



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

To:  
Regional Education Consortium Managing Directors

Cc:  
Directors of Education  
Regional 14-19 Co-ordinators  
Secondary School Headteachers  
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

29 October 2015

Dear Colleagues

I wrote to you in July last year, and a further letter followed from Kate Crabtree in November, setting out the changes being made to the way that some qualifications will count towards school performance measures at Key Stage 4.

I am writing again to highlight our progress in implementing the changes and to add further detail on some specific matters.

A reminder of all changes taking place can be found in the attached annex.

#### Completed changes

The first change was implemented in 2013 when we began reporting separately on attainment of GCSEs in English Language/Welsh Language and Mathematics.

#### From 2016

In autumn 2016, for 2015-16 results, we will move to reporting school performance on a year 11 cohort basis rather than for learners aged 15 at the start of the year. Until then, we are still reporting performance measures using the age-based cohort method. Final Key Stage 4 results are currently being finalised for publication for the 2014-15 reporting year and no changes will be made to the existing cohort definition for this set of results.

This is a recommended change arising from the Review of Qualifications for 14-19 year olds in Wales, which has been strongly argued for as a fairer basis for measurement of school performance. However, as a consequence of this change, we may see some anomalies over the next two years as we crossover from one basis to another. For example, during 2015 and 2016 we may see instances of:

- Learners missed out in both years.  
Where a learner is taught in year group 11 in 2015 but is aged 14 (the pupil is ahead of their natural year group), this learner's results will not



BUDDSODDWYR | INVESTORS  
MEWN POBL | IN PEOPLE

Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 0FR

Ffôn \* Tel 02920 826014

count this year because they are not 15. The learner's results will not count next year either because they will not be in year 11. The learner's KS4 results will never be counted in our official statistics.

- Learners counted in both years.  
Where a learner is taught in year group 10 but is aged 15 (the learner is behind their natural year group), this learner's results will count in 2015 because they are 15 and in 2016 because they will then be in year 11. The learner's results will be counted in two successive years.

These particular scenarios will only occur for the changeover year. However, from 2016 onwards, where a learner repeats year 11 their results will be counted in successive years.

To help schools, local authorities and consortia gauge the effect of the change in cohort we will provide key measures calculated on both the year 11 and age 15 bases in 2016, although only the year 11 data will be published on My Local School and used in categorisation and the All Wales Core Data Sets.

We will also see in 2016 a limit to the contribution value of non-GCSE qualifications to performance measures. Any single qualification will have a maximum equivalence value, in performance terms, of 2 GCSEs, applying to all measures.

#### From 2017

There will be a change in 2017 in the qualifications that count towards the literacy and numeracy elements of key measures.

As schools are now delivering the new specifications for GCSE English Language, GCSE Welsh Language, GCSE Mathematics – Numeracy and GCSE Mathematics, I would like to make sure that there is a clear understanding of how these will contribute towards the performance measures from 2017 onwards, and how legacy qualifications will be treated.

The Review of Qualifications for 14-19 year olds in Wales highlighted that revisions were needed to the English and Welsh Language GCSEs in order to provide greater assurance of literacy. The introduction of two new mathematics GCSEs, one covering numeracy and the other covering aspects of mathematics techniques, was also recommended. In view of this, these new, updated and more appropriate qualifications, have been made available to schools for first teaching from September this year. To reflect this we will see the following changes to performance measures for reporting from 2017:

- **Impact on Capped Points Score**
  - **Only the new specifications for GCSE English Language, GCSE Welsh Language, GCSE Mathematics-Numeracy and GCSE Mathematics** will count towards the literacy and numeracy elements of the new capped points score.
  - Legacy qualifications **will not** count towards the literacy and numeracy elements. **This includes scenarios where a learner has been entered for an examination early and attained the award of a legacy qualification prior to 2016-17.** For example, a year 11 learner who attained an old specification 'legacy' GCSE in English, Welsh Language or Mathematics while in year 10 or

below, in 2016 or earlier, would not be counted as achieving the required literacy and numeracy elements of the capped points score in 2017 as they did not attain the new specification qualifications as part of the 2017 year 11 cohort.

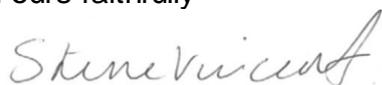
- Literature qualifications **will not** count towards the required literacy element of the capped points score from 2017, but will count as part of a learner's best 'other' four qualifications.
- Legacy specification GCSEs in English, Welsh and Mathematics will count towards the general (non literacy and numeracy) requirements for performance measures, including the 'other' four qualifications within the new capped points score. **However they will only count for learners who have not also been entered for the corresponding new GCSEs.** Where learners have qualifications in both the new and corresponding legacy specification GCSEs we will include the new specification GCSE only in the measure, including where the grade achieved in the legacy specification GCSE is higher than in the grade achieved in the new specification GCSE.
- **Impact on Level 2 Inclusive Measure**
  - **Only the new specifications for GCSE English Language, GCSE Welsh Language and GCSE Mathematics-Numeracy** will count towards the literacy and numeracy elements of the Level 2 Inclusive measure.
  - **Neither** the legacy GCSE Mathematics or the new GCSE Mathematics specifications will count towards the numeracy element of the Level 2 Inclusive measure. **This includes scenarios where a learner has been entered for an examination early and attained the award of a legacy qualification prior to 2016-17 as outlined in the Capped Points Score example above.**
  - Where a learner has been entered for both the new and corresponding legacy GCSEs in English, Welsh and Mathematics, it is the new specification GCSEs that will be counted as the contribution towards the Level 2 Inclusive measure, and the legacy qualifications will be discounted, including where the grade achieved in the legacy specification is higher than in the new specification GCSE.
  - Literature qualifications **will not** count towards the required literacy element from 2017 onwards, but will count as part of a learner's 'other' three qualifications within the Level 2 Inclusive measure.

Several other changes to performance measures are being made in 2017 and 2018; a reminder of these can be seen in the attached annex and more detail and previous correspondence can be found at:

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/qualificationsinwales/revofqualen/key-stage-4-performance-measures-stakeholder-survey/?lang=en>

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to email us at [ims@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ims@wales.gsi.gov.uk).

Yours faithfully



Steve Vincent  
Deputy Director  
School Management

**Annex – changes to KS4 performance measures (extract from letter sent 3 July).** Reporting year refers to the year in which the cohort being measured completes Year 11.

<b>Change</b>	<b>Year of introduction (for reporting)</b>
Separate reporting of attainment of GCSEs in English Language/Welsh Language and Mathematics. From 2017 attainment of both new maths GCSEs will be reported	2013
Use of whole year 11 cohorts as basis for reporting, rather than learners aged 15 at the start of the year	2016
Maximum equivalence, in performance measure terms, of 2 GCSEs for any qualification. This applies to all performance measures.	2016
New capped points score introduced	2017
Greater emphasis on new capped point score than on threshold measures (including Welsh Bac measures, once introduced)	2017
Core Subject Indicator no longer published (but data available)	2017
40% limit on non-GCSEs in threshold measures	2017
Use of new GCSEs in English Language/Welsh Language and Mathematics-Numeracy as literacy and numeracy elements of Level 2 Inclusive measure. Literature qualifications no longer count towards literacy element.	2017
Essential Skills Wales and Wider Key Skills qualifications do not attract any performance points (threshold or capped points score)	2017
Welsh Bac measures replace current threshold measures (Level 1, Level 2 and Level 2 Inclusive)	2018
Use of GCSEs only in relation to science requirements (following introduction of new science GCSE suite for teaching from Sept 2016)	2018

### **Changes for reporting from summer 2016:**

1. The maximum equivalence rating for any non-GCSE qualification at 14-16 will be two GCSEs. Those level 1 or 2 qualifications currently counting as equivalent to more than two GCSEs will have their performance points value capped at the equivalent of two GCSEs. This will impact on level 1, level 2 and level 2 inclusive threshold measures, the capped points score and, from 2017, the Welsh BaccaLaureate measures (see below).

Note: the policy in Wales differs from that in England where the equivalence value is being limited to one GCSE.

2. We will use whole Year 11 cohorts for reporting, rather than just learners who are 15 at the start of the year.

### **Changes for reporting from summer 2017:**

3. A new capped points score will be introduced. It will use the existing scoring methodology, which attributes different scores for each grade and takes into account the size of the qualification. The new score will have a number of significant differences from the current capped points score:
  - The score will be based on nine rather than eight qualifications
  - Five of the nine qualifications used to calculate the score will be:
    - GCSE English Language or GCSE Welsh Language (whichever is the learner's best)
    - GCSE Mathematics – Numeracy and GCSE Mathematics
    - The learner's best two science qualifications (from 2018, their best two science GCSEs)
  - The other four qualifications will be the learner's best (highest grade) other qualifications. These could be GCSEs, vocational qualifications or the Skills Challenge Certificate (the core of the new Welsh BaccaLaureate).
4. There will be a limit of 40 per cent on the contribution of non-GCSEs to the Level 1, Level 2 and Level 2 inclusive threshold measures. There will be no limit on the contribution of non-GCSEs to the new capped points score (although, as set out above, some specific qualifications are required within the nine).
5. Appropriate qualifications with a stated size between 60 and 120 Guided Learning Hours will be allocated a 0.5 GCSE equivalence.

### **Changes for reporting from 2018**

6. New measures will be introduced, of attainment of the new Welsh BaccaLaureate at Foundation and National levels (Levels 1 and 2). These new measures will begin to replace the current Level 1, Level 2 and Level 2 Inclusive threshold measures.