

More than a last resort: Arrangements and quality of EOTAS tuition in Wales

March 2026

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Executive summary

What we did

This thematic report examines the arrangements for and quality of tuition services for pupils who are educated other than at school (EOTAS) across Wales.

If you're new to EOTAS or tuition services, see FAQs on page 52.

We considered how well local authorities meet their statutory duties. We also looked at how effectively tuition services support pupils' learning, well-being and progression. The report also shares effective practice, where identified.

Our evidence came from surveys and discussions with local authorities and visits to 14 tuition providers, including local authority services, schools, pupil referral units (PRUs) and commissioned providers. During visits, we spoke with leaders, tutors, pupils and parents or carers. We observed learning, reviewed pupils' work and examined documentation such as individual development plans (IDPs), curriculum planning and transition arrangements. In total, we spoke with over 60 pupils.

What we found

Strategic leadership and oversight

Local authorities have a statutory role in ensuring that pupils who cannot attend school continue to receive suitable education. In the strongest authorities, leaders have a clear strategic vision for tuition services. They view tuition as a purposeful and, where appropriate, time-limited intervention that supports pupils to sustain or re-engage with learning and prepare for future pathways.

However, **strategic leadership and governance are inconsistent** across Wales. In too many authorities, arrangements lack clarity and coherence. This results in fragmented provision and uneven expectations for providers. Oversight of commissioned services is often particularly underdeveloped, particularly where provision is delivered online or in the community.

We found that **national expectations for tuition provision within EOTAS were not sufficiently clear**, particularly in relation to curriculum breadth and balance, which contributed to variability in learners' experiences across Wales. Differences in local interpretation had led to inconsistencies in the range and depth of learning available to young people educated outside mainstream settings. We also found confusion regarding

expectations for the number of hours of tuition to be provided, resulting in inconsistent practice across local authorities. As a result, entitlement was not applied consistently, and approaches to planning, delivery and quality assurance varied.

Quality of provision and curriculum

There is too much variation in the quality of tuition services. A minority of providers deliver high-quality teaching within a carefully planned curriculum. In these settings, learning is engaging and matched well to pupils' needs. Pupils often make strong progress in confidence, well-being and academic learning.

In contrast, many pupils experience a **narrow curriculum**. They receive only a limited number of hours each week. Provision is frequently restricted to English and mathematics, with limited access to other areas of learning and experience (AoLE) or vocational pathways. As a result, pupils' opportunities to gain qualifications and progress to positive destinations is limited.

The delivery of the **Curriculum for Wales** is inconsistent. While a few providers have adapted their curricula thoughtfully, others have yet to embed the principles, purposes and progression framework effectively.

We found that **expectations for more able pupils were too low** in several tuition services. In a minority of cases, teaching materials lacked sufficient challenge and did not consistently support higher-level thinking or progression. As a result, more able learners did not always receive work that matched their capabilities, limiting opportunities to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding

Additional learning needs (ALN) and well-being

The needs of pupils accessing tuition services are becoming increasingly complex. Many pupils experience a combination of mental health difficulties, neurodevelopmental needs, trauma and/or a pattern of disrupted schooling.

In the strongest practice, providers use assessment information and IDPs effectively. They adopt trauma-informed approaches and work closely with other agencies to support pupils' well-being. However, **ALN arrangements remain variable**. In some cases, identification of needs is delayed, and provision does not consistently reflect statutory expectations.

Tuition services are often expected to address needs beyond their original remit, for example in meeting complex ALN. This places pressure on staff capacity and resources and can affect the quality and sustainability of provision.

While local authorities in Wales have a legal duty to secure suitable education for pupils receiving Education Otherwise Than at School (EOTAS) up to the age of 16, there is no expectation that tuition services continue beyond that point. As a result, **it is extremely rare for tuition provision to be maintained after 16 to support young people with ALN** to achieve qualifications.

In practice, this creates a significant inequity within the system. Many pupils in special schools routinely remain in education until the age of 19, benefiting from structured post-16 programmes, specialist teaching, continued therapeutic input and supported pathways to accredited qualifications. However, **young people with ALN who are unable to attend school and who rely on tuition services, do not experience the same continuity of entitlement.** Those supported through EOTAS tuition frequently see their provision reduced substantially or ended abruptly at 16, limiting their access to qualifications and ongoing specialist support at a critical stage in their education.

Pupil voice and engagement

Where practice is strongest, pupils have meaningful opportunities to influence their learning. They help shape timetables, learning activities and future plans. This increases engagement and motivation.

In many services, however, **pupil voice is limited**. Pupils in online or community-based provision often report having little influence over what or how they learn. Opportunities to gather and act on pupils' views are inconsistent. Where practice is strongest, pupils have meaningful opportunities to influence their learning. They help shape timetables, learning activities and future plans. This increases engagement, motivation and a stronger sense of ownership over their education.



Many pupils report that their programmes are not broad and balanced. They describe a strong focus on a narrow range of subjects, often prioritising core qualifications, with limited access to the wider areas of learning and experience within the Curriculum for Wales. As a result, these pupils felt they were missing out on creative, expressive, practical or physical aspects of learning that their peers in school settings routinely experienced.

Parents, carers and communication

Parents and carers frequently value the dedication and commitment of individual tutors. They recognise the positive relationships built with pupils.

However, many families describe a system that lacks transparency and consistency. Access to provision often depends on local arrangements rather than a clear articulation of how it meets the needs of their child. Weak communication, delays in provision, limited hours and uncertainty about progression are common concerns where oversight is less effective.

Monitoring, safeguarding and attendance

Monitoring and quality assurance arrangements vary widely. A minority of local authorities have robust systems in place. These include regular evaluation of teaching quality, the curriculum offer and pupils' progress.

In many authorities, monitoring is **inconsistent and fragmented**. It often focuses on compliance with agreed arrangements rather than the quality and impact of learning. Safeguarding and attendance monitoring arrangements are generally secure, but quality assurance of commissioned providers and online provision is weaker. In a small number of cases, follow-up of non-attendance is not sufficiently prompt.

Transition and progression

Arrangements for transition and progression are uneven. In the strongest examples, pupils benefit from early planning, effective careers guidance and well-coordinated multi-agency support. These pupils achieve strong post-16 outcomes.

In many areas, transition planning is reactive. Responsibilities are unclear and co-ordination between services is limited. This can lead to gaps in provision and uncertainty for pupils at key transition points.

Welsh-medium provision

Welsh-medium and bilingual tuition provision is **underdeveloped**. A very few authorities have established coherent pathways. Most rely on the availability of individual Welsh- speaking tutors rather than planned provision. This limits pupils' access to Welsh--medium education, particularly for pupils in year 10 and year 11.

Why it matters

Tuition services support some of the most vulnerable pupils in Wales. For these pupils, education provides structure, stability and a route to positive future outcomes.

When the quality and availability of provision vary widely, pupils' experiences depend too heavily on where they live. This can restrict access to a broad curriculum, limit qualifications and reduce opportunities for progression.

Strengthening strategic leadership, improving consistency and ensuring robust monitoring are essential. Clearer expectations, better co-ordination and more equitable provision can help ensure that tuition services meet pupils' needs and support them to move confidently to their next steps.

Effective, equitable tuition provision is achievable. The challenge is in developing a shared understanding of *what good looks* like and ensuring that strong practice becomes consistent and available to all pupils, regardless of where they live.

Introduction

Our work for this thematic report evaluates the arrangements for and quality of tuition for pupils educated other than at school (EOTAS) across Wales. The report draws on extensive evidence from tuition services, including pupil referral units (PRUs), mainstream schools delivering hybrid models, community-based provision and commissioned providers. The analysis reflects the practice of local authorities, leaders, tutors, school staff and external providers, as well as the lived experiences of pupils and their families. We have synthesised inspection evidence, first-hand observation, engagement with pupils and scrutiny of documentation. Details of how evidence was gathered and analysed, including the scope and limitations of the review, are set out in the methods and evidence base section (page 46).

At the time of evidence gathering for this report, we found that there was no comprehensive national dataset capturing the number or characteristics of pupils receiving tuition through EOTAS. The Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC), which is the main statutory data collection used by the Welsh Government to gather information about learners in schools, does not routinely collect specific data on pupils educated within tuition services. This limits national oversight and the ability to analyse trends, characteristics or outcomes for this group. Based on the evidence available to us during the review, we identified approximately 900 pupils accessing tuition services across Wales at that time. However, in the absence of systematic national data collection, this figure reflects the information provided during fieldwork rather than a definitive national total.

Evidence from our fieldwork and from our inspection activity indicates that the EOTAS landscape continues to evolve in response to rising levels of pupil anxiety, mental health needs, behavioural challenges, disrupted attendance and complex life circumstances. Tuition services now support a broad range of pupils whose needs differ widely in nature, intensity and duration. As such, the effectiveness of tuition cannot be understood in isolation from local authority strategy, multi-agency collaboration, curriculum design, professional learning, quality assurance arrangements and the wider continuum of EOTAS pathways.

Tuition delivered through EOTAS plays a vital role in supporting learners whose needs cannot be met within mainstream provision, often at times of heightened vulnerability. However, our findings indicate that the absence of sufficiently detailed national expectations has led to considerable variation in how curriculum entitlement is

interpreted and enacted. In particular, there is inconsistency in how breadth, balance and progression are reflected in tuition programmes, alongside differing interpretations of expected tuition hours. This lack of clarity has contributed to uneven practice across Wales and differences in learners' access to a suitably broad and balanced learning experience

Evidence from this thematic review shows that most pupils who required tuition experienced significant barriers to learning, including poor mental health, anxiety, disrupted schooling, fractured relationships with education and, in some cases, wider adverse experiences. In this context, tuition services often provided a protective and stabilising environment that enabled pupils to feel safe, understood and supported at a time of heightened vulnerability.



Our evidence shows that by offering flexible, individualised provision and consistent relationships with trusted adults, tuition services help pupils to rebuild confidence, regulate emotions and restore a sense of belonging. This well-being-focused role is a critical part of the rationale for tuition services within EOTAS arrangements and underpins pupils' ability to re-engage with learning, progress along appropriate pathways and, where possible, return to mainstream education.

This review follows Estyn's thematic review, Equity of curriculum experiences for pupils

who are educated other than at school (EOTAS), published in June 2023.

This thematic report is written in response to a request for advice from the Cabinet Secretary for Education in the remit letter to Estyn for 2025/2026. The report provides an overview of the arrangements of local authorities who provide tuition services for pupils who are EOTAS, including evaluating systems for safeguarding and ensuring attendance. It evaluates the curriculum experiences of pupils, including their access to a full-time curriculum offer. It also considers how well local authorities evaluate and improve the quality and impact of provision and reports on transition between tuition services and schools or post-16 provision. We highlight examples of effective practice in local authorities and providers, where the quality of the curriculum offer supports the needs of pupils successfully and effectively assists their return to mainstream education, or to progress to further education, training, or employment.

This report draws on a range of evidence, including survey responses from local authorities, meetings with local authority officers, visits to tuition providers and engagement with pupils and parents or carers.

The intended audience for this report is the Welsh Government, leaders, and staff of schools and PRUs and providers of tuition services, local authorities, and school improvement services.

The report will contribute to professional discussions and inform the work of the Welsh Government EOTAS Advisory Group to strengthen the EOTAS Framework for Action guidance and support and improve the work of local authorities and providers, who are responsible for the delivery of tuition services for pupils who are EOTAS. It may also be of interest to the parents and carers of pupils accessing tuition services.

This thematic review does not advocate a single preferred model for the delivery of education otherwise than at school (EOTAS). Throughout our fieldwork and analysis, we observed a range of approaches, including face-to-face tuition, fully online provision and hybrid models combining in-person and virtual learning. Each model demonstrated strengths and limitations, depending on context and implementation. Our evaluation of the evidence indicates that no single mode of delivery is inherently superior. Rather, the determining factor in effectiveness is the extent to which provision is carefully designed, quality assured and responsive to the individual needs, circumstances and aspirations of the learner. The findings presented in this report therefore focus on the quality, equity and impact of provision, irrespective of whether it is delivered face-to-face, online or through a blended approach.
In addition, the ‘spotlights’ included throughout the report are intended to illustrate

examples of effective practice observed in specific local authorities or providers. They are included to support professional learning and sector discussion, rather than to prescribe a single model of delivery. We recognise that local contexts vary and that provision is shaped by differing pupil needs, geography, capacity and commissioning arrangements. Consequently, these examples should not be interpreted as implying that all providers should replicate the practice described, but as illustrative case studies of approaches that were effective in their specific circumstances.

Background

This thematic report builds on the following key documents, which have provided a useful evidence base:

- Estyn's thematic review, *Equity of curriculum experiences for pupils who are educated other than at school (EOTAS)* Equity of curriculum experiences for pupils who are educated other than at school (EOTAS) published in June 2023
- Welsh Government (2019a) *Education otherwise than at school (EOTAS) Framework for Action.* Education otherwise than at school (EOTAS): framework for action | GOV.WALES,
- Hwb (2024) Education other than at school (EOTAS). Available at: Education other than at school (EOTAS) - HwbEducation other than at school (EOTAS) - Hwb (Accessed: 17 June 2025)
- Children's Commissioner for Wales (2023), *A spotlight report into educational provision for children and young people in healthcare providers in Wales* Education in Healthcare Report
- Welsh Government (March 2016), Inclusion and Pupil Support Guidance, guidance-inclusion-and-pupil-support_0.pdf
- Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being WG42005 Welsh Government Guidance, Guidance document no: 269/2021 Date of issue: March 2021

A full list of references can be found on page 57 of this document.

What is EOTAS?

Section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by section 47 of the Education Act, 1997) Education Act 1996 provides that:

> *Each local authority shall make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school (EOTAS) for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them*.

Education otherwise than at school (EOTAS) refers to education arrangements made by a local authority for pupils of compulsory school age who, for a variety of reasons, cannot attend a mainstream school or special school. In Wales, EOTAS is defined in legislation and statutory guidance and includes provisions such as pupil referral units (PRUs), hospital education, home tuition, online learning, and commissioned tuition services. Local authorities remain responsible for ensuring that pupils educated through EOTAS receive a suitable, broad and balanced education (unless medical or other needs prevent this) and that provision meets their well-being, safeguarding, and curriculum

entitlements, including under the Curriculum for Wales. Appendix 1 (page 59) summarises the guidance around EOTAS and the provision of individual tuition.

Why are pupils who are EOTAS in receipt of tuition services?

Pupils who are EOTAS are frequently offered tuition services because their needs cannot be met safely or effectively in a mainstream school setting. Common reasons include anxiety, trauma, mental health needs, medical conditions, or social, emotional and behavioural needs. In many cases, tuition is used when pupils are awaiting a specialist school place, when local specialist provision is unavailable, following permanent exclusions, or when a phased or flexible approach is required to re-engage them in learning. Tuition services typically provide small-group or one-to-one teaching through personalised learning, often through trauma-informed approaches. This helps pupils to remain engaged with learning and supports reintegration, progression to post-16 pathways, or other suitable long-term provisions.



Supporting Learners with Healthcare Needs (Welsh Government, 2017) WG31248 explains local authorities' duties to ensure suitable education for learners of compulsory school age who cannot attend mainstream settings due to healthcare needs, whether educated at home, in hospital or through EOTAS. Educational support should be identified and provided promptly, be flexible to changing health circumstances, and ensure continuity

of learning, including during hospital stays. While schools usually support short absences, local authorities must arrange provision for longer or anticipated absences, supported by clear policies, co-ordination between services, and close liaison with families and educators. Continued support is also expected for learners aged 16–18 where, because of illness, they still need to complete qualifications,

In Wales, pupils who are permanently excluded from school remain entitled to suitable full-time education, and local authorities have a legal duty to secure appropriate provision from the sixth school day following exclusion. This provision is often delivered through tuition services, pupil referral units (PRUs), or other alternative education settings, and must be tailored to the learner's age, ability, aptitude, and any additional learning needs. Under the *Education Act 1996* and subsequent Welsh Government guidance Exclusion from schools and pupil referral units, local authorities are responsible for ensuring that excluded pupils receive an efficient education and appropriate support, with a focus on reintegration where possible or progression to further education, training or employment.

Where tuition services take place

Tuition services for pupils who are EOTAS are delivered through a range of providers and provision, chosen to best meet individual needs and circumstances. These include:

- Pupils' homes, particularly where anxiety, medical needs, or safeguarding considerations prevent attendance at a setting.
- Local authority tuition centres or hubs, which may be stand-alone or linked to PRUs or private providers.
- Community venues, such as libraries, youth centres, or community buildings, offering neutral and less formal learning environments.
- Hospital or medical providers, for pupils receiving ongoing treatment.
- Online or blended environments, combining live virtual teaching with in-person support where appropriate.
- On school sites, often as part of a phased reintegration plan or dual-registration arrangement.

The provision is typically agreed by the local authority, informed by risk assessments and well-being considerations, and the pupil's IDP where applicable.

How tuition services take place

Tuition services are designed to be flexible, personalised, -time limited and responsive to pupils' needs. They usually involve:

- One-to-one or very small-group teaching, allowing for tailored support and the development of strong working relationships with staff.
- Flexible timetables and pastoral support plans (PSPs), which may start with reduced hours and increase as pupils' engagement and readiness improve.
- Trauma-informed and relational approaches, prioritising emotional regulation, trust, and well-being alongside learning.
- Adapted curricula, with a focus on health and well-being, aligned to the Curriculum for Wales and, where appropriate, accreditation or qualifications.
- Close multi-agency working, including education, health, social care, and families.
- Regular review and monitoring by the local authority to ensure suitability, progress, and safeguarding.

Overall, tuition services act as both a protective measure and a bridge, maintaining educational continuity for pupils who cannot attend school while supporting longer-term outcomes such as reintegration to schools, progression to post-16 education, or other personalised pathways.

This thematic report focuses on the implementation of aspects of the current statutory and non-statutory guidance in Wales for pupils who require educational tuition services. We have considered the arrangements for delivery. We have also considered how well local authorities delivered, monitored and quality assured the provision on offer and how well they support pupils to return to mainstream education, where appropriate.

The report provides information about the range of EOTAS tuition services for pupils within local authorities. It includes both PRUs and the wider third sector or voluntary organisations commissioned directly by local authorities. The report does not include within its scope, provision commissioned directly by schools to offer curriculum arrangements which they fund or have the responsibility to quality assure or the independent school sector. It does not include provision for pupils who are electively home educated (EHE).

Curriculum requirements for EOTAS providers

Welsh Government guidance states that, local authorities, management committees and teachers in charge of a PRU must jointly ensure that the curriculum at the PRU meets the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales Curriculum for Wales - Hwb .

A curriculum must:

- *enable learners to develop in the ways described in the four purposes*
- *provide for appropriate progression for learners*
- *be informed by the development and maintenance of a shared understanding of progression in line with the Minister's Direction under section 57 of the Act*
- *be suitable for learners of differing ages, abilities and aptitudes*
- *be broad and balanced, so far as is appropriate for learners*

A curriculum must make provision for learning and teaching that:

- *encompasses the health and well-being area*
- *encompasses the mandatory RSE Code (which must be developmentally appropriate for learners)*
- *develops the mandatory cross-curricular skills*

A curriculum must also make provision, if it is reasonably possible and appropriate to do so, for learning and teaching in:

- *the other Areas*
- *the other mandatory elements*

National data[1] shows that the number of pupils receiving EOTAS provision continues to rise. In 2024/25, 3,014 pupils received some form of EOTAS provision, equivalent to 6.5 pupils per 1,000. Of these, 2,684 pupils were educated mainly outside of school, accounting for almost nine in ten EOTAS pupils. The proportion of pupils mainly educated outside school has more than doubled since national data collection began in 2009/10.

There is notable variation in the proportion of pupils who are EOTAS between local authorities, with a few authorities having rates that are more than double the national average. Pupils with additional learning needs are disproportionately represented, with rates rising sharply over the last four years. Similarly, pupils entitled to free school meals are over-represented compared with the wider school population.

PRUs remain the largest provider of EOTAS provision, followed by independent schools and tuition services. However, national data does not identify how many individual pupils receive tuition services, limiting understanding of the full scale and impact of this provision. At the time of this report, evidence provide by local authorities indicates that

[1] Pupils educated other than at school: September 2024 to August 2025 [HTML] | GOV.WALES

just over 900 pupils were registered in tuition services in the 22 local authorities in Wales.

Given the growing scale of EOTAS, the vulnerability of many pupils receiving tuition, and the findings from Estyn's earlier thematic work, there is a strong rationale for this study. This report examines the extent to which tuition services meet statutory requirements, secure equitable curriculum experiences, and support pupils' progression and reintegration where appropriate.

The focus of this report is on the curriculum offer across all ages for pupils in tuition services as compared to their peers in mainstream schools and PRUs and the equity of these experiences across each local authority. Local authority processes to monitor the quality and impact of the curriculum offer for pupils attending tuition services have also been evaluated. Where effective practice was identified, examples of this are included within the report. As part of the evidence, we carried out a review of the arrangements to support pupils in tuition services returning to mainstream education, transition from primary provision to secondary mainstream and transition to further education, training, or employment.

Within the scope of this thematic review, most local authorities have been included, together with a sample of providers, including schools, PRUs, and private providers. This also included where the provision was delivered through the medium of Welsh.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Welsh Government:

1. Clarify national expectations for tuition provision within EOTAS, including curriculum equity, breadth and balance, to reduce variability across Wales.
2. Strengthen strategic expectations for Welsh-medium tuition, ensuring alignment with Cymraeg 2050 and the Welsh Education Strategic Plans (WESPs).
3. Improve national data collection of tuition provision, including the number of pupils accessing tuition annually, Welsh-medium provision, pupils with ALN, qualifications and destinations.

Recommendations for local authorities:

4. Strengthen strategic oversight and governance of tuition services within the EOTAS continuum.
5. Ensure equitable and ambitious curriculum provision, including access to accreditation and vocational pathways.
6. Apply ALN duties consistently for pupils in tuition services, up to age 19, using IDPs to shape provision and transition planning[2].
7. Strategically plan Welsh-medium tuition services.
8. Strengthen quality assurance and transition planning across all tuition pathways.

Recommendations for providers:

9. In conjunction with the local authority, align tuition provision with Curriculum for Wales, supporting pupil progression, well-being and skills.
10. Use IDPs actively to plan and review provision for pupils with ALN.
11. Support Welsh-medium continuity and progression where appropriate.
12. Communicate effectively with families, local authorities and schools, ensuring effective transition arrangements to return to mainstream education or post-16 placements.

[2] Local authorities are not legally required to provide support for pupils who are EOTAS beyond the age of 16, however all relevant duties in relation to pupils with ALN apply

Chapter 1: The arrangements of local authorities to meet the educational needs of pupils who require individual tuition

The roles and responsibilities of local authorities

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to secure education and wider support for pupils who are EOTAS and in tuition services. The evidence from this thematic review shows that, for many pupils who require tuition services, local authorities act as the central co-ordinating body that holds together complex and often fragile educational arrangements. They are frequently required to respond to acute need, including significant mental health difficulties, disrupted schooling, exclusion, medical absence and complex family circumstances.

In the strongest examples, local authorities combined statutory oversight with strong relational practice, bringing together schools, PRUs, health services, social care and commissioned providers to create personalised and responsive packages of support. This work extends well beyond education alone and includes safeguarding, well-being, advocacy for pupils and families, and sustained problem-solving in situations where pupils are at risk of complete disengagement. Even where systems were under pressure, local authority officers often demonstrated high levels of commitment, professional judgement and moral purpose. Their role is critical in ensuring that vulnerable pupils remain visible within the system, continue to access education in some form, and are supported to stabilise, re-engage and progress when school-based provision is not sufficient.

A small number of local authorities in our sample had reduced reliance on external tuition by strengthening early intervention, school-led support and partnership working.

A hybrid local authority and school joint model that minimises reliance on external tuition through early intervention and strong partnership working (Ynys Môn)

Ynys Môn local authority operates a highly effective hybrid model that prioritises early intervention and school-led support, resulting in only a very few pupils requiring fully external tuition services.

Strong partnership working between the local authority and schools enables emerging needs to be identified early and addressed through flexible in-school arrangements, targeted interventions and pastoral support. Schools play a central role in maintaining

pupils' engagement with learning, often through adapted timetables or short-term additional support, reducing the need for removal from mainstream education.

Where external tuition is required, it is commissioned by the local authority, used purposefully and for a limited period, primarily in exceptional circumstances such as permanent exclusion, significant health needs or delays in securing a suitable placement.

Decisions are overseen through robust moderation processes, ensuring consistency, fairness and clear expectations for reintegration.

This hybrid approach enables most pupils to remain connected to their school communities, supports regular attendance and promotes positive well-being. It also ensures that tuition remains a temporary measure rather than long-term placement, focused on re-engagement and progression. As a result, reintegration outcomes are strong and reliance on external tuition is minimised, demonstrating the authority's effective use of resources and commitment to inclusive practice.

This example illustrates how timely, school-centred responses, supported by tuition, can prevent escalation, maintain pupils' inclusion in mainstream education and ensure that tuition is used only where it adds clear value.

Statutory requirements for pupils who are EOTAS and require tuition services

Local authorities have a statutory role to ensure that pupils educated other than at school receive a coherent, equitable and high-quality educational experience.

Section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by section 47 of the Education Act, 1997) provides that:

> *Each local authority shall make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who, **by reason of illness**, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them*.

Although nearly all authorities we visited or spoke to expressed a commitment to supporting pupils unable to attend mainstream school, the clarity, coherence and effectiveness of strategic oversight varied widely. In the strongest authorities, officers articulated a unified vision for tuition as a temporary, carefully structured intervention that supports pupils to re-engage with education and progress confidently along appropriate pathways. In contrast, a minority of authorities had not yet established a cohesive strategic framework, resulting in fragmented provision and inconsistent

expectations. Many of the providers we visited as part of this thematic study demonstrated effective practice in partnership and multi-agency coordination and evidenced how a strategic preventative approach within the PRU system can substantially reduce the need for tuition.

Preventing EOTAS and reducing reliance on tuition through relationship-centred and vocational pathways (Wrexham PRU)

Wrexham PRU works with pupils who have experienced significant challenges including those with additional learning needs; social, emotional and mental health needs; disrupted relationships; persistent absence and complex family circumstances. The PRU is at capacity and expanding to meet demand for specialist placements. In response to rising EOTAS numbers and the limited impact of traditional tuition models, working closely with the local authority, the PRU has led the development of preventative, personalised and vocational learning pathways. These pathways aim to re-engage pupils early, reduce the need for tuition services and secure strong transitions to further education, training and employment.

Leaders place well-being and relational practice at the heart of the curriculum. Staff use detailed assessments and ALN information, including individual learning plans (IDPs) and additional learning provision (ALP) documentation, to co-construct bespoke programmes that combine academic learning, vocational pathways, therapy, community-based experiences, employability routes and hands-on learning through projects such as The Venture, Dream Safety, Wilderness Tribe and Heritage Workshop.

The PRU responds with agility to complex cases, designing bespoke packages that rebuild trust and prevent escalation. Early evidence shows substantial reductions in the number of pupils requiring tuition or being referred for EOTAS. Schools report that preventative interventions improve attendance, motivation and relationships with adults.

This example illustrates the potential impact of a preventative model that prioritises early intervention, vocational engagement and relational practice. It demonstrates that strategic investment in holistic provision can reduce reliance on tuition services and maintain more pupils within mainstream education.



Most local authorities in our sample demonstrated a clear understanding of the need for tuition to operate as part of a wider continuum of support. This included preventative interventions in schools, specialist placements in PRUs, short-term tuition packages, therapeutic or well-being initiatives and reintegration pathways. Authorities that approached this continuum strategically were better able to secure continuity and minimise disruptions to learning. Their vision emphasised early identification, timely intervention and strong links between schools, PRUs and tuition providers.

However, the extent to which this strategic intent was realised in practice depended heavily on the quality of local systems, leadership capacity and multi-agency collaboration. In many local authorities, governance arrangements were well developed, with multi-agency placement panels meeting regularly to review referrals, consider assessment information and monitor ongoing suitability. These panels typically included educational psychologists, ALN officers, attendance leads and youth support staff. The diversity of expertise strengthened professional dialogue and ensured that decisions regarding tuition placements reflected a comprehensive understanding of pupils' needs.

Overall, in local authorities, the panel model has evolved beyond case management to function as a strategic lever for system improvement. These panels scrutinise emerging patterns in referrals, identify variations in practice across schools and challenge

providers to adjust provision when pupils' needs change. Leaders in these authorities understood that tuition must remain flexible and responsive, adjusting in intensity, location and curriculum focus as pupils' circumstances shift. This strategic adaptability results in more coherent provision and a stronger balance between in-school and out-of-school learning. However, in a few local authorities, panel systems did not identify accurately pupils' needs regarding tuition services. In addition, in too many cases, there was no clear time limitation for the tuition offer to be reviewed by panel and therefore no clear reintegration plan.

There were variations in how responsibilities between schools, PRUs and local authorities are articulated and understood. In the strongest models, responsibilities were defined clearly, and communication pathways between stakeholders were well embedded. In most cases in these examples, schools remained accountable for their pupils even when the pupils receive tuition, and PRUs worked collaboratively with mainstream schools to support progression and reintegration. Local authorities oversaw the system as a whole, ensuring coherence and consistency. In contrast, where provision was less effective, roles and responsibilities overlapped or were unclear, leading to inconsistent communication, variable expectations and delays in decision-making.

While many authorities demonstrated clear strategic direction in their oversight of tuition services, national variability remains a defining characteristic of the sector. The inconsistencies identified in this chapter highlight the need for clearer national alignment and more systematic local evaluation. The absence of a unified national framework for tracking tuition hours, monitoring curriculum breadth and evaluating reintegration pathways contributes to fragmented practice. In most authorities, the quality of provision a pupil receives continued to depend heavily on where they live, the capacity of their school and the availability of local resources rather than on a consistent entitlement or clear alignment with individual needs.

Whilst there are examples of strong practice, the national picture reveals considerable inconsistency. Several authorities had not yet developed a coherent strategy that articulates clearly the purpose of tuition within the wider EOTAS and school system. In these areas, tuition services, PRUs, online platforms and commissioned providers operated largely independently of each other and were not aligned well enough with any in-school support strategies. Evidence from our fieldwork indicates that this lack of integration leads to duplication of effort, confusion over roles and responsibilities, and substantial variation in the educational experiences of pupils. In such authorities, it was common for pupils to receive different levels of support depending on the school they attend, which contributes to inequity in curriculum access and outcomes.

Strategic commissioning of tuition services by local authorities

The Welsh Government's 2020 report Review of Local Authority Commissioning Arrangements for Education Otherwise than at School Provision notes that most local authorities have either contracts or service level agreements in place with external providers. However, it recognises that local authorities could be more proactive in the monitoring of provision particularly around the quality of provision and the extent to which the provision meets pupils' needs.

Where local authorities commission external providers for EOTAS, most have a commissioning framework or service level agreement in place which includes a quality assurance framework. These contractual agreements provide inconsistent levels of challenge to quality assure the curriculum offer. Where practice is effective, the challenge is via the quality assurance framework, with regular quality assurance meetings and visits to the premises of providers to assess suitability of the teaching and learning

Our evidence indicates that a few authorities continued to rely heavily on small-scale commissioned providers without establishing sufficiently robust quality assurance mechanisms. Oversight of safeguarding, curriculum planning, staff qualifications and alignment with national guidance was inconsistent. Providers may operate with considerable autonomy, and local authorities do not always have a reliable understanding of what pupils are learning or how well they are progressing. These gaps in oversight limit authorities' capacity to evaluate impact and to intervene appropriately when provision is not meeting needs.

Arrangements to meet individual pupils' educational needs, including those pupils who have ALN and require tuition

The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales (2021) notes that:

> *18.13. If EOTAS provision has been arranged, a child or young person may remain registered as a pupil at the original school (which was maintaining the IDP). However, if the pupil becomes dual registered (for example, by becoming a registered pupil of a PRU and both the PRU and school are to provide education for the pupil), then the local authority will become responsible for maintaining the IDP (see Chapter 2818). Alternatively, if the child or young person remains a registered pupil of the original school whilst receiving EOTAS other than as a registered pupil at a maintained school or an enrolled student of an FEI (for example, if the pupil is receiving individual tuition at home or in hospital due to sickness whilst still a pupil), it may be more appropriate for the responsible local authority to take over responsibility for maintaining the IDP.*

Most providers demonstrated a strong commitment to meeting the needs of pupils with ALN. The majority of pupils in tuition services present with complex profiles, including social, emotional and mental health needs, persistent anxiety, neurodevelopmental differences and the impact of adverse childhood experiences. As a result, ALN-informed planning is essential to ensure that pupils can access learning meaningfully.

In the strongest providers, staff drew on a comprehensive range of assessments, including baseline tests, diagnostic tools, one-page profiles and detailed IDPs. This allowed leaders and tutors to form a holistic understanding of pupils' needs and plan appropriate support. These providers embedded trauma-informed practices throughout their curriculum and pastoral systems. They understood that emotional regulation and a sense of safety are prerequisites for learning and designed provision that created predictable, and relationally secure environments.

Several providers also blended academic learning with therapeutic intervention, well-being programmes, vocational engagement and social-skills development. Such models better reflect the continuum required for pupils facing emotional or behavioural barriers to learning. In many of these providers, ALN specialists, psychologists and support assistants provided valuable expertise that strengthens differentiation, curriculum personalisation and targeted intervention.

The following spotlight from Caerphilly illustrates the transformative effect of relational support rooted in ALN awareness.

Emotional availability and early intervention supporting well-being (The Hive, Caerphilly)

Pupils' well-being is supported effectively through early identification of those requiring more intensive emotional support. Following initial admission, some pupils spend time with an experienced teaching assistant who acts as their 'emotionally available adult'. This adult provides a consistent and trusted presence over a sustained period, typically around a term, during which they work intensively on pupils' social and emotional needs. The support takes place in a separate, quiet provision, allowing pupils to feel safe and gradually rebuild their confidence. During this time, the assistant facilitates pupils' integration into the wider tuition group at a pace appropriate to their readiness and develops strong relationships with parents and carers. This approach helps restore trust and fosters a positive perception of education for both pupils and families.

This example highlights the importance of trauma-informed relational practice within the wider tuition system. Such work requires significant professional skill, high levels of pastoral insight and close collaboration between staff, families and multi-agency partners.

Where local authorities have invested strategically in relational approaches, particularly those informed by trauma-informed principles, pupils developed greater readiness to access learning and benefit from wider curriculum experiences. Leaders in these authorities recognised that strong relationships were essential for developing pupil progress in tuition providers. They embedded this philosophy through comprehensive professional learning, clear expectations for staff interactions and robust monitoring of pupils' well-being.

However, ALN arrangements were inconsistent. Many providers lacked formalised assessment systems for tracking small-step progress in social, emotional or behavioural domains. Tutors relied heavily on standardised tests or general observations without a clear framework for evaluating progression. This limited leaders' ability to monitor impact, refine provision or identify professional learning needs.

In the majority of providers, IDPs were not used effectively to shape teaching or curriculum planning. Staff may have been aware of pupils' needs but did not consistently adapt strategies or design targeted interventions. In mixed-age or mixed-ability groups, tutors did not differentiate effectively due to a lack of specialist training, insufficient planning time or limited access to specialist advice. A few commissioned providers lacked the capacity or expertise to implement ALN-informed approaches, leading to inconsistency in the quality and appropriateness of provision.

There is no legal requirement for local authorities to provide education for pupils who are EOTAS beyond compulsory school age. However, where a pupil has ALN with a statutory maintained IDP, local authorities are required to provide the agreed additional learning provision (ALP). In most local authorities, tuition support ends at age 16, even where pupils have a statutory local authority maintained IDP and are not yet ready to transition to further education or training. This results in inconsistency in continuity of learning, access to appropriate qualifications and the quality of transition planning for older pupils with ALN.

Transition and reintegration of pupils

Another key area of local authority responsibility concerns progression and transitions from tuition services to longer term provision. The quality of transition support varied, reflecting differences in local authority strategy, the capacity of providers and the availability of resources. In the strongest examples, transition planning began early, was informed by robust assessment and was shaped by meaningful engagement with pupils and their families. Where careers guidance and curriculum planning were aligned, pupils

developed a clear understanding of post-16 pathways and the qualifications required to meet their goals.

One provider illustrates an exceptionally clear and effective system to support transitions.

Strong focus on progression and sustained post-16 destinations (Commissioned provision, Creative in Excellence, in Denbighshire)
Working closely with the local authority, this provision places a strong emphasis on ensuring that pupils have a clear and well-informed plan for their next steps. This includes transitions back to mainstream education or into PRUs, FE colleges specialist providers or the world of work. Pupils receive informed careers advice and tailor their curriculum to meet entry requirements for their chosen destinations. Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of college pathways and adjust their learning programmes accordingly. Leaders collaborate effectively with local education providers to support well-being during transitions. As a result, the provider has reported very low rates of pupils not in education, employment or training (NEET) over the past three years.

This example highlights the importance of aligning tuition provision with broader post-16 pathways. Authorities and providers that invest in careers education, work-related experiences and personalised guidance are more likely to secure positive outcomes for young people. Conversely, where such structures are absent, pupils may reach the end of tuition without a clear plan, increasing the risk of disengagement or becoming NEET. An authority-wide strategic focus on transitions throughout the EOTAS continuum strengthens the coherence of pathways and raises expectations among staff, pupils and families. It reinforces the idea that tuition should be time-limited, purposeful and connected to meaningful futures.

A further example illustrates the value of structured post-16 preparation within a large local authority model.

Preparing pupils purposefully for post-16 education (Cardiff Tuition Service)
Cardiff Tuition Service has established a strong programme of activities and events to support older secondary pupils as they plan for post-16 provision. Year 11 pupils attend weekly sessions focused explicitly on careers and the world of work. Speakers from external organisations contribute to these sessions, and pupils visit local colleges, workplaces and external providers. The annual “Future Fest” careers event brings together pupils, parents and staff from the tuition service, the PRU and the electively home educated (EHE) community. A wide range of post-16 providers and employers attend, offering information and guidance. Pupils also receive fortnightly visits from Careers Wales to support individual transition planning. This programme builds

confidence and provides pupils with a wide array of options when considering future destinations.

In local authorities where such systematic approaches were embedded, pupils demonstrated higher levels of aspiration and readiness for post-16 pathways. The coherence of transition planning contributed positively to their confidence, sense of agency and engagement in learning. These authorities understood that effective tuition must include forward-facing elements that prepare pupils not only to re-engage with education in the immediate term but also to progress meaningfully into further opportunities.

However, local authorities did not always adopt clear systematic approaches to transition planning for pupils in tuition services. This included for younger pupils at the age of 11, and for older pupils at the age of 16. In these authorities, transition arrangements were often reactive, uncoordinated and heavily dependent on individual staff members. Pupils may reach Year 11 without a clear understanding of available pathways or the qualifications required for progression. This lack of structure creates anxiety for pupils, reduces their sense of control and increases the likelihood of being NEET.

There was also a substantial inconsistency in how reintegration into mainstream schooling was approached. In the strongest authorities, reintegration was understood as a -long-term, multidimensional process requiring collaboration between schools, tuition services, PRUs and the local authority. Leaders recognised that reintegration is most successful when planned early, communicated clearly and supported through graduated steps. Schools in these authorities generally demonstrated openness to reintegration, underpinned by a clear set of expectations and robust pastoral structures.

Nearly all local authorities identified barriers to reintegration, including limited capacity in mainstream schools, variable approaches to supporting behaviour needs and well-being support, and uncertainty among leaders about how to manage partial or gradual returns. Many schools expressed concern about meeting the needs of pupils returning from EOTAS pathways, particularly when staffing, resources or specialist expertise are stretched. In these contexts, tuition services often become longer-term placements by default rather than by design.

The lack of reintegration success represents a significant weakness in the wider system and has long-term implications for equity and life chances. Pupils who remain on reduced hours or limited curriculum offers for extended periods risk deepening their

disengagement, narrowing their aspirations and experiencing reduced access to qualifications.

Access to a relevant, broad and balanced curriculum offer

The Welsh Government sets out clear mandatory requirements for the curriculum, Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 including EOTAS provision.

Curriculum experiences for pupils who are EOTAS and accessing tuition services in Wales were inconsistent, reflecting differences in local authority planning, resources, staffing, and commissioning arrangements. A minority of providers, working with the local authority, had developed ambitious and coherent curriculum models rooted in the principles of Curriculum for Wales. However, many pupils continued to access a limited or fragmented curriculum that did not offer sufficient breadth, challenge or progression. The disparity between the strongest and weakest provision illustrates both the potential of tuition services to transform learning and the persistent structural issues that undermine equity for pupils who are already vulnerable.



The curriculum in tuition services exists within a complex tension: providers must balance the need to offer broad and meaningful learning with the reality of reduced

teaching hours, irregular attendance patterns, complex pupil needs and varied levels of access to specialist staff or facilities. Providers that responded creatively to these constraints demonstrated that ambitious and high-quality curriculum models are achievable even within part-time or highly personalised arrangements. However, in many areas the curriculum was shaped more by operational limitations or commissioning arrangements than by pupils' needs or national expectations.

Evidence from our work for this report indicates that pupils who access tuition often arrived with substantial gaps in learning, a breakdown in relationships with school, reduced confidence and anxiety related to educational environments. As a result, local authorities and providers noted that as well as implementing a purpose-led, process-driven curriculum, they also needed to rebuild trust with pupils, support well-being, rekindle curiosity and engagement and provide purposeful routes towards reintegration or progression.

Despite these strengths, most pupils did not receive sufficient teaching hours to access the full breadth of curriculum experiences expected under Curriculum for Wales. Many pupils received as little as two or three hours of tuition per week, which restricted the possibility of studying across subjects and areas of learning and experience, undertaking practical learning or completing accredited qualifications. These limited hours had direct consequences for pupil progression and long-term outcomes and also meant that local authorities were not meeting their legal requirements The inconsistency in hours provided across different authorities contributes to inequity across Wales, with pupils' experiences shaped markedly by local policy, budget pressures and commissioning choices rather than by a consistent national entitlement.

Parents and carers frequently echoed these concerns. Many reported that tuition provision was commonly restricted to English and mathematics, particularly for pupils under the age of 14, with limited access to science and technology, expressive arts, humanities or vocational learning. Parents expressed concerns that such narrow offers did not reflect pupils' abilities or interests and significantly limited future options. Where curriculum programmes were broader and more personalised, parents reported their child had improved engagement, showing enjoyment and confidence in learning.

The extent to which pupils accessed a broad and balanced curriculum remains one of the key markers of variation in tuition quality. In the strongest provision, leaders articulated a clear curriculum rationale aligned with the four purposes of Curriculum for Wales and informed by robust assessment and pupil voice. These providers designed flexible learning pathways that combined academic, vocational and experiential learning, ensuring that pupils' needs, interests and aspirations shape the curriculum they receive.



A minority of providers demonstrated how ambitious curriculum planning can flourish even within the constraints of reduced teaching hours. In these provisions, leaders offered a wide range of subjects beyond English and mathematics, including science, art, product design, food-based qualifications, physical education, humanities and financial education. They enriched the curriculum with outdoor learning, creative arts, life skills, sports and well-planned enrichment opportunities that strengthen pupils' engagement, well-being and social development. These providers actively challenged deficit-based assumptions about what pupils in tuition are able to access or achieve.

A particularly strong example of curriculum breadth and ambition comes from Newport.

An ambitious curriculum offer (Newport Bridge Achievement Centre)

Leaders at this PRU have created an exceptionally rich, ambitious and well-designed curriculum for pupils accessing tuition services, remarkable in breadth and coherence given the reduced hours and complexity of pupil needs. Pupils can access up to eighteen academic, vocational and skills-based qualifications, including GCSEs in English, Mathematics, Science, Art, Product Design and PE, alongside vocational qualifications such as BTEC Home Cooking, Agored Cymru and City and Guilds courses and awards in financial education.

The curriculum is shaped by detailed assessment information, individual development plans (IDPs), one-page profiles and pupil and family voice, ensuring pathways are truly personalised. Leaders have introduced early accreditation routes for pupils, including the Arts Award, allowing pupils to experience early success and regain confidence. Personal development is woven throughout, including Duke of Edinburgh and the Prince's Trust programmes, alongside regular enrichment such as gym sessions, craft workshops, outdoor learning and community experiences. Robust schemes of work and coherence across tuition sites support strong continuity and progression. This curriculum model demonstrates how ambition, breadth and personalisation can be achieved even within part-time provision.

This example shows that ambitious curriculum provision is both achievable and transformative, offering pathways that enable pupils to make meaningful progress, gain self-confidence and sustain future aspirations.

Another strong example of curriculum breadth emerges from a school-based hybrid tuition model in Caerphilly.

Effective curriculum delivery for tuition services leading to strong pupil outcomes (Risca Community Comprehensive School, Caerphilly)

Using their devolved budget for tuition from the local authority, Risca Community Comprehensive School has developed an innovative tuition model that ensures pupils who are EOTAS receive tuition at their school and gradually increase their time in mainstream lessons. Pupils have full access to the mainstream curriculum. Pupils continue to study the full range of GCSE and vocational qualifications available to their peers, including options that require specialist facilities and subject expertise. Tuition centre staff deliver core subjects while pupils attend mainstream lessons for option subjects and specialist learning. The school supplements this with weekly enrichment sessions focused on practical skills such as cooking, budgeting and independent living. Curriculum pathways are tailored through detailed assessment, IDPs and close collaboration with subject leaders. Pupils describe the curriculum as supportive, flexible and aspirational.

This model illustrates the power of a hybrid approach that keeps pupils firmly connected to the mainstream curriculum, minimising isolation and sustaining high expectations. It demonstrates how mainstream schools, with financial support for tuition services and with clear strategic planning, can create highly inclusive and equitable models of tuition.

Full curriculum equity can also be secured through robust and time-limited on-line provision, as demonstrated by one PRU's practice in Bridgend.

Ensuring curriculum equity (The Bridge Alternative Provision Portfolio PRU, Bridgend)

Leaders at the Bridge PRU ensure that pupils who are educated through the PRU's tuition services, and are unable to attend the main site, continue to access the full breadth of the PRU's curriculum. Tuition is delivered through time-limited, high-quality online teaching by PRU staff, enabling pupils receiving tuition services to follow the same curriculum pathways and access the complete range of subjects and accredited qualifications available to pupils educated on site. As a result, pupils' curriculum entitlement is not diminished by their placement in tuition services.

Leaders place a strong emphasis on maintaining curriculum coherence, progression and subject depth across both tuition and on-site provision. They monitor pupils' engagement, attendance and progress closely and use this information effectively to adapt teaching and provide timely support. This ensures that learning remains well sequenced, appropriately challenging and builds securely over time.

At The Bridge PRU, leaders' clear expectations ensure that tuition services deliver an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum. Consequently, pupils in tuition services benefit from continuity, consistent challenge and equitable access to the full curriculum offer, supporting positive outcomes and progression.

This example illustrates that curriculum equity is attainable through a range of structures, including PRU-based, school-based or online provision, when leaders have a clear vision and hold strong expectations for all pupils.

Despite these examples of strong practice, our evidence shows that the majority of pupils receiving tuition did not experience this level of curriculum breadth. Many pupils accessed very restricted timetables, typically dominated by English or Welsh and mathematics and occasionally science. Leaders frequently cited limited hours, staffing constraints and lack of access to specialist teaching spaces as reasons for restricting the curriculum. In some areas, commissioning arrangements predetermined the subjects available, resulting in models that prioritise operational convenience over pupil need.

The consequences for pupils are significant. A narrow curriculum limits opportunities for engagement, reduces the likelihood of qualification success and exacerbates existing inequalities. Many pupils we spoke to reported feeling bored, unstimulated or unable to pursue their interests within tuition, leading to further disengagement or poor attendance. The lack of access to creative, practical or vocational opportunities limits pupils' ability to recognise strengths or experience success, further narrowing their future options.

In addition, curriculum planning was inconsistent. In the most effective providers, schemes of work were detailed, progressive and aligned with Curriculum for Wales. However, in a minority of provisions, curriculum planning was underdeveloped or insufficiently coherent. Some providers depend heavily on tutor-led improvisation or worksheets, resulting in fragmented learning. Expectations for more able pupils were too low in several tuition services, with a lack of challenge in teaching materials. The cumulative effect of limited hours, narrow curriculum models and inconsistent planning means that too few pupils in tuition receive their full curriculum entitlement and the progress they make is hampered.

Support for pupils' well-being in tuition services

In its statutory guidance, Framework on embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being (March 2021), the Welsh Government provides a clear direction for local authorities and providers regarding pupils receiving tuition services. The guidance seeks to ensure that well-being is embedded in all educational providers, and that pupils receiving individual tuition are included in the same protective, supportive frameworks as their mainstream peers.

The framework explicitly covers EOTAS and PRU providers, placing a duty on schools and authorities to support the well-being of all pupils, including those receiving tuition away from mainstream classrooms. For pupils receiving individual tuition (e.g. home or hospital-based), the guidance recommends personalised well-being plans. These should



involve collaboration among schools, local authorities, and health professionals to understand and address each child's emotional needs. Tuition providers are required to comply with safeguarding standards, be alert to emotional concerns, and connect pupils to additional well-being or therapeutic support when needed.

Where local authorities have invested strategically in relational approaches, particularly those informed by trauma-informed principles, pupils developed greater readiness to access learning and benefit from wider curriculum experiences. Leaders in these authorities recognised that strong relationships are not an add-on but an essential building block for progress in tuition providers. They embedded this philosophy through comprehensive professional learning, clear expectations for staff interactions and robust monitoring of pupils' well-being.

Curriculum enrichment in tuition services

Effective tuition services recognise that curriculum enrichment is a vital component of pupils' learning and well-being, rather than an optional add-on. In a few local authorities, where enrichment was planned purposefully, it helped pupils in tuition services to experience a broad and balanced curriculum that reflects the ambitions of the Curriculum for Wales. Enrichment activities, including creative arts, physical activity, outdoor learning, vocational experiences and community-based learning, enabled pupils to develop wider skills, interests and aspirations alongside academic learning.

An engaging, broad and balanced and curriculum for pupils in tuition services (Caerphilly local authority)

In Caerphilly, leaders have developed the *Caerphilly Adventures Group* to enhance curriculum enrichment for pupils educated through tuition services. This provision offers structured outdoor and experiential learning opportunities that complement pupils' academic programmes and align closely with the Curriculum for Wales. Activities are carefully planned to develop pupils' physical well-being, confidence, teamwork and problem-solving skills, while also supporting literacy, numeracy and personal development.

Staff use enrichment activities effectively to re-engage pupils who have experienced disrupted education or anxiety about formal learning. As a result, pupils demonstrate improved attendance, stronger relationships with adults and increased readiness to participate in learning. Leaders ensure that enrichment is not treated as a stand-alone activity, but is integrated coherently into pupils' individual learning plans, supporting both well-being and progression over time.

High-quality enrichment supported pupils' engagement, particularly for those whose previous experiences of education have been disrupted or unsuccessful. Practical and interest-led activities helped to rebuild pupils' confidence and increased their motivation to participate in learning. For many pupils in tuition services, enrichment provided opportunities to experience success, develop positive relationships with adults and peers, and reconnect with learning in a meaningful way. This was especially beneficial for pupils with ALN or those who had experienced trauma, anxiety or prolonged absence from school.



Curriculum enrichment within tuition services (Wrexham local authority)

In Wrexham, leaders have developed a strong approach to curriculum enrichment for pupils who might become EOTAS and for those in tuition services that broadens pupils' learning experiences and supports sustained placements in or re-engagement with education. Alongside academic tuition, pupils participate in a range of vocational, practical and skills-based enrichment activities, including construction and land-based learning, catering and food preparation, creative arts, digital media, and personal and

social development programmes. These activities are carefully selected to reflect pupils' interests, strengths and future aspirations.

Leaders use enrichment activities effectively to provide pupils with meaningful, real-world learning experiences that build confidence, independence and employability skills. Outdoor and community-based activities, such as work-related learning and team challenges, help pupils to develop resilience, communication and problem-solving skills. For many pupils, these experiences provide a positive context for developing literacy, numeracy and digital competence in applied and engaging ways.

This enrichment offer is particularly effective for pupils who have experienced prolonged disengagement or difficulty accessing mainstream education. Staff integrate enrichment activities coherently with pupils' individual learning plans, ensuring that they complement rather than replace academic learning. As a result, pupils in tuition services experience a broader, more motivating curriculum that supports improved engagement, well-being and readiness for progression into further education, training or employment.

Where leaders integrate enrichment coherently within the curriculum, it contributes positively to pupils' progress and personal development. Enrichment activities are most effective when they are clearly linked to curriculum aims and progression, rather than operating in isolation. In the strongest examples, tuition services used enrichment to enhance literacy, numeracy and digital competence, as well as to develop pupils' independence, resilience and readiness for future learning or employment.

However, our evidence also shows variability in the quality and availability of curriculum enrichment across tuition services. In less effective practice, enrichment was limited by short-term commissioning arrangements, staffing constraints or an overemphasis on key subjects, such as mathematics and English or Welsh, at the expense of wider learning. Where enrichment opportunities were inconsistent or poorly planned, pupils' experiences were narrowed and did not fully support their entitlement to a rich and ambitious curriculum.

How the curriculum is personalised to meet the needs of pupils

Most providers demonstrated a strong commitment to personalising the curriculum so that it reflected pupils' individual needs, interests and longer-term aspirations. Recognising that many pupils attending tuition services have experienced disrupted education, providers increasingly moved away from standardised programmes towards bespoke packages of learning. These were carefully constructed to re-engage pupils, rebuild confidence and provide meaningful next steps.

In the strongest examples, leaders and tutors worked closely with pupils to co-construct learning pathways that balanced core skills with areas of personal interest. Programmes were adapted in content, pace and delivery, often combining academic study with practical, vocational or community-based experiences. This flexible approach enabled pupils to experience success, develop transferable skills and see clear relevance between their current learning and future ambitions.



Effective providers also ensured that personalised curricula were linked explicitly to planned progression routes. Staff mapped learning carefully against future pathways, such as reintegration into mainstream school, entry to further education, apprenticeships or employment. Regular review points allowed programmes to evolve as pupils' confidence, engagement and goals developed. In these settings, personalisation was not just about differentiation within lessons, but about designing coherent, individualised learning journeys that supported both immediate well-being and sustained progression beyond the tuition service.

Assessment of the progress of pupils receiving tuition services

Assessment plays a central role in ensuring that tuition services meet pupils' needs, secure appropriate curriculum pathways and support progression, reintegration and

post-16 transitions. The quality and coherence of assessment practice within tuition services was variable and reflects wider differences in local authority strategies, commissioning arrangements and quality assurance. In the strongest provision, assessment was purposeful and continuous. Staff used it to identify pupils' starting points accurately, diagnose gaps in learning and well-being needs, and plan ambitious next steps aligned to the Curriculum for Wales. In contrast, in too many providers assessment was limited to informal tutor judgement or narrow baseline testing, and it was not used consistently to shape curriculum breadth, teaching approaches or pupils' progression routes.

Where local authority systems were well developed, assessment information was gathered and reviewed through multi-agency placement and review panels. These panels typically draw on evidence from pupils' schools, PRUs, educational psychology, attendance and ALN teams and youth support services. This broader professional dialogue strengthens decision-making and helps to ensure that tuition placements, hours and curriculum emphasis reflect a comprehensive understanding of pupils' needs. In a small number of authorities, panels use assessment evidence strategically to identify emerging patterns, challenge inconsistent practice across schools and providers and refine the local continuum of support. However, in several authorities, assessment information was inconsistent or incomplete, particularly where pupils accessed online or small-scale commissioned services, which limited leaders' ability to judge appropriateness, monitor impact or adjust provision when pupils' circumstances change.

For pupils with ALN, effective assessment is closely linked to statutory planning and review arrangements. In the strongest providers, staff used pupils' IDPs, one-page profiles and specialist assessments to adapt teaching, scaffold learning and plan small-step progress, particularly in social, emotional and communication domains. Providers that embedded trauma-informed practice recognised that assessment must capture more than academic attainment. They evaluated readiness to learn, emotional regulation, engagement and confidence as essential prerequisites for progress. However, in the majority of weaker providers, IDPs were not used consistently to inform teaching, and systems for tracking incremental progress were underdeveloped. This limits pupils' access to well-matched learning pathways and reduces the likelihood of sustained engagement or successful reintegration.

Effective assessment processes (Bridge Achievement Centre (PRU), Newport)

A particularly strong example of effective assessment within tuition services is evident at the Bridge Achievement Centre (PRU) in Newport, where leaders use a comprehensive suite of assessments to establish starting points and plan personalised timetables and

qualification routes. Tutors use assessment skilfully to shape next steps and adapt teaching for pupils with complex needs. Leaders strengthen this further through regular learning walks, work scrutiny and half-termly provision reviews, enabling consistent evaluation of teaching quality and pupils' progress across tuition sites.

This type of systematic and multi-layered assessment practice supports stronger curriculum coherence, improves subject planning and contributes to beneficial progress and qualification outcomes. In contrast, in many areas, local authorities did not track assessment outcomes across all tuition pathways with sufficient consistency. This reduces oversight of curriculum breadth and challenge, increases the risk that pupils remain on narrow programmes for extended periods, and weakens local authority's officers' opportunities to evaluate the impact of tuition on progression, reintegration and long-term destinations.

Access to education through Welsh-medium provision

Welsh-medium education provision in tuition services is underdeveloped across Wales. A minority of authorities have designed coherent bilingual models that ensure continuity of linguistic development, cultural identity and curriculum equivalence for Welsh-medium pupils. These authorities maintain a pool of Welsh-speaking tutors, access to Welsh-language resources and clear pathways to Welsh-medium qualifications.

However, in many authorities Welsh-medium provision is limited, reactive and dependent on the availability of individual tutors rather than a planned strategy. Further, pupils' access to Welsh-medium education fluctuates due to staffing changes or commissioning decisions. Older pupils are disproportionately affected, as access to specialist Welsh-medium teaching in subjects such as science, humanities or practical disciplines is limited.

In a few authorities, no Welsh-medium tuition is provided, meaning that pupils from Welsh-medium schools who enter tuition services often receive their education entirely through the medium of English. This has a direct impact on their linguistic development, confidence and progression. Pupils report declining fluency, difficulty maintaining their bilingual identity and challenges when reintegrating into Welsh-medium education. Access to tuition through the medium of Welsh is crucial to securing accredited outcomes in Welsh and sustaining progression within Welsh-medium pathways. While a minority of authorities have coherent Welsh-medium or bilingual models that enable pupils to continue studying and gaining qualifications in Welsh, in most cases provision is limited, reactive or unavailable. As a result, pupils from Welsh-medium backgrounds experience

interruptions to their Welsh-language learning and reduced opportunities to achieve qualifications through the medium of Welsh

Parents of Welsh-medium pupils reported that access to tuition through the medium of Welsh was critical to maintaining pupils' confidence, identity and well-being. Where -Welsh-medium provision was unavailable or inconsistent, parents described linguistic regression, reduced engagement and anxiety about reintegration to Welsh-medium schools or progression to Welsh-medium post-16 pathways. These experiences underline the importance of strategic planning for Welsh-medium tuition rather than reliance on the availability of individual tutors.

Online tuition models rarely provide Welsh-medium pathways, further widening the equity gap. Local authorities often did not track Welsh-medium access systematically, limiting their ability to monitor equity or plan strategically.

Local authorities reported challenges in securing timely, high-quality Welsh-medium tuition for pupils who are EOTAS. In many areas, -Welsh-medium provision was commissioned reactively, leading to delays, inconsistency in quality and disruption to pupils' linguistic continuity. This spotlight illustrates how Ynys Môn has developed a strategic, embedded approach to Welsh-medium tuition that secures equitable access, maintains curriculum entitlement and supports pupils' well-being and progression.

Embedding Welsh-medium tuition within EOTAS provision to secure continuity, inclusion and progression (Ynys Môn)

The local authority has established effective arrangements to ensure that pupils who require individual tuition through the medium of Welsh continue to access high-quality, inclusive educational provision. Welsh-medium tuition is embedded within the authority's Education Otherwise Than at School arrangements and is considered systematically at the point of decision-making. This includes agreeing the planned offer, ensuring curriculum breadth and balance, developing a personalised offer and setting clear review dates. This ensures that tuition is timely, short-term and meets the needs of pupils. Officers ensure that nearly all pupils who require Welsh-medium support are matched promptly with appropriately skilled Welsh-speaking tutors. This approach secures continuity of language learning and supports pupils' emotional well-being, particularly for those experiencing disruption to their education. Tutors plan learning carefully in line with the Curriculum for Wales and pupils' Individual Development Plans, ensuring that academic expectations and well-being priorities are closely aligned.

Welsh-medium tuition is planned strategically rather than reactively, ensuring equality of access and consistency of quality across the authority's provision. Nearly all pupils receiving Welsh-medium tuition remain engaged in learning, sustain confidence in using

Welsh and are well prepared to reintegrate into Welsh-medium mainstream education or progress successfully to post-16 pathways.

Views of pupils, parents and carers

Parents' and carers' experiences reflected the inconsistencies in the breadth and balance of pupils' curriculum experiences and in the number of hours available. Many described positive relationships with individual tutors or officers but reported uneven access to provision, delays in decision-making and a lack of clarity about referral pathways in some authorities. A minority of parents and carers described having to advocate persistently for appropriate support before needs are recognised. Where local authority systems were well co-ordinated, parents and carers valued regular communication, clear explanations of decisions and effective mediation between schools, providers and families. Where systems were weaker, parents and carers frequently described increased stress and deterioration in pupils' well-being during prolonged periods without suitable provision.

Pupil voice

Where pupil voice is embedded effectively in tuition services, pupils reported feeling valued, respected and understood. Strong practice included structured opportunities for pupils to express their views on curriculum planning, teaching approaches, timetabling and enrichment activities. Staff used pupil feedback to adapt provision, strengthen relationships and improve engagement. In these providers, pupils developed greater ownership of their learning and felt more confident to communicate their preferences and concerns.

In the strongest examples, pupil voice was a central feature of transition planning. Pupils helped shape their post-16 pathways, made informed decisions about qualifications and contributed meaningfully to discussions about reintegration or progression. Providers that adopted this approach typically demonstrated improved attendance, increased engagement and stronger pupil outcomes.



However, pupil voice in tuition services was variable. In many providers, pupils described being asked for their views but not seeing meaningful changes as a result. Some pupils felt that their curriculum was too narrow, insufficiently challenging or misaligned with their interests or aspirations. In community-based and online tuition pathways, opportunities for pupil voice were particularly limited due to restricted contact time or limited staff capacity.

Few local authorities used pupil voice strategically to inform system-level decision-making. As a result, curricula, commissioning arrangements and strategic plans do not always reflect pupils' insights or lived experiences. Embedding pupil voice within strategic governance, at both local authority and provider level, represents an important area for improvement.

Chapter 2: Governance and accountability

Strong governance and accountability are central to ensuring that tuition services operate effectively, deliver equitable curriculum experiences and secure positive outcomes for pupils. Local authorities' approaches to monitoring and quality assurance of tuition services varied substantially. A minority of authorities had established robust, coherent and system-wide quality assurance frameworks that enabled leaders to evaluate impact and drive improvement. In contrast, the majority of local authorities relied on underdeveloped or inconsistent approaches, where monitoring focuses more on compliance than on the quality, effectiveness or impact of educational provision. Our evidence indicates that overall, local authorities often applied inconsistent quality assurance to commissioned services, visiting providers infrequently and relying too heavily on self-reported information.

How local authorities monitor and quality assure the impact of tuition services

The role of the local authority in quality assurance remained a key driver for improvement and consistency. Authorities with robust quality assurance frameworks monitored curriculum breadth, teaching quality, pupil progress, safeguarding arrangements and transitions with appropriate frequency and rigour. They embedded cycles of monitoring that include visits, learning walks, observations, work scrutiny and listening to pupils. These authorities used evidence from quality assurance processes to refine commissioning arrangements, identify professional learning needs of tutors and adjust staffing structures.

However, the majority of local authorities we visited did not operate a coherent quality assurance framework that covered all tuition pathways. Monitoring activity was often disproportionately focused on PRUs, with home tuition, online tuition and small-scale commissioned provision receiving limited scrutiny. In these authorities, quality assurance relied heavily on self-reported information from providers, such as attendance figures or progress summaries, rather than first-hand observation or evaluation of pupils' work and progress.

In a few authorities, quality assurance was undertaken by individual officers without sufficient capacity or a clear structural framework. This led to inconsistency, delays in addressing concerns and limited opportunities for system-wide learning. In some cases, senior leaders responsible for quality assurance did not regularly visit tuition providers or

observe teaching directly, limiting their understanding of practice and reducing the effectiveness of challenge and support.

This spotlight highlights how Cardiff local authority has developed a comprehensive, multi-layered quality assurance framework that strengthens oversight, accountability and pupil outcomes across its tuition service and wider EOTAS provision.

Rigorous quality assurance drives improvement and secures positive pupil outcomes in tuition services (Cardiff local authority)

Cardiff has established a highly structured and effective approach to quality assurance that operates at strategic, service and provider levels. Governance arrangements include scrutiny committees, cabinet reporting, an EOTAS Management Board and dedicated quality assurance groups. These structures provide clear lines of accountability and ensure that tuition services are routinely considered within wider inclusion, risk and performance frameworks. Service-level agreements, safeguarding agreements and scheduled monitoring visits underpin consistent expectations for all providers, most of whom are registered and evaluated through the local authority's external quality assurance framework.

Within the tuition service itself, quality assurance is systematic and embedded in --day-to-day practice. Leaders undertake regular monitoring activities, including observations, curriculum scrutiny and review of assessment information. Learning journals, half-termly data drops and termly assessments are used to track pupils' progress and engagement, with outcomes shared with pupils and parents and carers. Attendance and safeguarding are monitored rigorously through dedicated EOTAS education welfare officers and family engagement staff, with clear escalation processes where concerns arise. This ensures that quality assurance focuses not only on compliance, but also on pupils' learning, well-being and safety.

Importantly, Cardiff uses quality assurance information evaluatively to understand impact and improve outcomes. The local authority tracks destinations and progression closely, linking tuition service performance to wider EOTAS outcomes. This has contributed to measurable improvements, including increased engagement in education, employment or training and a reduction in the proportion of pupils recorded as not in education, employment or training (NEET). Quality assurance findings also inform curriculum development, commissioning decisions and targeted support for providers that require closer scrutiny, ensuring that improvement activity is evidence-based and proportionate.

This spotlight demonstrates how strong quality assurance can move beyond procedural checks to become a driver of improvement, equity and impact. Cardiff's approach shows how clear governance, consistent expectations, robust monitoring and evaluative use of data can secure higher-quality tuition services, strengthen safeguarding and improve outcomes for pupils.

Local authority quality assurance processes, including the use of data

In the most effective local authorities, officers maintained up-to-date and accurate information about the numbers of pupils in tuition services and characteristics of their tuition population, including the nature of pupils' needs, reasons for referral and length of time in provision. This information allowed them to identify emerging patterns, plan strategically for capacity and engage in informed dialogue with schools about early intervention and reintegration. Local authorities with well-developed data tracking systems tended to have clearer oversight of commissioned services and stronger quality assurance systems.

Not all local authorities captured tuition data comprehensively. Information about pupils accessing online tuition, community-based programmes or very short-term commissioned packages were incomplete or absent. A few authorities did not track duration, hours of provision or subject access consistently, making it difficult to ensure that there is equity of curriculum experience for pupils in tuition services.

Overall, the absence of coherent national datasets limits the Welsh Government's ability to understand long-term trends, evaluate impact or plan strategically for future demand across the system.

Monitoring access to a relevant, broad and balanced curriculum

Monitoring of curriculum breadth and ambition remains underdeveloped. While a minority of authorities tracked pupils' access to subjects, qualifications and teaching hours in detail, the majority focused primarily on attendance when monitoring tuition provision. Although attendance data is essential, it is insufficient to evaluate whether pupils receive a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum and good quality tuition that supports them to progress. As a result, many pupils continued to receive narrow, low-hours provision without appropriate challenge, and this was not always identified or addressed through monitoring activity. In a few authorities, officers were unable to identify curriculum gaps or evaluate whether pupils' learning pathways aligned with their age, ability and aspirations.

Overall, PRUs with responsibility for tuition arrangements were usually well integrated into authority-wide quality assurance arrangements. PRU leaders undertook regular teaching observations and curriculum audits and linked findings explicitly to improvement planning. Multi-agency placement panels also played an evaluative role, using assessment information and pupil progress data to judge the ongoing suitability of tuition placements and identify barriers to progression. In a few local authorities, challenge from school improvement partners and other officers added further rigour to internal evaluation processes.



One example illustrates how rigorous quality assurance strengthens teaching and learning and access to a broad and balance curriculum offer for pupils.

Effective quality assurance within tuition services (The Bridge Achievement Centre (PRU), Newport)

At the Bridge Achievement Centre, leaders have embedded a sophisticated and robust quality assurance system that ensures that pupils in EOTAS, including those in tuition services, have access to a broad curriculum offer.

Leaders operate regular learning walks, book scrutiny, planning reviews and half-termly provision reviews, which allow tutors to reflect collaboratively on pedagogy, share effective strategies and identify areas for further support. These reviews are particularly

influential in improving subject knowledge in areas such as science and humanities. This culture of professional learning, combined with coherent curriculum planning and high expectations, results in beneficial academic progress and strong qualification outcomes for pupils.

This example illustrates how systematic and carefully designed quality assurance can enhance the quality of provision and strengthen professional expertise within tuition services. Providers with similar systems demonstrate higher levels of consistency and impact.

Where curriculum monitoring was well developed in local authorities, officers tracked subject access carefully, identified gaps and adjusted provision accordingly. They scrutinised whether pupils were entered for appropriate qualifications and whether vocational, creative and practical opportunities are available. In addition, they used feedback from pupils effectively to inform and amend the curriculum offer, ensuring it met their needs and interests. These authorities demonstrated how effective curriculum monitoring can promote equity and consistency across the system.

Monitoring the attendance and safeguarding of pupils who require tuition

Overall, attendance and safeguarding monitoring in tuition services is a strength across Wales. Most local authorities required daily registers from tuition services and maintained appropriate communication pathways between schools, PRUs and providers. Safeguarding procedures were generally well understood, and nearly all local authorities that we visited undertook annual safeguarding audits.

In a very few local authorities, roles and responsibilities between schools, providers and local authorities were unclear, leading to gaps in communication. Strategic analysis of attendance patterns was limited, and officers did not consistently evaluate how attendance correlated with curriculum access, well-being support or reintegration pathways.

Parents' and carers' experiences reflected these issues. While most parents expressed confidence in individual tutors, a few reported uncertainties about who holds responsibility for oversight when pupils access fragmented or multi-site provision which includes accessing tuition. A minority raised concerns about safeguarding assurance in commissioned or community-based provision where quality assurance arrangements were not clearly communicated.

The role of local authority elected members, including scrutiny

In the few most effective local authorities, elected members played an active role in holding officers to account for the quality and impact of tuition services. Officers reported quality assurance findings, data trends and outcome information to scrutiny committees, enabling informed challenge and strategic discussion. This strengthens transparency and supports longer-term planning.

However, in many authorities, elected member scrutiny of tuition services is limited. Reporting tended to focus on high-level information, such as pupil numbers rather than curriculum quality, progression or reintegration outcomes. Where data systems were weak, elected members lacked the information needed to evaluate effectiveness or challenge underperformance meaningfully.

Overall, variability in monitoring and quality assurance reflects deeper structural challenges. Authorities that understand their governance role clearly, invest in evaluative quality assurance systems and involve elected members meaningfully are more likely to secure equitable provision and positive outcomes. Where monitoring is weak, pupils are more likely to experience fragmented provision, limited challenge and fewer successful transitions.

In many local authorities, monitoring of commissioned services relied heavily on self-reported information rather than first-hand observation or detailed evaluation of pupils' work. Providers may be asked to supply attendance reports, progress data or safeguarding documentation but were rarely visited or observed. As a result, local authorities did not always have a reliable picture of the quality of teaching, curriculum breadth or pupil progress in commissioned providers.

In many local authorities, quality assurance work was undertaken by individual officers without a clear structural framework or sufficient capacity. This can lead to inconsistency, delays in resolving concerns and insufficient cross-system learning. In a few authorities, senior leaders responsible for quality assurance did not regularly visit tuition providers or observe teaching directly, limiting their understanding of the quality of teaching and learning.

Overall, professional learning and performance management for teachers in tuition services is inconsistent across Wales. In the most effective local authorities, performance management was closely aligned with quality assurance findings and used to support staff development. Teachers in these tuition services received targeted training, for example in trauma-informed practice, ALN strategies, behaviour support, assessment and curriculum planning. Professional learning for teachers in tuition services is often insufficiently tailored to the demands of teaching pupils with complex needs.

Monitoring and quality assurance of the reintegration of pupils

Reintegration remains one of the weakest aspects of monitoring across Wales. Although most authorities recorded whether reintegration occurs, few analyse why rates remained low or identified systemic barriers. Reintegration planning was often left to individual providers or schools and PRUs without strong system-level expectations.

Parents and carers frequently identified transition planning as one of the weakest aspects of tuition provision. Several described concerns about who monitors readiness for reintegration, progression to qualifications or post-16 pathways. Where transition planning was weak or delayed, parents and carers reported increased anxiety for both pupils and families. In contrast, where providers and local authorities engaged with families early, communicated clearly and aligned curriculum planning with future destinations, parents and carers reported greater confidence and smoother transitions.

A small number of providers demonstrate exceptionally positive NEET outcomes over several years, reflecting the impact of well-coordinated monitoring and transition planning.

This example demonstrates how well-planned transition planning, careful monitoring, multi-agency working and strong pastoral support combine to secure positive long-term outcomes. It describes a strong reintegration model in a secondary school that has developed a hybrid tuition approach rooted in mainstream inclusion.

Reintegration and progression strengthened through a hybrid model (Risca Community Comprehensive School, Caerphilly)

At Risca Community Comprehensive School, their pupils attend local authority funded EOTAS tuition for two days on site and mainstream lessons for three days each week. This hybrid model maintains continuity, strengthens relationships and supports smooth reintegration. Pupils benefit from a structured six-week “reset” programme that improves engagement and prepares them to return successfully to mainstream classes. Attendance has improved substantially, with one pupil increasing from 22% to 58% following sustained support. Overall school attendance stands at 92%, the highest in the local authority. Nearly all Year 11 pupils who accessed the in-school tuition achieve at least five - the officer for youth engagement progression framework (equivalent qualifications, and in 2025 all eight pupils successfully progressed to sustained destinations, supported by strong partnerships with Careers Wales and the officer for youth engagement progression framework (YEPF).

This example illustrates the significant positive impact of monitoring reintegration and progression carefully. Schools and authorities that prioritise reintegration, track its

success, and intervene proactively are better able to maintain pupils' connection to their school community.

Overall, the variability in monitoring and quality assurance arrangements across Wales reflects entrenched structural and capacity-related challenges within local authority oversight and commissioning of tuition services. Where monitoring was underdeveloped or inconsistently applied, pupils were more likely to experience fragmented provision, insufficient academic challenge, limited curriculum breadth and weaker progression and transition outcomes. Conversely, in local authorities and providers where roles and accountabilities for monitoring were clearly defined, and where leaders invest in systematic, evaluative quality assurance processes, provision was more coherent and responsive, expectations were higher and pupils achieved more positive educational and post-16 outcomes. This contrast highlights the critical importance of robust monitoring and quality assurance as a key lever for securing equity, consistency and improvement in tuition services across Wales.

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

1. What are tuition services in Wales?
Tuition services provide education for pupils who cannot attend school for a period of time. This may include one-to-one or small-group teaching at home, in community settings, online, or through local authority services.

Tuition is part of education otherwise than at school (EOTAS) and remains the responsibility of the local authority.

2. Why do pupils receive tuition instead of attending school?
Pupils usually receive tuition because their needs cannot be met safely or effectively in a school setting. Common reasons include anxiety, mental health needs, medical conditions, trauma, safeguarding reasons, exclusion, or while waiting for a suitable school or specialist placement.

3. How many pupils receive tuition services in Wales?
There is no complete national dataset, for example PLASC[3], showing exactly how many pupils receive tuition services each year. This limits understanding of the full scale and impact of tuition provision across Wales.

Evidence gathered for this report indicates that, across the 22 local authorities, just over 900 pupils were registered in tuition services at the time of the review. Overall, national data shows that the number of pupils educated other than at school (EOTAS) continues to rise, with 3,014 pupils receiving some form of EOTAS provision in 2024–2025. Most of these pupils were educated mainly outside of school, including through tuition services.

4. Is tuition meant to be short-term or long-term?
Tuition is intended to be a short-term, purposeful intervention. Its aim is to help pupils re-engage with learning, stabilise their well-being and, where appropriate, return to school or progress to post-16 education or training.

However, the report found that in some areas tuition becomes longer-term due to wider system pressures.

5. Who is responsible for arranging and overseeing tuition?

[3] The Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) is an electronic collection of pupil and school level data in Wales

Local authorities have the legal duty to arrange suitable education for pupils who are EOTAS. They are responsible for deciding when tuition is needed; commissioning or delivering provision and ensuring appropriate safeguarding; ensuring attendance and evaluating the quality of providers. Local authorities should work closely with schools, PRUs and providers.

6. What should pupils learn while receiving tuition?

Pupils should receive a broad and balanced curriculum, aligned with the Curriculum for Wales, as far as is reasonably possible. This includes more than just English and mathematics and should support progress, well-being and future pathways.

For pupils who have been out of school for a prolonged period, there may be a greater focus on curriculum enrichment and re-engagement with learning.

7. What did the report find about the quality of tuition across Wales?

The quality of tuition varies between local authorities and providers. Some offer ambitious, well-planned curricula and strong support. However, many pupils receive very limited hours and a narrow curriculum, which restricts progress and future opportunities.

8. How are pupils with ALN supported?

Pupils with ALN keep their full legal entitlements, even when receiving tuition. Effective practice includes using IDPs, trauma-informed approaches and multi-agency working.

However, the report found that ALN support for pupils accessing tuition is inconsistent nationally.

9. Can pupils receive tuition through the medium of Welsh?

Yes, pupils should be able to receive tuition through the medium of Welsh where this reflects their language background and educational needs. However, the report found that access to Welsh-medium tuition is inconsistent across Wales.

A small number of local authorities have planned bilingual or Welsh-medium tuition pathways that help pupils maintain their language skills and identity. In most areas, provision depends on the availability of individual Welsh-speaking tutors rather than a strategic approach. As a result, some pupils experience disruption to Welsh-medium learning, particularly at key stage 4, which can affect confidence, qualifications and reintegration into Welsh-medium education

10. How are parents and carers involved?

Parents and carers should be kept informed and involved in decisions about tuition, progress and next steps. Where local authority arrangements are clear and -well-coordinated, parents and carers report positive experiences. Where oversight is weaker, parents and carers or they often experience uncertainty and delays.

11. How do local authorities check that tuition is working?

Local authorities should monitor attendance, safeguarding, teaching quality, curriculum breadth and pupil progress. The report found that while safeguarding is generally strong, quality assurance of teaching and curriculum is often underdeveloped, especially for commissioned private providers and online tuition.

12. What should happen when tuition ends?

There should be clear planning for transition, whether this is a return to school, a move to another setting, or progression to post-16 education, training or employment. Strong transition planning leads to better outcomes, but this remains inconsistent across Wales.

Methods and evidence base

Evidence was gathered through a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. We sent an initial survey to all local authorities to provide an overview of current tuition services, including arrangements, commissioning practices and monitoring processes. We received responses from 20 local authorities.

In addition, we held a combination of face-to-face and virtual meetings with lead officers responsible for EOTAS and tuition services in local authorities. We met with officers from 18 local authorities and received information from a further four. As a result, we received information from all local authorities. These meetings enabled deeper exploration of strategic leadership, governance arrangements and operational challenges.

We visited 14 tuition providers, including schools, PRUs and commissioned external EOTAS providers. These visits enabled inspectors to evaluate the quality of teaching, curriculum planning, learner engagement and support for additional learning needs. During visits, we met with senior leaders, tutors and pupils, carried out learning walks and scrutinised pupils' work. We met with over 60 pupils individually and in small groups across the 14 providers. We also reviewed documentation including IDPs curriculum planning and qualification pathways. In addition, we canvassed the views of parents and carers about their experiences of provision. Copies of both surveys can be found on our website.

Local authorities, schools, PRUs and providers were selected to reflect a range of language mediums, sizes, provider types, geographical locations and socio-economic contexts.

We also drew on evidence from ongoing inspection activity and from discussions between local authority link inspectors and local authority officers. All discussions took place during the autumn term 2025 and most were conducted face-to-face.

Evidence from different sources was triangulated to inform evaluative judgements. Findings were considered in the round, with particular attention to consistency between local authority oversight, provider practice and pupils' experiences.

The review focused on tuition services commissioned or delivered by local authorities for pupils educated other than at school. Findings relate to the sample of local authorities, schools, PRUs and providers included in the review. The review did not

evaluate elective home education (EHE) or mainstream school-based interventions unless these formed part of local authority tuition arrangements.

Estyn would like to thank the following for their participation in this thematic inspection:

Provider	**Local Authority**
The Bridge Alternative Provision Portfolio PRU	Bridgend
Bridge Achievement Centre	Newport
Cardiff LA Tuition Service	Cardiff
Carmarthenshire Tuition Services	Carmarthenshire
Creative in Excellence	Denbighshire
Educate Group	Wrexham
Equity Foundation Ltd.	Merthyr
Gorwelion Newydd PRU	Wrexham
Maes Derw Pupil Referral Unit	Swansea
Plas Derwen PRU	Flintshire
The Hive (Community Tuition)	Caerphilly
Ty Gwyn Education Centre	Rhondda Cynon Taff
Vale of Glamorgan Tuition Services	Vale of Glamorgan
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni	Caerphilly
Risca Community School	Caerphilly

Glossary

Adverse childhood experiences	Stressful or traumatic events, including abuse or neglect. They may also include household dysfunction such as witnessing domestic violence or growing up with family members who have substance use disorders, mental illness or are incarcerated
ALN	Additional learning needs
ALP	Additional learning provision (for pupils who have ALN)
AoLE	Areas of learning and experience
BESD	Behaviour, emotional and social difficulties
CAMHS	Child and adolescent mental health services
Commissioned provider (or commissioned external provider)	An organisation or individual that is contracted by a local authority to deliver education or support services, rather than being directly managed by the local authority or a school.
EBSA	Emotionally based school avoidance
EHE	Electively home educated
EOTAS	Educated other than at school
EOTAS continuum	The range of educational arrangements available for pupils EOTAS, from short-term interventions such as tuition to longer-term specialist or alternative provision, depending on pupils' needs.
IDP	Individual development plan
Local authority link inspector (LALI)	An Estyn inspector who works with a specific local authority to maintain an ongoing professional relationship, support understanding of inspection findings and provide continuity

	between inspections and thematic work.
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training - a term used to describe young people who are not taking part in education, employment or training. It is often used to measure post-16 participation and longer-term outcomes
PLASC	The Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) in Wales is a statutory requirement for schools to return an annual census of individual pupils. It is mandated by the Education (Information About Individual Pupils) (Wales) Regulations 2003 and includes data on the individual learning activities of post-16 pupils.
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
PSP	Pastoral support plan
Relational practice	An approach that places positive, consistent relationships at the centre of provision, using trust, empathy and clear communication to support engagement, wellbeing and progress
Trauma-informed practice	An approach that recognises the impact of trauma on a child or young person's behaviour, wellbeing and learning, and responds by creating safe, supportive environments that avoid re-traumatisation and promote resilience.
YEPF	Youth engagement and progression framework

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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Legislation

Section 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
Section 19A(1) of the Education Act 1996
Section 19(6) of the Education Act 1996
Section 463 of the Education Act 1996
The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2020
The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018

Appendix 1: Further guidance

How does legislation define EOTAS and the provision for pupils who require tuition services?

For the purposes of this thematic report, education otherwise than at school (EOTAS) is defined in line with section 19A(1) of the Education Act 1996 which places a statutory duty on local authorities to make arrangements for the provision of suitable education, at school or otherwise, for children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made.

Under section 19(6) of the same Act, suitable education is defined *as education that is efficient and suitable to the child or young person's age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs they may have.* Tuition services form one mechanism through which local authorities meet this duty, particularly where pupils cannot reasonably access school-based provision.

Beyond what is set out in legislation, there is no clear or commonly understood definition of EOTAS across Wales. In practice, terminology is used inconsistently, and the terms *"alternative provision"* or *"alternative curriculum"* are often used inaccurately to describe EOTAS arrangements. Our evidence indicated that this lack of shared understanding contributed to variation in local authority practice, including differences in what was commissioned, how provision was categorised, and how quality was monitored.

Generally, tuition services are included as part of EOTAS provision where education is funded, organised or delivered by the local authority. This thematic study does not include electively home educated (EHE) pupils, as these pupils are not considered to be EOTAS under the Education Act 1996.

Curriculum for Wales EOTAS guidance, for pupils who require tuition

The Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 establishes statutory curriculum requirements for pupils aged 3–16 in Wales, including those educated through EOTAS arrangements such as tuition services. Welsh Government guidance clarifies that responsibility for arranging EOTAS rests with local authorities, rather than maintained schools.

Although maintained schools may provide education outside their premises under the Education Act 2002, the legal duties relating to the curriculum differ from those that apply to EOTAS provision. Education other than at school (EOTAS) - Hwb applies specifically to provision that is funded, organised and/or delivered by local authorities, including tuition services.

The teacher in charge of a PRU must ensure the curriculum is implemented in a way that:

- *enables the learner to develop in the ways described in the four purposes*
- *secures learning and teaching that offers appropriate progression for the learner*
- *is suitable for the learner's age, ability and aptitude*
- *takes account of the learner's additional learning needs (if any)*
- *secures learning and teaching that is broad and balanced, so far as is appropriate for the learner*

The teacher in charge of a PRU must ensure their curriculum is implemented in a way that secures learning and teaching for each learner that:

- *encompasses the Health and Well-being Area*
- *encompasses the mandatory RSE Code (which is suitable for each learner's stage of development)*
- *develops the mandatory cross-curricular skills*

The teacher in charge must also consider what learning and teaching it would be appropriate to provide for each learner in the other Areas and the other mandatory elements; and ensure, as far as reasonably possible, that the learning and teaching is provided for the learner.

The requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 for pupils who are EOTAS and require tuition

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 | Law Wales introduced a unified 0–25 system for supporting pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), underpinned by statutory duties relating to Individual Development Plans (IDPs).

Pupils who are EOTAS and receive tuition services retain their full statutory ALN entitlements, regardless of where education is delivered. The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales (2021) clarifies responsibility for maintaining IDPs in different EOTAS arrangements. Where pupils remain registered at their original school, that school may continue to maintain the IDP. Where pupils are dual registered, including registration at a

PRU, responsibility transfers to the local authority. In cases where pupils receive individual tuition at home or in hospital while remaining registered at their original school, it may be more appropriate for the local authority to assume responsibility for maintaining the IDP.

These arrangements require clear accountability and effective multi-agency working, particularly where tuition services form part of complex or evolving support packages for vulnerable pupils.

Key issues from Estyn's thematic review, Equity of curriculum experiences for pupils who are educated other than at school (EOTAS), published in June 2023

Estyn's thematic review Equity of curriculum experiences for pupils who are educated other than at school (EOTAS), published in June 2023, identified a number of systemic challenges in securing equity of curriculum experiences for pupils educated otherwise than at school, including those receiving tuition services.

The review found that, in too many local authorities, pupils receiving tuition accessed limited hours of education, and only in a very few local authorities, did pupils receive more than 10 hours of education per week. In only a very few cases did tuition services provide access to a full curriculum offer aligned to statutory expectations.

Where stronger practice existed, it often included planned access to online learning, integrated emotional health and well-being support, and clearer arrangements to support reintegration into mainstream education. However, overall, weaknesses in curriculum breadth, attendance monitoring and quality assurance limited pupils' opportunities to make progress and return successfully to school.

The review made a series of recommendations for local authorities, including the need to strengthen attendance monitoring, secure curriculum provision across all EOTAS providers, and improve quality assurance and oversight arrangements.