

WESP 03

Cynlluniau Strategol Cymraeg mewn Addysg - y fframwaith deddfwriaethol sy'n cefnogi Darpariaeth Addysg Gymraeg | Welsh in Education Strategic Plans - the legislative framework that supports Welsh-Medium Education Provision
Ymateb gan Cyngor y Gweithlu Addysg | Response from Education Workforce Council

EWC response to the inquiry of the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee and the Children, Young People and Education Committee into Welsh-medium education, with specific focus on Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs)

The Education Workforce Council (EWC) is the professional regulatory body for the education workforce in Wales, covering teachers in school and further education (FE) settings, youth / youth support workers and work based learning professionals.

The EWC is not responding to each of the four questions outlined in the request for evidence, rather it is limiting its response to matters specific to its remit but relevant to the questions.

It is the EWC's view that a successful approach to Welsh language provision will require effective and ongoing workforce planning across educational sectors and settings. The range of stakeholders and their interest in the issue is complex and the WESPs must be seen within this context.

The EWC already works with, and is committed to continued collaboration with, national and local government and the consortia to develop and implement workforce policy that is informed by the unique data it holds. This work includes contributing to the recently published Welsh in education workforce ten year plan, and thereafter implementing the actions allocated to it within the plan. The EWC is encouraged by the content of the plan and recognises that this is an extremely challenging area that will require a multi-agency approach over a sustained period of time to demonstrate impact.

EWC register of education practitioners

Under the Education (Wales) Act 2014, we are required to establish and maintain a Register of Education Practitioners (the Register) in Wales. We therefore hold detailed data in relation to the education workforce in Wales, including their Welsh language skills, across all registrant groups.

Data from the Register suggests that strategies that have been employed in recent years to support the growth of Welsh language are having a limited impact upon the number of Welsh speaking teachers (or those able to teach through the medium of Welsh) registered with the EWC, with negligible change noted over the past 10 years. The most recent data can be seen in our [Annual Workforce Statistics for Wales 2021](#) publication.

As there are more learning support staff registered with the EWC than school teachers, it is essential that local authority Welsh in Education Strategic Plans clearly set out arrangements for learning support staff as well as teachers. We are also making significant strides to ensure that the data that we hold on this part of the workforce becomes more complete.

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) accreditation

The EWC, via its Initial Teacher Education Accreditation Board (ITEA Board), has a statutory function to accredit programmes of ITE in Wales against a national criteria, it is also responsible for monitoring the programmes throughout their period of accreditation. Following a commitment by Welsh Government (WG) to revise the criteria, the ITEA Board met in February 2022 to discuss potential revisions it considers necessary to the criteria, including a number of ways in which ITE partnerships might strengthen their commitment to the Welsh language, such as including Welsh language as a requirement to attract more high calibre staff, and more cohesive development of students' Welsh language skills. The Chair of the ITEA Board and EWC's Accreditation and Quality Manager are part of the WG steering group working to revise the criteria.

We also provide an analysis of workforce data annually to WG to help inform its process of setting national intake allocations for ITE, thereafter, we work with WG to distribute allocations to accredited programmes of ITE in Wales.

ITE data shows that certain ITE partnerships are, year-on-year, finding it challenging to recruit Welsh medium staff, especially in South East Wales. In North and Mid-Wales there are higher Welsh medium recruitment rates; however, they remain below the 30% desired Welsh medium recruitment set by WG.

Welsh medium ITE recruitment is particularly challenging at secondary level, but the desired 30% intake is still not being met at Primary level either.

Promoting careers in the education professions

The *Education (Wales) Act 2014* makes provision for the EWC to undertake specific work to promote careers in the education professions. Since late 2018, the Council receives grant funding from WG to undertake work over and above that specified in the Act and has developed [Educators Wales](#) as a national brand, website and advice service to support recruitment and retention for the education sector.

One of our priorities is increasing recruitment of Welsh medium educators. Our Promotion of careers team includes an officer dedicated to Welsh medium recruitment, developing and implementing a targeted recruitment plan, working with a range of partners to include schools, colleges, youth work organisations, university student societies, Welsh departments and academics across all Welsh universities, the Urdd, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, Dysgu Cymraeg, CYDAG and Menter Iaith.

Workforce development

The Council recognises that, as well as encouraging new Welsh medium entrants into the profession, a successful workforce development strategy will also need to continue to focus on developing the skills of the existing education workforce. We therefore welcome WG's recent announcement regarding grants for 'capacity building'.

It is important that all training and development (for teachers and LSWs) is quality assured, accessible across all parts of Wales and sufficiently funded, to ensure equality of opportunity for all practitioners.

As well as increasing overall numbers of Welsh medium staff, it will also be important to ensure that Welsh medium teachers have appropriate specialisms. This is relevant in terms of both individual

subjects and areas such as ALN, where pupils should have equal opportunity to access a Welsh medium education (*this has been highlighted with the draft [Cardiff WESP for 2022-31](#)*).