

Meeting of:	<b>Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>Monday, 07 October 2024</b>
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Learning and Culture
Report Title:	Governor Training Report for the 2023/24 Academic Year
Purpose of Report:	To report on governor training for the 2023/24 Academic Year
Report Owner:	Elizabeth Jones, Director of Learning and Skills
Responsible Officer:	John Sparks, Head of Governor Support
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Consultation is not applicable
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for noting by the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This report provides commentary and a statistical summary of the attendance and evaluations received for online governor training courses held during the 2023/24 academic year.</li> <li>• The 2023/24 academic year continued to see a high number of Vale governors attending a record number of training sessions/courses. A summary of attendance over the last 10 years is provided within the report.</li> <li>• 89 virtual courses/sessions were held and 676 Vale governors attended during the 2023/24 academic year.</li> </ul>	

## **Recommendation**

1. That the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee consider the report and specifically the suggestions within paragraphs 2.10-2.17 for future versions.

## **Reason for Recommendation**

1. This report was previously requested by the Chairman of Scrutiny Committee (Lifelong Learning) and is now an annual item. It will be presented annually to report on governor training for the preceding academic year but suggestions are made in paragraphs 2.10-2.17 to ensure that it remains relevant going forward due to the changing circumstances highlighted within it.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 There are approximately 850 governors managing 55 schools within the Vale of Glamorgan. Governors play a key role in school improvement. Welsh Government has made legislation that introduced mandatory training for school governors for certain elements from September 2013. The mandatory elements cover induction, data, chair and clerk training and as such are a major focus of our governor training programme.

## **2. Key Issues for Consideration**

- 2.1 During the 2023/24 academic year we were able to provide 89 virtual courses/sessions which is the highest number ever offered and in total 676 Vale governors attended.
- 2.2 The completion of evaluation forms continues to reduce on previous pre-Covid years at 43.2%. This is a pattern reflected with other virtual training courses run by both the Central South Consortium (CSC) (average up to 50% or lower) and other local authorities across the region and despite the fact that the Vale virtual evaluation form at Appendix A is only a few questions and one page long. Although Appendix A appears as 2 pages that is due to the print layout, it is only 1 page online.
- 2.3 Another factor in the reduced number of evaluations received is that CSC significantly changed their evaluation form in 2020 to match the evaluation form used for all their Professional Learning opportunities for Headteachers, teachers etc. CSC's form had previously mirrored the Vale's evaluation form. Therefore, since this change it has not been possible to record responses from CSC and Vale run courses in a single analysis as has happened in previous years up to and including 2019/20. The Vale's evaluation form asks 3 questions whereas the revised CSC evaluation form asks up to 11 questions, none of which are compatible. We also did not circulate evaluation forms for the 2 Education Update & Briefing Sessions held in December 2023 and June 2024 where a total

of 82 governors attended because these are specifically update sessions that cover topical issues for governors.

- 2.4** In terms of consistency with this report in previous years, 70 evaluations were received from 162 governors attending 15 Vale run courses during the 2023/24 academic year and a summary table of the data from these evaluations is included below. Whilst these percentages are slightly lower than in previous pre-Covid years, they all still well exceed 90% of governors saying the courses were either good or very good. The actual number of attendees per course is provided at Appendix B.

Question	% of good or very good evaluations
How well did the course meet its stated aims and objectives?	93.19
How useful was the course content to your needs?	93.19
How effective were the course providers?	95.41

- 2.5** In conclusion, a record number and range of training sessions/courses were provided for governors during the 2023/24 academic year and attendance levels continue to be high. Over the past 4 academic years we've had attendance figures of 682, 753, 756 & 676 and way over 90% of all the evaluations we have received are either good or very good.
- 2.6** Although total attendance numbers were lower this year (676 compared to 756 in 2022/23), this is attributable to less evening course availability during the Autumn Term 2023. Feedback was provided to CSC and they increased their evening course provision during the Spring and Summer Terms 2024.
- 2.7** Going forward, governor training opportunities will continue to be held virtually during at least the Autumn Term 2024, but we will continue to monitor the situation to inform future governor training provision and a number of new courses will be provided during the 2024/25 academic year.
- 2.8** Although some in-person courses will be available during the 2024/25 academic year there is concern that a complete switch back to all in-person training could result in a significant reduction in attendance numbers, particularly during the winter months. Attendance numbers have risen significantly since training has become available online as evidenced by the figures at paragraph 2.5 above.
- 2.9** Whilst the fall in the number of completed evaluation forms is disappointing, well over 90% of those evaluations received were either good or very good. We will work with CSC to try and re-establish a consistent evaluation form and seek to encourage higher numbers of governor completion in future to inform future training provision.

- 2.10** Although this report is positive in terms of the number and range of training course provision and the resultant take up by Vale governors, in its current format it has lost its impact due to the dwindling number of evaluations being completed. Measures will be taken to increase governor engagement with evaluations but this report needs to widen its scope in future to remain relevant in these changing and challenging times.
- 2.11** Given the significant financial challenges faced by the Council and schools we need to be more flexible in targeting future training provision to upskill governors to enable them to both challenge and support schools to do better.
- 2.12** For example, a potential idea to consider would be to deliver finance training to Finance Committee governors at their schools to make it more accessible to governors and specific to their own school budget situation.
- 2.13** This should mean that more governors are trained in this key area on the impact on their own schools as opposed to just holding stand-alone sessions that would be unable to focus on individual school situations.
- 2.14** We also need to make better use of training attendance analysis going forward to identify any correlation between a lack of engagement with training by the governors at schools where financial deficiencies have been found by the Council’s auditing of schools process. An initial review of this data for the 2023/24 academic year has identified some schools where this may be the case and work will be undertaken to address this situation in the form of targeted training.
- 2.15** Recent evidence suggests that Estyn are increasingly looking at the school’s best use of their financial resources during their Inspection process when considering their judgements on the school’s performance so schools need to be prepared.
- 2.16** Better use of training attendance analysis could also be extended to other key areas of expertise for example Safeguarding, Human resources etc with the specific aim of making governor training more targeted and effective to achieve the best outcomes for schools and their pupils.
- 2.17** It may also be pertinent to include a table in next year’s report of an analysis of governor training attendance by school to again identify any potential trends/shortfalls.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Courses held	Governors attended	Evaluations received
2014/15	97.20%	94.30%	95.80%	29	457	359 (78.6%)
2015/16	97.60%	96.30%	97.30%	31	490	437 (89.2%)
2016/17	98.50%	97.30%	98.60%	30	437	397 (90.8%)

2017/18	98.10%	97.60%	97.80%	39	565	484 (85.7%)
2018/19	96.30%	95.80%	97.80%	32	535	465 (86.9%)
2019/20	98.60%	96.90%	98.80%	15	289	251 (86.9%)
2020/21	92.76%	90.45%	91.49%	51	682	+140 (49.5%)
2021/22	93.81%	92.67	93.61	81	753	*160 (60.4%)
2022/23	94.28	94.84	95.34	87	756	#127 (59.1%)
2023/24	93.19	93.19	95.41	89	676	"70 (43.2%)

+This figure relates to 140 evaluations received from 283 governors attending 16 Vale courses during the 2020/21 academic year.

\*This figure relates to 160 evaluations received from 265 governors attending 21 Vale courses during the 2021/22 academic year.

#This figure relates to 127 evaluations received from 215 governors attending 20 Vale courses during the 2022/23 academic year.

"This figure relates to 70 evaluations received from 162 governors attending 15 Vale courses during the 2023/24 academic year.

These figures are considerably lower than in previous pre-Covid years but is attributable to far less governors completing virtual evaluations as explained at paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4.

### **3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?**

- 3.1** The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 ("the 2015 Act") requires the Council to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.
- 3.2** The Council has committed as part of the Corporate Plan 2020-2025 to achieving a vision of 'Working Together for a Brighter Future'. This plan is reflective of the Welsh Government's Well-being of Future Generations Act and is comprised of four Well-being objectives to deliver this vision:
- Objective 1 - To work with and for our communities
  - Objective 2 - To support learning, employment and sustainable economic growth
  - Objective 3 - To support people at home and in their community
  - Objective 4 - To respect, enhance and enjoy our environment

- 3.3** Governor training is an essential component of the school improvement agenda and it is a statutory requirement that all Local Authorities provide it. It enables governors to fulfil their roles effectively by supporting and challenging schools to improve and contributes to the Council's Wellbeing Objective 2: To support learning, employment and sustainable growth by raising overall standards of achievement.

## **4. Climate Change and Nature Implications**

- 4.1** With all training being held virtually during the 2023/24 academic year the environmental impact has been reduced due to governors and trainers no longer needing to drive to venues.

## **5. Resources and Legal Considerations**

### **Financial**

- 5.1** All training was delivered by Council or Consortium employees online so there were no additional costs for delivery.

### **Employment**

- 5.2** There are no employment implications arising from this report.

### **Legal (Including Equalities)**

- 5.3** All Local Authorities must provide training for governors in accordance with The Education (Wales) Measure 2011 to enable them to fulfil their roles. Mandatory elements for induction, data, chair and clerk training are required by The Government of Maintained Schools (Training Requirements for Governors) (Wales) Regulations 2013, as amended.
- 5.4** Governor training opportunities within the medium of Welsh will continue to be available during the 2024/25 academic year.

## **6. Background Papers**

[The Education Measure \(Wales\) 2011.](#)

[The Government of Maintained Schools \(Training Requirements for Governors\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2013.](#)

APPENDIX A

# Evaluation form of Safeguarding virtual governor training - Thu 8 Jul at 5.30pm

1. Name

2. School

3. How well did the course meet its stated aims and objectives?

- Very good
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory

8/2/2021

4. How useful was the course content to your needs?

- Very good
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory

5. How effective was/were the course provider(s)?

- Very good
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory

6. Additional comments?

8/2/2021



**Appendix B**

Date	Course	No. attended	Evaluations rec'd (% completed)	Q1 good or very good	Q2 good or very good	Q3 good or very good
<b>AUTUMN TERM 2023</b>						
14 Nov	Finance/School budgets	11	9 (81.8%)	100%	100%	100%
16 Nov	DSGs L2 Safeguarding	24	13 (54.2%)	92.3%	92.3%	92.3%
22 Nov	Clerk	1	1 (100%)	100%	100%	100%
11 Dec	Pupil Voice/UNCRC	8	3 (37.5%)	100%	100%	100%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4 courses</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>26 (59.1%)</b>	<b>98.1%</b>	<b>98.1%</b>	<b>98.1%</b>
<b>SPRING TERM 2024</b>						
7 Feb	Redundancy	6	3 (50%)	100%	100%	100%
21 Feb	Pupil Exclusions	15	9 (60%)	88.9%	88.9%	88.9%
28 Feb	Food in Schools	17	12 (70.6%)	83.3%	83.3%	83.3%
5 Mar	Attendance	17	6 (35.3%)	100%	100%	100%
14 Mar	Children Looked After	9	3 (33.3%)	66.7%	33.3%	66.7%
19 Mar	Information Governance	9	3 (33.3%)	100%	100%	100%
20 Mar	DSGs L2 Safeguarding	17	1 (5.9%)	100%	100%	100%
21 Mar	Equality	16	3 (18.75%)	66.7%	100%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8 courses</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>40 (37.7%)</b>	<b>88.2%</b>	<b>88.2%</b>	<b>92.4%</b>
<b>SUMMER TERM 2024</b>						
27 Jun	DSG's	7	2 (28.6%)	100%	100%	100%
2 Jul	H&S	4	1 (25%)	100%	100%	100%
16 Jul	Clerk	1	1 (100%)	100%	100%	100%
<b>Totals so far</b>	<b>3 courses</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4 (33.3%)</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Overall 2023/24 totals</b>	<b>15 courses</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>70 (43.2%)</b>	<b>1,397.90 divided by 15 = 93.19</b>	<b>1,397.80 divided by 15 = 93.19</b>	<b>1,431.20 divided by 15 = 95.41</b>