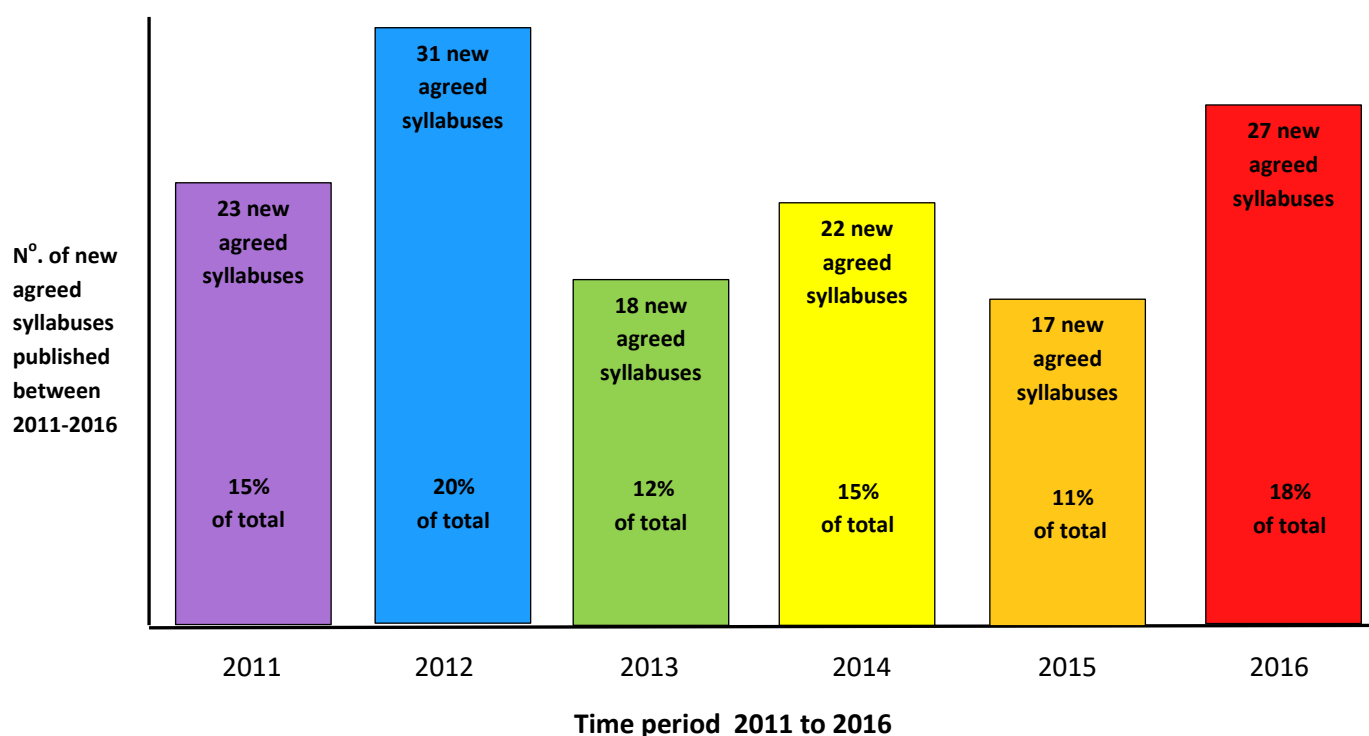


## Is the system of agreed syllabuses collapsing?

It has been claimed that a change in the law is needed as the system of writing new agreed syllabuses is collapsing. Part of the argument for this proposal is that the system is collapsing because of 'academisation'. Alternatively it's argued that underfunding of local government for the last five or six years has inevitably had a negative impact on SACREs and this has meant that agreed syllabuses have not been reviewed. But is this in fact true? What evidence is there that the system is in fact collapsing?

People will have different views about the quality of agreed syllabuses but on the more quantifiable judgement as to whether they are still being reviewed and replaced there is good evidence that the system has not collapsed but is in the main alive and working. In England there are 152 local authorities who have a responsibility to provide an agreed syllabus. Between 2011 and 2016 one hundred and fifty one agreed syllabuses were formally reviewed. In that same period of time 138 reviews have been completed resulting in 138 new agreed syllabuses. Twenty-one reviews are still ongoing. The diagram below provides more detail on what has been happening over the last six years.



These figures do not support the claim that the agreed syllabus system has collapsed. Rather the more natural conclusion is that we are in a period during which all aspects of local government are experiencing extreme difficulties and that SACREs and Agreed Syllabus Conferences (ASCs) although they are operating on very limited budgets they are still battling on. They are learning to adapt to very unfavourable conditions. Contrary to claims that the system is collapsing, LAs and ASCs are still delivering on one of their core functions which is to work together to review and update the local agreed syllabus.