

**All Wales Centre for  
Governor Training and Research**

**LEA TRAINING PROVISION  
FOR SCHOOL GOVERNORS  
IN WALES**

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

This study, “to research current LEA training programmes and practices”, was undertaken by the All Wales Centre of Excellence for Governor Training and Research, and commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government.

Its purpose was to provide information upon which to base the production of national governor training protocols.

The findings of the study are based on information from a questionnaire survey (Appendix 1) sent to all 22 Welsh unitary authorities in November 2003, and the governor training programmes from a sample group (13/22, 60%) of LEAs in Wales for the academic years 2002-2003 and 2003-2004.

## 2 PERSONNEL – LEA GOVERNOR SUPPORT UNITS

### 2.1 LEA Governor Support Units

A number of factors concerning LEA support for school governors, as expressed by size of LEA Governor Support Units, are discernible from the figures shown in Table 1: Staffing levels in LEA Governor Support Units:

LEAs were grouped into categories according to the number of schools, in order to facilitate comparison between LEAs of similar size.

Table 1: Staffing Levels in LEA Governor Support Units

No of schools	LEA	No of full-time staff	No of part-time staff	Staff whose sole responsibility is governor support	Staff with other responsibilities, but prime role is governor support	Staff with some responsibility for governor support, but prime role elsewhere
0 – 49	Blaenau Gwent	-	2	-	-	2
	Merthyr Tydfil	3	-	-	3	-
	Monmouthshire	2	2	-	4	-
	Torfaen	2	-	1	1	-
50 - 69	Anglesey	1	-	-	-	1
	Vale of Glamorgan	2	1	3	-	-
	Newport	4	1	5	-	-
	Denbighshire	-	1	-	-	1
	Bridgend	1	-	-	1	-
70 - 89	Conwy	-	4	-	-	4
	Wrexham	2	-	-	-	2
	Ceredigion	2	3	2	-	3
	Neath Port Talbot	-	4	-	-	4
	Pembrokeshire	3	-	1	2	-
90 – 109	Flintshire	-	2	-	-	2
	Caerphilly	5	2	6	1	-
	Swansea	-	3	-	1	2
110+	Gwynedd	-	3	-	-	3
	Powys	1	2	1	2	-
	Cardiff	5	1	6	-	-
	Rhondda Cynon Taff	11	-	9	2	-
	Carmarthenshire	3	-	-	1	2

There is a great variation in staffing levels linked directly to governor support across LEAs in Wales. At one end of the scale, Rhondda Cynon Taff have 11 full-time staff, while at the other end a number of authorities have only 1 or 2 Governor Support staff.

There is little correlation between the size of the LEA and the number of staff dedicated to Governor Support. Merthyr Tydfil (38 schools) and Monmouthshire (48 schools), for instance, have staffing levels which compare very favourably with authorities in the 90 – 109 schools and 110+ schools brackets

The majority of LEA staff throughout Wales involved in Governor Support have other responsibilities. In 10 LEAs, the main focus of staff with responsibilities in more than one area is Governor Support, while in 11 LEAs the main focus of staff in this position lies elsewhere.

There is no correlation between size of LEA Governor Support Units and the number and variety of courses they offer although a correlation exists between the number of courses offered and size of LEA, with larger LEAs offering more courses.

However, there is some correlation between size of LEA Governor Support Units and governor attendance at training courses. Of the 11 LEAs with fewer than 29% of their governing bodies represented at the majority of courses, 7 have amongst the lowest staffing figures for their governor support teams (see Table 6, page 14).

There is also a correlation between size of LEA Governor Support Units and cancellation rate of training events. Of the 6 LEAs which have course cancellation rates of above 9%, 5 have amongst the lowest staffing figures for their governor support teams (see Table 7, page 15).

## 2.2 Conclusions

While there is no correlation between size of LEA Governor Support Units and the number and variety of courses offered by LEAs, there appears to be a strong link between size of Governor Support Units and governor attendance at training courses and course cancellation rates. In addition, the presence in a Governor Support Unit of a member of staff wholly dedicated to governor support appears to have a positive effect on governor attendance at training courses and cancellation rates.

## 2.3 Recommendation

It is recommended that LEAs address the question of size of Governor Support Units and, in particular, consider the importance of heading the Governor Support Unit with, or including within it, a member of staff whose sole responsibility is governor support.

### **3 PERSONNEL - LINK GOVERNORS**

#### **3.1 Link Governors**

Where they have been appointed, link governors for training are generally expected to liaise between their governing body and LEA Governor Support team on all aspects of governor training, e.g. effectiveness, relevance, location, etc.

In the practice of establishing link governors with a remit for governor training from each school, there is great variation across Wales. Eleven LEAs have adopted this feature. It is noticeable that this feature is most commonly seen in the smallest LEAs (0-49 schools) and appears to a lesser extent in the largest LEAs (90-109 schools and 110+ schools).

There is great uniformity in the support LEAs give to link governors, with 8 of the 11 LEAs with link governors providing them with guidelines and/or role descriptions (see Table 2, page 5). Indeed, 1 LEA ran a training course for link governors in 2002-03, and another LEA ran a similar course in 2003-04.

The majority of LEAs with link governors (8 out of 11) hold regular meetings between link governors and Governor Support Officers. At these meetings all 8 LEAs discuss feedback from training courses, and 7 of them use the opportunity to plan future training programmes. Other topics which have been discussed at 3 LEAs' meetings are mentoring new governors, new legislation, and governing body self-evaluation.

It is worthy of note that of the 11 LEAs with link governors, 6 had a cancellation rate of governor training courses of less than 5%, while 2 had a cancellation rate of between 5 and 9%.

Of the 11 LEAs without link governors, 7 had a cancellation rate less than 5%, and the remainder above 10%. (Of the 2 LEAs with the best attendance rate, one has a link governor scheme in place and the other does not.)

Table 2: Link Governors

No of schools	LEA	Link governors on school governing bodies	Guidelines/role descriptions provided for link governors	Regular meetings of GSOs and Link Governors to:		
				Discuss feedback from training courses	Plan future training courses	Discuss other topics
0 – 49	Blaenau Gwent	✓		✓		
	Merthyr Tydfil	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Monmouthshire	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Torfaen	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
50 - 69	Anglesey					
	Vale of Glamorgan					
	Newport	✓		✓	✓	✓
	Denbighshire					
	Bridgend					
70 - 89	Conwy					
	Wrexham					
	Ceredigion					
	Neath Port Talbot					
	Pembrokeshire	✓		✓	✓	
90 – 109	Flintshire	✓	✓			
	Caerphilly	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Swansea	✓	✓	✓	✓	
110+	Gwynedd					
	Powys	Some	✓			
	Cardiff	✓	✓			
	Rhondda Cynon Taff					
	Carmarthenshire					

### 3.2 Conclusions

It would appear from these findings that link governors' input to amending courses to make them more relevant/attractive to governors appears to have little effect, as there is no correlation between the existence of a link governor scheme in LEAs and attendance at governor training courses or training course cancellation rates. This conclusion applies equally to those LEAs who have scheme in place and hold regular meetings with link governors and those who do not; and to those LEAs who provide guidelines and those who do not.

The LEAs with link governors who score highly in governor attendance at training courses and also have a low cancellation rate are very largely those with Governor Support Units with high staffing levels.

### 3.3 Recommendations

The evidence shows that it is impossible to make any connection between the existence of link governors and attendance at governor training sessions. It is impossible, therefore, to recommend that LEAs adopt the practice as a means of helping shape governor training courses to make them more relevant to governors' needs and, thereby, improving attendance figures. Nevertheless, the imaginative use of link governors with clear job descriptions has the potential to provide a conduit for ongoing dialogue between governing bodies and their training providers (LEAs) which can bring real benefits to training provision. Consequently, the use of a link governor scheme might well merit further investigation.

## 4 WHOLE OR INDIVIDUAL GOVERNING BODY TRAINING

### 4.1 Whole Governing Body Training

The majority of LEAs in Wales (19 out of 22) are now offering whole governing body training and a variety of methods for selecting topics for training are being used. Three LEAs provide a set of topics from which governing bodies may choose, 4 give governing bodies a completely free choice of topics, while 12 offer a combination of these two options. Those LEAs which provide a list of topics for whole governing body training from which governing bodies can choose, report that the most popular choice is, by far, *Governing Body Self-evaluation*. Other topics offered by LEAs for whole governing body training include *Health & Safety Issues*, *School Development Planning*, and *Finance*.

Whole governing body training has received a mixed reception. Of the 10 LEAs who have undertaken monitoring of their whole governing body training, 5 have found it to be more favourably received than other forms of training. One LEA gives a very positive report on their whole governing body training programme. A person has been appointed to lead the initiative, and training is provided in 30 – 45 minute sessions at the end of governing body meetings or, alternatively, as longer discrete sessions, depending on the training topic and the governing body's wishes. The programme has been in place for one year, and is growing in popularity with governing bodies.

However, one LEA which has offered individual governing body training to schools has not had the offer taken up. Another LEA reports that interest in whole governing body training amongst governing bodies is tailing off, with an uptake across the LEA of approximately 10 requests for training per term.

Three LEAs who currently offer whole governing body training have voiced concerns over the sustainability of these programmes.. One pointed to the cost of running courses for individual governing bodies and concluded “the future ... is uncertain”. A second considered the staffing implications owing to “other work commitments” by those LEA officials who provide the training. The third concluded that whole governing body training in their LEA was only possible “because few make requests” to receive this type of training.

The LEAs who do not offer whole governing body training all point to the problems of not having enough staff available to run such a service. One of these LEAs also points to the large number of small schools (fewer than 50 pupils) it has which, given difficulties with staffing, makes the provision of whole governing body training even more difficult.

## 4.2 Conclusions

The majority of LEAs in Wales are offering whole governing body training. Those LEAs who do not do so are not opposed to the service, but are unable to offer it for staffing reasons. However, the popularity of whole governing body training with governing bodies is not universal, and its continued existence is threatened by staffing problems in a number of LEAs. Nevertheless, one LEA which has embraced the opportunity to provide the service is reporting early signs of popularity.

## 4.3 Recommendations

Whole governing body training addresses the problems of poor attendance at centrally run governor training sessions, and the effectiveness of training is enhanced greatly when all members of a governing body receive the same training at the same time.

It is therefore recommended that, despite limited staff resources, LEAs should develop this service.

## **5 LOCATION AND TIMING OF TRAINING COURSES**

### **5.1 Location**

The issue of accessibility of training locations for governors is clearly addressed by Welsh authorities. Five LEAs in Wales usually hold training courses at one central venue, while the remaining 17 run courses at a number of venues, in an attempt to alleviate difficulties of transport which governors might otherwise experience.

### **5.2 Timing**

Of Wales' 22 LEAs, 20 run governor training courses on different days of the week. The majority of these (16) said that there was no marked difference in attendance at courses on different days. For the remaining four, the earlier part of the week was more popular, with one claiming Monday, one Tuesday, one Wednesday and one Tuesday/Wednesday.

However, 11 LEAs linked popularity and good attendance at courses with the subjects of the training session, rather than with the particular day on which a course was run.

Eleven LEAs run courses at different times of the day and six of these declared that evenings were the most popular time. This is obviously linked to work commitments of governors. One LEA, however, pointed to the increasing popularity of morning courses, and six LEAs linked the popularity of, and good attendance at, courses to the course content rather than to the time of day of the training session.

The vast majority of one session training courses run by LEAs (20) last for 1 to 2 hours, with only two LEAs reporting that the majority of their one session courses last for 2 to 3 hours.

### **5.3 Annual Governors Conferences**

Annual governor conferences organised by LEAs are growing in number in Wales. Fifteen LEAs now run such conferences. In a number of authorities, these are well established with seven LEAs having run them for more than 4 years. Three LEAs have organised conferences for 4 years, three for 3 years, two for 2 years, and for two LEAs 2003/2004 is the first year in which an annual conference has been held.

The venues for annual conferences vary. Seven LEAs use schools, while 5 have based conferences at their county hall or civic centre. Three have held their conferences at hotels. One LEA which has regularly used schools as a venue most recently used a theatre, while another is considering moving venue from schools to a hotel.

Attendance at conferences varies between approximately 60 and 150, though there is no correlation between venue and attendance, or size of authority and attendance. The average

attendance figure for the least two years is extremely difficult to estimate as figures vary from year to year and a minority of delegates might attend for part of a conference only.

Five LEAs hold all day conferences, five hold morning conferences, and five evening conferences.

There is a very wide variety of themes – some specific, some general – at annual conferences. Amongst those used recently are *Special Educational Needs, Community Learning and Regeneration, National Workload Agreement, Schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, What is good school governance?* and *Monitoring and Evaluation*.

There is very little evidence of cross-border co-operation in this area, with only two out of 15 LEAs reporting that they invite delegates from other authorities. There is no cross-border co-operation in the organisation of conferences.

#### 5.4 Conclusions

The findings show that LEAs are trying a variety of venues and timings to accommodate governors' preferences in an attempt to improve attendance at training sessions. However, course content, rather than course timing, is likely to have a greater influence on attendance figures.

The increasing number of LEAs which organise annual conferences are also using a variety of venues and timings to coincide with governors' wishes. As of yet, though, there is no evidence of cross-border co-operation in the organisation of conferences.

#### 5.5 Recommendations

LEAs should continue to use a variety of locations and timings for training courses in their efforts to improve attendance figures. They might also consider exploring training for "clusters" of school governing bodies as a means of seeking further improvements in this area. In addition, LEAs could profit from far closer cross-border co-operation in the organisation of annual governors' conferences.

## 6 TRAINERS

### 6.1 Language

Ten LEAs in Wales offer governor training courses through the medium of English only, while twelve offer training through both English and Welsh. Broadly speaking, those authorities which offer training through the medium of English only are to be found in the South East of the country, with the addition of Flintshire in the North. The majority of the LEAs offering courses in both English and Welsh are located in the North and West, although Cardiff, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea LEAs also offer this service.

### 6.2 Trainers

Table 3: Training Deliverers

TRAINING DELIVERER	No of LEAs using:			
	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Occasionally
Governor Support Officer	2	8	9	1
LEA Officials with specific remit	3	10	8	
Teachers from within LEA		1	4	2
Teachers from another LEA			1	
Outside educational consultants	1	1	7	5
Other		1		1

By far the most frequently used governor trainers in LEAs in Wales are Governor Support Officers (20 LEAs) and other LEA officials (this includes LEA school advisors) (21 LEAs). Fourteen LEAs use education consultants, though in the case of 12 LEAs, such consultants are not used on a regular basis. Teachers are not often involved in training, though this is perhaps to be expected as training courses are usually focused on matters of school governance and not curricular issues, where one might usually expect teacher input. The trainers which are mentioned under “Other” include inputs from the Police and the Health Service.

It is worth noting that the vast majority of LEAs use a variety of providers, with only one authority relying entirely on one particular source for trainers. However, this authority is one of the largest in Wales, and its single source for trainers, viz. LEA officials with a specific remit, is therefore quite big. There is no correlation between size of authority and the number of different sources of trainers.

For the complete breakdown of the variety of sources from which LEAs select trainers, please see Table 4.

Table 4: Sources of Trainers

<b>Number of LEAs using ...</b>					
1 source for trainer	2 sources for trainers	3 sources for trainers	4 sources for trainers	5 sources for trainers	6 sources for trainers
1	8	5	7	1	0

### 6.3 School Inspections

With the exception of 1 authority, all LEAs in Wales provide specific training for governors from schools about to be inspected. Most LEAs rely on their advisory services to carry out this duty, though there is also some input in a small number of authorities from Governor Support Officers and occasionally other officials with experience of school inspections.

### 6.4 Conclusion

The majority of LEAs rely heavily for training on their own authority personnel. However, such training comes from a variety of sources, e.g. governor support officers, LEA officials. It is quite clear, though, that teachers are rarely used as trainers.

### 6.5 Recommendations

LEAs should continue to use a variety of sources for governor training and explore the possibilities of developing teachers as trainers, and also those governors who, through either professional background or experience in school governance, have developed expertise in particular areas.

## 7 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

### 7.1 Monitoring

Every LEA in Wales monitors the quality of their governor training, many using a variety of methods.

Table 5: Methods employed by LEAs in monitoring the quality of their training

<b>Method of Monitoring</b>	<b>No of LEAs using this method</b>
Delegate evaluation form	22
Questions individual governors	8
LEA-wide survey of governing bodies	12
Feedback from Link Governors	8
Use of professional pollsters	0
Other	3

By far the most common method of monitoring is the course delegate evaluation form which is used by all LEAs, although just over half of the LEAs have made use of LEA-wide surveys which allow them to consult the views of governors who might only occasionally, or indeed never, attend training sessions. The “other” methods include use of best value reviews and consulting with Chairs of governing bodies, and also officers of governor federations or associations.

Only 7 LEAs rely solely on course delegate evaluation forms for feedback on the quality of training. Five LEAs use two methods of monitoring, 7 LEAs use three methods, 4 LEAs use one method, and 1 LEA uses five methods.

It is also clear that Welsh authorities utilise the information they have gleaned from their monitoring exercises, with 21 reporting that they have modified or adapted their training programmes as a consequence. The greatest influence has been on the time, length and content of courses, though other changes have included improved documentation for delegates, the development of different styles of course delivery, the introduction of certain courses and the scrapping of others and, in one case, the development of whole governing body training sessions.

Governor Support Unit respondents report that feedback on the majority of LEA governor training courses is very encouraging. With 13 authorities, overall feedback has been very good, 8 LEAs report feedback as good and 1 as quite good. Certain topics have received especially favourable feedback, most notably performance management and new governor induction.

Along with this positive feedback, there has been an overall increase in governor attendance at training courses over the last two years. Of the 17 LEAs who reported on attendance figures, 8 report improved attendance figures, 4 reduced figures, and 5 no change. It is noticeable that the LEA reporting by far the biggest increase was the one which has introduced its very successful whole governing body training programme.

However, it is impossible to assess the extent to which these improved figures are a result of the changes LEAs introduce as a result of their monitoring exercises. As one LEA with improved attendance figures pointed out, the improvement could be attributable mainly to a large influx of new governors who had attended induction courses, and who might well have had far more enthusiasm for training than their longer-serving colleagues.

## 7.2 Attendance Figures

Table 6: Governing body representation at training courses 2001-2003

<b>%age of governing bodies represented at majority of courses</b>	<b>No of LEAs</b>
Over 70%	2
55 – 69%	2
45 – 54%	3
30 – 44%	3
15 – 29%	9
Fewer than 15%	2

These figures show a disappointing level of attendance at courses, with over half of LEAs in Wales (14) reporting that in the majority of courses fewer than 45% of their school governing bodies are represented. There are exceptions to this poor attendance, and this is for courses which appear to be, according to one respondent, “relevant and pertinent”. Such courses include performance management, teachers’ workload, and health and safety issues.

## 7.3 Cancellation Rates

The percentage of courses cancelled is also a cause of some concern. Although a majority (13) of LEAs report that fewer than 5% of their courses have been cancelled, 5 LEAs have a cancellation rate of between 20 and 49%.

Table 7: Percentage of courses cancelled 2001-2003  
owing to lack of governing body support

<b>%age of courses cancelled</b>	<b>No of LEAs</b>
More than 50%	-
30 – 49%	3
20 – 29%	2
10 – 19%	1
5 – 9%	2
Less than 5%	13

There is a correlation between the size of Governor Support Unit and course attendance and course cancellation rates. Five of the six “best-performing” LEAs in terms of governor course attendance have Governor Support Units with a relatively large personnel. Each of these Support Units also has one member of staff whose sole responsibility is governor support. It is also worth noting that 5 of these 6 LEAs also have a cancellation rate of less than 5%.

By way of contrast, in 5 of the 7 LEAs with the poorest governor training course attendance, Governor Support Units are generally relatively small and, perhaps more pertinently, only one of these has a member of staff whose sole responsibility is for governor support. Seven of the LEAs with the poorest attendance records have cancellation rates above 10%.

#### 7.4 Conclusions

It is likely that the monitoring of courses and the use made of this information is having a positive effect on governor training course attendance figures, though the cancellation rate for courses is a cause for concern. It is worth noting that the majority of LEAs which have a member of staff whose sole responsibility is governor support have amongst the highest course attendance rates and lowest course cancellation rates.

#### 7.5 Recommendations

LEAs should continue to monitor training courses and seek to find more sophisticated monitoring methods in an attempt to improve attendance at governor training courses. LEAs should also seek ways of sharing good practice.

## 8 LEA GOVERNOR TRAINING PROGRAMMES 2002-2003, 2003-2004

It was possible to consider the training programmes of only 13 LEAs in Wales as, for a variety of reasons (most commonly that the training programmes for summer term 2004 had not yet been completed), 9 authorities were unable to submit the training programmes for both academic years 2002-2003 and 2003-2004.

For the purpose of this section of the study LEAs have been divided into 2 groups, ie. those with between 0 – 89 schools (7) and those with 90+ schools(6).

### 8.1 Training Topics

When considering the topics covered by training courses, it was decided to divide them into four broad groups:

- Governing body roles
- Curricular issues
- Social issues
- Core activities (monitoring and evaluation, target setting and strategic planning)

Such a division has limitations as topics included in one group will inevitably have an impact on topics included in another, e.g. “Bullying”, which is located in the *Social Issues* area is also an Equal Opportunities issue, which is included in the *Governing Body roles* section. Similarly, “Induction” and “Roles of different types of governors” are likely to take into consideration *monitoring and evaluation, target setting and strategic planning*. To deal with this problem, it was decided to place courses into different sections according to their title and (where this was given) the brief description of the course content, as such information usually indicated the main areas upon which courses focussed.

It was decided to give a separate listing to *monitoring and evaluation, target setting and strategic planning*, as these may be considered the core roles of governing bodies.

Finally, courses on Performance Management for Headteachers have not been included as provision of these has been mandatory for all LEAs.

Table 8 gives the number of LEAs offering governor training as broken down into 17 discrete areas under the four headings given above.

Table 8: No of LEAS offering at least one governor training course in the subject areas shown

TOPIC	2002 – 2003		2003 - 2004	
	Size of LEA		Size of LEA	
	0-89 schools	90+ schools	0-89 schools	90+ schools
<b><i>Governing Body Roles</i></b>				
Induction	6	6	6	6
Role of Governing Body	5	6	4	3
Role of different types of governors, eg. parent, incl clerk	5	5	4	5
Personnel Issues	6	6	6	5
Finance	5	3	5	4
Health & Safety	3	4	5	3
Equal Opportunities, incl. Combating Racism	6	4	2	5
Discipline, behaviour, exclusions	4	3	4	4
Governing Body Self-Evaluation	1	0	3	0
<b><i>Curricular Issues</i></b>				
Particular curricular area, eg. literacy	5	4	3	3
Special Needs	6	6	5	5
PSE, incl. Sex Education and Drug Abuse	2	4	5	4
<b><i>Social Issues</i></b>				
Children in Care, Child Protection, Education Welfare Service	5	5	4	3
Bullying	1	2	2	2
<b><i>Core Activities</i></b>				
Monitoring and Evaluation	3	4	4	2
Target Setting	1	1	0	1
Strategic Planning	5	3	2	4

A number of factors are apparent from these figures:

- In both the larger and smaller LEAs, courses on Governor Induction, Personnel Issues and Special Needs figure highly in both years studied, as does the role of different types of governors in the larger LEAs.
- Bullying, as a discrete issue, is offered in only a small number of LEAs, though of course the issue of bullying may figure in Equal Opportunities courses

- Very few LEAs run courses on governing body self-evaluation as a discrete area.
- There are also few LEA courses on the core governor roles of monitoring and evaluation, target setting and strategic planning. This is particularly the case with target setting.

Table 9: Total number of governor training courses offered by LEAs in the subject areas shown

TOPIC	2002 – 2003		2003 - 2004	
	Size of LEA		Size of LEA	
	0-89 schools	90+ schools	0-89 schools	90+ schools
<b><i>Governing Body Roles</i></b>				
Induction	10	8*	8	6*,**
Role of Governing Body	7	5	13	15
Role of different types of governors, eg. parent, incl clerk	11	13	9	10
Personnel Issues	15	7	17	12
Finance	12	6	9	4**
Health & Safety	5	4	5	6**
Equal Opportunities, incl. Combating Racism	2	6	6	5**
Discipline, behaviour, exclusions	5	7	4	6**
Governing Body Self-Evaluation	3	0	1	0
<b><i>Curricular Issues</i></b>				
Particular curricular area, eg. literacy	15	10	22	9**
Special Needs	7	9	7	14**
PSE, incl. Sex Education and Drug Abuse	6	8	3	7
<b><i>Social Issues</i></b>				
Children in Care, Child Protection, Education Welfare Service	6	4	8	7**
Bullying	2	2	1	2
<b><i>Core Activities</i></b>				
Monitoring and Evaluation	6	2	3	5**
Target Setting	0	1	2	1
Strategic Planning	2	5	6	6**

\* This figure includes 1 LEA which runs an induction course of 6 sessions

\*\* These figures include whole governing body training courses offered by 1 LEA

Table 9 shows the number of courses offered by LEAs in the different areas listed, and it is clear from these figures that certain issues have far more courses devoted to them than others. However, it should not be assumed that the popularity of topics as expressed by the number of courses is uniform across authorities. The large number of courses on personnel issues run by smaller LEAs (0-89 schools) in 2002-2003 is partly explained by one LEA which ran five different courses on personnel issues. Similarly, one of the larger LEAs (90+ schools) ran six of the 14 Special Needs courses in 2003-2004.

## 8.2 Conclusions

There are a number of topics on which most LEAs in Wales run governor training courses, eg. *Induction* and *Special Needs*. At the same time, there are certain topics (most notably *Governing body self-evaluation*, and perhaps more importantly, the core governor roles of *Monitoring and Evaluation*, *Target Setting* and *Strategic Planning*) for which training courses are run by only a small number of LEAs, due no doubt in part to widely differing staffing and resources levels available across LEAs in Wales.

## 8.3 Recommendations

Neighbouring LEAs should consider collaboration in producing joint training programmes for governors, in order to pool resources and expertise and prevent duplication. As a first step, LEAs should alert neighbouring authorities of their training programme, and invite their governors to attend courses.

Monitoring and evaluation, strategic planning and target setting are the most important roles for governing bodies to perform, yet the provision of training in these areas by LEAs is quite limited. Consequently, it is recommended that national training programmes be produced for these key subject areas.

## 9 SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 There is a great variation in staffing levels of Governor Support Units across LEAs in Wales, with very little correlation between size of LEA and size of Governor Support Units. There is, however, a correlation between size of LEA Governor Support Unit and attendance at courses, and also between size of Governor Support Unit and course cancellation rates, with LEAs with higher staffed units generally experiencing higher attendance figures at Governor training courses and lower course cancellation rates than LEA units with smaller staff.
- 9.2 Although there is little evidence of a correlation between the existence of link governors and training and improved governor attendance at training courses, there is potential to use link governors as a means of providing a conduit for ongoing dialogue between governing bodies and LEAs.
- 9.3 While the majority of LEAs in Wales offer whole governing body training, there is a variety in the way it is organised. Where it is monitored (10 LEAs), it has not been rated more highly than traditional training methods in a significant number of LEAs (5), and some concern has been expressed over its continuance by three respondents.
- 9.4 Every effort is made by LEAs to arrange location and timing of training courses to encourage attendance, and more LEAs are introducing annual governors' conferences.
- 9.5 Most LEAs in Wales rely mainly on their own authority personnel for governor training, though other sources are occasionally used.
- 9.6 LEA Governor Support Officers are very receptive to governor feedback, and readily adapt and modify training programmes in response to suggestions.
- 9.7 There are relatively few courses offered across LEAs in Wales whose focus is on governing body self-evaluation or the key governor roles of monitoring and evaluating, target setting and strategic planning.

## 10 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Given the wide variation in staffing levels of Governor Support Units in LEAs in Wales, it would be advisable for attention to be paid by LEAs to said staffing levels, as part of an attempt to improve attendance figures at training courses and reduce the number of courses cancelled. Particular attention should be paid to the number of duties outside governor support staff in governor support units should be expected to fulfil. LEAs should also considering appointing a member of staff whose sole responsibility is governor support, as another effective means of improving attendance at governor training courses and lowering course cancellation rates.
- 10.2 Those LEAs who do not have link governors for training on every governing body should consider setting up such a system and providing link governors with clear role descriptions.
- 10.3 In spite of rather disappointing feedback on whole governing body training in a number of authorities, LEAs should continue to support this initiative, especially as a means of addressing the problem of poor governor attendance at governor training sessions and, equally importantly, as a means of ensuring a large number of governors receive at least a basic level of training.
- 10.4 LEAs should continue to use a variety of locations and timings for training courses, and explore the idea of training “clusters” of school governing bodies.
- 10.5 LEAs should consider other sources for governor training in addition to their own personnel. Such sources include teachers and governors
- 10.6 LEAs should continue to respond to governor feedback when organising training courses by maintaining and reviewing the procedures they already use and sharing their practices with colleagues in other LEAs. Increased collaboration between LEAs should be encouraged to spread best practice and reduce duplication. This might be done by running joint annual conferences, inviting governors from neighbouring LEAs to training courses, and collaborating when organising governor training programmes.
- 10.7 Given this study and research conducted by Estyn and the All Wales Centre of Excellence for Governor Training and Research (see Appendix 2), it is clear that there is a need for high quality training for governors in self-evaluation and, more particularly, the core roles of monitoring and evaluation, target setting, and strategic planning. In view of the widely differing staffing and resources levels available across LEAs in Wales, it is recommended that national training programmes be produced for these key areas.

10.8 With reference to 10.7 above, the All Wales Centre of Excellence for Governor Training and Research has produced and piloted national governor training programmes on the subjects of Strategic Planning, Target Setting, and Monitoring & Evaluation. It is recommended that these be presented to all Governor Support teams in Wales at two specially organised regional launches.

All Wales Centre of Excellence for Governor Training and Research

LEA TRAINING FOR SCHOOL GOVERNORS

**THE LEA**

Name of Local Education Authority .....

1 How many Primary and Secondary schools are in your LEA?

Primary ..... Secondary .....

2 How many members of staff are in your LEA Governor Support Unit?

Full-time ..... Part-time .....

3 How many members of your LEA's Governor Support Unit:

- (a) Have no other responsibilities .....
- (b) Have other responsibilities but their prime responsibility is for governor support .....
- (c) Have some responsibility for governor support but their prime responsibility lies elsewhere .....

**LINK GOVERNORS**

4 Do schools in your LEA have "link" governors for training? YES  NO

5 If YES,

(a) Do they have guidelines or role descriptions for this position? YES  NO

(b) Do they attend regular meetings with Governor Support Officers to:

- discuss feedback from training courses YES  NO
- plan future training programmes YES  NO
- other topics (please specify .....

6 Is "governor training" a regular item placed on governing body meeting agendas by the LEA? YES  NO

**LOCATION**

7 Do you usually hold your training courses (tick one)

- (a) At one central venue
- (b) At a number of venues

8 Do you provide whole governing body training? YES  NO

9 If whole governing body training is provided by the .LEA, are: (tick one)

- (a) topics chosen from a list provided by the LEA
- (b) governing bodies given a completely free choice of topic
- (c) a combination of (a) and (b)

**LOCATION (continued )**

- 10 Have you monitored whole governing body training? YES  NO
- 11 If YES, has it been received more favourably by governors than other forms of training? YES  NO

**TIMING**

- 12 Do you run governor training courses on different days of the week? YES  NO
- 13 If you answered YES to question 12, did you find a marked difference in attendance at courses on different days of the week? YES  NO
- 14 If you answered YES to question 13, please specify the most popular day:  
.....
- 15 In your professional opinion, might the seeming popularity of the day(s) have been linked with the subject of the training session? YES  NO
- 16 Do you run courses at different times of the day? YES  NO
- 17 If you answered YES to question 16, did you find a marked difference in attendance at courses at different times of the day? YES  NO
- 18 If you answered YES to question 17, please specify the most popular time of day:  
.....
- 19 In your professional opinion, might the seeming popularity of the times have been linked with the subject of the training session? YES  NO
- 20 How long do the **majority** of your one session courses last? (tick one)
- (a) Less than 1 hour
- (b) 1 - 2 hours
- (c) 2 - 3 hours
- (d) 3 - 4 hours
- (e) More than 4 hours
- 21 Does your LEA organise an annual conference for governors? YES  NO
- 22 If you answered YES to question 21, for how many years have you been providing this service?
- (a) This is our first year
- (b) 1 year
- (c) 2 years
- (d) 3 years
- (e) 4 years
- (f) More than 4 years

**TRAINERS**

- 23 Do you offer training courses: (tick one)
- Only through the medium of English
- Only through the medium of Welsh
- Through both languages
- 24 Who delivers the training on the courses the LEA provides for governors?  
(tick one or more)
- |  | Always                   | Usually                  | Sometimes                | Occasionally             | Never                    |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Governor Support Officers                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Local Government Officials with specific remit | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Teachers from within your LEA                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Teachers from another LEA                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Outside educational consultants                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please specify):<br>.....               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- 25 Do you provide specific training for governors of schools about to be inspected? YES  NO
- 26 If you answered YES to question 25, which officials provide the training?  
.....

**MONITORING AND EVALUATING**

- 27 How do you monitor the quality of your training? (tick one or more as appropriate)
- (a) Delegate evaluation form
- (b) Questioning individual delegates
- (c) LEA-wide surveys of governing bodies
- (d) Feedback from link governors
- (e) Use professional opinion pollsters
- (f) Other (please specify)   
.....
- 28 Have the findings from monitoring exercises resulted in your modifying or  
adapting your training programme? YES  NO
- 29 If you answered YES to question 28, please specify modifications:  
.....  
.....
- 30 Overall, has the **feedback** from the majority of your courses been
- |                |                          |               |                          |
|----------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| (a) Very good  | <input type="checkbox"/> | (d) Fair      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) Good       | <input type="checkbox"/> | (e) Poor      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) Quite good | <input type="checkbox"/> | (f) Very poor | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**MONITORING AND EVALUATING (continued)**

31 If there have been courses which have been exceptional to the norm, either much better or much worse, please specify which course(s) and why, in your professional opinion, you feel this to be the case:

.....  
 .....  
 .....

32 Overall, what percentage of school governing bodies has been represented at the majority of your courses?

- |               |                          |                    |                          |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| (a) Over 70%  | <input type="checkbox"/> | (d) 30% - 44%      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) 55% - 69% | <input type="checkbox"/> | (e) 15% - 29%      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) 45% - 54% | <input type="checkbox"/> | (f) Fewer than 15% | <input type="checkbox"/> |

33 If there have been courses which have been exceptional to the norm, either much better or much worse, please specify which course(s) and why, in your professional opinion, you feel this to be the case:

.....  
 .....  
 .....

34 In the last 2 years, what percentage of your courses have you had to cancel owing to lack of support from governing bodies?

- |                   |                          |                  |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| (a) More than 50% | <input type="checkbox"/> | (d) 10% - 19%    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) 30% - 49%     | <input type="checkbox"/> | (e) 5% - 9%      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) 20% - 29%     | <input type="checkbox"/> | (f) Less than 5% | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**GENERAL**

Are there any aspects of governor training on which you would like to comment? We would particularly welcome any suggestions on improvements you feel could be made.

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

Thank you for your help in completing this questionnaire. Please return your completed form in the SAE provided by **18 December 2003** to:

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 All Wales Centre of Excellence for Governor Training and Research  
 Department of Education, University of Wales Swansea, Hendrefoelan SWANSEA SA2 7NB

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## “CORE” GOVERNOR ROLES

The Estyn publication *The Quality of Training and Support provided by LEAs to School Governors* (2003) reported that training for governors “is much less effective in making governors ... more ready to monitor and evaluate”, and of monitoring and evaluating standards and quality, and target setting, “several LEAs do not give enough attention to some of these important aspects of school improvement”.

Similarly, in the research undertaken by the All Wales Centre of Excellence for Governor Training and Research *Governing Body Input to School Improvement* (September 2003) – at present with the Welsh Assembly Government – it was found that Headteachers in “improving schools” (as defined by Estyn) rated as low governing body input to school improvement in the areas of monitoring and evaluation, target setting and strategic planning.