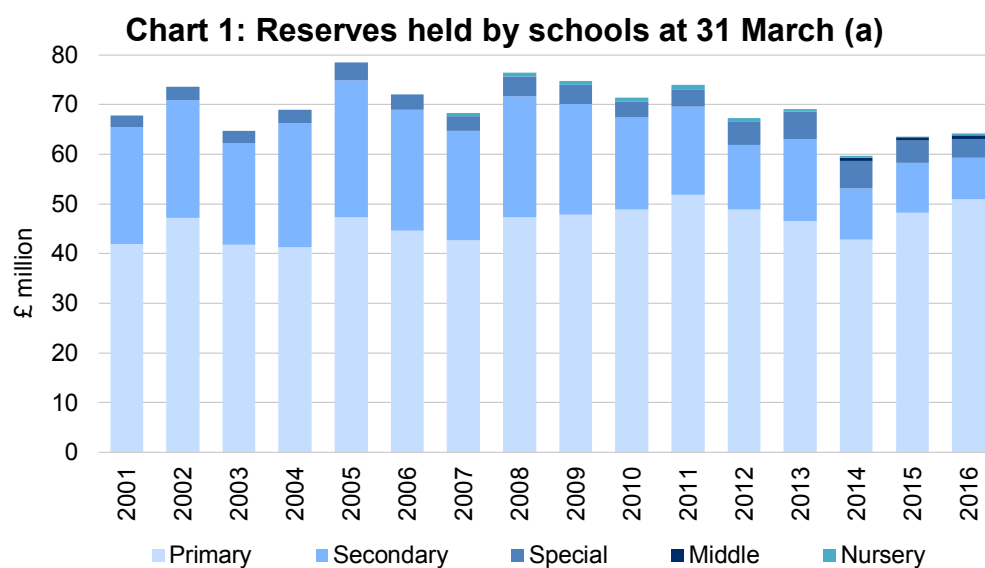
About this release

This statistical release provides an analysis of financial reserves held by schools in Wales for the financial years 2014-15 and 2015-16. Reserves are sums of money that schools carry forward from one year to the next. They arise from underspends and overspends against school allocations over time.

Additional information is available on StatsWales.

In this release

Levels and per pupil	2
Year on year change	3
By sector	7
Glossary	8



(a) Nursery schools are shown from 2007 and middle schools from 2014 onwards.

Table 1 provides an analysis of the reserves position at 31 March 2016 and the delegated schools expenditure during the 2015-16 financial year. Swansea recorded the highest level of overall reserves per pupil (£280) while Cardiff recorded the lowest level (£49). Schools within each local authority can have positive or negative reserves and this is shown in more detail in tables 6 and 7.

Table 1 - Delegated schools expenditure, level of school reserves and reserves per pupil

Authority	2015-16		Level of school reserves at 31 March 2016					
	Delegated school expenditure (£ million)	Delegated school expenditure per pupil (£) (a)	Positive reserves (£ million)	Negative reserves (£ million)	Total reserves (£ million)	Positive reserves per pupil (£) (a)	Negative reserves per pupil (£) (a)	Total reserves per pupil (£) (a)
Isle of Anglesey	47.2	5,062	2.6	-0.2	2.5	281	-17	264
Gwynedd	85.7	5,221	3.8	-0.4	3.3	230	-27	203
Conwy	81.6	5,314	4.0	-0.0	4.0	261	-0	261
Denbighshire	74.3	4,909	2.7	-1.1	1.6	175	-72	103
Flintshire	110.8	4,860	3.4	-1.0	2.3	149	-45	103
Wrexham	89.2	4,740	2.7	-0.1	2.6	142	-5	137
Powys	88.9	4,985	3.7	-1.2	2.4	206	-69	137
Ceredigion	48.3	5,160	2.4	-0.5	1.9	261	-54	207
Pembrokeshire	86.8	5,053	2.4	-0.2	2.2	139	-13	126
Carmarthenshire	131.1	4,871	4.5	-0.9	3.7	169	-32	137
Swansea	152.3	4,472	9.6	-0.1	9.5	282	-2	280
Neath Port Talbot	82.3	4,165	3.8	-0.6	3.2	193	-30	163
Bridgend	107.5	4,721	2.8	-0.6	2.2	122	-27	95
Vale of Glamorgan	99.7	4,686	3.2	-0.2	2.9	149	-10	139
Cardiff	250.9	4,877	6.0	-3.5	2.5	117	-68	49
Rhondda Cynon Taf	183.7	4,784	6.0	-2.4	3.6	156	-62	94
Merthyr Tydfil	44.2	5,145	1.0	-0.2	0.8	117	-27	90
Caerphilly	125.6	4,591	3.8	-0.9	2.9	138	-33	105
Blaenau Gwent	49.5	5,589	1.5	-0.3	1.2	168	-35	132
Torfaen	69.0	4,765	2.4	-0.2	2.2	165	-12	153
Monmouthshire	52.6	4,653	1.8	-0.6	1.1	155	-57	98
Newport	107.2	4,423	5.5	0.0	5.5	226	0	226
Wales	2,168.4	4,801	79.5	-15.3	64.1	176	-34	142
Lowest		4,165	1.0	-3.5	0.8	117	-72	49
Highest		5,589	9.6	0.0	9.5	282	0	280

Source: Section 52 Outturn forms

(a) Calculated using provisional data. Full-time equivalent pupil numbers are calculated from the Pupil Level Annual School Census 2016. They are based on numbers at January 2016 so will not reflect changes throughout the year.

Chart 2: Level of reserves per pupil at 31 March 2016

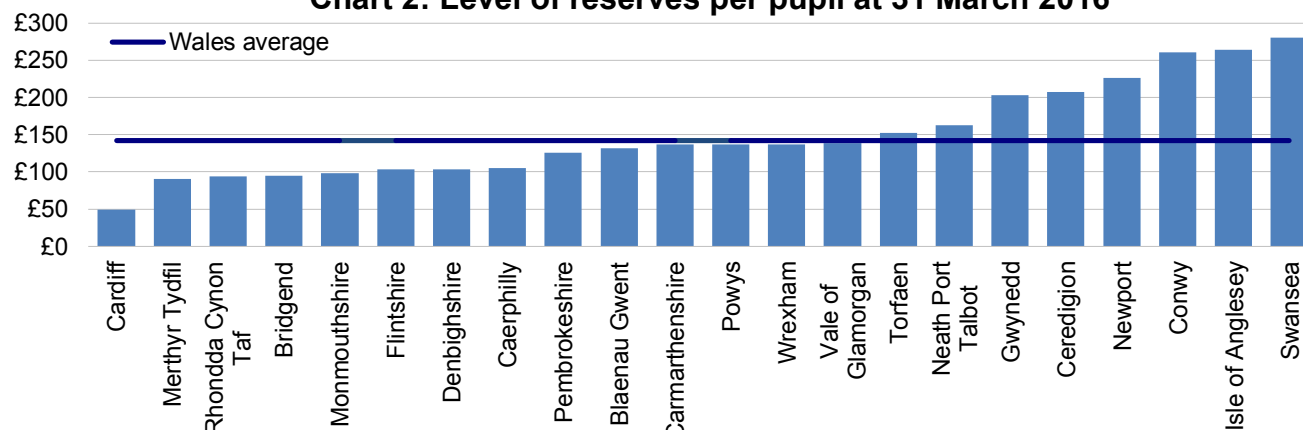


Table 2 shows the annual changes in school reserves. Compared to the previous year, the overall level of positive reserves increased by £2.1 million and the level of negative reserves increased by £1.5 million. These figures combine to show an increase of £0.6 million in total reserves.

Table 2 - Year on year changes in school reserves

£ million

Per cent

Authority	Level of school reserves at 31 March									School reserves as a percentage of delegated school expenditure at 31 March		
	Positive			Negative			Total			Total		Percentage point change
	2015	2016	Change	2015	2016	Change	2015	2016	Change	2015	2016	
Isle of Anglesey	2.8	2.6	-0.2	-0.3	-0.2	0.2	2.4	2.5	0.0	5.2	5.2	0.0
Gwynedd	3.8	3.8	-0.0	-0.3	-0.4	-0.1	3.5	3.3	-0.2	4.1	3.9	-0.2
Conwy	3.7	4.0	0.3	-0.0	-0.0	0.0	3.7	4.0	0.3	4.6	4.9	0.3
Denbighshire	3.7	2.7	-1.0	-0.2	-1.1	-0.9	3.5	1.6	-2.0	4.7	2.1	-2.6
Flintshire	2.9	3.4	0.5	-0.6	-1.0	-0.5	2.3	2.3	0.1	2.1	2.1	0.0
Wrexham	2.8	2.7	-0.1	-0.2	-0.1	0.1	2.6	2.6	0.0	2.9	2.9	0.0
Powys	4.3	3.7	-0.6	-1.2	-1.2	-0.1	3.1	2.4	-0.7	3.6	2.7	-0.9
Ceredigion	1.5	2.4	0.9	-0.5	-0.5	-0.0	1.0	1.9	0.9	2.2	4.0	1.8
Pembrokeshire	2.4	2.4	-0.0	-0.2	-0.2	0.0	2.2	2.2	-0.0	2.6	2.5	-0.1
Carmarthenshire	4.7	4.5	-0.2	-0.8	-0.9	-0.1	3.9	3.7	-0.3	3.0	2.8	-0.2
Swansea	10.0	9.6	-0.4	-0.2	-0.1	0.2	9.8	9.5	-0.2	6.3	6.3	-0.0
Neath Port Talbot	3.3	3.8	0.5	-0.5	-0.6	-0.1	2.8	3.2	0.5	3.3	3.9	0.6
Bridgend	3.1	2.8	-0.4	-0.7	-0.6	0.1	2.4	2.2	-0.3	2.2	2.0	-0.2
Vale of Glamorgan	2.8	3.2	0.4	-0.1	-0.2	-0.2	2.7	2.9	0.2	2.8	3.0	0.2
Cardiff	5.0	6.0	1.0	-3.8	-3.5	0.2	1.3	2.5	1.2	0.5	1.0	0.5
Rhondda Cynon Taf	6.1	6.0	-0.1	-2.4	-2.4	0.0	3.7	3.6	-0.1	2.0	2.0	0.0
Merthyr Tydfil	0.7	1.0	0.3	-0.5	-0.2	0.3	0.2	0.8	0.6	0.5	1.8	1.3
Caerphilly	3.7	3.8	0.1	-0.6	-0.9	-0.3	3.1	2.9	-0.2	2.4	2.3	-0.2
Blaenau Gwent	1.8	1.5	-0.3	-0.2	-0.3	-0.1	1.7	1.2	-0.5	3.4	2.4	-1.0
Torfaen	2.3	2.4	0.1	-0.1	-0.2	-0.1	2.2	2.2	-0.0	3.2	3.2	0.0
Monmouthshire	1.6	1.8	0.2	-0.5	-0.6	-0.2	1.1	1.1	-0.0	2.1	2.1	-0.0
Newport	4.4	5.5	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.4	5.5	1.1	4.2	5.1	0.9
Wales	77.4	79.5	2.1	-13.8	-15.3	-1.5	63.6	64.1	0.6	2.9	3.0	0.0
Lowest										0.5	1.0	
Highest										6.3	6.3	

Source: Section 52 Outturn forms

Table 3 shows the number of schools in Wales with reserves as a percentage of delegated schools expenditure at the end of 2015-16 broken down by school sector. The table groups schools according to whether the level of reserves is negative (i.e. a deficit), under 5%, between 5% and 10%, or over 10% of their delegated school expenditure. 138 primary and 65 secondary schools had negative reserves at 31 March 2016. 192 primary and 2 secondary school had reserves of over 10% of their expenditure.

Table 3 - Number of schools with reserves as a percentage of delegated schools expenditure

Sector	<i>number</i>				All schools
	Negative	Less than 5%	Between 5% and 10%	Over 10%	
Nursery	1	3	4	5	13
Primary	138	592	419	192	1,341
Middle	2	2	2	1	7
Secondary	65	113	28	2	208
Special	7	14	12	6	39
Total	213	724	465	206	1,608

Source: Section 52 Outturn forms

Table 4 shows the total value of reserves as a percentage of delegated schools expenditure. The total deficit for primary schools with negative reserves was £3 million and £11 million for secondary schools. Reserves in schools with over 10% of their delegated expenditure amounted to £15 million for primary and £1 million for secondary schools.

Table 4 - Level of school reserves as a percentage of delegated schools expenditure

Sector	<i>£ million</i>				All schools
	Negative	Less than 5%	Between 5% and 10%	Over 10%	
Nursery	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.4
Primary	-2.9	15.8	23.2	14.7	50.9
Middle	-0.3	0.1	0.5	0.5	0.7
Secondary	-11.3	10.4	8.3	1.0	8.3
Special	-0.9	1.1	1.8	1.8	3.8
Total	-15.3	27.4	33.8	18.2	64.1

Source: Section 52 Outturn forms

Table 5 shows the proportion of schools with reserves as a percentage of delegated schools expenditure. 10% of primary schools and 31% of secondary schools had negative reserves. 14% of primary schools and 1% of secondary schools had reserves greater than 10% of their delegated schools expenditure.

Table 5 - Proportion of schools across each sector with reserves as a percentage of delegated schools expenditure

Sector	<i>per cent</i>			
	Negative	Less than 5%	Between 5% and 10%	Over 10%
Nursery	8	23	31	38
Primary	10	44	31	14
Middle	29	29	29	14
Secondary	31	54	13	1
Special	18	36	31	15
Total	13	45	29	13

Source: Section 52 Outturn forms

Table 6 shows the proportion of schools whose level of reserves is negative (i.e. a deficit), under 5%, between 5% and 10%, or greater than 10% of their delegated schools expenditure. Denbighshire had the highest proportion of schools with negative reserves (32%), whilst Newport had no schools with negative reserves. Ceredigion had the highest proportion of schools (39%) with reserves of over 10%.

Table 6 - Proportion of all schools across each local authority with reserves as a percentage of delegated schools expenditure

	<i>per cent</i>			
	Negative	Less than 5%	Between 5% and 10%	Over 10%
Isle of Anglesey	8	26	42	25
Gwynedd	14	41	28	17
Conwy	1	45	37	16
Denbighshire	32	38	18	13
Flintshire	15	44	31	10
Wrexham	8	71	19	1
Powys	22	27	29	21
Ceredigion	7	13	41	39
Pembrokeshire	7	51	27	14
Carmarthenshire	23	37	30	10
Swansea	2	33	34	31
Neath Port Talbot	15	37	33	14
Bridgend	10	74	13	3
Vale of Glamorgan	5	64	23	8
Cardiff	17	61	18	3
Rhondda Cynon Taf	13	45	34	9
Merthyr Tydfil	4	79	14	4
Caerphilly	23	41	31	4
Blaenau Gwent	18	39	43	0
Torfaen	11	62	22	5
Monmouthshire	17	44	22	17
Newport	0	42	45	13
Wales	13	45	29	13
Lowest	0	13	13	0
Highest	32	79	45	39

Source: Section 52 Outturn forms

Chart 3: Proportion of schools with reserves as a percentage of delegated schools expenditure

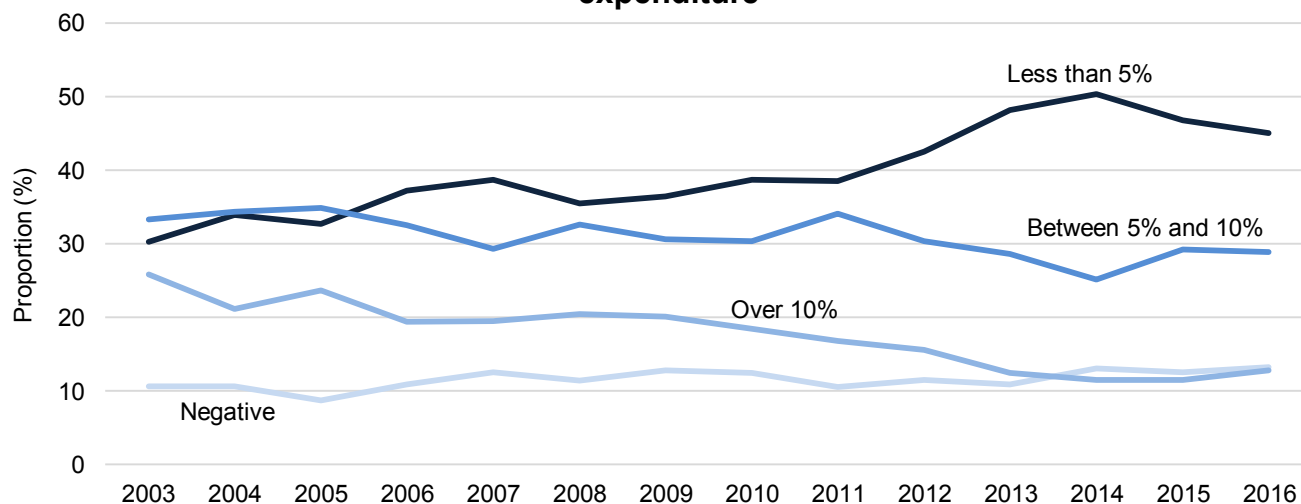


Chart 4: School reserves as a percentage of delegated schools expenditure

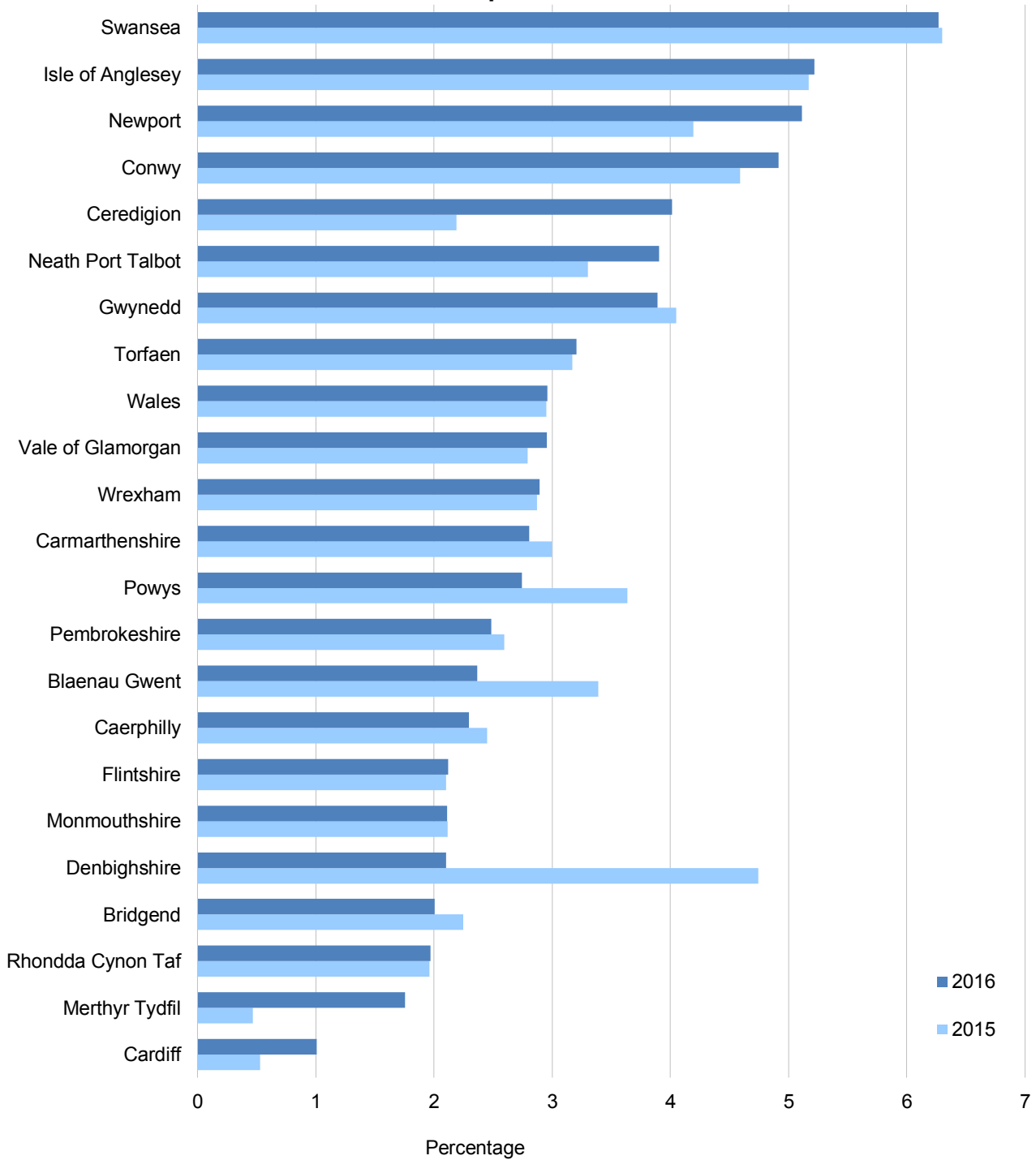


Table 7 shows the level of school reserves by local authority and school sector. The overall level of reserves were £51 million in primary schools and £8 million in secondary schools.

Table 7 - Level of school reserves at 31 March 2016, by school sector

Authority	<i>£ million</i>															
	Nursery			Primary			Middle			Secondary			Special			Overall
	Positive	Negative	Total	Positive	Negative	Total	Positive	Negative	Total	Positive	Negative	Total	Positive	Negative	Total	Total
Isle of Anglesey	.	.	.	2.0	-0.0	2.0	.	.	.	0.4	-0.1	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.2	2.5
Gwynedd	.	.	.	2.6	-0.1	2.5	.	.	.	1.1	-0.3	0.8	0.1	-0.1	0.1	3.3
Conwy	.	.	.	2.4	-0.0	2.4	.	.	.	1.4	0.0	1.4	0.2	0.0	0.2	4.0
Denbighshire	.	.	.	0.9	-0.6	0.2	.	-0.1	-0.1	1.0	-0.4	0.6	0.8	0.0	0.8	1.6
Flintshire	.	.	.	2.7	-0.1	2.6	.	.	.	0.5	-0.9	-0.5	0.2	0.0	0.2	2.3
Wrexham	0.0	.	0.0	2.0	-0.0	2.0	.	.	.	0.7	-0.1	0.6	0.0	-0.0	-0.0	2.6
Powys	.	.	.	2.7	-0.2	2.5	0.0	.	0.0	0.8	-0.7	0.1	0.2	-0.4	-0.2	2.4
Ceredigion	.	.	.	1.7	-0.0	1.7	0.2	-0.2	-0.0	0.5	-0.3	0.3	.	.	.	1.9
Pembrokeshire	.	.	.	2.0	-0.0	2.0	.	.	.	0.3	-0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	2.2
Carmarthenshire	0.0	.	0.0	2.7	-0.5	2.2	.	.	.	1.8	-0.2	1.5	0.1	-0.2	-0.1	3.7
Swansea	.	.	.	7.0	-0.0	7.0	.	.	.	2.2	-0.0	2.2	0.3	0.0	0.3	9.5
Neath Port Talbot	.	.	.	2.6	-0.3	2.3	.	.	.	1.1	-0.3	0.8	0.1	0.0	0.1	3.2
Bridgend	.	.	.	1.6	-0.1	1.5	.	.	.	0.7	-0.5	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.5	2.2
Vale of Glamorgan	0.0	.	0.0	2.1	-0.0	2.0	0.3	.	0.3	0.7	-0.2	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.1	2.9
Cardiff	0.2	.	0.2	4.3	-0.3	4.0	.	.	.	1.0	-3.2	-2.2	0.5	-0.0	0.5	2.5
Rhondda Cynon Taf	.	-0.0	-0.0	4.2	-0.0	4.2	0.5	.	0.5	0.9	-2.2	-1.3	0.4	-0.1	0.3	3.6
Merthyr Tydfil	0.1	.	0.1	0.8	0.0	0.8	.	.	.	0.1	-0.2	-0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.8
Caerphilly	.	.	.	2.6	-0.3	2.3	.	.	.	0.8	-0.6	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.4	2.9
Blaenau Gwent	.	.	.	1.1	-0.1	0.9	0.1	.	0.1	0.3	-0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	1.2
Torfaen	0.0	.	0.0	1.3	-0.0	1.3	.	.	.	0.9	-0.1	0.8	0.1	0.0	0.1	2.2
Monmouthshire	.	.	.	1.4	-0.1	1.3	.	.	.	0.4	-0.4	-0.1	0.0	-0.2	-0.2	1.1
Newport	0.0	.	0.0	3.3	0.0	3.3	.	.	.	2.0	0.0	2.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	5.5
Wales	0.4	-0.0	0.4	53.8	-2.9	50.9	1.0	-0.3	0.7	19.6	-11.3	8.3	4.6	-0.9	3.8	64.1

Source: Section 52 Outturn forms

. not applicable

Glossary

Definitions

Reserves are sums of money that schools carry forward from one year to the next. They arise from underspends and overspends against school allocations over time.

Delegated school expenditure is actual education spending that is purely delegated or devolved by local authorities to schools and does not include any money held centrally by the local authority and spent on behalf of schools.

Background

Schools are responsible for managing their own finances. The level of reserves held by an individual school at any point in time will depend on a number of factors. These will include the timing of receipt of income and of payments, the level of contingency fund the school governing body considers appropriate and the particular plans each school has for expenditure.

Key quality information

Official Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political reference.

This section provides a summary of information on this output against six dimensions of quality: Relevance, Accuracy, Timeliness and Punctuality, Accessibility and Clarity, Coherence, and Comparability.

Relevance

The statistics are important and have a number of uses, for example: advice to Ministers; local government finance revenue settlement calculations; unitary authority comparisons and benchmarking; expenditure in Wales compared to other countries; informing the debate in the National Assembly for Wales and beyond; assisting in research in public expenditure issues; economic analysis.

Accuracy

The main source of information about local education authority expenditure is the Section 52 outturn (S52) return required under Section 52 of the [Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998](#), provided by local authorities. Data has been collated in this way from 2001. Prior to this, the data was not aggregated centrally to provide a Wales position. The latest returns relate to the final accounts for the 2015-16 financial year.

We collect 100% of returns from all twenty-two county councils. The collection is a 100% survey and as such no estimation of the figures is calculated, and hence there is no sampling error.

In tables where figures have been rounded to the nearest final digit there may be an apparent discrepancy between the sum of the constituent items and the total as shown.

Once we receive the data, it goes through further validation and verification checks, for example:

- spend per head by local authority;
- arithmetic consistency checks;
- cross checks with other relevant data collections;
- thorough tolerance checks;
- outturn comparison with budgets;
- cross checks with data from other government departments;
- verification that data outside of tolerances are correct.

The data that is collected adhere to recognised professional standards. Specifically, the finance data is required under legislation and also must adhere to CIPFA accounting procedures. However, further guidelines are also available on the interpretation of these standards to ensure consistency.

Timeliness and punctuality

The data collection is carried out over the summer. The data is published in October, this allows time to collect, collate and validate the data.

All outputs adhere to the Code of Practice by pre-announcing the date of publication through the [upcoming calendar](#) web pages.

Accessibility and clarity

Welsh local government finance statistics are published in an accessible, orderly, pre-announced manner on the Welsh Government website at 9:30am on the day of publication. Simultaneously the releases are also published on the National Statistics Publication Hub. All releases are available to download for free.

More detailed data are also available at the same time on the StatsWales website and this can be manipulated online or downloaded into spreadsheets for use offline.

We aim to use Plain English in our outputs and all outputs adhere to the Welsh Government accessibility policy. Furthermore, all our headlines are published in Welsh and English.

We regularly peer review our outputs.

Comparability and coherence

Adhering to the professional code (CIPFA's SeRCOP) has meant that changes over time have been minimal. Where there have been time series which are not comparable from the start of the time series to the end this will be shown clearly in the outputs. Where advance warning is known of future changes these will be pre-announced in accordance with Welsh Government arrangements.

The existence of a professional code and our adherence to it provides assurance that the data are consistent across domains, such as local authorities.

Statistics on education expenditure are also published in both [England](#) and [Scotland](#).

National Statistics status

The [United Kingdom Statistics Authority](#) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#).

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is the Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ("national indicators") that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on indicators and associated technical information - [How do you measure a nation's progress? - National Indicators](#)

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

Further details

The document is available at: gov.wales/statistics-and-research/reserves-held-schools

Further data is available on our StatsWales website:

[StatsWales: Delegated School Outturn](#)

We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to stats.finance@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

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