

SPORT AND PUBLIC SERVICES

Phase 2 Sector Review

September 2021



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Chapter 1: Introduction and executive summary

In this chapter, we introduce the Review and summarise the findings.

1. Welcome to the report of our phase 2 sector review of sport and public services qualifications. This is the first in a series of phase 2 sector reviews to be carried out by Qualifications Wales, the regulator of qualifications, other than degrees, in Wales. The phase 2 sector reviews build on the cross-cutting themes identified from our original sector reviews but are more focused and shorter in length. In phase 2 sector reviews, we consider whether:
 - the range of qualifications available in the sector is appropriate to meet the needs of learners, learning providers and employers; and
 - whether the availability of Welsh-medium qualifications is sufficient to meet the needs of learners, learning providers and employers.

2. We focus primarily on qualifications that are eligible for use on publicly funded programmes of learning for learners over the age of 16, specifically those qualifications taken in further education colleges, sixth form secondary schools and work-based learning providers. However, if we discover issues with other relevant qualifications, we also take those into account.

3. The report is structured as follows:
 - Sector overview – we present data on the sport and public services qualifications offered in Wales.
 - Methodology – we outline how we conducted the Review.
 - Findings – we outline the findings of the Review in relation to the:
 - overall range of qualifications;
 - availability of Welsh-medium qualifications;
 - content and currency of qualifications; and
 - the assessment of qualifications.
 - Actions – we outline the actions that we have taken, and intend to take, to address the issues identified by the Review.

4. We addressed the aims of the Review through stakeholder interviews and an online learner questionnaire. We conducted 58 interviews with employers, learning providers and wider stakeholders. We also spoke with awarding bodies who offer sport and public services qualifications in Wales. To gather the views of learners we conducted an online survey and received over 380 responses. We drew from all these sources in compiling this report.

5. In relation to the overall range of qualifications in sport and public services, the Review identified that:

- most learning providers interviewed considered the range of qualifications for sport and public services to be sufficient to meet the needs of their learners and their centre, but a few learning providers expressed a desire for a greater choice of public services and outdoor activities qualifications.
- stakeholders believed that there are suitable qualifications available for sport and public services that effectively prepare learners to progress to further study, higher education, apprenticeships and/or employment.
- several sixth form secondary schools who deliver the Agored Cymru Level 2 in Learning in the Outdoors qualification would welcome a progression route to a relevant level 3 qualification.
- a greater choice of qualifications on the Level 3 Outdoor Programmes apprenticeship framework is desired by some work-based learning providers.
- there is a demand from employers, according to work-based learning providers we interviewed, for higher level exercise and fitness apprenticeship frameworks.
- employers identified specialist qualifications such as strength and conditioning, yoga, and pilates as additional qualifications that they would like their apprentices to complete, however these qualifications are not part of exercise and fitness apprenticeship frameworks.

6. In relation to the availability of Welsh-medium qualifications in sport and public services, the Review identified that:

- sport and public services qualifications were offered through the medium of Welsh across a range of learning settings. Welsh-medium sixth form secondary schools reported a high level of demand for sport and public services qualifications and expressed concern that such provision may be withdrawn. In further education colleges and work-based learning providers, the level of demand was more mixed.
- 1st4sport qualifications available on exercise and fitness and outdoor programmes apprenticeship frameworks were not available through the medium of Welsh and centres offering these qualifications in Welsh had to translate specifications and assessment materials.
- 1st4sport did not conduct the quality assurance process through the medium of Welsh for Welsh-medium centres.
- new Pearson BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Sport and Uniformed Protective Services qualifications have been made available through the medium of Welsh.
- there is a growing demand from learners for public services qualifications through the medium of Welsh and several further education colleges told us that they intend to develop their Welsh-medium provision in this area.
- centres were not always fully aware of the services available to them. For example, a few Welsh-medium sixth form secondary schools suggested that the Pearson assignment checking service was not available through the medium of Welsh, although on further investigation we discovered that it was available for sport and public services qualifications.
- there were several examples of good practice where learning providers were collaborating with each other to develop Welsh-medium resources for sport and public services qualifications.

7. In relation to the content and currency of qualifications, the Review identified that:

- the content of sport and public services qualifications was considered up-to-date by learning providers.
- sixth form secondary schools and further education colleges valued the range of optional units available on the new Pearson BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Sport and Uniformed Protective Services qualifications.
- the content of industry specific fitness qualifications from YMCA Awards had been recently updated and several learning providers told us they were more streamlined in terms of content and assessment.
- there is a desire, from several learning providers and employers, for additional content on mental health to be included in sports qualifications to reflect the need for greater awareness of mental health in the health and fitness industry.

8. In relation to the assessment of qualifications in sport and public services, the Review identified that:

- learning providers used a range of assessment methods to allow learners to demonstrate skills and knowledge but there was a recognition by further education colleges that staff may require more support in the use of alternative assessment methods such as blogs and video recordings.
- a few learning providers were concerned that the amount of content and synoptic assessment for some units on new Pearson BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Sport and Uniformed Protective Services qualifications may result in a focus on assessment rather than teaching and learning.
- several learning providers considered Pearson BTEC level 3 qualifications more robust with the addition of external assessments, but a few learning providers questioned the appropriateness of external examinations for some level 2 vocational learners.
- assessments included in qualifications on exercise and fitness apprenticeship frameworks were manageable for the work-based learning providers we interviewed.
- most learning providers were satisfied with the level of support that they received from awarding bodies although a few stated that they would appreciate more support for subject specific topics and would welcome more constructive feedback from external quality assurers about learners' work.

Our response to the findings of the Review

9. In Chapter 8 of this report, we set out the actions that we have already taken, and those we intend to take, to address the issues raised by the Review.

Actions we have taken	
1	<p>We shared with awarding bodies the findings relating to the range and content of qualifications and asked them about their current and future plans for offering sport and public services qualifications in Wales. We asked them for assurances that they intend to continue offering sport and public services qualifications in Wales. We were reassured that all awarding bodies we spoke with indicated that they intended to continue to offer sport and public services qualifications in Wales.</p>
2	<p>We shared with 1st4sport the findings relating to the availability of their qualifications through the medium of Welsh and strongly recommended to them that they apply for our Welsh Language Support Grant to make their qualifications available through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>In response to our findings, 1st4sport successfully applied for the Welsh Language Support Grant to make a range of qualifications available through the medium of Welsh. We will continue to engage with 1st4sport to review progress.</p>
3	<p>We met with all other awarding bodies offering sport and public services qualifications and reminded them of the availability of our Welsh Language Support Grant and encouraged them to apply for this grant to make available suitable Welsh-medium sport and public services qualifications.</p>
4	<p>We shared with 1st4sport the findings relating to their quality assurance process in Welsh-medium centres. We strongly recommended to them that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• recruit a suitable Welsh-speaking external quality assurer to support Welsh-medium centres; and• conduct the external quality assurance process through the medium of Welsh when requested by centres. <p>In response to our findings, 1st4sport have informed us that they have appointed a Welsh-speaking external quality assurer and intend to conduct the quality assurance process through the medium of Welsh, when requested by centres. We will continue to engage with 1st4sport to review progress.</p>

5	<p>We shared with Agored Cymru the findings relating to the demand from centres for a suitable level 3 qualification to progress from their Level 2 in Learning in the Outdoors qualification and suggested that they explore the need and demand with centres.</p> <p>In response to our findings, Agored Cymru told us that they would assess the level of demand with centres with a view to considering the development of a suitable level 3 qualification.</p>
6	<p>We shared with Pearson the concerns from Welsh-medium sixth form secondary schools that their assignment checking service was not available through the medium of Welsh. They have confirmed that this service is available through the medium of Welsh for sport and public services assignments.</p> <p>We have contacted all stakeholders involved in the Review to inform them of this outcome and we will use our new bulletin on Welsh-medium qualifications to ensure that this is communicated to all centres.</p>
7	<p>We shared the findings of the Review with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and brought to their attention the findings relating to Welsh-medium qualifications. We will continue to engage with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and update them on the new sport and public services qualifications that are available through the medium of Welsh.</p>
8	<p>In response to the findings relating to the manageability of assessments in legacy BTEC qualifications, we met with Pearson and were told that the new BTEC Level 3 Nationals qualifications had been designed to include fewer units and more streamlined assessments to address concerns about the manageability of assessment. They also told us that the essential assessment guidance had been developed to limit the number of assessments required for each unit.</p>
<p>Actions we will take</p>	
9	<p>Using our new bulletin on Welsh-medium qualifications, we will effectively communicate with centres about the sport and public services qualifications that are being developed or that are available partly through the medium of Welsh.</p>
10	<p>We will continue to engage with awarding bodies to ensure that the information on the Qualifications in Wales (QiW) database relating to the availability of Welsh-medium qualifications is current and accurate.</p>
11	<p>We will share the evidence of the Review with Welsh Government and bring to their attention the finding relating to the demand from work-based learning providers for higher level exercise and fitness apprenticeship frameworks.</p>

Chapter 2: Sector overview

In this chapter, we present data relating to sport and public services qualifications offered in Wales.

10. Desktop analysis of the QiW database indicated that there were 185 approved/designated sport and public services qualifications available in Wales. Analysis of data from Welsh Government’s Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) and Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR) databases for 2018/19 showed that over 11,000 qualification entries were recorded for learners in maintained secondary schools, further education colleges and work-based learning providers across Wales (Table 1¹).

Table 1: The number of approved/designated qualifications and entries across provider types in 2018-19

	Number of approved/designated qualifications	Entries in further education	Entries in secondary schools	Entries in work-based learning	Total Entries
Entry Level	4	10	30	0	40
Level 1	24	395	385	560	1,340
Level 1/2	11	535	1,345	0	1,880
Level 2	71	710	2,425	495	3,630
Level 3	75	2,535	1,205	490	4,230
Total	185	4,185	5,390	1,545	11,120

¹Source: Qualifications Wales’ analysis of Welsh Government PLASC and LLWR data for 2018-19 entries (entry numbers have been rounded to the nearest 5 and any figures less than 5 but greater than 0 is suppressed with *). The data includes qualification entries in maintained secondary schools for pre-16 learners. Totals have been rounded independently and therefore may not match the sum of rounded figures. GCSE and GCE AS/A level qualifications are not included in this data as they were out of scope of the Review.

11. In 2018/19, there were 11 awarding bodies offering sport and public services qualifications in Wales. Pearson offered most of the sport and public services qualifications and accounted for 73% of entries in 2018/19 (Table 2¹).

Table 2: The number of entries in 2018/19 per qualification level across awarding bodies

Awarding Body	Entry Level	Level 1	Level 1/2	Level 2	Level 3	Total	Market share
Pearson	30	940	1,465	2,135	3,510	8,075	73%
SLQ	0	350	0	620	65	1,035	9%
YMCA Awards	0	30	0	370	335	735	7%
Active IQ	0	0	0	390	225	615	5%
WJEC-CBAC	0	0	410	0	0	410	4%
OCR	10	0	0	35	30	75	1%
NOCN	0	0	0	40	0	40	<1%
SFJ Awards	0	0	0	0	35	35	<1%
1st4sport	0	0	0	20	10	30	<1%
NCFE	0	20	0	*	0	25	<1%
VTCT	0	0	0	0	20	20	<1%
Agored Cymru	0	0	0	20	0	20	<1%
City and Guilds of London Institute	0	0	0	0	*	*	<1%

12. The sport and public services qualifications with the highest number of entries for 2018/19 across further education colleges, work-based learning providers and maintained secondary schools in Wales are shown in table 3 below (Table 3¹). The data shows that the six qualifications with the highest number of entries in 2018-19 were offered by Pearson.

Table 3: Qualifications with the highest overall entries for 2018/19

Qualification Title	Entries in further education	Entries in work-based learning	Entries in secondary schools	Total entries
Pearson BTEC Level 2 Extended Certificate in Teamwork and Personal Development in the Community	30	0	1,050	1,080
Pearson BTEC Level 1/ Level 2 First Award in Sport	*	*	580	585
Pearson BTEC Level 3 90-credit Diploma in Sport	515	0	45	560
Pearson BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Sport	475	0	65	540
Pearson BTEC Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Sport	170	0	335	505
Pearson BTEC Level 2 Certificate in Leadership Through Sport	10	0	470	480
Pearson BTEC Level 3 90-credit Diploma in Public Services	460	0	10	470
WJEC Level 1/2 Award in Sport	0	0	410	410
SLQ Level 2 Qualification in Community Sports Leadership	120	0	270	390
Pearson BTEC Level 2 Certificate in Teamwork and Personal Development in the Community	0	0	355	355

Chapter 3: Review methodology

In this chapter, we outline how we conducted this phase 2 sector review.

Scope and organisation

13. We addressed the aims of the Review through:

- in-depth interviews with learning providers, awarding bodies, employers, sector bodies and wider stakeholders; and
- an online learner questionnaire.

14. We focused on sport and public services qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3 that were eligible for use on publicly funded programmes of learning for learners over the age of 16 and regulated by Qualifications Wales. We did not review GCSE or GCE AS/A Level Physical Education as these were considered out of scope of the Review. However, we were open to hearing views about all relevant sport and public services qualifications.

Stakeholder engagement

15. We conducted in-depth online interviews with a range of relevant stakeholders, including:

- representatives from further education colleges (lecturers, heads of the relevant departments and senior leaders);
- senior managers and assessors from work-based learning providers;
- teachers and heads of the relevant departments in maintained sixth form secondary schools;
- employers (usually senior managers or training managers);
- awarding bodies (usually heads of departments, responsible officers, or development managers); and
- wider stakeholders such as sector bodies, universities and Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

16. In total, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 58 stakeholders (Table 4). The interviews were conducted online using Microsoft Teams due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Interviews were conducted by a small team of staff from Qualifications Wales between September 2020 and February 2021.

Table 4: Stakeholder sample

11 Further education colleges	4 Work-based learning providers	11 Sixth form secondary schools	13 Employers	9 Awarding bodies	10 Wider stakeholders
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17. Stakeholder interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed by the Review Team. Once all transcripts had been analysed, reviewers came together to agree cross-cutting themes that emerged across the groups of participants. Emerging themes were shared with all members of staff who had conducted interviews in an open process, where key findings or assumptions could be challenged and discussed.

Online questionnaire

18. To gather learners' viewpoints of their qualifications, a questionnaire was made available via the Smart Survey platform for eight weeks between January and February 2021. A survey was deemed the most suitable method to gather learners' views as face-to-face interaction was not possible due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the survey could be completed when convenient to avoid any additional burden on learners and centres.

19. The survey was available on the Qualifications Wales website and was promoted on social media. The survey link was also sent to all those that had participated in the Review. The questionnaire included open and closed-response questions which focused on the lines of inquiry of the Review. Responses were analysed by at least two members of the Review Team.

20. We received a total of 382 full and 254 partial responses. Many respondents were 16–19-year-olds who were studying in further education colleges (79%), but we also received responses from learners studying in sixth form secondary schools and work-based learning providers. There was an almost even split between those studying sports qualifications and those studying public services qualifications.

Methodological considerations

21. Although it was not possible to engage with everyone, we are confident that we have been able to secure a sample that is representative of the stakeholder groups. As with previous sector reviews, it has been encouraging that there has been a high level of consistency between the findings emerging from different stakeholders.
22. We engaged with key awarding bodies who offer sport and public services qualifications at the beginning of the Review to discuss their plans for qualifications within the scope of the Review. We then conducted follow up meetings with the awarding bodies to discuss the emerging findings and potential solutions.
23. Our engagement with stakeholders, and the responses to our online questionnaire, provide us with useful insight into the opinions and perceptions of those involved. We presented accurately the opinions expressed, but we were not always able to validate or evaluate the accuracy of those opinions.

The findings

In Chapters 4 to 7, we outline the findings of the Review relating to:

- Chapter 4: The overall range of qualifications
- Chapter 5: Welsh-medium qualifications
- Chapter 6: The content and currency of qualifications
- Chapter 7: Assessment

Chapter 4: The overall range of qualifications

In this chapter, we report on the findings that relate to the range of sport and public services qualifications available in Wales.

The range of qualifications

24. We were told by learning providers that the range of qualifications available allows learners and learning providers to access suitable sport and public services qualifications. Most further education colleges and sixth form secondary schools offer sport and public services qualifications through Pearson, although a few further education colleges told us they also offer specific exercise and fitness qualifications, from YMCA Awards and Active IQ, to provide learners with a pathway to employment. Pearson offer most public services qualifications in Wales although one college was also delivering a public services qualification from SFJ Awards.

“I think that the qualifications that are out there allow us to have a real good choice and a good range.”

Teacher in sixth form secondary school

“I would say ... [the range of qualifications] meets the needs of our learners.”

Lecturer in further education college

25. A few learning providers suggested that they would like more than one awarding body to offer public services qualifications, as presently they are only offered by Pearson, and they would like a greater choice of qualifications to meet their needs. However, when we interviewed awarding bodies, we were told by a few that they had withdrawn public services qualifications as there was limited demand from learning providers in Wales.

“There’s a lot of students want to get into [Public Services]. So, I think there’s... scope in the market to have another awarding body to perhaps produce another option.”

Lecturer in further education college

26. Responses to the learner survey suggested that learners would like the Pearson BTEC level 3 public services qualifications to cover a wider range of roles within public services, as they wanted to progress to specific jobs, such as the ambulance service, armed services or fire and rescue services.

“It does match but I wish it focused more on specific roles in the [Uniformed Public Services] i.e. Ambulance Service.”

Learner

27. Sixth form secondary schools reported that they primarily offer qualifications from Pearson, Agored Cymru or WJEC. Most sixth form secondary schools that we interviewed had been delivering the legacy Pearson BTEC Level 3 Sport (2010) qualifications which have been withdrawn. There was an almost even split between those who had moved to the BTEC Level 3 Sport (2016) and the new BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Sport (2019) qualifications. All sixth form secondary schools delivering public services qualifications told us they were moving from the legacy BTEC (2010) qualification, which is being withdrawn soon, to the new BTEC Level 3 National in Uniformed Protective Services (2020) qualification.

28. Several learning providers expressed a desire for additional outdoor activity qualifications, particularly at level 3. A few sixth form secondary schools reported that they are using the Agored Cymru Level 2 in Learning in the Outdoors qualification, but they told us that they would like a suitable progression route to level 3. They said that the Agored Cymru qualification at level 2 was outdoor specific rather than being combined with sport and if a suitable progression qualification was available at level 3, their learners would be able to choose sport and outdoor activities as separate post-16 options.

“We’ve looked at a few Agored [Cymru] level 2 courses which look really interesting. If they could expand those onto a level 3, you’d have that linear [progression].”

Teacher in sixth form secondary school

29. A few learning providers we interviewed told us that the new Pearson BTEC Level 3 National in Sport and Outdoor Activities (2019) qualification is aligned to the Institute of Outdoor Learning standards, and this was welcomed as these standards were written in conjunction with employers in the outdoor activities industry. They said that the qualification contains a meaningful amount of content on outdoor education.

“The 2019 [BTEC] Sport and Outdoor, that was great for us, because we were able to put a meaningful amount of outdoor education in.”

Lecturer in further education college

“2019 BTEC in sport and outdoor activities as I understand it, is fully aligned with those occupational standards [Institute of Outdoor Learning], which is fantastic.”

Employer

30. Work-based learning providers told us that they work with a range of different awarding bodies such as 1st4sport, Active IQ, Pearson, and YMCA Awards and primarily deliver qualifications that are part of apprenticeship frameworks. We were told that there are a range of suitable qualifications available but there is a limited range of qualifications on the Outdoor Programmes framework.

31. We were told by work-based learning providers that there is demand, from employers, for specialist qualifications such as yoga, pilates and strength and conditioning. Although these qualifications are available, they are not part of apprenticeship frameworks and, therefore, most work-based learning providers do not offer them or only offer them as commercial courses. In response to the learner survey question on what could be done to improve sport and public services qualifications, learners also requested additional specialist qualifications.

“Active IQ deliver a Level 3 Strength and Conditioning and a Level 4 Strength and Conditioning as well yoga and Pilates. There’s also a Level 4 Certificate in Personal Training which has more of ‘a medical and mental well-being’ side in it. However, there are no apprenticeship frameworks or funding for them despite the demand from employers.”

Tutor in work-based learning provider

32. Several work-based learning providers and further education colleges said Level 2 Fitness Instructing and Level 3 Personal Training qualifications, offered by Active IQ and YMCA Awards, were fit for purpose as they allowed learners to enter the health and fitness industry. They said that the qualifications were up-to-date and relevant to learners as they were an entry requirement for employment. This view was also supported by employers who said these were essential qualifications for entry to the health and fitness industry.

“Level 2s and 3s, the fitness instructor and the personal trainer, I think they’re really relevant. They’re really popular, and they really fit the bill in terms of where people are at.”

Tutor in work-based learning provider

“YMCA [Level 2 Fitness Instructor] pushes them into the industry straight away, because they’re qualified at level 2, and they can practice.”

Lecturer in further education college

Progression routes

33. Several work-based learning providers told us that current sports apprenticeship frameworks only progress to level 3 and there is a demand for higher level frameworks from employers. They explained that they currently use generic management frameworks and deliver them within a sports context to meet employer needs and provide learners with higher level qualifications. However, this is not always suitable as not all learners want to progress to management roles. The Level 4 Outdoor Practices and Management apprenticeship framework is available, but it appears that this is not used and the qualifications on the framework are no longer available for public funding.

“Only thing we have available for leisure to move forward as a level 4, depending on their role, is ILM Management Level 4 and the things such as that. Whereas obviously... not everybody goes into management.”

Tutor in work-based learning provider

“I have to admit, when I looked at the Welsh [Outdoor Programmes] apprenticeships, there was a level 3 and a level 4. The level 4 essentially is on the shelf because nobody is taking it up.”

Employer

34. Work-based learning providers told us that the Level 2 Activity Leadership apprenticeship framework was a good introduction to how the sector works and covers basics such as health and safety. They also told us they were able to provide learners with additional qualifications, such as the National Governing Body awards, which support learners' progression into employment, as they are entry requirements and valued by employers.

“The [National Vocational Qualification] gives them a framework to work within in terms of leading the activity and then we link in the National Governing Body qualification, somebody could leave an Activity Leadership [apprenticeship] after one year, they could have probably 10 to 12 extra qualifications on top of their apprenticeship.”

Tutor in work-based learning provider

35. Many further education colleges and sixth form secondary schools commented that the Pearson BTEC level 3 sport and public services qualifications allowed learners to progress to higher level qualifications in further and higher education. Learners were asked, in the learner survey, if the qualification they were studying was relevant to their future study or work and 84% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed.

“[Pearson BTEC Level 3 Sport (2016)] prepares young people to go on to university and I suppose that’s one of the marks of success, and it does seem to prepare them very well.”

Teacher in sixth form secondary school

36. A few further education colleges said that the new Pearson BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Sport (2019) qualifications allowed learners to progress to employment as they include industry focused content. Pearson have also introduced a suite of BTEC level 2 industry skills qualifications including sport and public services qualifications to support progression into employment.

“When the new [Pearson BTEC Level 3 Sports] specifications were released, they actually bridge a lot of those skills gaps, which is you know, really promising with the introduction of the CIMPSA accredited qualifications. So that’s been a real positive for us, and we’re quite confident now that we can send some learners into [Higher Education], but also there’s the opportunity for them to move directly into employment.”

Lecturer in further education college

37. A few further education colleges and sixth form secondary schools told us that a few learners have difficulty progressing from the Pearson level 1/2 sport and public services qualifications to level 3 qualifications. We were told that learners are awarded either a level 1 or a level 2 qualification depending on their overall grade and if a learner achieves a level 1 qualification it can affect whether they can progress to the level 3 qualification. However, most learning providers said that if a learner did achieve a level 1, the learner would usually transfer to another subject area such as business studies or travel and tourism.

“Learners who get a level 1 pass on the [Level] 1/2 qualification struggle with their progression route as they would not be ready for level 3.”

Lecturer in further education college

38. Several further education colleges commented on the Pearson BTEC Level 1 Vocational Studies qualification and told us that the qualification supports learners to develop transferable skills and progress to higher level qualifications.

“[Level 1 Vocational Studies] is about developing those skills, both academic and personal skills that help them. Things like organisational skills as well, because of meeting deadlines. Those are the type of skills that when you move into level 2 and 3, they’re really important and they help them to pace out their workload so that they’re more successful.”

Lecturer in further education college

39. Many employers that we interviewed told us that softer skills such as effective communication and customer service skills were highly valued. They also told us that, within the public services, practical skills and life experience were important. Responses from the learner survey suggest that learners recognise these skills as being relevant to their future careers.

“The transferable skills, in particular communication skills and the ability to mentor, are very important. The transferable skills are more important than having a specific qualification.”

Employer

“The aspect of the qualifications that is going to be the most relevant to my career is the skills and qualities that we learn such as communication, leadership and many other skills within the public services.”

Learner

40. Employers that we interviewed told us that level 3 public services qualifications are not a pre-requisite for entry into employment within the sector. However, they did say that the qualifications were valuable for learners’ development and enabled learners to discuss their experiences in professional discussions in interviews.

“[Public Services] it’s not a requirement prior, but you can imagine that when they got to the interview what sets you apart from the others, that’s when that would come in.”

Employer

41. The Fire and Rescue Services told us that the new SFJ Awards Level 3 Diploma in Emergency Fire and Rescue Services qualification used on the Emergency Fire Service Operations apprenticeship is fit for purpose. They told us that all their new starters complete this qualification and that gave parity across Wales and allowed staff to move between the different services.

“The dual honours [Level 3 Diploma in Emergency Fire and Rescue Services] is being used by Mid and West and by North Wales as well, so it’s an all Wales [qualification] ... by using the same awarding body, it means that there’s more parity across all of Wales.”

Employer

Chapter 5: Welsh-medium qualifications

In this chapter, we present the findings relating to Welsh-medium qualifications.

Availability of Welsh-medium qualifications

42. The availability of Welsh-medium qualifications is one of the two primary considerations of phase 2 sector reviews. Welsh-medium sixth form secondary schools emphasised the importance of having a range of suitable sport and public services qualifications available through the medium of Welsh. There was some concern expressed about the future availability of sport and public services qualifications through the medium of Welsh.

“[Pearson level 3 Sport and Public Services] qualifications are vital to us as a Welsh-medium secondary school. We’ve had major concerns over the past couple of years really about the availability of these courses moving forward.”

Teacher in sixth form secondary school

43. We were told by Welsh-medium work-based learning providers that they had to translate specifications and resources for the 1st4sport qualifications that they offer. They told us that they are a small team, and as they offer several 1st4sport qualifications, across different apprenticeship frameworks, this significantly impacted on their time.

“The awarding body doesn’t produce it all in Welsh. We’ve had to translate everything ourselves. So, all of our supporting materials, all of the learner resources, everything, we’ve had to produce that ourselves bilingually.”

Tutor in work-based learning provider

44. We shared these findings with 1st4sport and explained the impact on work-based learning providers. Consequently, 1st4sport successfully applied for our Welsh Language Support Grant to make a range of sport and outdoor programme qualifications available through the medium of Welsh.

45. When Pearson introduced their new BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Sport (2019) and Uniformed Protective Services (2020) qualifications they successfully applied for the Qualifications Wales Welsh Language Support Grant. These qualifications have been made available through the medium of Welsh which learning providers told us was very positive.

46. However, a few further education colleges and Welsh-medium sixth form schools told us they had moved to the Pearson BTEC Level 3 Sport (2016) qualifications which have not been translated and include externally examined units. One sixth form secondary school told us that they would offer a bilingual approach, if necessary, where the externally examined unit would be taught and assessed in English and the remainder of the qualification in Welsh.

“It is proving a little bit of a challenge at the moment because the 2016 spec that we’re offering from BTEC currently hasn’t been translated so the exams are actually not available in Welsh at the moment.”

Lecturer in further education college

“Is it a balance of providing the best thing that we can for the learners, and if that means one of the examined units being through the medium of English and the exam being through the medium of English, then, you know, so be it because at the end of the day the learners are the most important people in all of this.”

Teacher in sixth form secondary school

47. Several further education colleges told us there was a growing demand for public services qualifications through the medium of Welsh and they had seen an increased number of learners coming from Welsh-medium secondary schools. They discussed their plans for developing their Welsh-medium provision in this area.

“We have noticed over the last two or three years there has been a definite increase, certainly within public services, the number of learners coming to us from Welsh-medium schools.”

Lecturer in further education college

48. We were also told by employers in public services that Welsh language skills are an important requirement for entry into the public services sector.

“It’s a desirable criterion, but everybody now coming into policing, or if you get promoted whilst you’re in policing, has to attain a minimum of a level 2 qualification in Welsh.”

Employer

49. A few employers told us that there are only a limited number of Welsh-speaking outdoor activity instructors. Two of the universities we interviewed told us they are now delivering modules through the medium of Welsh on the outdoor programme degree courses to encourage Welsh-speaking learners to continue their studies through the medium of Welsh.

“There is a gap in the market for Welsh speakers in the outdoor pursuits sector.”

Employer

50. We were told by several learning providers of the challenges of offering qualifications through the medium of Welsh. A few further education colleges explained that small class sizes can lead to a different learning experience when qualifications involve group work. However, one further education college explained that they were exploring the use of online platforms for Welsh-medium learners so that they could create a viable group across different college campuses.

“One of the advantages of going remote is in the future we could combine all the Welsh-speakers [at different campuses], put them together in a Welsh-medium provision and get our Welsh-speaking staff to deliver.”

Lecturer in further education college

51. Awarding bodies also highlighted small numbers of learners undertaking qualifications in Welsh as a challenge as it is not always financially viable to make all qualifications available in Welsh.

52. A few further education colleges stated that some of their Welsh-speaking staff can lack confidence in delivering qualifications fully bilingually or through the medium of Welsh. Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol told us that they have additional funding to increase the number of Welsh-speaking tutors for public services and they were encouraging learning providers to apply for the funding.

“Even with our Welsh-speaking staff, it’s very difficult for them to have the confidence to actually teach and deliver through Welsh.”

Lecturer in further education college

53. Another challenge identified by further education colleges was the reluctance of learners to be assessed through the medium of Welsh. They told us that some learners would choose to take oral assessments in Welsh but could lack confidence in submitting written assessments in Welsh so would prefer to do so in English.

Assessment through the medium of Welsh

54. As well as the concerns raised about the availability of assessments in the medium of Welsh for 1st4Sport qualifications (see paragraphs 43 to 44 above) concerns were also raised that 1st4sport did not undertake the external quality assurance process through the medium of Welsh at Welsh-medium centres. This required the centre to verbally translate learners' work and complete internal verification reports in English so the external quality assurer could access them which was not an effective process for the centre.

“[External Quality Assurers] ... they are really supportive, I can't say that they're not, but I have to sit there and translate for them and point them, so they're like, 'Where can I collect a criterion?' 'Show me where's the evidence that meets this,' 'Can you explain that evidence to me?' so it's a hell of a process. I write [internal quality assurance] reports in English so at least they can see that aspect.”

Tutor in work-based learning provider

55. In response to our findings, 1st4sport have informed us that they have now appointed a Welsh-speaking external quality assurer and intend to conduct the external quality assurance process through the medium of Welsh, when requested by centres. We will continue to engage with 1st4sport to monitor and review progress.

56. A few Welsh-medium centres commented that when they are allocated standards verifiers, they check with Pearson to ensure they are allocated a Welsh-speaking standards verifier. They said that the reason for this is they have previously been allocated English-speaking verifiers even though Pearson were aware that they were a Welsh-medium centre. A few secondary schools told us they are encouraging their staff to apply to become standards verifiers to increase the number of Welsh-speaking standards verifiers available.

“It'll always be a case of we'll be contacted first by an English-medium [standards verifier] and then we have to remind Pearson that we are in fact a Welsh-medium school.”

Teacher in sixth form secondary school

57. Learning providers were not always fully aware of the services available to them in relation to support of Welsh-medium assessment. For example, a few Welsh-medium sixth form secondary schools told us that the assignment checking service provided by Pearson was not available through the medium of Welsh. However, we subsequently checked with Pearson, and they have told us that the service can be used with Welsh-medium assignments for sport and public services qualifications.

Availability of Welsh-medium resources

58. A few further education colleges and sixth form secondary schools explained that more Welsh-medium resources were being made available by a few awarding bodies which they said was very positive. We also spoke with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol who are developing Welsh-medium resources for use in post-16 qualifications. They told us they had developed several bilingual resources for level 3 public services qualifications with the Blended Learning Consortium, and these were now available on Hwb. They explained that the next phase of the project will focus on promoting the use of Hwb to further education colleges.

“There’s more and more [Welsh-medium] resources coming through, which is positive.”

Lecturer in further education college

59. Several Welsh-medium sixth form secondary schools that we interviewed told us that they work with other local Welsh-medium secondary schools to share resources. They also told us that for public services qualifications they combine learners from different schools to make courses viable. A few further education colleges told us they had received funding for the development of materials and resources through the medium of Welsh to support the delivery of qualifications.

“We’ve had some funding and we’ve been working with partner colleges to develop our own [Welsh-medium resources].”

Lecturer in further education college

“There’s a lot of work going on between schools, and collaborative work, working together, especially for this new qualification [Pearson BTEC Level 3 Uniformed Protective Services 2020].”

Teacher in sixth form secondary school

60. Those learners who were studying their qualifications through the medium of Welsh told us that they had sufficient Welsh-medium resources from centres and awarding bodies, but they indicated that there were limited wider resources and information compared to those available in English.

“I receive all the information and materials I need to complete my qualification through the medium of Welsh, but it is more difficult to find additional information through the medium of Welsh.”

Learner

Chapter 6: Content of qualifications

In this chapter, we present the findings relating to the content and currency of sport and public services qualifications.

61. Most learning providers told us that the sports and public services qualifications they offer include up-to-date and relevant content. A few learning providers expressed a desire for additional content to be included in sports qualifications to reflect the developments in mental health awareness, a view that was supported by employers. Sports learners also recognised the need for mental health awareness to be included in the content of qualifications.

“I would say something that’s not necessarily built into any of the qualifications we deliver on is, for example, units or elements within mental health.”

Tutor in work-based learning provider

“Include a section on mental health and stress management as a [Personal Trainer] we all know that if you exercise it helps to improve mental health so it would be good to have a section that is part of the qualification so that we can reach and help more people.”

Learner

62. Several learning providers delivering YMCA Awards Level 2 Fitness Instructing and Level 3 Personal Trainer qualifications told us they had been recently updated. They said the new qualifications were more streamlined in terms of content and assessment.

“[YMCA Awards] have spoken to industry experts and ... come up with a slightly kind of streamline in terms of all their assessments and portfolios and also the criteria have all changed [and] is more relevant.”

Lecturer in further education college

63. One work-based learning provider told us that some units on the 1st4sport Level 3 Sports Development qualification were very demanding compared with similar qualifications at the same level.

“We do have bigger problems with the Level 3 Sports Development ... because ... there’s a big gap between [it] and the Level 3 in Outdoor Programmes NVQ. Some of the units are clearly on level four or five ... very heavy going for a learner who’s just done a level two in Activity Leadership [to] then go on to that.”

Tutor in work-based learning provider

64. As part of the learner survey, we asked learners what could be done to improve the sport or public services qualifications they were undertaking. A common response from learners was that they would value more practical content in their qualifications. However, they acknowledged that their access to the practical elements of the courses had been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and this may not be a true reflection of the qualification content in a typical year.

“I’m happy with my course overall but would like more practical lessons but it’s obviously difficult right now.”

Learner

65. Further education colleges said that the new Pearson BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Sport (2019) and Uniformed Protective Services (2020) qualifications were up-to-date and fit for purpose compared with the legacy BTEC (2010) qualifications.

“I think [Pearson BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Sport and Uniformed Protective Services qualifications] are a lot more up to date and I think they offer a lot more industry experience and insight than the previous specifications do as well.”

Lecturer in further education college

66. Several sixth form secondary schools and further education colleges told us that they valued the range of optional units available on the Pearson BTEC level 3 sport and public services qualifications as it allowed them to tailor the courses to meet their needs. They also appreciated the broader range of units within the Level 3 Uniformed Protective Services (2020) qualification which now targets wider job roles such as paramedics and the ambulance services. The learner survey revealed that many learners were also happy with the range of units covered in their qualifications and often stated specific units such as anatomy and physiology, outdoor activities and crime and the legal system, as the most relevant part of their course.

“I think the range of optional units [Pearson BTEC level 3 qualifications] that we do have to select from allows us to make it specific to our students and the facilities that we’ve got to support them with that as well.”

Teacher in sixth form secondary school

Chapter 7: Assessment

In this chapter, we report on the findings that relate to the assessment of sport and public services qualifications.

67. Most further education colleges and work-based learning providers told us they used a range of assessment methods, and these allow learners to demonstrate the skills and knowledge necessary to progress to further study, higher education, or employment.

“I think the assessment methods are inclusive for all different learning styles. It promotes independent learning, learning through assessment and embeds the wider transferable employability skills.”

Tutor in work-based learning provider

68. Many work-based learning providers said that the amount of assessment included in the qualifications they delivered was manageable and the ability to cross-reference assessment criteria helped to ensure learners were not over-burdened by assessments. They said that the assessments required for exercise and fitness qualifications were relevant as they reflected the skills and knowledge needed for working within the health and fitness industry.

“Not too much assessment and able to cross-reference within the apprenticeship framework. [We] use an assessment plan that allows for cross referencing learning outcomes and criteria across multiple qualifications.”

Tutor in work-based learning provider

69. A few further education colleges recognised that staff may require more training to give them the confidence to use different assessment methods. They told us that they would welcome additional support from awarding bodies on the types of evidence that could be used to cover assessment criteria. We discussed this issue with Pearson, and they told us they would be providing delivery guides to support assessment methods for the new Level 3 BTEC Nationals.

“[We] need to develop our staff teams to think of new, innovative, creative ways to assess learners and to give them the opportunity to show that they have the knowledge through vlogging, through audio feedback and things like that.”

Lecturer in further education college

70. A few further education colleges commented that the amount of content in the new Pearson BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Sport (2019) and Uniformed Protective Services (2020) qualifications meant that teachers and lecturers may focus on assessment rather than teaching and learning and that assessment could become unmanageable. However, other learning providers said that the amount of content allowed for deeper exploration of the subject and enabled them to create work-based projects making assessments more manageable for learners.

“From a learners’ perspective, it allows for deeper exploration into the units, and also they start to realise the cross-cutting themes between units as well.”

Lecturer in further education college

“The qualifications and the assessments are now probably heavier. The timings and the funding that we get means that we haven’t got as much time to deliver it. And a lot of the delivery is probably now focused around the assessment.”

Lecturer in further education college

71. Further education colleges and sixth form secondary schools expressed differing views on the role of examinations in vocational qualifications. Several further education colleges and sixth form secondary schools told us that examinations do not suit all learners, particularly those following vocational routes at level 2.

“I think that’s really unfair, because that’s grading their level based on their ability to do an exam and their exam skills, not their ability to do sport and public services at level 2.”

Lecturer in further education college

72. However, a few further education colleges expressed the opinion that Pearson BTEC level 3 sport and public services qualifications were more robust and rigorous with the inclusion of externally set assessments.

“I mean it’s not a bad thing to have those assessments. I think it is really good and it introduces more robustness and rigour into the [BTEC level 3] qualification.”

Lecturer in further education college

73. A few learning providers also expressed concern about the examination schedule for the Pearson BTEC qualifications which are January and June of each academic year. Learning providers told us that they enter learners for the January examination sitting so that they have a chance to re-sit in the June, if necessary. However, they said that entering learners for the January window placed a lot of additional pressure on learners who may require time to settle into the course and can lead to a focus on teaching for the exam. As a result, some further education colleges had changed qualifications from Pearson to the OCR Level 2 Sport (2012) qualifications.

“They’ve only been with us for maybe 12 weeks. The [examination] structure of that doesn’t feel right. It puts a lot of pressure on the learners.”

Lecturer in further education college

74. Most learning providers told us they were satisfied with the level of support that they receive from awarding bodies. Several further education colleges and sixth form secondary schools stated that they would appreciate more support from awarding bodies for subject specific topics and assessments. They also told us that they would welcome more constructive feedback from external quality assurers relating to assessment evidence.

Chapter 8: Actions

In this chapter, we outline the actions that we have taken, and intend to take to address the findings of the Review.

Actions we have taken	
1	<p>We shared with awarding bodies the findings relating to the range and content of qualifications and asked them about their current and future plans for offering sport and public services qualifications in Wales. We asked them for assurances that they intend to continue offering sport and public services qualifications in Wales. We were reassured that all awarding bodies we spoke with indicated that they intended to continue to offer sport and public services qualifications in Wales.</p>
2	<p>We shared with 1st4sport the findings relating to the availability of their qualifications through the medium of Welsh and strongly recommended to them that they apply for our Welsh Language Support Grant to make their qualifications available through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>In response to our findings, 1st4sport successfully applied for the Welsh Language Support Grant to make a range of qualifications available through the medium of Welsh. We will continue to engage with 1st4sport to review progress.</p>
3	<p>We met with all other awarding bodies offering sport and public services qualifications and reminded them of the availability of our Welsh Language Support Grant and encouraged them to apply for this grant to make available suitable Welsh-medium sport and public services qualifications.</p>
4	<p>We shared with 1st4sport the findings relating to their quality assurance process in Welsh-medium centres. We strongly recommended to them that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• recruit a suitable Welsh-speaking external quality assurer to support Welsh-medium centres; and• conduct the external quality assurance process through the medium of Welsh when requested by centres. <p>In response to our findings, 1st4sport have informed us that they have appointed a Welsh-speaking external quality assurer and intend to conduct the quality assurance process through the medium of Welsh, when requested by centres. We will continue to engage with 1st4sport to review progress.</p>

5	<p>We shared with Agored Cymru the findings relating to the demand from centres for a suitable level 3 qualification to progress from their Level 2 in Learning in the Outdoors qualification and suggested that they explore the need and demand with centres.</p> <p>In response to our findings, Agored Cymru told us that they would assess the level of demand with centres with a view to considering the development of a suitable level 3 qualification.</p>
6	<p>We shared with Pearson the concerns from Welsh-medium sixth form secondary schools that their assignment checking service was not available through the medium of Welsh. They have confirmed that this service is available through the medium of Welsh for sport and public services assignments.</p> <p>We have contacted all stakeholders involved in the Review to inform them of this outcome and we will use our new bulletin on Welsh-medium qualifications to ensure that this is communicated to all centres.</p>
7	<p>We shared the findings of the Review with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and brought to their attention the findings relating to Welsh-medium qualifications. We will continue to engage with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and update them on the new sport and public services qualifications that are available through the medium of Welsh.</p>
8	<p>In response to the findings relating to the manageability of assessments in legacy BTEC qualifications, we met with Pearson and were told that the new BTEC Level 3 Nationals qualifications had been designed to include fewer units and more streamlined assessments to address concerns about the manageability of assessment. They also told us that the essential assessment guidance had been developed to limit the number of assessments required for each unit.</p>
<p><i>Actions we will take</i></p>	
9	<p>Using our new bulletin on Welsh-medium qualifications, we will effectively communicate with centres about the sport and public services qualifications that are being developed or that are available partly through the medium of Welsh.</p>
10	<p>We will continue to engage with awarding bodies to ensure that the information on the Qualifications in Wales (QiW) database relating to the availability of Welsh-medium qualifications is current and accurate.</p>
11	<p>We will share the evidence of the Review with Welsh Government and bring to their attention the finding relating to the demand from work-based learning providers for higher level exercise and fitness apprenticeship frameworks.</p>

Conclusion

We believe that the actions we have taken, as well as those we will take, will address the issues identified by the Review, as far as reasonably possible. We are confident that these actions will ensure an appropriate range of qualifications, including Welsh-medium qualifications, are available to meet the needs of learners in Wales.

We would like to extend a sincere thank you to all those who gave their time to participate in the Review and provided such invaluable expertise and insight. Their knowledge and understanding of sport and public services qualifications helped establish a robust evidence base to structure the report. We value every contribution made to support the Review.



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