

# Comparing schools spending per pupil in Wales and England

Luke Sibieta, Research Fellow, Institute for Fiscal Studies and Education Policy Institute

@lukesibieta

Sustaining Wales' Public Services: Austerity and Beyond

Wales Public Services 2025 Conference , July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018

# Comparing school spending across England and Wales is important, but challenging

**Latest empirical evidence suggests higher levels of school resources/spending can improve later life outcomes**

**Interest in comparing how policymakers across the UK have prioritised school spending in times of overall public spending cuts**

**Previous Welsh government statistics suggest spending per pupil was about £600 lower in Wales than in England in 2009-10**

**Fast pace of Academies programme in England makes updating these statistics hard**

- Over two thirds of secondary schools in England are now Academies
- Academies missing from local authority outturns

**New school funding arrangements in England from 2013-14 mean that Academies are now included within local authority plans...**

# Outline

**Data/methods for calculating comparable measures of spending per pupil in Wales and England over time**

**Overall trends in spending per pupil since 2008-09**

**Driving factors and implications**

**Plans for further work**

# Constructing a consistent measure of spending per pupil across England and Wales is not easy

**Different statistics and definitions**

**Greater role for local authorities in Wales**

**Different funding structure for early years and post-16**

**Academies often missing from LA data in England**

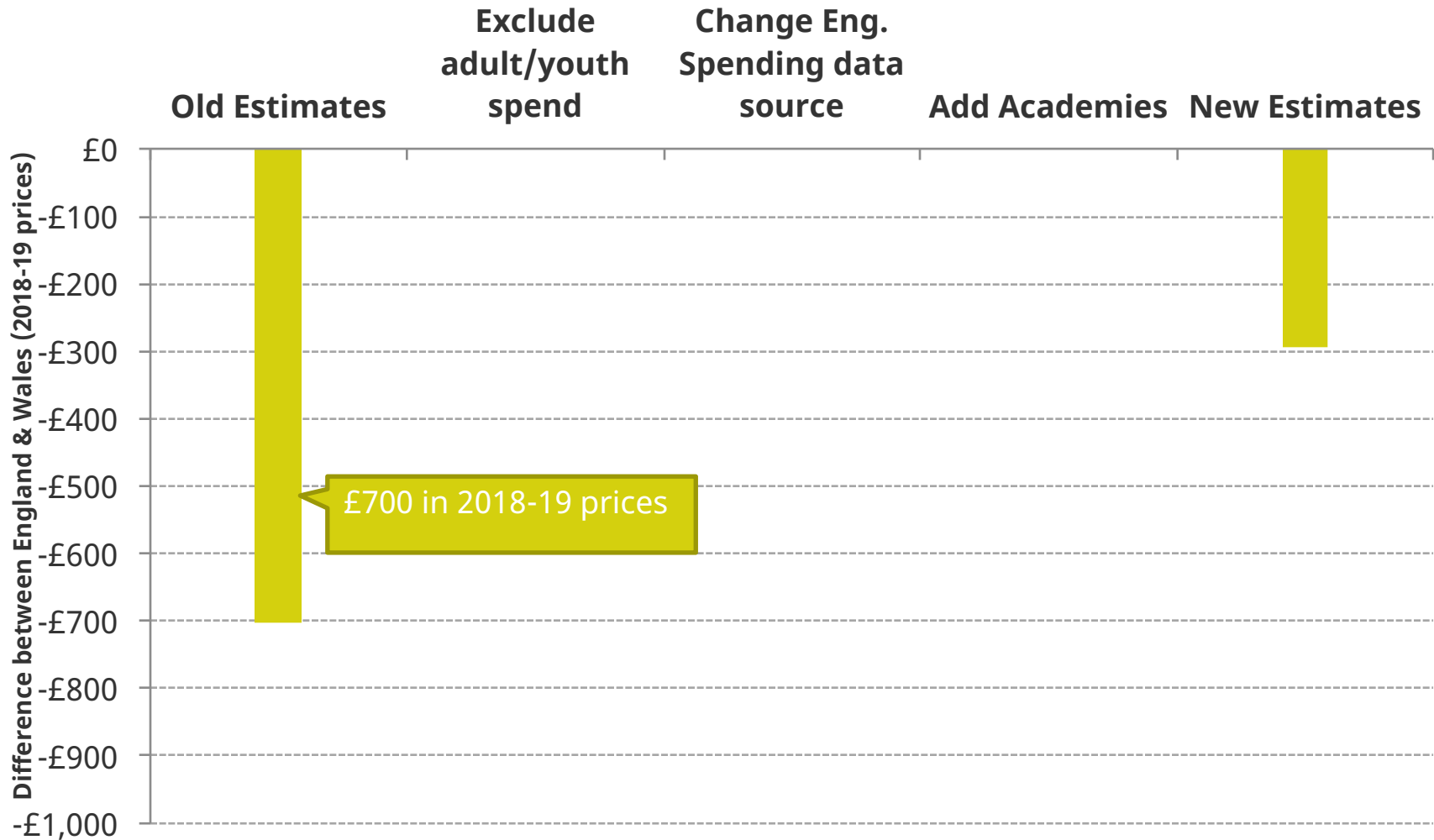
## **Our approach:**

- Total spending on schools from age 3-18 by schools or local authorities
- Consistent FTE pupil counts from ages 3-18 (spending data includes private nurseries for England; excluded for Wales)
- Add back in Academies for England before 2012-13
- Make use of England plans data from 2013-14, which includes

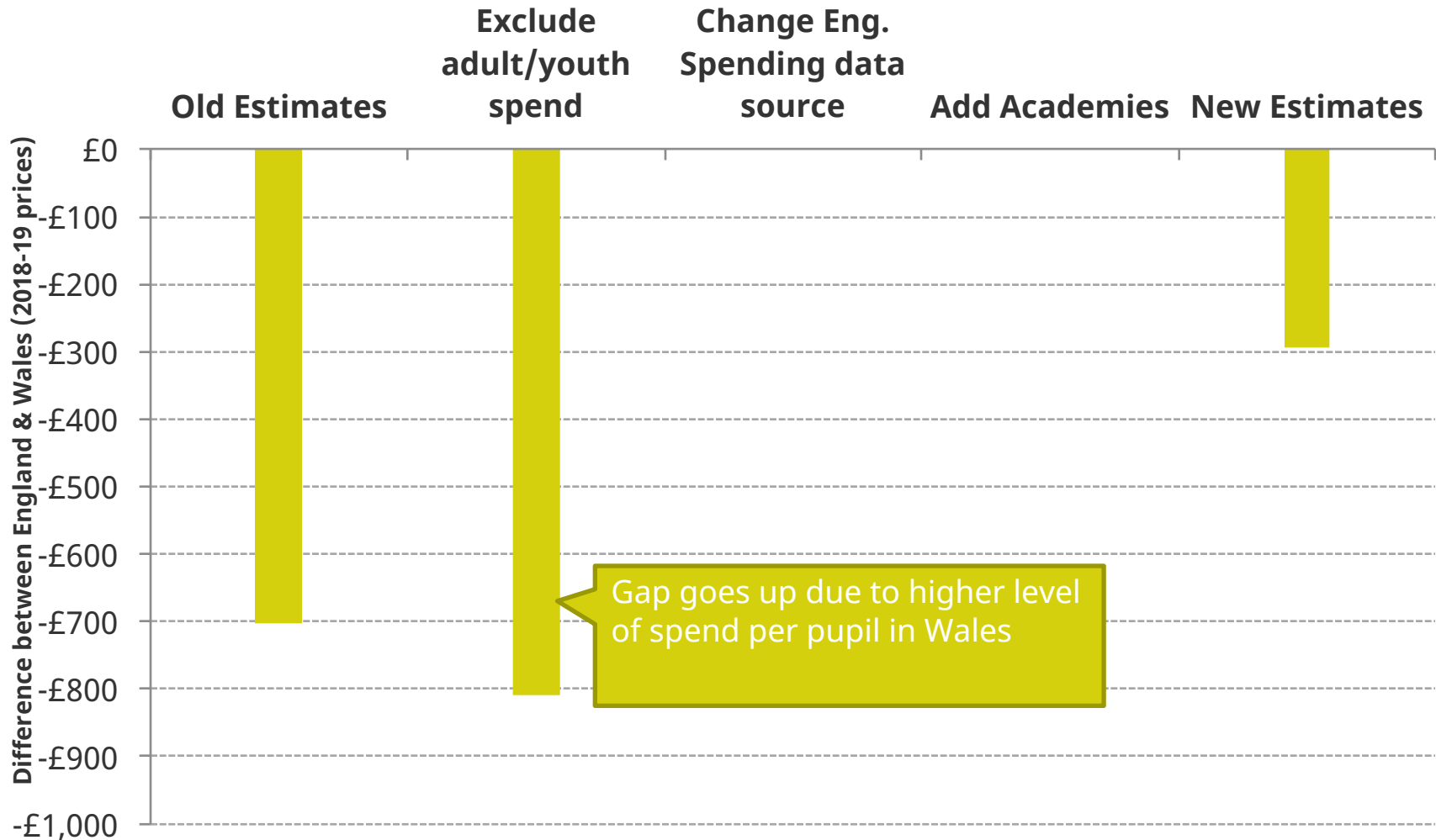
# Spending per pupil in Wales about £300 lower than in England in 2009



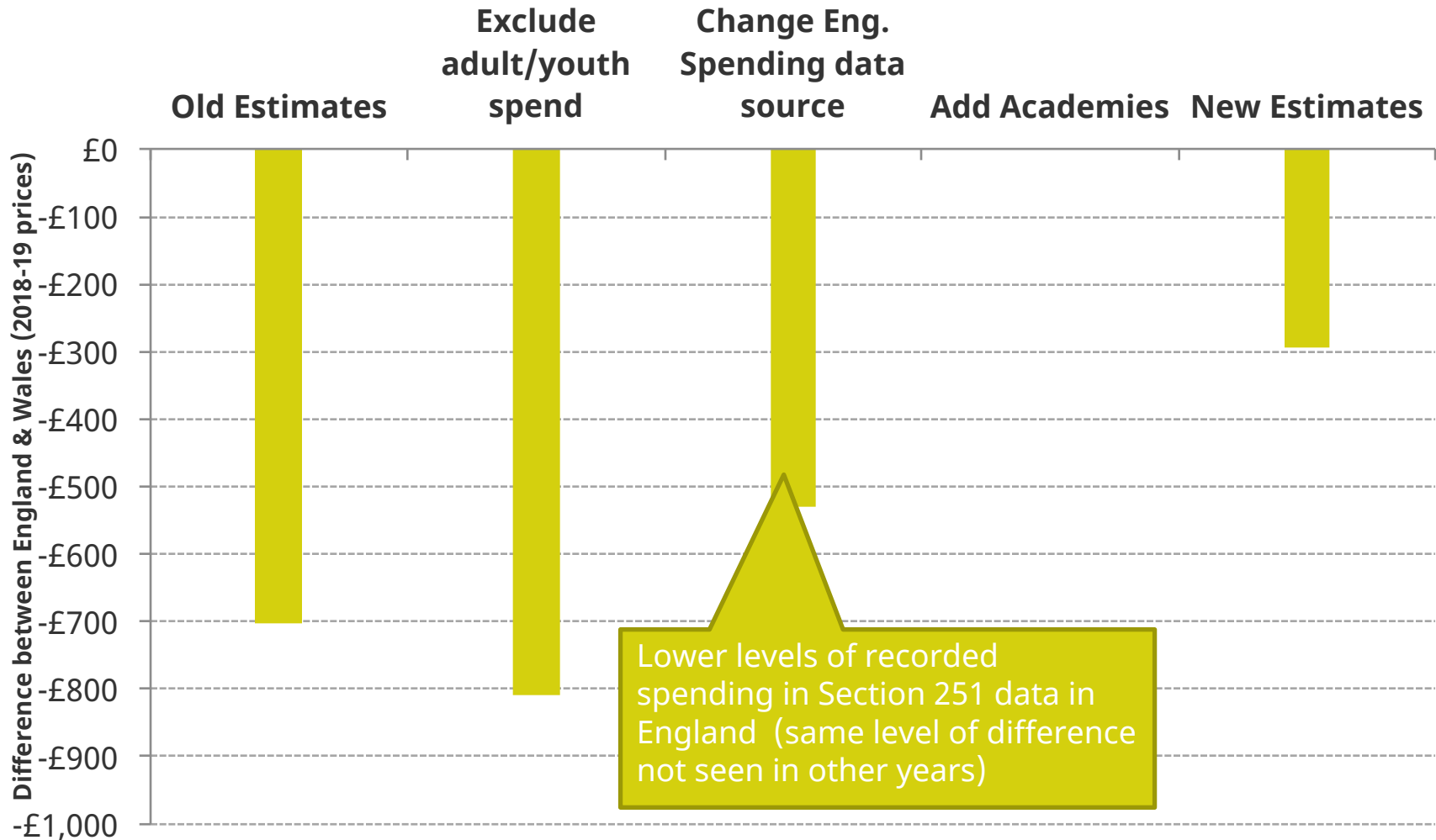
# Accounting for difference between £600 & £300 gap



# Accounting for difference between £600 & £300 gap

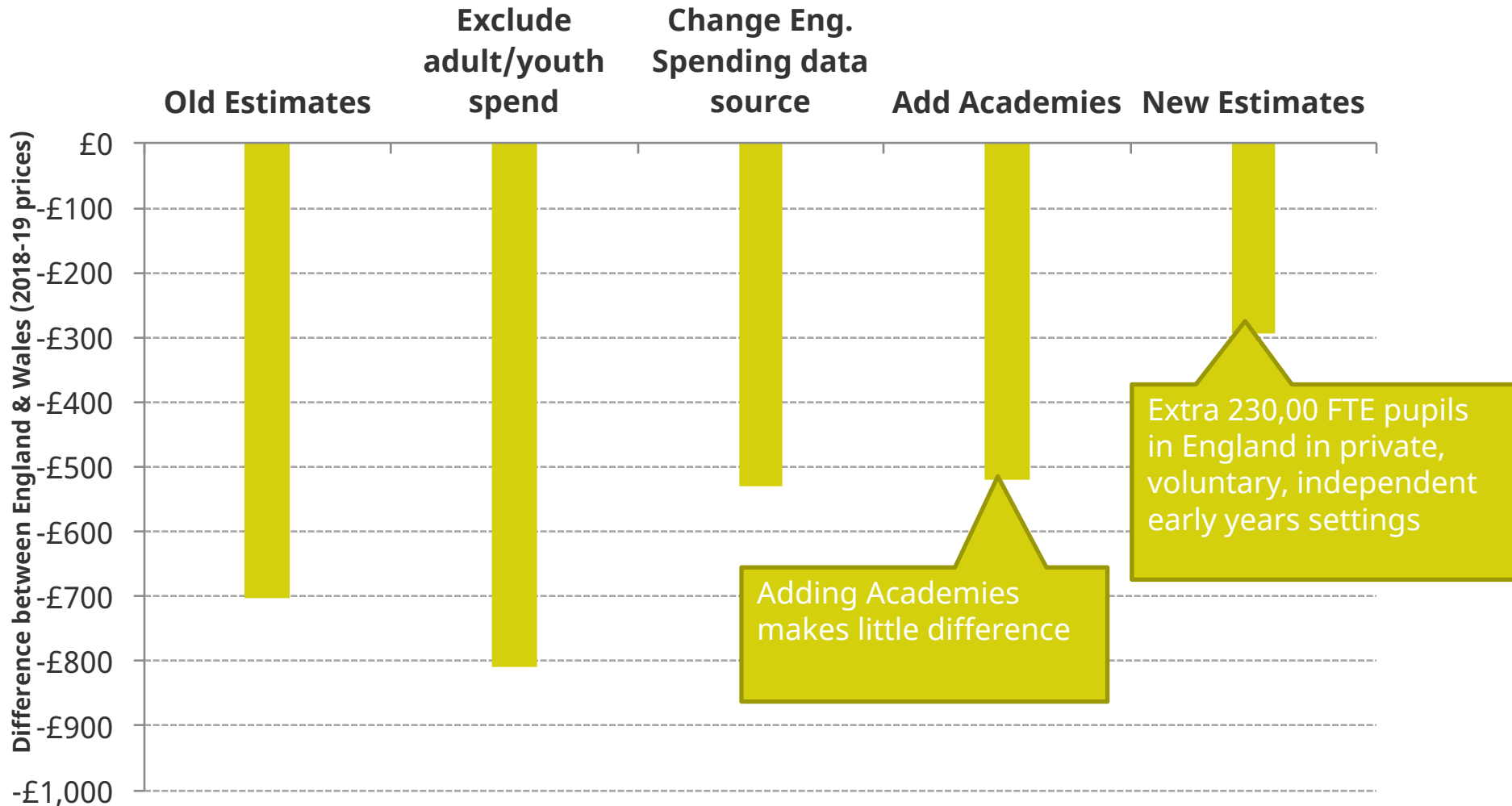


# Accounting for difference between £600 & £300 gap

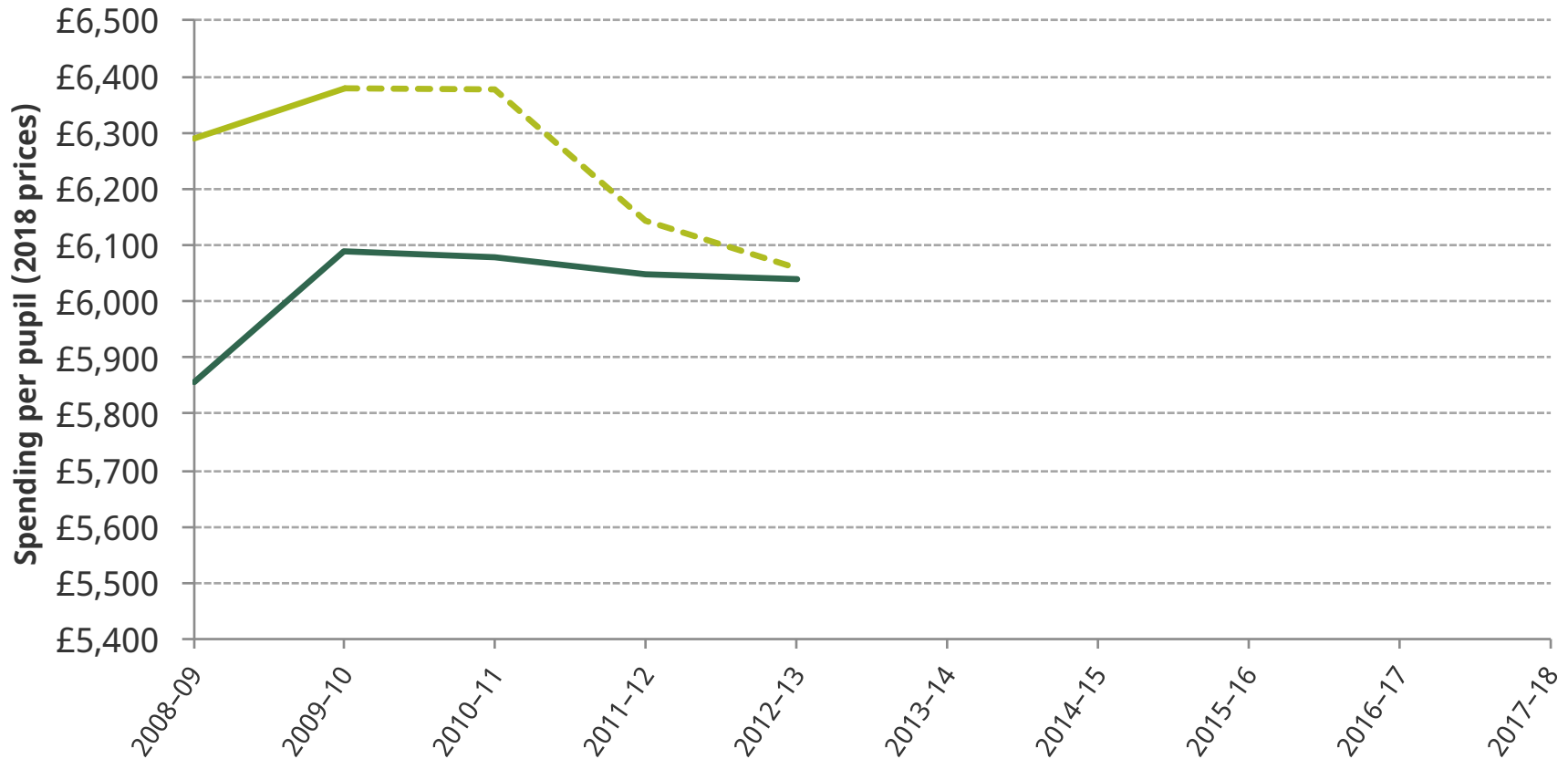




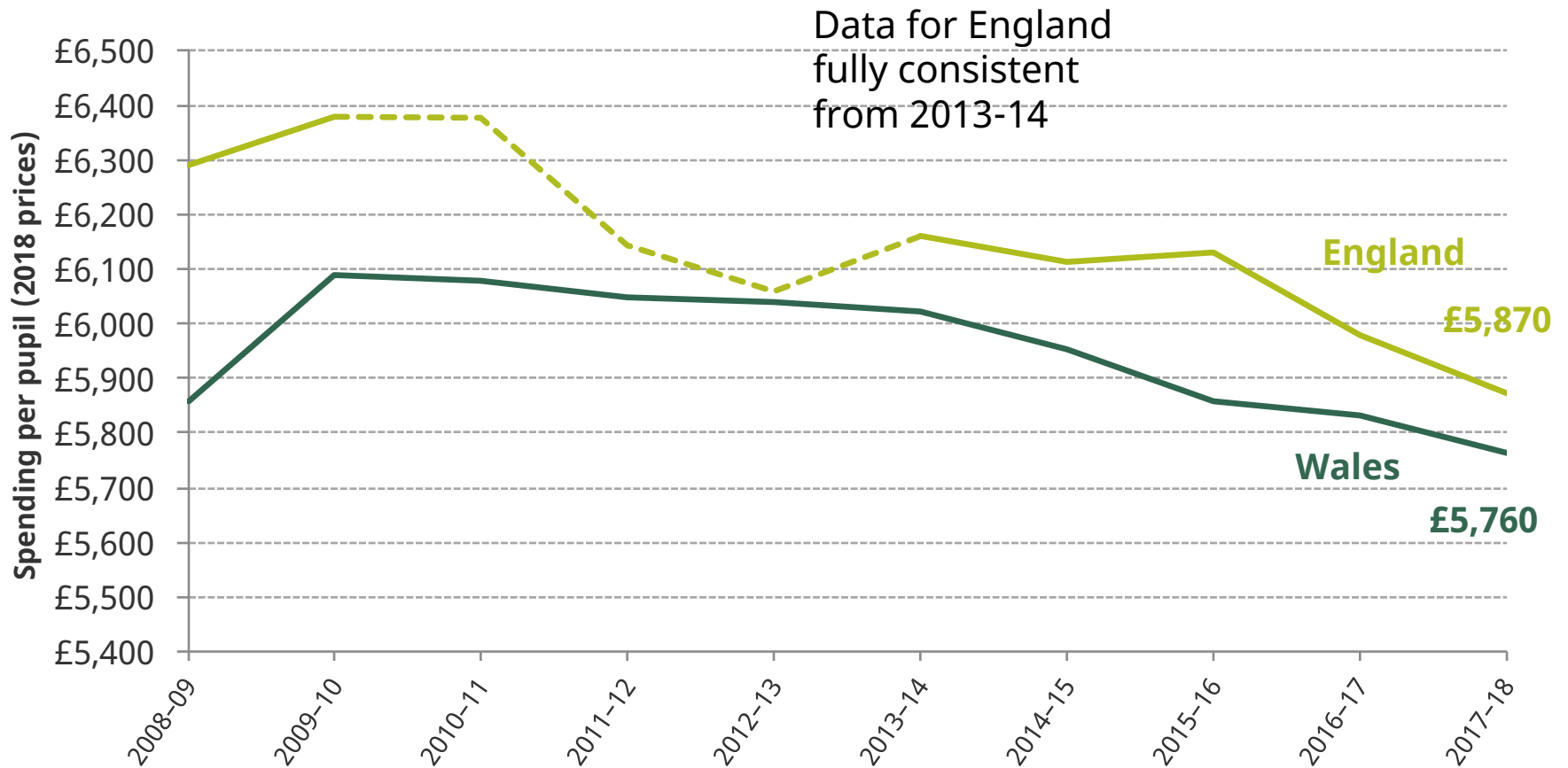
# Accounting for difference between £600 & £300 gap



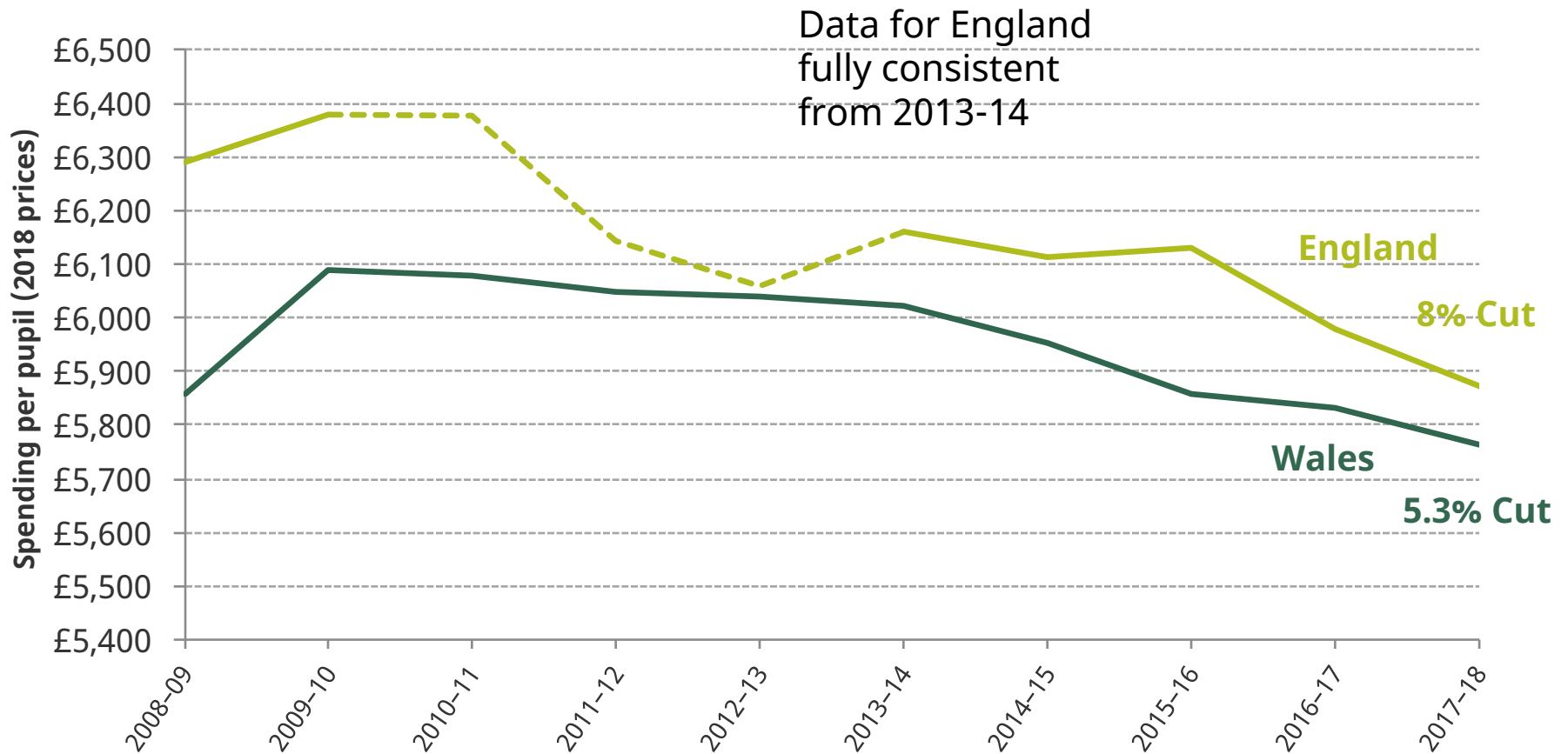
# Not clear we can fully trust Academies data from 2010-11 to 2012-13 in England



# Gap falls to just over £100 or about 2% by 2017



# Driven by faster cuts to spend per pupil in England between 2009-10 and 2017-18



# Summary of changes in spending per pupil

## Gap in spending per pupil down from £300 in 2009-10 to about £100 in 2017-18

- Smaller estimated gap in 2009 due to different data sources and inclusion of additional early years pupils in England
- If we could exclude London, gap would probably be closer to zero.

## Faster cuts in spending per pupil in England (8%) than in Wales (5%)

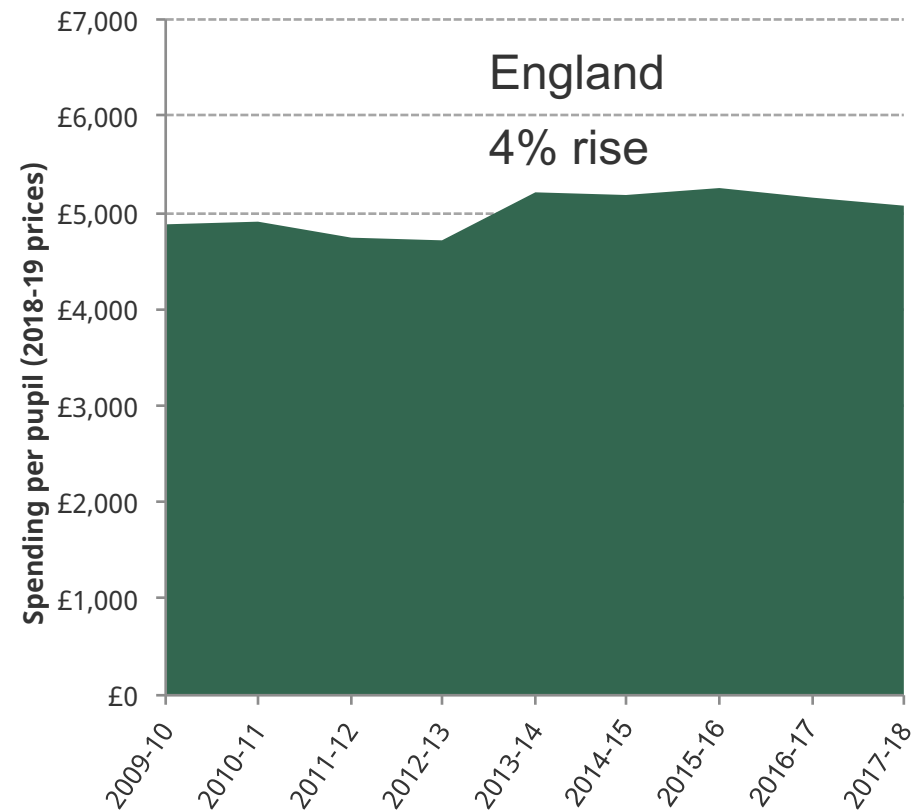
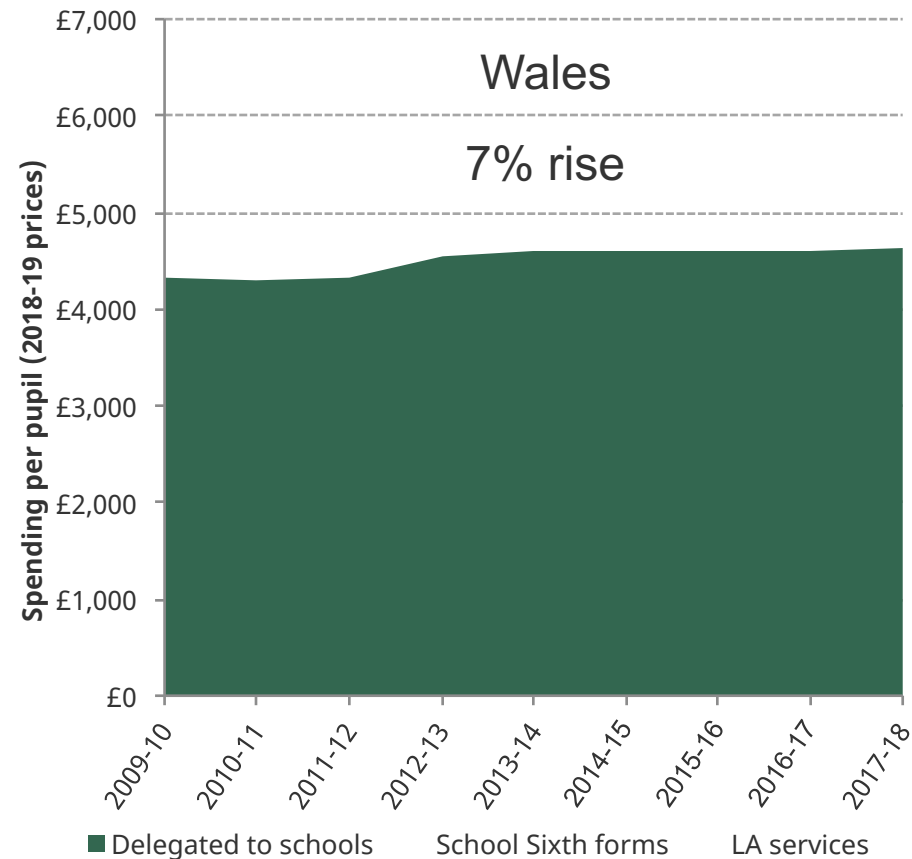
- Actual cut probably smaller for Wales as includes effect of moving Flying Start out of education budget in 2015-16

## What accounts for faster pace of cuts in England ?

- Spending allocated directly to schools
- Wider local authority services
- School Sixth Forms

# What has driven faster cuts in England?

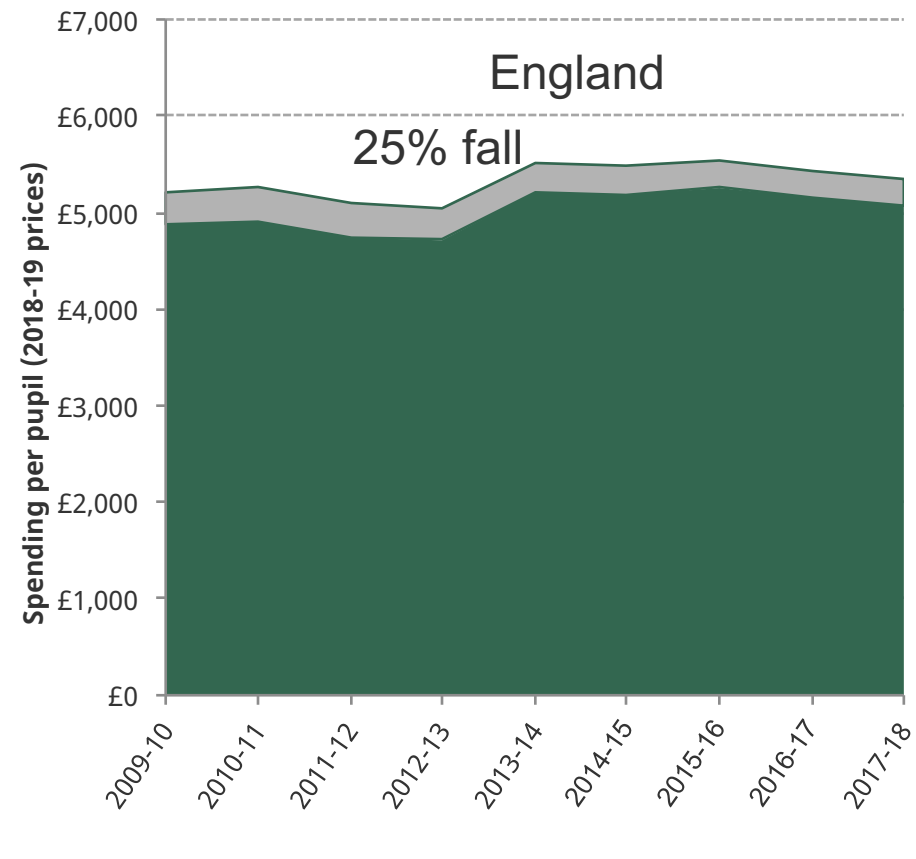
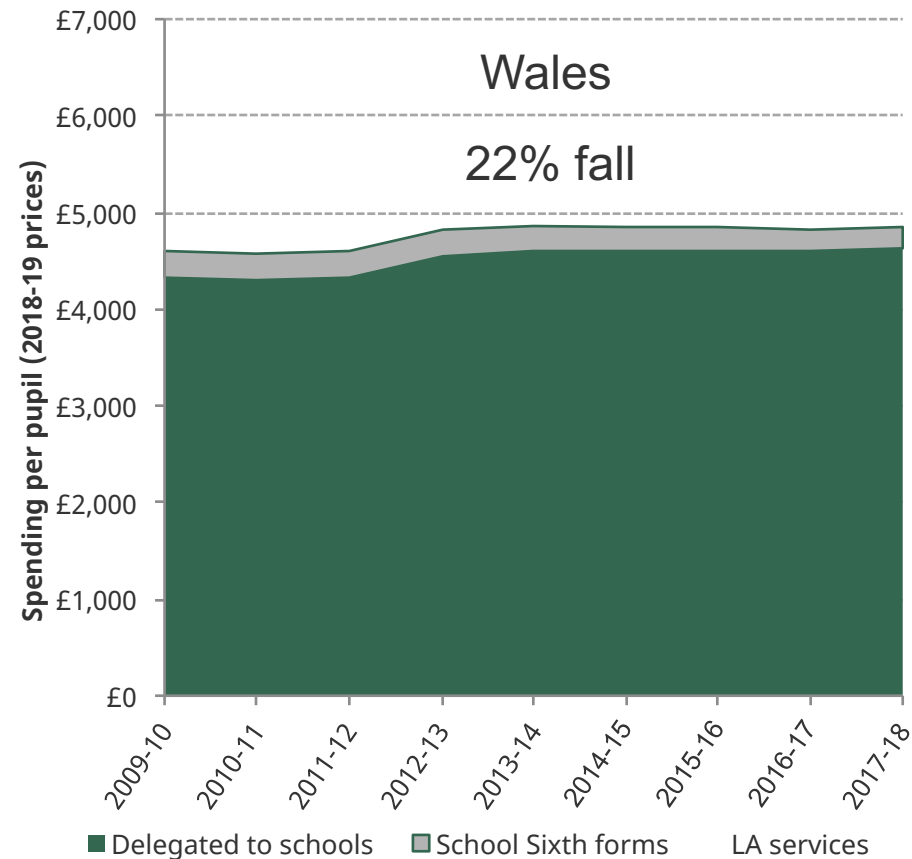
## Greater protection for funds delegated to schools in Wales



Notes: Figure are per pupil aged 3-19

# What has driven faster cuts in England?

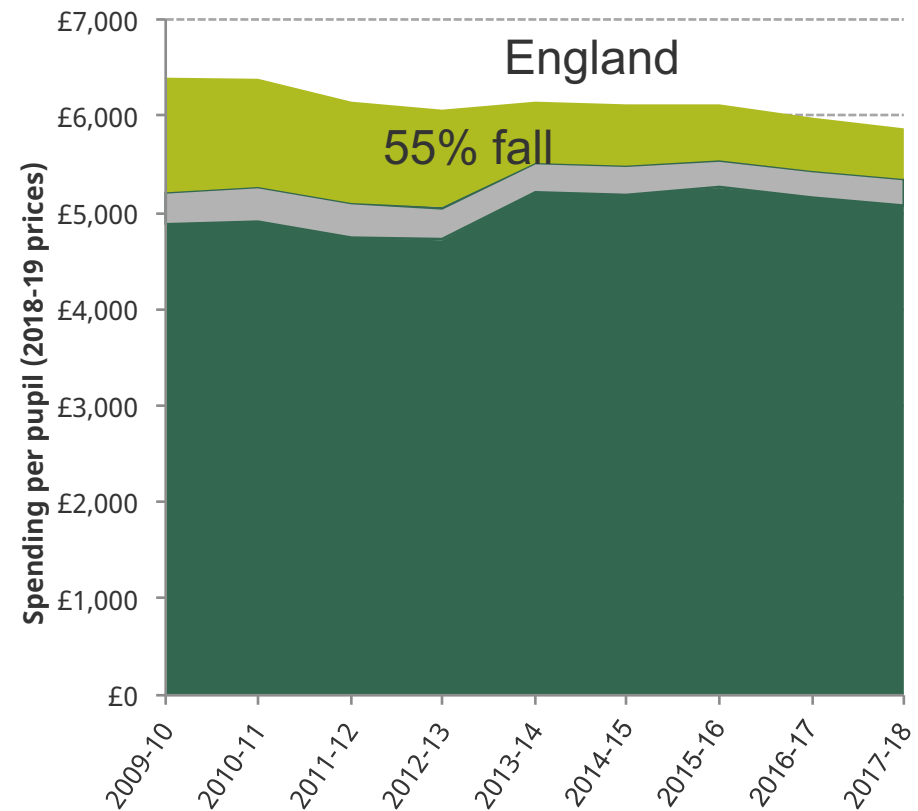
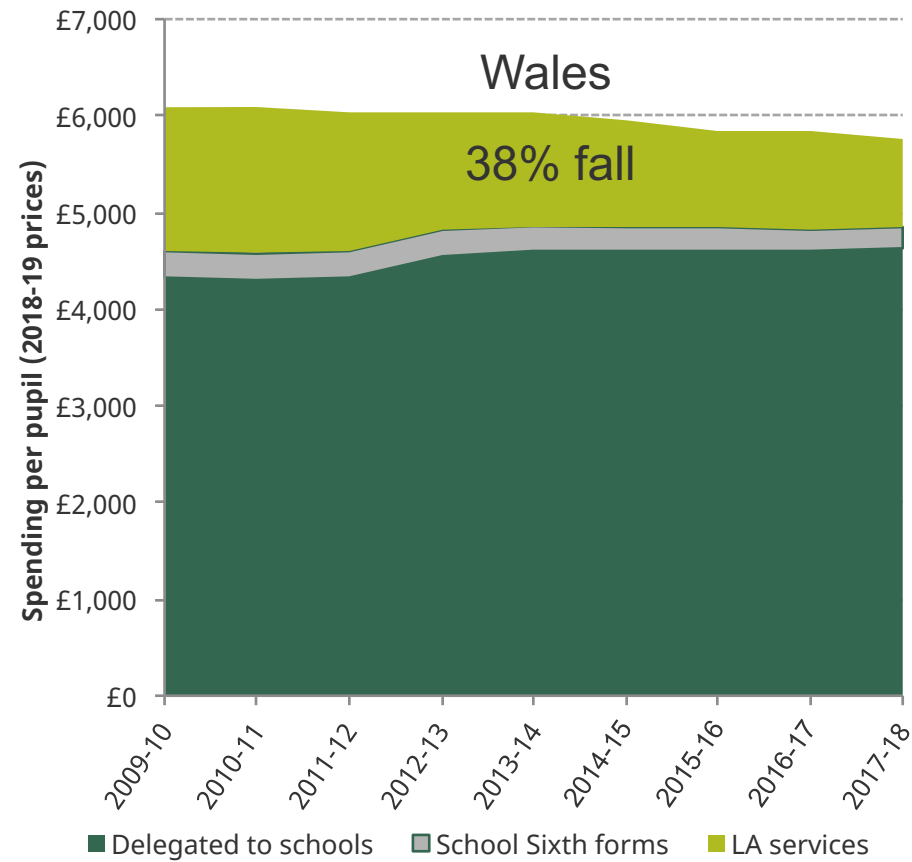
Both have cut school sixth form spending, slightly more in England



Notes: Figure are per pupil aged 3-19

# What has driven faster cuts in England?

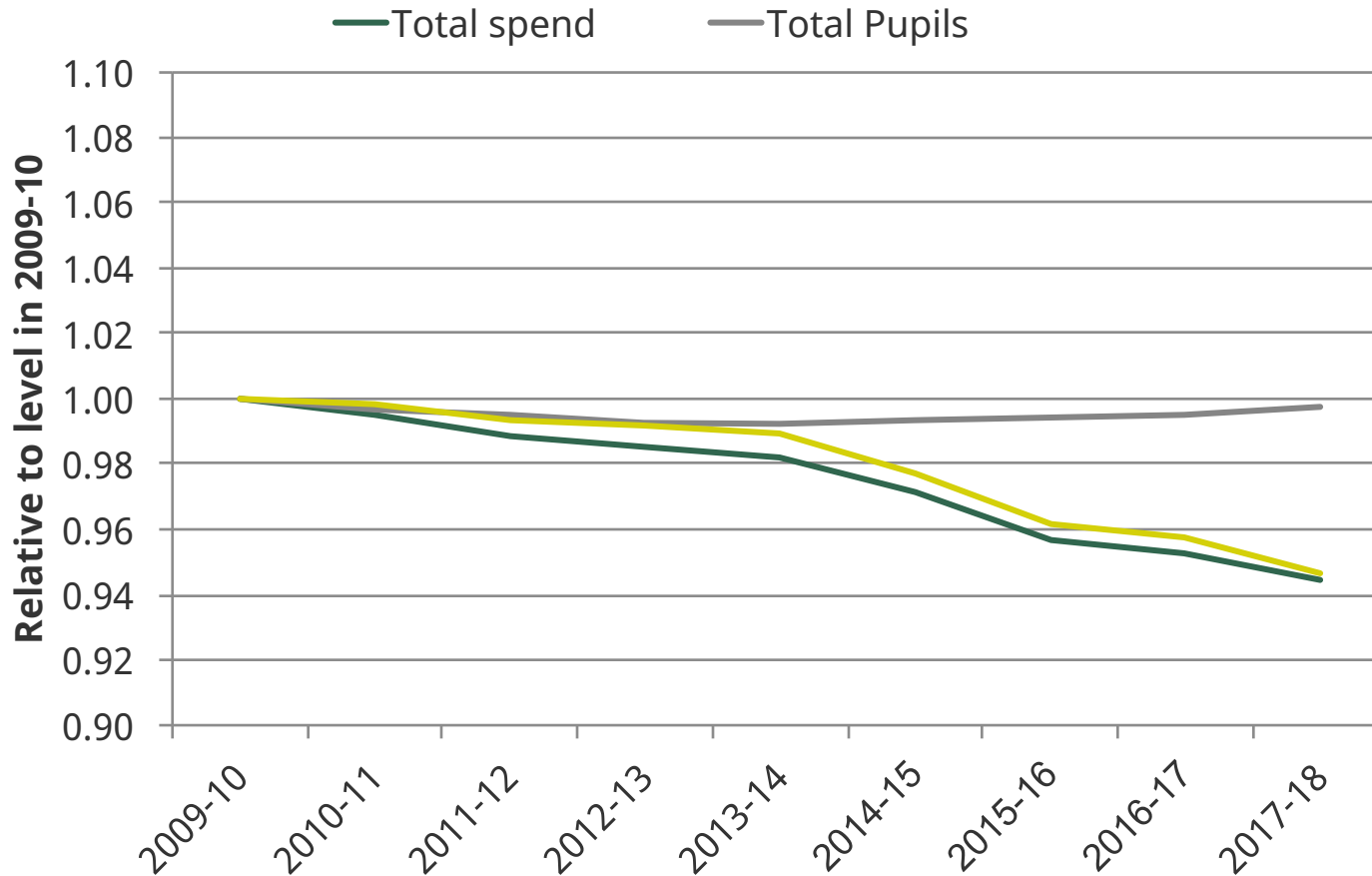
## Faster reductions in LA spending in England



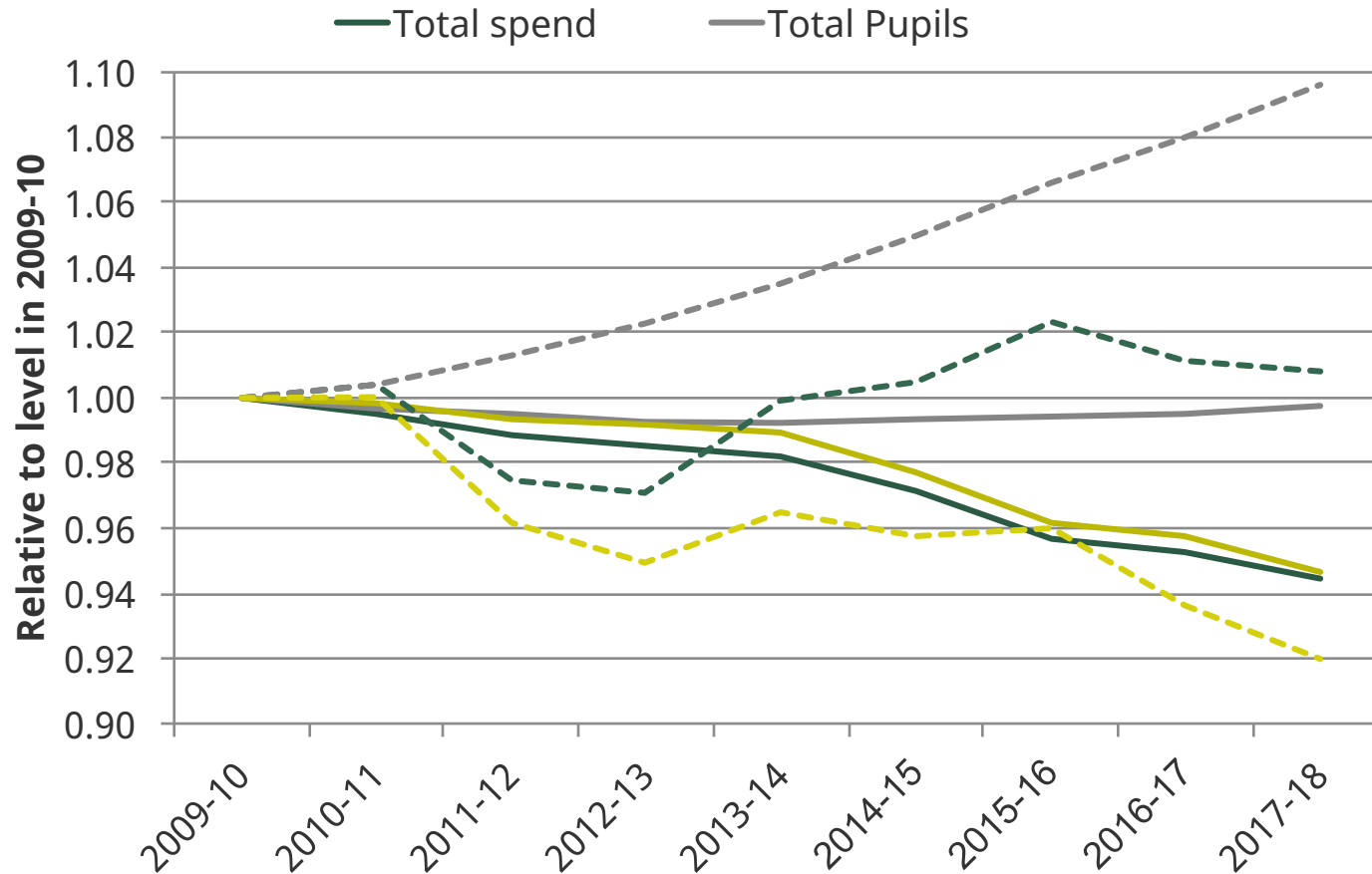
Notes: Figure are per pupil aged 3-19



# Spending per pupil cuts in Wales driven by falling total spending and static pupil numbers



# Falls in England driven by static total spending and nearly 10% rise in pupil population



# Summary and future research questions

## **£100 difference in spending per pupil between England & Wales in 2017**

- Lower than in 2009, when it was £300
- Lower than previous estimates of £600 due to refined pupil number estimates and different data sources

## **Faster pace of cuts in England (8%) than in Wales (5%)**

- Both countries have protected spending per pupil directly allocated to schools
- Faster cuts in sixth forms and wider local authority services in England
- 10% rise in pupil numbers in England, steady in Wales

## **Large differences in role of local authorities across England and Wales**

- Trading off additional choice for schools against economies of scale and coordination from local authorities
- What has this translated to in terms of actual inputs / spending patterns?

## **What are the differences across 'similar' schools in England and Wales?**

# Data/methods for spending per pupil in Wales

## Data sources:

- **2008-09 to 2016-17** - Education Revenue Expenditure
- **2017-18** - Project forwards based on 1% increase in planned LA budgets

## Key features of spending data

- Includes funding delegated to schools and central spending by LAs
- Excludes non-schools elements of LA budget
- Includes spend on school sixth forms
- Includes spending on 3 and 4 year olds in maintained settings **ONLY**
- Will include some spending on Flying Start up until 2015-16

## Pupil Counts

- FTE Pupils aged 3-18 in maintained schools

# Data/methods for spending per pupil in England

## Data sources:

- **2008-09 to 2012-13** – Section 251 Outturn Data
- **2013-14 to 2017-18** – Sections 251 Budget Data (before Academy deductions)
- **Supplements** – Schools Sixth Form Allocations, Pupil Premium Allocations, Final Allocations to Academies, Estimated Education Services Grant Allocations

## Key features of spending data

- Includes funding delegated to schools and spent centrally by LA
- Exclude non-schools elements as per Welsh data (e.g. adult learning, residual pension liabilities)
- Add spend on school sixth forms
- Includes spending on 3 and 4 year olds in maintained **AND** PVI settings.
- Academies and Free Schools funded by LA formulae from 2013-14 onwards
- Add Academy allocations for 2008-09 to 2012-13, but are these accurate for our purposes?
- Education Services Grant estimated for 2013-14 to 2016-17

## Pupil Counts

- FTE Pupils aged 3-18 in all state funded schools **plus** 3&4 year olds in PVI settings