

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2015-2016**

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**REPORT OF: THE DIRECTOR OF  
EDUCATION AND LIFELONG  
LEARNING IN DISCUSSION WITH  
THE CABINET MEMBER FOR  
EDUCATION & LIFELONG  
LEARNING (COUNCILLOR MRS E  
HANAGAN)**

**DATE: 18<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2016**

**Agenda Item No. 4**

**KEY STAGE 4 EXAMINATION RESULTS  
AND PRIMARY AND SECONDARY  
SCHOOL CATEGORISATION FOR 2015**

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**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with the final confirmation of the Key Stage 4 examination results and the Welsh Government Primary and Secondary School Categorisation for 2015-16.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members

- 2.1 Scrutinise and comment on the information contained within this report;
- 2.2 Consider whether they wish to make any recommendations or scrutinise in greater depth any matters contained in the report.

**3. REASONS FOR REPORT**

- 3.1 The progress made by schools in improving standards and outcomes for children and young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf is a priority for the Council. This report will be considered shortly by Cabinet.

**4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The outcomes for young people at the end of Key Stage 4 is externally verified via GCSE examinations.
- 4.2 Schools have individual subject results to enable senior leaders to challenge underperforming departments.
- 4.3 The Local Authority can analyse the performance of each school compared to the other secondary schools in the County Borough and across secondary schools in the Central South Consortium. When the data is finalised the results of each Local Authority is benchmarked to indicate the comparative performance across Wales.
- 4.4 In reviewing the comparative position of the Council it is important for Members to recognise that social deprivation has a significant impact on educational performance. Rhondda Cynon Taf is the second most deprived local authority yet the performance of our pupils exceeds the expected level. Deprivation is not an excuse for underperformance but a well researched reason.

## 5. PERFORMANCE AT KEY STAGE 4 2014-2015

- 5.1 The table below sets out the final Rhondda Cynon Taf's Key Stage 4 results over the six years to 2015 in respect of the key indicators upon which schools and the Local Authority are assessed by Estyn.

Key Stage 4	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	% point change 2010 to 2015
<b>Level 1 threshold (A*-G at GCSE or equivalent)</b>							
RCT	86.7%	88.3%	89%	93.0%	93.2%	95.7%	9.0%
Bridgend	89.1%	89.4%	92%	93.3%	93.4%	95.2%	6.1%
Merthyr Tydfil	85.7%	84.4%	87%	92.7%	95.4%	96.8%	11.1%
Cardiff	87.8%	89.3%	91%	91.7%	93.2%	92.1%	4.3%
Vale of Glamorgan	91.8%	91.4%	94%	94.5%	94.0%	95.8%	4%
Wales	89.7%	90.3%	92%	93.2%	94.0%	94.4%	4.3%
<b>Level 2 threshold (5 A*-C at GCSE or equivalent)</b>							
RCT	58.0%	64.4%	69%	77.9%	84.6%	87.1%	29.1%
Bridgend	60.8%	63.2%	66.4%	72.3%	79.6%	83.7%	22.9%
Merthyr Tydfil	54.8%	60.6%	64.3%	72.9%	82.0%	85.4%	30.6%
Cardiff	61.4%	63.9%	68.3%	73.0%	76.0%	81.6%	20.2%
Vale of Glamorgan	73.4%	75.3%	79.6%	82.6%	87.0%	89.4%	13.6%
Wales	63.7%	67.3%	73%	77.8%	82.3%	84.1%	20.4%
<b>Level 2 threshold (5 A*-C at GCSE or equivalent) including English/Welsh and Mathematics</b>							
RCT	43.0%	43.4%	44%	46.3%	50.5%	54.6%	11.6%

Key Stage 4	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	% point change 2010 to 2015
Bridgend	47.9%	44.6%	50.7%	52.3%	55.8%	59.7%	11.8%
Merthyr Tydfil	34.4%	39.3%	32.5%	38.7%	48.9%	51.9%	17.5%
Cardiff	47.6%	48.4%	49.3%	49.9%	54.0%	59.3%	11.7%
Vale of Glamorgan	57.1%	56.0%	55.3%	55.4%	62.2%	64.9%	7.8%
Wales	49.4%	50.1%	51%	52.7%	55.4%	57.9%	8.5%
<b>Core Subject Indicator (A*-C at GCSE or equivalent in English/Welsh, Mathematics and Science)</b>							
RCT	42.5%	43.0%	43.0%	45.3%	48.7%	53.3%	10.8%
Bridgend	47.5%	44.8%	49.9%	50.6%	54.5%	58.6%	11.1%
Merthyr Tydfil	32.9%	38.1%	31.7%	36.3%	46.7%	48.9%	16.0%
Cardiff	46.7%	47.3%	47.9%	46.7%	51.2%	56.5%	9.8%
Vale of Glamorgan	54.4%	54.0%	53.9%	50.2%	60.1%	63.9%	9.5%
Wales	48.0%	48.7%	49%	49.2%	52.6%	54.8%	6.8%
<b>Average Capped Wider Points Score Per Pupil</b>							<b>Points Increase</b>
RCT	288.6	295.4	305.1	323.8	336.5	345.6	57
Bridgend	297.0	299.9	312.7	321.5	334.1	343.5	46.5
Merthyr Tydfil	280.6	289.9	300.8	322.0	339.7	343.8	63.2
Cardiff	298.3	305.9	316.9	322.0	331.3	336.9	38.6
Vale of Glamorgan	324.4	328.9	341.0	346.8	349.8	357.9	33.5
Wales	305.1	311.6	323.5	333.1	340.8	343.5	38.4

5.2 Good progress continues to be made by schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf against the key performance indicators, increasing at a faster rate than the Welsh average over a number of years.

5.3 The data on these key performance indicators for each of the secondary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf over the past 4 years is set out in Appendix A. This table shows that for the 2014/2015 academic year, the majority of our schools made good progress against a range of the performance measures. This analysis of the school by school performance illustrates that the majority of Rhondda Cynon Taf schools have improved the Level 1 and 2 threshold indicators, the Level 2 threshold for English and/or Welsh and Maths and the core subject indicator.

5.4 The comparative performance of the Council against the other local authorities in Wales, before taking into account socio-economic factors such as free school meals, is as follows:

- Level 1 threshold (5 A\*-G or equivalent) – 13<sup>th</sup> (19<sup>th</sup> in 2014)
- Level 2 threshold (5 A\*-C or equivalent) – 8<sup>th</sup> (12<sup>th</sup> in 2014)
- Level 2 threshold (5 A\*-C at GCSE or equivalent) including English/Welsh and Mathematics – 15<sup>th</sup> (19<sup>th</sup> in 2014)

- Core Subject Indicator (A\*-C at GCSE or equivalent in English/Welsh, Mathematics and Science) – 14<sup>th</sup> (18<sup>th</sup> in 2014)
- Average Capped Wider Points Score – 10<sup>th</sup> (17<sup>th</sup> in 2014)

5.5 Over the past five years, Rhondda Cynon Taf has improved faster for the key performance indicators than the Welsh average, but performance across the schools continues to be mixed. The following table shows the number of schools in each quartile (based on the 5 free school meal groupings of secondary schools)

Schools in Each Quartile								
	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014
<b>Level 1</b>	7	(6)	4	(5)	5	(3)	1	(5)
<b>Level 2</b>	6	(7)	6	(6)	3	(2)	2	(4)
<b>Level 2+</b>	4	(7)	7	(1)	4	(6)	2	(5)
<b>CSI</b>	8	(6)	6	(6)	2	(3)	1	(4)
<b>Capped Points</b>	6	(6)	6	(5)	3	(4)	2	(4)

5.6 In the past too many schools, when compared with similar schools based on free school meals, were in the third and fourth quartiles. This has improved again this year and I am pleased to report that the majority of secondary schools are in the top two quartiles with an improvement in the Level 2 threshold including English, Welsh and Mathematics.

5.7 The following table sets out pupils' performance in the four key subject areas of English, Welsh, Mathematics and Science, over the past five years.

Key Stage 4 A*-C	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	%age point improvement 2010 to 2015
English	56.5%	57.9%	56%	56.8%	61.0%	66%	9.5%
Welsh	69.3%	73.0%	70.0%	69.9%	70%	70%	0.7%
Science	60.6%	67.7%	76.6%	82.0%	86.0%	86.0%	26.4%
Mathematics	47.7%	49.3%	51%	53.0%	57.0%	57.0%	12.3%

5.8 We can see that:

- English results have also made good progress in 2014/15;
- Mathematics has made progress in 2015, with 11 of the 17 schools improving the number of pupils that achieve an A\*-C at GCSE;
- The Welsh first language results have remained relatively static in Rhondda Cynon Taf for the past few years, fluctuating around 70%;
- The Science results continued to benefit from more schools offering BTEC Science in addition to the Science GCSE.

- 5.9 The table shows the gender variation of performance in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The boys have slightly narrowed the gap in English and Science and are performing on par with the girls in Mathematics. A wide gap still exists with girls outperforming boys by some distance in Welsh and English.

Key Stage 4 A*-C	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
English - boys	48%	47%	46%	50%	50%	56%
English – girls	65%	70%	66%	66%	74%	76%
Welsh – boys	61%	63%	61%	60%	59%	57%
Welsh – girls	77%	83%	79%	78%	82%	83%
Science – boys	57%	65%	71%	75%	81%	84%
Science – girls	65%	72%	79%	82%	91%	90%
Mathematics – boys	47%	48%	50%	53%	54%	60%
Mathematics - girls	49%	51%	52%	51%	59%	60%

- 5.10 To address the underperformance of the boys when compared to the girls' the focus has to continue to be on improving literacy standards in primary schools at Key Stage 3.
- 5.11 Since September 2012, all heads of department of the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and Welsh departments meet as groups with the Council's Head of School Achievement on a middle leadership development programme that shares best practice and challenges individual school data. As a result, good practice has been shared and implemented and is evident in the progress of the key subject areas. The future meetings still need to focus on the underperformance of boys.

## **6. SCHOOLS CHALLENGE CYMRU (PATHWAY'S TO SUCCESS SCHOOLS)**

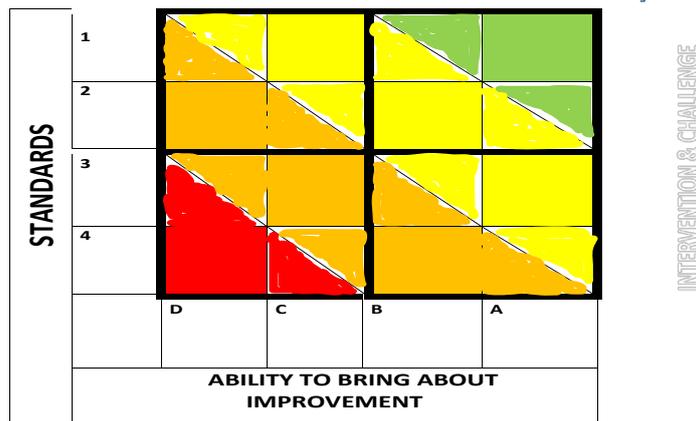
- 6.1 The Schools Challenge Cymru (SCC) Programme with £20 million funding attached was launched by the Welsh Government last year to improve standards in 40 of the underperforming schools in Wales.
- 6.2 Five schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf: Hawthorn High, Pontypridd High, Porth County, Tonyrefail Comprehensive and Tonypandy Community College were targeted to receive financial support from the SCC programme.
- 6.3 Across Wales two thirds of the schools achieved improvements on last year's GCSE results and in Rhondda Cynon Taf four out of the five schools made gains with Hawthorn High School and Tonypandy Community College making substantial gains.

## **7. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL CATEGORISATION**

### **Introduction**

- 7.1 In May 2014 after the Robert Hill Report on the Future Delivery of Education Services in Wales, the Minister for Education & Skills announced that the Banding System introduced in 2011 would be replaced by School Categorisation Model. There are three steps:
- 7.2 **Step One:** consists of data in relation to standards and performance. The first step in the process identifies how well the school is performing. An agreed set of data measures will be generated by Welsh Government and used by each consortium as part of the process to categorise schools. The agreed set of measures will be used by consortia from September and verified by Welsh Government in December/January of each year. A judgement of 1-4 will be generated in relation to standards.
- 7.3 **Step Two:** having made the first objective, data-driven judgement on a school's categorisation – based on the performance of pupils; the second judgment is based on the school's ability and capacity to self-improve. The process of coming to a judgement on its ability to bring about improvement will begin with the school's own self-evaluation, which it should already be undertaking on an annual cycle. The judgement on capacity to improve is to do with the school's ability to drive its own improvement for the future and will focus on leadership, learning and teaching.
- 7.4 Following the self-evaluation, consortia Challenge Advisers will have to be assured, and see evidence, that all school leaders use performance data robustly as part of effective school management and improvement. This will include governors, head teachers, middle and subject leaders. There must be evidence of the effective use of accurate data at individual pupil, class, group, cohort, subject and school level. Challenge Advisers will consider the performance of all learners and groups of learners and the quality of teaching and learning within the school. In particular, the performance of learners in receipt of free school meals will be reviewed and analysed – a school's context will not be used as an excuse for poor performance. A judgement of A-D will be generated.
- 7.5 **Step Three:** the combination of the two judgements will lead to a colour categorisation of the school which will trigger a bespoke programme of support, challenge and intervention. This will need to be agreed between the Local Authority and the regional school improvement service. The categorisation will be used to plan the targeting and deployment of resources by consortia and the Welsh Government in respect of national capacity building programmes.

7.6 The model is shown below:



7.7 There are four categories:

- **Green - these are our best schools who:**
  - know themselves well and identify and implement their own priorities for improvement;
  - have resilience within the staff team;
  - are rewarded by greater autonomy;
  - will be challenged to move towards or sustain excellence; and
  - have the capacity to lead others effectively (school to school support).
  
- **Yellow – these are our good schools who:**
  - will know and understand most of the areas in need of improvement;
  - have many aspects of the schools performance which are self-improving; and
  - will receive bespoke challenge and support deployed according to need.
  
- **Amber – these are our schools in need of improvement who:**
  - do not know and understand all the areas in need of improvement;
  - have many aspects of the schools performance which are not improving quickly enough;
  - will receive bespoke challenge and intervention deployed according to need
  - will receive an automatic letter from consortium;
  - self-evaluation and school improvement plan will be signed off by consortium;
  - will be expected to remain in an amber category for only the short-term; and
  - will receive time limited, focused challenge and intervention to support improvement or and be at the risk of dropping to the red category.

- **Red – these are our schools in need of greatest improvement who:**
  - will receive critical intervention;
  - receive an automatic warning letter from LA and subsequent use of statutory powers where necessary;
  - trigger intensive and effective collaboration between LA and consortium;
  - trigger the all-Wales common school causing concern arrangements; and
  - will lose autonomy and be subject to a more directed approach.

7.8 Following the verification of data with Step One of the model, the categorisation of all schools will be published in January of each year.

7.9 In the first year the National School Categorisation System for primary schools operated on a pilot basis. Detailed information on the performance measures used and the weighting placed upon each measure is available to parents and other interested parties. As with Banding, the Welsh Government is using school performance data to make a judgement on a school and the principles of Banding remain an integral part of the wider National School Categorisation System.

**What are the results of the School Categorisation in Rhondda Cynon Taf?**

7.10 A summary of the provisional categorisation of the Council's schools subject to National Moderation is shown below:

Category	Primary Schools				Secondary Schools			
	No of schools		%		No of schools		%	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
Green	7	19	6.7	18.1	3	1	17.6	5.9
Yellow	61	66	58.1	62.9	2	9	11.8	53.0
Amber	33	16	31.4	15.2	11	6	64.7	35.2
Red	4	4	3.8	3.8	1	1	5.9	5.9

7.12 The Central South Consortium's Framework for Challenge and Support sets out the response from the School Improvement Service to schools in each of the four categories, with the greatest support and challenge targeted at the amber and red schools.

7.13 For the amber and red schools, the diagnosis of need for improvement undertaken by the challenge advisor with the school will drive the work within the school. The challenge advisor of the red and amber schools may have available a monetary resource to support some of the costs associated with the support. The challenge advisor will provide the core allocation of contact according to the school's category and will broker the required additional support through the commissioning function of the school improvement service working closely with the strategic advisers as necessary.

7.14 The nature and amount of support will be determined by the identified need and may be derived from a number of sources, which could include one or a combination of:

- Support from other schools in the region;
- Support from other school improvement organisations and/or individuals from across the UK;
- Support from the Literacy or Numeracy or Welsh teams based in the Consortium;
- Specific leadership and/or teaching development.

7.15 For schools requiring amber or red support the Challenge Adviser will need to keep the school's progress and the appropriateness and impact of the support under review so as to make changes where required in good time. The focus will be on the impact of the work to secure improvement rather than the number of days delivered.

7.16 Furthermore, in Rhondda Cynon Taf the Headteacher and Chair of Governors of red schools meet the Director of Education and key school improvement officers, including the challenge advisor, every half term to monitor progress against the agreed action plan. Amber schools undertake a similar exercise once a term.

- 7.17 To date, sufficient progress is being made by the vast majority of amber and red schools. Over the next few years, the Council and the schools will work together to strive to ensure all our schools are good schools and no school is in the Red category.

## **8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

The Council has duties under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (amended) under Section 13A 'to promote high standards in primary and secondary education'.

## **11. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP**

This has a clear link to the priorities set out in the in the Rhondda Cynon Taf Single Integrated Plan. In order to prosper people must have the education and essential skills to secure employment.

## **12. CONCLUSION**

- 12.1 Education performance in Rhondda Cynon Taf at Key Stage 4 has made a significant step forward in 2015 with many schools making significant progress. This rate of progress must be sustained if we are to ensure that all our secondary schools compare favourably to similar schools across Wales.

- 12.2 The 5 Schools Challenge Cymru will continue to receive financial support from the Welsh Government so that the schools can build on the foundations and structural changes which have been instigated to ensure longer term improvements in standards.

- 12.3 In January 2014 the Central South Consortium launched the Central South Wales Challenge which is an initiative designed to simulate the sharing of expertise between schools to create a self improving system. There are several strands including:

- School Improvement Groups;

- Pathfinder schools;
- Hub schools.

It is agreed that a school led model is the right direction of travel but this way of working is dependent on several factors.

12.4 An improvement in educational performance in Rhondda Cynon Taf is occurring because:

- Standards of teaching continue to improve;
- Individual pupil's performance is rigorously tracked and appropriate timely interventions and support provided to the pupils; and
- Headteachers are prepared to tackle staff underperformance at all levels in their school, at senior and middle leadership levels as well as main-scale teachers. Currently, some schools are more rigorous in their approach to school improvement and that is reflected in the school's performance.

12.5 Schools and the Council have a responsibility to all pupils to reduce the school by school and in school variation in education performance. Each secondary school Headteacher has had a copy of the Key Stage 4 results of all the secondary schools and the categorisation information across Wales. It is evident from the information as to which schools are the high achievers and from whom schools need to learn best practice.

12.6 The Council and the schools have made a concerted effort in the past year to improve standards of teaching and learning in schools, through a variety of approaches. The next step is for headteachers and their senior management teams to consistently share and implement successful approaches to leadership and management; and teaching and learning, with the support of the Council and the Consortium.

12.7 As a group, the secondary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf have again made good progress in 2015 and the Governing Bodies, Headteachers, staff and pupils should be congratulated for the improvement in performance. School improvement is not a smooth process but it does require significant focus, rigour and commitment if it is to be achieved. Clearly, if this focus, rigour and commitment continues, the pupils of Rhondda Cynon Taf will go on to achieve even better educational outcomes in 2016 and onwards.



**Appendix A**

School	Free School Meal Band	KS4 Level 1 Threshold					KS4 Level 2 Threshold					Level 2 inc English/Welsh First Language & Maths					CSI					
		10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	
Aberdare Community	>30%					94%					76%					45%						43%
Bryncelynnog	>15% but >20%	93%	93%	97%	93%	97%	66%	72%	73%	76%	75%	54%	52%	43%	53%	62%	54%	52%	43%	53%	62%	
Cardinal Newman	>15% but >20%	96%	92%	100%	100%	98%	69%	71%	86%	84%	88%	57%	60%	57%	72%	71%	55%	53%	57%	69%	71%	
Ferndale	>30%	88%	87%	96%	99%	100%	42%	46%	84%	97%	97%	24%	25%	38%	47%	50%	23%	24%	37%	46%	50%	
Hawthorn High	>20% but < 30%	85%	82%	94%	95%	97%	51%	55%	83%	93%	94%	40%	41%	34%	40%	49%	39%	41%	31%	37%	41%	
Mountain Ash	>30%	86%	90%	93%	90%	93%	78%	75%	86%	84%	87%	35%	31%	43%	36%	52%	34%	31%	41%	36%	52%	
Pontypridd High	>20% but < 30%	93%	90%	94%	90%	98%	55%	60%	60%	79%	93%	39%	36%	46%	52%	53%	39%	35%	44%	48%	50%	
Porth County	>20% but < 30%	86%	88%	90%	91%	99%	61%	66%	63%	63%	96%	33%	37%	43%	47%	48%	33%	37%	42%	48%	48%	
St John Baptist	>10% but <15%	96%	96%	99%	99%	100%	67%	82%	81%	94%	77%	58%	66%	73%	75%	61%	60%	66%	72%	70%	61%	
Tonypanyd	>20% but < 30%	87%	91%	92%	96%	98%	59%	86%	80%	90%	85%	28%	28%	29%	31%	49%	28%	28%	29%	30%	47%	
Tonyrefail	>20% but < 30%	87%	85%	91%	99%	98%	60%	67%	77%	87%	87%	33%	40%	35%	52%	47%	31%	39%	35%	52%	47%	
Treorchy	>20% but < 30%	97%	97%	97%	97%	100%	85%	93%	95%	94%	96%	54%	43%	58%	47%	56%	53%	42%	58%	47%	52%	
Y Pant	>10% but <15%	95%	97%	99%	98%	98%	79%	82%	92%	93%	91%	70%	71%	68%	75%	66%	69%	71%	68%	70%	66%	
YG Cymer	>15% but >20%	92%	90%	100%	99%	100%	77%	60%	99%	99%	100%	41%	40%	48%	54%	63%	38%	40%	41%	53%	63%	
YG Garth Olwg	>10% but <15%	92%	92%	98%	95%	98%	69%	75%	71%	80%	93%	50%	56%	44%	54%	63%	49%	56%	42%	48%	62%	
Ysgol Llanhari	>10% but <15%	97%	96%	97%	99%	100%	69%	74%	71%	97%	100%	49%	58%	53%	65%	65%	49%	61%	53%	64%	65%	
YG Rhydywaun	>10% but <15%	92%	93%	97%	98%	100%	60%	61%	82%	98%	99%	48%	42%	56%	60%	65%	48%	43%	56%	60%	65%	
<b>RCT</b>		<b>88%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>53%</b>	
<b>Wales</b>		<b>90%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>55%</b>	

