



Post-16 attendance and participation: An evaluation of attendance, participation and provider practice across Wales

October 2026

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Executive summary

This report considers attendance and participation among full-time learners aged 16 to 19 in further education (FE) colleges and school sixth forms across Wales. We define attendance as the learner's presence in a timetabled session, either in person or online. We recognise that they may continue to participate in their learning in other ways. It considers patterns in attendance, the factors that influence low attendance and the effectiveness of approaches to improving attendance.

The report draws on evidence from virtual visits conducted online with colleges and schools across Wales, discussions with learners and staff, survey responses and analysis of available attendance data. The review found that there is currently no consistent national approach to measuring or reporting post-16 attendance. As a result, attendance figures are not fully comparable across providers and, in some cases, headline attendance data does not accurately reflect learners' physical presence in lessons. These inconsistencies reduce the usefulness of attendance data for benchmarking, self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Over the last three years, providers' data suggested that learners attended around 80% of timetabled lessons across post-16 provision. This is well below the attendance expectations set by providers and indicates that attendance remains a concern across both school sixth forms and further education colleges.

Attendance patterns varied more by course level, year group and type of provision than by subject area. Attendance was stronger in Year 12 and on higher-level courses, including A-levels and Level 3 vocational programmes, and weaker in Entry Level, Level 1 and compulsory provision such as resit provision for GCSE English and mathematics or Welsh Baccalaureate sessions. Learners were more likely to attend lessons they viewed as relevant to their future progression, while timetabling issues, including long gaps between lessons, also affected attendance for a minority of learners.

In many providers, leaders had begun to strengthen their use of attendance data by distinguishing more clearly between attendance and participation, analysing patterns and trends more closely and linking attendance information to wider learner progress and well-being data. However, a minority of providers do not analyse attendance data rigorously enough, particularly when considering groups of learners. This limits their ability to evaluate the impact of interventions and identify emerging patterns in poor attendance.

There were a range of factors contributing to lower attendance. These included reported increases in learner emotional well-being concerns, transport difficulties, financial pressures and part-time employment. Learners frequently described these challenges in practical terms, including unreliable or expensive transport, balancing employment alongside study and difficulties returning to regular attendance routines following periods of absence. These factors rarely occurred in isolation and providers generally recognised that improving attendance requires flexible and individualised support, often involving collaboration with families, external agencies and wider support services.

Evidence from learner discussions and provider visits suggested that attendance is closely linked to learners' enjoyment of their courses. Where teaching is effective and stimulated learners' engagement, they were more likely to attend regularly. Learners also valued providers where staff knew them well, responded quickly to concerns and provided flexible support where appropriate.

Most providers set suitable expectations around attendance. However, there was too much variation in how consistently these expectations were implemented, monitored and reinforced. In the strongest practice, leaders maintained high expectations through systematic monitoring, timely intervention and clear accountability arrangements.

Providers had begun to strengthen approaches to promoting attendance, including a supportive and individualised response to poor attendance. A notable strength across most providers was the emergence and development of specialist support roles such as pastoral, progress and learner coaches and the adoption of 'team around the learner' approaches. Where these arrangements were well established, they supported earlier identification of attendance concerns, more co-ordinated intervention and stronger communication with learners and families.

Most providers recognised a strong relationship between attendance, participation and learner outcomes. Higher attendance was commonly associated with stronger attainment, retention and progression. While providers increasingly recognised that learners may continue to engage with learning remotely or through online platforms during periods of absence, this was seen as a temporary or exceptional arrangement linked to individual learner circumstances. Providers consistently emphasised that regular attendance provides more than academic benefit. It supports learners' social development, access to specialist teaching, development of professional behaviours and readiness for employment or higher education.

Introduction

This report was commissioned to provide Medr and Welsh Government with a clearer national picture of post-16 attendance and participation patterns, the factors influencing lower-attendance and the effectiveness of provider approaches to monitoring and improving attendance. The report considers attendance and participation among full-time learners aged 16 to 19 in further education (FE) colleges and school sixth forms across Wales. It does not include full-time learners aged 20+, part-time learners or learners in apprenticeships, adult community learning, special schools or independent schools.

The report aims to:

- provide an overview of attendance and participation patterns across post-16 provision in Wales
- identify the main causes of low attendance and how these vary across different groups of learners
- evaluate how schools and colleges record, monitor and analyse attendance
- consider the effectiveness of provider strategies to improve attendance and participation
- identify effective practice in supporting learner engagement
- explore the relationship between attendance, participation and learner outcomes, including retention, achievement and progression

It is important to distinguish between attendance and participation. Attendance refers to a learner's recorded attendance in timetabled lessons, whether delivered in person or online, as recorded through formal registration systems. Participation recognises that learners may continue to engage with learning during periods of absence from timetabled sessions, for example through completing work, accessing online resources or interacting with staff and peers. This report explores how providers balance expectations around attendance at timetabled lessons with approaches to supporting learners who continue to engage in learning during periods of absence. References to attendance in this report relate specifically to recorded attendance in lessons.

There are important limitations to the available data on post-16 attendance in Wales. Whilst Welsh Government collects session attendance information for school sixth forms through weekly returns, this is not a statutory or nationally published dataset. There is currently no equivalent national attendance dataset for FE colleges. In addition, providers record and report attendance in different ways, including the use of lesson, session and daily attendance measures, making direct comparison between providers

unreliable. As a result, there is limited ability for providers or national bodies to benchmark attendance reliably or evaluate performance consistently across the sector. These limitations mean that attendance data referenced in this report are provider-owned data and should be interpreted with caution. Nevertheless, the evidence gathered during this review provides a general overview of current attendance patterns and provider practice across post-16 education in Wales.

The findings are based on a wide range of evidence, including:

- provider data returns from participating schools and colleges, including attendance rates, breakdowns by learner group and reasons for absence
- responses to a pre-visit survey exploring attendance patterns, monitoring systems and perceived barriers to attendance
- visits to all 12 further education colleges in Wales, including 10 virtual thematic review visits and evidence-gathering discussions with two colleges in-person as part of their core inspection activity, and to 25 schools with sixth forms selected to provide a broad geographical spread and a range of contexts, including variation in size, language medium and prior attendance performance
- discussions with senior leaders, attendance leads, pastoral staff and operational staff responsible for monitoring attendance during provider visits
- learner focus groups, including learners with a range of attendance patterns, to understand barriers to attendance and engagement during provider visits
- analysis of provider documentation, including attendance policies, strategies and internal monitoring systems
- engagement with wider stakeholders, including Welsh Government policy and analytical leads and local authority representatives

Background

Improving attendance has been a longstanding priority across schools in Wales. In recent years, Estyn's thematic work on attendance in secondary schools (Estyn, 2024; Estyn, 2025a) highlighted that attendance has not recovered consistently to pre-pandemic levels and that persistent absence remains a national concern. Persistent absence, defined as attendance below 90%, is considerably higher than pre-pandemic levels, particularly among older learners and learners from low-income households. Learners eligible for free school meals continue to have considerably lower attendance rates than their peers, and around half of secondary schools inspected recently have received recommendations to improve attendance. The thematic reports (Estyn, 2024; Estyn, 2025a) highlighted the importance of whole-school approaches that combine strong

leadership, effective use of attendance data, pastoral support, family engagement and high-quality teaching and learning. However, approaches to improving attendance in secondary schools remain variable across Wales and national attendance rates have improved only slightly in recent years, with progress beginning to level off.

There is currently limited national evidence about attendance and participation in post-16 education in Wales, particularly within the further education (FE) sector. Welsh Government collects attendance information for school sixth forms through weekly returns, although this is not a statutory requirement and the data is not published.

Evidence suggests that attendance remains a substantial challenge within post-16 education. A recent survey of colleges in England and Wales (Association of Colleges, 2024) indicated that FE attendance had remained relatively stable at around 85% over recent years, with lower attendance among 16 to 18-year-old learners and variation between learner groups and areas of learning. Attendance in GCSE English and mathematics resit provision was notably lower than in many other areas of provision. The survey also highlighted inconsistencies in how colleges define and record authorised and unauthorised absence, reinforcing wider concerns about comparability and reliability of attendance data across the sector.

Similar issues were identified in the Welsh Government's review of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) (Welsh Government, 2024), which noted variation in attendance expectations and reporting practices between institutions.

Previous Estyn work on improving attendance in secondary schools, alongside wider sector research, identified several factors contributing to lower attendance. These included the lasting impact of the pandemic on learners' engagement with school, poverty and financial pressures, transport difficulties, family circumstances, and increasing concerns around learners' emotional well-being and mental health. Research and recent thematic work (Estyn, 2025b; Wales Centre for Public Policy, 2024) suggest that well-being concerns, disengagement and socio-economic pressures continue to affect participation in post-16 education. Wider research also demonstrates that higher attendance is linked to better academic outcomes, although the reasons for absence and the nature of participation are important factors (Klein, Sosu and Dare, 2022; Lam et al., 2023).

Recent Estyn work on learner behaviour in further education colleges (Estyn, 2025b) also provides important context for this review. It highlighted the continuing impact of the pandemic on learners' engagement, resilience and social development, and identified lateness, absenteeism and disengagement as common challenges in FE settings. The

report also emphasised the importance of clear expectations, strong relationships between staff and learners, effective use of data dashboards and well-developed pastoral support in helping colleges respond to learners' needs. These themes are closely linked to attendance and participation, particularly where learners face multiple barriers to regular engagement.

Alongside this, in the FE sector, Medr-funded projects led by Colegau Cymru, in partnership with colleges and trade unions, have increasingly highlighted the relationship between learners' attendance, well-being and behaviour and staff workload within FE settings. These projects have contributed to the development of specialist pastoral and learner support roles, including progress coaches and well-being teams, aimed at strengthening learner engagement and supporting attendance more effectively.

Taken together, this evidence points to a need for a clearer national understanding of attendance and participation in post-16 education in Wales. There is limited comparable information about attendance across school sixth forms and FE colleges, how providers record and respond to absence, and how attendance and participation relate to learner engagement, retention, achievement and progression. This review was commissioned to address these gaps and to identify effective practice that can support improvement across the post-16 sectors in Wales.

Recommendations

To continue improving attendance across post-16 education in Wales:

Providers should:

- strengthen their strategic approach to improving attendance, including making effective use of data to identify trends and causes of low attendance
- distinguish clearly between learners' physical attendance, authorised absence, and participation in other timetabled learning, including lessons delivered remotely, when recording attendance
- set and share high expectations for in-person attendance for all learners
- review curriculum design and timetabling in areas where attendance is consistently weaker to ensure that provision is relevant, accessible and supports high levels of attendance
- work collaboratively with local authorities, other providers and agencies to improve the sharing of transition information about learners' prior attendance, support needs and barriers to engagement

Medr should:

- work with the sector to standardise expectations for recording and reporting post-16 attendance and participation, including common definitions, attendance codes and reporting arrangements, to support consistent application of provider attendance policies, including expectations relating to EMA eligibility and payments
- work with Welsh Government and providers to publish national post-16 attendance data to support benchmarking, evaluation and continuous improvement
- facilitate sector-wide sharing of effective practice, particularly around data use, pastoral support and approaches linking attendance, well-being and engagement

Welsh Government should:

- work with Medr to review transport and financial support arrangements that affect access to post-16 provision, particularly across local authority boundaries and in Welsh-medium education
- work with Medr and providers to publish national post-16 attendance data to support benchmarking, evaluation and continuous improvement

Local authorities should:

- work with schools, colleges, other local authorities and partners to improve transition information-sharing and address barriers to attendance, particularly in relation to transport issues

Summary of attendance and participation rates

Interpreting the attendance data

Attendance data used in this review provides useful insight into patterns across post-16 provision, but there are important limitations to reliability, comparability and benchmarking. These include:

- no single national approach to recording post-16 attendance across Wales
- variation between providers in the use of lesson, session and daily attendance measures
- differences between providers in how authorised absence, participation in timetabled remote learning and partner provision are defined and recorded
- variation in learner absence reporting processes, including the use of self-certification in some providers
- differences in the extent to which headline attendance reflects overall participation or physical presence in lessons

As a result, attendance data across providers is not directly comparable and findings should be regarded as indicative rather than definitive.

Attendance data and patterns

Across both school sixth forms and further education colleges, learners attended around 80% of timetabled lessons. Attendance varied considerably across providers and, although many providers reported gradual improvement over the past three years, a minority continued to report attendance notably below pre-pandemic levels.

In most providers, attendance was stronger in Year 12 than Year 13, particularly for learners studying A-levels. Leaders commonly attributed this to a combination of factors, including greater learner independence, with learners having more autonomy over decisions about attendance and balancing competing commitments, alongside examination and coursework pressures, part-time employment and university applications. Several providers reported that more flexible registration arrangements and greater autonomy over independent study in Year 13 could contribute to weaker attendance where learners were less successful in managing their time and competing demands.

In most providers, learners with additional learning needs (ALN) attended at similar or higher rates than their peers. Similarly, attendance rates for learners eligible for free

school meals or Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) were often only slightly below overall provider attendance rates. This contrasts with the position in secondary schools for learners pre-16, where attendance among pupils eligible for free school meals is currently around six percentage points lower than the national average.

Attendance was consistently highest in higher level provision, including A-level and Level 3 vocational courses. In contrast, attendance was generally lower in Level 1 provision.

The lowest attendance rates were consistently found in compulsory skills and resit provision, particularly GCSE English and mathematics and Welsh Baccalaureate sessions. Attendance in these areas was commonly substantially lower than attendance in learners' main programmes. During visits, providers often linked this to lower learner motivation, weaker prior experiences of these subjects and learners not always recognising their relevance or value to future progression, employment or qualifications.

Through the data returned from providers sampled, across colleges, it was found that attendance rates were relatively consistent across most subject areas. Overall, variation by subject was less pronounced than variation by course level and type of provision. The information provided by school sixth forms was not sufficient to be able to make meaningful analysis or comparison by subject area as not enough schools returned data at subject level.

Common barriers to strong attendance

Across the providers visited, leaders and pastoral staff identified a wide range of causes of lower attendance among post-16 learners. In most providers, absence was not attributed to a single issue but to a combination of interrelated factors. Leaders increasingly recognised that lower attendance was rarely the result of a single cause and instead reflected the combined effect of learners' personal circumstances, wider social factors and the way provision was organised.

Reported well-being factors affecting attendance

Leaders consistently identified well-being concerns and low resilience as important factors contributing to learner absence across both school sixth forms and further education colleges. In nearly all providers, leaders felt that these issues had become more prevalent since the pandemic and continued to affect learners' ability to attend consistently. Leaders also noted that learners were less resilient in recovering from short periods of absence, which could quickly develop into more persistent patterns of lower attendance.

In a few providers, leaders recognised that absence recorded as linked to well-being or mental health concerns could sometimes reflect a wider range of underlying factors, such as low motivation, disengagement or broader personal circumstances. This reinforced the importance of understanding the context surrounding absence and providing appropriate individualised support.

Illness was frequently recorded as a reason for absence. However, leaders in several providers noted that absence recorded as illness did not always reflect straightforward physical illness and could sometimes conceal wider issues, including anxiety about attending, transport difficulties or disengagement. This highlighted the complexity of interpreting absence data and the importance of exploring the underlying reasons for non-attendance.

Transport, financial pressures and part-time employment

Transport and financial pressures were considerable barriers to learners attending regularly, particularly where learners had to travel long distances to access their chosen programme of study. Leaders reported that rising travel costs, limited public transport and variation in local authority transport arrangements affected learners' ability to attend consistently.

These issues were particularly evident in Welsh-medium provision, where learners often travelled from wide geographical areas. In a few cases, leaders felt that learners could access transport support more easily for nearby English-medium provision than for Welsh-medium sixth forms, which had an impact on attendance. In colleges particularly, providers reported that some learners whose household circumstances placed them above the eligibility thresholds for EMA or other financial support nevertheless experienced significant financial pressures. Rising transport costs meant that these learners often received little or no financial assistance with travel despite facing substantial costs associated with attending college or sixth form.

Welsh Government has also sought to reduce transport-related barriers through initiatives such as the £1 youth bus fare pilot. However, leaders and learners in many providers continued to identify transport as a significant challenge, particularly in relation to journey reliability, travel times and the affordability of travel for those not eligible for financial support.

Transport difficulties were sometimes compounded by timetabling arrangements. Long journeys and limited or unreliable public transport made attendance harder to sustain where learners had long gaps between lessons or no later transport options were available.

Part-time employment was identified by many providers as a factor that could affect attendance. Many learners combined paid work with their studies successfully. However, providers reported that, for some learners, working late shifts or extended hours could contribute to fatigue, reduced punctuality and occasional absence, particularly at the start of the week. In a few cases, leaders and staff reported that financial pressures led learners to prioritise employment over attendance at planned learning sessions.

Independence, motivation and engagement

Attendance patterns were also influenced by the increased independence and self-sufficiency associated with post-16 study. Many providers reported that some learners struggled to manage their time effectively, particularly where they had free periods, gaps in their timetable or fewer structured expectations than in compulsory education. This was particularly evident in Year 13, where attendance often declined as learners balanced coursework, examination preparation and planning for their next steps after Year 13.

Learners were less likely to attend sessions they perceived as less relevant or less valuable. Across providers, attendance was often weaker in compulsory or cross-curricular elements, such as Welsh Baccalaureate, tutorial sessions and skills-based provision, including GCSE resits. Learners often viewed these sessions as less directly linked to their

future progression, repetitive, or easier to complete independently outside lessons. Attendance was stronger where sessions were engaging, practical and clearly connected to learners' goals and qualifications. In a few providers, leaders and learners felt that the widespread availability of online resources and recorded materials made it easier for learners to catch up following absence but could also reduce the perceived need to attend some theory-based sessions in person.

Family circumstances and prior experiences

Where learners had responsibilities as young carers or faced challenges at home, regular attendance was more challenging. Providers also highlighted the influence of parental attitudes and engagement. Reduced parental oversight and differing expectations around independence sometimes limited the effectiveness of home-provider communication.

Pre-existing patterns from compulsory education continued to influence attendance at sixth form or college. Providers generally reported that learners who had poor attendance in Year 11, or who had experienced reduced timetables, education other than at school (EOTAS) provision or home education, were more likely to struggle with attendance post-16. This is particularly significant given that attendance is generally weakest in Year 11 compared with other compulsory-age year groups. Transition into post-16 education was identified as a particularly vulnerable point, especially where information about learners' prior attendance and barriers to engagement was limited or not shared effectively. Where transition information was weaker, providers were less able to identify learners at risk of poor attendance early enough.

Learners broadly identified the same barriers to attendance as staff and leaders, particularly transport difficulties, timetable structure, workload pressures and competing commitments such as employment.

Provider approaches to improving attendance

Across the providers visited, leaders and staff generally recognised the importance of regular attendance and its relationship with learner outcomes. However, the effectiveness of approaches to monitoring, evaluating and improving attendance was too variable across providers.

Where providers were most effective in improving attendance, leaders:

- set clear expectations for attendance and communicated these consistently to staff, learners, parents and carers
- promoted a strong culture of in-person attendance
- treated attendance as a shared responsibility across all staff
- made robust use of attendance data to identify concerns promptly, consider attendance of groups of learners and to provide targeted support where required
- followed up absence promptly, often on the same day
- used a graduated response to improving attendance, carefully balancing challenge with support
- understood the individual barriers affecting learners and tailored support accordingly, including setting realistic improvement targets based on learners' circumstances
- focused on sustained improvement and re-engagement, particularly for learners with historically low attendance, rather than fixed attendance thresholds
- used supportive, trauma-informed approaches where appropriate, focusing on re-engagement and retention before considering withdrawal from programmes
- used specialist pastoral roles, such as coaches and mentors, to co-ordinate support
- evaluated the impact of attendance interventions and adapted approaches accordingly
- engaged effectively with parents and carers to reinforce attendance expectations and support early intervention
- worked collaboratively with external agencies and support services where learners faced multiple or complex barriers to attendance
- recognised the importance of engaging teaching, relevant curriculum and well-planned timetables in supporting attendance

Where providers were less effective, leaders:

- relied too heavily on headline attendance figures without analysing patterns in enough detail

- did not use attendance data forensically enough to evaluate which interventions were improving attendance
- used inconsistent definitions of authorised absence, attendance and participation
- lacked a clear enough distinction between learners' physical presence in lessons and wider engagement with learning
- were too reactive and did not identify emerging attendance concerns early enough
- did not promote attendance as a shared responsibility across staff teams
- had limited access to detailed transition information, particularly learners' previous attendance patterns and barriers to engagement
- had limited engagement with parents, carers, local authorities or external agencies
- did not always consider how curriculum design, timetabling or learner perceptions of relevance affected attendance
- did not have clear enough criteria for deciding when continued low attendance, despite some engagement, should trigger more formal review of a learner's place on programme

Setting high attendance expectations

Nearly all providers reported using their attendance policy to set clear expectations of regular attendance. In practice, expectations were sometimes provided as standalone documents for post-16 learners although were more often embedded within wider whole-school or college policies and implemented through learner agreements, induction processes and day-to-day monitoring systems.

Nearly all school sixth forms and further education colleges reported setting high expectations for attendance, often around 90% to 100%, although there was too much variation in how consistently these expectations were communicated and implemented. Approaches reflected the different contexts of the two sectors. School sixth forms often used more structured processes, including learner agreements, parental contact and staged escalation. Colleges also set clear expectations but were more likely to describe attendance within wider learner-support arrangements, including progress coaching, well-being support, reasonable adjustments and re-engagement processes. Across both sectors, the most effective providers combined clear expectations with timely intervention and tailored support.

Ysgol Brynhyfryd: Clearer systems and early support

The school has strengthened sixth-form attendance through clearer expectations, regular monitoring and a more structured response to concerns. Staff record attendance lesson by lesson, as well as for expected tutor periods and assemblies. The

school also uses sign-in and sign-out lanyards to help monitor whether learners are on site. Leaders have introduced a graduated response when attendance begins to decline. This includes early discussions with form tutors, prompt follow-up by the Pupil Support Officer, letters to parents, review meetings and, where needed, attendance agreements or bespoke support plans. Attendance concerns are reviewed regularly by the Pupil Support Officer, Head of Sixth Form and the learner, supporting earlier identification of concerns and timely intervention before patterns of lower attendance become more established.

The school promotes learner ownership through fortnightly small-group tutorial sessions, where tutors discuss attendance, progress with learning and workload with learners. Learners understand the school's expectation of good attendance, know how to report planned or illness-related absence, and recognise the link between attendance and achievement. Leaders also reinforce this message through parental communication and regular review of attendance at senior leadership and governor level. Although attendance remains below pre-pandemic levels, attendance for Year 12 learners and AS courses has improved in recent years, and leaders report that these improvements are now beginning to be seen as learners progress into Year 13.

For learners eligible for EMA, all providers indicated that attendance expectations were set at, or very close to, 100% of timetabled sessions in order to receive payment each week. Survey responses showed that this expectation was typically applied with some flexibility, with providers – in line with EMA guidance - allowing authorised absences, such as illness, medical appointments or agreed exceptional circumstances, to count towards attendance requirements. Overall, the evidence highlighted a consistent expectation that EMA recipients should attend all timetabled learning, while providers retained discretion in applying their own attendance policies and determining authorised absence. This appears to provide a strong incentive for attendance among learners receiving EMA and may help explain why attendance differences between EMA learners and their peers are often less pronounced than the attendance gaps associated with disadvantage during compulsory schooling. However, variation in providers' attendance recording practices and approaches to authorised absence means that learners' experiences of EMA attendance requirements are not always consistent across Wales.

Across both sectors, providers recognised that learners may continue to engage with learning despite periods of absence, for example through online platforms, independent study, catch-up work or ongoing communication with staff. In a minority of cases, providers used hybrid or flexible arrangements to support learners experiencing significant barriers to attendance, including anxiety, medical needs or reintegration following prolonged absence. However, nearly all providers were clear that learners'

continued engagement with learning while absent—for example by accessing online learning materials or completing work independently—was not regarded as an alternative to regular physical attendance. Instead, it was used primarily as a short-term measure to help learners keep up with their studies during periods of absence.

Evidence from providers and learners highlighted the importance of regular in-person attendance in supporting learners' academic progress, access to specialist teaching and resources, routine, social development and preparedness for employment or further study. Learners themselves often reported that face-to-face teaching, direct explanation and interaction with staff and peers supported their learning more effectively than working independently online. As a result, most providers worked towards improving learners' in-person attendance, even where temporary flexibility was in place.

Leaders frequently adopted a contextualised approach when working with individual learners. In practice, attendance improvement targets were often tailored to learners' starting points and personal circumstances, particularly where learners entered post-16 education with historically very low attendance, disrupted prior experiences or significant barriers to engagement. In these cases, leaders often viewed incremental improvement as meaningful progress, for example where a learner with previous attendance around 50% or 60% sustained attendance closer to 70% or 80%. This reflected a broader emphasis on improvement, re-engagement and retention rather than reliance on fixed attendance thresholds alone.

Recording attendance and defining absence

All providers had established systems for recording attendance, with increasing use of lesson-by-lesson tracking as the most meaningful measure in post-16 settings. However, there was too much variation in how attendance was defined, coded and reported, particularly in relation to authorised absence. As a result, it is difficult to make any comparisons or to fully evaluate the attendance of learners in post-16.

School sixth forms generally operated within clearer and more consistent frameworks, typically using the same attendance codes and categories as those applied in compulsory education, including defined authorised and unauthorised absence codes and expectations for parental notification. In further education colleges, approaches were more variable. Colleges often used locally developed attendance codes and recording systems, with differences in how authorised and unauthorised absence categories were defined and applied.

There was also variation in how learners were expected to report absence and how providers applied arrangements for evidencing illness. In some colleges, learners reported

absence through an app, online form or learner portal, while in others they contacted tutors, lecturers or student services directly by email, telephone or online communication platforms. Many providers allowed learners to self-certify short periods of illness, often for a few days and in some cases for up to one week, reflecting both local attendance policies and EMA guidance. Where absences extended beyond these periods, providers generally required additional evidence or confirmation, such as parental notification, medical evidence or discussion with pastoral staff. However, the amount of evidence required and the extent to which repeated periods of self-certification were accepted varied between providers. As a result, learners with similar attendance patterns could experience different processes and expectations depending on where they studied. Leaders in providers using carefully managed self-certification felt that this supported learners' independence and reflected expectations in the workplace, where employees are typically able to self-certify short-term illness. Learners also valued being trusted to report absence themselves and felt that self-certification reduced unnecessary barriers when they were unwell for short periods.

A key issue across both schools and colleges was the lack of consistency in how attendance and absence were recorded and reported. While providers generally expected learners to attend all timetabled sessions, they differed in how authorised absences, such as illness, medical appointments, educational visits and work placements, were reflected in attendance data. As a result, attendance figures did not always represent the same underlying measure of attendance across providers, limiting the reliability of comparisons between settings.

In a minority of providers, more commonly in further education colleges, leaders distinguished between different measures of attendance, such as overall attendance and on-site or lesson attendance. These approaches, often supported by digital dashboards, provided a more nuanced understanding of learners' physical attendance alongside their wider engagement with learning. However, this practice was not consistent across the sector.

Use of data and monitoring systems

Although most providers had established systems for monitoring attendance, the quality and impact of the processes varied. A minority had well-developed dashboards and live tracking systems that enabled leaders and staff to analyse attendance patterns quickly and in detail across learner groups, subjects and types of provision. The majority relied too heavily on manual processes and reported difficulties extracting or analysing attendance data efficiently. This limited leaders' ability to identify emerging patterns quickly and evaluate the impact of attendance interventions over time. This was particularly evident in smaller school sixth forms, where staff capacity and resources

were often focused primarily on pre-16 learners. As a result, leaders did not always analyse post-16 attendance in enough detail by learner group, course or subject to identify trends or target support effectively.

Most further education colleges used digital dashboards to track attendance alongside progress, well-being and learner characteristics. These systems enabled leaders to identify patterns and monitor attendance at multiple levels, including by course, subject and learner group.

Cardiff and Vale College: Tracking attendance and rapid intervention

The college has embedded a clear attendance and retention strategy based on the principle that strong attendance supports attainment, progression and work readiness. Its in-house 'Tracking and Progress Hub' brings together real-time information on attendance, targets, grades and additional learning needs (ALN), enabling leaders, staff and learners to monitor attendance and wider participation closely. A key strength is the college's use of on-site attendance as the primary performance measure, providing a clearer picture of learners' physical presence in lessons while still recognising wider participation. Weekly at-risk meetings review learners with a red or amber rating in detail, with progress coaches and deputy heads agreeing timely, tailored interventions linked to attendance, progress and well-being. Progress coaches provide learners with a consistent point of contact and rapidly follow-up with learners and parents when concerns emerge. Automated text and email alerts, structured progress review points and more detailed attendance coding have strengthened early intervention and helped staff identify underlying reasons for absence more accurately. Leaders and staff reported that the approach improved the speed and coordination of attendance intervention while attendance across the college has improved in recent years and is now approaching pre-pandemic levels.

In most school sixth forms, attendance monitoring was systematic and built on the school's established attendance processes for compulsory-age learners. This typically included daily tracking, same-day follow-up of absence, and clear escalation procedures linked to defined attendance thresholds. However, variation in how attendance was recorded and interpreted meant that data was not always used consistently across providers. In a few cases, leaders reported difficulty interpreting attendance figures, particularly where authorised absence was included within headline measures.

Bishop Gore Comprehensive School: Using data and shared accountability to strengthen attendance

The school has strengthened its oversight and monitoring of sixth-form attendance through detailed self-evaluation and clear analysis of attendance patterns, particularly in individual subjects, recognising that lesson attendance provides a more accurate picture of engagement than morning and afternoon registration marks alone. Attendance has improved in recent years, particularly for learners in Year 12, and leaders attribute this, in part, to a more structured and co-ordinated approach to attendance. Additional leadership capacity, including senior leadership oversight and a dedicated support role, has strengthened accountability for attendance across the sixth form. Attendance expectations are communicated clearly through Year 11 induction events, open evenings and a sixth-form attendance contract signed by learners and parents. A co-ordinated approach involving form tutors, subject teachers and pastoral leaders supports regular monitoring and early intervention, with weekly attendance information shared with tutors and discussed with learners during tutor meetings. Where attendance declines, a graduated response begins with supportive conversations with learners before escalating to subject staff involvement, parental contact and formal meetings where appropriate.

Intervention strategies

Most providers had structured approaches to intervention, typically based on early identification and a graduated response. In school sixth forms, intervention processes were generally clearly defined and consistently applied. These often followed staged escalation models, with attendance thresholds triggering specific actions such as letters home, meetings with parents and carers, and involvement of senior leaders. In the most effective practice, leaders and pastoral staff complemented these formal processes with timely communication with parents and carers and rapid follow-up of absence. Providers reported that these approaches helped prevent patterns of absence from becoming embedded and supported learners to re-engage with learning.

In further education colleges, intervention approaches were also informed by strong understanding of learners' individual circumstances but were typically more flexible and individualised in how support was applied. While escalation processes were in place, colleges often placed greater emphasis on identifying the underlying reasons for absence and coordinating tailored support through progress coaches, well-being teams and wider pastoral services. In a few cases, providers adapted expectations or retained learners on programmes where attendance was low but learners continued to complete work, access

learning materials and make sufficient academic progress, helping to sustain retention and progression.

The differences between school and college approaches generally reflected the context and organisation of each sector rather than clear differences in effectiveness. Although approaches differed between sectors, the strongest practice shared common features. Leaders identified concerns early, used attendance information alongside wider knowledge of learners' circumstances, and coordinated timely support through staff who knew learners well.

Across both sectors, many providers had moved away from viewing low attendance primarily as a disciplinary issue. Instead, most adopted a more supportive and, in some cases, trauma-informed approach that sought to understand the reasons for absence and keep learners engaged in learning. This was particularly evident where learners had health and well-being needs, caring responsibilities or disrupted prior experiences of education. Providers consistently told us during the visits that they were therefore less likely than in the past to withdraw learners solely because of poor attendance. Instead, they usually sought to use staged support, re-engagement plans, phased returns, mentoring or referrals to wider support services before considering whether a learner should remain on a course.

This approach was welcomed by most staff and learners because it helped providers respond more sensitively to individual circumstances and supported re-engagement for learners who may previously have disengaged completely from education. However, in a very few cases, staff felt that this created grey areas around how much continued engagement with learning while absent was sufficient for a learner to remain on course, particularly where attendance remained very low, but learners continued to submit work or engage intermittently. In these cases, providers were still working through how to balance support and retention with expectations around attendance, progression and readiness for further study or employment.

Providers recognised that transport was a key challenge for learners travelling substantial distances, attending Welsh-medium provision or relying on multiple forms of public transport. In a few cases, providers cited learners travelling up to 90 minutes each way to access their chosen provision. Where transport difficulties affected attendance, providers often worked with learners, families, local authorities and other partners to help learners access available transport or financial support and identify practical solutions where possible. However, leaders generally felt that their ability to address transport-related barriers was constrained by wider transport policies and funding arrangements.

Same-day communication with parents or carers was a feature of stronger practice, particularly in school sixth forms. In colleges, parental engagement tended to occur later or was more limited, reflecting differences in expectations of learner independence.

Monmouth Comprehensive School: Swift staged intervention

The school has established a clear process to respond quickly to sixth-form attendance concerns. Form tutors act as the first point of contact and use professional judgement to begin early, supportive conversations with learners, exploring issues such as transport, workload or well-being before patterns become established. Where concerns continue, cases escalate through clear stages to senior leaders. An embedded interventions tracker supports transparency and accountability, enabling tutors and leaders to see actions taken and next steps. The school also uses attendance information alongside course patterns and key points in the year, such as mock examinations, to evaluate concerns and adapt support. This helps staff identify concerns quickly and respond promptly before patterns of lower attendance become more established, while maintaining a clear expectation that learners attend in person wherever possible.

Leadership and support roles

In most providers, there were clear lines of responsibility and accountability for the attendance of post-16 learners. In most settings, attendance was overseen by senior leaders, with operational responsibility shared across tutors, pastoral staff and administrative teams.

A notable strength was the development of specialist roles such as progress coaches, learner coaches or pastoral mentors. These roles provided dedicated capacity for monitoring attendance, building relationships with learners and coordinating support. In many cases, these staff had detailed knowledge of learners' circumstances and were able to intervene early and effectively.

Ysgol Gymraeg Gwynllyw: A dedicated learning coach

Leaders describe appointment of the learning coach as a key part of the school's strategy to improve attendance since the pandemic. The learning coach monitors attendance closely, follows up promptly when learners do not attend lessons and contacts learners or home where needed. They also support learners during timetabled independent study sessions, introduced following learner voice feedback, which help

learners use non-contact time productively while remaining on site. The learning coach has a strong understanding of learners' circumstances, contributes to three-weekly progress meetings with senior leaders and provides careers mentoring to help learners link attendance with future goals and progression. Leaders and learners report that the role has strengthened communication, supported earlier intervention when attendance concerns emerge and helped maintain engagement during independent study periods. Attendance in the sixth form has improved in recent years and is now above pre-pandemic levels.

Across both sectors, many providers had adopted a 'team around the learner' approach. This involved co-ordinated working between curriculum staff, pastoral teams, well-being services and, where appropriate, external agencies. In stronger practice, this enabled providers to address the multiple and interrelated factors affecting attendance.

St David's Catholic Sixth Form College: Team around the learner

The college uses its Learner Welfare Group to co-ordinate support for learners experiencing attendance difficulties. The group brings together pastoral staff and support services to review learners' attendance alongside well-being, academic progress and individual circumstances. Pastoral tutors act as the main point of contact for parents and learners, helping to avoid duplicated communication and ensuring concerns are followed up consistently. The group agrees tailored support, which may include action plans, mentoring, phased returns, adjustments to timetables or referrals to external support. This approach helps the college co-ordinate support more effectively and respond to attendance concerns in a trauma-informed way, particularly where learners have significant health, well-being or additional support needs. Leaders report that the group has improved information sharing between staff, enabled more tailored interventions and contributed to the college's wider improvements in attendance rates over the last three years.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking attendance across post-16 provision was limited by the absence of a national framework for recording and reporting attendance. Providers used different definitions, measures and recording practices, and there was no nationally collected or published attendance dataset. As a result, attendance data was not sufficiently comparable to support reliable benchmarking across the sector. This limited providers' ability to understand how well they were performing, identify national trends and evaluate which approaches were most effective in improving attendance.

Learner experiences of attendance and participation

Overall, we held 51 learner discussion groups involving approximately 500 learners from school sixth forms and further education colleges across Wales. Many learners understood the importance of attendance and were motivated to engage with their learning. Although a few learners in discussion groups had lower or more variable attendance, many were regular attenders and spoke positively about their courses and future goals. Learners were usually reflective about the factors affecting attendance, both for themselves and their peers. They told us that attendance was influenced by a combination of factors, including:

- how engaging and relevant they felt lessons were
- the quality of relationships with staff
- timetable gaps, long days and isolated lessons
- transport cost, reliability and journey length
- part-time work, driving lessons and other commitments
- stress, anxiety, workload and assessment pressures
- the availability of online resources to catch up
- how clearly providers explained attendance expectations and absence processes

Most learners understood attendance expectations, including how to report absence, the link with EMA and the possible consequences of poor attendance. Many described attendance as their own responsibility and recognised its link to attainment and progression although fewer knew their exact attendance rates.

Learners were more likely to attend when teaching was engaging, well-structured and clearly linked to their goals. They valued positive relationships with staff and were motivated by lessons that felt purposeful, practical or important for future progression. In contrast, attendance was weaker in sessions learners perceived as less relevant, particularly Welsh Baccalaureate, tutorial sessions, enrichment and skills provision. In these cases, some learners were more likely to prioritise other work or commitments.

Coleg Cambria: Rewarding attendance in skills

The college has introduced a recognition and rewards system to encourage attendance, particularly in literacy and numeracy sessions where attendance is typically lower than in learners' main programmes. Learners can receive certificates, vouchers and other rewards for strong or full attendance, including specific recognition for English and mathematics. The initiative is supported by clear messages that skills sessions carry the same expectations as vocational subjects, alongside efforts to celebrate attendance

achievements with learners and parents. Staff report that these approaches have helped improve attendance in a few areas where attendance has traditionally been weaker.

In post-16 settings, increasing independence also influenced attendance. While many learners managed this well, a minority made selective decisions about which sessions to attend, particularly where timetables included long gaps, late lessons or extended days. This was more common among older learners, especially Year 13 learners in school sixth forms, where coursework, examinations, employment and progression planning created additional pressures. In many cases, older learners were also more likely to have access to their own transport, which increased their flexibility to leave site between lessons or to choose not to attend particular sessions.

Learners consistently valued strong pastoral and one-to-one support. They particularly appreciated having a trusted adult who knew their circumstances and responded quickly when concerns arose. Many learners also felt well supported to catch up after absence through online platforms, uploaded resources and direct help from teachers. However, most still viewed face-to-face teaching as more effective, especially in practical subjects or where direct explanation was important. In a very few cases, the availability of online resources reduced learners' perceived need to attend every session, particularly where learners felt they could access materials independently outside lessons.

Ysgol Morgan Llwyd: Catch-up through the Learning Hub

The school's Learning Hub provides structured academic and pastoral support for sixth-form learners who need help catching up following periods of lower attendance. Learners can self-refer through the school website, and staff co-ordinate closely with subject teachers to ensure that resources, lesson materials and targeted support are available promptly. The Hub is open throughout the school day and includes support from senior leaders, learning mentors and, where appropriate, subject specialists. Staff tailor support carefully to individual learners' needs, for example arranging one-to-one subject sessions during free periods to address gaps in learning. The Hub supports early intervention and re-engagement by providing learners with a supportive environment to rebuild confidence and maintain progress following periods of absence.

Practical barriers to attendance were a frequent concern for learners. They highlighted transport costs, unreliable public transport, long journeys, timetable gaps and isolated lessons as factors that made attendance harder. These issues were particularly significant

for learners travelling long distances or accessing Welsh-medium provision across wide geographical areas.

Learners also described stress, anxiety and workload as factors affecting attendance, especially during assessment or examination periods. In these cases, absence was sometimes linked to difficulty managing pressure rather than a lack of engagement with learning.

Local authority support and oversight

Strategic oversight and evaluation

Overall, the role of local authorities in supporting post-16 attendance was limited. Unlike in compulsory education, where responsibilities are clearly defined, their involvement in post-16 settings focused mainly on transition and inclusion processes. Schools and colleges consistently reported that responsibility for monitoring and improving post-16 attendance rested primarily with providers themselves. In addition, the absence of consistent national attendance data limited opportunities for benchmarking, external challenge and the sharing of effective practice across the sector.

Transport and access to post-16 provision

Unlike compulsory school-age transport, support for post-16 learners is largely discretionary. As a result, local authority transport policies vary considerably across Wales. While some authorities continue to provide free transport for eligible post-16 learners attending sixth forms or colleges, others provide only partial support through travel grants, concessionary arrangements or financial contributions. A few authorities have substantially reduced or withdrawn routine support for post-16 transport altogether.

Support is sometimes only available to learners at Welsh-medium or faith-based providers and sometimes learners at FE colleges are not eligible for support. As a result, learners attending similar courses may face markedly different transport costs and travel arrangements depending on where they live, creating what many providers described as a 'postcode lottery' which continues to affect some learners' attendance and participation in post-16 education and training.

Transition and information sharing

Many providers highlighted the importance of receiving timely information about learners' attendance histories, barriers to engagement and previous support

arrangements before learners started their post-16 programmes. Where suitable information sharing protocols were in place and this information was shared effectively between schools, colleges and relevant services, providers were better able to identify learners at risk of poor attendance and put support in place at an early stage. However, arrangements for sharing attendance-related information varied. Several providers, particularly colleges and school sixth forms recruiting learners from other institutions, reported that they received limited information about learners' previous attendance patterns or interventions. As a result, providers were sometimes less able to identify learners at risk of poor attendance early enough and target support proactively during transition.

Education welfare and wider support services

Local authority attendance and education welfare services generally focused their work on compulsory school-age learners. As a result, schools and colleges typically took primary responsibility for monitoring attendance, identifying concerns and coordinating interventions for post-16 learners. In a few areas, providers were able to draw on wider support services, including youth engagement, wellbeing, safeguarding and transition support, particularly for learners with complex needs or those at risk of disengagement. However, the availability and extent of this support varied considerably. While a few providers described established links with local authority inclusion or youth engagement services, others reported little or no local authority involvement in post-16 attendance.

Impact of attendance on learner outcomes

There is a strong relationship between attendance and learner outcomes (Lam et al., 2023). In nearly all providers, regular attendance was associated with stronger attainment, better retention and improved progression. Learners often recognised that attending lessons regularly supported the development of their knowledge, understanding and skills. It also helped them keep up with coursework and prepare more effectively for examinations.

In stronger providers, leaders used attendance data alongside progress, attainment and pastoral information to identify learners at risk. Attendance formed part of wider curriculum review and intervention processes, helping leaders consider whether learners were on appropriate courses and whether additional support or a change of pathway was needed. In a few providers, attendance information was used to inform transition interviews, retention decisions and targeted support.

The clearest evidence of impact was found where providers analysed attendance

alongside retention and progression. In a few cases, lower attendance was linked to reduced progression from AS to A2, weaker subject outcomes or a higher likelihood of learners leaving mid-year. One provider identified that learners leaving mid-year had substantially lower attendance than their peers, while another linked improvements in attendance monitoring and progress coaching with improved retention, progression and achievement.

Gower College Swansea: Progress coaches improving outcomes

The college has developed a progress coach model to strengthen the monitoring of attendance and resulting support. Progress coaches deliver tutorials, monitor attendance and well-being, and usually support around 150 learners. When learners miss three sessions, an alert prompts the progress coach to make contact and explore barriers to attendance. Leaders report improvements in retention, progression from AS to A2 and achievement since introducing the model, and plan to extend the approach across more curriculum areas.

Nearly all providers understood the importance of regular physical attendance and viewed this as important for learner success, well-being and preparation for further study or employment. Leaders and staff frequently highlighted the value of face-to-face learning, particularly where learners benefited from specialist resources, practical teaching, direct explanation, discussion and regular feedback from teachers. Nearly all providers therefore regarded remote or independent participation as a temporary or exceptional arrangement rather than an alternative to attending lessons in person.

At the same time, providers increasingly recognised that attendance alone did not fully capture learner engagement. Across both sectors, some learners continued to participate in learning during periods of absence through online platforms, independent study, uploaded resources and regular contact with teachers or pastoral staff. In a few cases, particularly where learners experienced significant health, well-being or personal barriers, flexible arrangements such as phased returns, hybrid learning or tailored support plans helped learners remain engaged in education, achieve qualifications and progress successfully.

This reflected a broader shift in many providers towards more supportive and individualised approaches to attendance. Rather than relying primarily on punitive responses or automatic withdrawal linked to attendance thresholds, providers were more likely to focus on maintaining engagement, supporting re-engagement and understanding the barriers affecting individual learners. In many cases, learners with low

attendance remained on their courses where providers judged that they were continuing to participate meaningfully and make sufficient progress towards a successful outcome.

However, most providers recognised that participation in learning without regular attendance required careful monitoring to ensure that learners continued to make sufficient academic progress and remained prepared for progression or employment. In many cases, there was limited evaluation of whether learners engaging remotely or independently achieved as well as learners attending consistently in person.

Despite widespread recognition of the link between attendance and outcomes, formal evaluation was underdeveloped in many providers. Several leaders recognised the relationship between attendance, attainment and progression but did not analyse this systematically, particularly in relation to destinations or longer-term outcomes. This limited leaders' ability to identify which approaches were most effective in improving attendance, retention and learner outcomes over time.

Methods and evidence base

This report drew on evidence collected between January and March 2026 to provide a national overview of attendance and participation in post-16 education in Wales, alongside detailed evidence about provider practice and learner experience.

The fieldwork focused on:

- patterns and trends in attendance and participation
- causes of non-attendance
- provider approaches to monitoring, recording and improving attendance
- the relationship between attendance, participation and learner outcomes

Lines of enquiry were informed by previous Estyn thematic work on attendance, current policy priorities and issues identified through inspection activity. Attention was given to the distinction between attendance and participation, the use of attendance data, including for EMA purposes, and the effectiveness of intervention strategies.

The review included evidence from all 12 further education (FE) colleges in Wales and 25 schools with sixth forms as listed in the acknowledgements section. All 12 colleges completed a common survey and data return to provide a consistent national evidence base. In addition, attendance and participation issues were explored through virtual thematic review visits with 10 colleges, while evidence from the remaining two colleges was gathered in-person through discussions held as part of their core FE inspection activity. The school sample reflected a range of contexts, including representation from local authorities across Wales, English- and Welsh-medium provision, differing sixth form sizes, and schools with varying attendance profiles at compulsory age.

Quantitative evidence drew on several sources. Welsh Government provided attendance data for school sixth forms covering the 2023/24 and 2024/25 academic years. The dataset included national and school-level information, with some breakdowns by learner characteristics. However, the dataset was not statutory, had not been formally validated or published, and contained inconsistencies in coding and recording practices between providers. Welsh Government advised that the data was broadly reliable at national level but should be treated with caution at provider level. In addition, it did not include socio-economic indicators such as free school meal eligibility or EMA status, or breakdowns by course level. There was no equivalent national dataset for FE colleges. As a result, quantitative analysis for the FE sector relied mainly on provider-level data.

All participating providers completed a standardised data template requesting:

- overall attendance rates
- attendance by learner group and course level
- subject-level attendance
- authorised and unauthorised absence data
- reasons for non-attendance
- registration codes used

Where possible, sixth form templates were pre-populated using Welsh Government data to support consistency and accuracy.

Providers also completed a pre-visit survey covering:

- attendance trends and patterns
- monitoring and reporting systems
- perceived barriers to attendance
- approaches to intervention and support

The qualitative evidence in this report was generated through remote visits to providers. Visits to FE colleges and larger sixth forms took place over one day and included meetings with senior leaders, operational staff and learner groups, alongside time for inspectors to review documentation and discuss findings. Smaller sixth forms were visited over a half-day using a similar structure.

Across all remote visits, inspectors met with:

- senior leaders responsible for attendance, curriculum or pastoral provision
- operational staff, including tutors, attendance officers, EMA leads, progress coaches and well-being staff
- learners aged 16 to 19

During these visits, inspectors held 51 learner discussion groups involving approximately 500 learners. Although a few learners in discussion groups had lower or more variable attendance, many were regular attenders

Discussions explored learners' understanding of attendance expectations, reasons for absence, and experiences of teaching, support and engagement.

Inspectors also reviewed provider documentation, including attendance policies, strategies, dashboards and internal reports. In addition, the review drew on discussions with Welsh Government officials, Medr and local authority representatives, particularly education welfare leads.

The report also considered findings from external research and national surveys on attendance and participation to provide wider context.

There were several limitations to the evidence base. The absence of a national, validated dataset for post-16 attendance, particularly in FE colleges, limited the ability to produce fully comparable national analysis. Variability in how providers defined and recorded attendance, including authorised absence, also affected comparability. The learner evidence presented in this report is informed by discussions with approximately 500 learners across 51 discussion groups. While these views provide valuable insight into learners' experiences, they should not be regarded as statistically representative of all post-16 learners in Wales. Despite these limitations, the evidence was sufficiently consistent to identify broad national patterns and common themes across post-16 education in Wales.

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Bishop Gore School	Bridgend College
Bishop Vaughan School	Cardiff and Vale College
Brynteg School	Coleg Cambria
Caerleon Comprehensive School	Coleg Gwent
Castell Alun High School	Coleg Merthyr
Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen	Coleg Sir Gâr
Lewis School Pengam	Coleg y Cymoedd
Monmouth Comprehensive School	Gower College Swansea
Newport High School	Grŵp Llandrillo Menai
St John Baptist CIW High School	Grwp NPTC Group
Stanwell School	Pembrokeshire College
Whitchurch High School	St David's Catholic Sixth Form College
Whitmore High School	
Ysgol Brynhyfryd	
Ysgol David Hughes	
Ysgol Dinas Bran	
Ysgol Dyffryn Aman	
Ysgol Garth Olwg	
Ysgol Gymraeg Gwynllyw	

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Ysgol Gyfun Penweddig	
Ysgol John Bright	
Ysgol Llanfyllin	
Ysgol Morgan Llwyd	
Ysgol Uwchradd Glan Clwyd	
Ysgol Godre'r Berwyn	

Glossary

Attendance	A learner's recorded presence in timetabled lessons or agreed learning activities.
Participation	A learner's engagement with learning activities, including online learning, independent study or communication with staff, whether or not they are physically present in lessons
Authorised absence	Absence accepted by the provider for an approved reason, such as illness, medical appointments or agreed exceptional circumstances.
Unauthorised absence	Absence not approved by the provider or where no acceptable reason for absence has been provided.
Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA)	Financial support available to eligible post-16 learners, linked to agreed attendance and participation expectations.
On-site attendance	A measure of learners' physical presence in lessons or on provider premises, distinct from wider participation in learning.
Persistent absence	Attendance below 90% of expected timetabled lessons or sessions.
Team around the learner	A coordinated approach where pastoral, well-being, curriculum and external support staff work together to support individual learners.
Trauma-informed approach	An approach that recognises the impact of learners' experiences, well-being and personal circumstances on behaviour, engagement and attendance, and responds through supportive and relational practice.

Numbers – quantities and proportions

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

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