

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Ymchwiliad i Addysg a Dysgu Proffesiynol Athrawon | Inquiry into Teachers' Professional Learning and Education

TT 16

Ymateb gan : Grŵp Prif Swyddogion Ieuenctid Cymru :

Response from : Wales Principal Youth Officers' Group

The *Wales Principal Youth Officers Group* (PYOG) is the representative group of officers nominated by each local authority as the professional and strategic head of the youth service. The Group has an established role in advising on the strategic development and delivery of youth services and other associated initiatives on behalf of the *Association of Directors of Education in Wales* (ADEW) and are a sub-group of the ADEW structure. The PYOG also has a strategic connection with the *Welsh Local Government Association* (WLGA).

The PYOG welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation Teachers' Professional Learning and Education.

1. Arrangements for continuing professional development for the current workforce

Education in Wales is undergoing a dramatic, once-in-a-generation overhaul of its content and structures, in order to ensure that the curriculum which learners access is both engaging and relevant in a world which is increasingly dynamic and challenging. The changes taking place take full account of such needs and demands as reflected in the Welsh context but also from international practice and research, a great deal of which describes the pre-requisite for excellent quality teaching and learning as essential for any strong performing education system.

These ongoing developments include the introduction of a new professional body, the Education Workforce Council (EWC), which came into being on April 1st, 2016. The principle aims of the EWC are to:

- contribute to improving the standards of teaching and the quality of learning in Wales;
- maintain and improve standards of professional conduct amongst teachers and persons who support teaching and learning in Wales;
- safeguard the interests of learners, parents and the public and maintain public trust and confidence in the education workforce

The remit of the new regulator for educational professionals has been broadened from that of its predecessor body, the General Teaching Council for Wales, to include other parts of the sector delivering education in Wales – Further Education,

Work Based Learning and Youth Work. The PYOG sees this as a very positive development and, in relation to CPD, potentially an ideal platform for these complementary professions to learn from and about each other's practices, values and principles in delivering learning opportunities in different settings and environments but often working with the same children and young people. For example, whilst observing some excellent collaborative work between youth work and schools and/or Further Educational establishments, the *National Youth Agency's Commission into the role of youth work in formal education* (Oct, 2013, P. 29), included in its recommendations that:

- *There is a pressing need for much stronger collaboration between the teaching and youth work professions;*
- *Schools and Colleges need to develop their understanding of how youth work can complement formal education and that*
- *The youth work profession needs to articulate and promote the unique contribution of youth work more effectively.*

The Welsh Government's online education resource, Hwb, can also play an important part in this process via the sharing of resources, skills and discussion. Indeed, the PYOG is currently working with Welsh Government piloting a youth work presence on Hwb, which may lead to a Youth Work Zone at a later date.

2. The role of initial teacher training

As mentioned, one of the main reasons for changes to the curriculum in Wales is the recognition that traditional methods are no longer preparing our young people for modern life and work environments. *Successful Futures*, the report completed by Professor Graham Donaldson for Welsh Government which forms the foundation for the ongoing changes, makes 68 recommendations to WG for consideration, all of which have been accepted. Whilst some of these are more specific to formal education environments e.g. those related to curriculum structure and assessment, many have youth work values implicit in their content and intent e.g. the breadth of the curriculum, achievement outcomes and pedagogy. Others, whilst not referring to youth work directly, have intrinsic youth work methods and principles built into their proposals e.g. recommendation 34 *children and young people should have opportunities to learn from expertise and experience from outside school* and recommendation 3, *that children and young people develop as:*

- *Ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives*
- *Enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work*
- *Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world*
- *Healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society*

If aspiring to develop young people in these ways, we must also aspire to developing teachers and educators to deliver opportunities which can provide these attributes. This means a cultural shift in the way teaching and learning is carried out, including a joint work force (and communities) effort – rather than focussing disproportionately on ensuring as many young people pass exams as possible, the focus also needs to include passing on the ability to thrive as individuals via the development of relevant life skills, as positive contributors to

communities and with a broad range of transferable vocational and academic as well as 'soft' skills (the application of knowledge gained).

The PYOG would urge Welsh Government and the EWC to enter into dialogue across the sectors mentioned and **take into account not only the needs of the teaching profession in this process but also those training to be college lecturers, work based learning professionals and youth workers.** Likewise, this principle ought to apply when considering developments in these other parts of the workforce. It seems prudent in this context to provide opportunities for teachers, lecturers, youth workers etc. to be exposed to (and therefore learn from) other parts of the education workforce. Each of these parts of the workforce offer specialisms and specialists in different disciplines, each being as valuable (to the progress of the country as well as the development of individuals) as the others. It is important to retain these specialisms whilst looking to improve the quality of education delivery in Wales.

3. The sufficiency of the future workforce

The PYOG would contend that, should the above suggestions/proposals (around CPD and initial training) be carried out successfully, this would be one mechanism for ensuring sustainability and sufficiency for the workforce as a whole. By offering a blended delivery of education that *Curriculum for Life* suggests, not only would children and young people receive a more holistic/rounded education, but the work-force will become more enriched via greater and broader learning experiences themselves. It will also enable the workforce to have a better understanding of other methods of delivery. This in itself is a learning experience for children – observing educators learning too.

4. The readiness of the workforce to implement the new curriculum

Again, the PYOG would assert that it is crucially important that **all parts of the education workforce are involved in developing and implementing the new curriculum at every step.** It is going to require a huge effort from all involved, resulting in a cultural shift in the way teaching and learning is delivered and experienced. There are promising building blocks in place e.g. the EWC and the WG's Curriculum Review Stakeholder's Group. How these are harnessed and developed is crucial. Whilst recognising that schools deliver education to the vast majority of children and young people in Wales, there are a number of other settings which need to be fully involved in this evolution. Some of these settings engage with children and young people at different stages in their education, some (like the Youth Service which is open to all young people aged 11-25 years, all year round – often at times when others aren't) engage with the same children and young people but at different times of the day/year e.g. school holidays and/or out of school time. Whilst teachers need to be ready and prepared, the work-force in these settings need to also be fully consulted and at the same point of awareness and preparedness in the journey.