

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

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

Ymchwiliad i Addysg a Dysgu Proffesiynol Athrawon – Gwybodaeth Bellach | Inquiry into Teachers' Professional Learning and Education – Further Information

TT FI 01

Ymateb gan: Cymdeithas Athrawon a Darlithwyr

Response from: Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)

Inquiry into Teachers' Professional Learning and Education – CYPE Committee additional questions August 2017

ATL Cymru response

ATL Cymru, the education union, is an independent, registered trade union and professional association, representing teachers, head teachers, lecturers and support staff in maintained and independent nurseries, schools, sixth form, tertiary and further education colleges in Wales. AMiE is the trade union and professional association for leaders and managers in colleges and schools, and is a distinct section of ATL. We recognise the link between education policy and members' conditions of service.

Our response

ATL Cymru welcomes the opportunity to respond to the CYPE Committee Questions listed below:

- The proposed implementation timescale; will teachers across Wales have the necessary time and resources to be able to genuinely match the descriptors of the new Standards by September 2018?
- Is there, or is there likely to be, enough support and training available to help teachers transition to the new standards?

Our main concerns about the Standards remain consistent with our response to the CYPE Committee Inquiry earlier in the year. We still have concerns about:

- The Reform Agenda
- Expectations of the profession
- How standards will be used (Capability)
- Role of the Consortia
- Time and resources for training

ATL Cymru has stated that whilst we welcome many of the professional standards in principle, we would be concerned that there isn't enough in terms of time and resources to ensure the implementation of these Standards by 2018.

Reform agenda

As we stated before, the Standards are in danger of becoming lost amongst the many changes which form part of the Reform Agenda. Teachers, like all education professionals, are faced with a series of changes, which will all have an impact on teacher workload, and could therefore impact on outcomes for

children and young people, if not sufficiently resourced and implemented with a full suite of training.

The indicative list below includes some of the changes, which largely form part of the 'Reform Agenda':

- A new Curriculum for Wales
- ALN Reform
- Welsh language expectations
- Changes to tests and Qualifications
- New Estyn regime
- Digital competency framework
- Changes to categorisation

We remain concerned that without more training and resources the above changes will not be able to be implemented across and by the entire workforce.

Expectations of the Profession

The WG consultation document on Professional Standards said:

“Professional teachers earn the respect of their colleagues and the wider world by going the distance for their learners, engaging with research and developing their practice. These outlooks and activities begin on the first day of their training and continue throughout their career, whether that be as a classroom teacher or in formal roles of leadership, including headship.”

Over all, a clear commitment to CPD is required if these professional standards are to be meaningful, and these aspirations are to be fulfilled. Otherwise the profession will be faced with increased expectations at a time of great challenge.

Capability

ATL Cymru have welcomed the professional standards in principle. Yet we remain concerned that they could be misused without training for everyone – including those with line-management responsibilities – to ensure the role and status of the standards is fully understood and used correctly. We would not want them to be used as a punitive measure during capability issues. Whilst there has been some reassures this is not the intention of the Standards, without full training, there is a danger this could happen. The timescales for such training remain tight.

The role of the Consortia

ATL Cymru remain concerned that there needs to be strong oversight of the Consortia and their role in implementation of professional standards.

We note from the outcome of the National Assembly's Outreach team survey that regional consortia were not always well understood by teachers and that

the training they provide is not always relevant or affordable¹, which was considered by the Public Accounts Committee earlier this year.

Conditions of service

Since answering both the WG and the previous CYPE Committee consultations, we would seek greater clarity on the precise status of the Professional Standards. We ask for clarity in light of recent comments² from the First Minister, in answer to a question from Leader of Plaid Cymru, Leanne Wood AM, about tackling workload, pay and conditions and numbers in initial teacher training. The First Minister said:

“I think there are great opportunities for us when pay and conditions are devolved to put in place a holistic package for teachers to make sure that the responsibilities they have are reflected in terms of the pay that they receive. It has always been a strange anomaly that we have responsibility for education, but not for pay and conditions. That is at the heart of delivering a good deal for teachers, and that’s what we intend to do.

[...]

“I don’t think it would be possible to put in place the right package until pay and conditions are devolved. Why? Well, people want to know what their terms of employment are, what their conditions of employment are, what they’ll be paid, and what activities they’ll be paid for. That all impacts, clearly, on a decision to go into a profession and that impacts, ultimately, on numbers. Now, next year, we’ll have the opportunity and the responsibility of controlling teachers’ pay and conditions. We want to work with the teaching unions to make sure we put forward a package that makes teaching more attractive than perhaps it has been for some people in the past, but getting control of pay and conditions is absolutely crucial for that.”

Therefore, we would seek clarity on the status of the Professional Standards now, since WG has said they are addressing some of the issues highlighted by Leanne Wood AM?

We very much look forward to working with the First Minister to, as he states, “make sure we put forward a package that makes teaching more attractive than perhaps it has been for some people in the past”, as he has stated. We also welcome his comments, that no teacher will be any worse off than in

¹ <http://senedd.assembly.wales/documents/s61358/Survey%20results.pdf>

² <http://www.assembly.wales/en/bus-home/pages/rop.aspx?meetingid=4300&language=en&assembly=5&c=Record%20of%20Proceedings> FMQs, 26/6/17. In answer to questions from Plaid Cymru Leader, Leanne Wood AM

England, and look forward to reading proposals as to how this will be achieved.³

Conclusions

With these points in mind we remain concerned that access to CPD for the education workforce will remain limited, and that the professional standards increase expectations on the workforce at a time of great pressure, without providing funded opportunities for learning which are needed.

Our full response to the WG consultation on Professional Standards for teachers can be found here:

<https://www.atl.org.uk/sites/www.atl.org.uk/files/ATL%20Cymru%20response%20to%20professional%20teacher%20standards%20consultation.pdf>

We note that our response to your earlier consultation on Teachers' Professional Learning can be found here:

<https://www.atl.org.uk/sites/www.atl.org.uk/files/ATL-Cymru-Professional-learning-and-education-CYPE.pdf>

³ <https://www.atl.org.uk/latest/future-teachers%E2%80%99-pay-wales>