

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 06

Ymateb gan: Cymdeithas Genedlaethol yr Ysgolfeistri ac Undeb yr Athrawesau

Response from: National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)

1. The NASUWT welcomes the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Children, Young People and Education Committee (CYPEC) Inquiry into Teachers' Professional Learning and Education (the second Inquiry).
2. The NASUWT is the largest teachers' union in Wales representing exclusively teachers and school leaders.

GENERAL COMMENTS

3. The NASUWT notes that the particular purpose of the second Inquiry is to consider:
 - (i) the proposed implementation timescale for the new professional standards for teaching and leadership (the draft school standards);
 - (ii) whether teachers across Wales will have the necessary time and resources to be able to genuinely match the descriptors of the new standards by September 2018;
 - (iii) if there is, or if there is likely to be, enough support and training available to help teachers transition to the draft school standards.
4. Whilst the Union finds no difficulty in presenting written evidence on these issues, the CYPEC is asked to note from the outset that the submission of this evidence should not be viewed as an acceptance of the draft school standards.
5. Indeed, the CYPEC is asked to consider this evidence in the context of the responses submitted to the consultations on the draft school standards and on the new professional standards for further education (FE) teachers and work-based learning practitioners (the draft FE standards) (Appendix A and B, respectively).

6. The NASUWT has referred to the new professional standards as 'draft' school standards, because it was expected that post-consultation discussions with the Education Directorate, which commenced at a meeting on 22 June 2017, following the publication of the summary of the responses to the consultation (the summary of responses), would continue through July and August.
7. Following the meeting on 22 June, the Union sent an email on 30 June to the Education Directorate (the 30 June email) in which the issues that had been discussed, the position reached at the end of the meeting and the matters which warranted further discussion, were set out.
8. The NASUWT received an out-of-office reply indicating that the correspondence would be attended to at the beginning of July. However, in the absence of a response, and following the publication of the July Dysg eNewsletter (Issue 503) (Dysg 503) in which it was suggested that the standards had been finalised, a follow-up email was sent. This email solicited a response which indicated that the lead representative of the Education Directorate no longer worked for the Welsh Government.
9. Although a meeting has now been arranged for 26 September as, apparently, this was the earliest date that could be offered by the Education Directorate, it has been suggested that the meeting will be *'...part of the ongoing engagement with stakeholders to implement the new standards. This will give us the opportunity to discuss the development of support materials for the standards, and the concerns you raise at the end of your email'*.
10. The NASUWT responded by placing on record that members, other than newly qualified teachers on induction, will be advised not to move to the new standards until September 2018, when they become mandatory, as the concerns about the new standards have not been allayed.
11. The NASUWT invites the CYPEC to consider its inquiry in the context of the issues, concerns and outstanding matters set out in the 30 June email, and the advice that will be issued to our members (Appendix C and D respectively).
12. The CYPEC should also be aware that the NASUWT has written to both the Westminster Secretary of State for Education and the Cabinet Secretary for Education in Wales to challenge the removal of the Practising Teacher Standards (PTS) from the 2017 School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), as the draft school standards will not become mandatory until September 2018 (Appendix E and F, respectively).

13. It may be of interest to the CYPEC to note that the majority of the newly qualified teachers (NQTs) who attended an NASUWT New Teacher Seminar in Cardiff this summer were aware that new end of induction standards were being introduced from 1 September but only some had seen the PowerPoint presentation. Despite this, there was a confidence expressed that their initial teacher training (ITT) course will have equipped them to meet the new standards. However, it was clear that the failure to publish the end of induction standards in a coherent and transparent form was a matter of some concern.
14. The NASUWT maintains that these concerns are not without foundation as the slide show that became accessible through the Dysg 503 is prefaced with a note which indicates that the '*...slide pack is presented as a temporary measure whilst an improved format is developed following comments received during the consultation...*' with the new format being '*...available by 1 September 2017*'.
15. Whilst the new format is, hopefully, to be welcomed, it is long overdue. Further, the suggestion on the face of the slide pack that the concerns about the format arose during the consultation process is entirely disingenuous, as the NASUWT had been clear that the slide show approach was fundamentally misplaced and misguided long before the formal consultation process commenced.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

16. The NASUWT offers the comments and observations which follow on the specific issues identified for scrutiny by the CYPEC.

The proposed implementation timescale for the draft school standards

17. The NASUWT maintains that the timescales, as laid out in the consultation document, would have been easily achievable if far less time had been spent on the construction of a set of standards that are overly complex and irreconcilable with the provision of the STPCD.
18. Regrettably, it appears that, either intentionally or unwittingly, the architects of the standards have created a set of standards that present an accountability framework that could be used as pay standards for teaching and learning responsibility payments, pay progression along the main pay range and/or movement to and along the upper pay range.

19. It is accepted that for NQTs the qualified teacher status (QTS) and the end of induction standards are standards against which they will be judged. However, if faith is placed in the confidence of those NQTs who attended the NASUWT seminar, then their enthusiasm should carry them through as they will have known no other standards. However, the NASUWT would not have the same confidence in the regional consortia that has been charged with the responsibility of providing the external mentoring for the NQTs, as it appears that there is an intention to rely on the school mentors rather than employ dedicated staff to undertake this work.
20. As for the generality of existing teachers, the NASUWT would doubt that many will have ventured into the labyrinthine slide show presentation and, when they do so, they will despair that so much time has been spent on attempting to analyse what they already do as consummate professionals on a daily basis. Indeed, the NASUWT expects fully the new standards to be received as patronising and demeaning by experienced teachers and open to abuse by those senior leaders who favour 'command and control' management.
21. Despite the actions taken by the Welsh and Westminster Government over the 2017 STPCD, referred to previously in this evidence, the NASUWT is clear that the draft school standards will not become mandatory before 1 September 2018 and has advised members against moving away from the PTS during the current performance management (PM) cycle which covers the academic year 2017/18 (Appendix D).
22. Consequently, on the understanding that the PTS will continue to apply to teachers until 1 September 2018 and without prejudice to the Union's rejection of the new standards, the NASUWT considers the timescale for the mandatory application of the draft school standards to be reasonable.

The sufficiency of the time and resources available to teachers across Wales to be able to genuinely match the descriptors of the new standards by September 2018

23. The NASUWT maintains that this aspect of the second Inquiry serves to confirm the Union's view that the new standards present an accountability framework which will be viewed and used as a management tool by which post-induction teachers will be assessed in terms of pay progression, as it suggests that teachers will be expected to match the descriptors.

24. However, the CYPEC should be aware that during the development of the standards, in answer to questions raised by the NASUWT, it was stressed that this is not the purpose of the standards post-induction as it will be assumed that the generality of teachers will be 'matching' the descriptors routinely in their day-to-day work and that the descriptors relating to '*towards sustained highly effective practice*' merely presented a 'pick and mix' menu from which teachers can choose to enhance their own professional development (Appendix C, point 3).
25. If this approach is taken at face value and 'policed' effectively, and without prejudice to the Union's rejection of the new standards, then the NASUWT believes that teachers should be able to transfer to the new standards for the 2018/19 PM cycle.

The adequacy of the support and training available to help teachers transition to the draft school standards

26. Without prejudice to the Union's rejection of the new standards, the NASUWT maintains that if the approach referred to in paragraph 24 of this evidence is applied to the new standards, then teachers should have no difficulty in transferring to the draft school standards for the 2018/19 PM cycle.
27. However, the NASUWT maintains that, as referred to in the 30 June email, particularly but not exclusively, at points 5 and 6, there will be a need for the Welsh Government, following consultation with the NASUWT and other unions, to issue clear and unequivocal guidance on the purpose and use of the standards and for the Welsh Government to play a key role in 'policing' the application standards (Appendix C).
28. The NASUWT maintains that consideration should be given by the CYPEC to the support and training that will be required to be provided by the Welsh Government to ensure that the issues identified by the NASUWT in the 30 June email around the potential misuse of the standards post-induction and a twin-track approach to their application are addressed, so that teachers are able to have confidence that they will not become a series of requirements against which they will be constantly judged (Appendix C).