

Dydd Llun, Hydref 20fed 2025 am 10.00
Cyfarfod Microsoft Teams

Present: Gwern ap Rhisiart, Alison Halliday, Debbie Jones, Owain Dewi Hughes, Ffion Griffith (cofnodi), Joanna Thomas, Rhian Parry Jones,

Apologies: Ffion Edwards Ellis, Colette Owen, Aimee Jones, Fiona Morris

1. Welcome and Apologies

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting. Apologies were accepted.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2025

It was agreed that the minutes were correct. No specific matters arising.

3. Draft Annual Report (for approval)

The draft has previously been shared with everyone. It was noted that it is last year's template, assuming that there are no changes to this year's requirements.

No comments raised.

4. Arrangements the Authority intends to consult on

ODH noted that every Authority is required to undertake an annual admissions consultation on their admission arrangements. There is no intention to change anything in our admission arrangements except for the admission numbers of some schools. A programme has been set up to visit schools and reassess capacity. The catchment areas for Bangor, Brynrefail and Dyffryn Ogwen have already been completed and the intention is to visit the rest too. Numbers are not expected to change significantly, but if there are changes in buildings or room usage, an assessment is required.

It was noted that total capacity is divided by the number of school years— in primary, for example, from Reception to Year 6 — which gives you the admission number. E.g. a school with 70 pupils and 7 year groups would have an admission number of 10. This number is important because it carries legal power. If a school receives 10 or fewer applications for Reception year, the school must accept every application; they have no right to refuse. If more applications are received than the admission number, then the application can be refused if it can be shown that accepting all applicants would cause problems for the school. The number is also important for school modernisation purposes.

Appendices have already been shared which include a spreadsheet showing changes to the admission numbers of some schools. A team has visited some catchment areas, and this has led to these changes following a review of classroom and hall use, etc. It was noted that a National formula must be used to calculate capacity, and the Authority cannot change it. Following any adjustment, the new admission number must go out to consultation. It was noted that the consultation process has not yet taken place with the schools listed on the spreadsheet.

GapRh noted that the vast majority of visits have resulted in a reduction to the admission number, except for a few schools. Is this likely to happen in other catchment areas too? DAWJ noted that it is difficult to say until entering the school to see how every room is used and what adaptations have taken place over time – and feeding this information into the formula. Open discussions also take place with Headteachers if further clarification is needed during the visit.

JT noted that Church Schools also need to be consulted when changing admission numbers.

GapRh asked which catchment area will be visited next? DAWJ noted that the intention is to visit 1–2 catchment areas in the next half-term, and the Glan y Môr catchment area has been suggested. A visit to two secondary schools is also intended this year.

GapRh asked if there is an appeals process if Governors disagree with the admission number? ODH explained that Governors can respond through the formal consultation. If



they remain unhappy, ultimately they can ask the Government to review it as an appeal. Clear guidance exists in the code of conduct about the steps they must follow when appealing.

5. School Capacity and Vacant Places

ODH noted that this is a county-wide overview to provide a full picture of the situation. The information is submitted to Welsh Government annually, so it is also an opportunity to present it to the Forum. It was noted that vacant places in Secondary schools have fallen slightly, but this is not true of Primary schools. GapRh added that the Primary figures show an increase in vacant places over time, which will affect Secondary demographics in future years, leading to further vacant places in Secondary.

DAWJ noted that regarding the work undertaken to review capacity, there is no agenda to reduce vacant places. Capacity is based solely on the formula. She added that there is an ADEW meeting tomorrow on Planning Vacant Places where data from all Authorities will be shared. Gwynedd currently has the highest percentage of vacant places in Wales.

6. Update on Transfer Applications

It was noted that this item was on the agenda following a request at the last meeting. ODH noted that historically transfer applications were not recorded in a database, but some information is now stored electronically.

There is no table for Primary transfer applications, but it would be possible to look at the data as a whole for the sector over a specific period rather than reporting for each individual Primary school.

ODH explained that this data relates to applications, and it does not necessarily mean they were approved at this stage.

GapRh asked if the form could be amended so that parents give a reason for submitting a transfer application? ODH noted that this is possible. There is a space on the current form where parents can give a reason, but they are not required to complete it.

It was agreed that it is important to look into this. There are many possible factors and reasons why a transfer request is submitted for a child. The Authority likely needs to consider all potential reasons and incorporate them into the form to help identify trends.

RhPJ noted that the majority of pupils who have transferred to Dyffryn Nantlle are those who have experienced difficulties with ALNCo or attendance in the previous school. Most forms state no reason for the transfer, making it difficult to have discussions with the previous school. It would be useful to have as much information as possible on the form to ensure that the receiving school has the resources and staffing suitable for any needs. In addition, funding does not transfer with the child, which creates significant difficulties for schools.

GapRh noted that the transfer form needs serious review. He will write to all Gwynedd Headteachers stating that the intention is to review the form, asking what kind of information schools would wish to receive when a child transfers to them. He also added that the CPR report following the Neil Foden offences included a clear recommendation that Governors must have access to transfer data for their school and be able to compare it with other schools in the county. As a Forum, we need to be ready for this change. Additionally, GapRh noted his intention to write to all Governing Bodies after half-term stressing the importance of funding following the child if they transfer.

7. The Appeals Process

A presentation was given on the process following a request at the last meeting. It was noted that admission to special schools does not fall under the same legislation and is a different process. Admission is only granted if the school is named on the IDP. An ALN Tribunal would then deal with any appeal. It was agreed that at the next meeting the numbers for special schools will also be highlighted.

8. Update on VA Schools

Not discussed.

9. Date of the next meeting

9 March 2026.

