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

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

Ymateb gan: ACT Ltd

Response from: ACT Ltd

Summary

ACT Ltd appreciates the opportunity to provide evidence to the Senedd consultation on teacher retention and recruitment. We strongly believe that reforming Apprenticeship frameworks in Supporting Teaching and Learning in schools and creating higher-level apprenticeship opportunities in this space is essential to address the skills gap, improve retention, and build a sustainable workforce. Welsh Government Apprenticeship funding offers a unique opportunity to support this initiative and create clearer pathways for individuals to progress into teaching roles.

1. Teacher Training Pathways and the Role of Apprenticeships

Challenges Identified:

- **Lack of Clear Progression Pathways:** The current structure of teacher training can be fragmented, making it difficult for support staff to transition into teaching roles. While many support staff have valuable experience, there are limited clear pathways for them to advance into fully qualified teaching positions. Additionally, there is a lack of frequent qualification reviews to ensure that training content remains relevant to the evolving needs of schools and pupils. This oversight can hinder the adaptability of the workforce to meet classroom challenges.
- **Insufficient Higher-Level Apprenticeships:** While Apprenticeships in Supporting Teaching and Learning (STLS) provide essential training for entry-level support staff, there is a lack of progression to higher-level qualifications and roles within the education sector.
- **Mismatch Between Training and Needs:** Current Apprenticeship frameworks for STLS do not always meet the growing need for more highly skilled, specialised roles in the education sector, particularly in areas like Additional Learning Needs

(ALN), behaviour management and Welsh-medium education.

Recommendations:

- **Create Clear Pathways for Career Progression:** Develop a clear, structured career progression pathway that allows individuals to move from entry-level support roles into qualified teaching positions. This pathway should include defined steps that outline the skills and qualifications needed at each stage, providing an attractive route into the teaching profession for existing support staff.
- **Reform Apprenticeship Frameworks:** Reform and enhance the current Apprenticeship frameworks for Supporting Teaching and Learning in schools to include higher-level apprenticeships. These higher-level apprenticeships could focus on areas such as advanced classroom management, ALN support, and curriculum development, offering a clear progression route for staff aiming to take on more advanced roles within schools.
- **Increase Access to Welsh-medium Apprenticeships:** Expand Apprenticeship frameworks to include specialised pathways in Welsh-medium education. This would help to address the significant shortage of Welsh-medium teachers and teaching assistants, creating a talent pipeline for this critical area.

Integration of Digital Skills Apprenticeships

To further enhance the development of teaching staff, integrating digital skills apprenticeships can play a pivotal role. Several digital apprenticeships have been developed that can complement traditional teaching roles:

- **Digital Skills for Business Apprenticeships (Levels 2 & 3):** These apprenticeships offer pathways in Digital Skills for Business, including areas such as Microsoft 365, data management, and digital communication. They combine work-based learning with part-time study, allowing apprentices to enhance their digital skills while gaining practical experience.
- **Digital Learning Practitioner Apprenticeship (Level 3):** This apprenticeship is tailored for individuals interested in developing and delivering digital learning solutions within organisations. It covers areas such as instructional design, e-learning development, and digital content creation.
- **Data Analyst Apprenticeship (Level 4):** This apprenticeship aims to develop professionals who can analyse and interpret complex data to inform business decisions.

All of these can be aligned with the Welsh Government's Digital Competence Framework (DCF) to ensure consistency with national expectations.

Providing training aligned with the DCF not only builds sector-relevant digital literacy, but also ensures staff are confident in delivering digital learning to pupils, supporting modern, inclusive, and tech-enabled classrooms.

By integrating these digital skills apprenticeships into the education sector, support staff can acquire valuable technical skills that complement their teaching abilities. This integration not only enhances the effectiveness of teaching but also provides clear progression pathways for support staff into more advanced roles within the education system.

2. Utilising Welsh Government Apprenticeship Funding

Challenges Identified:

- **Limited availability of Advanced Training:** Currently, Apprenticeships in the education sector are primarily focused on level 2 and 3 qualifications, and there is insufficient access to higher-level qualifications and career development.
- **Underutilisation of Apprenticeship Funding in Education:** While Apprenticeships are a key part of the Welsh Government's strategy for workforce development, the education sector has not fully utilised the potential of Apprenticeship funding.

Recommendations:

- **Maximise Welsh Government Apprenticeship Funding:** Work with Welsh Government, awarding organisations and MEDR to create higher-level Apprenticeships in education, particularly in STLS and teaching-related roles. This pipeline should also include programmes such as Jobs Growth Wales+ (JGW+) to engage young people from a diverse range of backgrounds. This could act as a crucial on-ramp into Supporting Teaching and Learning (STLS) pathways, enabling broader representation within the profession and offering alternatives to traditional academic routes like A-Level, BA, and postgraduate study.
- **Create Tailored Apprenticeship Programmes:** Use Welsh Government funding to create tailored Apprenticeship programmes that meet the specific needs of the education sector. These could include higher-level qualifications in areas

such as:

- **Advanced Supporting Teaching and Learning**
- **Leadership Development for Support Staff**
- **Promote Apprenticeships as a Career Pathway:** Increase awareness of Apprenticeships as a viable career route into teaching, particularly for those who may not wish to pursue university-based routes.

3. Supporting the Wider Workforce and Improving Retention

Challenges Identified:

- **Training Gaps for Support Staff:** Many support staff lack adequate training in key areas such as classroom management, safeguarding, and behaviour management.
- **Short-Term Contracts and Job Insecurity:** Short-term contracts and low job security for support staff can contribute to high turnover rates.

Recommendations:

- **Invest in Continuous Development:** Ensure that all staff, including teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors, have access to high-quality, ongoing training and professional development.
- **Create Pathways for Senior Roles:** Develop apprenticeship frameworks that allow existing support staff to take on more senior roles, with the appropriate training, qualifications, and job security to ensure they stay within the sector.

4. Conclusion

ACT Ltd believes that reforming Apprenticeship frameworks in Supporting Teaching and Learning, particularly by creating higher-level opportunities, is a critical step in addressing the challenges of teacher recruitment and retention.

We further advocate for regular qualification reviews to ensure training remains relevant to the evolving needs of schools and pupils.

By using Welsh Government Apprenticeship funding to support these reforms, including expanding initiatives like JGW+ and embedding digital training aligned with the Digital Competence Framework, we can build clear pathways for career progression, provide valuable opportunities for the existing workforce, and ensure the development of a skilled, diverse, and committed teaching workforce.

We strongly urge the Welsh Government to consider these recommendations and take bold action to reform the current Apprenticeship structures to better serve the needs of the education sector.