



Headteacher Evaluations  
Headteacher Feedback Analysis Post CV1  
& Robin Hughes Interviews

June 2017

## Summary

For ERW to continue succeeding in developing the best school improvement services for the region it needs to persist in striving to better itself. One way of gathering information to better one's services is to ask the Headteachers to give their full and honest feedback. The best way to acquire unbiased or skewed information was to firstly provide the opportunity for the Headteachers to fill in a Survey Monkey Questionnaire specifically designed to analyse the CV1 which meant that their responses would be completely anonymous but also relevant. Secondly ERW commissioned Robin Hughes to conduct interviews with different Headteacher across ERW and ask for their unbiased views.

In a small time frame the Survey Monkey Questionnaire received over 200 responses which meant the sample size would be great enough to ensure that the results would be significant. Robin Hughes had successfully conducted 20 interviews with some being cluster group Headteachers meetings.

From the Headteacher Feedback there were very interesting findings in the analysis with Local Authority's (LAs) answering in a different manner to others. There was a clear indication that the schools in Powys were much happier with the service that they received from their Challenge Advisors compared to Pembrokeshire and Swansea who were more prone to answer negatively compared to all the other LAs regarding their experience.

Outlined below are some of the recommendations from both the Headteacher feedback Analysis and Robin Hughes' Interviews, these are derived from the clear messages that were evident throughout:

Recommendation 1: Support package needs to be more bespoke for each school, only 61% believed that it met the allocation entitlement of the categorisation process. 61% compared to other questions is a low satisfaction figure, as other questions we have seen figures of 84% satisfaction rate. There was also a belief that the ERW concentrates more on the underperforming schools and that the Menu of Support is more tailored for them, rather than the 'Green/Better performing schools'.

Recommendation 2: Numerous schools have requested more School to School networking and also good practice examples. Grouping similar categorised schools together. There needs to be more knowledge of which schools should be used as the benchmarks/Good Practice for others throughout the region. Progress with Dolen is greatly encouraged.

Recommendation 3: The turnover of CA per school is something that need to be addressed. Numerous Headteachers raised the issue that their CA turnover is highly disadvantageous and disruptive to the school's progress and development. They were not able to form a relationship with their CA as they could well have another CA for the next visit. This was exacerbated by a commissioned headteacher model in some cases.

Recommendation 4: Challenge Advisers need to be well prepared before visiting the school. schools are more willing to listen and take heed of the advice that the CA gave to them as there was a greater element of trust due to the school staff believing in the competency of their CA knowing what they were doing.

Recommendation 5: Schools believe there is a need for greater consistency in the Challenge advisers on a Local Authority level. If this is the case on the Local Authority level, then there is even a greater need for consistency on a regional level as the results have shown a great divide in the experience schools in different local authorities have received.

Recommendation 6: Challenge Advisers need to be going there to support not scrutinise/interrogate, some were too focused on looking at the data of the school rather than engaging with the pupil themselves and the pupil's books.

Recommendation 7: There needs to be a clear and consistent message that defines ERW and what it stands for. The varying messages and inconsistencies throughout the region undermines ERW's work. This cannot be done if there such inconsistencies such as Challenge Advisers in Local Authorities and the constant turnover of CAs as schools' confidence in ERW will wane. A School that has confidence in their CA will be willing to listen to their CA, therefore an avenue of clear communication from ERW should go via the CA.

For ERW to achieve these Recommendations it relies greatly on the relationship that the school has with their CA and that the inconsistencies are notably reduced.

## **Introduction**

This report has combined the analysis of the Headteachers' feedback post Core Visit 1 (CV1) and the Qualitative Research Robin Hughes undertook for ERW from 1<sup>st</sup> of March to the 27<sup>th</sup> of April where he attended various Headteacher, Clusters Group and Head of Department meetings. This work, that has been undertaken to better understand how Headteachers view ERW and the whole process of school improvement. This is invaluable information for us to be able to improve our service and provide a better experience in the future for all our schools across the region.

The Headteacher Feedback was a questionnaire posted on Survey Monkey and consisted of 14 questions, ranging from which Local Authority the school belonged to, sector – Primary, Secondary, all ages and special, to more in depth questions asking their view of how well the Challenge adviser had carried out their role – if they had ‘confirmed the school’s understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, ‘the categorisation process delivered effectively, relevant support; to questions on ERW’s communication techniques and how could ERW improve on their service. The responses as aforementioned were carried out after CV1 had been completed. The questionnaires were completed from the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2017 to the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2017, in that time 207 responses had been received which was considered an ample enough size to run the analysis.

Robin Hughes’ qualitative Research comprised of 11 individual Headteacher interviews, Headteacher group meetings and 2 Heads of Departments meetings. All Local Authorities and Sectors were fairly represented in the undertaking of this research. Similar to the questionnaire we wished to gain valuable knowledge of how schools perceive ERW as a whole.

## **Report Methodologies**

### **Headteacher Feedback Analysis**

Two hundred and seven schools started the process of completing the questionnaire (as of the 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2017) but many after a few questions lost interest and did not manage to complete all the questions. Some only managed the first few, only the Sector and LA questions and a few did not answer any after questions 3-5. Over 20 respondents failed to complete the questionnaire from question 3 onwards, this number steadily increases to around 30 by the final few questions of the questionnaire.

#### **Local Authority breakdown**

Swansea	38
Neath Port Talbot	29
Ceredigion	15
Powys	46
Sir Gar	54
Pembrokeshire	23
Did not state which county	2

#### **Sector breakdown**

Special	5
Primary	168
All Age	5
Secondary	27
Sir Gar	54
Did not state which sector	2

### **Robin Hughes Qualitative research**

The research was wholly Qualitative, structured interviews. There were a total of 19 interviews, 11 individual Headteachers, 8 group meetings – 6 of them being Headteacher groups Primary and Secondary in Powys, Neath Port Talbot (NPT) and Swansea, and 2 Heads of Department Networks – English and Maths. All sectors were represented in the Research Primary, Secondary, Faith, Special Schools.

#### **Local Authority Breakdown**

Swansea	3
Neath Port Talbot	3
Ceredigion	1
Powys	5
Sir Gar	3
Pembrokeshire	2
Heads of Department	2

## Challenge Adviser CV1 and the support provided

### Headteacher Feedback analysis

Did CV1 confirm the understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses?

	Swansea	%
Yes – very well	29	90.63%
Yes - adequately	2	6.25%
No	1	3.13%
Total Answered	32	

	Neath Port Talbot	%
Yes – very well	23	88.46%
Yes - adequately	3	11.54%
No	0	0.00%
Total Answered	26	

	Ceredigion	%
Yes – very well	12	85.71%
Yes - adequately	2	14.29%
No	0	0.00%
Total Answered	14	

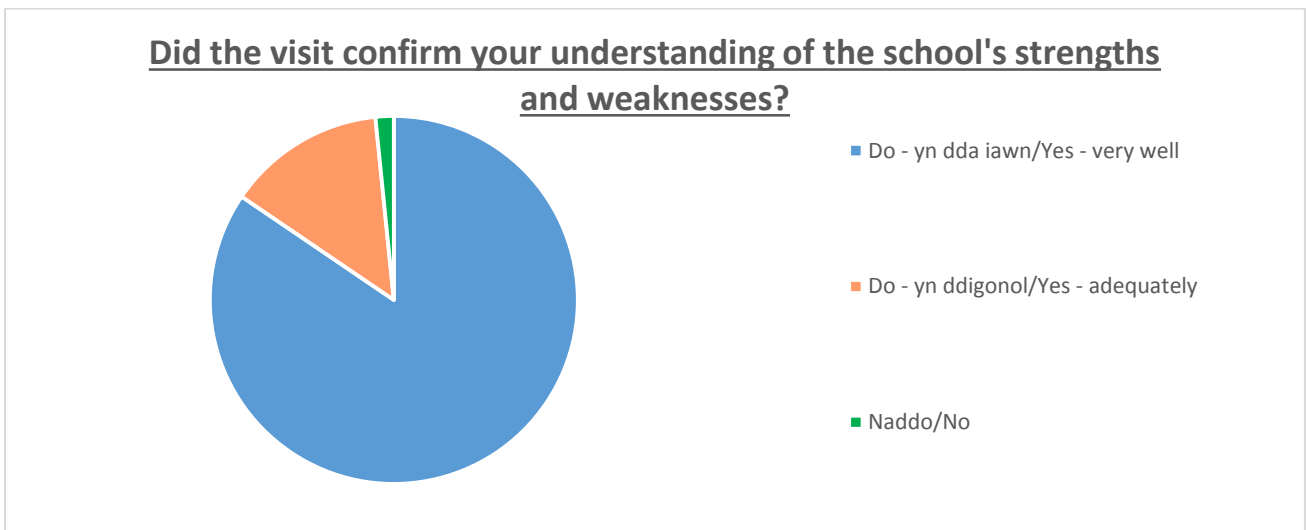
	Powys	%
Yes – very well	43	95.56%
Yes - adequately	2	4.44%
No	0	0.00%
Total Answered	45	

	Carmarthenshire	%
Yes – very well	36	75.00%
Yes - adequately	12	25.00%
No	0	0.00%
Total Answered	48	

	Pembrokeshire	%
Yes – very well	15	68.18%
Yes - adequately	5	22.73%
No	2	9.09%
Total Answered	22	

	Frequency	%
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100.0	Do - yn dda iawn/Yes - very well	158	84.49%
90.0	Do - yn ddigonol/Yes - adequately	26	13.90%
80.0	Naddo/No	3	1.60%
70.0	Total	187	
60.0			
50.0			
40.0			
30.0			
20.0			
10.0			
0.0			



Overall a very positive result, almost 85% believed that the visit confirmed their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, almost 14% believed that it had done adequately with only 1.6% believing that it was not so. Of the 3 respondents that stated that it had not confirmed their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses 2 were from Pembrokeshire and 1 from Swansea. In Powys' responses we can see a very strong belief that this was the case, with almost 96% of the 45 respondents saying 'Yes – very well' and the other two saying 'Yes – adequately'.

When looking at the comments submitted by the various Headteachers this confirms that they believed the visit was beneficial to them.

*"I found the visit very supportive - particularly as an Acting Head newly in post. My Challenge Adviser is a really supportive presence who I feel I can contact and receive appropriate support from." - Primary Headteacher, Pembrokeshire.*

*"Excellent. Supportive yet challenging" - Special School Headteacher, Powys.*

*"A very supportive visit during a time of uncertainty at our school. Constructive challenge, advice and discussion supported the temporary SLT to plan how to drive forward a shared vision." – Primary School Headteacher, Powys.*

*"The visit was conducted in a professional and supportive manner." - Primary School Headteacher, NPT*

*"The CA was excellent and did a good job. He was both supportive and challenging. The support package - although adequate (and through no fault of the CA or the region) did not meet every need of the school. This would seem to be to be almost impossible I would not expect it to." – Primary School Headteacher, Swansea.*

There were a few that believed that the visits and Challenge were not providing support only challenging them –

*"We need more practical support and less challenge. We need to focus on what we do with the children rather than generating administrative procedures under the guise of monitoring and evidence." - Primary School Headteacher Swansea.*

*"Less challenge and more support would be useful." – Primary School Headteacher, NPT.*

## **Robin Hughes Interviews**

In Robin Hughes' interviews a Secondary Headteacher (HT) in Pembrokeshire similarly believed that -

*"CV1 needs more than 'this or that is weak or strong'. It needs more focus on support." Secondary School HT, Pembrokeshire*

*"CV1 looks at results, outcomes. It should start earlier because it really isn't necessary to wait for final approved results are signed off in mid-Autumn. CV2 is more about teaching and learning, so it is useful." Secondary School HT, Pembrokeshire.*

A Primary Headteacher in Ceredigion believed that sharing **good practice** would be highly beneficial during the CV1

*"It would be great if the Challenge Adviser could actually say in CV1 'here is some relevant good practice' on a matter where support is needed. Waiting for the report, then waiting for support, means that your 'To Do' list is growing by the day!" Primary School HT, Ceredigion*

Headteachers requesting examples of good practice was a recurring theme in the research being in CV1 or CV2

*"A resource for sharing best practice? Good. But it must be quality assured. If CV1 or CV2 had prompts to identify 'practice worth sharing', that would help." Secondary School HT, Powys.*



“Knowing where there is good practice is powerful and very useful. Dolen can’t come soon enough, really, and even better if it has good practice from beyond the region too. That said, I’m not at all sure that we are working together well enough within the region yet!” Primary School HT, Ceredigion

“It is really helpful if your Challenge Adviser says ‘Let me point you to 2 or 3 schools that are really good at that’.” Primary School Cluster HT group, Swansea.

“Dolen sounds good. I’d hope that you could input something like ‘Behaviour strategies’ and a list of case studies would come up.” Primary School Cluster HT group, Swansea

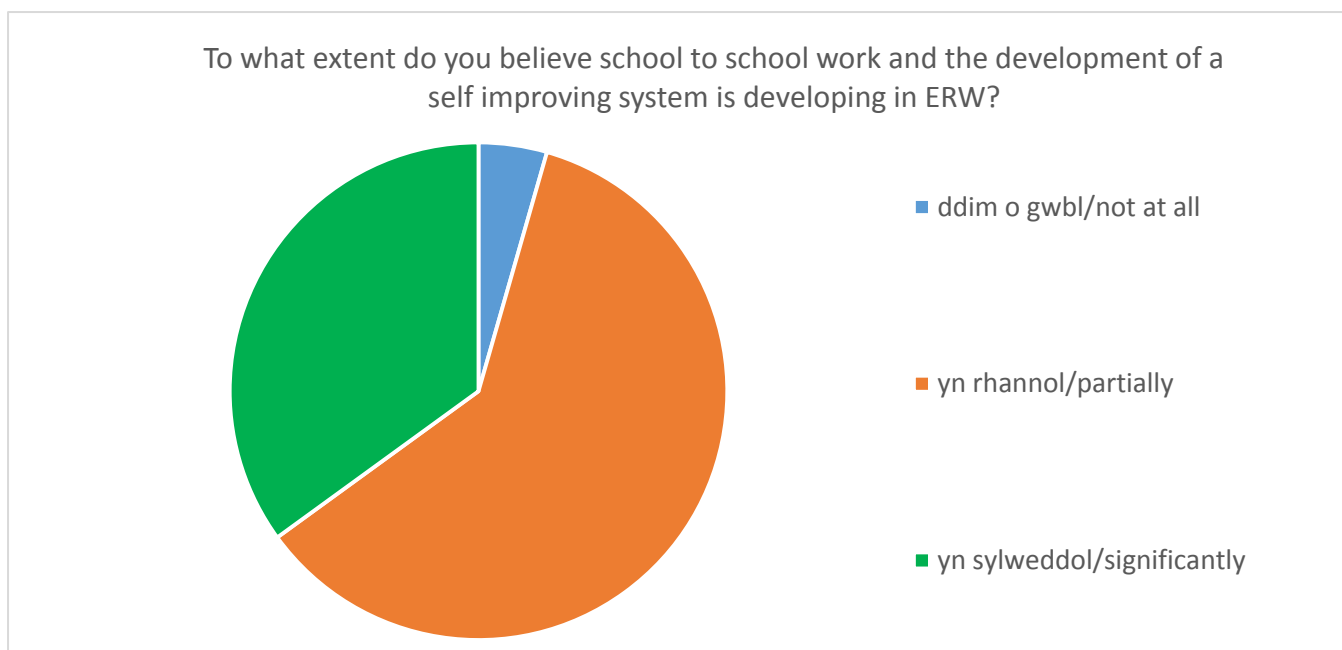
“Perhaps we need to change the perception of it. We could say ERW needs it, to develop partnership working with schools, to identify good practice that then gets shared. Of course, it is still worthwhile as a way of keeping up dialogue between the headteacher and Challenge Adviser.” Primary School HT, Powys.

It is clear that schools believe that to improve the support provided in CV1 even further is to provide examples of ‘good practice’, they foresee ‘Dolen’ as being a valuable resource.

Closely linked to sharing ‘good practice’ is ERW’s **School to School** work. Schools strongly believe that ‘School to School work’ is the way forward, it is evident throughout the comments of both the Headteacher Feedback Analysis and Robin Hughes’ interviews that they want to see a great deal of improvement in the opportunities available for them to collaborate with other schools.

**To what extent do Schools believe ‘school to school’ work and the development of a self-improving system is developing in ERW?**

	Frequency	%
ddim o gwbl/not at all	8	4.44%
yn rhannol/partially	109	60.56%
yn sylweddol/significantly	63	35.00%
Total	180	



	Swansea	%
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ddim o gwbl/not at all	4	13.33%
yn rhannol/partially	23	76.67%
yn sylweddol/significantly	3	10.00%
Total Answered	30	

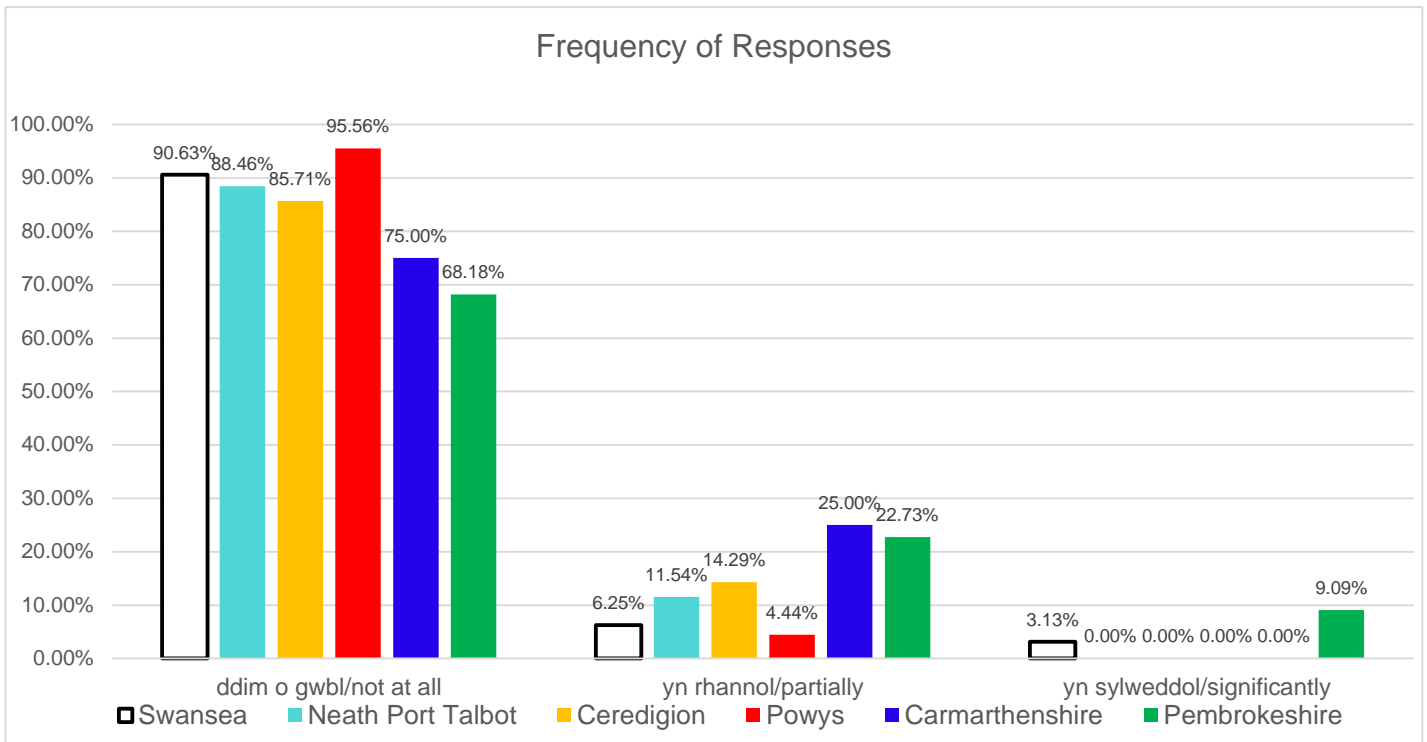
	Neath Port Talbot	%
ddim o gwbl/not at all	0	0.00%
yn rhannol/partially	18	72.00%
yn sylweddol/significantly	7	28.00%
Total Answered	25	

	Ceredigion	%
ddim o gwbl/not at all	0	0.00%
yn rhannol/partially	8	61.54%
yn sylweddol/significantly	5	38.46%
Total Answered	13	

	Powys	%
ddim o gwbl/not at all	1	2.22%
yn rhannol/partially	24	53.33%
yn sylweddol/significantly	20	44.44%
Total Answered	45	

	Carmarthenshire	%
ddim o gwbl/not at all	3	6.82%
yn rhannol/partially	27	61.36%
yn sylweddol/significantly	14	31.82%
Total Answered	44	

	Pembrokeshire	%
ddim o gwbl/not at all	0	0.00%
yn rhannol/partially	9	39.13%
yn sylweddol/significantly	14	60.87%
Total Answered	23	



Throughout the **Headteacher Feedback Analysis** Pembrokeshire have been the LA that has given/most consistent in providing negative feedback, even so we can see that they believe there is a significant ‘school to school work and the development of a self-improving system in ERW’, they are the only LA that has a greater number (with 60.87%) believing that there is a significant improvement (well above the 35% average) compared to a partial improvement or not at all. Swansea (4) feature as one of the 3 LAs that believe there is no school to school work and development of a self-improving system in ERW with Carmarthenshire with 3 and Powys being the other with 1, but it is worth noting that Powys did have the largest amount of respondents stating that there is a significant improvement.

### **Headteacher Feedback Analysis**

*“Schools still need to be guided as to the relevance of ERW. Greater facilitation and promotion of school to school work would be beneficial.” – Secondary School HT, NPT.*

Translated – *“Improve the School to School system e.g. group similar schools” – Primary School HT, Carmarthenshire.*

*“A Headteacher working group to co-ordinate school to school work.” – Primary School HT, Powys.*

*“A calendar of School 2 School activities that reflects ‘pressure points’ within a school. Currently this term none of our staff can afford, or want to, miss A Level and GCSE classes!” – Secondary school HT, Powys*

*“opportunities for staff to experience working in other schools as part of their professional development and return with ideas from excellent schools” – Primary School HT, Pembrokeshire.*

### **Robin Hughes Interviews**

*“I’d ask ERW to continue to develop school2school working, and to keep focus on support. The challenge bit of the equation is working fine, but support needs to continue to develop.” – Primary School HT, Swansea.*

*A Primary School HT from Pembrokeshire stated - "A Challenge Adviser suggested we visit a similar school they'd identified in Cardiff. I went with my Deputy and that was great. And it was great to share with fellow professionals and to have the encouragement that a lot of what you're doing is OK, 'we're on the right path'."*

*...  
"I've looked at the menu of support but actually I chat to my Challenge Adviser about support that is available or that I might seek. I chat to them sometimes every week, at least every two weeks."*

*"ERW has added value to the network that special schools had already. It has promoted school 2 school work and collaboration generally." Special School HT, Powys.*

*"I got support, which was good. It was bespoke and not just straight off that ridiculous list on paper." –  
Secondary HT group, NPT*

As we can see in the comments above there is great confidence in ERW to develop the School to School network within the region, pairing similar schools together with even one school commenting that it should be pan Wales even.

### **Headteacher Feedback Analysis**

*Translated – "Need more networking between category Green schools so they can learn from each other. School to School support work is good for supporting schools that are in other categories but there needs to be networking between schools that are in the Green category as well so as their schools practice is also improved" – Primary School HT, Carmarthenshire.*

### **Robin Hughes' Interviews**

*"We're a small nation. Let's collaborate more. We've got more in common with Bridgend and the Valleys than with Ceredigion. The M4 corridor means that there is flow that doesn't fit with consortia boundaries." –  
Secondary School HT, NPT.*

**Did the support package offered by ERW meet the allocation entitlement and your support requirements following your categorisation?**

	Swansea	%
Oedd - yn dda iawn/Yes - very well	10	32.26%
Oedd - yn ddigonol/Yes - adequately	13	41.94%
Nac oedd/No	8	25.81%
<b>Total Answered</b>	<b>31</b>	

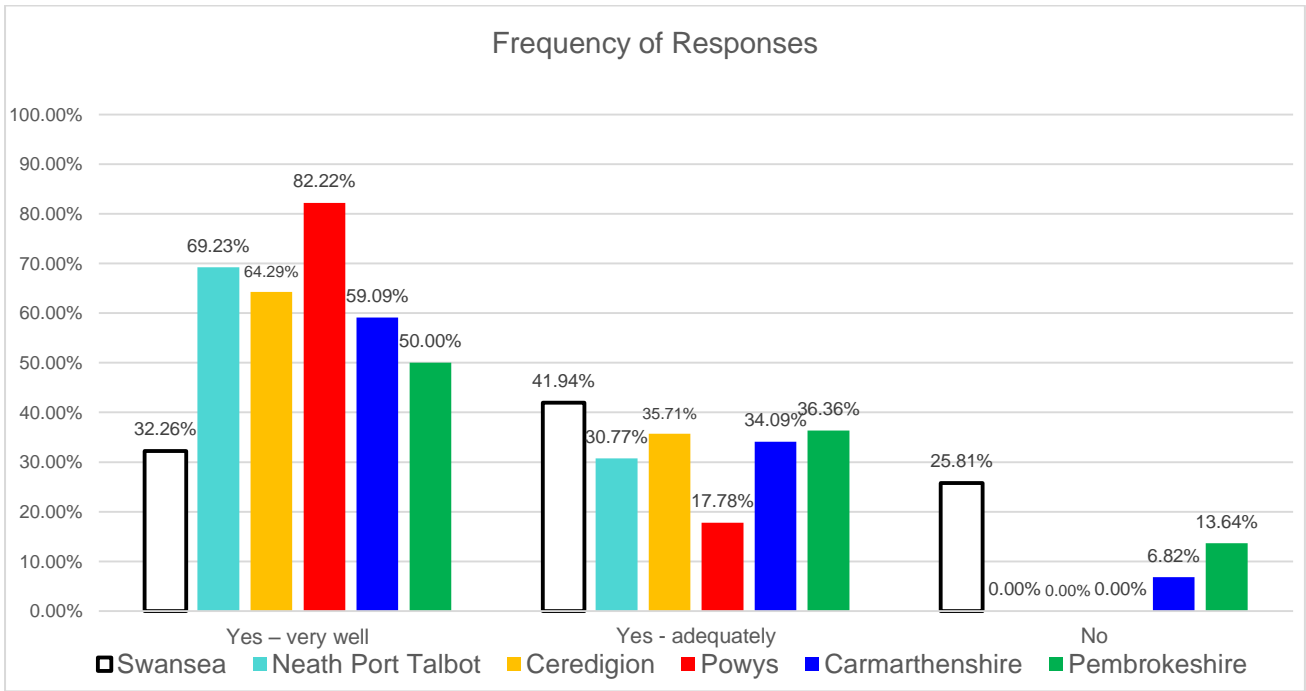
	Neath Port Talbot	%
Oedd - yn dda iawn/Yes - very well	18	69.23%
Oedd - yn ddigonol/Yes - adequately	8	30.77%
Nac oedd/No	0	0.00%
<b>Total Answered</b>	<b>26</b>	

	Ceredigion	%
Oedd - yn dda iawn/Yes - very well	9	64.29%
Oedd - yn ddigonol/Yes - adequately	5	35.71%
Nac oedd/No	0	0.00%
<b>Total Answered</b>	<b>14</b>	

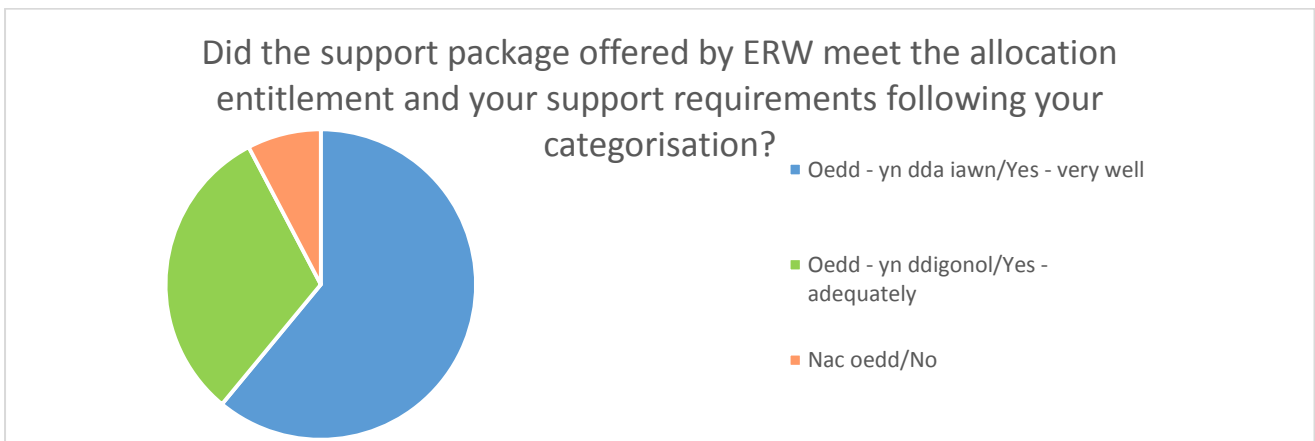
	Powys	%
Oedd - yn dda iawn/Yes - very well	37	82.22%
Oedd - yn ddigonol/Yes - adequately	8	17.78%
Nac oedd/No	0	0.00%
<b>Total Answered</b>	<b>45</b>	

	Carmarthenshire	%
Oedd - yn dda iawn/Yes - very well	26	59.09%
Oedd - yn ddigonol/Yes - adequately	15	34.09%
Nac oedd/No	3	6.82%
<b>Total Answered</b>	<b>44</b>	

	Pembrokeshire	%
Oedd - yn dda iawn/Yes - very well	11	50.00%
Oedd - yn ddigonol/Yes - adequately	8	36.36%
Nac oedd/No	3	13.64%
Total Answered	22	



		%
Oedd - yn dda iawn/Yes - very well	111	60.99%
Oedd - yn ddigonol/Yes - adequately	57	31.32%
Nac oedd/No	14	7.69%
Total	182	



Over 60% (111) of respondents stated that the support package offered by ERW meet the allocation entitlement 'very well', with 31.32% (57) believing that ERW had met it adequately and the remaining 7.69% (14) believing that ERW had not done so. In Powys we can see that the respondents were very satisfied with 82.22% (37) stating ERW had met the support package met the allocation entitlement very well, with the remaining 17.78% (8) that ERW had adequately achieved this. As mentioned earlier 14 respondents believed that ERW had not achieved this, 8 were from Swansea, and 3 from Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire. There is a common theme presenting itself with Pembrokeshire mainly and Swansea being the ever present in negative responses, with Carmarthenshire contributing to a few negative statements as well.

There is a belief Green schools and 'Better' Performing schools are provided no support or no support that is tailored towards them, it is all geared towards the underperforming schools and they are also the ones that have to support them.

### **Robin Hughes Interviews**

*"Building credibility in ERW will take time, of course. It is still fairly new. But one of the things we need to do better is identify and communicate what is given to the schools that aren't challenged. The challenged get support, but what do the others get? They give."*

*"If you are a high performing school, what can ERW provide that helps you move forward? Where is the pedagogical next step?"*

*"We have a deficit-recovery model. Everything is focused on low achieving schools. But more is needed, if we are all to develop and improve."*

*"Across ERW, training seems to be based on the lowest common denominator. That doesn't take things forward, really, in school improvement. It isn't stretching or challenging enough."*

*"Who chooses the theme for CV2? Where does it come from? It's just more of that lowest common denominator stuff again."*

*"I don't think there's enough variety in the support that is available. And the support does need to be promoted a lot more."*

*"Support needs to move forward from being limited to a fairly narrow menu of interventions that can be delivered, that allows people to just stagger along. Where is the research and evidence of things that work, not just in West Wales, but further afield, globally?"*

*"This year's menu of support will be very much like last year's. Where is the evaluation of it?"*

As seen in the last two quotes above the Menu of Support in general is not seen to be bespoke or tailored enough for Headteachers across the region not only for the Green or Better Performing schools, this is clear in both analysis as it was also evident in the Headteachers responses post CV1.

### **Headteacher feedback analysis**

*"Visit was both challenging and supportive. Felt our CA knew our school and had done necessary analysis of the school's data. Disappointing menu of support. As a school we tend to make our own networks for school to school support and are buying external CPD." – Primary School Headteacher, Swansea.*

*“Professional and supportive. The menu of support is limited for special schools but the items selected were appropriate and since the visit we have had support to re develop our website due to pgfl being removed.” – Special School Headteacher, Pembrokeshire.*

*“Challenge adviser was excellent. Menu of support courses for numeracy, literacy, differentiation not as effective” – Primary School Headteacher, NPT.*

### **Robin Hughes Interviews**

*“I can’t remember a single Challenge Adviser actually giving me a menu of support and saying ‘oracy needs to improve, and here is A, B, C for you’ and ‘here, this is a list of a few schools that have good practice in this’. – Primary School Headteacher, Carmarthenshire.*

*“The menu of support isn’t tailored. What’s really needed is ‘where have we seen this before’, ‘who’s had similar challenge and what did they do’. Who can we go and meet to talk it through.” – Secondary School Headteacher, Pembrokeshire.*

It is clear that schools strongly believe that the Menu of Support is clearly not tailored enough for schools. Among all the schools that actually discussed ERW’s menu of Support verbally their view was unanimous that the menu of Support was too general, as a Primary Headteacher from Swansea put it –

*“I think the menu of support is really about us being given what can be provided, rather than being provided what we really need.”*

No positive statements/comments were made regarding the Menu of Support. Even so, as we can see when looking solely at the Headteacher Feedback Analysis statistics below, 91.89% of respondent actually believed that they had in fact received a relevant Menu of Support.

### **Did you receive a relevant menu of support as a consequence of the adviser's visit to your School?**

	Swansea	%
Do/Yes	23	71.88%
Naddo/No	9	28.13%
Total Answered	32	

	Neath Port Talbot	%
Do/Yes	25	96.15%
Naddo/No	1	3.85%
Total Answered	26	

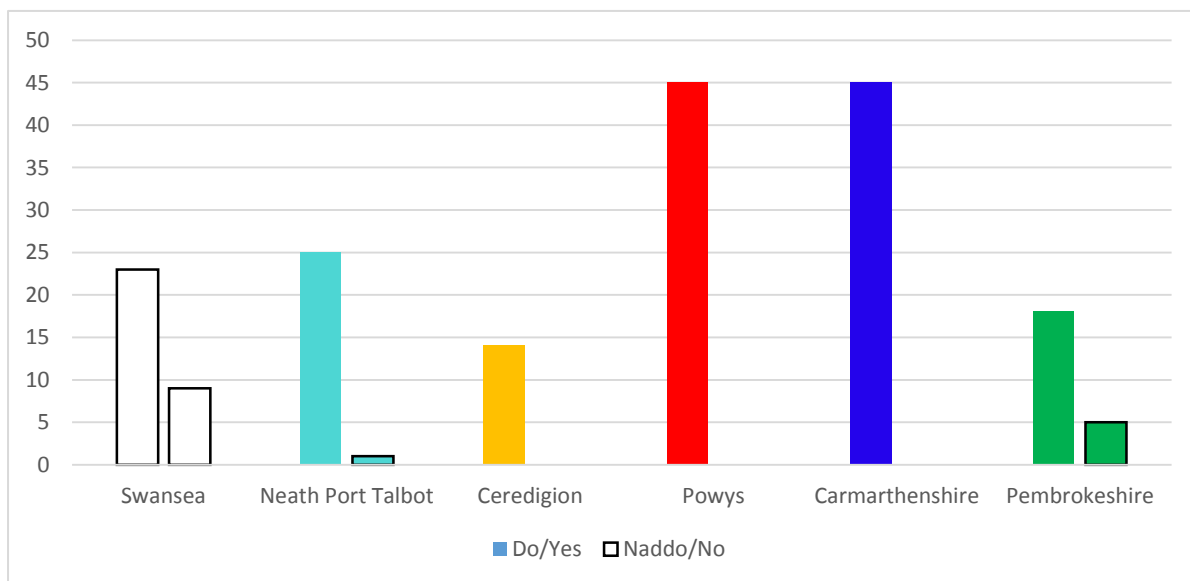


	Ceredigion	%
Do/Yes	14	100.00%
Naddo/No	0	0.00%
Total Answered	14	

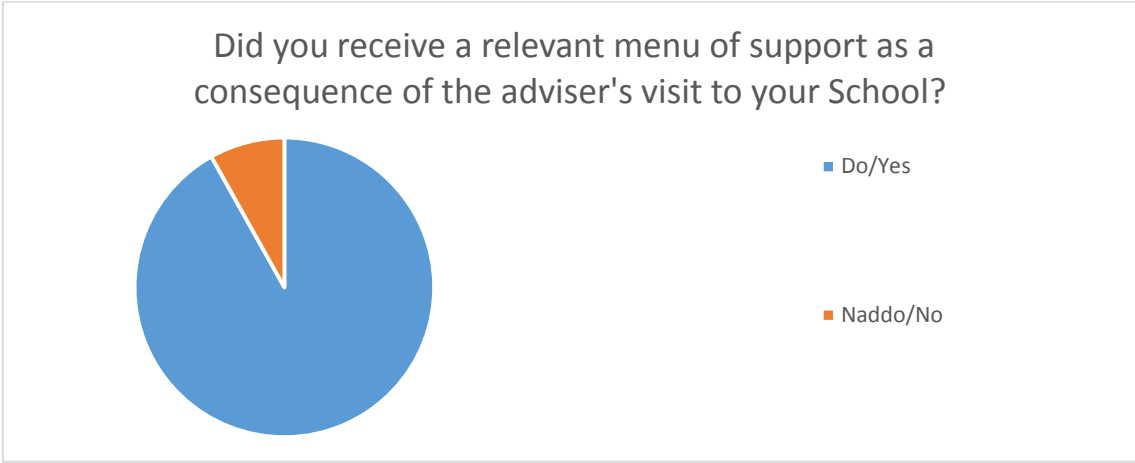
	Powys	%
Do/Yes	45	100.00%
Naddo/No	0	0.00%
Total Answered	45	

	Carmarthenshire	%
Do/Yes	45	100.00%
Naddo/No	0	0.00%
Total Answered	45	

	Pembrokeshire	%
Do/Yes	18	78.26%
Naddo/No	5	21.74%
Total Answered	23	



	Frequency	%
Do/Yes	170	91.89%
Naddo/No	15	8.11%
Total	185	



91.89% of respondents stated that they had received a relevant menu of support as a consequence of the adviser's visit to their school, the remaining 8.11% believed they had not. The 15 (8.11% of respondents) that had not received a relevant menu of support were from Swansea, Pembrokeshire and NPT with 9, 5 and 1 respectively.

There is a trend that all that answered negatively on the survey came from the same Local Authorities as all that commented negatively, Pembrokeshire, Swansea and NPT. It is clear that the schools within these three LA believe that Menu of Support is not bespoke/tailored enough.

## Comments on the quality of the visit and Challenge Advisers as a whole

### Headteacher Feedback Analysis report

The responses from the Headteacher feedback analysis were been categorised, Dark green – Excellent, light green – Good, Light yellow – More positives than negative, Bright yellow – More negatives than positives, and then Red for Poor/no positives.

	Total	Swansea	Neath Port Talbot	Ceredigion	Powys	Carmarthenshire	Pembrokeshire
Dark Green - Excellent	74	13	11	4	24	13	9
Light Green - Good	55	10	6	6	15	14	4
Light Yellow - More positive than negative	5	1	1	0	0	2	1
Bright Yellow - More Negative than Positive	12	2	0	0	0	7	3
Red - Poor	5	0	0	0	0	0	5

The main points gathered from the comments were as followed –

- 3 of the 5 comments categorised in the Red category by Pembrokeshire Schools stated/used the word 'Poor' in their comments.
- Whenever Challenge Advisers were well prepared and well informed of all school data/information schools reacted well, and gave very positive feedback. When the CA's visited they were much more willing to listen and take heed of the advice that the CA gave to them as there was a greater element of trust due to the school staff believing in the competency of their CA knowing what they were doing.
- Some visits proved to be long and at times too much information was shared on a singular visit therefore the message would be lost and the challenge in front of them be too daunting.
- Some CA's were too focused on looking at the data of the school rather than engaging with the pupil themselves and the pupils' books.

From looking at point 2 and 4 a suggested improvement would be to advise CA's to be well prepared before visiting any of their schools, that they are well versed with all the important data for that particular School, rather than pouring through it all on the visit and concentrating more and engaging more with the problems at hand. The data analysis and finding out any information process should already be completed before the first visit.

A recurring theme that was evident that came from the interviews was the problem of high turnover of CA that schools have, this was referenced to in 8 out of the 19 interviews,

*"The visit was fine, but this is the third challenge adviser we have had in three years and ESTYN (this week) were not happy about the lack of consistency." Primary School HT, Pembrokeshire.*

*“Challenge advisors were very professional, however, as the school had its 4th challenge advisor in as many years, this proved frustrating as we had to keep explaining our context. Continuity is preferable.” Primary School HT, Swansea*

This was also evident in **Robin Hughes Interviews** -

*“Having your Challenge Adviser change from year to year creates some difficulties. I’d like them to stay for 3 years, so that the dialogue gets better and better and they get to see the improvement that we are all working for.” – Primary School HT, Ceredigion.*

*“The turnover of Challenge Advisers per school and per cluster is high. It is disadvantageous.” – Primary School Cluster HT Group, Swansea.*

*“The biggest criticism I have is that I’ve had a yearly change. Every time, you start again. And the impact just isn’t as strong as it could be because of that.” – Secondary School HT, Pembrokeshire.*

*“I had 5 Challenge Advisers in 18 months, and leading into inspection.” – Primary HT Cluster Group, NPT.*

*“I’ve had a different Challenge Adviser every year of my headship and that creates difficulties, although the relationships have been good ones. The visits have become more purposeful and the exchange has improved over time.” – Primary School HT, Swansea.*

We can see that respondents from Swansea were the most consistent in stating that the turnover of CA was high with a few from Pembrokeshire also expressing their concern.

Pembrokeshire’s schools as were the only LA to have been considered the quality of the visit and CA as ‘Poor’, with 3 schools actually using the word ‘Poor’.

*“Poor - agreed activities and processes not stuck to. Many judgements made on the basis of other evidence acquired. Total time for visit greatly exceeded that allocated. Rather a random process that lacked clarity.” Secondary School HT, Pembrokeshire.*

*“Poor. These questions could be more searching regarding the process eg ascertaining how the visit was conducted, relating to the skills and capabilities of the Challenge Advisors. I question the real understanding that a Challenge Advisor has of a school if they do not spend time with learners. Many Heads speak of the loss of the pastoral element of the role of Challenge Advisor and whilst the core purpose is to challenge, this element must be promoted in the climate. The quality of the reports are poor - I would not expect teachers to provide this standard for our children, I question if they help us to move forward as a school. I believe that this role needs to be reviewed in order to make the Core Visit more meaningful. It achieved very little for our school.” Primary School HT, Pembrokeshire.*

*“The CV1 meeting was the first time that the Challenge Adviser had been to the school, and the first time meeting me. The visit was 7 hours long, with no break for lunch, and looked almost entirely at data, sub-levels and tracking. There seemed to be little interest in getting to know the school or meeting children and teachers, just a desire to look at the data. The Challenge Adviser was focused on “challenge”, and the levels that children achieve year on year. There seemed to be little appreciation that learning is not linear, and that different children do not necessarily learn at the same speed. I know that there is a job to be done in raising standards, but this cannot just be “you need more L5s” when you know nothing about the children. The old adage seems to be correct - “The further you are from the child, the more important the data”. I think that a broader view of what a school is doing/achieving for its learners is vital. With the Donaldson curriculum around the corner, a view needs to be taken of changes in teaching and learning; of the breadth of curriculum offered to the learners, and the more nuanced features of a school rather than levels, sub-levels and data in English, maths, science and Welsh.” Primary School Headteacher, Pembrokeshire.*

CA Preparation and how some CAs performed, interacted during the CV1 and the visit's length and how intense the day itself were other issues raised by HT. Some believed that some CAs solely looked at Data.

*"Focus on data rather than on impact on pupils' emotional development school to school working etc." Primary School HT, Pembrokeshire.*

*"No books were looked at" – Primary School HT, Carmarthenshire.*

*"It was a tough day. Data was 'interrogated' not challenged! (The same as being assertive/aggressive). Didn't agree with the need to introduce the sub levels between levels in KS2 - why?? What is the point of saying at the end of KS2 that a child is 4 a, b or c? - it makes no difference. What you want to know is if they are a L4 or L5 - there is no need. Estyn said there was no need!!!" – Primary School HT, Pembrokeshire.*

*"Very thorough, however, it is very intense and a long day. Too much in it" - Primary School HT, Swansea.*

*"Very professionally done. Clear and open communication prior to, during and after the visit allowing for frank and open professional dialogue. Heads performance management meetings should be required to be on a separate date as by that time both head and governors have been thinking intensely for several/many hours. This does not allow heads to focus on their own needs or requirements sufficiently well. I know it is optional but we try to make things easier generally for our ChAd and Govs but this means we are putting ourselves second again. Clearer, more focused Perf Man would improve leadership skills and consequently school leadership." Primary School HT, Powys.*

As mentioned before from the main points of the Headteacher Feedback analysis comments on CAs, schools strongly believe that when there is a strong relationship between them and the CA, and that they can trust that the CA is experienced and will support them then there is a much a greater willingness on their behalf. CA preparation for each visit is paramount for this, this was again evident in both findings.

## **Headteachers Feedback Analysis**

*"Excellent. I felt that our Challenge Advisor new our school well and although the process was thorough I felt it was a supportive process too." – Primary School HT, Pembrokeshire.*

*"The Challenge Advisors were professional, had done their research and helped with the SE process."*

*"Excellent. I feel that my Challenge Adviser has a secure understanding of the school and both asks challenging questions and offers support as needed." – Primary School HT, Pembrokeshire.*

## **Robin Hughes Interviews**

*"When your Challenge Adviser knows your pupils and knows your school, you can work together. That takes time." - Former Primary HT, current Primary HT group co-ordinator, NPT*

*"I had four different Challenge Advisers in 7 years and begged ERW to have some stability. They listened and I now have an Adviser who is supportive. He has my respect." – Primary School HT, Swansea.*

*"The best thing that happened to me was when the Challenge Adviser – we were a Schools Challenge Cymru school – spoke with me, we shared the issues, and they went off, found other schools with something similar and what they were doing about it, and gave that to me. That was great." – Head of Maths department, Unknown LA.*



## Headteacher Feedback analysis

Was the categorisation process as part of the visit delivered effectively?

	Swansea	%
Yes – very well	27	90.00%
Yes - adequately	3	10.00%
No	0	0.00%
Total Answered	30	

	Neath Port Talbot	%
Yes – very well	23	88.46%
Yes - adequately	2	7.69%
No	1	3.85%
Total Answered	26	

	Ceredigion	%
Yes – very well	13	92.86%
Yes - adequately	1	7.14%
No	0	0.00%
Total Answered	14	

	Powys	%
Yes – very well	43	95.56%
Yes - adequately	2	4.44%
No	0	0.00%
Total Answered	45	

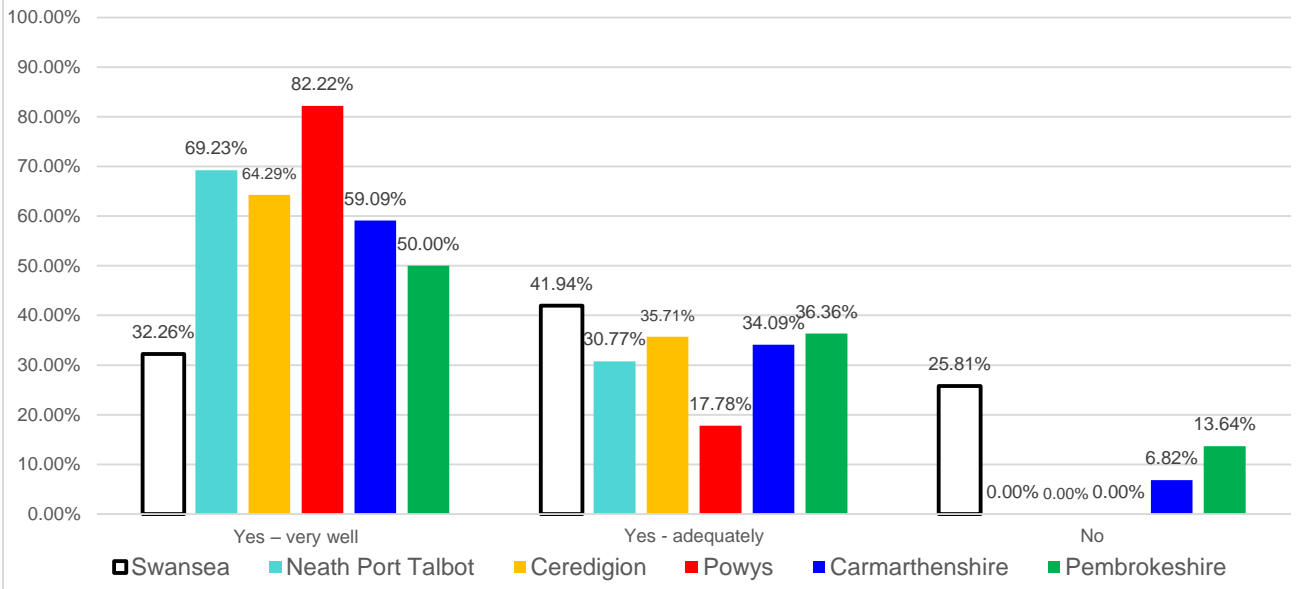
	Carmarthenshire	%
Yes – very well	36	76.60%
Yes - adequately	11	23.40%
No	0	0.00%
Total Answered	47	

	Pembrokeshire	%
Yes – very well	14	60.87%
Yes - adequately	7	30.43%
No	2	8.70%
Total Answered	23	

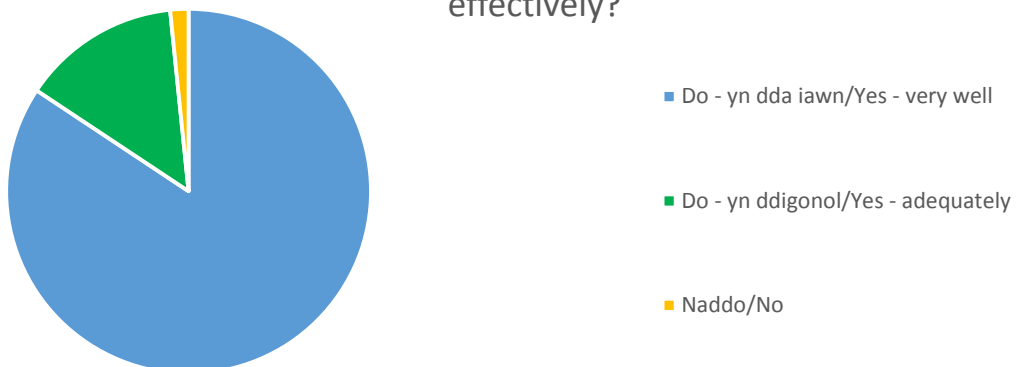
	Frequency	%
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Do - yn dda iawn/Yes - very well	156	84.32%
Do - yn ddigonol/Yes - adequately	26	14.05%
Naddo/No	3	1.62%
Total	185	

Frequency of Responses



Was the categorisation process as part of the visit delivered effectively?





Almost 85% believed that the categorisation process was delivered very well, with over 14% that it was adequately delivered and only 3 believed that it was not. Of those 3, again 2 were from Pembrokeshire and 1 from Neath Port Talbot. In Powys, Ceredigion and Swansea we saw figures of 90% or above in the 'Yes – very well' category. Only 60.87% of Pembrokeshire's respondents believed that the categorisation process was delivered "Very Well" this is well below the average score of 84.32%, Carmarthenshire was the only other LA well below the average. Both Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire also had a very high percentage in the 'Adequately' category compared to the average of 14.05%, with scores of 30.43% and 23.4% respectively.

**Robin Hughes' Interviews did not cover the categorisation process.**

## **ERW's Communication**

### **Headteacher Feedback Analysis**

	Swansea	%
Aneffeithiol / Ineffective	1	3.23%
Aneffeithiol iawn / Very Ineffective	1	3.23%
Boddhaol / Satisfactory	13	41.94%
Effeithiol / Effective	11	35.48%
Effeithiol iawn / Very Effective	5	16.13%
Total Answered	31	

	Neath Port Talbot	%
Aneffeithiol / Ineffective	2	8.00%
Aneffeithiol iawn / Very Ineffective	0	0.00%
Boddhaol / Satisfactory	5	20.00%
Effeithiol / Effective	12	48.00%
Effeithiol iawn / Very Effective	6	24.00%
Total Answered	25	

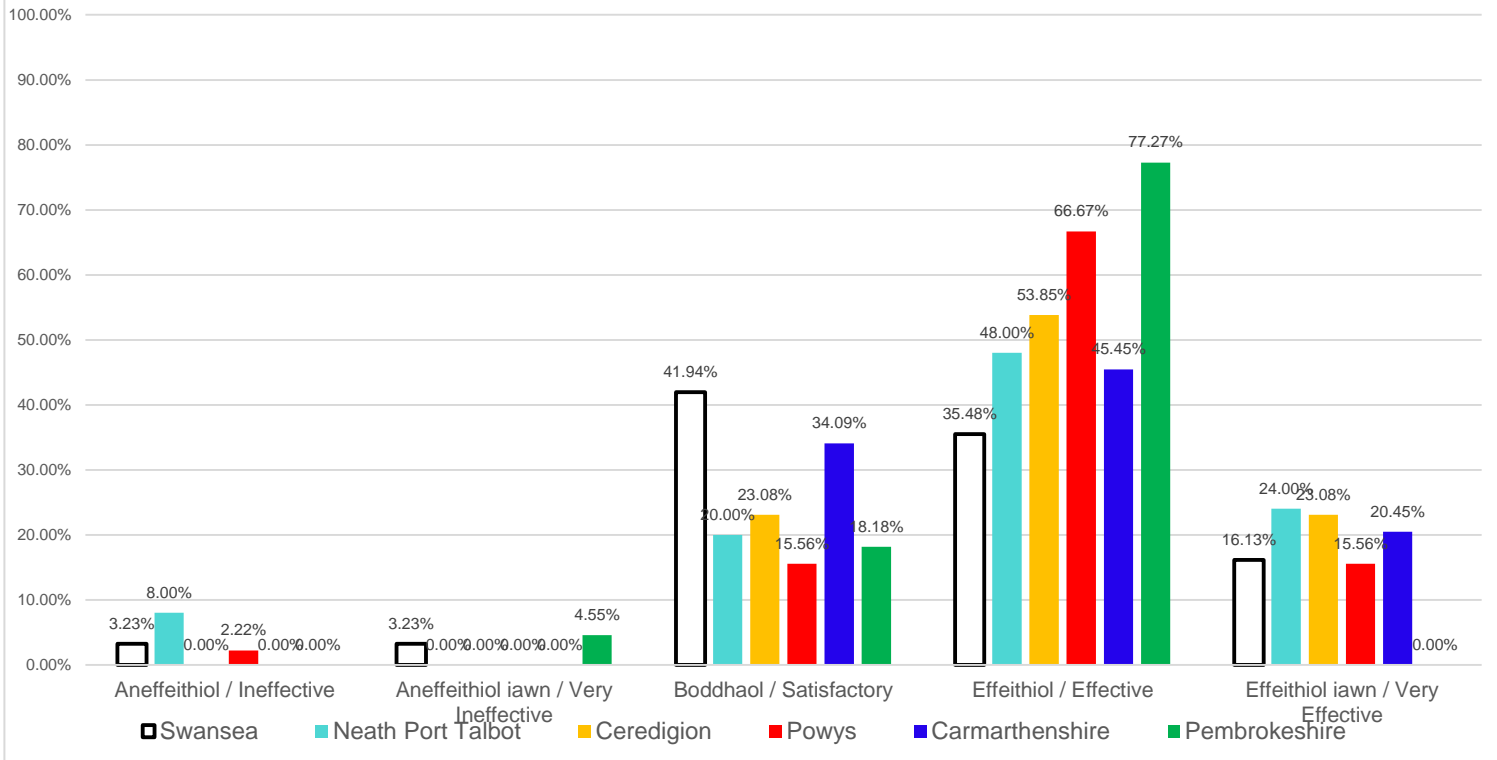
	Ceredigion	%
Aneffeithiol / Ineffective	0	0.00%
Aneffeithiol iawn / Very Ineffective	0	0.00%
Boddhaol / Satisfactory	3	23.08%
Effeithiol / Effective	7	53.85%
Effeithiol iawn / Very Effective	3	23.08%
Total Answered	13	

	Powys	%
Aneffeithiol / Ineffective	1	2.22%
Aneffeithiol iawn / Very Ineffective	0	0.00%
Boddhaol / Satisfactory	7	15.56%
Effeithiol / Effective	30	66.67%
Effeithiol iawn / Very Effective	7	15.56%
Total Answered	45	

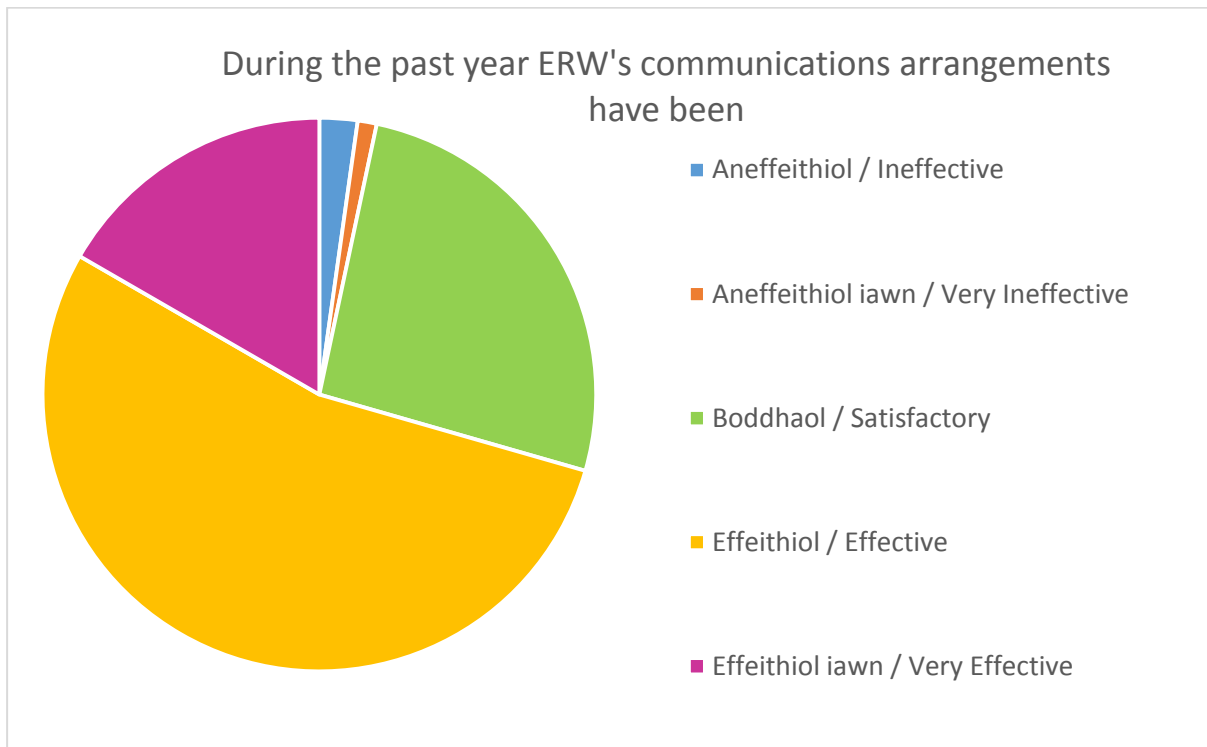
	Carmarthenshire	%
Aneffeithiol / Ineffective	0	0.00%
Aneffeithiol iawn / Very Ineffective	0	0.00%
Boddhaol / Satisfactory	15	34.09%
Effeithiol / Effective	20	45.45%
Effeithiol iawn / Very Effective	9	20.45%
Total Answered	44	

	Pembrokeshire	%
Aneffeithiol / Ineffective	0	0.00%
Aneffeithiol iawn / Very Ineffective	1	4.55%
Boddhaol / Satisfactory	4	18.18%
Effeithiol / Effective	17	77.27%
Effeithiol iawn / Very Effective	0	0.00%
Total Answered	22	

Frequency of Responses



Aneffeithiol / Ineffective	4	2.22%
Aneffeithiol iawn / Very Ineffective	2	1.11%
Boddhaol / Satisfactory	47	26.11%
Effeithiol / Effective	97	53.89%
Effeithiol iawn / Very Effective	30	16.67%
Total	180	



From the Feedback Analysis Pembrokeshire and Swansea again feature as one of the 3 LA to give more negative feedback compared to others. The overall positive or negative experience with their CA's and ERW as a whole could have affected this response and the remaining answers. But on the whole we can see positive feedback as over 50% of the respondents are of the view that ERW's communication has been mainly effective, with Satisfactory having 26.11%, therefore there is room for improvement as only 16.67 believed that it was very effective.

### **Robin Hughes Interviews**

Schools valued that they were able to pick up the phone or approach someone with responsibility within ERW easily

*"ERW seem prepared to listen. That is reassuring. I feel I can contact them, even the MD directly." – Primary School HT, Swansea*

*"ERW had the same expectations of us special schools as other schools, to begin with. We spoke up, ERW listened, and we now have a special schools network. We spoke to the MD and she listened." Special School HT, Powys.*

*"I had a concern with a Challenge Adviser, and I approached the Pricncipal Challenge Adviser. It was dealt with. That relationship with the Senior Challenge Adviser is really important." - Powys Primary HT Group.*

*"If I have an issue, I just call the Md. She's approachable and supportive. But I guess that isn't really sustainable." Secondary HT Group, Swansea*

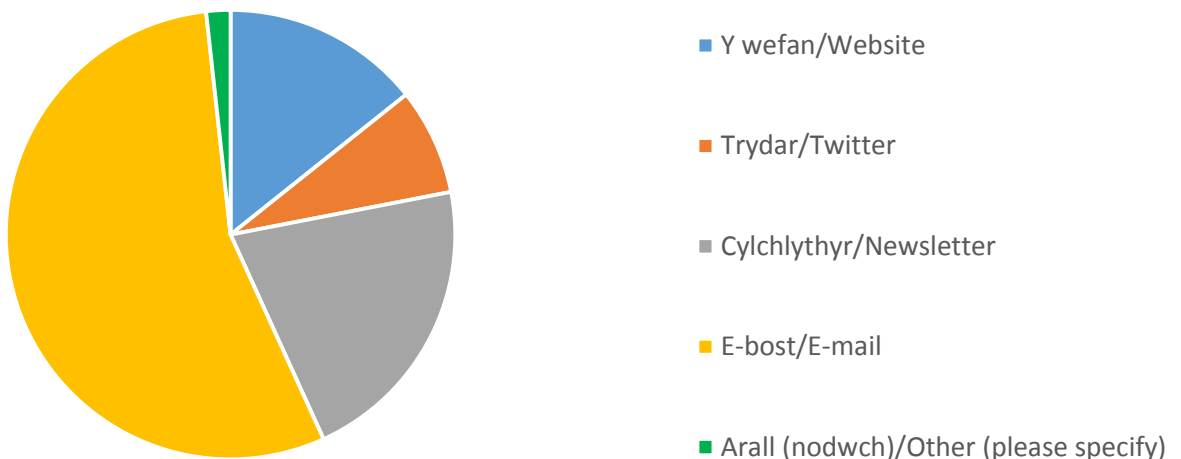
*"I had four different Challenge Advisers in 7 years and begged the MD to have some stability. She listened and I now have an Adviser who is supportive. She has my respect." – Primary School HT, Pembrokeshire.*

## **Headteacher feedback Analysis**

**When asking School which method of communication do you find most helpful to gain information on ERW's work, this was their response:**

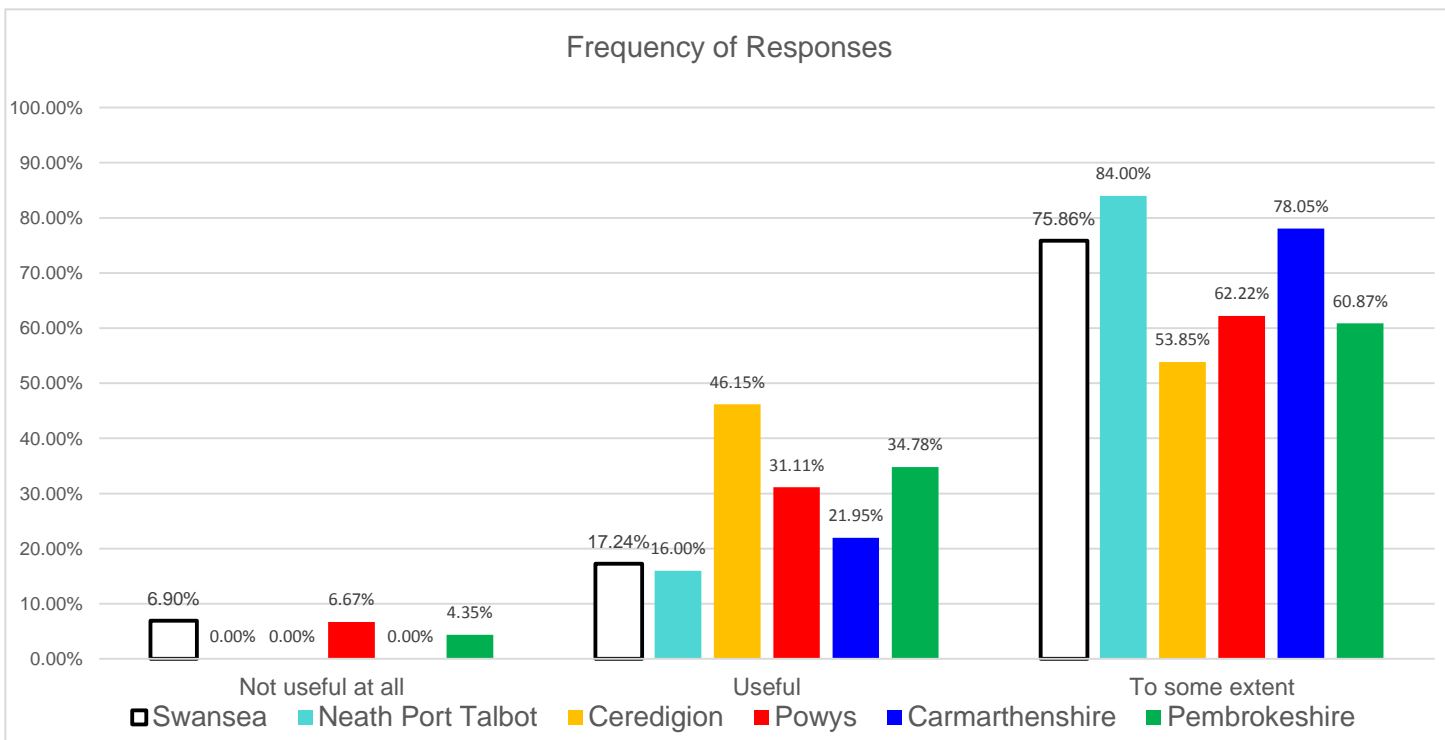
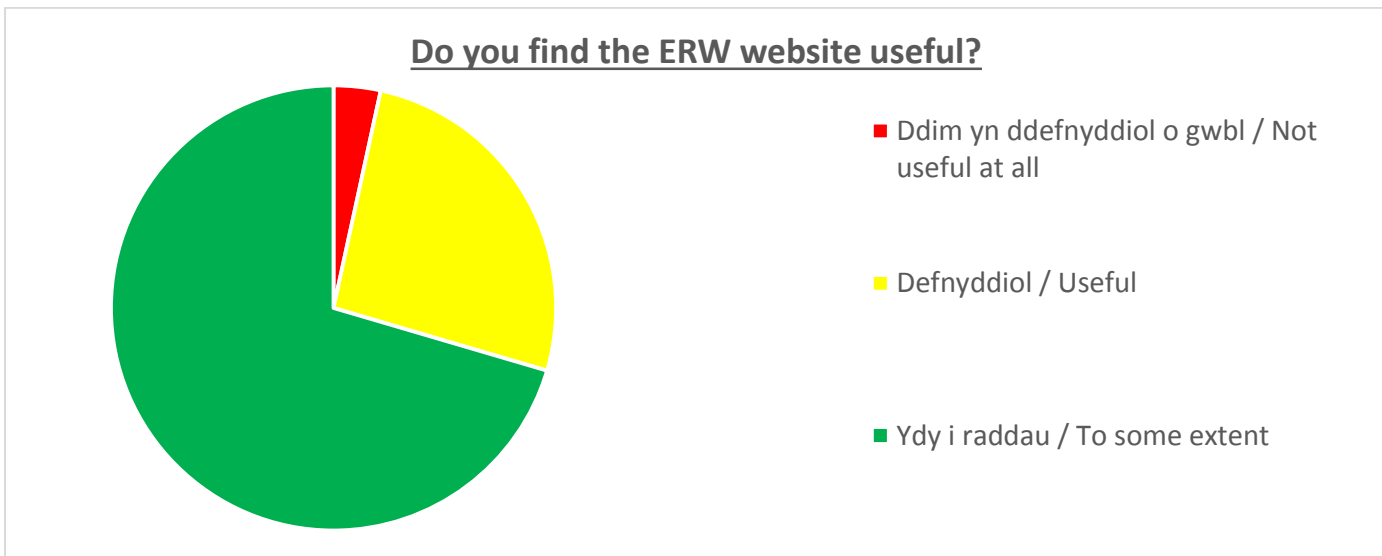
Method of Communication	Frequency
Y wefan/Website	41
Trydar/Twitter	22
Cylchlythyr/Newsletter	61
E-bost/E-mail	158
Arall (nodwch)/Other (please specify)	5

Which method of communication do you find most helpful to gain information on ERW's work?



**Was the ERW website useful?**

	Frequency	%
Ddim yn ddefnyddiol o gwbl / Not useful at all	6	3.41%
Defnyddiol / Useful	46	26.14%
Ydy i raddau / To some extent	124	70.45%
Total	176	



## **Improvements that could be made to the ERW website.**

### **Headteacher Feedback Analysis**

A number of respondents believe that the 'ease of use' of the website needs to be improved greatly, especially navigating and finding what they came to the website for

*"It is difficult to navigate and find the information needed." – Primary School HT, Powys.*

*"Needs to be easier to navigate" - Primary School HT, Powys.*

*"Sometimes difficult to find documents." - Primary School HT, NPT.*

*"I haven't got time to be trawling through a website, frankly!" – Primary School HT, Swansea.*

Translated – *"Difficult to find some documents" Primary School HT, Powys.*

*"Clearer links and greater sign posting of where to find key documents" - Primary School HT, Powys.*

*"I don't use the website very often, but I have searched for documents to support us in attendance related matters. Hyperlinks to relevant WG and ESTYN documents would also be useful, making ERW website more of a one stop shop." Primary School HT, Swansea.*

This was also confirmed in **Robin Hughes' Interviews**

*"It is really tricky to find what you want. 'This will be in Teaching and Learning', you think, but then it isn't, so you end up just calling someone." – Primary HT group, Powys*

*"It is functional. But it isn't clever. It doesn't lead you to other things, like Amazon says 'you bought this, so you may be interested in these'. Why not have links to other relevant stuff, like Estyn reports, Ofsted reports and papers from Universities?" – Secondary School HT, Carmarthenshire.*

*"Finding what you are looking for on the website can be very frustrating. You end up calling someone, usually, and they send it to you." – Secondary HT Group, Powys*

From the comments above and the figures laid out from the Headteacher feedback Analysis, the website is not deemed a success due to the impracticality and its Ease of Use. This in its course deters people from using it, only 41 of the respondents stated that the website was their preferred method of gathering information.

From the quotes that follow we can see a few suggested methods to improve the website to encourage more people to use it as their primary source of information - there is a need for more resources, content and information made readily available for schools

### **Headteacher Feedback Analysis**

*"Needs more content which will be useful to schools- there is very little in some areas." – Primary School HT, Swansea.*

*"Direct links via email to relevant material and information on the website would be useful" – Primary School HT, Pembrokeshire.*

*"Good practice" - Secondary School HT, Pembrokeshire.*

*“Easier to access key exemplar documents/policies/guidance/requirements” – Primary school HT, Carmarthenshire.*

*“ALN section very poor. Has been highlighted during various meetings.” – HT form NPT.*

Some even requested they be notified when new information was posted on the website or that it be made obvious

*“Make it easier to navigate - when there are new posts, can these be flagged up on the front page?” - Secondary School HT, Powys.*

Translated – *“Email to show that there are updates put up on the website” – Primary School HT, Carmarthenshire.*

*“A quick email to inform us if anything new has been added.” - Primary School HT, Carmarthenshire.*

A respondent in **Robin Hughes’ Interviews** recommended

*“It matters if the email is about a ‘hot topic’. Literacy or numeracy would be a flag; now, its’ Digital Competency.” – Former Primary HT, current Primary HT group co-ordinator, NPT*

Updating information regularly; information should be shared in a timelier manner, especially regarding courses especially in Carmarthenshire as schools in this LA seem to be informed too late therefore they are unable to attend

### **Headteacher Feedback Analysis**

Translated - *“Information for events often arrive too late. Duplication also occurs regularly as well” – Secondary School HT, Carmarthenshire.*

Translated – *“Often events are announced too late – short notice...” Primary School HT, Carmarthenshire.*

Translated – *“Very often communication happens too late, there is not enough forewarning for courses – one or two weeks notice is not enough in a busy school – a month notice is at least required before sending relevant people to courses/conferences” Secondary School HT, Carmarthenshire.*

### **Robin Hughes’ Interviews**

*“Late emails giving short notice for training aren’t helpful. And it makes you question if the training is any good, anyway.” – Primary School cluster HT group, Swansea.*

Some schools believe that there was no need to send out bilingual emails/newsletters if the first language of the school was known.

### **Headteacher Feedback Analysis**

*“I’d appreciate it if communications could be sent in the school’s first language’ only.” – Primary School HT, NPT.*

*“No need to have everything bilingually” - Primary School HT, NPT.*



*“Emails are often sent out in Welsh only or there is a very long scroll to find the English version” – Primary School HT, Powys.*

Participants in **Robin Hughes’ Interviews** suggested that high volume of emails leads to important messages being lost. Fewer communications but with better quality content would be advisable.

*“You do get 7 or 8 emails when fewer would do. A better protocol for communicating with headteachers would be good.” – Secondary HT Group, Powys.*

*“Swansea have a Monday email for headteachers. They’re trying to pool as much as they can into that mailing to get fewer emails sent to you. It works quite well; it is definitely something I make time for.” – Primary School HT, Swansea.*

There is also a call for Newsletter to be improved, to be current and engaging

*“The newsletter is great but perhaps we need something that is a bit more ‘here, this is vital or very important’, helping draw attention to something. Otherwise, you can easily miss something or feel that you’re wasting some of your time.” – Secondary HT Group – Powys.*

*“There’s an ERW newsletter. I don’t engage massively with that; it is more of a showcase than it is an information stream.” – Primary School HT, Swansea.*

*“I download every newsletter. But if it’s taking too long to load or doesn’t capture my attention straight away, I keep them to read later. And then, of course, other things get in the way of doing that.” – Primary School HT, Ceredigion.*

Other notable quotes from **Robin Hughes’ Interviews** on Communication

*“You’d see an email has come from your Challenge Adviser and think ‘Oh right, I’ll have to read that’.” - Former Primary HT, current Primary HT group co-ordinator, NPT*

When school’s CA send them emails they are more likely to read the email compared to if that email was sent as a general email out to everyone.

*“If someone shows you the value of the website or HWB or whatever, you start to use it and get the habit. I’ve only just started to use the ERW website and HWB since taking on a secondment; as a Head, I didn’t really use either.” - Former Primary HT, current Primary HT group co-ordinator, NPT*

*“Having a figurehead who is responsible for things, putting a face to things, is helpful. Having them go out to headteacher meetings is probably a heavy workload but perhaps it just has to be done to push communication forward.” – Secondary school HT, Powys.*

## **ERW itself**

As we can see from the **Headteacher Feedback Analysis** many are satisfied with ERW works with them, there is still a great deal of improvement needed. Some LAs require more attention than others as there is a great deal of variance across the region, for example the respondents of Powys and Pembrokeshire differ greatly in their views on ERW. Even so, some schools perceive ERW as another body that they are accountable to. Schools need to see that ERW is not a separate organisation but a legal alliance within the LA that works with the Welsh Government, ESTYN, and especially the School itself. There is also great deal of inconsistency throughout the region as to what ERW does and stands for. Even though there is still uncertainty among some HT, we can see that there are a few HT that believe since ERW's inception, ERW has been able to provide what their LA could not before.

## **Headteacher Feedback Analysis**

*"Schools still need to be guided as to the relevance of ERW. Greater facilitation and promotion of school to school work would be beneficial." – Secondary School HT, NPT*

*"LA and ERW working in true partnership and this is recognized by schools." – Primary School HT, Pembrokeshire*

Translated - *"At the moment I feel answerable to a large amount of people – children, parents, community, governors, LA, ERW, Welsh Government, ESTYN. It would be good to have consistency and to reduce the number of people that we are answerable to (of course not the children and parents!), receive the same clear message from the direction we need to be going regarding curriculum, projects and new enterprises, systems and policies etc. It would be a good idea to have consistency between Counties – the same policies, procedures, systems and documents etc" – Primary school HT, Pembrokeshire.*

## **Robin Hughes Interviews**

*"ERW are working on policies, but the LA is also looking at policies. There's some tension there, and as a head, you really do need certainty on which policy to follow. If the LA has agreed that ERW should lead, the LA should step back." – Primary School HT, Swansea.*

*"If you get policies coming from ERW and the LA, you'll go with the LA because of your liabilities." – Secondary School HT, Powys.*

*"One of the issues for Powys has always been the capacity to support schools. ERW is giving it that." – Secondary School HT, Powys.*

*"ERW aren't really present in our schools." Primary HT group, Powys*

*"I know what the LA does. But I don't really know what ERW does." Primary HT group, Powys*

*"The last few ERW events I've attended were positive and upbeat. It is so refreshing. And a big contrast to what I'm used to from County... I know what my relationship with the Local Authority is, and I know what my relationship with ERW is; but I don't really know what the relationship between ERW and the Local Authority is..."*

*I do think there's quite a few headteachers out there who couldn't tell you what ERW is or what it's about...I've been to quite a few headteacher meetings and it has never really been explained what ERW is and what is about." – Primary School HT, Pembrokeshire.*

*“There wasn’t much challenge, and not a lot of support either, from the Authority. Things have improved.” – Secondary School HT, Carmarthenshire.*

*“The regional approach began here as a response to budget pressure. Power and authority stayed with County. But now, there’s some tension. If something goes wrong at school, the Local Authority may give you a telling off but it is ERW that will give you support. Power and authority are different things, so who has power and who has authority now?” - Secondary School HT, Carmarthenshire.*

*“Estyn’s role is to judge. We all know that. But what is ERW’s role? Is it to judge, too? I don’t think they know themselves.” - Primary School cluster HT group in Swansea*

*“It is frustrating. I’m not really sure who my master is.” - Primary School cluster HT group in Swansea*

*“Without really knowing what its vision is and what its role is, I don’t really know how I relate to it nor what I think of it.” - Primary School cluster HT group in Swansea*

From a Secondary HT group in NPT:

*“I don’t think it is very clear what ERW’s real purpose is. It is blurred what the real difference between ERW and the Local Authority is.” Secondary HT group in NPT*

*“It isn’t really clear that this is what ERW is about, and this is what it can offer to get it done.” - Secondary HT group in NPT*

*“ERW has matured. It has earned the right, surely, to do more and consider more than just Welsh Government priorities. That needs a bit more work.” – Secondary School HT, Carmarthenshire.*

As we can see there is a varied view of ERW across the region, there are very differing views from schools not really knowing the purpose of ERW where others believe ERW to have taken over some of the roles of the LA.

Even so we revisit the theme that schools perceive ERW to be an additional organisation to answer to which in their eyes creates additional workload, something that ERW in fact should be leading and reducing.

Headteacher Feedback analysis

*“Really struggle to see what benefit there is in having ERW and Local Authority. Feel that work is/has increased since the creation of ERW. Work load is something that ERW wish to look at yet they have recently increased the workload.” – Primary School HT, NPT*

### **Robin Hughes’ Interviews**

*“ERW is ideally placed to say, ‘these are our priorities’ and then say ‘we need such and such, but we don’t need this or that’. ERW can ask ‘Is this really necessary?’ especially when it comes to data.” - Former Primary HT, current Primary HT group co-ordinator, NPT*

*“Managing all the stuff that’s coming our way. Timetabling its impact, identifying what’s important and when it needs to be done by – that’ll be a role for ERW.” – Secondary School HT, Powys.*

Inconsistency is a general theme throughout the Headteacher Feedback Survey. Schools are not only asking for consistency in the CA in the region but within their own LA.

*“Still too many inconsistencies between challenge advisers.” – Primary School HT, Pembrokeshire.*

*“More consistency in challenge advisors. Very difficult for schools with constantly changing advisors, each with their own ideas.” – Primary School HT, Carmarthenshire.*

*“greater consistency between challenge advisers across the authority” – Primary School HT, Carmarthenshire.*