

# Agenda – Children, Young People and Education Committee

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Meeting Venue:

Hybrid – Committee room 4 Tŷ Hywel  
and video conference via Zoom

Meeting date: 16 July 2025

Meeting time: 09.00

For further information contact:

Naomi Stocks

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

[SeneddChildren@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddChildren@senedd.wales)

## Hybrid

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### Public meeting

09.00

- 1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

09.00

- 2 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from items 3 and 8 at today's meeting and for item 1 at the meeting on 17 September

09.00

### Private meeting

09.00 – 09.15

- 3 Pre appointment hearing for the Chair of the Qualifications Wales Strategic Board

09.00 – 09.15



## **Public meeting**

09.15 – 12.20

### **4 Teacher recruitment and retention – evidence session 7**

09.15 – 10.15

(Pages 1 – 29)

Christopher Williams, Course leader, Primary ITE, University of South Wales  
[via zoom]

Dave Stacey, Director of Initial Teacher Education, University of Wales Trinity  
Saint David and representing the Athrofa's ITE partnership

Dr Sarah Stewart, Director of the PGCE programme in Wales, The Open  
University in Wales

Dr Angella Cooze, PGCE English Senior Lecturer & PGCE Secondary  
Programme Director, Swansea University Schools' Partnership

Attached Documents:

Research brief

Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership, University of Wales Trinity St David  
The Open University in Wales

## **Break**

10.15 – 10.25

### **5 Teacher recruitment and retention – evidence session 8**

10.25 – 11.20

(Pages 30 – 42)

Rebecca Williams, Senior Language Skills and Workforce Planning Manager,  
Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

Dona Lewis, Chief Executive, National Centre for Learning Welsh [via zoom]

Attached Documents:

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (Translation)

The National Centre for Learning Welsh (Translation)

## **6 Teacher recruitment and retention – evidence session 9**

11.25 – 12.20

(Pages 43 – 55)

Councillor Deborah Davies, Welsh Local Government Association Deputy Spokesperson for Education and Deputy Leader of Newport City Council and the Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years [Via Zoom]

Dr Lowri Brown, Vice Chair of Association of Directors of Education in Wales and Chief Education Officer, Conwy Council [Via Zoom]

Attached Documents:

Welsh Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Education in Wales

## **7 Papers to note**

12.20

### **7.1 Teacher recruitment and retention**

(Pages 56 – 57)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chief Executive of the Education Workforce Council from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

### **7.2 Issues facing the Higher Education Sector**

(Pages 58 – 59)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Convener of the Education, Children and Young People Committee from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

### **7.3 Information from Stakeholders**

(Pages 60 – 65)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee from the Wales Coordinator for The Maternal Mental Health Alliance

### **7.4 Information from Stakeholders**

(Pages 66 – 67)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee from the Parent Infant Network Cymru and the Parent–Infant Foundation

### **7.5 Information from Stakeholders**

(Pages 68 – 69)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee and the Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

### **7.6 Reviewing Committee Effectiveness in the Sixth Senedd**

(Page 70)

Attached Documents:

Letter to all Committee Chairs from the Llywydd

### **7.7 Issues facing the Higher Education Sector**

(Pages 71 – 72)

Attached Documents:

Letter to Cardiff University from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

## **7.8 Issues facing the Higher Education Sector**

(Pages 73 – 74)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Director of the Higher Education Policy Institute from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

## **7.9 Information from Stakeholders**

(Pages 75 – 77)

Attached Documents:

Briefing note from the Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales

## **Private meeting**

12.20 – 12.30

## **8 Teacher recruitment and retention – consideration of the evidence**

12.20 – 12.30

Document is Restricted

TRR 28

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Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i'r [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar gyfer yr [ymchwiliad i recriwtio a chadw athrawon](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) on the [Inquiry into Teacher recruitment and retention](#)

Ymateb gan: Partneriaeth Dysgu Proffesiynol Athrofa, Prifysgol Cymru Y Drindod Dewi Sant,  
Response from: Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership, University of Wales Trinity St David

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06.06.25

Ysgrifennaf mewn ymateb i'ch galwad am dystiolaeth mewn perthynas â'r heriau sy'n ymwneud â recriwtio a chadw athrawon yng Nghymru. Fi yw Cyfarwyddwr Academaidd Partneriaeth Dysgu Proffesiynol Athrofa ym Mhrifysgol Cymru Y Drindod Dewi Sant, un o ddarparwyr achrededig Addysg Gychwynnol Athrawon (AGA) yng Nghymru. Yn ogystal â'n cyfraniad i'r dystiolaeth a gyflwynwyd i chi gan USCET, meddyliais y gallai fod yn ddefnyddiol codi'r pwyntiau canlynol.

Mae'r diwygiadau i AGA yng Nghymru a wnaed ers 2019 wedi cryfhau'r ddarpariaeth, ac wedi gwneud cynnydd da i fynd i'r afael â'r pryderon a godwyd gan yr Athro Furlong yn 'Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers'. Amlygir y rhain yn adroddiad diweddar yr Athro Moira Hulme ([https://myresearchspace.uws.ac.uk/ws/portalfile/s/portal/60855906/2025\\_02\\_28\\_Hulme\\_Discourse\\_final.pdf](https://myresearchspace.uws.ac.uk/ws/portalfile/s/portal/60855906/2025_02_28_Hulme_Discourse_final.pdf))

Er gwaethaf hyn, wrth geisio denu athrawon i'r proffesiwn yng Nghymru, rydym yn gweithio yn erbyn canfyddiad, sy'n aml yn cael ei atgyfnerthu yn y cyfryngau, nad yw addysgu yn yrfa ddeniadol. Mae angen gwneud mwy i sicrhau bod athrawon yn teimlo eu bod yn cael eu gwerthfawrogi ac yn cael yr adnoddau sydd eu hangen arnynt i gyflawni eu gwaith yn effeithiol. Yna mae angen rhannu'r neges gadarnhaol hon yn eang, yn weithredol, a'i ailadrodd dro ar ôl tro. Mae hyn yn cynnwys lledaenu'r neges y tu hwnt i Gymru. Rydym wedi cael nifer fach o fyfyrwyr dros y blynyddoedd diwethaf sydd wedi dweud wrthym eu bod wedi dewis dod i Gymru i ymgymryd â chysiau AGA ac i addysgu oherwydd

I write in response to your call for evidence in relation to the challenges around teacher recruitment and retention in Wales. I am the Academic Director for the Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership at the University of Wales Trinity St David, one of the accredited providers of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in Wales. In addition to our contribution to the evidence submitted to you by USCET, I thought it may be helpful to make the following points.

The reforms to ITE in Wales undertaken since 2019 have strengthened provision, and made good progress to address the concerns raised by Prof Furlong in 'Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers'. These are highlighted in the recent report by Prof Moira Hulme ([https://myresearchspace.uws.ac.uk/ws/portalfile/s/portal/60855906/2025\\_02\\_28\\_Hulme\\_Discourse\\_final.pdf](https://myresearchspace.uws.ac.uk/ws/portalfile/s/portal/60855906/2025_02_28_Hulme_Discourse_final.pdf))

Despite this, when seeking to attract teachers to the profession in Wales, we are working against a perception, often reinforced in the media, that teaching is not an attractive career. More needs to be done to ensure that teachers feel valued and are provided with the resources they need to perform their jobs effectively. This positive message then needs to be shared widely, actively, and repeatedly. This includes spreading the message beyond Wales. We have had a small number of students over the last few years who have told us that they have chosen to come to Wales to undertake ITE courses and teach because of the positive messages they have heard

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y negeseuon cadarnhaol maen nhw wedi'u clywed am system Cymru. Mae hyn yn rhywbeth y gellid a dylid ei rannu'n ehangach.

Un o'r heriau mwyaf o hyrwyddo addysgu fel gyrfa a glywn ar hyn o bryd yw'r diffyg hyblygrwydd y mae'r swydd (fel y'i cyfansoddir ar hyn o bryd) yn ei gynnig. Mae'r gwerth y mae darpar ymgeiswyr i'r rhaglenni yn ei roi ar y ffactor hwn wrth benderfynu ar opsiynau gyrfa wedi tyfu yn ystod y blynyddoedd diwethaf, yn enwedig ers y pandemig. Byddwn yn cefnogi'r awgrym yn yr adroddiad diweddar gan Brifysgol Fetropolitan Caerdydd i edrych ar ffyrdd o gynyddu'r hyblygrwydd o fewn y gweithlu, heb ei gwneud yn ofynnol i athrawon weithio'n rhan-amser i gyflawni hyn. Mae hyn yn tanseilio gwerth y cyflog y mae rhai o'n hymgeiswyr yn dweud wrthym yw un o'r pethau sy'n eu denu i'r proffesiwn.

Ar ôl i ni recriwtio darpar athrawon i raglenni AGA, mae angen i ni sicrhau bod ysgolion mewn sefyllfa i gefnogi camau cynnar eu datblygiad proffesiynol trwy gael yr amser a'r adnoddau i sicrhau mentora effeithiol o addysgu yn ystod eu rhaglenni AGA, i'w blwyddyn ANG a thu hwnt. Pan nad yw ysgolion yn gallu cynnig lleoliadau mewn pynciau prinder gan eu bod yn teimlo nad oes ganddynt y gallu i wneud hynny, mae gennym broblem sylweddol wrth gynnal llif athrawon o ansawdd uchel i'r proffesiwn. Mae angen i raglenni achrededig fod yn hyfyw yn ariannol ar gyfer partneriaethau AGA, ac mae angen iddynt weithio ym mhob rhan o Gymru, gan gynnwys ardaloedd gwledig.

Yn olaf, byddwn yn awgrymu bod angen i ni edrych yn ofalus ar y rhwystrau a brofir gan y rhai a hoffai addysgu, ac a fyddai'n gwneud athrawon rhagorol, ond nad oes ganddynt y sicrwydd ariannol i gymryd blwyddyn i ffwrdd o gyflog i gwblhau cwrs TAR, neu dair blynedd i gwblhau cwrs gradd. Dylai'r rhai sy'n dymuno trosglwyddo

about the Welsh system. This is something which could and should be shared more widely.

One of the biggest challenges of promoting teaching as a career that we hear at the moment is the lack of flexibility that the job (as currently constituted) offers. The value that potential applicants to the programmes place on this factor when deciding on career options has grown in recent years, especially since the pandemic. I would endorse the suggestion in the recent report from Cardiff Metropolitan University to look at ways of increasing the flexibility within the workforce, without requiring teachers to work part-time to achieve this. This undercuts the value of the salary which some of our applicants tell us is one of the things that attracts them to the profession.

Once we have recruited student-teachers to ITE programmes we need to ensure that schools are in a position to support the early stages of their professional development by having the time and resources to ensure effective mentoring of teaching during their ITE programmes, into their NQT year and beyond. When schools are unable to offer placements in shortage subjects as they feel they don't have the capacity to do so, we have a significant problem in sustaining the flow of high-quality teachers into the profession. Accredited programmes need to be financially viable for ITE partnerships, and need to work in all parts of Wales, including rural areas.

Lastly, I would suggest that we need to look carefully at the barriers experienced by those who would like to teach, and would make excellent teachers, but don't have the financial security to take a year away from a salary to complete a PGCE course, or three years to complete a degree course. Those who wish to

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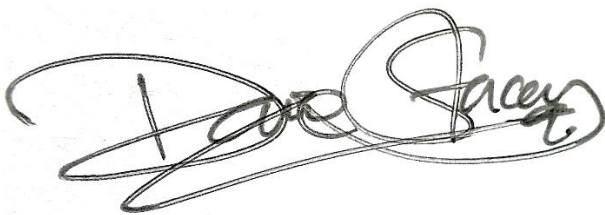
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i addysgu, yn enwedig i uwchradd, gael llwybrau amgen sy'n cydnabod eu profiad ehangach, fel sydd yn achos mewn gwledydd Ewropeaidd eraill. Mae angen i ni ystyried i ba raddau y mae gwybodaeth pwnc mor ddibynnol ar radd israddedig a sicrhau nad yw llwybrau i addysgu uwchradd, yn Gymraeg a Saesneg, yn cael eu cyfyngu gan ddewis hanesyddol unigolyn o raglen israddedig. Wrth feddwl am y gweithlu ar gyfer y dyfodol, mae angen i ni sicrhau bod hyn yn cydfynd â'r Cwricwlwm newydd i Gymru, yn hytrach nag adlewyrchu system arholiadau hŷn. Efallai y bydd gwerth hefyd mewn ystyried sut y gall y rhai sydd â SAC o gyrsiau cynradd, a'r rhai sydd â Cymwysterau PCET gael mynediad at ddysgu proffesiynol o ansawdd uchel yn hawdd i'w harfogi i addysgu yn y maes uwchradd.

Nid yw'r her o ddenu athrawon o ansawdd uchel i'r proffesiwn yn unigryw i Gymru, ond yn un sy'n dod yn fwyfwy amlwg, yn enwedig mewn addysg uwchradd. Yn y cyd-destun hwnnw, rwy'n croesawu'r ymchwiliad hwn ac edrychaf ymlaen at weld newidiadau cadarnhaol a fydd, gobeithio, yn dilyn ohono.

Gyda dymuniadau gorau,



## Dave Stacey

Cyfarwyddwr AGA / *Director of ITE*

Prifysgol Cymru Y Drindod Dewi Sant / *University of Wales Trinity St David*

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transfer into teaching, especially into secondary, should have alternative routes that recognise their wider experience, as is the case in other European countries. We need to consider the extent to which subject knowledge is so dependent on an undergraduate degree and ensure that routes into secondary teaching, both in Welsh and English are not limited by an individual's historic choice of undergraduate programme. In thinking about the workforce for the future, we need to ensure that this is aligned with the new Curriculum for Wales, rather than reflecting an older examination system. There may also be value in considering how those with QTS from primary courses, and those with PCET Qualifications can easily access high-quality professional learning to equip them to teach in the secondary setting.

The challenge of attracting high-quality teachers to the profession is not unique to Wales, but one which is becoming increasingly stark, especially in secondary education. In that context, I welcome this enquiry and look forward to seeing positive changes that will hopefully follow from it.

With best wishes,

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Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i'r [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar gyfer yr [ymchwiliad i recriwtio a chadw athrawon](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) on the [Inquiry into Teacher recruitment and retention](#)

Ymateb gan: Y Brifysgol Agored yng Nghymru  
Response from: The Open University in Wales

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## Teacher recruitment and retention

The Open University (OU) in Wales is pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the Children, Young People and Education Committee's inquiry into teacher recruitment and retention.

The Committee will be aware that the OU in Wales is one of Wales' main providers of initial teacher education (ITE) through our innovative part-time and salaried routes, funded by the Welsh Government.

This response reflects the challenges and opportunities that we have encountered in offering these routes. We would be very pleased to have the opportunity to provide further written or oral evidence to the Committee, if that were useful.

### **Background to the OU's PGCE programme**

The OU in Wales' Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme was introduced as a solution to a recruitment challenge in the teaching sector. The programme is a first-of-its-kind model which offers two routes into the teaching profession for people who might not otherwise be able to consider becoming teachers.

The part-time route offers students the chance to study the programme on a part-time basis, combining it with existing jobs and other commitments.

Alongside their academic studies, they are paired with one of our partner schools for their practical training. On successful completion, they are awarded a PGCE with qualified teacher status. This route is available on the primary pathway and the secondary pathway in Science, Maths, Welsh, English, English with Drama, English with Media, Design and Technology, Computing/ICT, or Modern Foreign Languages (MFL).

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The salaried route is aimed particularly at those already working in the education sector in roles such as teaching assistants, higher-level teaching assistants, and technicians. They are able to combine their studies with practical training in their own schools alongside their current work. On successful completion, they are also awarded a PGCE with qualified teacher status. This route is available on the primary pathway and the secondary pathway in Science, Mathematics, Welsh, English, English with Drama, English with Media, Design and Technology, Computing/ICT, or MFL.

More information about the OU ITE Partnership can be found on [our website](#).

## **Recruitment barriers**

Our provision was introduced in response to the challenges of teacher recruitment. The flexible nature of the model makes a teaching qualification more accessible to a wider pool of people, and is particularly effective in enabling people to study to become teachers in their own communities.

One of the main resulting challenges of this model is that some of our prospective students might not have the necessary qualifications, e.g. GCSEs, to join our programme. Increasingly we see people who have been teaching assistants for a very long time expressing an interest in the programme, but unable to join because they don't have a degree already. Many of these are looking for a route into teaching that doesn't mean having to go to university before being able to take up a PGCE course.

In the secondary sector specifically, career changers coming to us might have a degree, but not one that's relevant to a subject we offer which they want to teach. Although the accreditation criteria have been revised to include 50% degree relevance, this remains a challenge. We recommend applying flexibility, with an element of professional judgement to help determine the relevance of prospective students' existing degrees.

Further, the current criteria do not consider prospective students' experiential learning, or new and 'alternative' learning such as degree apprenticeships and other qualifications. While not an immediate issue, it would be prudent to think

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now about how to determine eligibility for the future when people will likely have a different range of qualifications.

The Committee may want to consider how other countries support people with a wider range of qualifications, experience and knowledge to enter the teaching profession. This includes England, where subject knowledge enhancement courses are available as a pre-ITE course, funded by the Department for Education in priority sectors. This kind of intervention has thus far not been used in Wales.

More broadly, the Committee may want to give some consideration to the perception of the teaching profession at the moment. We have some concerns about the challenges facing the profession, together with false narratives about it, which may lead to some students choosing other careers.

There are also some real challenges in modern workforce practices in the teaching sector. We see from our students, for example, that more and more people want flexible, agile work; those on our part-time route report challenges in finding part-time work after they have graduated because current practices do not generally support this kind of work.

In addition, there are significant challenges with school finances, with which the Committee will be very familiar. In many parts of Wales, we are finding that schools, particularly in the primary sector, simply do not have sufficient funds or capacity available to invest in supporting their people onto our salaried route. While this is an immediate challenge, it poses a risk of creating or exacerbating recruitment challenges further down the line.

### **Welsh-medium recruitment**

Our programme has had success in recruiting a high proportion of Welsh speakers and prospective Welsh teachers. However, there are similar issues in the Welsh-medium sector to the sector at large.

One of the challenges in recruiting Welsh-medium teachers is that there are simply fewer Welsh-medium degrees available to study. There is also the potential for upstream issues to be exacerbated with the most recent census data showing a decline in 5-15-year-olds speaking Welsh. There is high

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competition for Welsh speakers from other public service sectors, such as the health and social care sector, policing, and so on, meaning more attention needs to be given to converting more adults into Welsh speakers.

## **Broader issues**

We consider that recruitment and retention are different sides of the same coin. There is currently increasing attention being given to recruitment in part because of challenges in retention. It is important that these two things are considered together, and we commend the Committee for doing so in this inquiry.

It is also important to consider that ITE recruitment is not necessarily the same as teacher recruitment. Not all PGCE students want to become teachers in maintained schools; they may be looking for careers in any number of education-adjacent roles. This is a demonstration of the importance of thinking about recruitment and retention together.

We also draw the Committee's attention to potential viability issues that are emerging. Traditionally, providers have used primary pathway recruitment as an effective subsidy for under-recruited secondary pathways. However, following what appears to be a global trend, primary recruitment is now also slowing, and this poses a financial risk to ITE provision across the board. This should be considered in the wider context of universities' financial challenges. ITE is expensive to deliver – e.g. because of various accreditation requirements such as the 1:15 tutor-student ratio and the requirement for all academic staff to have doctorates or pay for them to undertake one – and under the circumstances, there is increased internal scrutiny of ITE provision. We are concerned about what this could mean for the future of ITE provision across Wales.

Another significant challenge appears in terms of data. Currently, we simply do not know where our students go after they have graduated because this data is not systematically collected. We are able to draw some inferences from other data sets and from ad hoc communications with alumni, but this is by no means authoritative in providing a full picture of how ITE provision is leading to more teachers. We recommend a national approach, perhaps supported by Medr, to this.

# Agenda Item 5

This document provides a translation of correspondence received from Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

## TRR 12

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i'r [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar gyfer yr [ymchwiliad i recriwtio a chadw athrawon](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) on the [Inquiry into Teacher recruitment and retention](#)

Ymateb gan: Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol  
Response from: Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

Thank you for the invitation to submit evidence to the Committee's inquiry into Teacher Recruitment and Retention.

This paper responds to the consultation's specific questions, and representatives from the Coleg will be pleased to elaborate and answer questions during the oral evidence session on 16 July 2025.

The Coleg creates and promotes training and study opportunities in Welsh by working with further education colleges, schools, universities, apprenticeship providers and employers. We inspire and encourage everyone to use their Welsh skills, with the aim of creating a bilingual workforce, including the education workforce itself. The Welsh Government has designated the Coleg to advise Medr (the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research) on its statutory duties relating to the Welsh language.

1. Barriers to recruitment: Intake into ITE and factors impacting recruitment into post (including a focus on priority subjects, Welsh medium, secondary schools and the impact of Wales' educational reforms on teacher recruitment).

It is important to note the extent of the challenge in terms of the number of teachers needed to work through the medium of Welsh and to teach Welsh as a subject, as well as the challenge of attracting them to the profession.

The latest (November 2024) [Data Analysis](#) (p.20) which accompanies the Welsh Government's [Welsh in Education Workforce Plan](#) shows that 225 additional secondary teachers are needed each year above the numbers currently coming through Initial Teacher Education (ITE) or other ways in order to reach the Cymraeg 2050 targets; the corresponding figure for primary teachers is 153.

For both sectors, the numbers trained each year are very close to the numbers leaving the profession.

	Approximate total number of teachers trained or additional capacity	Numbers leaving
Primary	240	235
Secondary	156	160

(Part of Table 1.18)

This clearly does not lead to any progress towards the targets and leaves the numbers in schools at a critically low level. This in turn poses a threat to the breadth of provision it's possible to provide for pupils.

There are a number of structural factors that affect recruitment to Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses.

Approach to planning and establishing ITE courses: At present, an 'accreditation' approach is used for ITE courses, where Partnerships, effectively led by universities, apply to the Education Workforce Council for course accreditation on the basis of accreditation criteria set by the Welsh Government. If the courses meet the requirements of the accreditation criteria, and are therefore accredited by the Education Workforce Council, the courses are allowed to run for a specific period as outlined in the accreditation.

This model leads to a pattern of courses across Wales that can be arbitrary, unstrategic and inefficient from a funding and recruitment perspective. For example, since September 2024, there is no PGCE course (apart from Open University courses) being offered in the huge geographical area between Bangor (CaBan Bangor) in the north and Swansea (Yr Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership, and Swansea University Schools' Partnership) in the south. It is not possible for everyone to undertake a course that is far from home, especially people from disadvantaged backgrounds and older candidates who be career-changers. At the same time, PGCE courses in 11 secondary subjects are being run by two Partnerships within the same city, with small numbers on both sets of courses.

In this context, it is worth noting the financial crisis currently facing Welsh universities which means that the majority are re-examining their provision, and carrying out redundancy processes, voluntary processes in the first instance. Universities are unlikely to maintain provision that does not pay its way, even if it contributes to national priorities, and ITE courses may well fall into this category. If any university comes to the conclusion that its ITE provision is not sustainable, that could lead to a pattern of provision that is even more arbitrary and unstrategic from an all-Wales perspective. In addition, there could be serious implications for Welsh-medium provision where the numbers tend to be lower.

Funding ITE courses/students: At present, the vast majority of students on ITE courses, including PGCE courses, pay the same fees as students in the majority of other subjects and fields (£9,535 per year). For students graduating with very significant debts, paying more fees to do a PGCE course could be a significant disincentive; this is raised in the report '[A Future Teaching Profession for Wales: Recruitment, Retention and Professional Progression](#)' (Paragraph 3.15) (Cardiff Metropolitan University, December 2024).

To make the situation worse, the intensity of the PGCE course makes it impossible to undertake part-time work alongside the course (see 'Structure and content of the PGCE course' below) – something that would be possible in the context of other postgraduate courses.

This means that, at present, undertaking the majority of PGCE courses means a requirement to pay fees and to be without a salary for a year. On that basis, it is an unrealistic option for some groups of potential candidates.

The courses offered through the Open University are different because they are part-time courses over two years. In addition, for the salaried route (through the Open University), the Welsh Government pays the fees, and the candidates earn a salary while qualifying.

As the shortage of teachers has reached a crisis point, especially for the Welsh in education workforce, a different funding system could be considered that would remove or reduce this barrier and make PGCE courses a more attractive and realistic option (see recommendations in the 'Addressing recruitment and retention' section below).



Structure and content of the PGCE course: It is known that the PGCE course is a challenging year for candidates – there is a full curriculum, time is short, and the academic, practical and administrative requirements are substantial.

Although in such professional courses there is an expectation that the bar will be high in terms of challenge and achievement, in the context of PGCE courses and the recruitment crisis for the profession, this may be problematic in a number of ways:

- (i) the perception of the intensity and challenge of the course could be enough in itself to disincentivise some and prevent them from applying for a PGCE course
- (ii) for others, the nature of the course is too much of a challenge and they do not manage to complete it; according to Education Workforce Council statistics, in 2023/24, 17.5% of students on Secondary PGCE courses failed (c.1%), dropped out (6.5%) or deferred completion (10%)<sup>1</sup>
- (iii) this extremely challenging year, coupled with the perception of the profession as more challenging in many ways than other professions, means that a proportion of the candidates, at the end of the ITE course, decide to abandon teaching as a career and apply for jobs in other fields; according to figures from the Education Workforce Council in 2022/23, there was a difference of 15.5% between the number who were awarded Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), and the number who registered with the Council following the award (see also Cardiff Metropolitan University's report, paragraph 4.17-18).

In short, it seems that between a quarter and a third of those who start an Initial Teacher Education course can be expected not to complete the course, or not to go on to a career as a teacher.

Promoting the profession and opportunities to train: A great deal of work is being done to promote teaching as a profession and the opportunities to train to be a teacher, by the Welsh Government itself (under the name Teaching Wales), by the Education Workforce Council (under the name Educators Wales) on behalf of the Welsh Government, and by others, including the Coleg Cymraeg.

The Coleg promotes recruitment to ITE courses through its Dysgu'r Dyfodol scheme, which offers work experience and mentoring sessions with early career teachers for undergraduate and postgraduate university students who speak Welsh and are interested in a career in education. In addition, the Coleg's Cadw Cyswllt ('Keeping in Touch') scheme targets Welsh-speaking students who are studying outside Wales with the aim of encouraging them to return to Wales, including to do PGCE courses. We create and distribute materials promoting teaching as a career, targeting Welsh-speaking students.

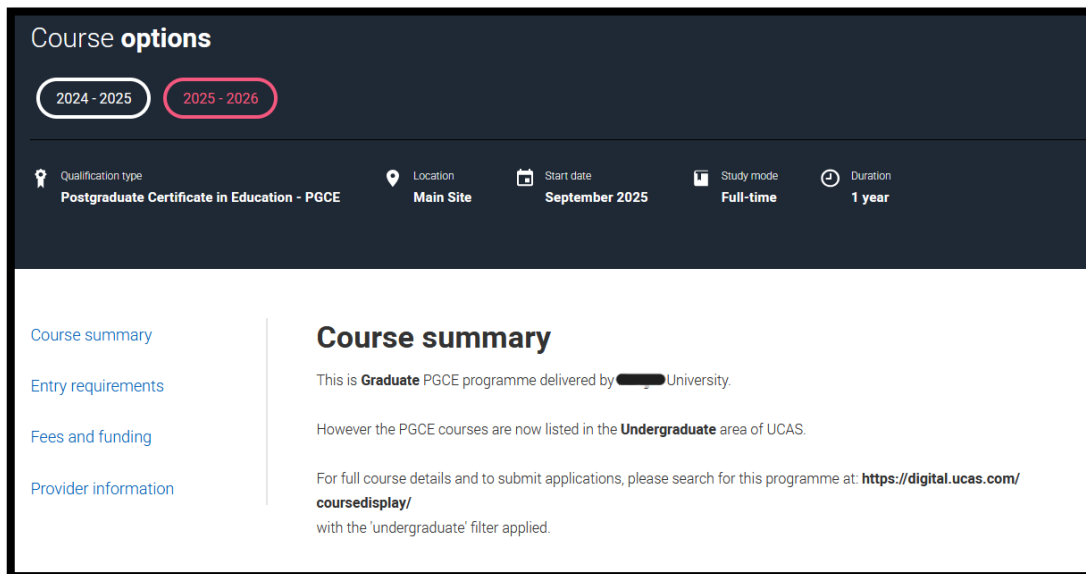
The Coleg is of the view that more could be done to ensure that complete and reliable information is easily available to people who are seeking it. If finding information is difficult, we risk losing potential candidates at the first stage, which we cannot afford to do.

Applying via UCAS: In order to apply for a PGCE course at a university in Wales, candidates must apply via the UCAS website. The UCAS website is designed for applications to undergraduate courses, not to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/documents-eng/about/workforce-statistics/ite/1267-ite-student-results-2023-24>

postgraduate courses such as PGCE courses. As a result, the website's structure does not provide a user-friendly experience, and this may also be a barrier.



We cannot afford to lose potential candidates because of difficulties with the interface.

A related issue is that deadlines for courses vary from one university to another, which can again create a confusing landscape for potential candidates.

Another factor affecting recruitment to Welsh-medium ITE courses and to jobs that require Welsh-medium teaching, is the number of students who pursue their education through the medium of Welsh or bilingually after leaving statutory education. According to the latest published data, around 7,000 students were studying part of their degree course in Welsh. The Coleg Cymraeg works with further education colleges, universities, organisations offering apprenticeships, and employers to create opportunities to train and study in Welsh, and to encourage and inspire learners to continue using and developing their Welsh language skills throughout their educational career.

In addition, Medr has a strategic duty to promote tertiary education through the medium of Welsh, including to 'encourage the demand for, and participation in ... tertiary education provided through the medium of Welsh' and to 'take all reasonable steps to ensure that there is sufficient Welsh tertiary education provided through the medium of Welsh to meet demand'. This will apply to undergraduate degrees in a range of subjects which are priority areas for the statutory sector, and to PGCE courses.

Continued work is needed to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of learners coming from the statutory sector through the tertiary sector continuing with their studies through the medium of Welsh in order to reach the ITE sector ready to undertake their courses confidently in Welsh, and going from there to jobs where they will be able to teach through the medium of Welsh. At present, too many learners are missing opportunities to continue studying through the medium of Welsh at different stages throughout the journey (for various reasons relating to lack of opportunities or lack of encouragement and support), and as a result are losing confidence in their ability to use the language for study or in professional contexts.

There is a category of factors that are recognised as barriers to entry into the profession relating to terms and conditions of work, including a lack of flexibility compared to other professions, and a heavy workload. The report [A Future Teaching Profession for Wales](#) provides more details on this.

2. Factors affecting retention (including a focus on priority subjects, Welsh medium, secondary schools and the effectiveness of early career support)

An analysis of these issues is available in the [Data Analysis](#) (pp. 14-19) that accompanies the Welsh in Education Workforce Plan as well as the report [A Future Teaching Profession for Wales](#) (pp. 13-19).

3. School Leaders: specific factors affecting recruitment and retention of school leaders

See [Data Analysis](#) (pp. 31-35) in the Welsh in Education Workforce Plan.

4. Diversity of the workforce: whether the current and future workforce reflects the diversity of the Welsh population including gender, race and ethnicity and disability

The [Education Workforce Council's statistics](#) (pp. 13-14) show a severe lack of diversity within the education workforce, particularly in terms of race and ethnicity, and disability. This lack of a workforce that reflects the diversity of the Welsh population is a matter of great concern and drives a vicious cycle where pupils do not see role models to inspire them to join the profession.

5. Impact on learners: of the current position on and the delivery of education and on wider support for learners

Across the education system, the shortage of teachers in priority areas means that there is a growing tendency for teachers to be teaching beyond their specialist subject or subjects. This puts unreasonable pressure on the staff and is likely to lead to a less specialist teaching experience, possibly with less passion for the subject.

In addition, the shortage of teachers in specific subject areas can lead to a limitation on the range of subjects available to pupils. We see increasing cases of schools not being able to offer subjects which, traditionally, have been an integral part of the curriculum, such as Music, Drama, Modern Foreign Languages and individual Science subjects. There are also examples where it is not possible to offer A Level Welsh for these reasons.

As the situation for recruitment in the Welsh-medium sector is even more precarious than in the English-medium sector, these issues may have a worse effect on that sector. According to [Estyn's Annual Report](#) 'In a minority of local authorities, recruiting staff, including teachers who teach through the medium of Welsh, was identified as one of the main challenges in terms of their provision for Welsh-medium education.'

6. Impact on delivering educational reforms: including the Curriculum for Wales. Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill.

We look forward to seeing the Welsh Language and Education Bill coming into force soon, as the Coleg very much welcomes the ambition for the education system in the context of the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 strategy. But we must also acknowledge that it will bring challenges in terms of the education workforce. The number of teachers is insufficient for the system's requirements at present; in order to move the whole system forward and ensure that all learners have the opportunity to become

independent Welsh speakers, we will need many more teachers who can teach Welsh as a subject and teach through the medium of Welsh at all types of schools, right across Wales.

In order to do that, a combination of methods will be needed, including systematic Welsh language upskilling for current members of the education workforce, and a fundamental change in the expectations in relation to the Welsh language in the context of ITE and early-career professional development.

It is also important to draw attention to the vicious cycle that results from the crisis in terms of the numbers studying Welsh (First Language and Second Language) at A Level, which in turn leads to a very small pool of potential candidates to qualify as Welsh language teachers, including in English-medium schools. Steps need to be taken to ensure that any pupil who wants to take A Level Welsh is able to do so.

7. Addressing recruitment and retention: What actions should be taken, and by whom, to ensure the sustainability of the education workforce and how such actions should be prioritised
  - Strategic planning and allocation of numbers: A much more detailed and strategic approach should be adopted to identify the needs of the workforce over time, with planning in advance for those numbers, rather than using the current crude Teacher Planning and Supply Model ('TPSM'). The TPSM produces one figure for the primary sector and one for the secondary sector nationally; on the basis of these figures, the Education Workforce Council allocates numbers to individual ITE programmes.

The TPSM does not take into account local and regional differences, needs in relation to specific subjects, or linguistic needs in relation to the ability to teach in Welsh.

In this context, we note Recommendation 49 of the report of the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities, '[Empowering communities, strengthening the Welsh language](#)', which says: 'Within areas of higher density linguistic significance, the Welsh Government should plan to meet the needs of the education workforce...'. It is a cause for concern that the system for planning ITE is currently much too high-level to be able to deal with such a recommendation.

Such an approach would also fit in with the requirement in the Welsh Language and Education Bill that the National Framework should 'include an assessment of the number of education practitioners needed in each local authority in order to meet any target set...' and should 'set out the steps the Welsh Ministers will take, based on that assessment, for the purposes of ensuring that the number of education practitioners working in Wales meets the need'.

At present, it is not clear where the responsibility for formulating and implementing such a strategy would sit. In order to establish such a system that is truly strategic, and to ensure this is followed up by efficient action, the Coleg is of the view that a Strategic Unit should be established within the Welsh Government. Such a Unit would plan bilingual workforces across priority sectors, with the education workforce being a top priority. It would establish collaboration arrangements between relevant stakeholders and ensure that there are robust performance indicators and accountability arrangements in place.

- Consideration should be given as to whether the current system of accrediting ITE courses, and PGCE courses in particular, leads to an appropriate and strategic distribution of courses that facilitates the recruitment of suitable candidates across Wales. Consideration should be given as to whether there are advantages to the commissioning model used by Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) for many courses in health. Such a model would have the potential for the strategic planning

of ITE provision at a national level, taking local variations and needs into account. It could mean more security and stability for the universities offering the provision. Currently, Welsh Government determines the criteria and places a statutory duty on the Education Workforce Council to administer the accreditation process; it is not clear to us whether it would be Welsh Government or Medr who would have responsibility for considering a change to this system.

- Alongside considering the model for establishing ITE courses, a cost/benefit exercise should be carried out to consider whether reducing or removing fees for PGCE courses across the board, or in priority areas in particular (including in Welsh as a subject), and/or for courses that prepare teachers to teach through the medium of Welsh, would be advantageous from a recruitment perspective, as well as sustainable from a funding perspective.

In revisiting funding models, it would be necessary to weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of the existing incentive system compared to potential alternative arrangements. The [Incentives to recruit and retain teachers in Wales](#) report (Education Policy Institute, on behalf of the Welsh Government – November 2024) discusses the evidence base for different models, and concludes that the evidence on the impact of incentives is stronger in relation to teacher retention than it is in relation to teacher recruitment.

As part of these considerations, some thought could be given to existing models for certain pathways in health, where the funding of fees comes with a condition to work in Wales for a certain period.

- There is now significant evidence, including in the Cardiff Metropolitan University report, suggesting that it is time to look at the content, focus and structure of the PGCE course, and ensure that it lays solid foundations that include the main priority areas. Rather than overloading the qualification year, further development requirements (including in relation to developing Welsh language skills) could be set over the early career years, ensuring sufficient non-contact time for the structured professional development, and the professional support (e.g. mentoring) that would be needed during that period.

As part of the process of revisiting the content and structure of the PGCE course and the early career years, requirements should be embedded based on the Code to Describe Welsh Language Ability which will be created as a result of the Welsh Language and Education Bill, to ensure that all candidates make progress during this formative period, whatever their starting point in relation to the Welsh language.

It is also possible that consideration needs to be given to extending the options currently available (through the Open University) for flexible routes into the profession, rather than trying to channel the vast majority through full-time one-year PGCE courses. This model (as well as the fee structure) is particularly difficult for candidates from disadvantaged backgrounds, and older candidates, including career changers – both important target audiences.

It would be worth comparing the different routes (BA Education/Full-time PGCE/Part-Time PGCE/Employed PGCE) to see if there are significant differences in terms of completion rates and post-qualification job application rates that would suggest specific policy developments.

Consideration should also be given to whether there are models of courses that do not currently exist that could help alleviate some aspects of the recruitment crisis. For example, would establishing BA Secondary Education courses in priority subject areas (in collaboration with relevant academic

departments) facilitate access to the profession for those who already know, at the age of 18, that they want to be a teacher of a specific subject? It could be worth considering ITE courses in Areas of Learning and Experience to match the Curriculum for Wales, training teachers who would be confident to teach across a range of related subject areas, rather than teachers having to teach in areas for which they have not been prepared after joining the workforce.

- It might be useful to revisit the central source of information which promotes teaching as a career and provides information on initial training options to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- The way of applying via the UCAS website should be revisited, and either work done with UCAS to improve the interface and experience for potential candidates, or consideration given to a different system. We imagine Medr would have the responsibility for taking action in this regard, perhaps jointly with the Education Workforce Council.
- We need to aim for a system where all learners use, maintain and develop their Welsh language skills throughout their educational journey, and from there to jobs where they use their Welsh, including in the education workforce. A significant increase is needed in the numbers who continue to study through the medium of Welsh, especially for A Level and then at degree level, in order to increase the pool of learners who would be able to train as teachers and join the Welsh in education workforce. The 'National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh' which will be drawn up as a result of the Welsh Language and Education Bill will offer an opportunity to create the coordinated, whole-system effort that is needed to meet this urgent need.

TRR29

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Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i'r [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar gyfer yr [ymchwiliad i recriwtio a chadw athrawon](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) on the [Inquiry into Teacher recruitment and retention](#)

Ymateb gan: Y Ganolfan Dysgu Cymraeg Genedlaethol  
Response from: The National Centre for Learning Welsh

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## **Response from the National Centre for Learning Welsh to the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Inquiry.**

### **1. Background**

1.1 The National Centre for Learning Welsh was established by the Welsh Government in 2016 to lead the Learn Welsh sector for adults.

1.2 The Centre specialises in Language Learning and Acquisition.

1.3 The Centre's aim is to create Welsh speakers who enjoy using the language, by providing a national Learn Welsh strategy and services. Since its establishment, the Centre has transformed the Learn Welsh sector. In 2023-24, it was announced that more learners than ever before had completed Learn Welsh courses (18,330), a 45% increase since the Centre was established.

1.4 Since its establishment, the Centre has expanded its audience, developing specific schemes for audiences such as families, workplaces and young people. We also work with a number of sectors, and have developed tailored Learn Welsh programmes, for example for Early Years Care and Education, Health and Care, Further / Higher Education, Local Authorities and Sport. The Centre was recently given responsibilities to provide a national programme for the Education Workforce. The Centre also runs a programme of Confidence Building and Using Welsh courses to support speakers who lack confidence to use their Welsh.

1.5 One of the Centre's first duties was to develop a national Learn Welsh curriculum. The curriculum is aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), and is used across the Centre's various schemes and courses. The curriculum includes overviews demonstrating progression in the four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) across levels A1 to C1. They can be used in conjunction with the functional overviews and grammatical syntaxes. As learners progress, they will learn to use the language (speaking and writing) in an increasing number of contexts. They will move from the familiar (A1) to a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar situations (B2), and will be able to undertake increasingly complex listening and reading tasks, moving from simple language in familiar contexts (A1) to much more complex and abstract language in a wide range of styles and contexts (B2). They will also be able to use a growing pool of vocabulary, styles and registers (formal and informal), grammar and syntax and pronunciation features. They will also come to use the language with increasing confidence and depth.

1.6 The Centre has selected 10 core providers, through a tendering process, to provide a variety of courses for the audiences mentioned above, alongside the fundamental work of Welsh learning for adults in the community and virtually. The sector employs a workforce of 500 tutors, managers and support staff.

1.7 In August 2021, the Welsh Government carried out a rapid review of the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The report stated that the Centre is:

*'... recognised as a body that coordinates, plans, delivers and develops Learn Welsh provision at a national level... In the second phase of its existence, this role as a key and*





*strategic institution central to the acquisition of the Welsh language needs to be developed and strengthened.*

1.8 The Learn Welsh sector is inspected by Estyn, within a specific framework for the Learn Welsh provision. The Centre itself is also inspected by Estyn.

1.9 The Centre's definition of learning Welsh is that it is a broad activity, and a continuum of language learning and acquisition. This includes the following:

- awareness of the Welsh language and its culture, and presenting very simple Welsh vocabulary.
- a more formal learning structure, face-to-face or virtually, which follows the CEFR levels from A1 to C1.
- confidence building activities, working with speakers who lack confidence or speakers wishing to use specialist vocabulary at work.
- opportunities for speakers to continue learning, through refresher and improvement provision.
- opportunities to use and practise Welsh in the community, at work or with peers.

## **2. The Teacher Recruitment and Retention Inquiry**

### **2.1 Barriers to recruitment**

Since 2024, the Centre has been responsible for a national programme for learning and developing Welsh language skills within the Statutory Education Workforce. The programme supports the Workforce, thereby tackling the challenges of upskilling, with a flexible approach grounded in learning methodologies that can be transferred to the classroom. Within the programme, opportunities are provided for students studying to become teachers.

In response to Estyn's inspection of Initial Teacher Education (September 2023), a resource was created to support Initial Teacher Education providers to provide the 35 hours of language development that form part of the course. The Centre has also created a new type of course, to be offered during June 2025, providing a 10-day course for prospective teachers. This was a pilot course, originally for 15 participants, but 51 have already signed up.

Meeting the requirements of the Welsh Language and Education Bill will require teachers with increased Welsh language skills, and the opportunity to provide this at the outset of a teacher's career is a means of ensuring the necessary support.

Reforming the way in which Welsh is presented in Initial Teacher Education could be far-reaching in terms of supporting teachers' Welsh language skills.

The Centre believes the requirement to develop personal Welsh language skills should be extended from 35 to 120 hours, enabling a prospective teacher to complete an entire progression level (CEFR) in Welsh before starting as a newly qualified teacher. For example, a prospective teacher already at Entry level (A1) before starting their course could complete the entire Foundation level (A2), and be ready to start Intermediate level (B1) by the time they start teaching. The provision should be part of the Centre's national



Learn Welsh programme for the Education Workforce, providing a clear progression pathway.

Supporting prospective teachers at the higher levels of the Learn Welsh continuum is also key, in order to give them the confidence to undertake their teaching practice in Welsh-medium schools. The Centre provides Professional Welsh courses (at Refresher level) for prospective teachers wishing to increase their confidence in their use of Welsh.

## 2.2 Factors affecting retention

The Centre's National Programme for learning and developing Welsh language skills within the Statutory Education Workforce supports the Workforce, thereby tackling the challenges of upskilling, with a flexible approach grounded in learning methodologies that can be transferred to the classroom.

The programme includes opportunities to follow self-study courses, tutor-led courses, residential courses, and from September 2025 onwards, the intensive learning provision (through a sabbatical scheme) will also be part of the offer. The Centre also places Learn Welsh tutors in certain schools that are changing their language medium, supporting teachers within their setting to develop their skills and confidence in the Welsh language. All courses offered by the Centre, including the Education Workforce courses, have been prepared in accordance with the CEFR (*Common European Framework for Languages*) and it is therefore clear which CEFR level, and consequently which level of the Language Competency Framework for Teachers, is being met.

All Education Workforce courses are contextualised to work in schools and with children and young people. The courses upskill teachers to use Welsh in the classroom, which in turn improves Welsh language provision for children and young people. The national programme has thus far reached over 2,000 practitioners. The Welsh Language and Education Bill provides an opportunity to further expand our work in this area, and to plan strategically in partnership with a number of organisations, such as Local Authorities to achieve the aims of their Welsh in Education Strategic Plans.

## 2.3 School Leaders; Impact on learners; Impact on delivering educational reforms; Impact on teachers and the wider workforce

All the provision in the Centre's national programme is available to **School Leaders**, as well as specific courses for leaders and aspiring leaders. There are further opportunities through professional qualifications such as the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) to ensure that elements of developing Welsh language skills are part of the expectation, intertwined with aspects of leading on the Welsh language within a school. Similarly, our Education Workforce programme has an **impact on teachers and the wider workforce** through specific and contextual courses, for example for Foundation Learning teaching assistants.

The Centre's Education Workforce programme is structured to have an **impact on learners**. One of the principles of the programme is to ensure that teachers are upskilled to support children and young people's progress in Welsh. Every element of the programme focuses on the use of Welsh with children and young people, introducing practical strategies for using Welsh within a school. In due course, this will have a positive impact on children and young people's experience of the Welsh language. It will also



ensure that the principles of **educational reform** in relation to the Welsh language in the Curriculum for Wales and the ALN Act are met.

## 2.4 Addressing recruitment and retention

Further developing the Centre's programme to support the Welsh language skills of the Education Workforce is crucial, in order to tackle the challenge of ensuring a workforce with suitable Welsh language skills, particularly with the introduction of the Welsh Language and Education Bill.

The Centre has expertise in Welsh Language Learning and Acquisition, and therefore fully recognizes the importance and influence of its work in a wider policy area. Through strategic planning, the Centre is already influencing progress in this area, and we believe the Centre, and the National Institute for Learning Welsh in due course, have an essential role to play in providing a broad programme of support for the Education Workforce.

The Centre believes that its National Programme for the Education Workforce should be leading a broader framework to support prospective and practising teachers, and that the Centre can expand its work to encompass this in future.

The Centre is grateful for the opportunity to take part in the consultation process. It is excited about the possibilities of continuing to evolve its work as part of the National Institute for Learning Welsh and supporting prospective and practising teachers to learn and develop their Welsh language skills, for the benefit of the children and young people of Wales.

**Dona Lewis**  
**Chief Executive**  
**The National Centre for Learning Welsh**

[Estyn inspection of the National Centre for Learning Welsh, April 2024](#)  
[The National Centre for Learning Welsh: Annual Report 2023-24](#)

# Agenda Item 6

TRR 22

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Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i'r [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar gyfer yr [ymchwiliad i recriwtio a chadw athrawon](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) on the [Inquiry into Teacher recruitment and retention](#)

Ymateb gan: Gymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru a Chymdeithas Cyfarwyddwyr Addysg Cymru

Response from: Welsh Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Education in Wales

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# WLGA & ADEW Inquiry response

06 June 2025

## WLGA and ADEW response to the Children, Young People and Education Committee's Inquiry into Teacher Recruitment and Retention

### Welsh Local Government Association - The Voice of Welsh Councils

We are The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA); a politically led cross-party organisation that seeks to give local government a strong voice at a national level. We represent the interests of local government and promote local democracy in Wales. The 22 councils in Wales are our members and the 3 fire and rescue authorities and 3 national park authorities are associate members.

#### **We believe that the ideas that change people's lives, happen locally.**

Communities are at their best when they feel connected to their council through local democracy. By championing, facilitating, and achieving these connections, we can build a vibrant local democracy that allows communities to thrive.

**Our ultimate goal** is to promote, protect, support, and develop democratic local government and the interests of councils in Wales.

#### **We'll achieve our vision by**

- Promoting the role and prominence of councillors and council leaders
- Ensuring maximum local discretion in legislation or statutory guidance
- Championing and securing long-term and sustainable funding for councils
- Promoting sector-led improvement
- Encouraging a vibrant local democracy, promoting greater diversity
- Supporting councils to effectively manage their workforce

This response has been informed by the knowledge and expertise of the Association of the Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW). As such this is a joint consultation response on behalf of the WLGA and ADEW and represents the collective views of local authorities in Wales. The response also includes contributions from the local authority Human Resources Directors Network (HRD) and National Neurodivergence team within the WLGA.



## RESPONSE

### **1. Barriers to recruitment: Intake into Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and factors impacting recruitment into post (including a focus on priority subjects, Welsh medium, secondary schools and the impact of Wales' educational reforms on teacher recruitment).**

The WLGA and ADEW are concerned by the current recruitment challenges faced by the education sector in Wales. The Secondary Recruitment and Retention research project group recently reported that *“there was approximately a 62% shortfall in recruitment to the 1-year- PGCE Secondary ITE programme with only 424 of the 1109 places allocated being filled”*<sup>1</sup> in 2023-24. The challenges are even greater in the Welsh medium sector and in recruiting teachers that can teach Welsh as a second language across other schools. ADEW colleagues are particularly concerned about Welsh medium recruitment for Mathematics and Science teachers. The lack of ITE provision across mid-Wales is also a concern. Local authorities are reporting critical shortages in the following areas:

- Welsh language
- Mathematics
- Science (especially Chemistry and Physics)
- ICT
- Technology
- Geography
- Modern foreign languages

As outlined in recent evidence provided by the WLGA to the Independent Welsh Pay Review Board (IWPRB), there is a strong view that recruitment and retention is multi-factorial and salary and allowance ranges are just one part. Cultural and environmental factors such as pupil behaviour, workload and the increased demands of teaching are all impacting on wellbeing and are important influencers of recruitment and retention. Reports from within the teaching profession, as well as other negative press, is having a negative impact on recruitment. There is a strong public perception of poor pupil behaviour, pupils having complex needs and an increasing pastoral burden which is deterring prospective applicants. Budget pressures and an expectation to do more with less, are also potential factors.

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<sup>1</sup> [A future teaching profession for Wales by Cardiff Metropolitan University - December 2024](#)



Recruitment and retention challenges are exacerbated in rural areas, particularly where new teachers or trainees aren't familiar with the area or need to depend upon public transport. Local authorities are also seeing a decrease in the number of courses provided due to restructures or closures of university departments as a result of financial pressures. Again, the negative impact of this seems to be exacerbated in universities that typically serve rural authorities. In North Wales for example, there are reported shortages in Technology and Maths teachers which may be linked to fewer courses now running at Bangor University.

Broader challenges such as the lack of affordable housing and increasing costs of living also impact ITE recruitment, particularly in areas that have been hit by the increases in second-home ownership and holiday homes. Typically, these are areas with higher numbers of graduates from Welsh-speaking communities who currently find it difficult to compete with the rising house prices locally. This in turn places additional pressure on Welsh language education workforce recruitment.

There are similar challenges for schools serving pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN). Specialist provision settings require specific experience and qualifications, narrowing the recruitment field even further. The commitment by Welsh Government to review the salaries for ALN Co-ordinators in Wales is welcomed to support the further development of this role.

Recruitment challenges aren't limited to ITE recruitment. Local authorities are also reporting challenges in appointing suitable candidates into senior posts too. These challenges have largely affected faith, Welsh medium and small rural primary schools, although some secondary schools have also faced difficulties attracting applicants to senior leader posts. Faith schools encounter additional difficulties with leadership recruitment due to the requirement for alignment with specific religious values.

Another factor which is affecting both recruitment and retention is the competition from other professions. Other graduate careers are seen as more attractive due to better pay, flexibility, or perceived status. The post pandemic effect, where flexible working has become more available, is also making other professions more desirable. Teaching has limited options to support flexible working, but the pandemic altered working patterns and expectations for many. The ability to work flexibly and occasionally from home, is now a big factor in an individual's career and employment decisions.



Several councils also advocate the need to offer greater flexibility to qualify in Wales with Assessment Only routes into teaching and reintroducing schemes such as Teach First. In England this greater flexibility exists with those having worked as unqualified teachers having routes to secure [qualified teacher status](#) through an assessment only programme. While ADEW understands that Education Workforce Council's (EWC) role is as an accrediting body, we believe that WG, EWC and others should be proactively working with providers to develop more flexible routes given the recruitment challenges facing our schools.

Providing targeted financial incentives and enhanced professional development opportunities would help overcome some of the barriers. Providing high-quality teacher education and building strong societal respect for teachers could also be beneficial to the sector.

## **2. Factors affecting retention: (including a focus on priority subjects, Welsh medium, secondary schools and the effectiveness of early career support).**

Local Authorities are reporting a significant rise in school workforce redundancies compared with previous years. A recent budget pressures survey found that in 2024/25, twenty Local Authorities reported having a significant increase in teacher redundancies, both at voluntary and compulsory levels. School workforce reductions are also due to a significant number of fixed term contracts not being renewed, leavers not being replaced, and maternity cover not being sourced due to current budget positions.

There is also a problem with teachers leaving their posts after only a few years. Many teachers leave within the first few years due to lack of support and mentoring. Teachers who leave after a few years of teaching also report unmanageable workloads impacting on health and wellbeing and work-life balance. Early career support should be strengthened and workload protected until teachers become more experienced. Many Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) are entering the profession underprepared, with ITE often not equipping them for the realities of the roles, including the behavioural challenges they may face. ITE training can be fragmented and overly focused on irrelevant paperwork or academic studies, leaving less experienced teachers with limited practical exposure. Councils have suggested spreading the support over the first three years of teaching, citing some examples in England of impactful mentoring programmes for new teachers and flexible working arrangements to improve retention.





The education sector is currently experiencing reform fatigue with teachers reporting the follow key factors as issues which affect job satisfaction and retention; increased workload including more administrative tasks and additional work in implementing reforms, staff shortages including support staff which reduces teacher capacity, behaviour including pupils exhibiting higher levels of defiance and aggression in schools. Persistent pupil absence also adds to teacher stress and undermines classroom morale.

More than one Council has questioned the role of EWC and its effectiveness in promoting teaching as a profession. EWC claims that it actively promotes careers in education in Wales through the [Educators Wales website](#) and advice service. This is funded by Welsh Government but it is not clear the effectiveness or the impact resulting from the investment.

### **3. School Leaders: specific factors affecting recruitment and retention of school leaders.**

The factors negatively affecting the recruitment and retention of school leaders tend to be due to the demanding nature of the roles themselves, as opposed to related to pay. The pay structures for school leaders are well understood and experienced teachers who take on additional responsibilities are rewarded and paid well. As referenced in recent evidence to the Committee on school improvement, it is financially challenging where headteacher salary ranges are far ahead of everyone else in the system. A significant number of primary and secondary headteachers for example earn more than senior council officers who hold them to account. This makes it difficult for local authorities to be able to afford to second staff from schools due to the disparity in terms and conditions, as well as pay. Any review of pay awards should therefore consider this to avoid any unintended consequences for recruitment and retention within local authorities.

Some Governing Bodies are currently increasing headteacher pay ranges outside of their schools grouping to address retention challenges which is resulting in significantly inflated pay ranges in comparison to the size of the school. A recruitment and retention allowance could provide Governing Bodies with a means to facilitate retaining headteachers who may otherwise leave, whilst ensuring that no changes are made to the actual grade of the salary range. It is suggested that recruitment allowances should be for a temporary period of up to 2 years and should not be subject to safeguarding arrangements in place under the STPC(W)D.



Councils are reporting on a decrease in the number of applicants for headteacher and deputy headteacher roles. They are also seeing fewer experienced applicants for senior posts. Some headteacher applicants are put off by roles where there are some teaching requirements alongside headteacher responsibilities, again this is more prevalent in smaller schools. As pay is not the only incentive, school leaders need increased support and clearer career progression pathways to improve retention and progression.

The age profile of headteachers and senior leaders is a risk, however leaders retiring is not the only challenge. The local authority HRD network also note that school leaders are leaving the profession to take up alternative professions. Reducing the workload for senior leadership and reducing national pressures would help. The feedback from all levels of the sector is that reducing school budgets leads to a smaller workforce but that this leaves more work for everyone else to complete. Those leaving the profession have stated that the workload is excessive which in turn has an impact on their mental health and work-life balance.

There are also issues with the leadership pipeline in schools. One significant barrier is the current slowdown and inefficiencies in the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) process. Unlike in the past, when the Welsh Government regularly sent lists of potential candidates to local authorities, there is now a lack of clear communication. This has led to delays in the leadership pipeline, with a two-year cycle limiting the availability of future headteachers. It is felt the cohort size could have been doubled to meet demand. Furthermore, there are some concerns where local authority staff feel that deserving candidates, such as Assistant Headteachers in Welsh-medium schools, have not been accepted on to the NPQH programme. Local authorities would therefore welcome a stronger role in validating and supporting applications to ensure the right candidates are progressing. This is particularly important in shortage areas, for example in the Welsh medium sector, faith sector and for applicants from smaller rural schools.

ADEW colleagues have also raised the issue of limited career development opportunities influencing recruitment and retention. There should be a clear and ambitious pathway for career development and opportunities for professional growth for senior leaders, such as clear steps for headteachers to become School Improvement specialists, Executive Headteachers or system leaders.



#### **4. Diversity of the workforce: whether the current and future workforce reflects the diversity of the Welsh population including gender, race and ethnicity and disability.**

Areas of the education workforce in Wales are underrepresented in terms of ethnicity, gender, transgender, age, disability and sexual orientation. Targeted recruitment campaigns and support networks as well as diversity training and inclusive hiring practices could help improve workforce diversity. Stronger promotion of teaching as a viable and rewarding career path for underrepresented groups, including targeted outreach, mentorship, and support throughout teacher training and progression into leadership would also help increase workforce diversity.

#### **Recruitment and Retention – A Neurodivergent perspective**

The National Neurodivergence Team funded by Welsh Government and hosted by the WLGA works closely with the neurodivergent community across Wales, local authorities, local Autism/Neurodivergent leads, Health Boards and advisory groups. As such, this team also offers a unique perspective on some of the recruitment and retention challenges for neurodivergent teachers. From a neurodivergent teacher's perspective, a school environment and necessary reasonable adjustments can be difficult to navigate. The lack of flexibility in schools can make it difficult to recruit or retain neurodivergent teachers, which contributes to a smaller and less diverse workforce. There are many aspects of school life which initially appeal to the neurodivergent community. This could include factors like the regular timetabled structure of a school day, the opportunity to work and focus on one subject of significant interest and expertise, and the opportunity to work in familiar environments, particularly for recent graduates.

However, anecdotally many teachers who are neurodivergent do not receive the support or adjustments that enable them to thrive while working in schools. In many cases, this could be because the teachers themselves are undiagnosed or are more likely to avoid disclosing a diagnosis due to the fear of stigma or due to the general lack of understanding around neurodivergence in adults. Many undiagnosed teachers are waiting more than 3 years for diagnostic tests for Autism or neurodivergence, with waiting times of 5 years within some Health Board regions.

Training on what reasonable adjustments are necessary and what is protected under the Equalities Act would help in building this diversity within the workforce. There may be simple adjustments that can support neurodivergent



teachers at the recruitment and interview stages. One example is providing interview questions beforehand, understanding differences in communication and ensuring interviewers are clear and concise throughout the interview process. Support for trainee teachers during placement would also need to be tailored to ensure successful outcomes. The National Neurodivergence team also advise that emphasis on a neuroinclusive environment, which takes into consideration communication and sensory processing differences, are essential in improving teacher wellbeing. Having a strengths-based approach to support neurodivergent teachers would also help increase retention. Every neurodivergent teacher will present in a different way and may need different reasonable adjustments in the workplace. Developing supportive, inclusive, working environments would help recruit and retain more teachers with diverse strengths. For more information from the National Neurodivergence Teams please see the links in Appendix 1.

## **5. Impact on learners: of the current position on and the delivery of education and on wider support for learners.**

Teacher shortages and retention issues negatively impact learners by reducing the quality of teaching and increasing class sizes. Teacher shortages also reduce the depth and breadth of the curriculum offer, as schools are unable to run certain subjects due to a lack of qualified staff. The narrowing of subject choices and inconsistent teaching quality risk widening inequalities and diminishing the overall educational experience. Increasingly, lessons are being delivered by non-specialist teachers, meaning students are sometimes taught by individuals with little or no subject-specific knowledge. This undermines the quality of teaching and limits learners' understanding and engagement.

Reduced school budgets make it difficult to recruit permanent members of staff and it leads to higher staff turnover. The current budget pressures also result in schools cutting support staff which has a detrimental effect on education provision, teacher capacity and staff wellbeing. The targeted interventions around behaviour, attendance and pastoral support that non-teaching staff provide play a fundamental role in improving pupil outcomes for all. In schools that are struggling, there tends to be a higher rate of staff sickness absence which in turns places more reliance on supply teaching which is costly and affects the consistency of the teaching, especially where supply staff cannot match the specialisms needed. Moreover, there is shortage of supply staff in many rural areas which also has an adverse effect on pupils. There is a higher turnover of staff in schools serving low-income communities



which in turn widens the attainment gap. Investing in improving teacher wellbeing and professional development would lead to improved educational outcomes for learners.

## **6. Impact on delivering educational reforms: including the Curriculum for Wales. Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill.**

Implementing several significant educational reforms over a short period of time has been challenging. However, the workforce has responded positively to these major changes and have developed effective collaborative practices which has enabled them to work effectively on many national priorities. As mentioned earlier however, the sector is experiencing reform fatigue and a commitment to keep embedding reform through impactful professional learning, and not introducing any new reform, would be welcomed.

It is difficult to quantify the precise impact of each of the individual reforms on teacher recruitment and retention, but the following areas have been identified as possible contributors to these challenges:

- There are some concerns that curriculum reform may require teachers to work outside of their subject specialisms which is off-putting to some prospective teachers and causes existing teachers some stress and additional work.
- As mentioned earlier, the decline in ITE enrolment and critical gaps in key subjects places a further strain on schools' capacity to implement all reforms effectively.
- Developing a new curriculum and preparing for new qualifications is a lot of additional work on top of existing work priorities.
- High levels of staff sickness can lead to young people being taught by a number of different supply teachers which can be particularly difficult for pupils with ALN/vulnerable pupils and makes it harder for all teachers to achieve better educational outcomes.

## **7. Impact on teachers and wider workforce: including impact on use of teaching assistants and support staff, effect on use of supply teachers.**

Teacher shortages lead to increased reliance on teaching assistants and supply teachers, which reduces the overall quality and consistency of the teaching and educational outcomes. The growing reliance on teaching assistants, especially



(HLTAs) for other duties beyond their remit, such as cover in some cases, also means that key interventions are delayed. The shortfalls in school budgets however also mean a reduction in school support staff as schools struggle to maintain the necessary teacher pupil ratios. This in turn places added pressure on classroom teachers which is likely to negatively impact retention. Recruiting teaching assistants is also challenging when the pay for these roles is comparatively low and yet the demands on teaching assistants are increasing.

The quality and availability of supply teachers, especially in secondary schools, is also a growing concern, with many schools struggling to secure suitably qualified or experienced individuals. This inconsistency impacts teaching quality, learner progress, and staff morale. Teachers are often stretched as they are needed to cover absent colleagues or manage even larger workloads.

## **8. Addressing recruitment and retention: What actions should be taken, and by whom, to ensure the sustainability of the education workforce and how such actions should be prioritised.**

Councils have stated that improving professional development, improving support systems and reducing teacher workload would all improve recruitment and retention. Specifically, the following actions should be prioritised:

- Implementing comprehensive professional development programmes and making teaching an ambitious pathway for graduates.
- Improving collaboration with key stakeholders and partners to expand access to training.
- Providing strong mentorship, reducing timescales and increasing wellbeing support to NQTs and early career teachers.
- Providing specialised training for teaching staff to support neurodiverse learners and pupils with ALN, and equipping them with the skills to implement universal provision effectively.
- Addressing workload issues through better resource allocation and administrative support to help retain teachers.

The Welsh Government will need to develop innovative strategies to address the stark decline in ITE enrolment and address the critical shortages in key subjects, including shortages in the number of teachers who are able to deliver on the ambitious aims of Cymraeg 2050 and the upcoming Welsh Language and Education Bill. Additional work is needed with Further Education colleges and Universities to promote the teaching profession and encourage graduates to train as teachers. Welsh



Government must also ensure that all pay increases, and targeted initiatives are fully funded to avoid school headcount reductions. Any additional costs from educational reforms, whether direct or indirect, must be fully funded on an on-going basis by the Welsh Government.

The HRD network has also suggested that local authorities should review their own coaching & mentoring models and recruitment and retention strategies with a view to enhancing existing practice. Potential strategies could include soft and hard federations, executive headships, and 'grow your own' models for teachers, as well as opportunities for bespoke leadership programmes.

As a sector, more could also be done to develop a positive narrative around teaching as a profession, including celebrating successes and sharing positive stories with the wider public. Positive media campaigns highlighting the rewarding aspects of teaching and showcasing success stories would also help. Teachers advocating for the profession themselves and modelling teaching as a fulfilling vocation for pupils is also likely to influence young people who are considering becoming teachers.

## **Appendix 1 – Links from the National Neurodivergence team**

[I am a teacher or Early Years leader - Niwrowahaniaeth Cymru | Neurodivergence Wales | National Neurodivergence Team](#)

["Fostering Inclusion: How School Leaders Are Transforming Work Environments for Teachers with Special Needs and Disabilities" - Neuroteachers](#)

["There's Only So Much the School Can Change About Itself ... Before You Need to Change Something About Yourself"—a Qualitative Analysis of the Experiences of Neurodivergent Student Teachers | Autism in Adulthood](#)

[Final-Report-ACEN-2023-Grant-Becoming-and-Flourishing-as-a-Neurodivergent-Teacher.pdf](#)

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**Children, Young People  
and Education Committee**

Hayden Llewellyn,  
Chief Executive,  
Education Workforce Council

01 July 2025

**Follow up from evidence session**

Dear Hayden,

Thank you for giving evidence to the Committee on 5 June. It was a very helpful session as we started our inquiry into teacher recruitment and retention.

We agreed to write to seek further information around the work on financial incentives. We are particularly interested in the effectiveness of financial incentives, so any information you can give on this would be greatly appreciated. We will also be asking the Welsh Government for more information on this work, as we appreciate they commissioned your work in this space.

During the session, you also talked about teaching as a “product”, and some of the reasons it is currently less attractive to some graduates. You also suggested that in tackling this there should be a focus on dealing with “a couple of priorities”. What do you think are the priorities which would improve the attractiveness of teaching?

I would appreciate it if you could send your response by Monday 1 September. If you envisage any issues with this timeline, please let the Clerk know.

Yours sincerely,



Buffy Williams MS  
Chair  
Children, Young People and Education Committee

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Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

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## Children, Young People and Education Committee

Douglas Ross MSP

Convener

Education, Children and Young People

Committee

01 July 2025

### Information sharing across committees

Dear Douglas,

Thank you for your letter dated 4 June highlighting our shared areas of interest in issues facing the higher education sector. We discussed this at our recent Committee meeting. We believe there would be merit in exploring how we can work together on areas of mutual interest, and would welcome the opportunity to do so.

In terms of areas of shared interest, we are keen to explore what solutions to the current issues in higher education could be.

Our clerks have also been in contact with Welsh Affairs Select Committee throughout our work, and we believe there may be some merit in extending an invite to any of the territorial committees at Westminster that have also been looking at or have an interest in these issues.

We welcome the opportunity to develop closer working relationships with our counterpart committees across the country. Our Clerk will be in touch to discuss the logistics.

Yours sincerely,



Buffy Williams MS

Chair

Children, Young People and Education Committee

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Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Buffy Williams, MS  
Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee  
Welsh Parliament,  
Cardiff Bay,  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

Dr. Sarah Witcombe-Hayes  
Senior Policy Researcher, NSPCC Cymru

Izzabella James  
Policy & Public Affairs Manager, Home-Start Cymru  
Wales Coordinator, Maternal Mental Health Alliance

1<sup>st</sup> July 2025

**Re: Serious concerns about perinatal mental health in Wales**

Dear Buffy Williams, MS

We are writing to you, with support from the perinatal mental health sector, to express our serious concerns regarding the future of perinatal mental health provision in Wales. We feel that the recent proposal by NHS Wales Performance and Improvement to disband the Perinatal Clinical Implementation Network and National Clinical Lead role and replace it with a Community of Practice/Peer Group, raises significant issues.

We fear that this change will negatively impact service development and delivery, quality assurance, joint working, training, and the vital support available for new and expectant parents and their babies struggling with their mental health. This proposal would not only impact on specialist perinatal mental health services, but also on the whole system that supports families in the perinatal period. This includes health visiting, maternity, neonatal, local authorities and the third sector. The Perinatal Clinical Implementation Network provides the critical link between services across the pathway and specialist commissioners, and Welsh Government. This proposal fails to recognise the crucial work of the network in bringing the perinatal mental health system together to protect and help give babies the best start in life. The proposal would also mean that services across the perinatal system would have no formal voice at Executive level within NHS Wales Performance and Improvement.

**A Backward Step in National Progress**

This proposal would put Wales out of step with other parts of the UK leaving us without a Perinatal Mental Health Clinical Lead and national focus to drive forward progress to support parents and their families. This will be a giant step backwards. Having a perinatal mental health clinical network in Wales was a key recommendation from the fifth Senedd's Children, Young People and Education Committees Inquiry into Perinatal Mental Health<sup>1</sup>.

The Committee recommended that Welsh Government should establish a network with the necessary resources (including senior clinical and administrative time and a training budget) to enable national leadership, coordination and expertise to develop services and workforce. This recommendation was accepted by Welsh Government, and it was agreed that there was a need to establish a clinician-led managed clinical network to support the development of perinatal mental health services in Wales<sup>ii</sup>. It is also important to note that the Inquiry identified that the former Perinatal Mental Health Community of Practice lacked formal authority and resource<sup>iii</sup>.

A move to disband the Perinatal Clinical Implementation Network puts at risk all the work that has been done over the last few years to create cohesion, multi-disciplinary working and the standardisation of specialist service tools. It also represents a marked departure from Welsh Government's exciting new ambition to become the world's first official "Marmot Nation"<sup>iv</sup>, central to which is giving every child the best start in life. The proposal also appears to contradict plans within Welsh Government's new Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy<sup>v</sup>, for parent-infant relationships support to build on the work of the Perinatal Clinical Implementation Network.

### **Ongoing Gaps in Perinatal Mental Health Provision**

As a result of the strong leadership and coordination provided by the National Clinical Lead for Perinatal Mental Health, and the wider Perinatal Clinical Implementation Network, there has been lots to celebrate over the last six years. This includes the creation of clear perinatal mental health pathways, the development of specialist perinatal mental health teams, the opening of Uned Gobaith (the MBU in South Wales), and many training opportunities to develop workforce skills across the pathway. The network has been the key driving force for these changes, critical in unifying services and promoting innovation at scale.

Despite progress, the work to develop perinatal mental health care is not complete, and significant challenges remain. None of the Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Teams are currently meeting Type One of the CCQI Standards for Perinatal Mental Health Services, which are the minimum standards needed to ensure patient safety, rights, dignity, the law and fundamentals of care. This is despite the commitment in the *Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan 2019-2022*<sup>vi</sup> for all services to achieve these standards by 2021. Four years on, this has still not been achieved. This leaves significant parts of the pathway vulnerable to under development and to services across different health boards reverting back to inequity and variable accessibility without a dedicated network driving equitable development at and all Wales level.

Furthermore, recommendations from the one-year review of Uned Gobaith<sup>vii</sup> (in 2022) have not been actioned, the MBU in Chester (Seren Lodge) with two ring fenced beds for women from Wales has not yet opened its doors, and there is a lack of dedicated perinatal mental health support for dads and partners. Work also needs to be undertaken around birth trauma, babies on the edge of care and admissions to adult inpatient wards. These gaps alongside the move towards open access, same day, seamless care in the new Mental Health Strategy<sup>viii</sup>, makes the Perinatal Clinical Implementation Network and the clinical

leadership role absolutely vital. Now is the time to build on support for vulnerable new parents struggling with their mental health, not take a significant step backwards.

### **Lack of Formal Consultation**

We are deeply concerned that no formal or informal mechanisms have been put in place to consult with the Perinatal Clinical Implementation Network or families with lived experience about this proposal. They have not had the opportunity to contribute feedback, share evidence, or express their concerns about the impact these proposed changes could have. This risks decisions being made in isolation from those they affect most.

### **Concerns raised by Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Teams in Wales**

In the absence of formal consultation, we have engaged with Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Teams across Wales, who have raised the following concerns about the proposal;

- Losing the supervisory role that the network provides through regular meetings, which enables the sharing of ideas and service development opportunities and helps promote staff well-being.
- A loss of the 'All Wales Approach', including the loss of standardisation of PMH pathways, service leaflets and interventions, without the network to monitor, review and update in response to new research and innovation
- Concerns about quality assurance and how teams will meet CCQI standards and get accredited, without the support and direction of the network
- A lack of equitable opportunities for new training for teams across Wales, and funding for new or ongoing training which have been resourced and organised by the Perinatal Clinical Implementation Network.
- The development of adequate and equitable services across Wales for co-parents/partners/dads experiencing mental health problems and trauma in the perinatal period.
- The impact on the development of new parent-infant relationship services and ensuring these are closely aligned to perinatal mental health services
- The impact on improving multiagency working
- The work that needs to be done to support women admitted to adult inpatient wards
- The unfeasibility of already overstretched perinatal services facilitating a COP/Peer Groups
- The lack of formal consultation with perinatal services and service users about the proposal

These concerns highlight the value of the Perinatal Clinical Implementation Network and clinical lead for perinatal mental health role, in supporting frontline teams and improving outcomes for families and babies across Wales. There is critical need for the network to drive the development of the next phase of the perinatal and parent-infant pathway, and without this there is a real risk that services will develop in silo, giving rise to inequity of access to support for families.

### **Views of parents with lived experience**

We have also worked with some parents with lived experience of perinatal mental health problems to understand concerns about the proposal to disband the network.

*“The proposal for the network and perinatal clinical lead role to disappear gives me great concern. With this decision, Wales risks losing vital perinatal focus and the strong connections among professionals in this field that the network has been facilitating. Wales will become the only UK nation without such clinical oversight, setting us back, and causing the good momentum that has been created to be halted”. - Mark Williams, International parental mental health campaigner.*

### **What needs to happen?**

We are calling on the Welsh Government and NHS Wales Performance and Improvement to:

- Retain the Perinatal Clinical Implementation Network and National Clinical Lead role
- Commit to resourcing the Network and Clinical Lead post, recognising the role it plays in tackling health inequalities for new and expectant parents and their babies
- Ensure a formal consultation is conducted with perinatal services across the pathway, parents and families for any proposed changes to the network
- Commit to building on the perinatal mental health progress already made; of which the infrastructure behind this has been, and will be, integral to achieving progress

### **Meeting and Next Steps**

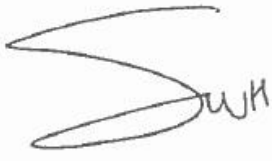
We urge the Committee to investigate this proposal as a key priority. We would like the Committee's support in recommending that NHS Wales Performance and Improvement reconsider the proposal to disband the Perinatal Clinical Implementation Network and National Clinical Lead role, particularly in light of previous Welsh Government commitments<sup>ix</sup>. We would also welcome a recommendation from the Committee for NHS Wales Performance and Improvement to establish a formal consultation for this proposal, giving perinatal services and service users an opportunity to share evidence about the importance of the Perinatal Clinical Implementation Network and National Clinical Lead role, which must be considered in the decision-making process.

We would be happy to meet with the Committee to discuss this in more detail, if that would be useful at this time.

We would be very grateful for the Committee's support in this matter.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Sarah Witcombe-Hayes  
Senior Policy Researcher, NSPCC Cymru



Izzabella James  
Policy & Public Affairs Manager, Home-Start Cymru  
Wales Coordinator for The Maternal Mental Health Alliance

This letter is endorsed by:

Action on Postpartum Psychosis (APP), Barnardo's Cymru, The Birth Trauma Association, Bliss, Early Years Action Group, Institute of Health Visiting, The Parent-Infant Foundation, Parent-Infant Network Cymru, RCM Wales, Samaritans Cymru, Sands, Save the Children/ Achub y Plant, and West Wales Action for Mental Health.







Royal College  
of Midwives



<sup>i</sup> See Children, Young People and Education Committee (2017) Perinatal Mental Health in Wales. National Assembly for Wales. Accessed via: [cr-ld11234-e.pdf](#)

<sup>ii</sup> See letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social to Lynne Neagle, MS as the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee. Available at: [gen-ld11290-e.pdf](#)

<sup>iii</sup> See Children, Young People and Education Committee (2017) Perinatal Mental Health in Wales. National Assembly for Wales. Available at: [cr-ld11234-e.pdf](#)

<sup>iv</sup> Welsh Government (2025) Wales to become world's first 'Marmot nation' to tackle health inequalities. Available at: [Wales to become world's first 'Marmot nation' to tackle health inequalities | GOV.WALES](#)

<sup>v</sup> Welsh Government (2025) The Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025–2035. Available at: [Mental health and wellbeing strategy 2025 to 2035](#)

<sup>vi</sup> Welsh Government (2020) Review of Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan 2019-2022 in response to Covid 19. Available at: [review-of-the-together-for-mental-health-delivery-plan-20192022-in-response-to-covid-19 0.pdf](#)

<sup>vii</sup> Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee (2023) A Review of Uned Gobaith Mother and Baby Unit at Tonna Hospital, Swansea Bay University Health Board Following 1 Year of Opening. (Public Version)

<sup>viii</sup> Welsh Government (2025) The Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025–2035. Available at: [Mental health and wellbeing strategy 2025 to 2035](#)

<sup>ix</sup> See letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social to Lynne Neagle, MS as the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee. Available at: [gen-ld11290-e.pdf](#)

# Agenda Item 7.4



Buffy Williams, MS  
Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee  
Welsh Parliament,  
Cardiff, CF99 1SN

Dr Nicola Canale and Dr Paddy Martin  
Parent Infant Network Cymru

Dr Liz Gregory  
The Parent-Infant Foundation  
Office 7, 35-37 Ludgate Hill  
London, EC4M 7JN

1<sup>st</sup> July 2025

Dear Buffy Williams, MS,

## **Re: Serious concern regarding Perinatal Services in Wales**

Parent Infant Network Cymru is a network of professionals who either work in Specialist Parent Infant Relationship Services, or who have an interest in developing Parent Infant Relationship services across Wales. We collaborate closely with the Perinatal Network's Clinical Lead as there is much common ground. Parents with mental health issues are at a heightened risk of facing difficulties in their relationship with their babies, with significant implications both for perinatal mental health, and for babies' development

We aspire to similar goals too. These include national clinical leadership for Parent-Infant Relationships, equitable provision of specialist support for Parent-Infant relationships, and the development of professional standards across specialist Parent-Infant Relationship teams. These aspirations are outlined in the Golden Thread report<sup>1</sup>, jointly written by the Parent-Infant Foundation, the NSPCC and the Perinatal Clinical Lead.

Along with colleagues across the maternity and the early years sector, we are deeply concerned by the recent proposal by NHS Wales Performance and Improvement to disband the Perinatal Clinical Implementation Network and National Clinical Lead role and replace it with a Community of Practice/Peer Group. In addition to the issues comprehensively outlined in the letter written by the NSPCC, Home Start Cymru and the Maternal Mental Health Alliance (which PINC fully endorses), we have additional concerns about the Parent Infant Relationship element of Perinatal Services. We are concerned that this could put at the risk both recent achievements and future progress, given how early we are in the important journey to reach and support more vulnerable babies. We note that:

- The provision of specialist therapeutic support for parent-infant relationships to parents and their babies who are referred to Perinatal Mental Health Services is currently inequitable across Wales. The loss of National Leadership presents a risk, both to

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<sup>1</sup> The golden thread A Case for Developing Specialist Parent-Infant Services in Wales. Available at: [The-Golden-Thread-Report-DIGITAL.pdf](#)

current provision, and future developments to ensure equity in this important aspect of specialist intervention for vulnerable babies and their families.

- The Perinatal Clinical Lead has been an important advocate regarding the development of Specialist Parent Infant Relationship services at a national level, linking Parent Infant Network Cymru with key networks and developments across the sector. The loss of representation through this role will pose a significant risk to the development of Parent Infant Relationship Services, as there is currently no formal mechanism for PINC to remain connected to and influence the wider system.
- The achievements in Perinatal Mental Health under the leadership of the Clinical Lead have provided an aspirational model in both the development of specialist services alongside a wider focus on a whole system approach, including pathways and training. Without national leadership there is a significant risk this will not be maintained – particularly as regional services find themselves under increasing pressure to focus on acute demand.
- This year has seen the publication of the All Age Mental Health and Well-being Strategy<sup>2</sup> which aims to create a whole system approach; and place emphasis on the importance of the First 1000 days. In addition Wales has recently declared ambitious plans to be the first “Marmot” Nation<sup>3</sup>. These recent developments require a dedicated focus across all sectors on giving every baby the best start in life. The loss of the National Clinical Lead role, alongside the Perinatal Clinical Implementation Network represents a significant step backwards in achieving these stated aims.

Parent Infant Network Cymru are therefore calling on Welsh Government and NHS Wales Improvement and Performance to retain the National Clinical Lead role and the Perinatal Clinical Implementation Network; recognising their importance in supporting the wider maternity and early years system alongside their key role in developing, maintaining and improving Perinatal Mental Health Services.

Yours Sincerely,

*Nicola Canale*

**Dr Nicola Canale and Dr Paddy Martin**

Joint Chairs On behalf of Parent Infant Network Cymru

*E Gregory*

**Dr Liz Gregory**

Wales Development Lead, The Parent-Infant Foundation

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<sup>2</sup> Welsh Government (2025) The Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025–2035. Available at: [Mental health and wellbeing strategy 2025 to 2035 | GOV.WALES](#)

<sup>3</sup> Welsh Government (2025) Wales to become world’s first ‘Marmot nation’ to tackle health inequalities. Available at [Wales to become world’s first ‘Marmot nation’ to tackle health inequalities | GOV.WALES](#)

# Agenda Item 7.5

**Y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb  
a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol**

**Equality and Social Justice  
Committee**

**Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl  
Ifanc ac Addysg**

**Children, Young People  
and Education Committee**

**Senedd Cymru**

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Jane Hutt MS CBE

Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip

4 July 2025

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

## Taser 10 Briefing from Children's Legal Centre

We wish to draw to your attention the [Children's Legal Centre Wales briefing](#) regarding the use of Tasers on children. In particular how children's rights in Wales could be impacted by the potential authorisation of Taser 10 for use by police forces in Wales and England. Following consideration by our committees on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of June we agreed to write to you jointly for more information. Rather than duplicate the briefing by repeating its contents here, we would urge you to read the briefing if you have not already done so.

Our current concern is based on the Welsh data about Taser use on children aged 11-17 across the 4 Welsh police forces in the year ending 2024. We have not taken evidence or conducted a detailed inquiry into this topic but we recognise this issue would benefit from greater parliamentary scrutiny at some stage. Nevertheless, we are sufficiently alarmed at the impact on children's rights, including the potential psychological and physical harm to children that these weapons can inflict, that we felt it necessary to signal our concerns immediately.

Fundamentally, we question how sanctioning the use of Taser 10 on children is consistent with the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 and the trauma-informed approach of the Youth Justice Blueprint. Furthermore, the data on disproportional and discriminatory use of Tasers on people from ethnic minorities undermines the ambition to secure an Anti-racist Wales.



In light of these concerns and given the intersection between devolved and reserved policy, we would like to ask the following questions:

1. What is the Welsh Government's position on the use of Tasers on children by police forces in Wales? What representations has the Welsh Government made to UK Ministers and police forces in Wales on their use on children?
2. What involvement has the Welsh Government had in formulating UK Government policy on the use of Tasers on children? How has the Welsh Government ensured that the rights of children and the devolved context are taken into account by the UK Government?
3. How will the Welsh Government ensure that the impact on children is properly assessed by the UK Government?
4. Will the Welsh Government or UK Government conduct and publish a Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) on the policy and commit to doing so for all future changes to police enforcement technology that relate to children in Wales.
5. How will the Welsh Government work with colleagues in the UK Government to improve data transparency and reporting around the use of Tasers and other police enforcement technologies particularly the need for disaggregated data for Wales?

We would be grateful for a response by 21/07/25 and look forward to receiving it. A copy of this letter and your response will also be shared with the Children's Legal Centre Wales.

Yours sincerely,



Jenny Rathbone MS

Buffy Williams MS

Chair of the Equality and Social Justice  
Committee, Senedd Cymru

Chair of the Children, Young People and  
Education Committee, Senedd Cymru

CC:

Jo Stevens MP, Secretary of State for Wales

Senedd Committees

Via e-mail

8 July 2025

**Consultation: Reviewing Committee Effectiveness in the Sixth Senedd**

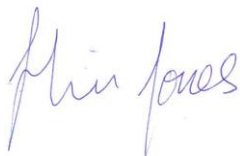
Dear Chair,

You will be aware that the Chairs' Forum is currently considering how committees have operated during the Sixth Senedd. The aim of this work is to identify whether committee procedures and practices can be improved to ensure the scrutiny function is as effective as possible, and to use this information to inform the Seventh Senedd. The Forum is keen to consider wider cultural issues around the operation of Senedd committees, as well as practical matters such as size and function.

The Future Senedd Committee has also made a [number of recommendations](#) to the Forum about the committee system and considerations for the Seventh Senedd, and these have been factored into our work on this matter.

The Forum has launched a [consultation](#), and we would be grateful for the views of individual Committees on the questions in the [consultation document](#), and any reflections that you may consider relevant by **12 September 2025**.

Yours sincerely,



Elin Jones MS/AS

Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg / We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English





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Professor Wendy Lerner  
Vice Chancellor and President

Patrick Younge  
Chair of Council,

Cardiff University

08 July 2025

### **Follow up following evidence session**

Dear Wendy and Patrick,

Thank you for coming and giving evidence to the Committee on 12 June, and for the additional information that you have subsequently provided. We also noted the letter from Patrick at our meeting on 25 June.

We have some additional questions, now that the University Council has agreed the proposals for change.

- In light of the changes to the proposals, can you provide more information on the financial challenge and the targets or Key Performance Indicators you have set for the University's financial performance for each year to 2029-30. While you provided three examples during our session, we would also appreciate some specific information on the targets you have set for generating savings and any gaps as a result of the changes to the plans
- What is the timeline for realising these savings?
- During the session, you also indicated that there is scope for further savings, can you provide more detail on where you envisage these savings coming from?
- What plans do you have to increase income generation, and how do these factor into the long term plans for the institution?
- During the session you indicated "the majority of that stress-related data refers to personal stress, not workplace stress". The UCU told us this was " ... just not true ..." The external audit of Occupational Health and Safety, ISO45003 said that the data shows that work related stress and work related depression have remained "consistent" across 2024 and 2025. We also note that this

audit said "The vast majority of CU clients contact Vivup whilst still in work. The level is higher than the Vivup average seen across all its clients". In light of these findings, would you wish to clarify your evidence to us and provide evidence that supports it?

We would be grateful if you could respond by 8 September.

Yours sincerely,



Buffy Williams MS

Chair

Children, Young People and Education Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



Nick Hillman OBE,  
Director,  
Higher Education Policy Institute

08 July 2025

### **Issues facing the Higher Education sector in Wales**

Dear Nick,

We have been looking at the issues facing the higher education sector in Wales. While this started as a planned single session looking at proposed cuts at Cardiff University, it has broadened out in scope. As part of this work, we have heard from Medr, Cardiff University, UCU, Unison and NUS Cymru. We have also written and received responses from all the Welsh higher education institutions. More information about this inquiry is available on our website:

<https://business.senedd.wales/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Id=45325>

We have also been following with a keen interest the work our counterpart committees in other legislatures have been doing on the higher education sector. While some issues are specific to the Welsh context, many of the challenges are also faced by the sector across the UK.

The challenges we have heard directly about include:

- Tuition fees not keeping pace with the costs of delivering courses;
- Significant reductions in international student enrolments;
- The impact of 'higher-tariff' universities turning to the home market to address financial challenges
- Participation issues in Wales

- HE funding model;
- Impact of competition law in creating barriers for collaboration;
- Inflationary cost pressures, particularly around energy costs;
- Increases in national insurance and pension contributions; and
- Research funding not meeting the full costs of research.

We are keen to hear about the possible solutions to the issues currently faced by universities, in Wales specifically, in particular from an impartial perspective. As a think tank specialising in higher education, would you be in a position to respond in writing with your thoughts on the solutions to the issues currently facing the sector?

If you need any more information about the Committee's work in this space, please do not hesitate to contact our Clerk, Naomi Stocks [naomi.stocks@senedd.wales](mailto:naomi.stocks@senedd.wales)

We would be grateful if you could respond by 2 September.

Yours sincerely,



Buffy Williams MS  
Chair  
Children, Young People and Education Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

## Background

With major childcare expansion underway in England, there has been mounting pressure on the Welsh Government to improve the support available to families on this side of the border. We asked parents and carers of children under five about their experience of using childcare, the impact this has on their families and what would help them.

The headline findings presented in this briefing are based on an online survey of **780 parents and carers of children under five years old**.<sup>1</sup> The survey was conducted by [Arad](#) on behalf of [Women's Equality Network \(WEN\) Wales](#) and ran from mid-March to mid-May 2025.

## Key findings

### 1. Lack of childcare causes stress at home by negatively affecting parents and home life

- **84%** of respondents said their childcare arrangements have a somewhat or very **positive impact on their child**
- But almost **3 in 10 (28%)** of parents or carers said their **childcare** arrangements have a somewhat or very **negative impact on themselves**
- **41%** said their childcare arrangements have a somewhat or very **negative impact on their home life**.

### 2. Adjustments and sacrifices to manage childcare make a dent in family finances that is felt by adults and children

- **60%** of respondents had to **reduce their work hours**
- **42%** had to **reduce spending on essentials** like food, rent or heating
- **35%** had to **reduce spending** on non-essentials for their children, like **clothing, toys or activities**.

<sup>1</sup>In total, 883 parents and carers responded to the survey. Of these, 103 did not have children aged 0–4. They were given the opportunity to share comments on childcare before exiting the survey.

### 3. Lack of childcare is hindering parents' work and education

- **89%** of respondents who **do not use any formal childcare (119 responses)** are **unable to work or study** as much as they would like
- Among those respondents who are using formal childcare, the figure of those **unable to work or study** as much as they would like is still as high as **60% (345 responses)**
- Figures are **worse for families with below average income**, with **two-thirds** of respondents unable to work or study as much as they would like (66%), compared to **a little over half (55%)** for families with **above average income**.

### 4. Childcare costs are hindering work and education, but so are issues with transport and inflexible hours

- **Cost of childcare is the main reason** preventing work or study (**83%**), followed by issues with **drop-offs, pick-ups or transport between settings (35%)** and childcare **not being available at the times needed (32%)**
- Among parents and carers of **three- to four-year-olds**, **almost half (45%)** said **difficulties with drop-offs, pick-ups or transport between settings** are a reason why they cannot work or study as much as they would like
- When asked what would enable them to work or study as much as they wanted, the vast majority said **more affordable childcare (83%)**, with **almost half (46%)** responding **more flexible childcare**, such as irregular hours or part-time care.

### 5. Families struggle to find clear information on childcare

- Nearly **70%** of all respondents struggle to find **information on financial support** for childcare (**69%**)
- **Almost half (45%)** struggle to find **information on childcare options** in their area.

### 6. The childcare needs of families who are already using childcare are not met

- **72%** of respondents (478 responses) would use more childcare if it was **affordable and available**
- This figure rose to **81%** among respondents with **children under the age of two** (179 responses).

## These initial findings point to the following key areas for action and policy development for the Welsh Government:

- Reduce the costs of childcare for families – especially for children under three years
- Improve information on financial support with childcare costs and on local childcare options
- Simplify the delivery and application process so that families can take up the support they are entitled to
- Work with the childcare sector on offering more flexible hours and improving cost transparency.

Further analysis will take place over the next months, with a final report and detailed recommendations being published in the autumn.

For an initial discussion of these findings, please contact [jessica@wenwales.org.uk](mailto:jessica@wenwales.org.uk).

## About Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales

Our vision is of a Wales free from gender discrimination where all have equal authority and opportunity to shape society and their own lives. We work with our vibrant coalition of organisational and individual members to transform society. Our work sits under three pillars: we will connect, campaign and champion women so our vision is realised.

This research is funded by the [abrdn Financial Fairness Trust](#).