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Chair's foreword

Before entering the Senedd, I spent a long time working in schools. I know that working in education can be fun, stimulating and challenging.

Teachers change lives, every day. The impact a teacher, and other education staff, can have lasts long after a child has left the classroom. One of the real highlights of this inquiry was hearing about this aspect of teaching, why people got into teaching, and why they stayed. But alongside this, we also heard of the growing pressures that are making it harder for teachers to do the job they love.

This report reflects what we heard clearly: recruitment and retention challenges are placing strain on schools. Secondary schools face persistent shortages, and too many schools are struggling to attract applicants. Workload remains one of the biggest factor driving teachers away. This is made worse by growing behavioural challenges, reform fatigue, and expectations on schools to shoulder responsibilities that sit far beyond teaching and learning.

Despite these pressures, what stood out during our inquiry was the extraordinary commitment of the workforce. Teachers and leaders continue to go above and beyond for their learners. We need to match this dedication with a supportive system that enables teachers to do what they do best: teach.

There are no easy answers to some of the issues faced. But there is an opportunity with the development of the Welsh Government's Strategic Education Workforce Plan, to start to change things. We hope that our report, conclusions and recommendations are helpful in the development of this Plan.

Getting this right matters because every child in Wales deserves the best possible education, delivered by professionals who feel valued, supported, and able to thrive. I hope that our report plays a small role in helping us get to that position.

Buffy Williams MS

Chair

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. The Welsh Government provides more information on the effectiveness of the previously run Teach First and Graduate Teaching programmes in Wales, including how effective they were in supporting a broader range of people into the teaching profession, and why it was decided to discontinue support for the programmes..... Page 69

Recommendation 2. As part of its Strategic Education Workforce Plan, the Welsh Government either undertake or commission work looking at whether the costs to a student of ITE acts as a barrier to entry and successful completion; whether these barriers are higher for particular groups of potential students; and what options there may be to remove these financial barriers. This work should be done within the context of the current financial climate to ensure any recommendations for change are feasible and affordable and will improve recruitment and retention..... Page 69

Recommendation 3. The Welsh Government in responding to this report provides a timeline for the work examining the 50 per cent degree relevance requirement for joining ITE..... Page 70

Recommendation 4. The Welsh Government should identify the factors which stop teachers with Welsh language skills from using them professionally. Once these factors have been identified, the Welsh Government should review the current support provided to these teachers to ensure it is meeting their needs and is directed in the most effective ways..... Page 71

Recommendation 5. The Welsh Government should ensure that all promotional work about teaching in Wales makes it clear that people who have done teacher training in England do not face barriers to moving to Wales to teach.Page 72

Recommendation 6. The Welsh Government, as part of their Strategic Education Workforce Plan should include work on the current use of sabbaticals in Welsh schools, and how schools and school staff can be supported to take up sabbatical opportunities..... Page 110

Recommendation 7. The Welsh Government should outline how it supports schools and local authorities to identify good practice and then how it supports dissemination of this good practice across the Welsh education sector.Page 111

Recommendation 8. The Welsh Government should outline the impacts of the Strategic Workload Co-ordination Group on workload reduction and in which areas of school operations these benefits have been realised and what the impacts have been on the workforce. Page 111

Recommendation 9. The Welsh Government should make reducing workloads for classroom teachers a key priority in the Strategic Education Workforce Plan. The Workforce Plan should have clear and measurable actions that seek to reduce workloads in a meaningful and noticeable way for teachers as quickly as possible. It should also include ways in which workload can be measured. As part of this, the Welsh Government should ensure it engages directly with teachers. It should also look at best practice from the other countries, both within the UK and internationally and seek to apply any of this practice which would work within the Welsh context. Page 111

Recommendation 10. The Welsh Government should set an expectation to schools and local authorities that activities that do not need to be done at school, such as planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) can be done off-site. In setting this expectation the Welsh Government should make it clear that timetabling should be done in such a way that would support off site working for PPA. As a minimum, where teachers do have to remain on site, PPA time must be protected so they cannot be disturbed and drawn into other school matters. Page 112

Recommendation 11. The Welsh Government issues clear, coherent and universal guidance on behaviour management that is explicit and open to as little misinterpretation as possible for all different types of school settings in Wales, as a matter of urgency. This guidance should ensure that a consistent approach is being taken across Wales to behaviour, and in particular serious behavioural breaches. Page 113

Recommendation 12. The Welsh Government should ensure that schools and local authorities are providing sufficient shadowing and mentoring opportunities for classroom teachers to better understand whether they wish to move into school leadership roles. Page 127

Recommendation 13. The Welsh Government should outline how it will evaluate the changes to the NPQH. Any such evaluation should ensure it looks at whether the course supports learners to develop the skills and knowledge to be an effective headteacher; and whether the course provides good value..... Page 127

Recommendation 14. The Welsh Government commissions research to identify the factors that are causing the gender disparity in school leadership roles and then draw up an action plan to address any factors within the Welsh Government’s responsibilities.....Page 128

Recommendation 15. The Welsh Government ensures that the Strategic Education Workforce Plan has actions which will ensure the teaching profession more closely reflects the Welsh population, and the communities schools serve.Page 136

Recommendation 16. The Welsh Government should establish a national body to set pay, terms and conditions for support staff.....Page 152

EMBARGOED REPORT
UNTILL 00:01
29/01/2026

1. Introduction

The issue of teacher recruitment and retention has been on our radar for a while. It has come up in a lot of our work so decided to look at in more detail. We took written, and oral evidence, as well as engaging directly with teachers, school leaders and ex-teachers.

- 1.** In 2024, we decided to look at teacher recruitment and retention in more detail. This was an issue that kept being raised in our other scrutiny.
- 2.** Concerns were also raised by the scientific bodies such as the Institute of Physics, and the Royal Societies of Chemistry, and Biology. We heard some shocking statistics about the numbers of students qualifying to become science teachers. For example in 2022/23, Education Workforce Council (“EWC”) data indicated that only three students qualified as physics teachers with a further person deferring, compared with a target of 58.¹
- 3.** In Estyn’s 2023/24 annual report, the Chief Inspector said that recruitment, particularly in some areas such as science, maths and Welsh language had been “a significant challenge, impacting the quality of education”. This was a particular issue in secondary schools. He said that the “failure to attract new entrants” into teaching was affecting the “quality of teaching and learning”².
- 4.** Ahead of detailed scoping work, we wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Education (“the Cabinet Secretary”) outlining our concerns and seeking more information on a number of key issues.³ The Cabinet Secretary responded in September 2024 with information that was helpful in shaping our thinking about the focus of this work.⁴
- 5.** We then embarked on scrutiny of the then Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill. The successful implementation of this now Act is absolutely dependent on having the education workforce to deliver it. We outlined this in

¹ EWC, Initial Teaching Education student results, 2022-23, table 5.

² Estyn, Annual Report 2023-2024, Foreword

³ Letter from CYPE Chair to Cabinet Secretary for Education, Teacher recruitment and retention, 24 June 2024

⁴ Letter from Cabinet Secretary for Education to CYPE Chair, 6 September 2024

our report on the Bill's general principles. We committed to look at these issues in the broader context as part of a stand-alone inquiry.⁵

6. During our consideration of the Bill, many stakeholders made the case for a statutory workforce plan with targets. We felt that recruitment and retention issues went far wider than ensuring sufficient numbers of teachers who could either teach in Welsh or could teach Welsh. We recommended that the Welsh Government identify the “most appropriate legislative mechanism to place a duty on the Welsh Ministers to prepare a statutory education workforce plan which includes targets, and a timeframe, for recruitment and retention”. We called for this plan to include “all aspects of the education workforce”, as well as having a focus on shortage areas and future need.⁶

7. The Welsh Government accepted this recommendation in principle, stating that the Cabinet Secretary was intending to “develop a strategic education workforce plan for the whole education sector to improve recruitment and retention, wellbeing and high quality teaching and learning”. However, because it needed to be flexible and future-proofed, the workforce plan would be non-statutory.⁷

8. At the same time, the Cabinet Secretary issued a written statement announcing the development of a Strategic Education Workforce Plan (“the Workforce Plan”) for schools and early year settings initially. This would take account of issues such as workload, cost of living crisis, changing needs of learners and “changes in society’s expectations of what schools should do”, all of which affect the attractiveness of teaching.⁸

9. Following this announcement, we asked for further information from the Cabinet Secretary on the development of the Workforce Plan.⁹ The Cabinet Secretary said work was ongoing, with the intention of publishing the Workforce Plan in 2026.¹⁰

⁵ [CYPE Committee, Welsh Language and Education \(Wales\) Bill: Stage 1 report, Chapter 3, Workforce and capacity issues, 13 December 2024](#)

⁶ [CYPE Committee, Welsh Language and Education \(Wales\) Bill: Stage 1 report, Chapter 3, Workforce and capacity issues, 13 December 2024](#)

⁷ [Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language, Welsh Language and Education \(Wales\) Bill, 13 January 2025](#)

⁸ [Welsh Government, Cabinet Secretary for Education, Written Statement: Strategic education workforce plan, 13 January 2025](#)

⁹ [Letter from CYPE Chair to Cabinet Secretary for Education, Strategic Education Workforce Plan, 18 February 2025](#)

¹⁰ [Letter from Cabinet Secretary for Education to CYPE Chair, 12 March 2025](#)

Our approach

10. On 5 March 2025, we considered our scope and approach to this inquiry. We agreed the following terms of reference.

Terms of reference

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).

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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.

11. We launched a written consultation on 18 March 2025, which closed on 6 June 2025. We received 31 responses. More details are available in Annex 2.

12. Our Citizen Engagement team held a number of focus groups, one-to-one interviews with teachers, ex-teachers who had recently left the profession and

Qualified Teacher (“NQT”), who must register with the EWC if they wish to work in a maintained school in Wales.

19. We heard from a range of stakeholders that recruitment issues are not unique to Wales, with other parts of the UK and the world facing challenges.¹² The EWC highlighted a recent UNESCO report which said that by 2030 an extra 40 million primary and secondary teachers would be needed across the world to meet demands.¹³ The Cabinet Secretary said that these issues were part of recent conversations at the Atlantic Rim Collaboration.¹⁴

20. Cardiff Metropolitan University highlighted that the severity of the situation in England is reflected in “the new UK Labour Government that took power in July 2024” making “recruitment of additional secondary teachers one of its five defining missions”¹⁵.

21. While there are challenges across the globe, the position is actually quite nuanced in Wales. As the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language told us during scrutiny of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill¹⁶, total pupil numbers are projected to fall in future years¹⁷ due to lower birth rates¹⁸. However, this will take some time before it significantly impacts secondary school numbers. There are also specific shortages in particular subjects and in particular sectors, not to mention regional and other demographic factors.

22. We heard that there were some Wales-specific factors including:

- The need to have a bilingual workforce¹⁹;
- Less generous bursaries than in England²⁰;

¹² Written evidence, [TRR 28, Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership, University of Wales, Trinity St David](#)

¹³ Written evidence, [TRR 23 EWC](#)

¹⁴ [CYPE Committee, 17 September 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 10](#)

¹⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 04, Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 3.1](#)

¹⁶ [CYPE Committee, 24 October 2024, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 46](#)

¹⁷ Welsh Government (StatsWales), [Pupil projections](#)

¹⁸ Welsh Government (StatsWales), [Antenatal records, live births and still births by health board providing the service](#)

¹⁹ Written evidence, [TRR 06, Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru \(UCAC\)](#)

²⁰ Written evidence, [TRR 17, Universities and Schools Council for the Education of Teachers \(USCET\)](#); Written evidence, [TRR 18, Royal Society of Chemistry, paragraph 6](#); Written evidence, [TRR 25, Institute of Physics, CYPE Committee, 18 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 177](#) (Royal Society of Biology); [CYPE Committee, 18 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 286](#) (Association of Language Learning); [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 255](#) (Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol)

Factor	Highlighted by:
Lack of flexible working	ASCL Cymru ³⁸ Yr Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership, University of Wales, Trinity St David ³⁹ Catholic Education Service ⁴⁰ Cardiff Metropolitan University ⁴¹ Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol ⁴² Estyn ⁴³ Institute of Physics ⁴⁴ NASUWT ⁴⁵ NEU ⁴⁶ School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University ⁴⁷ Swansea University Schools Partnership ⁴⁸ Teachers we spoke to during our engagement activity ⁴⁹ UCAC ⁵⁰ WLGA & ADEW ⁵¹
Negative perception of teaching	ASCL Cymru ⁵² Yr Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership, University of Wales, Trinity St David ⁵³ Catholic Education Service ⁵⁴ Cardiff Metropolitan University ⁵⁵

³⁸ Written evidence, [TRR 16 Association of School and College Leaders \(ASCL\) Cymru](#)

³⁹ Written evidence, [TRR 28. Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership, University of Wales, Trinity St David](#)

⁴⁰ Written evidence, [TRR 09, Catholic Education Service](#)

⁴¹ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 3.11](#)

⁴² Written evidence, [TRR 12 Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol](#)

⁴³ Written evidence, [TRR 24 Estyn](#)

⁴⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 25 Institute of Physics](#)

⁴⁵ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 239](#)

⁴⁶ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 272](#)

⁴⁷ Written evidence, [TRR 27, School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University](#)

⁴⁸ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 11](#)

⁴⁹ [Citizen Engagement Team, Teacher Recruitment and Retention, Engagement Findings, paragraph 38, September 2025](#)

⁵⁰ Written evidence, [TRR 06 Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru \(UCAC\)](#)

⁵¹ Written evidence, [TRR 22 Welsh Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Education in Wales](#)

⁵² Written evidence, [TRR 16 Association of School and College Leaders \(ASCL\) Cymru](#)

⁵³ Written evidence, [TRR 28. Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership, University of Wales, Trinity St David](#)

⁵⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 09, Catholic Education Service](#)

⁵⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 3.8](#)

Factor	Highlighted by:
	<p>EWC⁵⁶</p> <p>Estyn⁵⁷</p> <p>Royal Society of Chemistry⁵⁸</p> <p>School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University⁵⁹</p> <p>Swansea University Schools Partnership⁶⁰</p> <p>UCAC⁶¹</p> <p>Universities and Schools Council for the Education of Teachers (USCET)⁶²</p> <p>WLGA & ADEW⁶³</p>
<p>Worsening pupil behaviour</p>	<p>ASCL Cymru⁶⁴</p> <p>Cardiff Metropolitan University⁶⁵</p> <p>Estyn⁶⁶</p> <p>Institute of Physics⁶⁷</p> <p>National Foundation for Educational Research⁶⁸</p> <p>School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University⁶⁹</p> <p>Teachers we spoke to during our engagement activity⁷⁰</p> <p>UCAC⁷¹</p> <p>WLGA & ADEW⁷²</p>
<p>Declining parental and societal support and attitudes</p>	<p>ASCL Cymru⁷³</p>

⁵⁶ CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025. Record of Proceedings paragraph 56

⁵⁷ Written evidence, TRR 24 Estyn

⁵⁸ CYPE Committee, 18 June 2025. Record of Proceedings paragraph 165

⁵⁹ Written evidence, TRR 27. School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University

⁶⁰ Written evidence, TRR 21 Swansea University Schools Partnership (SUSP)

⁶¹ CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025. Record of Proceedings paragraph 243

⁶² Written evidence, TRR 17 Universities and Schools Council for the Education of Teachers (USCET)

⁶³ Written evidence, TRR 22 Welsh Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Education in Wales

⁶⁴ Written evidence, TRR 16 Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) Cymru

⁶⁵ Written evidence, TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 3.8

⁶⁶ Written evidence, TRR 24 Estyn

⁶⁷ Written evidence, TRR 25 Institute of Physics

⁶⁸ CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025. Record of Proceedings paragraph 134

⁶⁹ Written evidence, TRR 27. School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University

⁷⁰ Citizen Engagement Team. Teacher Recruitment and Retention. Engagement Findings, paragraphs 66-67. September 2025

⁷¹ Written evidence, TRR 06 Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru (UCAC)

⁷² Written evidence, TRR 22 Welsh Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Education in Wales

⁷³ Written evidence, TRR 16 Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) Cymru

Factor	Highlighted by:
	UCAC ⁷⁴
Uncompetitive pay particularly for shortage subjects	ASCL Cymru ⁷⁵ Institute of Physics ⁷⁶ NEU Cymru ⁷⁷ Royal Society of Chemistry ⁷⁸ UCAC ⁷⁹ Universities and Schools Council for the Education of Teachers (USCET) ⁸⁰
A competitive job market for graduates in certain sectors	Cardiff Metropolitan University ⁸¹ Education Policy Institute ⁸² Estyn ⁸³ Institute of Physics ⁸⁴ NAHT Cymru ⁸⁵ NASUWT ⁸⁶ National Foundation for Educational Research ⁸⁷ Teachers we spoke to during our engagement activity ⁸⁸ The Open University in Wales ⁸⁹ WLGA & ADEW ⁹⁰
Declining numbers of students taking relevant	Association of Language Learning ⁹¹ Cardiff Metropolitan University ⁹²

⁷⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 06 Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru \(UCAC\)](#)

⁷⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 16 Association of School and College Leaders \(ASCL\) Cymru](#)

⁷⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 25 Institute of Physics](#)

⁷⁷ Written evidence, [TRR 13 National Education Union \(NEU\) Cymru](#)

⁷⁸ Written evidence, [TRR 18 Royal Society of Chemistry, paragraph 5](#)

⁷⁹ Written evidence, [TRR 06 Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru \(UCAC\)](#)

⁸⁰ Written evidence, [TRR 17 Universities and Schools Council for the Education of Teachers \(USCET\)](#)

⁸¹ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 3.12](#)

⁸² [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 145](#)

⁸³ Written evidence, [TRR 24 Estyn](#)

⁸⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 25 Institute of Physics](#)

⁸⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 26 NAHT Cymru](#)

⁸⁶ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 237](#)

⁸⁷ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 133](#)

⁸⁸ [Citizen Engagement Team, Teacher Recruitment and Retention, Engagement Findings, paragraph 44, September 2025](#)

⁸⁹ Written evidence, [TRR 08 The Open University in Wales](#)

⁹⁰ Written evidence, [TRR 22 Welsh Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Education in Wales](#)

⁹¹ [CYPE Committee, 18 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 288](#)

⁹² Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 3.14](#)

Factor	Highlighted by:
GCSE / A Levels / undergraduate courses	Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol ⁹³ Institute of Physics ⁹⁴ The Open University in Wales ⁹⁵ Royal Society of Chemistry ⁹⁶ Swansea University Schools Partnership ⁹⁷ Teachers we spoke during our engagement activity ⁹⁸ Welsh Language Commissioner ⁹⁹

31. We heard about the different ways in which careers in teaching are promoted. EWC said it was a collective effort, involving the Welsh Government, ITE partnerships, local authorities, themselves, and supply agencies. EWC developed the “Educators Wales” brand, funded by the Welsh Government. The website includes a national job portal. They also carry out promotional and advocacy work. In 2024/25 Educators Wales had a presence at “over 230 events ... engaging with thousands of people”.¹⁰⁰

32. We heard of how promotion could be improved. Swansea University Schools Partnership shared the motivations of their students, which they felt could be a focus of targeted national campaigns. These included a “sense of being part of rewarding career ‘something bigger than just yourself,’ engagement with their disciplines and job opportunities”. They also suggested that some of the myths around teaching could be the focus of a “myth-busting’ campaign”¹⁰¹.

33. Cardiff Metropolitan University called for a national campaign which promoted teaching as a “high-status profession with an attractive career profile”. It should promote teaching “realistically as a challenging profession but one that can be personally fulfilling ... and financially rewarding”. They cited successful international examples including Finland and Iceland.¹⁰² Such a campaign should be “led by Welsh Government (politicians and officials) and include local

⁹³ Written evidence, [TRR 12 Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol](#)

⁹⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 25 Institute of Physics](#)

⁹⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 08 The Open University in Wales](#)

⁹⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 18 Royal Society of Chemistry, paragraph 5](#)

⁹⁷ Written evidence, [TRR 21 Swansea University Schools Partnership \(SUSP\)](#)

⁹⁸ [Citizen Engagement Team, Teacher Recruitment and Retention, Engagement Findings, paragraphs 49-50, September 2025](#)

⁹⁹ Written evidence, [TRR 15 Welsh Language Commissioner](#)

¹⁰⁰ Written evidence, [TRR 23 Education Workforce Council](#)

¹⁰¹ Written evidence, [TRR 21 Swansea University Schools Partnership \(SUSP\)](#)

¹⁰² Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraphs 8.1-8.3](#)

authorities, Estyn, the EWC, universities, the teaching associations, headteachers and their schools”¹⁰³.

34. Although EWC urged caution about calls for a “flashy, shiny, really good promotional campaign’. ... if what you’re trying to promote isn’t good, it won’t work”¹⁰⁴.

35. Cardiff Metropolitan University suggested that schools should play a more active role in promoting teaching as a career choice. As part of this, they should offer opportunities for those interested in teaching to “gain realistic, practical insights and experiences” of teaching. They also called for schools to be “incentivised” for this participation.¹⁰⁵

36. WLGA and ADEW called on the Welsh Government to “develop innovative strategies” to address the recruitment shortages.¹⁰⁶

37. Estyn told us that ways to address recruitment challenges have been “too narrow and mainly focused on finding more recruits, rather than a more comprehensive evaluation of the system as a whole”. They said recruitment and retention strategies needed to be holistic and “system wide” ensuring the best candidates enter into the profession and then stay.¹⁰⁷

38. The Welsh Government shared the methods used to promote teaching. Teaching Wales which is the main promotional campaign “features real teachers in Wales”. The campaign has “bursts of activity” throughout the year, including over the summer, followed by additional bursts “in October, and in the New Year running to the end of March 2026”.

39. They highlighted that rather than having “mass media advertising” which is not an “effective way of connecting with our target audiences”, they use “targeted digital channels”. These methods have “better engagement and value” when trying to reach audiences who are “mainly under 40”. The methods they employ include “targeted social media (Facebook, TikTok, LinkedIn, X), online advertising, radio, TV catchup, PR, outdoor advertising, UCAS mailers and attendance at key events”.¹⁰⁸ See paragraph 195 for more information on Welsh language campaigns.

¹⁰³ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 8.6](#)

¹⁰⁴ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings paragraph 53](#)

¹⁰⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 7.19](#)

¹⁰⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 22 Welsh Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Education in Wales](#)

¹⁰⁷ Written evidence, [TRR 24 Estyn](#)

¹⁰⁸ Written evidence, [TRR 31 Welsh Government](#)

40. The Welsh Government said that they “work closely” with EWC to ensure the national campaign integrates with EWC’s advocacy service. As of January 2024, “over 27,000 individuals” had engaged with this advocacy service, which offers a range of support.

“The advocacy service offers a single point of information to individuals on all aspects of teaching as a career as well as a free recruitment and information service to individuals seeking progression opportunities as educators. This includes comprehensive support including application and CV writing, and interview skills workshops. As well as working closely with Teaching Wales the service seeks out opportunities and partnership working, such as supporting ITE Partnerships with innovative ideas to implement activity in their own recruitment strategies and plans, such as on campus promotion of ITE.”¹⁰⁹

41. Alongside this centrally managed work, the Welsh Government said that as part of their accreditation guidelines, ITE partnerships must have recruitment strategies. In order to maximise value for money and ensure consistent messaging and synergy, there is close working between Welsh Government, EWC and ITE partnerships.¹¹⁰

42. We also heard about the Welsh Government’s future plans, including recruitment of “Teach Tomorrow Today ambassadors”. These “inspiring teachers ... stories, faces and advocacy will be at the heart of our campaign storytelling across multiple touchpoints”. They also accepted that schools have a role to play, and that they are currently developing “content for schools to share with their Alumni”. Additionally, they are exploring working more closely with local authorities to “help with local labour market trends, engage them in our campaign work and tailor our campaign activity to work on a local basis”¹¹¹.

43. The Cabinet Secretary agreed with others, by saying that teachers were the “biggest advocates for becoming a teacher”.¹¹²

44. In highlighting the factors affecting the attractiveness of teaching, everybody acknowledged that they are multi-factorial. The weighting of particular factors will also depend on the specific context of each potential new teacher, where they

¹⁰⁹ Written evidence, [TRR 31 Welsh Government](#)

¹¹⁰ Written evidence, [TRR 31 Welsh Government](#)

¹¹¹ Written evidence, [TRR 31 Welsh Government](#)

¹¹² [CYPE Committee, 17 September 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 77](#)

live, and what subject they wish to teach. While some organisations highlighted particular factors, such as workload, as being particularly prominent, no single factor emerged as the primary cause.

45. The Cabinet Secretary said it was a “combination of factors” that impact on the decision to enter teaching. She acknowledged many of the issues highlighted by stakeholders (as detailed above).¹¹³ She accepted that the perception of teaching is a “key factor” to recruitment and retention.¹¹⁴

46. We also heard about some potential factors relating to the attractiveness of ITE itself, rather than the broader teaching profession.

47. The intensity of the one-year PGCE course can be an issue. The combination of a full programme, with lots of different skills to be developed, combined with limited time can make it challenging. This was raised by Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol¹¹⁵; Cardiff Metropolitan University¹¹⁶ and the Royal Society of Chemistry¹¹⁷.

48. Just the perception of the intensity of a PGCE course can stop people applying. As highlighted by Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol¹¹⁸; Royal Society of Chemistry¹¹⁹; and Swansea University Schools Partnership¹²⁰.

49. Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol felt that it was timely 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.” They suggested that instead of “overloading” the PGCE year, there should be more development requirements in the early years of a career. However, this would need to be underpinned with sufficient time and support to undertake this professional development.¹²¹

50. The Institute of Physics called for improvements to ITE, including better support for students. They said this does not “just begin and end in a single year of ITE”¹²².

¹¹³ [CYPE Committee, 17 September 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 11](#)

¹¹⁴ [CYPE Committee, 17 September 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 73](#)

¹¹⁵ [Written evidence, TRR 12 Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol](#)

¹¹⁶ [Written evidence, TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 8.26](#)

¹¹⁷ [Written evidence, TRR 18 Royal Society of Chemistry, paragraph 17](#)

¹¹⁸ [Written evidence, TRR 12 Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol](#)

¹¹⁹ [Written evidence, TRR 18 Royal Society of Chemistry, paragraph 17](#)

¹²⁰ [Written evidence, TRR 21 Swansea University Schools Partnership \(SUSP\)](#)

¹²¹ [Written evidence, TRR 12 Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol](#)

¹²² [Written evidence, TRR 25 Institute of Physics](#)

51. Stakeholders, including Cardiff Metropolitan University¹²³; Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol¹²⁴; Estyn¹²⁵; and the Royal Society of Chemistry¹²⁶ highlighted the cost of postgraduate ITE. This can act as a disincentive for students who are already graduating with high debts¹²⁷ or those who wish to change careers.¹²⁸ It can also affect those who may be unsure as to whether they wish to teach, or those who cannot be certain of securing employment post qualification.¹²⁹ The intensity of the course also makes it difficult for students to have part-time work to help with costs. This combination of costs and a lack of income means that it “is an unrealistic option for some groups of potential candidates”¹³⁰.

52. Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol called for an alternative funding system which would make PGCE courses “a more attractive and realistic option”¹³¹. Others who supported different approaches to ITE costs included:

- Cardiff Metropolitan University¹³²;
- Catholic Education Service¹³³;
- Estyn¹³⁴;
- Institute of Physics¹³⁵; and
- Swansea University Schools Partnership¹³⁶.

53. Ideas suggested included covering PGCE costs in some way¹³⁷ or student debt reduction¹³⁸. Although Estyn did note that there could be a “significant financial implications” of waiving fees.¹³⁹ Cardiff Metropolitan University said that the funding offer should recognise “the student debt they will have already

¹²³ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 8.7](#)

¹²⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 12 Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol](#)

¹²⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 24 Estyn](#)

¹²⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 18 Royal Society of Chemistry, paragraph 6](#)

¹²⁷ Written evidence, [TRR 12 Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol](#)

¹²⁸ Written evidence, [TRR 18 Royal Society of Chemistry, paragraph 6](#)

¹²⁹ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 8.7](#)

¹³⁰ Written evidence, [TRR 12 Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol](#)

¹³¹ Written evidence, [TRR 12 Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol](#)

¹³² Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 8.1](#)

¹³³ Written evidence, [TRR 09, Catholic Education Service](#)

¹³⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 24 Estyn](#)

¹³⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 25 Institute of Physics](#)

¹³⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 21 Swansea University Schools Partnership \(SUSP\)](#)

¹³⁷ Written evidence, [TRR 25 Institute of Physics](#); Written evidence, [TRR 09, Catholic Education Service](#); Written evidence, [TRR 24 Estyn](#); Written evidence, [TRR 21 Swansea University Schools Partnership \(SUSP\)](#)

¹³⁸ Written evidence, [TRR 25 Institute of Physics](#)

¹³⁹ Written evidence, [TRR 24 Estyn](#)

incurred and the potential value they can provide through public service as a teacher”¹⁴⁰.

54. Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol called for a cost benefit analysis to consider whether removing or reducing ITE course fees would be sustainable and improve recruitment. This analysis could investigate whether such funding should be targeted at specific priority areas. Such an analysis should also look at the models used in healthcare where fee support has conditions about working in Wales for a period.¹⁴¹ Cardiff Metropolitan University also called for a similar analysis to be done leading to “financial modelling options and recommendations”¹⁴².

55. The Open University in Wales said that their students tell them that they could not have completed a traditional PGCE, because they would not have been able to cover the financial costs.¹⁴³

56. The Catholic Education Service highlighted that a lack of specific ITE provision for Catholics was a “significant issue”. They said that it means those who wish to study at a Catholic university have to study in England with a “significant number” then employed in English schools. For those who do undertake ITE in Wales, they are not always matched to Catholic schools. They said there should be an option in ITE provision to have “some if not all” of their practical experience in a Catholic school. Not having this option means Catholic students “are not gaining the knowledge and experience of teaching RE and that the NQTs are being lost to the system at source”¹⁴⁴.

57. The Cabinet Secretary said that it was the Welsh Government’s understanding that the issues are not with the ITE courses but about the wider perception of the attractiveness of secondary teaching.¹⁴⁵

Determining the number and allocation of ITE places

58. Closely related to the issue of attractiveness of ITE, is the geographical location of ITE provision. This links to the system of ITE allocation, and the availability of data to support the placement of ITE provision.

59. The Welsh Government sets the accreditation criteria for ITE courses. Individual ITE courses are then accredited by EWC if they meet the criteria.

¹⁴⁰ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 8.1](#)

¹⁴¹ Written evidence, [TRR 12 Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol](#)

¹⁴² Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 8.11](#)

¹⁴³ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 14](#)

¹⁴⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 09 Catholic Education Service](#)

¹⁴⁵ [CYPE Committee, 17 September 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 10](#)

Courses are then allowed to run for a specific period as outlined in the accreditation.

- 60.** The Welsh Government sets the overall teacher intake target for Wales. It tells the EWC of the desired numbers for primary and secondary sectors, based on the Teacher Planning Supply Model (“the TPSM”). The TPSM estimates the numbers of teachers that need to be trained to meet future demand. In doing so, the model considers historical data and future projections, including learner, and teacher demographics alongside pupil teacher ratios.
- 61.** EWC provides allocations to each of the ITE partnerships, using the overall desired national intake for primary and secondary ITE programmes. As noted in paragraph 21, overall pupil numbers are projected to fall in future years although there is still a need to increase recruitment and improve retention, especially in certain subjects. For example, as noted in paragraphs 206-228, there are number of priority secondary subjects which have not met their targets for years.
- 62.** Some suggested the accreditation criteria can be constraining to ITE providers, inhibiting the ability to be responsive to needs.¹⁴⁶ For example, USCET said the current staffing requirements both in terms of teacher: student ratios, and qualification requirements for staff can “fetter provider discretion” as well as impeding potential expansion or development of new programmes.¹⁴⁷
- 63.** Cardiff Metropolitan University said the current criteria mean that “many of the most socio-economically disadvantaged schools in Wales ... are excluded from ITE partnerships”¹⁴⁸.
- 64.** The Welsh Government said that the accreditation model enables schools and higher education institutions to play an “equal part” in ensuring a balance between theory and practical training. Schools play a role in the development and quality assurance of ITE. They said that the OECD’s Flying Start report “highlighted our approach to recognise schools as an important partner in the design and delivery of initial teacher education programmes and the creation and use of research as a strength”¹⁴⁹.
- 65.** We heard that the nature of the accreditation model is a factor in ITE “cold spots” across Wales. Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol said that the current accreditation model which is “effectively led by universities” leads to course

¹⁴⁶ Written evidence, [TRR.17 Universities and Schools Council for the Education of Teachers \(USCET\)](#)

¹⁴⁷ Written evidence, [TRR.17 Universities and Schools Council for the Education of Teachers \(USCET\)](#)

¹⁴⁸ Written evidence, [TRR.04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 7.19](#)

¹⁴⁹ Written evidence, [TRR.31 Welsh Government](#)

distribution across Wales which “can be arbitrary, unstrategic and inefficient from a funding and recruitment perspective”. This has resulted in there being no PGCE courses available (apart from Open University courses) “in the huge geographical area between Bangor ... in the north and Swansea ... in the south”¹⁵⁰. This, they believe, could particularly affect those who are not in a position to study away from home, such as career changers or those from disadvantaged backgrounds.¹⁵¹

66. The National Centre for Learning Welsh agreed on the need to be more strategic.¹⁵² They cited that “we have 12 subjects in PGCE that are taught within the same city by two separate universities. So, we are duplicating courses unnecessarily”¹⁵³.

67. Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol called for the commissioning of provision to be done after the workforce needs had been identified. This “could create a better fit between workforce requirements and the provision that brings teachers into the profession”¹⁵⁴. They suggested that moving towards a commissioning system as exists, in the health sector, could “provide more stability in the universities too”.¹⁵⁵

68. EWC compared the current “open economy” model to the previous model with three regional partnerships and universities working together. They felt the current approach was “more robust”. However, there is a need to ensure there are “no cold spots within delivery of subject areas”¹⁵⁶. While the Open University in Wales said that:

“... given the strategic importance to our nation of the role of teacher recruitment, it would seem precarious to leave it to the vagaries of the market, in that sense. That’s one point where I don’t think the market model works particularly well for us.”¹⁵⁷

69. The WLGA & ADEW called the lack of ITE in Mid-Wales a “concern”.¹⁵⁸ The closure of ITE provision in Aberystwyth has also created additional challenges for Welsh-medium provision.¹⁵⁹ The National Centre for Learning Welsh also

¹⁵⁰ Aberystwyth University [ended its PGCE from 2024/25 onwards](#) after losing its accreditation from the EWC. An [Estyn report in 2023](#) had identified shortcomings in the university’s provision.

¹⁵¹ Written evidence, [TRR 12 Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol](#)

¹⁵² [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 188](#)

¹⁵³ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 243](#)

¹⁵⁴ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 179](#)

¹⁵⁵ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 185](#)

¹⁵⁶ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings paragraphs 61-62](#)

¹⁵⁷ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 78](#)

¹⁵⁸ Written evidence, [TRR 22 Welsh Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Education in Wales](#)

¹⁵⁹ [CYPE Committee, 18 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 168](#)

highlighted the absence of provision in mid-Wales.¹⁶⁰ While UCAC said the closure had affected numbers of people choosing to do ITE.¹⁶¹

70. Some, such as UCAC,¹⁶² called for ITE provision at every Welsh university. The University of South Wales said it should be “everywhere ... because many, many students live at home”¹⁶³.

71. The Royal Society of Chemistry highlighted concerns about closures of undergraduate courses in some Welsh universities. They said the resulting “cold spot”, with chemistry only available in Cardiff and Swansea, could reduce the number of trainee chemistry teachers in North Wales. They cited research from England which indicated that students who live at home during their undergraduate studies are more likely to become teachers than those who study away from home. They are also less likely to leave teaching within the first four years. They noted that Bangor University did not have any chemistry graduates on their PGCE programme this year, which they suggested could be the result of the closure of the undergraduate chemistry courses.¹⁶⁴ The Institute of Physics raised concerns that there are only three physics departments in Welsh universities.¹⁶⁵

72. USCET shared concerns about breaking the “supply line” between undergraduate programmes and PGCE courses at the same institution and how this may impact on recruitment in the future.¹⁶⁶ The WLGA & ADEW said that the shortages of technology and maths teachers in North Wales could be related to a reduction of courses running at Bangor University.¹⁶⁷

73. We heard that the current system for allocation of places is “unsuitable”. Swansea University Schools Partnership said that “Allocation numbers, particularly for smaller programmes, mean that longer term strategic planning is difficult”. They said that allocations should be “rationalised to allow for the growth of successful provision”¹⁶⁸. Although Yr Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership, University of Wales, Trinity St David, said that it’s not allocation that is causing

¹⁶⁰ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 176](#)

¹⁶¹ [Written evidence, TRR 06 Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru \(UCAC\)](#);

¹⁶² [Written evidence, TRR 06 Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru \(UCAC\)](#);

¹⁶³ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 87](#)

¹⁶⁴ [Written evidence, TRR 18 Royal Society of Chemistry, paragraphs 10-12](#)

¹⁶⁵ [CYPE Committee, 18 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 168](#)

¹⁶⁶ [Written evidence, TRR 17 Universities and Schools Council for the Education of Teachers \(USCET\)](#)

¹⁶⁷ [Written evidence, TRR 22 Welsh Local Government Association and Association of Directors of](#)

[Education in Wales](#)

¹⁶⁸ [Written evidence, TRR 21 Swansea University Schools Partnership \(SUSP\)](#)

issues, but the recruitment systems that underpin entry to postgraduate ITE.¹⁶⁹ (See paragraphs 82-86.)

74. Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol said it was important to plan “for the needs of the system”. They said if there is an identified need for more Welsh speaking physics teachers in a particular area “then let us ensure that we have courses available that provide that training to sufficient numbers of people, and recruit specifically and appropriately for those courses”¹⁷⁰. They called TPSM “crude”, and that a “much more detailed and strategic approach” was needed. TPSM does not currently “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.” They cited recommendation 49 of the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities which called on the Welsh Government to “plan to meet the needs of the education workforce” in areas of higher Welsh language density. They said it was concerning that the current system would not be able to deliver on this recommendation. They called for the Welsh Government to establish a Strategic Unit to support bilingual workforce planning.¹⁷¹

75. The Cabinet Secretary said that the current model where allocations are based on the TPSM is “effectively ... commissioning places ... based on evidence and data”¹⁷².

76. A common theme throughout all of our work in this Senedd has been a lack of timely data to help inform policy making or evaluation. This inquiry has been no different.

77. Data gaps that were identified included:

Data gap:	Raised by:
Application-level data	Royal Society of Biology ¹⁷³
Effectiveness of bursaries / long term impact	UCAC ¹⁷⁴
Leadership progression of science teachers	Royal Society of Biology ¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁹ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 66](#)

¹⁷⁰ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 238](#)

¹⁷¹ [Written evidence, TRR 12 Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol](#)

¹⁷² [CYPE Committee, 17 September 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 23](#)

¹⁷³ [Written evidence, TRR 19 Royal Society of Biology](#)

¹⁷⁴ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 371](#)

¹⁷⁵ [Written evidence, TRR 19 Royal Society of Biology](#)

Data gap:	Raised by:
Limited granularity on primary level science training	Royal Society of Biology ¹⁷⁶
Proportion of mid-career entry into teaching	Royal Society of Biology ¹⁷⁷
Reasons for teachers leaving the profession	Estyn ¹⁷⁸
Robust data on the secondary subject a teacher has trained in (specialism is currently self-reported)	Institute of Physics ¹⁷⁹ Royal Society of Biology ¹⁸⁰
Systematic data on ITE graduate destinations	Open University in Wales ¹⁸¹
Teacher mobility between Wales and England	Royal Society of Biology ¹⁸²
Tracking of progression of PGCE students	Cardiff Metropolitan University ¹⁸³

78. As well as insufficient data, there is also a lack of timely data. This was highlighted by the National Foundation for Educational Research¹⁸⁴; Independent Welsh Pay Review Body¹⁸⁵; and the Royal Society of Biology¹⁸⁶. The most recent ITE data by subjects and phase is for 2021/22, which as the National Foundation for Educational Research said “isn’t very recent”.¹⁸⁷

79. The National Foundation for Educational Research compared it with data from England. In June 2025, they could already see data on the number of trainees who had started in September 2024. The UK Government’s Department for Education publishes monthly data on ITE applications. The National Foundation for Educational Research said the lack of timely data in Wales hampers research into recent trends in teaching training.¹⁸⁸

80. The Welsh Government acknowledged that while national level data sets identify national subject shortages, there may be different issues at either local

¹⁷⁶ Written evidence, [TRR.19.Royal.Society.of.Biology](#)

¹⁷⁷ Written evidence, [TRR.19.Royal.Society.of.Biology](#)

¹⁷⁸ Written evidence, [TRR.24.Estyn](#)

¹⁷⁹ Written evidence, [TRR.25.Institute.of.Physics](#)

¹⁸⁰ Written evidence, [TRR.19.Royal.Society.of.Biology](#)

¹⁸¹ Written evidence, [TRR.08.The.Open.University.in.Wales](#)

¹⁸² Written evidence, [TRR.19.Royal.Society.of.Biology](#)

¹⁸³ Written evidence, [TRR.04.Cardiff.Metropolitan.University.paragraph.5.2](#)

¹⁸⁴ [CYPE.Committee.5.June.2025.Record.of.Proceedings.paragraph.147](#)

¹⁸⁵ Written evidence, [TRR.20.Independent.Welsh.Pay.Review.Body.paragraph.3.5](#)

¹⁸⁶ Written evidence, [TRR.19.Royal.Society.of.Biology](#)

¹⁸⁷ [CYPE.Committee.5.June.2025.Record.of.Proceedings.paragraph.147](#)

¹⁸⁸ [CYPE.Committee.5.June.2025.Record.of.Proceedings.paragraphs.147-148](#)

authority or individual school level.¹⁸⁹ The Cabinet Secretary accepted that there is not enough “really good local information”. She said that, as part of the development of the Workforce Plan, the Welsh Government intends to work with local authorities to get improved local data. This, in turn, would enable a more targeted approach to dealing with capacity gaps.¹⁹⁰

81. The Cabinet Secretary described the school improvement partnership programme¹⁹¹ as a “perfect vehicle” to get “that granular detail that we need” for the Workforce Plan.¹⁹²

Application process

82. A seemingly quite technical issue can also create challenges both for prospective ITE students and ITE course providers. People wishing to apply for PGCE courses at a Welsh university, apply via UCAS. All the ITE providers raised concerns about this. We heard that using a system designed for undergraduate courses for PGCEs can create additional barriers.¹⁹³ It also risks losing potential ITE students because the information is hard to access.¹⁹⁴ UCSET said it was “not fit for purpose”.¹⁹⁵ Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol called either for improvements to be made to the interface or a different system introduced.¹⁹⁶

83. A particular challenge is not knowing how many offers have been accepted until late in the recruitment cycle. University of South Wales described it as a “massive issue”.¹⁹⁷ Yr Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership, University of Wales, Trinity St David compared UCAS with the previous PGCE specific system where applicants were encouraged to make decisions more quickly, which enabled institutions to manage their intakes more effectively.¹⁹⁸ Swansea University Schools Partnership said that the UCAS system can negatively impact financial and

¹⁸⁹ Written evidence, [TRR.31.Welsh Government](#)

¹⁹⁰ [CYPE Committee. 17 September 2025. Record of Proceedings, paragraph 23](#)

¹⁹¹ The [School Improvement Partnership Programme](#) refers to the work the Welsh Government is undertaking with local authorities to design and implement new school improvement arrangements to replace the regional consortia, following [Professor Dylan Jones' ‘middle tier review’](#).

¹⁹² [CYPE Committee. 17 September 2025. Record of Proceedings, paragraph 55](#)

¹⁹³ Written evidence, [TRR.12.Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol](#)

¹⁹⁴ [CYPE Committee. 16 July 2025. Record of Proceedings, paragraph 174](#)

¹⁹⁵ Written evidence, [TRR.17.Universities and Schools Council for the Education of Teachers \(USCET\)](#)

¹⁹⁶ Written evidence, [TRR.12.Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol](#)

¹⁹⁷ [CYPE Committee. 16 July 2025. Record of Proceedings, paragraph 73](#)

¹⁹⁸ [CYPE Committee. 16 July 2025. Record of Proceedings, paragraph 66](#)

recruitment planning.¹⁹⁹ They called for a “much shorter time” between an offer being made and the deadline for a decision being made by an applicant.²⁰⁰

84. Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol also said that institutions have different deadlines which can cause confusion for applicants.²⁰¹

85. The Cabinet Secretary is aware of these issues. Although she emphasised the “limited levers” available to the Welsh Government. She highlighted that use of UCAS was optional and that some ITE partnerships do not use it.

86. The issues stem from England setting up their own application system, leading to UCAS closing down the bespoke teaching application process. She explained that the Welsh Government had explored developing a Welsh specific system, but it was not feasible due to the economies of scale. There has been work with UCAS and ITE partnerships to try and fix the issues. In light of the ongoing issues, she committed to “look again at potential solutions for our Welsh ITE system”²⁰².

Perceptions of teaching as career

87. As noted previously, one of the clear themes of the evidence emerging from the inquiry was the negative perception having a significant impact on the attractiveness of teaching. This was highlighted by almost everyone we spoke to, including teachers, school leaders and ex-teachers.²⁰³

88. One witness said school is one of the few environments where almost everybody has personal experience, but it’s a role that looks very different from “the other side of the desk”²⁰⁴. Yet, do schools themselves promote teaching as a rewarding career choice for their pupils? We heard it can actually be the opposite. Cardiff Metropolitan University said that their undergraduate students report their teachers, or parents who are teachers, advising them against teaching.²⁰⁵

89. Yr Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership, University of Wales, Trinity St David said that negative advice from teachers to students “is absolutely killing the

¹⁹⁹ Written evidence, [TRR 21 Swansea University Schools Partnership \(SUSP\)](#)

²⁰⁰ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 68](#)

²⁰¹ Written evidence, [TRR 12 Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol](#)

²⁰² [Letter from Cabinet Secretary for Education to Chair, CYPE Committee, 19 November 2025](#)

²⁰³ For example, [Citizen Engagement Team, Teacher Recruitment and Retention, Engagement Findings, paragraph 14, September 2025](#); Written evidence, [TRR 17 Universities and Schools Council for the Education of Teachers \(USCET\)](#)

²⁰⁴ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 163](#)

²⁰⁵ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 130](#)

they also noted that they were “passionate” about the importance of teaching, and had close family relations in the profession.²⁹⁵

140. While some of the evidence is mixed, a number of organisations think they make a difference, including the Association of Language Learning²⁹⁶; the Institute of Physics²⁹⁷ and the Royal Society of Chemistry²⁹⁸.

141. EWC highlighted the information they are compiling on incentives for the Welsh Government. At the time of giving oral evidence to us, they had provided this data to the Welsh Government.²⁹⁹ The Independent Welsh Pay Review Body noted that the Welsh Government analysis into the effectiveness of incentives was not available at the time they submitted their written evidence.³⁰⁰

142. The Royal Society of Chemistry said the current incentives for chemistry were “probably not enough to be effective”³⁰¹. While the Institute of Physics said that the incentive was not sufficient to live off, which may deter students from less well-off backgrounds.³⁰² They also said that while bursaries may seem expensive they are not actually available to a lot of people, and therefore “isn’t a huge amount of money, in global terms”³⁰³.

143. As flagged in paragraph 19, numerous stakeholders highlighted that some subject specific incentives in England are more generous or attractive than those in Wales. The Royal Society of Chemistry compared the incentives available to a Chemistry graduate undertaking ITE in Wales compared to someone doing it in England:

“... for UK students pursuing an English medium chemistry PGCE in Wales, once tuition fees have been deducted, the bursary is only £2,465 for a full-time course. ... shows that even with the Welsh language incentive, the take-home bursary after fees is less than half the equivalent amount that an ITE chemist in England receives.”³⁰⁴

²⁹⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 03 Individual](#)

²⁹⁶ [CYPE Committee, 18 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 351](#)

²⁹⁷ Written evidence, [TRR 25 Institute of Physics](#)

²⁹⁸ Written evidence, [TRR 18 Royal Society of Chemistry, paragraph 5](#)

²⁹⁹ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 106](#)

³⁰⁰ Written evidence, [TRR 20 Independent Welsh Pay Review Body, paragraph 3.5](#)

³⁰¹ Written evidence, [TRR 18 Royal Society of Chemistry, paragraph 6](#)

³⁰² [CYPE Committee, 18 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 178](#)

³⁰³ [CYPE Committee, 18 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 277](#)

³⁰⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 18 Royal Society of Chemistry, paragraph 6](#)

144. While the Institute of Physics made a similar comparison, saying that a prospective Physics teacher in Wales (who is not eligible for either the Iaith Athrawon Yfory Incentive Scheme or the Ethnic Minority ITE Incentive Scheme) will receive a £15,000 bursary in Wales compared to a £29,000 bursary in England. They also highlighted that the bursary in England has increased recently, but has remained static in Wales since 2022.³⁰⁵

145. A number of organisations called for bursaries and incentive schemes to match the value of those available in England. They included the Institute of Physics³⁰⁶; Royal Society of Chemistry³⁰⁷; and USCET³⁰⁸.

146. The Association of Language Learning said:

"I interview quite a significant number of students who either decline, or accept and then decline, and when I go back to them—because I often follow up just to find out if it was something I could have done and we could have offered, or I didn't explain properly—and they often have told me that it's—. Well, the question is always around the bursary, and they go to Oxford, or they go to Bristol or they go to London and just choose to train there."³⁰⁹

147. These discrepancies between incentives may have a bigger impact on the border areas of Wales. The Institute of Physics said it would be "interesting to understand any impact the bursary in England has on students in Wales doing their teacher training in England – particularly amongst border areas such as Newport and Wrexham where commuting to a university in England is relatively easy". They suggested that bringing the bursary in line with that of England's might "mitigate" the cross-border impacts.³¹⁰

148. The Association of Language Learning highlighted that some students will do the PGCE in Bristol because of the larger bursaries, but do their placements in Wales, which they felt was a "little bit unfair" to those students who stay in Wales.³¹¹

³⁰⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 25 Institute of Physics](#)

³⁰⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 25 Institute of Physics](#)

³⁰⁷ Written evidence, [TRR 18 Royal Society of Chemistry, paragraph 31](#)

³⁰⁸ Written evidence, [TRR 17 Universities and Schools Council for the Education of Teachers \(USCET\)](#)

³⁰⁹ [CYPE Committee, 18 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 301](#)

³¹⁰ Written evidence, [TRR 25 Institute of Physics](#)

³¹¹ [CYPE Committee, 18 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 297](#)

149. After we finished taking evidence, the UK Government announced changes to their incentive schemes, for example, incentives for Biology will reduce to £5,000, and Design and Technology and Modern Foreign Languages will reduce to £20,000.³¹²

150. During our engagement work, we were told that while incentives may be effective at getting students into ITE, they may not then stay in teaching. A headteacher described having a student teacher who was “very honest with us from day one” telling them they were only doing ITE “to get some money”. This person completed the course but did not go into teaching. A secondary headteacher suggested that a way of countering this could be in offering the incentives over a longer time period:

“So many people use it as a ‘finish university, not really quite sure what to do, why don’t I do this and get paid for a year’ option. There could be a greater incentive for the longer term. If there’s to be a financial benefit for doing those courses, that should be over the next five to ten years, rather than ‘here’s 15 grand to do a year.’”³¹³

An individual who was no longer in the teaching profession but was in receipt of a bursary said they felt that “... grants to get people to pursue teacher training courses attract ineligible applicants ...”³¹⁴.

151. The Institute of Physics called for financial incentives to be targeted at potential teachers “whose behaviour tends to be more responsive to financial incentives compared to experienced teachers”. They also called for spending to be targeted at priority subjects which, they said, provides “better value for money compared to undifferentiated spending on all phases and subjects, such as across-the-board pay”³¹⁵.

152. The Catholic Education Service highlighted concerns about the numbers of RE teachers, calling it a “particular” concern for Catholic schools. They noted that while financial incentives are offered for “other core subjects ... there is no understanding that RE is a core subject in Catholic schools”³¹⁶.

³¹² [UK Government. Funding: initial teacher training \(ITT\) academic year 2026 to 2027. Updated 7 October 2025](#)

³¹³ [Citizen Engagement Team. Teacher Recruitment and Retention. Engagement Findings, paragraph 77. September 2025](#)

³¹⁴ Written evidence, [TRR.03 Individual](#)

³¹⁵ Written evidence, [TRR.25 Institute of Physics](#)

³¹⁶ Written evidence, [TRR.09. Catholic Education Service](#)

153. The Welsh Government said that available incentive schemes are “targeted at those areas and subjects where recruitment is most challenging; priority subjects, the Welsh-medium sector and attracting more entrants from ethnic minorities”. For those candidates who are eligible for all three schemes a total of £25,000 is available.³¹⁷

154. The Welsh Government highlighted that the priority subjects and phases are chosen on an annual basis using both the School Workforce Census data and the Higher Education Statistical Authority data. This identification, they said, means the Welsh Government can target incentives. They emphasised that this “is not a statistical exercise alone and that contextual factors must be used in determining the final list of priority subjects”³¹⁸.

155. The Cabinet Secretary told us that incentives are reviewed annually. She highlighted the “wealth” of research from across the UK, including the Welsh Government’s own research from 2019. She agreed with others that the evidence on their effectiveness is “mixed” but that after the current evaluation and research is completed in 2026, it will be easier to make a “robust judgment on their use”.³¹⁹

156. The 2019 research EWC did on behalf of the Welsh Government had “inconclusive” findings. The Cabinet Secretary said that it:

“... suggested that while incentives were one of the levers, there were stronger arguments around the attractiveness of the profession, continued support for early career development, and also opportunities for progression.”³²⁰

157. The Cabinet Secretary acknowledged the evidence we had received about the “significant difference” between bursaries in England and Wales. She noted that even though England has more generous incentives they still experience similar challenges for STEM subjects.³²¹ She said she was “very keen to look at what more we can do in this space, mindful of the budget constraints that I face”. She reiterated her commitment to look at incentives again, and that this work would be informed by the ongoing work.³²² She highlighted that it was complex and decisions could not just be linked to incentives.³²³

³¹⁷ Written evidence, [TRR 31 Welsh Government](#)

³¹⁸ Written evidence, [TRR 31 Welsh Government](#)

³¹⁹ [CYPE Committee 17 September 2025. Record of Proceedings, paragraph 15](#)

³²⁰ [CYPE Committee 17 September 2025. Record of Proceedings, paragraph 16](#)

³²¹ [CYPE Committee 17 September 2025. Record of Proceedings, paragraph 19](#)

³²² [CYPE Committee 17 September 2025. Record of Proceedings, paragraph 16](#)

³²³ [CYPE Committee 17 September 2025. Record of Proceedings, paragraph 19](#)

158. In terms of retaining, rather than just recruiting teachers, the Welsh Government also highlighted the Welsh in Education Teacher Retention Bursary. This £5,000 bursary is open to teachers who have achieved QTS since August 2020 and have done three years of teaching Welsh or teaching through the medium of Welsh in secondary education. This will be available until Autumn 2028, and “will provide us with data on whether the introduction of a bursary encourages teachers to enter and stay in the profession”³²⁴.

Impact of challenging financial context for providers

159. We are acutely aware of the challenging financial climate faced by higher education institutions, which run ITE provision. We have been looking at this issue in more detail separately.³²⁵ However it was also raised in this inquiry in relation to delivery of ITE.

160. We were told that the viability of ITE programmes is very much dependent on fee income from students. Fees are the primary source for ITE funding. The Open University in Wales said that ITE faces specific challenges because a lot of cost reduction for other courses such as increasing staff: student ratios or centralising provision are not possible in ITE. As they understood it, ITE does not receive additional funding because it is not assessed as a high cost subject. Unlike, some health courses. This is despite there being a number of additional costs incurred such as placement costs, or supporting school partnerships.³²⁶

161. Yr Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership, University of Wales, Trinity St David described ITE as “expensive”, but necessarily so because of the need to support schools to ensure the quality of provision. They also highlighted that other professions such as health have a different model to that of ITE.³²⁷ These views were echoed by Swansea University Schools Partnership. They said that a market based system is “difficult” for ITE:

“... because we value, for example, the training of computer science teachers much more highly than we will the fact that there may only be three of them. We need to have these people, and it needs to be funded in a way that allows it to be

³²⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 31 Welsh Government](#)

³²⁵ [CYPE Committee. Issues facing the Higher Education Sector inquiry page \[accessed 21 October 2024\]](#)

³²⁶ [CYPE Committee. 16 July 2025. Record of Proceedings, paragraph 77](#)

³²⁷ [CYPE Committee. 16 July 2025. Record of Proceedings, paragraph 81](#)

166. Cardiff Metropolitan University said that under-recruitment to PGCE courses in 2023/24 resulted in a loss of funding of approximately £6.3 million to Welsh universities / school partnerships from the Welsh Government. “The year-on-year loss of this funding is a major deficit of badly needed potential income for schools and universities”³³⁶.

167. The Open University in Wales reminded us that staffing in higher education is often a “synergistic staffing model” with PGCE staff also teaching on other courses and modules. This means any risk to ITE can also impact the wider provision within a faculty.³³⁷

168. The Institute of Physics raised concerns that Welsh ITE does not have the same level of funding or investment that counterparts in other parts of the UK have.³³⁸

169. The Cabinet Secretary accepted the current challenges facing higher education, and pointed to the work Medr are doing looking at subject demand provision and distribution in Wales of higher education provision. This work will also consider any possible interventions that may be needed to support “strategically important subject areas”. This report was due in the autumn.³³⁹

170. The Cabinet Secretary said she was aware of ITE partnership concerns about delivery costs. She accepted that the additional costs associated with ITE. She said Medr’s work would help, including on the issue of “cold spots”. She acknowledged the importance of having coverage across the country for undergraduate subjects, “because that also has an impact on recruitment to ITE, because ITE partnerships are very active in promoting ITE to their students who they’re educating anyway”. She said she was, at that point, exploring options as to how ITE providers could be supported, and that a final decision would be made before the budget.³⁴⁰

171. After we had finished our evidence gathering, the Welsh Government published their 2026-27 Draft Budget. The Welsh Government provided an additional £2.5 million for Medr to be used to support universities with the costs of ITE.³⁴¹ The Cabinet Secretary told us this was the result of representations made by the Minister for Further and Higher Education, and her own visit to Swansea

³³⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 7.2](#)

³³⁷ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 76](#)

³³⁸ [CYPE Committee, 18 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 174](#)

³³⁹ [CYPE Committee, 17 September 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 28](#)

³⁴⁰ [CYPE Committee, 17 September 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraphs 27 and 30](#)

³⁴¹ [Welsh Government, Evidence Paper on Draft Budget 2026-27 - Education Main Expenditure Group \(MEG\), 27 November 2025](#)

University's ITE provision.³⁴² The Minister for Further and Higher Education said a number of Vice-Chancellors raised concerns that universities were having to subsidise ITE provision. This is in contrast to healthcare courses which are commissioned through Health Education and Improvement Wales and are fully funded. In 2024-25, Cardiff Metropolitan University "spent just under £1 million ... and Bangor University just over £400,000". She said this felt like it was "an area that just seemed as though it was absolutely right for review" and that she was pleased this additional money has gone to providers.³⁴³

Particular challenges for Welsh medium education

172. Our interest and concern about the issues facing recruitment and retention were brought to the fore through our scrutiny of the then Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill. One of the key barriers to effective implementation of the now Act, and to realise the aim of Cymraeg 2050 is ensuring there are sufficient staff in schools who can either teach Welsh as a subject or teach subjects through Welsh.

173. Yet again, it was a key theme throughout the evidence, both in terms of recruitment to ITE and then into teaching posts. Although we did hear that retention rates were slightly higher for Welsh medium staff, at 79 per cent compared to 75 per cent in English medium settings. Although this higher retention rate was not considered to be a significant difference.³⁴⁴ While many of the general issues we cover elsewhere in this report, obviously also apply to Welsh medium education, there are some specific issues which are important to highlight.

174. There are some concerns about the pipeline of Welsh speakers decreasing and thereby reducing the numbers of those who could teach Welsh or through the medium of Welsh. This is significantly affected by the decrease in students studying Welsh at higher levels, such as A level or degree. This was raised by Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol³⁴⁵; Open University in Wales³⁴⁶; and the Welsh Language Commissioner³⁴⁷.

³⁴² [CYPE Committee, 27 November 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 14](#)

³⁴³ [CYPE Committee, 27 November 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraphs 89-90](#)

³⁴⁴ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 89](#)

³⁴⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 12 Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol](#)

³⁴⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 08 The Open University in Wales](#)

³⁴⁷ Written evidence, [TRR 15 Welsh Language Commissioner](#)

185. Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol also play a role, working with everybody in the education sector, and employers to promote studying and training through Welsh medium including:

- Dysgu'r Dyfodol. It promotes ITE by offering mentoring and work experience with under and post graduate students who speak Welsh.
- Cadw Cyswllt. While this scheme is broader than just teaching, it encourages Welsh speaking students to return to Wales, this can include for ITE courses.
- Creation and distribution of promotional materials about teaching as a career which are targeted at Welsh speakers.³⁶⁴

186. ACT highlighted the opportunity to expand apprenticeship frameworks to cover Welsh-medium education. This they felt would help create a “talent pipeline” as well as addressing the shortfall for both Welsh medium teachers and teaching assistants.³⁶⁵

187. Swansea University Schools Partnership suggested that nationally funded Welsh Language Enhancement programmes would help create pathways into Welsh medium teaching.³⁶⁶

188. The Welsh Government accepted that recruitment to secondary ITE is “challenging” and even smaller into the Welsh medium streams.³⁶⁷ They agreed that this is made worse because of the low numbers of students taking Welsh A level which is then “further compounded” by the low numbers of undergraduates studying through Welsh.³⁶⁸

189. The Cabinet Secretary said she was “very worried” about Welsh medium recruitment. She said increasing the numbers of Welsh medium teachers needs to be “a top priority for all stakeholders and a key part of the workforce plan”³⁶⁹. She said they are providing “£0.145 million to increase the number of learners studying Welsh at A-level”.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 12 Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol](#)

³⁶⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 07 ACT Ltd](#)

³⁶⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 21 Swansea University Schools Partnership \(SUSP\)](#)

³⁶⁷ Written evidence, [TRR 31 Welsh Government](#)

³⁶⁸ Written evidence, [TRR 31 Welsh Government](#)

³⁶⁹ [CYPE Committee, 17 September 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 50](#)

³⁷⁰ [CYPE Committee, 17 September 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 51](#)

190. The Welsh Government published its Welsh in Education Workforce Plan in May 2022. This ten year plan sets out the steps the Welsh Government and other will take to develop the Welsh language workforce in schools.³⁷¹

191. EWC said that the Welsh Government’s target for the number of ITE entrants training through Welsh is not being met, despite the different initiatives, including the Welsh in Education Workforce Plan.³⁷²

192. UCAC queried the extent to which there is “real evaluation and monitoring” of the plan. They also called on the Welsh Government to consider international best practice on bilingual teaching and its benefits.³⁷³ They said the Welsh Government needed to “seriously address” issues around Welsh medium recruitment and retention, suggesting “career-long strategies” were needed. They said that, at the moment, the Welsh Government is “failing, although they have thrown money at it for a quarter of a century”.³⁷⁴

193. The Welsh Government highlighted some of the actions within the Welsh in Education Workforce Plan. This included an increase to the Salary Contribution Grant for Welsh medium Secondary schools and Welsh subject student teachers in English medium schools. This is now 100 per cent of Band 1 of the Unqualified Teachers pay scale. This grant has been further expanded to enable maintained primary schools to access it at 50 per cent, and secondary schools with a “transitional language category” at 100 per cent to support Welsh medium student teachers. English medium secondary schools can access this grant at 50 per cent.³⁷⁵

194. They also highlighted the additional funding for the Open University employment based ITE courses. The employment costs for Welsh-medium schools are fully funded by the Welsh Government. Other initiatives that they fund included Cadw Cyswllt and Dysgu’r Dyfodol (both of which are delivered by Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol).³⁷⁶ (See paragraph 185.)

195. The Welsh Government said their national teacher recruitment campaign, Teaching Wales, is particularly focused on priority secondary subjects, including “increasing the numbers who can teach in Welsh”. The messaging is tailored with different ones for Welsh speakers. They said their research has shown that “a

³⁷¹ [Welsh Government, Welsh in education workforce plan, 24 May 2022](#)

³⁷² Written evidence, [TRR 23 EWC](#).

³⁷³ Written evidence, [TRR 06 Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru \(UCAC\)](#)

³⁷⁴ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 372](#)

³⁷⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 31 Welsh Government](#)

³⁷⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 31 Welsh Government](#)

significant number of Welsh speakers, have different motivations and barriers to consider teaching as a career. This has been reinforced in the creative testing”. Their research has shown that Welsh speaking graduates “are more likely to consider teaching as a career”. Previously there has been TV advertising on S4C in order to target Welsh speakers.³⁷⁷ For more information on promotion of teaching more broadly see paragraphs 32-42.

196. The Welsh Government told us about their joint working with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. As well as the work of the Coleg highlighted in paragraph 185, they also have “specific Welsh language focused activities at several key Welsh language summer events”.³⁷⁸

197. The National Centre for Learning Welsh told us about a pilot in June 2025, which offered a 10 day course for prospective ITE students. While they originally envisaged an intake of 15, 51 had signed up at the time they submitted their written evidence.³⁷⁹ When they gave oral evidence they reflected on this pilot. 40 people attended the course.

“Before they attended the course, 47 per cent said that they did not feel confident in Welsh; after the course—and it was a two-week intensive course—79 per cent of them said that they were much more confident to study a course through the medium of Welsh, and 29 per cent of those who didn’t intend to study a Welsh-medium course initially had changed their minds, and, from September, they will be following an ITE course through the medium of Welsh. There are interventions that are possible for us to make with not much investment that really will make a difference and really do make a difference.”³⁸⁰

This, they said, showed that “alternative models” should be considered.³⁸¹

198. In response to the Estyn 2023 inspection of ITE, resources have been created to support ITE providers in delivering the 35 hours of language development that is part of the course.³⁸² Coleg Cymraeg Cendleathol said the 35 hours “were crucial” and making a difference. But they said “it’s nowhere near enough”. They called for more opportunities during teaching training to develop Welsh skills, and

³⁷⁷ Written evidence, [TRR 31, Welsh Government](#)

³⁷⁸ Written evidence, [TRR 31, Welsh Government](#)

³⁷⁹ Written evidence, TRR 29, [The National Centre for Learning Welsh](#)

³⁸⁰ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 225](#)

³⁸¹ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 188](#)

³⁸² Written evidence, TRR 29, [The National Centre for Learning Welsh](#)

then follow through into the early years of a career. They said that the development of language skills through this period should be done “holistically”³⁸³ that can help guide the teacher “along the continuum ... over a period of years”³⁸⁴.

199. The National Centre for Learning Welsh felt that changes to ITE could be “far-reaching” in developing and supporting teachers Welsh language skills. They called for the number of hours dedicated to developing a student’s own Welsh language skills to be increased to 120. This would enable a student to complete “an entire progression level” before becoming a qualified teacher. They also called for more support for those who are “at the higher levels” of Welsh language skills, so they are confident enough to do some of their training in Welsh medium schools.³⁸⁵

200. The Welsh Language Commissioner said that Welsh language skill development should be compulsory for everyone training in Wales. They also called for the Welsh Government to establish a “a five-year Welsh language training framework which would be a mandatory part of training and qualifying as a teacher in Wales”. While starting during ITE, it should continue as part of the induction and professional development in the first four years of a career, and would be tailored to different levels of pre-existing Welsh skills. This framework would “have the long-term aim of ensuring that all teachers are able to teach through the medium of Welsh”³⁸⁶.

201. Coleg Cymraeg Cendleathol accepted the intensity of the PGCE course but suggested that if the course length was extended to “over 10 or 11 months” it would reduce the intensity, as well as also enable the development of language skills.³⁸⁷ They also suggested that language skills should developed throughout a teacher’s career.³⁸⁸

202. The Welsh Language Commissioner cited the School Workforce Census data which indicates “very little positive change” in the Welsh language skills of teachers over the last three years. This survey also showed “a high number of teachers in some local authorities” with either no or entry level Welsh skills.³⁸⁹

³⁸³ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 192](#)

³⁸⁴ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 222](#)

³⁸⁵ Written evidence, TRR 29, [The National Centre for Learning Welsh](#)

³⁸⁶ Written evidence, TRR 15, [Welsh Language Commissioner](#)

³⁸⁷ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 180](#)

³⁸⁸ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 194](#)

³⁸⁹ Written evidence, TRR 15, [Welsh Language Commissioner](#)

203. The National Centre for Learning Welsh has a national programme to help develop Welsh language skills within the “statutory education workforce”. This provides opportunities for those on ITE. It also includes refresher professional Welsh courses for prospective teachers who want to increase their confidence in using Welsh.³⁹⁰

204. The Welsh Government highlighted the Welsh-medium workforce capacity development grant, which is around £800k per academic year. This grant helps support schools “to develop innovative ways to solve some of their recruitment challenges”.³⁹¹

205. The Cabinet Secretary highlighted initiatives including Cynllun Pontio, which supports primary school teachers to become teachers in Welsh medium secondary schools. This is a “further £1.5 million investment”.³⁹² But she said more work was needed to upskill the “1,590 teachers who are currently able to teach in Welsh” but aren’t currently. As a result, they are funding the National Centre for Learning Welsh “with over £2 million” to increase this capacity.³⁹³

Recruitment into post

206. We heard about the high number of vacancies across Wales, although the challenges are harder for: shortage subjects, including STEM, and Welsh medium; some types of schools; or in some particular geographic areas. As with ITE the challenges are predominately faced by the secondary sector.

207. The Open University in Wales reminded us that ITE recruitment does not equal teacher recruitment. They said not all PGCE students want to teach in maintained schools, and “may be looking for careers in any number of education-adjacent roles”³⁹⁴. While Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol said that a number of ITE students will decide “to abandon teaching as a career and apply for jobs in other fields” at the end of their ITE studies. They cited EWC statistics which indicated there is a “difference of 15.5%” between those who are awarded QTS and those who register with the EWC.³⁹⁵

³⁹⁰ Written evidence, TRR 29, [The National Centre for Learning Welsh](#)

³⁹¹ Written evidence, [TRR 31 Welsh Government](#)

³⁹² [CYPE Committee, 17 September 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 51](#)

³⁹³ [CYPE Committee, 17 September 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 52](#)

³⁹⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 08 The Open University in Wales](#)

³⁹⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 12 Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol](#)

208. Cardiff Metropolitan University said that “an increasing number of NQTS” choose to work as supply teachers rather than taking a substantive role, despite this leading to worse employment terms and conditions.³⁹⁶

209. There was a consistent theme that recruitment was one of the biggest challenges faced by headteachers, including the Catholic Education Service.³⁹⁷ ASCL Cymru shared their findings from their survey where 95 per cent of respondents were having challenges recruiting. 42.8 per cent said they were “experiencing severe difficulty”, and 69.4 per cent had received no applicants for some posts.³⁹⁸

210. Cardiff Metropolitan University said that headteachers report having to advertise a post two or three times before they will get even a single application.³⁹⁹ They also highlighted that some schools will advertise for other subjects such as PE or Drama, when they have other vacancies, such as Maths, Science or English with the hope that the applicants will “show some potential for teaching [other areas] as a first or second subject”⁴⁰⁰.

211. During engagement with teachers, and headteachers we heard directly of the challenges. One said:

“The truth is really, in the last 12 years, we’ve seen a situation where recruitment was ok going to bad, and going from bad, to catastrophic.”⁴⁰¹

212. We heard that there has been a significant and noticeable decrease in the number of applicants applying for vacancies. Estyn said that “schools across Wales” have reported this with secondary schools particularly struggling. “The average number of applicants per vacancy has more than halved since 2011”. In contrast, primary school recruitment “has remained relatively buoyant”.⁴⁰² The Institute of Physics noted that the average number of applicants for science subjects has declined from 12.5 in 2011 to 3.9 in 2023. They said that physics was “one of the worst hit subjects”. They highlighted that in 2024, there were “fewer physics-trained teachers (174) than secondary schools (205)”. They said that 58 per

³⁹⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 4.11](#)

³⁹⁷ Written evidence, [TRR 09 Catholic Education Service](#)

³⁹⁸ Written evidence, [TRR 16 Association of School and College Leaders \(ASCL\) Cymru](#)

³⁹⁹ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 4.2](#)

⁴⁰⁰ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 4.4](#)

⁴⁰¹ [Citizen Engagement Team, Teacher Recruitment and Retention, Engagement Findings, paragraph 17, September 2025](#)

⁴⁰² Written evidence, [TRR 24 Estyn](#)

cent of secondary schools felt they were understaffed for physics which is “much higher” than other UK nations.⁴⁰³

213. ASCL Cymru said there are “significant” shortages in a number of subjects including maths, science, Welsh, music, modern foreign language and IT.⁴⁰⁴ While the Royal Society of Chemistry reported that schools often receive “few or no applications” for science posts.⁴⁰⁵ Swansea University Schools Partnership said that for subjects such as Maths, Physics and Welsh schools are “reporting extremely shallow pools of applicants from which to draw”⁴⁰⁶.

214. WLGA & ADEW said that local authorities are reporting “critical shortages in the following areas: Welsh language, Mathematics, Science (especially Chemistry and Physics), ICT, Technology, Geography, Modern foreign languages”⁴⁰⁷.

215. Estyn also highlighted music as a subject which can struggle.⁴⁰⁸ The EWC as well as detailing the subjects already listed in 213-214 (except Music) said that English was also struggling.⁴⁰⁹ Cardiff Metropolitan University said that subjects that traditionally had healthy recruitment such as English, Geography and Art and Design are now facing challenges.⁴¹⁰

216. As can be seen by the subjects cited, challenges are now extending beyond the “traditional” shortage subjects. Here are the views of two secondary headteachers who spoke to us as part of our engagement activity:

“Beyond P.E perhaps and maybe History, the challenges are huge and it’s not getting any better. It’s getting worse and worse every single year.”

“I think we’ll get to a point where we’ll just run out of teachers I’m afraid. We’ll have to stop teaching certain subjects.”⁴¹¹

⁴⁰³ Written evidence, [TRR 25 Institute of Physics](#)

⁴⁰⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 16 Association of School and College Leaders \(ASCL\) Cymru](#)

⁴⁰⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 18 Royal Society of Chemistry, paragraph 16](#)

⁴⁰⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 21 Swansea University Schools Partnership \(SUSP\)](#)

⁴⁰⁷ Written evidence, [TRR 22 Welsh Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Education in Wales](#)

⁴⁰⁸ Written evidence, [TRR 24 Estyn](#)

⁴⁰⁹ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 12](#)

⁴¹⁰ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 129](#)

⁴¹¹ [Citizen Engagement Team, Teacher Recruitment and Retention, Engagement Findings, paragraph 19, September 2025](#)

217. As with the issues around recruitment to Welsh medium ITE, these issues continue into recruitment to Welsh medium posts or schools. This was highlighted by:

- Cardiff Metropolitan University⁴¹²;
- Estyn⁴¹³;
- the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body⁴¹⁴;
- Swansea University Schools Partnership⁴¹⁵; and
- WLGA & ADEW⁴¹⁶.

218. EWC said that any challenges seen in secondary schools are “magnified” when it comes to Welsh medium settings. They said secondary heads report it as “really, really tough to get any new teacher in priority subjects when it’s Welsh medium”⁴¹⁷.

219. Teacher shortages are also more pronounced in schools serving more socio-economically deprived areas.⁴¹⁸

220. We heard that certain geographical areas can struggle to fill vacancies, for example rural or remote areas.⁴¹⁹ For example, schools along the English border can draw from a wider pool of candidates, compared to those in North or West Wales.⁴²⁰ The Royal Society of Chemistry reported that they were told that rural and Welsh medium schools particularly struggle to fill chemistry vacancies.⁴²¹

221. An additional challenge in some rural areas can be a lack of affordable housing. According to WLGA & ADEW this is a particular challenge in areas that “have been hit by the increases in second-home ownership and holiday homes”.

⁴¹² Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 4.2](#)

⁴¹³ Written evidence, [TRR 24 Estyn](#)

⁴¹⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 20 Independent Welsh Pay Review Body, paragraph 3.7](#)

⁴¹⁵ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 10](#)

⁴¹⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 22 Welsh Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Education in Wales](#)

⁴¹⁷ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings paragraph 32](#)

⁴¹⁸ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 4.8](#)

⁴¹⁹ Written evidence, [TRR 20 Independent Welsh Pay Review Body, paragraph 3.7](#); Written evidence, [TRR 21 Swansea University Schools Partnership \(SUSP\)](#); Written evidence, [TRR 22 Welsh Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Education in Wales](#)

⁴²⁰ [Citizen Engagement Team, Teacher Recruitment and Retention, Engagement Findings, paragraph 21, September 2025](#)

⁴²¹ Written evidence, [TRR 18 Royal Society of Chemistry, paragraph 16](#)

They also said that these are often areas with higher numbers of Welsh speaking graduates, thereby making it more difficult to recruit to Welsh language posts.⁴²²

222. Positively, we heard that schools who are involved in ITE report that they see this as a “key factor in their successful recruitment to posts”⁴²³.

223. The Welsh Government were very clear that while national issues are a matter for them, recruitment to specific posts were the responsibility of individual schools, and that issues faced by particular areas are the responsibility of local authorities.

“Staffing challenges faced by schools are highly contextual and national level concerns (such as the level of ITE recruitment into primary, STEM subjects and Welsh-medium) may not be applicable at a local level. The responsibility for the employment of teachers in schools lies with local authorities and governing bodies as the employing bodies. They are responsible for ensuring that sufficient, suitable staff are employed or engaged to work at their school/s in order to provide education appropriate for the ages, aptitudes, abilities and needs of their learners.”⁴²⁴

224. The Welsh Government indicated that the data shows that the average number of applicants per post has declined since 2020/21. Although teaching Welsh as a subject has seen an increase.

“The average number of applications for priority subject posts, ..., are consistently below the average number of applications for all secondary posts (5.2). Chemistry (1.8 applications per post), Information Technology (2.0), Biology (2.9), Design and Technology (3.0) and Welsh (3.2) received the lowest number of applications per post in AY2023/24. This compares to Physical Education (8.3), History (8.0) and English (5.0) which consistently receive a greater number of applications per post on average.”⁴²⁵

⁴²² Written evidence, [TRR 22 Welsh Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Education in Wales](#)

⁴²³ Written evidence, [TRR 21 Swansea University Schools Partnership \(SUSP\)](#)

⁴²⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 31 Welsh Government](#)

⁴²⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 31 Welsh Government](#)

225. More broadly, the average number of applications per post in 2023/24 was 10, an increase from 7.8 in 2022/23, but still lower than the 12.0 in 2020/21. There is quite a contrast between settings, with primaries receiving on average 15.2 applications per post, compared to 5.2 applications per post in secondary.⁴²⁶

226. The Cabinet Secretary acknowledged that the recruitment challenges vary according to location. She highlighted data that showed the highest average number of applications per post in 2023/24 were in urban areas such as Cardiff, Newport, Vale of Glamorgan and Swansea. The lower average number of applications per post were in Ceredigion, Powys, Denbighshire, Pembrokeshire and Anglesey. She said that work was underway with the ITE partnerships to try and address the challenges faced by rural schools. One action includes Ceredigion and Powys forming a mid-Wales partnership, and working with Cardiff Metropolitan University “to explore the possibility of a blended programme” which would look to train qualified teachers within the geographical area.⁴²⁷

227. The Cabinet Secretary talked about planned work with local authorities to ensure there is data at a local authority level:

“... where we work closely with them to really drill down into what the challenge is, is really important, because we don't have that data at a really detailed local level at the moment, so we haven't got live data on the number of vacancies, we haven't got an understanding of local-level trends in terms of retention, reasons for leaving the profession, the age profile of the workforce. So, we need to do that work with local authorities.”⁴²⁸

228. The Welsh Government have commissioned the Education Policy Institute to consider how teachers can be encouraged to work in areas of socioeconomic deprivation. The Cabinet Secretary said she was “considering the report's findings” and that she was “keen” to work with schools and local authorities to incentivise teachers to work in these schools. This was complex, but could include support for travel costs or bursaries.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 31 Welsh Government](#)

⁴²⁷ [CYPE Committee, 17 September 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 45](#)

⁴²⁸ [CYPE Committee, 17 September 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 45](#)

⁴²⁹ [CYPE Committee, 17 September 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 46](#)

Our view

229. Since we decided to do this work, the Welsh Government announced plans to develop the Workforce Plan (see paragraph 8). We welcome this. We hope that the evidence we have gathered and our conclusions will help shape the Plan so that Wales can develop a sustainable, high-quality, healthy and happy teaching workforce.

230. Teaching has a perception issue. The joys and benefits of a teaching career are often lost in highlighting the very real challenges that the education system faces. While there need to be significant changes which will help address the root causes of these challenges, there also needs to be a greater emphasis on the positive elements of choosing a career in education.

231. Some of the issues that drive negative perceptions of teaching, such as workload, challenging pupil behaviour and the impact of social media are covered in our next Chapter. But we note that these are all issues that impact on the perception, as well as the reality of teaching on a daily basis. In turn, this can have a significant impact on recruitment into ITE, and then into actual teaching posts.

232. We do not wish to underplay the challenges the education system faces, many of which we will go on to highlight throughout the report. Teaching can be challenging, but there are many positive elements of the career which need to be spotlighted and spoken of publicly.

233. Teaching is a profession that changes lives on a daily basis. A teacher's impact lives long after students have left a classroom or school. Almost everybody has a story of that one teacher who made a difference, or who ignited a love of a particular subject which then developed into either a life-long passion or career. But teachers don't just change one student's life, they positively impact on tens, or even hundreds of students every single year. These impacts can ripple out from the student into the family or wider community. Few other careers have this life changing impact on this type of scale. Do we take this element of teaching for granted? Should it be celebrated and commented on more? Some of the best moments of this inquiry were when witnesses started talking about why they went into teaching, and what they loved about this very special and unique job. It is essential that these aspects of teaching are at the forefront of any discussions or promotion of teaching as a career choice.

234. There is a clear need to strengthen the perception of teaching as a high-quality, rewarding profession that attracts both young people and career changers. Those currently in the classroom play a vital role in shaping this perception, as their experiences can play a significant role in influencing choices of potential teachers. However, we have heard that the challenges of the role can sometimes overshadow its many positives, which may affect the attractiveness of the profession. Supporting teachers to share a balanced picture of their work could help address this.

235. We believe that those groups and organisations that work in education or represent those in education have a social and professional responsibility to share the positive nature of teaching. We understand that for some this needs to be balanced with their duty to highlight the issues faced by the profession. But care needs to be taken to ensure that in doing this, the positive elements of teaching are not consistently overshadowed.

236. We know that schools often invite alumni to return and talk about their careers. We suspect that few schools invite alumni who have gone into teaching. Yet, this is a great opportunity to promote teaching as an aspiration and rewarding career choice.

237. The world of work has changed dramatically in recent years. People have far more options available to them. Also, people demand different things from their working lives, and prioritise different aspects such as flexible working. The way we view our working lives has changed, instead of a “job for life” people actively want to pursue different opportunities at different points in their lives. This “portfolio” approach to careers whilst creating challenges to the teaching profession, also opens doors to people joining the teaching profession later in their career. It is not all doom and gloom for the prospects of the teaching profession, but this means promoting teaching in different ways and to different groups and opening up access.

238. This change in the way we work has not yet been reflected in widening the routes into teaching. While some work has been done with the introduction of salaried or part time PGCEs, these routes still demand an appropriate undergraduate subject degree.

239. Clearly, any alternative route into teaching needs to maintain the highest standards. Just as teaching is one of the most rewarding jobs, it is also one of the most important. Quality cannot be lost in the drive to increase the numbers of teachers. But we think it’s important to explore alternative routes into teaching,

especially looking at schemes such as Teach First, or routes that enable people already working in education to progress into teaching.

240. We want the Welsh Government to outline to us what they feel are the opportunities and challenges for harnessing the opportunities for career changers to enter into the profession while maintaining standards. In doing this we think they should explore the alternative routes with a view to implementing those which the evidence suggests could support more high quality teachers into the profession.

241. We would welcome more information from the Welsh Government on the effectiveness of previously run programmes such as Teach First and the Graduate Teaching Programme. In particular: how effective they were in improving the diversity of the teaching profession, and how effective they supported career changers entering the profession. Why was the decision made to discontinue these programmes, and what was the evidence that led to these decisions?

Recommendation 1. The Welsh Government provides more information on the effectiveness of the previously run Teach First and Graduate Teaching programmes in Wales, including how effective they were in supporting a broader range of people into the teaching profession, and why it was decided to discontinue support for the programmes.

242. Simple barriers such as an unwieldy or difficult application process for ITE need to be removed. We welcome the Welsh Government's commitment to revisit the challenges faced by those ITE providers who use the UCAS application system. (See paragraphs 82-86).

243. The cost of ITE can be off-putting to potential students. We think there is a need for further work exploring the extent to which the costs of ITE are a barrier, whether the costs disproportionately affect specific groups of potential students and the options for supporting students with ITE costs. We heard a number of ideas which we feel deserve further consideration. We think this work would fit well as part of the Workforce Plan and encourage the Welsh Government to include it as a strand in the Plan.

Recommendation 2. As part of its Strategic Education Workforce Plan, the Welsh Government either undertake or commission work looking at whether the costs to a student of ITE acts as a barrier to entry and successful completion; whether these barriers are higher for particular groups of potential students; and what options there may be to remove these financial barriers. This work should be done

within the context of the current financial climate to ensure any recommendations for change are feasible and affordable and will improve recruitment and retention.

244. On the specific issue of whether a 50 per cent relevant subject specific undergraduate degree is needed for entry to postgraduate ITE, we welcome the Welsh Government's work in this space. We agree with those stakeholders who highlighted that relevant subject knowledge can come from a wider base than just an undergraduate degree. In some cases, people may have an undergraduate degree, but it is not classed as relevant enough. Any work on this needs to be balanced with the need to maintain high standards.

Recommendation 3. The Welsh Government in responding to this report provides a timeline for the work examining the 50 per cent degree relevance requirement for joining ITE.

245. The evidence on the impact of incentives is mixed. We believe the Welsh Government's work looking at this is important. Will the review give us the answers we need as to whether incentives work effectively? We understand this work will not be published before either report or the Workforce Plan is published. We, therefore, do not feel it would be appropriate for us to make firm recommendations in this space without sight of the work. We expect this review to be comprehensive and to provide the Welsh Government with robust information which will support them in making policy decisions rooted in evidence. We acknowledge that this could result in the next Welsh Government having some important decisions to make on incentives.

246. As we note, one of the recurring themes in this Senedd has been a lack of timely, publicly available data to inform policy decisions and evaluation. This inquiry has been no different. This relates to a number of different elements of this inquiry, including determining the number and allocation of ITE places, and recruitment into teaching posts.

247. In relation to concerns about "cold spots" for ITE, we believe it's important that we have the right data to better understand the impacts of such cold spots, rather than making recommendations for ITE provision in every Welsh university. Data must be used so that the Welsh Government and providers can make informed decisions about ITE provision. Understanding what the data says will mean that policy interventions can be better tailored to answer the challenges.

248. We welcome the additional money that has been provided as part of the Welsh Government's Draft Budget (see paragraph 171171) to recognise the additional costs of running high quality ITE provision for providers. The extent to which this covers the additional costs and the impact the funding has, is something we will flag as an area of interest for our successor Committee.

249. While all aspects of secondary education struggle with teacher recruitment, the Welsh medium sector faces particular challenges. This was our route into this work. In our Stage 1 report on the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill, we recommended that the Welsh Government identifies the most appropriate legislative mechanism to place a duty on Welsh Ministers to prepare a statutory education workforce plan, which covered all aspects of the education workforce.⁴³⁰ The Welsh Government accepted the recommendation in principle, citing the forthcoming development of the Workforce Plan but not placing it on a statutory basis.⁴³¹

250. There are clearly some untapped Welsh skills within the education workforce, with over 1,500 teachers who have Welsh language skills not currently using them in their current role. We are aware that some of this can be down to a lack of confidence about an individual's own Welsh language skills. Giving these people the support to be able to move into the Welsh medium sector would be one way of filling the current gap. It is not clear to us if there is sufficient understanding of the wider reasons why these teachers are not currently using their Welsh medium skills. We think there needs to be further exploration of this issue, with a view to addressing any particular factors.

Recommendation 4. The Welsh Government should identify the factors which stop teachers with Welsh language skills from using them professionally. Once these factors have been identified, the Welsh Government should review the current support provided to these teachers to ensure it is meeting their needs and is directed in the most effective ways.

251. People leave Wales for England for higher education, and for ITE. The higher bursaries can play a part in this (see paragraphs 146 - 148), but it is not the only factor. But, this does not mean they are lost to the Welsh education workforce forever. Moving between the two systems should be as easy as possible. Also important, is that the public narrative makes this clear. We don't want

⁴³⁰ [CYPE Committee, Welsh Language and Education \(Wales\) Bill: Stage 1 Report, December 2024, Recommendation 3](#)

⁴³¹ [Letter from Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language to CYPE Committee Chair, Welsh Language and Education \(Wales\) Bill, 13 January 2025](#)

misconceptions about moving to Wales because of the different curriculum, or concerns about Welsh language skills putting people off. Any such myths must be busted.

Recommendation 5. The Welsh Government should ensure that all promotional work about teaching in Wales makes it clear that people who have done teacher training in England do not face barriers to moving to Wales to teach.

252. Some subjects, and some schools face particular challenges in recruiting teachers into post. Subject wise this might be the result of small numbers entering into teacher training. School wise this may be down to geography or because they work in a more challenging context. There are no easy answers to solving these challenges. We hope that the Workforce Plan will have the space to explore some of these issues in more detail.

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3. Retention

Retention rates are less challenging than recruitment, but there is enough attrition to cause issues when combined with low recruitment. Workload is a key factor, along with the need for improved professional learning and flexible working opportunities.

253. Teacher retention is not as bad as recruitment.⁴³² However, this does not mean that there aren't some challenges. Swansea University Schools Partnership said their school colleagues report retention as stable for a number of secondary subjects.⁴³³

254. Cardiff Metropolitan University said retention in Wales “whilst concerning” compared more favourably to the picture in England “where one in five NQTs leave teaching in their first 2 years and 4 in ten after 5 years, with these proportions continuing to rise year on year”⁴³⁴. The National Foundation for Educational Research suggested leaving rates are calculated differently in England. They said when they tried to measure them similarly “we actually found less difference between Wales and similar areas of England”. Although they noted this was done during the pandemic which affected retention rates.⁴³⁵

255. The EWC data indicates retention rates are relatively stable, with 75.9 per cent of teachers registered in 2020, still registered in 2025. (This rate was slightly higher for Welsh speaking teachers at 79.9 per cent.) While 57.7 per cent of teachers registered in 2015, were still registered in 2025. They said the numbers of teachers deregistering “has remained fairly stable at around an average of 2,400 deregistered each over the past five years”⁴³⁶.

256. While retention is not considered as perilous as recruitment, it cannot be ignored. Education Support said it was important that an “equal emphasis” is placed on retention in the forthcoming Workforce Plan saying “there is no

⁴³² Written evidence, [TRR 23 EWC](#).

⁴³³ Written evidence, [TRR 21 Swansea University Schools Partnership \(SUSP\)](#).

⁴³⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 5.5](#).

⁴³⁵ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 162](#).

⁴³⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 23 EWC](#).

sustainable recruitment without effective retention”⁴³⁷. Cardiff Metropolitan University said that retention was a more complex issue than recruitment, and that there was a need for a “better understanding”.⁴³⁸ They also called urgently for more “robust empirical evidence” on teacher retention.⁴³⁹

257. NEU Cymru highlighted both the financial and human cost of teachers leaving the profession. As well as losing the expertise of teachers, there is also the “time and finance cost” of training new teachers to fill the shortfall caused.⁴⁴⁰ Swansea University Schools Partnership also noted the impact of experienced staff leaving the profession.⁴⁴¹

258. ASCL Cymru said retention challenges are “systemic, urgent, and worsening”⁴⁴². As with some of the recruitment issues, Cardiff Metropolitan University said retention “is likely to be more problematic” in rural areas or in areas with higher levels of socioeconomic disadvantage.⁴⁴³ The National Foundation for Educational Research said that schools with higher free school meal rates tend to have higher rates of teachers leaving.⁴⁴⁴

259. The Education Policy Institute said that some turnover is “often healthy” as it brings new ideas and opens up progression opportunities for other staff. They said consideration needs to be given to ensure this happens.⁴⁴⁵

Early career support

260. The first five years of a teacher’s career are critical in terms of building the foundations for a long term career. There are concerns that a lot of teachers are leaving during this period:

- Cardiff Metropolitan University⁴⁴⁶;
- Estyn⁴⁴⁷;

⁴³⁷ Written evidence, [TRR 10 Education Support](#)

⁴³⁸ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 160](#)

⁴³⁹ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 5.8](#)

⁴⁴⁰ Written evidence, [TRR 13 National Education Union \(NEU\) Cymru](#)

⁴⁴¹ Written evidence, [TRR 21 Swansea University Schools Partnership \(SUSP\)](#)

⁴⁴² Written evidence, [TRR 16 Association of School and College Leaders \(ASCL\) Cymru](#)

⁴⁴³ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 5.7](#)

⁴⁴⁴ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 161](#)

⁴⁴⁵ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 157](#)

⁴⁴⁶ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 176](#)

⁴⁴⁷ Written evidence, [TRR 24 Estyn](#)

- Independent Welsh Pay Review Body⁴⁴⁸;
- NEU Cymru⁴⁴⁹; and
- WLGA & ADEW⁴⁵⁰.

261. NEU Cymru said that the number of teachers leaving in the first five years “has increased significantly”. They said “a quarter of teachers” leave in this time, referring to “particularly high wastage rates”.⁴⁵¹ While Estyn said that “worryingly” in terms of secondary teachers leaving, the highest numbers are those teaching “English, mathematics, science and Welsh second language”⁴⁵². Cardiff Metropolitan University said a local authority reported that “one in six of its NQTs have left teaching in the last 3 years”⁴⁵³.

262. One of the factors identified is a lack of professional support in these early years of a career.⁴⁵⁴ Cardiff Metropolitan University said there was a need for a “strong focus” on supporting NQTs and early career teachers.⁴⁵⁵ The WLGA & ADEW called for support to be spread throughout the first three years of a teacher’s career, pointing to successful mentoring programmes in England.⁴⁵⁶ ASCL Cymru said that the NQT programme could be extended to a two year programme meaning “they could not only survive year 1, they could start to develop and thrive in year 2, before they lost that additional support”⁴⁵⁷.

263. EWC reminded us that teaching is a big job and that “teaching and learning is messy”. They said “nobody can get the job ... under their belt within a couple of years”⁴⁵⁸. ADEW said the first five years are critical, and that after this period there is a “real turning point and a shift” with teachers gaining confidence and autonomy. Therefore “support structures” need to be in place during the first five

⁴⁴⁸ Written evidence, [TRR 20 Independent Welsh Pay Review Body, paragraph 3.11](#)

⁴⁴⁹ Written evidence, [TRR 13 National Education Union \(NEU\) Cymru](#)

⁴⁵⁰ Written evidence, [TRR 22 Welsh Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Education in Wales](#)

⁴⁵¹ Written evidence, [TRR 13 National Education Union \(NEU\) Cymru](#)

⁴⁵² Written evidence, [TRR 24 Estyn](#)

⁴⁵³ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 5.2](#)

⁴⁵⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 22 Welsh Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Education in Wales](#)

⁴⁵⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, section 5, summary headlines](#)

⁴⁵⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 22 Welsh Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Education in Wales](#)

⁴⁵⁷ [CYPE Committee, 18 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 43](#)

⁴⁵⁸ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 83](#)

years, as they create the building blocks to a successful, long term teaching career.⁴⁵⁹

264. Swansea University Schools Partnership highlighted that support for newly qualified teachers “is radically reduced” from the ITE, which “some found hard to adjust to”⁴⁶⁰. Estyn said that currently there is not a sufficiently robust programme for NQTs.⁴⁶¹ Cardiff Metropolitan University said schools have less time to provide both formal and informal support for NQTs, with a particular gap in coaching from “expert teachers”.⁴⁶²

265. Cardiff Metropolitan University raised concerns about a lack of continuity between ITE and induction for NQTs. Once students graduate, there is “no formal liaison or continuity between university tutors who have worked closely with them” and those who will be leading their NQT induction.⁴⁶³ They said there was the potential for universities to have a “greater role” in early career development, as they do in supporting other professions.⁴⁶⁴

266. Both University of South Wales⁴⁶⁵ and Yr Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership, University of Wales, Trinity St David⁴⁶⁶ reported that their graduates would value having ongoing relationships with the university. University of South Wales said it was an area that could merit further research into whether it would improve retention rates.⁴⁶⁷

267. The Association of Language Learning also this. They cited their own experience of delivering ITE, they receive a lot of emails / messages from past students asking for support. While the support may be on quite basic things, it will be on things they didn't encounter in their training. This can be compounded if they are the only language teacher in a school so can't access support through immediate colleagues. This can lead to feeling overwhelmed, potentially contributing to them leaving the profession.⁴⁶⁸

268. ADEW also talked about the level of overwhelm that early career teachers can feel, and the need to have clear support they can access.⁴⁶⁹ This was borne out

⁴⁵⁹ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraphs 286-287](#)

⁴⁶⁰ [Written evidence, TRR 21 Swansea University Schools Partnership \(SUSP\)](#)

⁴⁶¹ [Written evidence, TRR 24 Estyn](#)

⁴⁶² [Written evidence, TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 5.39](#)

⁴⁶³ [Written evidence, TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 6.2](#)

⁴⁶⁴ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 190](#)

⁴⁶⁵ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 95](#)

⁴⁶⁶ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 112](#)

⁴⁶⁷ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 95](#)

⁴⁶⁸ [CYPE Committee, 18 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 306](#)

⁴⁶⁹ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 301](#)

in discussions with teachers, with many NQTs reported feeling overwhelmed by the expectations that were placed on them at the start of their careers. One reported frustration at the lack of “grace” for teachers teaching classes on their own for the first time.⁴⁷⁰

269. Comparisons were made with other careers and the type of induction and support they receive. Cardiff Metropolitan University highlighted the more structured approach taken in both nursing and social work. Both have specific support programmes in the early years.⁴⁷¹ They said that early career support should resemble an apprenticeship model including:

“... reduced timetables, structured coaching and planned, personalised, professional learning in a way that is commonplace in medicine and other professions.”⁴⁷²

270. Wrexham University⁴⁷³ supported calls for new teachers to have reduced timetables. While ADEW suggested early career teachers having more “protected time” during which they could access coaching and mentoring support.⁴⁷⁴

271. There were repeated calls for early career support to be strengthened.⁴⁷⁵ Swansea University Schools Partnership called for a systematic review of support and expectations of newly qualified teachers and early career teachers.⁴⁷⁶ While Cardiff Metropolitan University said it was unclear how NQTs’ support entitlement is “evaluated and guaranteed”⁴⁷⁷.

272. Yr Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership, University of Wales, Trinity St David said it was important to ensure that schools who are taking on NQTs have both the time and resources to provide effective support and mentoring.⁴⁷⁸

273. UCAC said the level of support varies between schools. They called for “more robust national leadership on this, and more collaboration, in order to ensure that every individual receives the support that they deserve”⁴⁷⁹. The Institute of Physics

⁴⁷⁰ [Citizen Engagement Team, Teacher Recruitment and Retention, Engagement Findings, paragraph 81, September 2025](#)

⁴⁷¹ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraphs 6.9-6.10](#)

⁴⁷² Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 7.19](#)

⁴⁷³ Written evidence, [TRR 30 Wrexham University](#)

⁴⁷⁴ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 302](#)

⁴⁷⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 22 Welsh Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Education in Wales](#); Written evidence, [TRR 25 Institute of Physics](#)

⁴⁷⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 21 Swansea University Schools Partnership \(SUSP\)](#)

⁴⁷⁷ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 5.39](#)

⁴⁷⁸ Written evidence, [TRR 28, Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership, University of Wales, Trinity St David](#)

⁴⁷⁹ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 318](#)

also highlighted the inconsistencies in support. It is too reliant on what individual schools can offer.⁴⁸⁰ The Royal Society of Biology also suggested that location can affect the level of support, suggesting that those in rural areas may not have the same access to support as those in urban areas.⁴⁸¹

274. Yet the impact of getting the right support in the early years pays off, with Cardiff Metropolitan University highlighting research which shows that if they get the right support, NQTs will make the “most rapid development in the first two years of teaching following ITE”⁴⁸².

275. Some suggested ITE does not equip teachers sufficiently for what teaching is like in practice, in particular challenging behaviour.⁴⁸³ The Catholic Education Service said there was a “general feeling” that NQTs “are less prepared for the rigours of teaching than previous generations”⁴⁸⁴.

276. The WLGA & ADEW said that the nature of ITE can be “fragmented and overly focused on irrelevant paperwork or academic studies leaving less experienced teachers with limited practical exposure”⁴⁸⁵. ADEW said that some teachers come into the profession feeling “underprepared”, and asked if there should be more investment in ITE.⁴⁸⁶

277. Cardiff Metropolitan University said that the “flaw in the system” was expecting a one-year postgraduate course plus an often variable induction programme to be the mechanism to produce the teachers we want. They called for a “long, thin development process”. Again, they pointed at the more structured approach taken in nursing, social work and other professions.⁴⁸⁷

278. Cardiff Metropolitan University said that high quality induction and early career development is of “great importance”. They highlighted the 2020 Welsh Government review which found this to be insufficient, and that as a result new guidance and requirements were drawn up for local authorities. While they said the guidance included effective practice, NQTs were still reporting that the support they were receiving was “highly variable” in both time and support

⁴⁸⁰ [CYPE Committee, 18 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 191](#)

⁴⁸¹ [CYPE Committee, 18 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 193](#)

⁴⁸² Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 7.19](#)

⁴⁸³ Written evidence, [TRR 22 Welsh Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Education in Wales](#)

⁴⁸⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 09, Catholic Education Service](#)

⁴⁸⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 22 Welsh Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Education in Wales](#)

⁴⁸⁶ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 303](#)

⁴⁸⁷ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 187](#)

received.⁴⁸⁸ They described getting support in the early career stages as “something of a lottery” and therefore it was “hardly surprising” the numbers leaving at this point in their careers.⁴⁸⁹ They called induction “crucial”.⁴⁹⁰

279. The EWC said that induction needed improving “in terms of mentoring, coaching and working through that business of academic rigour and practical application”⁴⁹¹.

280. The University of Southampton said induction needs to be more personalised to the individual teacher, and less compliance focused. They said that depersonalised inductions can result in “disillusionment and exit”. They suggest that a “developmental approach to retention focuses on mentoring that builds confidence, identity, and professional practice”⁴⁹².

“This means treating ECTs as long-term assets whose needs evolve over time—not just as trainees to be ‘ticked off’ a statutory checklist. When teachers are meaningfully developed, not merely assessed, they are far more likely to stay, thrive, and contribute as future mentors and leaders.”⁴⁹³

281. A number of stakeholders highlighted the importance of effective mentoring for NQTs, including Wrexham University⁴⁹⁴; and Yr Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership, University of Wales, Trinity St David⁴⁹⁵.

282. The University of Southampton pointed to findings from their own research conducted in England on the importance of mentorship for early career teachers calling it a “critical but underexploited factor” in recruitment and retention. The piloting of a mentoring toolkit has indicated “improvements to the visibility and value of mentoring ... a renewed commitment to subject-specific CPD and greater alignment between ECT progression and school development planning”. They said their research shows a close link between retention and the “quality and context sensitivity” of mentorship.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁸⁸ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraphs 5.37-5.38](#)

⁴⁸⁹ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 5.40](#)

⁴⁹⁰ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 7.19](#)

⁴⁹¹ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 83](#)

⁴⁹² Written evidence, [TRR 14 University of Southampton](#)

⁴⁹³ Written evidence, [TRR 14 University of Southampton](#)

⁴⁹⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 30 Wrexham University](#)

⁴⁹⁵ [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 111](#)

⁴⁹⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 14 University of Southampton](#)

283. They also said that the current requirement for secondary school teachers to have subject specific mentors was not necessarily what is needed by early career teachers. They suggested that what was more important was development of “classroom confidence and pedagogical identity in subject areas”. They said that their research shows that effective mentorship leads to both the early career teacher and the mentor “feeling valued, retained, and professionally ambitious”. It also shows that mentoring is “not a peripheral add-on to teacher development but a pivotal determinant of workforce sustainability in secondary education”⁴⁹⁷.

284. Swansea University Schools Partnership reported that some newly qualified teachers felt there was “inconsistent mentoring”.⁴⁹⁸ NEU Cymru said that before the middle tier reform there was an “external verifier” from the regional consortia, but they were concerned that there may not now be support for the induction mentor or the NQT.⁴⁹⁹

285. The Welsh Government said that support for NQTs was reviewed in 2022, and as a result, all NQTs have a funded mentor and a professional learning programme in their first year. Dysgu is also being asked to review the professional learning support for NQTs:

“... to ensure that it aligns with my priorities and provides a clear continuation of support from ITE as they progress through their first few years of teaching as part of an early career programme.”⁵⁰⁰

286. The Cabinet Secretary said that while retention rates were better than in England “we definitely have more to do”. She acknowledged the importance of early career support. Currently the Welsh Government funds a package of around £5 million of support, including a funded mentor for every NQT and a 10 per cent timetable reduction to support their accessing professional development.⁵⁰¹

287. However, she said more still needed to be done. Work is ongoing to develop an early career pathway for teachers in their first five years. This work is being done with teachers, Dysgu and other stakeholders.

“My expectation is this career pathway will commence in ITE, which would be year 1, and incorporate the statutory induction

⁴⁹⁷ Written evidence, [TRR 14 University of Southampton](#)

⁴⁹⁸ Written evidence, [TRR 21 Swansea University Schools Partnership \(SUSP\)](#)

⁴⁹⁹ [CYPE Committee, 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 327](#)

⁵⁰⁰ Written evidence, [TRR 31 Welsh Government](#)

⁵⁰¹ [CYPE Committee, 17 September 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 88](#)

period, year 2, but then, vitally, go over, then, into the following three years of the first five years of their career. We're currently scoping the development of a three-year early career professional learning programme. That would include a common curriculum for early career PL, a focus on the key issues facing early career teachers, including things like child development, neurodiversity, well-being, behaviour and subject knowledge, and a consistent and coherent model of support for professional learning and inquiry across ITE providers."

This will also include "ongoing participation in school-led inquiry, both within and beyond the early career teachers' own school"⁵⁰².

Professional learning

288. Professional learning extends far beyond the early years of a teacher's career. We heard a range of evidence emphasising how good, timely and effective professional learning can help support retention. However, currently it is not always easily accessible, and there is variability across Wales. EWC said that the access to professional learning is "inconsistent" across Wales.⁵⁰³

289. Cardiff Metropolitan University highlighted that while professional learning has improved it remains non-mandatory and does not compare as favourably to other OECD countries. They said that "many high performing education systems require teachers to participate in a minimum of 100 hours a year of high-quality professional learning"⁵⁰⁴.

290. Estyn said that structured and meaningful plans for professional learning are "essential" for recruitment and retention. They said the "most effective schools have a strong culture of professional learning that provides for teachers' needs at all career stages and creates pathways for progression"⁵⁰⁵. While Cardiff Metropolitan University said that professional learning which is tailored to individual school contexts is "of significant importance" to both retention and job satisfaction.⁵⁰⁶

291. The University of Southampton said retention was about more than incentives or working conditions, and teachers need to "feel they are learning,

⁵⁰² [CYPE Committee, 17 September 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraphs 88-89](#)

⁵⁰³ Written evidence, [TRR 23 EWC](#)

⁵⁰⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 6.5](#)

⁵⁰⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 24 Estyn](#)

⁵⁰⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 04 Cardiff Metropolitan University, paragraph 5.31](#)

- UCAC⁷⁷⁸.

471. One of the particular challenges is that heads have to take the lead on finding financial savings, which often involve redundancies. This can have a particular impact on stress and wellbeing.⁷⁷⁹ In some instances, the NAHT said, heads are having to take on other roles like caretaking because they cannot afford to employ staff. Yet these are roles which are critical to running a school.⁷⁸⁰

472. The reality of schools having to do more beyond traditional education has an impact on school leader workload. This was highlighted by the Catholic Education Service⁷⁸¹. NAHT described the “mission creep” facing school leaders, and called for school leaders to be able to focus on teaching and learning, and supporting teachers.⁷⁸²

473. Education Support said:

“Leaders tell us that they experience a ‘burden of failure’ from the emotional toll of leading an organisation where they know that children cannot thrive, but feel that there is nothing they can do about it due to systemic factors. This is exacerbated by a sense that there is positive, well-intentioned ambition and vision for education in Wales but that this cannot always be delivered on the ground.”⁷⁸³

474. The impact of all these factors can be significant on the mental health and wellbeing of school leaders. UCAC said these pressures were causing some to leave the profession altogether.⁷⁸⁴

475. Education Support said that wellbeing of school leaders is a “real cause for concern”.

“Our Teacher Wellbeing Index 2024 finds that rates of anxiety, depression, burnout and acute stress among leaders remain at high levels across the UK, including Wales. This has a meaningful impact on the health of individual leaders, their

⁷⁷⁸ Written evidence, [TRR 06 Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru \(UCAC\)](#)

⁷⁷⁹ Written evidence, [TRR 06 Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru \(UCAC\)](#); Written evidence, [TRR 10 Education Support](#)

⁷⁸⁰ [CYPE Committee, 18 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 45](#)

⁷⁸¹ Written evidence, [TRR 09, Catholic Education Service](#)

⁷⁸² [CYPE Committee, 18 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 45](#)

⁷⁸³ Written evidence, [TRR 10 Education Support](#)

⁷⁸⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 06 Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru \(UCAC\)](#)

teams; as well as staff retention and the quality of education that can be delivered for our children and young people.”⁷⁸⁵

476. Education Support said that the vocational nature of working in education can sometimes lead to a blurring between “personal and professional identity”. They thought this might explain why there are higher levels of stress in education compared to other professions. They called for more research to “better understand the link between vocation, professional identity and stress”. They said that professional supervision which is a “relatively low-cost intervention” can “have a big impact on personal wellbeing”. They said there had been a 24 per cent reduction of school leaders wanting to leave their job after accessing it. They also said they saw an increase in wellbeing scores.⁷⁸⁶

477. ASCL Cymru highlighted the “sense of isolation in leadership roles”.⁷⁸⁷ WLGA also talked about the isolated nature of the role.⁷⁸⁸ While EWC highlighted that there was a lack of time for reflection and self-evaluation because school leaders are “firefighting” making it more difficult for them to “get ahead of the game” and ensure they are driving the school forward.⁷⁸⁹

478. As a result of these various different pressures, we heard that a lot of teachers choose not to go into leadership.⁷⁹⁰ The breadth of responsibility and accountability meant that middle leaders are becoming increasingly reluctant to progress to senior leadership roles. This was raised by:

- ASCL Cymru⁷⁹¹;
- Catholic Education Service⁷⁹²;
- EWC⁷⁹³;
- NAHT Cymru⁷⁹⁴; and

⁷⁸⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 10 Education Support](#)

⁷⁸⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 10 Education Support](#)

⁷⁸⁷ Written evidence, [TRR 16 Association of School and College Leaders \(ASCL\) Cymru](#)

⁷⁸⁸ [CYPE Committee 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 329](#)

⁷⁸⁹ [CYPE Committee 5 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 100](#)

⁷⁹⁰ Written evidence, [TRR 06 Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru \(UCAC\)](#); Written evidence, [TRR 21 Swansea University Schools Partnership \(SUSP\)](#)

⁷⁹¹ Written evidence, [TRR 16 Association of School and College Leaders \(ASCL\) Cymru](#)

⁷⁹² Written evidence, [TRR 09, Catholic Education Service](#)

⁷⁹³ Written evidence, [TRR 23 Education Workforce Council](#)

⁷⁹⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 26 NAHT Cymru](#)

- Teachers and school leaders⁷⁹⁵.

479. ASCL Cymru said that the desirability of leadership roles is affected by the way teachers perceive school leaders in their own settings.⁷⁹⁶ They said a lot of people decide not to progress past Deputy Head position because they see the challenges faced by their own heads.⁷⁹⁷

480. Swansea University Schools Partnership called for a review into career development opportunities, in particular how middle leaders can be better supported to “encourage” them to progress into senior leadership roles.⁷⁹⁸ WLGA & ADEW said there was a need for a “clear and ambitious pathway for career development” in particular for headteachers to progress into different roles such as school improvement and system leaders.⁷⁹⁹

481. The school leaders we spoke to made a distinction between pastoral leadership roles and academic leadership roles. There was agreement that it is more difficult to recruit to the pastoral roles than the academic roles. This was attributed to the level of scrutiny pastoral leaders face from families, senior leaders and other support services.⁸⁰⁰

482. School leaders also highlighted that there can be challenges getting people to move from Assistant Head roles into Deputy Head and more senior roles. This was attributed to the increased responsibilities, stress and limited financial reward.⁸⁰¹

*“Those staff that are ready to progress into middle and senior leadership, they see the stress, they see the strain placed on the senior leadership team, and a lot of them make a lifestyle choice... they choose to stay on Upper Pay Scale 3. The next time I lose a senior leader, I’m going to really struggle.”-
Secondary headteacher.⁸⁰²*

⁷⁹⁵ [Citizen Engagement Team, Teacher Recruitment and Retention, Engagement Findings, paragraphs 54-55, September 2025](#)

⁷⁹⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 16 Association of School and College Leaders \(ASCL\) Cymru](#)

⁷⁹⁷ [CYPE Committee, 18 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 72](#)

⁷⁹⁸ Written evidence, [TRR 21 Swansea University Schools Partnership \(SUSP\)](#)

⁷⁹⁹ Written evidence, [TRR 22 Welsh Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Education in Wales](#)

⁸⁰⁰ [Citizen Engagement Team, Teacher Recruitment and Retention, Engagement Findings, paragraphs 55, September 2025](#)

⁸⁰¹ [Citizen Engagement Team, Teacher Recruitment and Retention, Engagement Findings, paragraphs 54, September 2025](#)

⁸⁰² [Citizen Engagement Team, Teacher Recruitment and Retention, Engagement Findings, paragraphs 52, September 2025](#)

483. The Cabinet Secretary said that improving flexibility is important:

“One of the things that we’ve done recently is emphasise to local authorities ahead of us changing the teachers’ terms and conditions that headteachers cannot be on call 24/7. They have to have downtime on weekends, they have to have downtime in school holidays, and things like that I think make a big difference to women who might have caring responsibilities as well. So, I think it’s about that whole package, really, of how we’re supporting the workforce.”⁸⁰³

484. The Welsh Government highlighted Education Support’s Professional Supervision Programme, which they said has positive impacts on wellbeing. They said this would be a “key part of the programme of work for this year”⁸⁰⁴.

Diversity in leadership roles

485. EWC shared the data indicating a gender gap in school leadership roles.

“In 2025, 61.4% of registered Heads were female and 38.6% were male. This contrasts significantly with the gender split across the teaching workforce as a whole, which was 75.8% female and 24.2% male.”⁸⁰⁵

They said there was a need to increase gender and ethnic diversity in leadership roles.⁸⁰⁶ ASCL Cymru said the lack of diversity was “emphasised” in leadership roles.⁸⁰⁷

486. Estyn said that while the numbers of female heads have increased, there is still a greater proportion of men in head teaching roles.⁸⁰⁸ ASCL Cymru said the issue seems to become more pronounced in the step from deputy head to head. They said it wasn’t clear whether it’s because women are not applying or not being appointed. The solution would depend on understanding where the blockage was.⁸⁰⁹ NAHT Cymru called for further work to identify the barriers and solutions to deal with them.⁸¹⁰ More broadly, Swansea University Schools

⁸⁰³ [CYPE Committee, 17 September 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 103](#)

⁸⁰⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 31 Welsh Government](#)

⁸⁰⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 23 Education Workforce Council](#)

⁸⁰⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 23 Education Workforce Council](#)

⁸⁰⁷ Written evidence, [TRR 16 Association of School and College Leaders \(ASCL\) Cymru](#)

⁸⁰⁸ Written evidence, [TRR 24 Estyn](#)

⁸⁰⁹ [CYPE Committee, 18 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 62](#)

⁸¹⁰ [CYPE Committee, 18 June 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 63](#)

Partnership called for a “scoping exercise” to look at attitudes and barriers to teaching, which could identify routes into teaching which would open up the profession.⁸¹¹

487. WLGA said that one of the factors affecting women progressing was the impact of childcare, which “traditionally still falls upon women”. They said women can start their careers ambitiously, but maternity leave “creates a gap” making it harder for them to develop their careers. They said this was particularly an issue in the primary sector, where women “seem to settle in that middle tier”⁸¹².

488. The proportion of school leaders from ethnically diverse backgrounds is very low.⁸¹³ EWC shared statistics that show only 0.6 per cent of headteachers, 0.6 per cent of deputy heads and 0.5 per cent of assistant heads are from ethnically diverse backgrounds. They said this was both a pipeline issue (with not enough entrants joining) and because of “deeper, structural barriers to progression”. They called for both issues to be addressed to ensure school leadership is more diverse.⁸¹⁴

489. The Royal Society of Biology highlighted that “minority ethnic teachers often undertake unpaid leadership roles related to diversity and inclusion efforts. Addressing these structural issues requires improved pathways for progression and targeted recruitment initiatives to increase representation”⁸¹⁵.

490. The Cabinet Secretary acknowledged that the proportion of women in leadership does not reflect the wider gender representation in the workforce. But she noted that there has been an increase. She said the Welsh Government is currently working with leaders and local authorities to understand why there is a gender gap in leadership roles. She said Dysgu also have a role to support women in the workforce.⁸¹⁶

Our view

491. Headteachers and other senior leaders need to be given the time and space to inspire and support teachers into these roles. And equally, teachers need to have the time to be able to explore in more detail whether they wish to make the move into school leadership. There need to be more opportunities for teachers to

⁸¹¹ Written evidence, [TRR 21 Swansea University Schools Partnership \(SUSP\)](#)

⁸¹² [CYPE Committee, 16 July 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 337](#)

⁸¹³ Written evidence, [TRR 24 Estyn](#)

⁸¹⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 23 Education Workforce Council](#)

⁸¹⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 19 Royal Society of Biology](#)

⁸¹⁶ [CYPE Committee, 17 September 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 102](#)

shadow or mentor existing school leaders to better understand the role. These opportunities should not just be limited to shadowing or mentoring within their own school. This is particularly important as teachers may have to move schools to take up leadership posts.

Recommendation 12. The Welsh Government should ensure that schools and local authorities are providing sufficient shadowing and mentoring opportunities for classroom teachers to better understand whether they wish to move into school leadership roles.

492. The NPQH has recently been reformed. It is therefore too early to determine if these changes will address the concerns of stakeholders. We want to better understand how the Welsh Government will assess the effectiveness of the changes to the qualification. In particular, the numbers coming through the qualification, whether the course provides those studying it the skills and knowledge to be effective school leaders; and the overall value of the qualification.

Recommendation 13. The Welsh Government should outline how it will evaluate the changes to the NPQH. Any such evaluation should ensure it looks at whether the course supports learners to develop the skills and knowledge to be an effective headteacher; and whether the course provides good value.

493. School leaders face immense pressures and challenges. It is an incredibly important job, but not always an easy one. School leaders have had to help steer their schools through a high amount of reform, whilst also managing the impact of the pandemic and the wider societal challenges. Our comments from earlier in this report about the need for schools to do less in relation to the wider social challenges should be considered as part of the context for school leaders' workload.

494. Particularly, we are very mindful of the high level of reform within the education system. While this impacts on all school staff, it places significant additional burdens on school leaders. We note that the Welsh Government has committed to using Workload Impact Assessments for any new or revised Welsh Government policy that impact on education staff (see paragraph 352). It is important that the Welsh Government, both now and in the future, seriously considers how much reform can be delivered in a system that is also facing other challenges, including significant financial pressures. We need to be realistic about what reform can be successfully delivered whilst also ensuring schools are a positive environment for learners and all staff. There is a limit to what the system

577. In light of the Act, and the broader Workforce Plan, the Welsh Government will be looking at what further actions may be needed. They accepted that they will need to review existing targets because of “changing demographics alongside the local authority plans for increasing Welsh-medium education in their areas”⁹⁴¹.

Our view

578. We have already set out that we think the education sector is very close to the maximum in terms of the level of reform it can successfully deliver (see paragraphs 494). There is very little space in the current system for further reform, and we would counsel any future Welsh Government that it reflects on this, before embarking on any further education reform.

579. Throughout this Senedd term we have looked in detail at the implementation of the new curriculum and ALN system. We trust that our work on this has helped inform the new Workforce Plan, where relevant. Shortly after publication of this report, we will be publishing our final views on the implementation of education reforms. In coming to these views, we have considered the relevant evidence from this inquiry.

580. On the implementation of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act, our views remain the same as those we set out in our Stage 1 report on the then Bill. The Act is ambitious, and as we said, it will take “considerable effort by everyone in the education system” to deliver. While the Welsh Government acknowledged that workforce was critical to the delivery of the Act, we called on it to do more.⁹⁴² We will be interested to see how the Workforce Plan takes account of the demands the new Act places on the education system, and the workforce, in particular the issues we raised in our report on the Bill.

⁹⁴¹ Written evidence, [TRR 31 Welsh Government](#)

⁹⁴² [CYPE Committee, Welsh Language and Education \(Wales\) Bill: Stage 1 Report, December 2024](#)

8. The wider education workforce

Recruitment and retention of teachers can impact on the rest of the education workforce. There is a need for Teaching Assistants pay and conditions to reflect the important role they play.

581. While the focus of our inquiry was on teacher recruitment and retention, we wanted to also understand what the impact was on the wider education workforce. We have covered throughout the report the impact shortages have on other teachers and school leaders, in particular on their workloads. In this chapter we are focused on other education staff.

582. Our inquiry's focus was on teachers in the statutory school sector. We are aware that there are issues for teachers in other parts of the education sector, and for other education professionals in schools. However, we think these issues deserve their own consideration, and we wanted to keep the scope of this inquiry manageable. These may be issues we highlight for possible future consideration in our legacy report.

583. Teaching Assistants are an invaluable part of the education workforce, but there have been longstanding concerns about their pay and conditions. This has been further highlighted in recent research commissioned by UNISON, a report of which was published in December.⁹⁴³ Many of the issues, in particular the increasingly complex needs of learners, that impact teachers also have a significant impact on Teaching Assistants. But they are paid significantly less, making the role less attractive. This was raised by a number of people include the Catholic Education Service⁹⁴⁴; Estyn⁹⁴⁵; and WLGA & ADEW⁹⁴⁶. ACT also highlighted the impact of short term contracts and a lack of job security.⁹⁴⁷

⁹⁴³ UNISON Cymru & Labour Research Department, [Time to value School Support Staff: The case for a Wales Negotiating Body](#), December 2025

⁹⁴⁴ Written evidence, [TRR 09 Catholic Education Service](#)

⁹⁴⁵ Written evidence, [TRR 24 Estyn](#)

⁹⁴⁶ Written evidence, [TRR 22 Welsh Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Education in Wales](#)

⁹⁴⁷ Written evidence, [TRR 07 ACT Ltd](#)

584. EWC noted the high level of turnover in support staff. This then affects schools “creating instability and ongoing recruitment issues”⁹⁴⁸. Estyn also said this was an issue that had come up during inspections.⁹⁴⁹

585. We heard concerns about Teaching Assistants and Higher Teaching Assistants covering for teachers. NEU Cymru said the practice is “widely used” across Wales.⁹⁵⁰ WLGA & ADEW also said there was a “growing reliance” on Teaching Assistants to take on “duties beyond their remit, such as cover in some cases”.⁹⁵¹

586. The Welsh Government said that Teaching Assistants are a “vital and valued part of our education workforce, and we want to make sure they have the recognition and support they deserve”. They said that work was ongoing with others to “agree how we will take forward my commitment to improve pay and conditions for our support staff”⁹⁵². The Cabinet Secretary said she was “very concerned” about pay and conditions for Teaching Assistants, and that it would be “key priority” for the Workforce Plan.⁹⁵³

587. The Cabinet Secretary also said that it was important that schools did retain staff. She said getting rid of roles such as pastoral support “just creates a whole range of problems, then, that classroom teachers are having to deal with”⁹⁵⁴.

588. We asked the Cabinet Secretary about Teaching Assistants and Higher Teaching Assistants covering lessons. She said that work has been undertaken to create common job descriptions for Teaching Assistants and Higher Teaching Assistants, but that she was “deeply frustrated that this approach has not been implemented at local authority level”. This issue was being taken forward urgently. She also said that the statutory framework was very clear that only those with QTS “are permitted to be employed to teach”. But that there are “certain circumstances” where “specified work” can be done by those without QTS.

“They are permitted to teach either as an ‘unqualified teacher’ (where the unqualified teacher is employed for a limited time as a school teacher and registered with EWC to undertake specified work) or in certain time limited circumstances where

⁹⁴⁸ Written evidence, [TRR 23 Education Workforce Council](#)

⁹⁴⁹ Written evidence, [TRR 24 Estyn](#)

⁹⁵⁰ Written evidence, [TRR 13 National Education Union \(NEU\) Cymru](#)

⁹⁵¹ Written evidence, [TRR 22 Welsh Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Education in Wales](#)

⁹⁵² Written evidence, [TRR 31 Welsh Government](#)

⁹⁵³ [Letter from Cabinet Secretary for Education to Chair, CYPE Committee, 19 November 2025](#)

⁹⁵⁴ [CYPE Committee, 17 September 2025, Record of Proceedings, paragraph 133](#)

Reference	Organisation
TRR 21	Swansea University Schools Partnership (SUSP)
TRR 22	Welsh Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Education in Wales
TRR 23	Education Workforce Council
TRR 24	Estyn
TRR 25	Institute of Physics
TRR 26	National Association of Headteachers (NAHT) Cymru
TRR 27	School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University
TRR 28	Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership, University of Wales Trinity St David
TRR 29	The National Centre for Learning Welsh
TRR 30	Wrexham University
TRR 31	Welsh Government

Additional Information

Title	Date
National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)	June 2025
National Education Union (NEU)	June 2025
The Open University in Wales	16 July 2025
Education Workforce Council	June 2025
Welsh Government	19 November 2025