

Number: WG38244



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

## Welsh Government Consultation – summary of response

### Additional National Professional Learning INSET days 2019- 22

16 July 2019

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.  
This document is also available in Welsh.

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## Table of acronyms

Acronym	Expanded version
ALN	Additional Learning Needs
ALNET Act	Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act
AoLE	Area of Learning and Experience
CfW	Curriculum for Wales
EWC	Education Workforce Council
INSET	In Service Training
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
LA	Local authority
NAPL	National Approach to Professional Learning
PPA	Preparation, planning and assessment
WG	Welsh Government

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# Introduction

## About the consultation

The Welsh Government's action plan, *Education in Wales: Our National Mission* aims to raise standards, reduce the attainment gap, and deliver an education system that is a source of national pride and public confidence.<sup>1</sup> The development of new curriculum and assessment arrangements (developed since 2016 in collaboration with a network of Pioneer Schools and other education stakeholders) is a fundamental element of achieving this mission.

Welsh Government wants to specifically support teaching professionals to prepare for the delivery of the new curriculum. Welsh Government believes a focus on Professional Learning will be critical to ensure readiness and engagement of all practitioners with the new curriculum. The National Approach to Professional Learning (NAPL) and the associated £24million investment is intended to create time within schools for professionals to develop and up-skill themselves and to work collaboratively within and across schools.<sup>2</sup> The NAPL is a key driver of the objectives within *Education in Wales - Our National Mission*. Welsh Government is committed to developing a national approach to career-long Professional Learning which is embedded in evidence-based research and effective collaboration.

However, even with the introduction of the NAPL and the provision of this additional funding, there is a need to reinforce a system-wide universal engagement with preparation and awareness of the implications of the new curriculum. Welsh Government is therefore proposing to give practitioners this extra time in the form of National Professional Learning INSET days. These would be available for the next 3 academic years (2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22) as schools engage with the new curriculum prior to its formal roll out in schools (academic year 2022/23). This will augment the pre-existing INSET time of five days allocated to schools per academic year.

To do this Welsh Government will need to increase INSET days by amending the Education (School Day and School Year) (Wales) Regulations 2003. This change would require maintained schools to use one day (i.e. two school sessions) for the purpose of INSET, specifically aimed at Professional Learning for the new curriculum. This would mean that schools would hold six INSET days per year, with the school being closed to pupils on the additional INSET day.

The consultation on *Additional National Professional Learning INSET days 2019- 22* was launched on 5 March 2019 and closed on 1 May 2019. The full text of the consultation is available at:

<https://gov.wales/additional-national-professional-learning-inset-days-2019-2022>

Welsh Government received a total of 899 responses to this consultation:

- 894 were submitted through the online consultation

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<sup>1</sup> Welsh Government (2017), *Education in Wales: Our National Mission*.

<sup>2</sup> Welsh Government (2018), *National Approach to Professional Learning* <https://gov.wales/national-approach-professional-learning-napl>

- 5 were submitted via e-mail (two of these responses did not directly follow the structure of the consultation questions).

Arad Research was commissioned by the Welsh Government to analyse the responses received during the consultation on *Additional National Professional Learning INSET days 2019- 22*. This summary document presents the key findings of the analysis, identifying the key messages and themes presented in consultation responses. The full analysis of responses is available at Annex A.

## Summary of overarching themes

This initial section presents certain key themes which arose frequently across the consultation in its entirety. Although the consultation questions focus on different elements of the INSET proposals, the analysis has found overarching and recurring themes which are raised across multiple questions and/or are repeated on multiple occasions by respondents.

**The general trend amongst responses was agreement that an additional INSET day is necessary, and preferably more than one in many cases.** Alongside this, a variety of alternative delivery models were suggested including more than one additional INSET day each year, offering these days for at least three years (if not more to allow for implementation and evaluation), and various options in terms of suitable timing for the additional INSET days.

**There was a tendency for respondents to emphasise that additional INSET days should be considered as part of a wider Professional Learning journey.** Responding to new curriculum and assessment arrangements – as well as wider education reforms – was clearly identified as a task beyond the scope of one additional INSET day. Practitioners will need a comprehensive programme of Professional Learning and planning opportunities, which will necessitate changes to existing INSET days, PPA time, cluster working and regional support.

**Respondents often expressed awareness of the scale of work required to adapt to a complex new curriculum and the capacity of practitioners to undertake such work.** Respondents emphasised that practitioners' workloads are already heavy and curriculum reform (and other education reforms) represented an added burden. As such, respondents emphasised this fact should be at the forefront of decisions relating to Professional Learning.

**Since the new curriculum places an emphasis on collaboration, respondents had a tendency to comment that additional INSET days will be necessary to allow practitioners to come together to co-design curriculum elements and share good practice.** Cross-subject and cross-key stage working is recognised as a core principle behind the new curriculum. While some Professional Learning and planning can be undertaken during PPA periods or similar, practitioners will need dedicated time together to develop their vision and curriculum, ensuring a cohesive approach to pedagogy and curriculum content across the school. Similarly, schools require dedicated days to work in collaboration and share good practice with other schools in their clusters.

**Respondents noted the importance of taking into consideration the scope of education reform as a whole when making decisions relating to Professional Learning opportunities.** Respondents expressed awareness that additional INSET days should be considered within the context of a range of educational reforms occurring over the next few years. Key changes to consider include changes to Professional Learning structures, teacher pay and conditions, self-evaluation approaches, new approaches to assessment and inspection and ALN reforms.

**Respondents tended to emphasise that considered, consistent and effective implementation of the new curriculum will require dedicated time such as INSET days.** Schools are starting their curriculum reform journeys from very different circumstances and sufficient Professional Learning time, planning time and support or

guidance from middle tier organisations and unions is vital to do justice to the vision for education in Wales.

**However, there is some awareness amongst respondents that a balance must be achieved between providing additional INSET days and avoiding a negative impact on working parents and/or learner outcomes.** Respondents tended to comment that the impact of additional INSET days on parents must be mitigated and the number of days for which learners are out of the classroom should be limited.

## Next Steps

In responding to the results of the consultation we have carefully considered the feedback and comments made by respondents.

We are grateful to the large numbers who took the time to provide their views; helping us to shape our approach moving forward.

As we articulated in the consultation document, the Welsh Government wants to specifically support teaching professionals to prepare for the delivery of the new curriculum. We believe a focus on Professional Learning will be critical to ensure readiness and engagement of all practitioners with the new curriculum.

The National Approach to Professional Learning (NAPL) and the associated £24 million investment we have made available will create time within schools for professionals to develop and up-skill themselves and to work collaboratively within and across schools.<sup>3</sup> The NAPL is a key driver of the objectives within “Education in Wales - Our National Mission” and is the framework within which Welsh Government will deliver Professional Learning for all its education reforms.

However, even with the introduction of the NAPL and the provision of the £24 million additional funding, we recognised a need to reinforce a system wide universal engagement with preparation and awareness of the implications of the new curriculum – in consulting on additional INSET we recognised the need to provide additional whole-school time for all practitioners to be able to do this.

We want to be clear that the proposed additional National Professional Learning INSET day is an integral part of the NAPL. The additional day should not be seen as a stand alone proposal, or as a suggestion that one additional day per year for the next three years is sufficient in itself to address the Professional Learning needs inherent in the realisation of the new curriculum. Rather the proposal should be seen within the context of the NAPL as a whole, and should be seen along with the additional funding we have made available to create further time in schools for engagement with Professional Learning.

Having considered the detailed analysis (to be found in Annex A of the report) we propose the following:

- 1. Amend the Education (School Day and School Year) (Wales) Regulations 2003 to provide one additional INSET day per year for 3 years, until 2022, to focus specifically on Professional Learning to support the new curriculum.**

The responses analysis shows a clear agreement, from over 90% of respondents, with our proposal to increase the number of INSET days for Professional Learning to support the introduction of the new curriculum.

The additional INSET day is seen as necessary by practitioners, Unions and middle tier organisations such as Local Authorities, Regional Consortia, Estyn, Education Workforce Council and the National Academy for Educational Leadership. This reflects complex and

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<sup>3</sup> Welsh Government (2018), *National Approach to Professional Learning* <https://gov.wales/national-approach-professional-learning-napl>



large-scale reform, and capacity building which is needed for practitioners to be able to deliver the curriculum.

Many respondents called for more than one additional INSET, and for a longer period than the three years proposed. We are not proposing to amend the regulations to longer than three years because in that time the wider context of the NAPL will be developing, we will be continuing to gather evidence and undertake research into the use of INSET and to monitor changes within the wider system that may have an impact on our approach. All of the factors have the potential to lead to further developments or changes in the future.

## **2. Amend the regulations to specify that the additional Professional Learning INSET days should take place annually, during the summer term**

The consultation responses showed that two thirds of respondents agreed that having either a specified date or period would be beneficial, but many responses emphasised that there were practical issues with having a specified date. These included the challenge of accessing the experiences of colleagues from pioneer schools and others within their clusters. One third of respondents felt that when the INSET took place should be for the school to decide to allow for pre-planned training and school autonomy.

We are therefore proposing that the INSET day will take place within a specified period rather than being held on a specific day. Holding the INSET days at a similar time, albeit with a degree of flexibility, will help create a national conversation and ensure all teachers are receiving the same messages, and none are left behind

We are proposing that the summer term would be an appropriate time to hold the INSET days. For the first year, the summer term would allow us time to secure resources, and in the second year this will allow us time to evaluate the impact, making any changes necessary. We will recommend that to reduce the impact on families that generally schools should consider carefully the timing of the day and that all INSET days should be publicised well in advance.

## **3. A recommendation to schools that out of the original five INSET days already allocated to schools, a minimum of a further one day should also be used to prepare for the new curriculum, this to be taken at a time to suit the school.**

This approach reflects the feedback in the responses, where 78% of respondents felt that one additional day would not be sufficient. Officials agree that more time will be needed but that this could come out of one of the pre-existing INSET days, reflecting the fact that those who felt that their schools used the INSET days well are already using them to work on their implementation of the new curriculum.

We cannot fully justify more than one additional INSET day per year given the additional financial burden this would place on some parents, often those who can afford it least. There is also the tension between our approach to prioritising children's attendance and providing less available school days overall.

Instead, we recommend to all schools that they use another of their pre-existing INSET days as an approach to support their readiness for the new curriculum.

To support this, a bank of resources would be available for schools to use to support them on these days (see below).

#### **4. The development of a bank of resources which can be used to guide INSET sessions.**

The consultation asked for thoughts on whether WG should mandate the content of the material for the INSET days. The responses to this question were divided with 37% feeling that we should not, and 38% that we should, with the rest undecided.

Many felt that the choice should be made by schools, and that our approach to these additional INSET days should reflect the ethos of the new curriculum by providing practitioners with greater agency. We agree that flexibility will be essential, but that clearly there are some schools for whom a steer would be useful, especially those who were not pioneer schools.

The use of the word 'mandatory' in the text of the consultation may have implied we planned to be very prescriptive in regard to the content to be offered to schools. What we propose however is, that a bank, or framework, of resources should be created which schools will be able to choose from, depending where they are on their own individual curriculum journey. A bank of online, bilingual resources should enable enough differentiation for schools to pick and choose what they cover on the INSET days.

We propose to secure these resources over the next nine months so that they are ready for schools to use them by Summer 2020.

The use of INSET, and their effectiveness, will be the subject of a piece of research work to be undertaken by University of South Wales. This learning will feed into the resources to be developed as well as wider thinking on the use and purpose of INSET.

Work will now be undertaken to amend regulations (the Education (School Day and School Year) (Wales) Regulations 2003 (as amended)) and action the policy approach outlined above. Following the necessary legislative procedure the regulations should be amended by early September 2019 to allow for the additional of a National Professional Learning INSET day for the academic years 2019/20, 2020/21, and 2021/22.

## Annex A

### Methodology

The quantitative data (i.e. data based on closed questions) from the responses which followed the structure of the consultation questions was analysed. These quantitative responses comprised of 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree' or 'disagree' answers to some of the consultation questions.

A thematic analysis of the qualitative data (data based on open-ended questions) in the consultation responses was undertaken. The thematic analysis categorised the opinions, comments, statements and issues raised by respondents into overarching themes. The analysis aimed to identify the themes into which the consultation responses most frequently fall. The process for undertaking this analysis was as follows:

1. A random sample of responses for each question was reviewed by two researchers (each reviewing a different half of the sample). The size of the sample was determined by the number of responses received to each question and comprised at least 30% of the total responses per question.
2. The responses in the sample were coded thematically, to identify the themes arising most frequently.
3. One of the researchers then reviewed all the remaining responses to each question to ensure that the identified themes remained constant and to identify new themes arising. This included comparing the comments of those who had answered 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree' or 'disagree' to relevant questions. This step also included comparing the comments of self-identified schools / practitioners, unions, middle tier organisations, parents and other respondent populations where possible.
4. This process ensured that all consultation responses were reviewed during the analysis.

Out of the total 899 responses received to this consultation, 478 were identifiable as a particular population group, rather than an anonymous individual respondent. These were identifiable either because they had noted their population group in the appropriate consultation question or their population group was clearly identifiable by their response (e.g. "As a parent, I feel..."). However, this means that it is not possible to know which population groups the anonymous responses represent; as such, any analysis of responses by population groups presented in this report is tentative and must be interpreted with care. In addition, certain population groups (such as parents or guardians) are less likely than others to identify themselves. Furthermore, some respondents have identified themselves as a local authority when it seems from their comments they are in fact a school or practitioner within that local authority. With this in mind, the numbers of responses from particular population groups are as follows:

- 394 were identified as schools or practitioners (including early years settings);
- 41 were identified as middle tier organisations (such as local authorities, regional education consortia, other representative bodies or organisations) or unions;
- 17 were identified as a parent or guardian;
- 3 were identified as a higher education institution;
- 4 were identified as a private company or third sector organisation; and
- 440 could not be identified.

Considering the challenges discussed above with achieving a level of certainty concerning the number of responses from particular population groups, this report does not present a breakdown of the closed question response (quantitative data) by population group; the numbers are not sufficiently exact to allow this. This report does however present analyses of open questions (qualitative data) based on available population group data. Caution must be exercised in interpreting these analyses as well, considering that the number of responses from identified schools or practitioners is significantly higher than the number of responses from other population groups.

## Reporting findings

This report therefore presents key themes arising frequently within consultation responses. There is a wealth of evidence provided through the consultation which supports these themes and provides significant additional detail for use by Welsh Government. **Throughout the report the themes and points presented are drawn from comments made by consultation respondents and do not represent the views of the report authors.** Themes are presented in order of frequency under each statement.

For the purpose of brevity and to avoid excessive repetition in how findings are presented, the authors have not necessarily prefaced each theme or point with *'Respondents noted that...'*. Instead there is an assumption that the reader will understand that all themes presented are summaries of comments by individuals and organisations who contributed to the consultation.

Finally, interspersed throughout the report is a selection of quotes to illustrate the points and themes raised.

It is worth noting that the way in which a few consultation questions were worded created some challenges for interpreting and presenting the data, in particular the quantitative data (data from closed questions). Question 5 included the word 'mandatory', but Welsh Government now consider that a term such as 'structured' or 'guided' could have been more appropriate. Question 6 included an 'either/or' option, which meant that respondents struggled to answer the closed question. For respondents who had stated in question 1 that they did not think any additional INSET days were necessary, subsequent questions specifically relating to the structure and content of these days were less relevant.

## Question 1 analysis

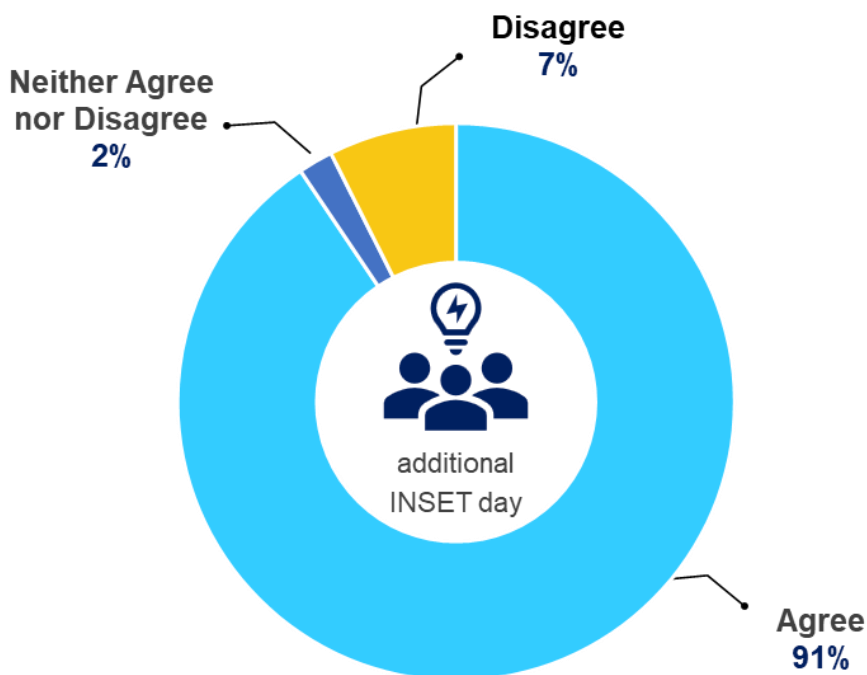
The National Approach to Professional Learning (NAPL) and the associated £24million investment is intended to help to create time in schools for professionals to develop and up-skill themselves and to work collaboratively within and across schools. However even with this new approach and the provision of additional funding, we believe there may be a need to reinforce a system wide universal engagement with preparation and awareness of the implications of the new curriculum.

It is therefore proposed that an additional National Professional Learning INSET day is created that will augment the pre-existing INSET time allocated to schools.

**Do you think an additional INSET day is necessary to prepare for the new curriculum?**

In a closed question, respondents were asked to state whether they agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, or disagreed with the question. The figure below presents the results; 91% of respondents agreed with the question, 2% neither agreed nor disagreed and 7% disagreed.

*Figure 1: Percentage of respondents who agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, or disagreed that an additional INSET day is necessary to prepare for the new curriculum (n=892).*



There were 467 additional comments provided in response to this question.

**Among those who agreed with the question (and the small number who neither agreed nor disagreed), the themes raised most frequently were as follows.**

**An additional INSET day is necessary because the new curriculum represents a complex and large-scale reform which will add significantly to practitioners' already heavy workloads.** Respondents noted that the new curriculum and assessment arrangements represent a widespread, fundamental shift in both mind-sets and teaching practice. They emphasised that practitioners need additional protected time to familiarise themselves with the vast range of new structures and expectations. Preparing for such

large-scale reform will be challenging for practitioners who already face heavy workloads and pressure to undertake elements of their work in their own time. Additional time is therefore vital to limit the burden placed on practitioners' capacity.

*“The changes that are proposed are possibly the largest ever reforms of the curriculum in Wales. They will see a wholesale shift in the way children are taught. Without the necessary training teachers and other educators will not be in a position to deliver what is needed. Unfortunately, due to the magnitude of the changes I feel that to do justice to the children of Wales far more than one day a year are needed.” (Union)*

**As a result, respondents took this opportunity to emphasise that one additional INSET day is not enough.** Respondents do not feel that one additional INSET day per year will allow practitioners to adequately prepare, considering the complexity and scope of the reforms. The amount of necessary INSET days is discussed further under the analysis of questions 2 and 3 later in this report.

*“1 day will not be enough to build an effective curriculum which is distinct to individual schools and which effectively supports and challenges individual learners. Giving the profession the time to build learning and teaching opportunities which are meaningful will take time.” (School or practitioner)*

**At least one additional INSET day is necessary to give practitioners time for comprehensive curriculum planning.** Current PPA time is seen as insufficient to plan for the new curriculum in its entirety. Respondents noted that ring-fenced additional time is the only way in which practitioners will be able to plan whole new schemes of work. The amount of work required to develop a new curriculum is deemed significant and time must be allocated to establish a strong foundation through suitable planning.

*“The implementation of the new curriculum will require a significant amount of work to set up. Whole-school planning for coverage of a range of skills will need to be developed by staff to ensure good educational outcomes for pupils across their school careers.” (School or practitioner)*

**At least one additional INSET day is seen as a necessary opportunity for practitioners to understand, interpret and reflect upon the new curriculum and assessment arrangements.** This additional time will allow teachers to: Explore the new curriculum; assess its implications for their planning and pedagogy; develop ownership of their school-level curriculum; and reflect on necessary changes to mind-sets and school cultures. This process is seen as vital to ensuring practitioners are fully engaged with the new curriculum and are willing and able to reflect its core principles in their teaching practice.

*“For a lot of teachers this is a very different way of thinking i.e. creativity is key to this new curriculum, and time is key to creativity.” (Individual respondent)*

**At least one additional INSET day is seen as a necessary opportunity for practitioners to collaborate, co-design curriculum elements and share good practice.** Respondents commented that practitioners have limited time outside their teaching and planning timetable to engage with one another. Similar, schools have limited time to engage with other schools within their clusters. Considering the cross-subject, cross-key stage and thematic principles upon which the new curriculum is founded, practitioners need an additional INSET day to develop their local curriculum as a team. Schools need an

additional INSET day to share good practice across clusters and collaborate on approaches to transition.

*“It is crucial that a) all teachers have time to develop their approaches to the New curriculum and b) that they can do so alongside their colleagues and within their own school context. The new curriculum will require a more collaborative approach within and between schools and it is vital time is provided.” (Individual respondent)*

**At least one additional INSET day will help ensure all schools are preparing for the new curriculum in a consistent manner and that key messages are communicated consistently.** Respondents expressed some concern that schools across Wales vary in terms of their understanding of and preparation for the new curriculum. Setting aside time in the form of an INSET day will ensure all practitioners receive the same messages at the same time and ensure schools across clusters and consortia have a shared vision. Allowing all schools to access information at the same time – rather than having key messages cascading through schools – is seen as essential. **Similarly, additional INSET day(s) would ensure all staff are trained concurrently and move towards a shared understanding of the curriculum simultaneously.**

*“Bringing practitioners together locally, regionally and nationally to develop a common understanding of the key principles of the new Areas of Learning is key to ensuring clarity and consistency across Wales in planning an innovative curriculum.” (Middle tier organisation).*

*“At present, a number of key staff are constantly going out to meetings, conferences and then having to cascade the important messages back in school. It has an impact of consistency of learning in class and lack of time within the school day to cascade back.” (School or practitioner)*

**Existing INSET days are already filled to capacity and so an additional INSET day will be necessary to focus specifically on curriculum arrangements.** Respondents reported that current INSET days are already used for a wide range of school improvement priorities, to disseminate regional strategies, to work collaboratively on other aspects of reform and to deliver statutory training. **In particular, special schools already struggling to fit important statutory training into existing INSET days.** Special schools are seen to require particular consideration in terms of additional INSET days, as they face particular challenges in terms of finding time for important Professional Learning and training.

*“[Welsh Government] need to be mindful of the implications for special schools. Time for new curriculum already limited by the need for other mandatory training- medical, manual handling etc. all such training has an impact on INSET days. So when all other schools can focus on curriculum/ pedagogy special schools have to consider more things.” (School or practitioner)*

**Respondents took this opportunity to suggest alternative formats for the delivery of INSET days and/or Professional Learning.** This included delivering during twilight sessions and either avoiding an impact on practitioners’ holiday time or avoiding a reduction in the amount of time learners spend at school.

**An additional INSET day should be seen as one element within a wider approach to Professional Learning, particularly wider support opportunities.** Respondents noted the need for a package of support from middle tier organisations such as consortia,

sufficient funding for training, reform of teacher conditions and advice on how to make best use of INSET days.

*“If the fundamental changes to the vision of education are going to come to fruition, a more fundamental reform of teachers' conditions if needed. Extra INSET days will help, but they are isolated and temporary. Teachers need more PPA time, as part of their contract, in order to continually improve, reflect and self-evaluate and plan for progression and pedagogy. Perhaps an afternoon, in addition to the 10% PPA we currently have, for the sole purpose of research and Professional Learning may help.” (School or practitioner)*

**A small number of respondents expressed concern that insufficient information about curriculum and assessment changes has been communicated.** This is seen to both necessitate additional INSET days, to ensure practitioners understand the content of the new curriculum, and to necessitate more clarity on particular elements of the reforms (such as assessment).

**A small number of respondents emphasised that the additional time and support provided to practitioners to implement the new curriculum should certainly include practitioners in the non-maintained sector.**

*“We are a non-maintained setting so currently we don't have any inset days. We need to be treated in the same way as maintained nurseries. We receive exceptional training from EAS however it would be far more beneficial for all staff to attend do roll out can be more effective.” (Early years setting)*

**Among those who disagreed with the question, the themes raised most frequently were as follows.**

**An additional INSET day is not necessary because required Professional Learning activities should take place within existing INSET days.** Respondents noted that it is the schools' responsibility to adopt a strategic approach to INSET days, ensuring that responding to the new curriculum and assessment arrangements are a core priority for the use of existing INSET days.

*“Schools should have been making strategic development plans which would include the appropriate use of the current 5 days to plan for the implementation of the new curriculum. There is little regulation of these five days and so the quality and effectiveness vary considerably.” (Individual respondent)*

**Alternatively, an additional INSET day is not necessary because practitioners should already be preparing for the new curriculum arrangements as part of their core teaching responsibilities.** Respondents feel practitioners have been aware of curriculum and assessment changes for a period of time and should be integrating planning into their usual planning cycles.

**Current INSET days are not seen as particularly effective and so there is scope to develop a clearer focus on curriculum development.** Respondents reported that not all of the five current days are used to best effect and so Welsh Government and schools should work to ensure current INSET time is focused on curriculum priorities.

**Respondents also felt that more than one additional INSET day is necessary and so disagreed with the closed question.** Although these respondents disagreed with the



question, they were in agreement with the idea that more than one additional INSET day will be required each year (as discussed earlier in this section).

**An additional INSET day would have a negative impact on parents or guardians and on learners' education.** Respondents reported that an additional INSET would aggravate the burden already placed on working parents or guardians who need to make childcare arrangements for these days. Removing learners from an additional day of school was also envisaged to have a negative impact on learners, reducing further the number of days allocated to in-school learning and causing them to 'miss out' on education.

*“As a working parent it is a real struggle to accommodate the current number of inset days as it is. All the parents are told to do is plan for the extra inset day, great thanks for that, but where do the working families get the additional day from? It's about time the Welsh Government thought about the bigger picture and the impact to parents and the organisations they work for, not just the teachers and schools. I'm all for allowing the teachers to plan, but not at the cost of peoples household income where unpaid leave has to be taken or additional childcare costs are incurred.” (Parent or guardian)*

### **Differences in the themes raised most frequently by different population groups.**

**Both schools/practitioners, unions and middle tier organisations tended to draw attention to similar themes.** In particular, both these population groups tended to draw attention to ensuring that all schools and staff are preparing in a consistent manner; that one additional INSET day will not be sufficient; and the complexity and scale of the reform could have a negative impact on practitioner workloads within additional INSET days.

**Schools/practitioners were somewhat more likely to draw attention to the time needed for planning purposes,** such as developing schemes of work; were more likely to draw attention to the need to use INSET days for collaboration between practitioners and across clusters; and were more likely to emphasise the value of INSET days in allowing practitioners to start understanding the curriculum content. Special schools drew particular attention to the challenges they face in undertaking statutory training within INSET days and, accordingly, their particular requirement for additional INSET time.

**The small number of identified parents or guardians were somewhat more likely to express concern about the impact of an additional INSET day on their working life or childcare arrangements,** or express a lack of understanding of how current INSET days are used. However, a small number of schools/practitioners also commented on the need to avoid placing an additional burden on parents or guardians.

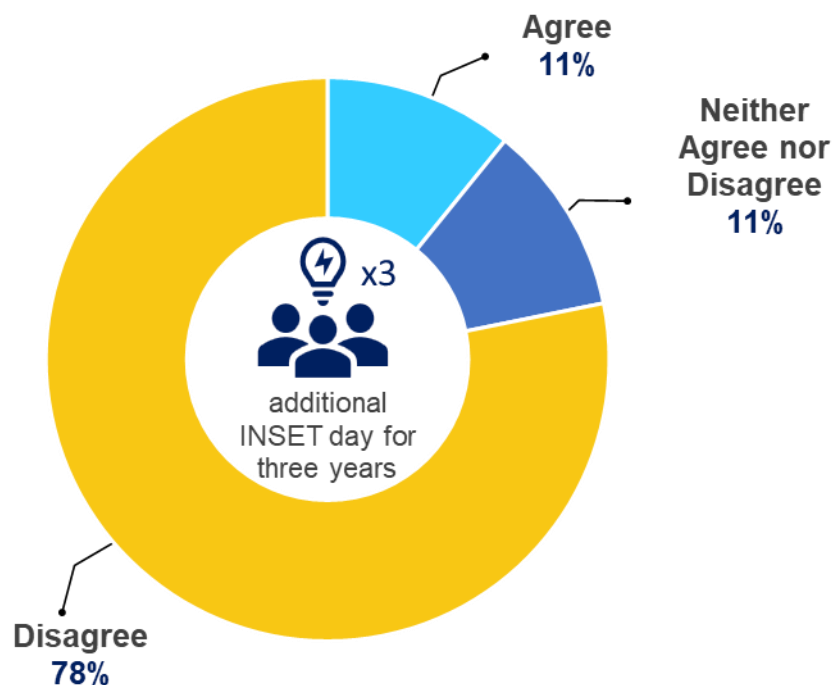
## Question 2 analysis

One extra INSET day per year, for the above three years, is proposed. This day will be specifically focussed on Professional Learning to support the introduction of the new curriculum. It is suggested that this will provide the balance of extra support and time with the amount of time pupils have in school.

**Do you think one additional INSET day per year for three years will be sufficient additional resource to help preparations for the new curriculum?**

In a closed question, respondents were asked to state whether they agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, or disagreed with the question. The figure below presents the results; 11% of respondents agreed with the question, 11% neither agreed nor disagreed and 78% disagreed.

*Figure 2: Percentage of respondents who agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, or disagreed that one additional INSET day per year for three years will be sufficient additional resource (n=628).*



There were 631 additional comments provided in response to this question.

**Among those who agreed with the question, the themes raised most frequently were as follows.**

**One additional INSET day per year for three years is a helpful proposal since it is essential practitioners are given time to prepare and develop their teaching practice.** These respondents commented that providing an additional INSET day will be a valuable way of ensuring practitioners have additional time to prepare for the new curriculum. An additional day would complement the time already available to practitioners within existing INSET days. Schools should be encouraged to use this additional day as a foundation upon which to build wider their wider curriculum and Professional Learning approach.

*“This is a welcome addition and an acceptable balance between the need for further investment in Professional Learning with the least disruption to pupils, families and the school year in general.” (Individual respondent)*

*“In terms of getting to grips with the new curriculum these 3 days are necessary to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum will be delivered competently. We will need time to understand the requirements of the teachers, organised resources that will need to be available and to adapt and develop planning.” (School or practitioner)*

**The five existing INSET days should provide sufficient time to respond to the new curriculum and assessment arrangements.** Respondents noted that responding to the new curriculum and assessment arrangements should be a school-level priority and as such, existing Professional Learning opportunities (including INSET days) should be tailored towards this new priority. Respondents felt that it was the responsibility of school leaders to ensure time is allocated to necessary professional conversations as part of school improvement priorities.

*“Should schools require additional time to focus on reform, this could be found from within the remaining window of the 5 inset days, without compromising schools work on other priorities.” (Middle tier organisation)*

**Two additional INSET days per year for three years would be preferable.** Although respondents acknowledged that any additional Professional Learning time in the form of a dedicated INSET day is valuable, they requested whether two additional INSET days would be possible. Respondents felt that practitioners would value two additional INSET days and this would align with the complexity of the reforms.

*“Yes I agree but I think two days (as was previously agreed in the past for transition activities) would be better still.” (School or practitioner)*

**A small number of respondents emphasised additional themes including:**

- This additional INSET day should be considered part of a wider, on-going approach to Professional Learning.
- This additional INSET day is necessary due to the complexity and scale of the curriculum reform process.
- More than one day per year would be preferable, but respondents do not specify how many.
- This additional INSET day is necessary to allow practitioners to collaborate.
- It would be difficult for working parents to cope with more than one additional INSET day.
- There will be additional Professional Learning support for schools from wider education partners, such as regional education consortia.

*“Regional Consortia will also support schools to look at other models of Professional Learning delivery that sit outside of the traditional 5 days e.g. individual practitioner enquiry, collaborative enquiry e.g. in triads / departments or across AoLE groupings.” (Middle tier organisation)*

**Among those who neither agreed nor disagreed with the question, the themes raised most frequently were as follows.**

**Whether or not one additional INSET day per year for three years is sufficient depends on the whole package of support which will be available to schools.** Respondents commented that one additional INSET day per year is unlikely to be sufficient unless there is also a wider system of Professional Learning and support from education partners in place. One additional INSET day may be acceptable if responding to new curriculum and assessment arrangements becomes a wider priority for school and regional-level Professional Learning processes.

*“If this is the only time that schools are going to dedicate for the new curriculum then clearly it is not enough. However, if the content is provided by [Welsh Government] then it should supplement what the school is currently doing in order to embed and reinforce what is already taking place and ensure that no school falls behind.” (Middle tier organisation)*

**Respondents reported that they did not feel sufficiently informed to respond to the question and/or are currently unsure about the most suitable number of additional INSET days.** These respondents felt they were lacking information concerning the detail of the new curriculum and/or felt uncertain how much additional Professional Learning time would be required before having started to develop their school-level curriculum.

*“Until we see the finalised content of the curriculum is hard to tell. I believe that one day in the first year is not enough, however in consecutive years this should be enough because it should be more a matter of tweaking than creating and arranging from scratch.” (School or practitioner)*

**Respondents commented on the need to ensure a careful balance between additional INSET days and the burden placed on working parents or guardians.** While respondents commented that more than one additional INSET day would be preferable and perhaps necessary, they also recognised that additional days could have a negative impact on working parents or guardians and on the amount of time children spend in school learning.

*“It is likely that more time will be required to prepare for the implementation of the new curriculum. However, it would be unfair to take away valuable teaching a learning experiences away from classes who need them, especially key examination classes.” (School or practitioner)*

**The comments from respondents who disagreed with the question can be broadly separated into two categories:**

- 1. Comments explaining why more than one additional INSET day per year for three years is necessary.**
- 2. Comments suggesting alternative numbers of days and delivery models.**

1.

**Respondents re-emphasised that more than one additional INSET day is necessary because the new curriculum represents a complex and large-scale reform which will add significantly to practitioners’ already heavy workloads.** This theme echoes comments already raised by responses to question 1 of this consultation. Respondents noted that the new curriculum and assessment arrangements require substantial re-

organisation of teaching practices and mind-sets. The current workload placed on practitioners is seen as excessive and this workload will be increased over the coming years as practitioners respond to the new arrangements.

*“Teachers are under a lot of pressure to deliver outstanding teaching to current cohorts, whilst also inputting into the new curriculum and gearing up to deliver it, embedding new professional standards, contributing to schools as learning organisations, taking best practice to other schools and working with other schools to learn from them as well as being fully involved in their school's self-evaluation and school development plan process and good teachers are leaving the profession because of this. They need more time not just annually to reflect on all of the new initiatives that are coming their way”. (School or practitioner)*

**As such, respondents noted that as much time as possible is necessary to allow practitioners to absorb, interpret and reflect upon the curriculum and assessment changes.** The new curriculum is seen to involve an array of complex themes and skills, which will take significant time for practitioners to fully grasp. Implementing the new curriculum to the best of their ability requires practitioners to have dedicated time to understand each element (such as each AoLEs, Progression Steps, What Matters Statements and cross-boundary working) and translate these elements into a workable curriculum and pedagogy.

*“As a pioneer school we have lived and breathed the development of the new curriculum from inception and schools need to have as much time as possible to go on the journey that we have to come to terms with documentation, change their mind-set and practices over time. As much Professional Learning time as possible for this is vital with Professional Learning given being purposeful and consistent across the nation.” (School or practitioner)*

*“Following the visionary amount of time and money given to the design of the new curriculum, through the pioneer schools and other participants and partners, the same value through the provision of time to schools to make this work properly. Otherwise we will have so many staff out of class continually that the pupils suffer.” (School or practitioner)*

**Since the new curriculum places such an emphasis on collaboration, more than one additional INSET day will be necessary to allow practitioners to come together to co-design curriculum elements and share good practice.** Cross-subject and cross-key stage working is recognised as a core principle behind the new curriculum. While some Professional Learning and planning can be undertaken during PPA periods or similar, designing a whole-school vision and curriculum is a collaborative process. Respondents emphasised that all practitioners will need dedicated time together to develop their vision and curriculum, ensuring a cohesive approach to pedagogy and curriculum content across the school. Similarly, schools require dedicated days to work in collaboration and share good practice with other schools in their clusters; this is seen as a key element of rolling out the new curriculum consistently across Wales.

*“Innovation and creativity come out of collaborative planning and sharing of ideas across a whole school. This doesn't happen in a day. Time needs to be allowed for key stage planning as well as whole school planning.” (School or practitioner)*

**Respondents re-emphasised that existing INSET days are already filled to capacity and so more than one additional INSET day will be necessary to focus specifically on curriculum arrangements.** All existing training time in schools is seen to be full, resulting

from the large number of mandatory and extremely valuable training courses (particularly those focused on child wellbeing). A wide range of activities are currently undertaken during the existing five INSET days and few of these activities can be amended or removed in order to release time for work on new curriculum and assessment arrangements; all these existing activities are important school-level priorities.

*“When considering the essential annual training areas of Safeguarding and Child Protection, Health and Safety (Risk Assessment), GDPR, assessment processes / moderation, self-evaluation and school improvement, currently undertaken by all schools, it is clear that the current INSET days are both essential and overstretched.” (Union)*

## 2.

**Around a third of respondents commented that one additional INSET day for three years was insufficient but did not specify how much additional time would be necessary.** Raising one or more of the reasons discussed above, respondents noted that one additional INSET day per year for three years is insufficient. They stated that much more time (in a variety of possible formats such as INSET days, PPA time, wider Professional Learning activities) must be provided to ensure practitioners can implement the new curriculum effectively. These respondents didn't specify how much additional time would be needed but made it clear that they felt one additional INSET day per year is insufficient.

*“The new curriculum is being 'built by teachers' - if this is the case then we need the time to make this happen and make it a success. This cannot be done in one day.” (School or practitioner)*

**Around a fifth of respondents commented that either two or three additional INSET days per year will be necessary (with a higher proportion favouring two additional days).** Respondents commented that two or three additional INSET days per year (instead of one) will allow at least some of the required time for practitioners to plan, collaborate, start implementing and review new curriculum arrangements. Purposeful days set aside throughout the year are seen as necessary to ensure practitioners continuously review and evaluate the implementation of the curriculum. Respondents who suggested two additional days tended to emphasise the need for one additional day at the start of the academic year and a second later on to review progress. Respondents who suggested three additional days tended to emphasise the need for one additional day each term.

*“Two additional days per year would be useful. One at the beginning for planning, working on school improvement planning for new curriculum as a whole school is key. An additional day (summer term approximately) would be useful as an evaluation session and further planning as a whole school staff.” (School or practitioner)*

*“I feel that one day is needed at the beginning of the year, at the end of the autumn term and the end of the spring term, in order to: Plan, Develop, Evaluate”. (School or practitioner – translated from Welsh)*

**A small number of respondents recommended that a high number of additional INSET days are provided during the first year, reducing year on year as the new curriculum is implemented.** These respondents felt that there was merit in offering a higher number of INSET days during 2019/20 to ensure practitioners can invest sufficiently in preparing for the new curriculum. The number of additional INSET days could then be

gradually reduced over the next few years, as practitioners become more confident in implementing the new curriculum and can use the additional INSET day(s) for review and evaluation. For example, some respondents recommend that three additional INSET days could be provided in 2019/20, two in 2020/2021 and one in 2021/22.

*“We think that further support is required, however it might be more appropriate to front load the number of days, then review them as practitioners are building their understanding of the new curriculum.” (Middle tier organisation)*

**A small number of respondents also explained that one additional INSET day should only be considered as part of a wider, on-going Professional Learning programme.** An additional INSET day (or more than one) is seen as one element of the Professional Learning approach needed in order to effectively implement the new curriculum. Professional conversations, PPA time and school-level planning priorities need to be tailored around the new curriculum requirements. This includes providing staff with regular opportunities for additional training and evaluation throughout the year, setting aside dedicated time where possible. This is seen as the only way to ensure practitioners can plan for and implement the new curriculum without an excessive additional workload.

*“[We do] not believe that one additional INSET day per year for three years will be sufficient to help preparations for the new curriculum...[We have] campaigned over many years for an increase in the amount of planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time provided to teachers. This currently stands at 10% of a teacher’s timetabled teaching time. [We believe] that teachers should be given 20% PPA time in the lead up to and in the early years of the introduction of the new curriculum. This will be vital to ensure that pupils are adequately and properly supported.” (Union)*

*“If the fundamental changes to the vision of education are going to come to fruition, a more fundamental reform of teachers' conditions if needed. Extra INSET days will help, but they are isolated and temporary. Teachers need more PPA time, as part of their contract, in order to continually improve, reflect and self-evaluate and plan for progression and pedagogy.” (School or practitioner)*

**A small number of respondents also suggested that existing and new INSET days could be provided as an intensive block, to minimise disruption.** Rather than providing additional INSET days throughout the year, some respondents suggested providing INSET days in an intensive block (for instance at the start of the academic year) to provide practitioners with sufficient time to develop comprehensive plans. Such an intensive structure would also allow for a concentrated effort to work collaboratively and develop an overarching vision for the new curriculum at school level.

### **Commonalities amongst across all responses (agreed, disagreed or neither agreed nor disagreed).**

**There is a need to ensure schools carefully consider how to make best use of the additional and existing INSET days to effectively respond to new curriculum and assessment arrangements.** Regardless of whether or not an additional INSET day (or a higher number) is provided, respondents emphasised that all INSET days will need to be used very effectively to respond to new curriculum and assessment requirements. School leaders will need to ensure curriculum planning is a key priority for all school improvement activities carried out as part of INSET days. This may involve middle tier organisations, unions and/or Welsh Government supporting schools with guidance on effective content

(see the analysis of question 5 of the consultation below). Respondents commented that all INSET days should be used to add value to wider Professional Learning activities, focused on the new curriculum.

*“There is scope to review the proposed arrangements after the first year to evaluate whether the additional INSET day is sufficient. As this additional INSET day is intended to focus on Professional Learning to support the implementation of the new curriculum, it will be essential that there are clear guidelines on in the intended outcomes expected. Clear guidance to help schools monitor and evaluate the impact of the additional INSET day on pupils’ performance will be fundamental. One of the challenges for schools will be how this INSET day links closely with other Professional Learning within the school.” (Middle tier organisation)*

**Although one additional INSET day per year for three years is a good starting point, there might be circumstances under which more are necessary.** Respondents note that, although one additional INSET day would be valuable, there are particular issues which should be taken into account when deciding on an appropriate amount of additional time to allocate. Schools are at different points in their curriculum development journeys and may need differing levels of Professional Learning activities. It may also be necessary to reconsider the amount of necessary INSET days over the years, as practitioners familiarise themselves with the curriculum and assess the appropriate amount of dedicated additional time required for effective delivery. A small number of respondents were unsure whether more than one additional INSET would be necessary but felt this was an option which should be explored.

*“Really does depend on position and readiness of the school for the new curriculum, the skill set of all staff and the resources and opportunities available to equip staff members.” (School or practitioner)*

**With this in mind, schools need strong support and guidance from middle tier organisations as part of a process to ensure school-level preparations are progressing well.** Respondents commented that a package of support needs to be in place to ensure schools do not struggle with Professional Learning capacity and to ensure a level of consistency across different schools. Examples of potential support include guidance and resources from regional education consortia on curriculum content and key pedagogy principles.

*“Regional consortia would work with pioneer schools to develop a series of pick and mix resources/approaches to support school engagement with key aspects of the new curriculum or e.g. the pedagogic content knowledge required that is specific to AoLEs. A menu of support could be developed to support this objective.” (Middle tier organisation)*

### **Differences in the themes raised most frequently by different population groups.**

**Schools / practitioners, middle tier organisations and unions tended to reflect similar key themes.** In particular, these population groups tended to: emphasise the fact that more than one additional INSET day per year for three years will be necessary but did not specify how much more time will be necessary; they also tended to emphasise the burden which the complexity and scale of the curriculum reform will place on practitioners; both tended to request two or three additional days per year (although schools / practitioners were slightly more likely to request three additional days).



**Schools / practitioners were somewhat more likely to emphasise the types of tasks for which the additional INSET days are required**, particularly collaboration with other practitioners and absorbing and reflecting upon the new curriculum. **Middle tier organisations and unions were somewhat more likely to discuss the additional INSET day as part of a wider package of required Professional Learning opportunities** and support or guidance from other education stakeholders.

There were insufficient comments from identified parents or guardians in response to this question to draw any conclusions about the views of this population group in particular. The few respondents who were identifiable as parents or guardians tended to be unsure as to whether additional INSET days would be necessary or add any value.

## Question 3 analysis

We think that these three years represent the key period for engagement and preparation prior to delivery of the new curriculum being realised in schools with the publication of the draft curriculum in 2019, the final curriculum in 2020 with roll out statutory from 2022.

### How many years should the additional INSET days be available for?

There were 866 comments provided in response to this question.

Of these, 623 comments specified for how many additional years the INSET days should be available. The below table presents the numbers and proportions of respondents who suggested each time period.

*Table 1: Number of years for which respondents reported additional INSET days should be available*

Number of years	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
1	1	0.2%
2	15	2.4%
At least 2	3	0.5%
<b>3</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>35.5%</b>
<b>At least 3</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>13.0%</b>
2 to 3	2	0.3%
4	43	6.9%
At least 4	7	1.1%
3 to 4	5	0.8%
<b>5</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>26.2%</b>
At least 5	34	5.5%
2 to 5	1	0.2%
3 to 5	12	1.9%
4 to 5	5	0.8%
6	14	2.2%
At least 6	4	0.6%
7	6	1.0%
At least 7	4	0.6%
At least 10	2	0.3%
<i>Total</i>	<i>623</i>	

As can be seen from the above table, **the tendency was for a majority of respondents to feel that additional INSET days should be available for a period of roughly 3-5 years.** However, the table also shows a variation in views with regard to the most appropriate number of years, with around a quarter of respondents specifying a period (e.g. 2 to 3 years) or not indicating an upper limit (e.g. at least 3 years).

**Respondents who agreed that additional INSET days for three years was appropriate tended to comment that offering additional days until the statutory implementation of the curriculum was reasonable.** By 2022, respondents felt that schools should be in a position to implement the new arrangements. At this point, the appropriate number of INSET days going forward should be reviewed. These respondents sometimes commented that

offering a higher number of INSET days per year for three years would be more beneficial than extending the number of years; this would allow practitioners to fully invest their time in preparing for implementation. Additional Professional Learning activity should provide a more coherent package of support around the INSET days during the first three years.

*“Three years seems reasonable but again it needs to be supplemented by the school’s use of the other INSET days and their use of staff meetings throughout the year. Valuable information given to schools and LAs in a timely way will also aid the process.” (Middle tier organisation)*

**However, respondents who felt that additional INSET days should be available for at least three years or up to five years emphasised that three years would only support practitioners up until the statutory introduction of the curriculum.** Additional years of support will be necessary during the early years of the new curriculum, allowing teachers to familiarise themselves with delivery and review the appropriateness of new arrangements. Allowing additional INSET days for up to five years will allow practitioners to evaluate the early delivery of the new curriculum and ensure curriculum content and pedagogy is appropriate for all key stages.

*“From speaking to pioneer schools who have adopted a ‘Donaldson type’ approach over the past 10 years they are still updating/improving the way they deliver this on a term by term basis. Therefore, I believe at least one extra INSET day is required for years past 2022.” (Individual respondent)*

Additional comments provided by 370 respondents provide more insight into the key considerations which should be taken into account to inform the appropriate length of time. These comments raised key criteria which should be used to decide on the appropriate number of years.

**Additional INSET days should be provided until the new curriculum has been fully implemented.** Responses vary in terms of their definition of ‘fully implemented’. Some respondents do not give a definition, stating that additional INSET days will be necessary until all elements of the new curriculum are in place. Others state that additional INSET days will be necessary until a full cohort of young people have progressed through to key stage 4 and undertaken key examinations. Others state that additional INSET days will be necessary until the curriculum is rolled out “across all year groups” and/or rolled out smoothly across year groups.

*“Until the new curriculum is up and running and teachers are confident with it.” (Individual respondent)*

**Additional INSET should be provided long enough for practitioners to review, reflect upon and evaluate new curriculum arrangements.** Additional INSET days are deemed necessary for more than only the design and implementation of the curriculum. Respondents commented that INSET days should be used in future years to ensure the effectiveness of the new curriculum delivery, providing practitioners with a structured opportunity to evaluate the significant changes that will have occurred. Curriculum development is not seen as a short-term task, but rather a process that involves long-term refinement, review and improvement. Respondents therefore noted that additional INSET days should be provided for sufficient years to allow practitioners time to see the impact of their new pedagogy and curriculum on learners.

*“I would think 5 years. The first three will be to assist with forming and shaping the new curriculum to ensure a best fit for the schools involved. The following two years could be used to analyse and review - a crucial part of the process that is largely overlooked in the launch of such changes.” (Individual respondent)*

*“Until 2 years after the introduction of the new curriculum in order to ensure enough time to reflect and to evaluate the changes at departmental, faculty, school and national level and to make the relevant adaptations.” (School or practitioner – translated from Welsh)*

**Additional INSET days should be on-going, as part of a new approach to long-term Professional Learning.** These respondents commented that an additional INSET day should be provided indefinitely. The new curriculum is seen as a substantial change to teaching practice and adapting to its requirements will be an on-going process for many practitioners. In addition, Professional Learning, opportunities for professional dialogue and opportunities for planning, moderation and assessment are seen as valuable in themselves, regardless of the new curriculum; additional time for this work should be prioritised on a long-term basis. At this stage, therefore, respondents commented that additional INSET days should be provided on an on-going basis to complement a new approach to Professional Learning and to allow practitioners to undertake all the necessary tasks which will develop over time (such as producing new resources and amending curriculum content). The additional INSET days could perhaps be reviewed in future years once the curriculum is more fully established.

*“If Professional Learning is to be realised as an important aspect of the new standards for all professionals within the workforce, the making the additional days a permanent feature would emphasise [Welsh Government]’s belief in its importance.” (School or practitioner)*

**No additional INSET days should be provided.** Some respondents took this opportunity to re-emphasise their disagreement with the need for any additional INSET days and that, accordingly, the question was not relevant to them.

**More than one additional INSET day per year will be necessary.** Some respondents took this opportunity to re-emphasise that – regardless of the number of years proposed for additional INSET days – more than one additional INSET day per year should be provided. These respondents echoed some of the comments raised in responses to questions 1 and 2 of the consultation.

**A small number of respondents reported that a different format for Professional Learning should be prioritised.** This includes providing alternative opportunities for Professional Learning and planning outside regular INSET days (such as additional PPA time) and ensuring that Professional Learning structures respond to the needs of different sectors (such as the early years sector).

*“It seems more likely that more regular, bespoke Professional Learning is really what’s required. Schools moving to asymmetric weeks to provide fortnightly Professional Learning seem to have understood the scale of need and also demonstrate strong understanding of how adults learn well.” (Individual respondent)*

**A small number of respondents were unsure for how many years additional INSET days should be available.** These respondents commented that they were generally unsure at this point how much additional time would be required since they did not feel sufficiently informed about new curriculum requirements. Respondents recognise that schools may

have different INSET needs and/or the appropriate number of days and years could be reconsidered as the curriculum is implemented. Additional INSET days is also seen by a couple of respondents as one element within a more fundamental, on-going consideration of teacher pay and conditions.

### **Differences in the themes raised most frequently by different population groups.**

There were no discernible differences in the themes which tended to be raised by different population groups. Schools/practitioners, unions and middle tier organisations expressed similar views regarding the appropriate number of years (often settling on 3-5 as a whole) and emphasised many of the same key themes (such as the importance of evaluation and a wider, on-going approach to Professional Learning). The numbers of substantial responses from other population groups – including parents – were insufficient to allow for any direct comparison in this case.

## Question 4 analysis

We are interested in your views on how INSET days are currently used. We are interested in evidence and examples of the current use of INSET and how INSET may be used in the period before the advent of the new curriculum to more widely support realisation of the new curriculum moving forward.

### **What do you think about how INSET days are currently used?**

There were 830 comments provided in response to this question.

Just under half the respondents provided positive views on how INSET days were currently used. Around a fifth provided mixed views and a fifth provided negative views with the remainder providing comments that were neither positive nor negative (e.g. describing current practice or noting what they would like to see included in INSET).

### **Issues raised by those who expressed positive views on the use of INSET days.**

**The most frequently raised theme was that INSET days were currently used effectively.** Respondents frequently referred to the variety of approaches taken to planning INSET days and provided a range of examples of how they considered INSET days to be effectively delivered. Frequently mentioned examples relating to the content of INSET days included the following:

- Focusing on the new curriculum;
- Focusing on ALN reform;
- Raising standards;
- Dissemination of information;
- Planning and administration; and
- Providing feedback on previous INSET sessions.

Many of those who commented positively on the effectiveness of INSET days referred to the process of planning training activity, the content of training and approach to delivery (e.g. use of internal and external speakers, rotation of topics and staff, collaboration with other schools).

*“In my schools we plan well ahead for inset days and use them for all staff and governors to share, learn and develop in a cost-effective way. We work with cluster schools and our wider network to share training and ideas. The exchange of learning on these days is essential and offers us the space and time to stop and reflect.” (School or practitioner)*

*“INSET days are utilised well by schools and are planned for well in advance. For example, bringing in outside providers for cluster training, in house training using staff expertise and also First Aid, CP, Prevent, Behaviour Management days, etc.” (School or practitioner)*

**Respondents’ views indicate that INSET days are considered valuable for Professional Learning.** The value of INSET days was the second most frequently mentioned theme among those who provided positive views, with many commenting on their value for training and professional development, sharing and discussing good practice and to enable an individualised approach to Professional Learning.

*“Useful, lots of collaboration between schools helps with consistency and being cost-effective by paying for experts together.” (Middle tier organisation – translated from Welsh)*

*“INSET days are very beneficial to support the learning needs of our pupils and to keep up to date with policy and curriculum changes. Without these we wouldn't be able to provide the best service possible for our future generations.” (School or practitioner)*

*“They are a necessity particularly in the time of change not just with regards to curriculum but with teaching and leadership standards, changes to performance management, schools as learning organisations, changes in assessments etc. providing there is a clear focus and the format is for whole school developments.” (School or practitioner)*

*“Ensuring teaching staff are up to date with new teaching methods in order to provide my children with the best education possible” (Parent or guardian)*

**Respondents considered that INSET days offer opportunities for whole school development and partnership working.** Respondents emphasised the importance of bringing all staff together, focusing on school-wide priorities, providing them with consistent messages and promoting collaboration. Partnership working is considered a key potential benefit from INSET days. Some respondents provided positive comments on the opportunities that INSET days provide for working in partnership with cluster schools.

*“We think ours are invaluable because we use our INSET days to deliver workshops to all staff, for departments to meet and plan and for whole school delivery from either internal or external experts.” (School or practitioner)*

*“School INSET is valuable for [school development planning].; shared visions to be explored and collaborative planning. Governors also benefit from INSET days with school staff.” (School or practitioner)*

*“Each of our INSET days has a particular theme, related to our improvement objectives e.g., one of our current INSET days is a joint cluster day that we host (ourselves and our 9 primary schools together) with a specific learning focus and joint workshops. Another of our current INSET days is a [school improvement group] day that we also host, which takes place in collaboration with other schools in our [school improvement group].” (School or practitioner)*

### **Issues and challenges raised by respondents commenting on the use of INSET days.**

Many issues and challenges relating to the use of INSET days were raised by those who expressed positive views as well as those expressing negative and a mixture of views.

The most frequently raised **challenge among all respondents related to a lack of time for INSET activity.** Comments relating to a lack of time were provided by those who had positive, mixed and negative views on how INSET days were used. Many of these respondents were practitioners who commented on time pressures, mentioning their general workload and a lack of time for various everyday activities (e.g. creating resources, planning lessons) as well as the time required to keep up-to-date on new policies and initiatives. Some of these respondents felt that the time spent participating in INSET days would be better spent on other work activities. Some felt there was a lack of opportunity for critical reflection and learning.

*“Majority are useful for school to cover certain aspects that all staff need to participate in, however more time for time in department or individually to reflect and improve on standards would be nice.” (School or practitioner)*

*“Teachers need more time to consider what they need rather than sitting in a hall listening to information that might not even be particularly relevant or useful to that particular teacher. It would be far more useful or beneficial to be in charge of your own continual professional development. For example, it would be far more useful for me to spend the time updating resources for my department and having the time to liaise with other professionals within and across my own AoLE - sharing of best practice.” (School or practitioner)*

**Special schools noted that there was a lack of time for professional development due to the additional training relating to ALN that practitioners required.** This theme is echoed in responses to other questions within this consultation, with respondents emphasising that Special Schools face a wide range of mandatory training requirements that put additional demands on their INSET days.

*“There is not enough INSET time currently in Special Schools as there are so many vital core training needs to be met. Time is maximized and very creative approaches (carousels, twilights, pooling resources with other schools etc. are all utilized but time is still very tight)” (School or practitioner)*

*“Being in the special sector there are not enough in order for us as a leadership team to cover all necessary multi-disciplinary aspects.” (School or practitioner)*

**Some respondents considered that INSET days were not being used to their full potential.** A variety of reasons for this view were offered by respondents, with some noting that current arrangements offered insufficient collaboration opportunities. Some considered that INSET days were currently not delivered in the most efficient manner or were of poor quality.

*“Most INSET days need to be streamlined more. Less time discussion and more time doing and implementing changes for the new curriculum would be beneficial.” (School or practitioner)*

*“As it currently stands, INSET days are not utilised to their full potential. Too much time is wasted on matters than could easily be consolidated into an email or passed on to line managers to be disseminated during department meetings. INSET time should be better spent allowing teachers to prepare and plan engaging and innovative lessons.” (School or practitioner)*

**A few respondents felt that INSET was insufficiently focused on evidence-based practice and pedagogy.** Additionally, some reported that there was limited evidence of the effectiveness of different approaches to Professional Learning and that INSET should be monitored and evaluated more closely to assess its effectiveness.

*“I do believe that there needs to be a greater focus on pedagogy and cross cluster working.” (School or practitioner)*



*“They are a waste of time; I would prefer to discuss pedagogy and use the latest research to improve lessons and implement improvements.” (Individual respondent – translated from Welsh)*

**A need for more central support for INSET was raised by some respondents.** Some of these respondents considered that there was a need for more strategic guidance on INSET (e.g. a national agenda), while others referred to a need for more guidance on the new curriculum, shared resources and more external input from expert training providers. Some felt there was a lack of funding available to fund external delivery of training available. Respondents suggested that **more central support and guidance could help overcome perceived inconsistency in practice and variation in quality and effectiveness of INSET.**

*“Obviously these are bespoke to school settings. Having some generic resources that can be used (or adapted) by schools but have the same basic messages in them would be useful.” (School or practitioner)*

*“I think there is a lack of consistency of practice cross consortium and cross county. I think more guidance is required in terms of areas for development for schools. e.g. the new ALN Bill should be a priority for training and schools should have an obligation to offer training in certain areas whilst maintaining a degree of autonomy in other INSET days.” (School or practitioner)*

*“As with many aspects of Wales’ education system, there is likely to be variability in how INSET days are being used between different settings and within different Local Authorities and school clusters across the country.” (Union)*

**However, maintaining school and teacher autonomy to plan and prioritise the content of INSET was also an important consideration for many respondents.** Some respondents supported the current levels of autonomy afforded to schools. This theme is echoed in comments raised in response to question 5 on whether or not mandatory content should be provided for the additional INSET day.

*“I think there should be no prescription on what specifically has to be done on the INSET days, and it should be the school’s discretion so that each individual establishment can use these days to plan for the new curriculum in however each school needs to.” (Individual respondent)*

*“When tailored well to the school they can be extremely productive. However, there are times when content or training is pushed down from LA or consortia and these often do not tie in with school priorities.” (School or practitioner)*

**Insufficient opportunities were provided during INSET sessions for critical reflection and for practitioners to reflect on their own individual learning needs and skills development.** Some respondents also felt that INSET days needed to be more tailored to practitioner needs (e.g. more subject or area specific).

*“There is a lack of flexibility for teachers to pursue their own lines of enquiry within school. If inset time was dedicated to this then there would be more action research engaged schools.” (School or practitioner)*

**Some respondents commented on the scheduling of INSET days.** Some respondents were supportive of schools arranging INSET days on the same dates, noting that this

provided more opportunities for collaboration between schools (e.g. joint sessions to share good practice) and cluster working. This was also considered to be beneficial for cross-border collaboration between Welsh-medium schools in different local authorities.

*“Having universal Inset days across counties would allow us to work together across the region. This would be advantageous especially if there are no other Welsh medium schools in your county.” (School or practitioner – translated from Welsh)*

This approach was considered beneficial by some parents or guardians who had children in more than one school and commented that synchronising INSET days in these schools reduced the number of days childcare they had to arrange.

*“All the schools plan different days and so if you have a child at both primary and secondary school, there is a potential need for an additional 10 days of childcare. How do I pay for this? How do I use my work holidays for this?” (Parent or guardian – translated from Welsh)*

**There were concerns raised about schools arranging INSET on the same dates**, noting that this could lead to difficulties in accessing external experts or training providers. Furthermore, some practitioners felt that individual schools should be able to arrange INSET days when it best suited the needs of the school.

*“Meet the needs of individual schools who are at different stages of development. Freedom to select days is important in order to get facilitators or when school needs them. Dictated days not as effective.” (School or practitioner)*

**Schools’ use of ‘twilight’ INSET sessions were also commented upon** (i.e. sessions scheduled after school hours, used in place of whole INSET days). Some respondents questioned whether this was the most appropriate way of scheduling practitioner training. Additionally, some respondents proposed that INSET days should be arranged during school holidays.

*“If they can be added to school holidays this would be easier for childcare purposes. Ad-hoc days can be disruptive.” (Individual respondent)*

*“I believe that there seems to be too much going on within the schools that require CPD for five days per year. I believe that additional days should be paid for during holiday periods and not included within term time. Parents should then see no further disruption to their works schedules that is generally the case with the current approach to INSET Days.” (Individual respondent)*

**The increasing demands on teachers in light of key policy developments (e.g. ALN Act, curriculum reform) were commonly raised by respondents as a reason for increasing the amount of CPD delivered.** Some respondents therefore noted that additional INSET days were required to equip practitioners with the skills to deliver these reforms. This theme was echoed frequently in responses to other consultation questions, with respondents emphasising that additional INSET days should be considered within the context of wider education policy developments.

*“5 Inset days simply isn’t enough for teachers at the moment with increasing demands on the role.” (School or practitioner)*

*“There are not enough for all the demands there are on teachers.” (School or practitioner – translated from Welsh)*

**A small number of parents felt that they did not understand what INSET days were used for** and that they did not receive sufficient information about the purpose of the training.

*“It is difficult to say as we, parents can only accept what communication is offered by the school regarding inset days which is often very little or nothing at all.” (Parent or guardian)*

### **Differences in the themes raised most frequently by different population groups.**

**School practitioners appeared to more frequently express positive views than other respondent groups in relation to the use of INSET days.** Over half of the respondents who were identifiable as schools or practitioners expressed positive views on how INSET days are currently used, with around a third expressing a mixture of positive and negative views. Less than a fifth expressed negative views. Among respondents identifiable as middle tier respondents and unions, around half expressed either mixed views or neither positive nor negative views. Around a third expressed positive views, and a few respondents expressed negative views. Few parents provided views on this question, but most of those that did provided mixed views.

**School practitioners were more likely than others to raise concerns about the lack of time** available for training activity within INSET days and issues relating to practitioner workload. Respondents from schools were also more likely to mention a need for more school and teacher autonomy, while middle tier organisations and unions more frequently mentioned a need for strategic guidance or more consistent approach to INSET days.

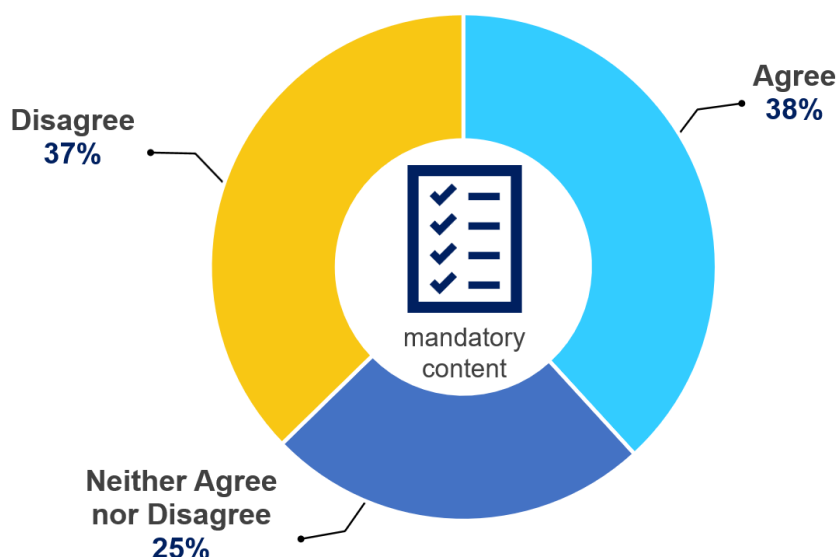
## Question 5 analysis

We propose that how the extra day is to be used should be mandatory so that we can ensure that all teachers in Wales are exposed to a National Professional Learning package specifically targeted at providing them with the necessary learning to prepare them to engage with the fundamental shift that the new curriculum in Wales represents.

**Do you think we should provide mandatory content for these additional days?**

In a closed question, respondents were asked to state whether they agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, or disagreed with the question. The figure below presents the results; 38% of respondents agreed with the question, 25% neither agreed nor disagreed and 37% disagreed.

**Figure 3: Percentage of respondents who agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, or disagreed that mandatory content should be provided for these additional days (n=885).**



There were 616 additional comments provided in response to this question.

**Among those who agreed with the question, the themes raised most frequently were as follows.**

**Mandatory content for the additional days is necessary as a way of ensuring that there is consistency in the content.** This theme of consistency and equality of access to content was by far the most common theme among those agreeing with providing mandatory content. Respondents commented that it is important that the training for the new curriculum is consistent throughout Wales, and that shared agendas and shared resources are made available to allow for easier collaboration across schools, ensure that key messages are received at the same time and allow less room for misinterpretation.

*“This would bring consistency across the country and will allow capacity of training when practitioners move between schools. In addition, the knowledge of senior leaders is variable and therefore, in order to provide an effective use of the additional day, mandatory content would be sensible.” (School or practitioner)*

*“In our experience as a pioneer school, we have often found that information has been available to different groups at different times. This has caused confusion. I believe mandatory content will mitigate the risk of mixed messages or mis-timed messages being communicated. Having said this, I also strongly believe there needs to be time and space for schools to interpret the national agenda and messages at a local level, in a local context.” (School or practitioner)*

**There should be mandatory content on the additional days so that the best use is made** of those days. Respondents were concerned that without mandatory content, or clear guidance, the additional days would not be used for its intended purpose.

*“You know the schools are having the correct training and that these days are not being used for anything else.” (School or practitioner)*

*“If everyone works towards the same goals at the same time, that should help the implementation phase otherwise there's a risk that the additional day/s will be blended into the rest of the INSET activities.” (Not identifiable)*

Among those that agreed with providing mandatory content, a small number of respondents were in favour of prescribing the content for either part of the day, or only for the first few additional INSET days, before then opening up the agenda to cover the school's priorities. Other themes included the need for flexibility in delivering the content, the potential role of mandatory content in contributing to a national discussion on the new curriculum and the need for the mandatory content to be linked to ongoing improvement and evaluation.

**Among those who disagreed with the question, the themes raised most frequently were as follows.**

**Schools' needs differ and mandatory content would not suit all schools.**

Respondents emphasised that schools decide what is important for their setting to meet their own priorities and needs. Each school has their own approach to how they are developing the curriculum best suited to their own context and they are in the best position to determine their own needs

**Mandatory content would be restrictive and respondents commented that it would be difficult to dictate content that fits with schools' different stages of development towards the new curriculum.** Respondents commented that some schools are more advanced in their understanding and development of the new curriculum and they could be held back by mandatory content or find that they have covered the content already.

*“Schools are in a wide range of different places in relation to the new curriculum, with different strengths and different areas for development. Standardised mandatory content, being a 'one size fits all' will lack depth for many schools in the areas where they need to focus”. (School or practitioner)*

**Since the new curriculum places an emphasis on providing practitioners with greater agency, many respondents believed that issuing mandatory content would be at odds with the very ethos of Curriculum for Wales 2022.** Schools should be allowed to create their own agenda to suit their own needs and local context. While some guidance would be helpful, there needs to be room for innovation and creativity in introducing the new curriculum. The teaching profession should be trusted to plan INSET days effectively to

drive the new curriculum and schools should have the autonomy to deliver in a way that suits the needs of the school.

*“Given that the strong message from Welsh government is that the new curriculum will look different in every school it should be up to the school to structure the day based on their priorities.” (School practitioner)*

Although many respondents disagreed with following mandatory content in the additional INSET days, the **benefit of providing clear guidance and making available a bank of resources was a key theme** in the additional comments.

**Among those who neither agreed nor disagreed with the question, the themes raised most frequently were as follows.**

**The theme raised most frequently by most respondents was the need for clear guidance and structure.** Respondents welcomed clear guidance for the content of the additional INSET but many respondents questioned whether this should be mandatory. The respondents commented that it would be beneficial to have outline content but that this should also allow for flexibility and time for schools to address their own priorities.

As with respondents who disagreed with providing mandatory content, the other key theme raised by this group was that **schools’ needs differ and that schools are at different positions.**

**A small number commented that content should focus on new curriculum** on the additional days, to ensure these days are specifically used for this purpose rather than alternative school priorities.

*“There needs to be a common and consistent message regarding the new curriculum to avoid misunderstanding and misconception, however, consideration must be given to the fact that all schools are on different parts of the journey and may need different support.”  
(School or practitioner)*

*“I think that it should be mandatory for the additional days to be focussed on the Curriculum for Wales however that individual schools should have ownership on what is covered as they are all at different points in their journey.” (School or practitioner)*

**Commonalities amongst across all responses (agreed, disagreed or neither agreed nor disagreed).**

Many respondents explained in their additional comments that they would welcome a clear framework or guidance for the additional days, regardless of how they answered the closed question.

*“I believe that a mandatory framework for the days is essential to ensure that they are utilised effectively; however, schools and individual settings should be able to decide what works best for them in their context. Support materials would be most useful.” (School or practitioner)*

### **Differences in the themes raised most frequently by different population groups.**

**Middle tier and union respondents were somewhat more likely to agree with providing mandatory content than other respondents.** There were no discernible differences in the themes raised by different population groups in their additional comments and respondents from all groups welcomed guidance and structure, commented on the need for consistency and raised the issue that any content provided would need to take account of schools' differing needs.

The responses to this question on the provision of mandatory content were compared with the responses to the previous question on respondents' views on how INSET days are currently used. **Those respondents who expressed positive views on the use of INSET days** in their additional comments to Question 4 were **more likely to comment that school's needs vary** and that schools are at different stages. Otherwise the themes raised in response to the question of mandatory contents were broadly similar regardless of opinions held about current INSET days.

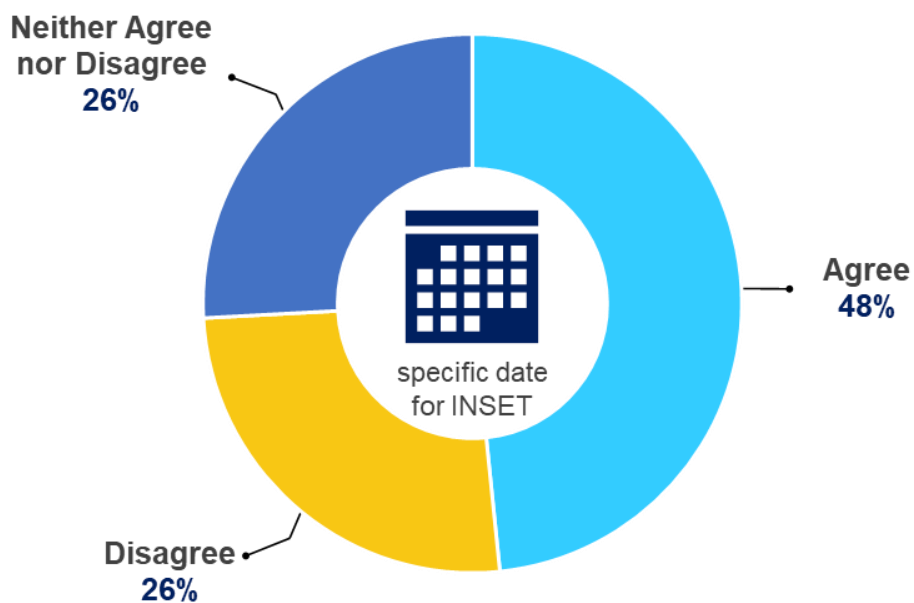
## Question 6 analysis

We don't want any teacher or school to feel like they are being left behind, and we want to create a national conversation around Professional Learning. We are interested in your thoughts as to whether a set date for the additional INSET would work practically.

**Do you think having a specified date for the National Professional Learning INSET day would be beneficial, or do you think a period should be specified (i.e. within a particular term or half term)?**

In a closed question, respondents were asked to state whether they agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, or disagreed with the question. The figure below presents the results; 48% of respondents agreed with the question, 26% neither agreed nor disagreed and 26% disagreed. It is worth noting that, due to the phrasing of the question, **the responses to the closed question cannot be taken as entirely accurate**. More detailed analysis of the respondents' comments showed that a greater proportion – two-thirds of the respondents - think that a specified date or period would be beneficial.

**Figure 4: Percentage of respondents who agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, or disagreed that having a specified date for the National Professional Learning INSET day would be beneficial (n=855).**



There were 713 additional comments provided in response to this question.

Due to the phrasing of the question, respondents chose to answer this question in different ways, and there were common themes in the responses across the answer options. The additional comments provided were reviewed and the responses then categorised according to the opinions expressed in those comments rather than according to the closed answer choice. According to the analysis of the additional comments, 67% of respondent expressed a view that either a set date or a set period would work practically. A fifth (19%) disagreed and stated that schools (or clusters, or consortia) should decide and 6% focused on the practical challenges which would make setting a date or a period difficult. 6% of respondents were undecided or commented that they did not have an opinion. The



remaining 2% either opposed additional INSET days or proposed that the additional days should be during the school holidays.

**Two-thirds of the respondents agreed with having either a specified date or a specified period for the additional INSET.**

**Around half of these were in favour of a specified date.**

Respondents commented that a 'national day' would be beneficial for a number of reasons.

**A set date for the additional INSET could help communicate that the new curriculum is a national priority** to parents and the general public. Respondents reported that this could increase the value of the additional INSET day in the public eye meaning that parents would be more understanding of the need for an additional day.

**Many respondents felt that having a specified date for the National Professional Learning INSET day would allow for greater collaboration between schools. It would be beneficial also for schools and practitioners to have messages at the same time** during a set date, which ensures that every school receives the same information about the new curriculum at the same time and that no school or practitioner is left behind. Managing the timing of INSET days would also be helpful for practitioners changing jobs and moving between schools.

**Respondents re-emphasised that it would be easier for parents to arrange childcare if there is a set date**, especially for those parents who have children in different schools. However, there was no consensus on this issue and a small number of respondents were of the view that one set date would put too much pressure on the childcare sector, and that there would be a childcare shortage on these dates.

*“If a specific date was chosen for use across Wales or specific regions/LAs, schools would then have the opportunity to come together more to discuss and plan for the delivery of the new curriculum. Work can then be divided and more good practice shared throughout consortia” (School or practitioner).*

*“Everyone, everywhere, should have the same opportunities. A day for everyone across Wales. We need to hear the same messages.” (Middle tier organisation – translated from Welsh)*

**The other half were in favour of a set period rather than a date.**

Respondents thought that a period where all schools would take the additional INSET day would be beneficial for some of the same reasons as those respondents who preferred a set date, namely communicating that the new curriculum was a priority and making sure that all practitioners received key messages at around the same time.

**Respondents who recommended a set period over a set date were often concerned about the practicalities of running INSET days across all schools on the same day.** There were two main themes with regard to practical difficulties in holding a set date. Respondents believed that the finite number of experts and speakers would mean that setting one date would be impossible. They noted the challenge of every school trying to access expert speakers or access the experience of colleagues from pioneer schools if there was a specified date. A period rather than a date would be also preferable since

schools will have different busy periods, and many will have existing commitments and events already scheduled.

*“A specified time period would be most effective, I believe. Schools have other priorities, in addition to the new curriculum, and these will need to be addressed in a timely manner also”  
(School or practitioner).*

*“We believe that it would not be practical to have a specified date. For example, trainers may need to deliver in several schools in the region and this will not be possible if the training is on the same day, or several days may be required in one school to cover the same content because of needing to ensure that part-time staff are able to attend. But specifying that the INSET day should be scheduled for the Spring term with a measure of discretion regarding the specific date would work well”. (Union)*

**There was a request by many respondents for any set date to be tagged on to the school holidays, again so that it would be easier for parents to plan childcare, or take advantage of extending their holidays.** A small number requested a specific term for the additional INSET, usually the summer term, although there was no consensus on the timing, with requests for the additional INSET day to run in other terms too.

*“[Agree with a date]...providing it was publicised in advance and allocated to an existing school holiday at the end or beginning of a term.” (School or practitioner)*

Some respondents explained that there were advantages and disadvantages to both the option of a set date or a set period. A small number of respondents explained that they did not have an opinion on the matter, ‘as long as it happened’, and a very small number reported that they did not feel that it was an important issue.

**A significant minority (a fifth of those who provided supporting comments) believed that schools should decide when to use the additional INSET days.**

Respondents commented that **schools should be able to decide on the most suitable timings to allow for pre-planned events and training**, and to be able to cover content relevant to them at the time in the year they believe to be most effective. This would also allow schools more flexibility to meet their own needs.

Echoing answers to the previous question on providing mandatory content, a very small number of respondents commented on the **need for school autonomy and that schools should be trusted with the timing of the additional day**. Deciding on a set date would clash with the ethos of the new curriculum.

*“This would be contradictory to the message of the new curriculum’s capacity to do what is absolutely right for an individual school, children, staff, cluster and community” (School or practitioner)*

*“It needs to fit the school context and WG cannot possibly know when it is the right time to deliver specific content in different schools. Senior leaders should be trusted to deliver the right thing at the right time for the school” (School or practitioner)*

In some of the additional comments analysed, **respondents’ preferences were unclear**, while a very small number explained that they had no strong opinions.

**A very small number of respondents** commented that the additional INSET days should be in the evening or during the school holidays, and a handful of respondents commented that no additional INSET days should be provided. These respondents described themselves as parents or guardians or did not identify as part of any group. No schools or practitioners recommended INSET days during holidays.

**Commonalities/Differences in the themes raised most frequently by different population groups.**

Overall, there were no discernible differences in the views held by the different population groups or the themes raised.

## Questions 7 and 8 analysis

We would like to know your views on the effects that the proposals would have on the Welsh language, specifically on:

Opportunities for people to use Welsh

Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

\*\*\*\*\*

Please also explain how you believe the proposed policy could be formulated or changed so as to have:

Positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language

No adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

There were 609 comments provided in response to question 7 and 453 comments provided in response to question 8.

**Many respondents expressed broadly positive views but qualified their views or suggested additional actions in order achieve further positive effects.**

**Respondents felt that, in order for the proposals to extend opportunities for people to use Welsh, more structured, longer term support is needed to support Welsh language skills.** Respondents expressed scepticism that the requirement to extend the use of the Welsh language as part of the curriculum could be effectively supported through an additional INSET day. It was argued that teachers will require access to more regular, intensive and tailored tuition to enhance their Welsh language skills and reach a standard where this makes a meaningful difference in curriculum delivery.

*“I do not believe one INSET day will be the harbinger of bilingualism in our schools. Rather, I believe to achieve the goals outlined, and the Welsh Government target of 1 million Welsh speakers, then teachers will need to have intensive Welsh language sabbatical periods in which they are fully supported to attain a standard of Welsh that can be passed on through the curriculum as a whole. I am not a proponent of shoehorning this into one, or even six, INSET days.” (Individual respondent)*

Many practitioners, in particular, felt that the curriculum changes were too wide-ranging to be accommodated by one additional INSET day and that the additional time would be unlikely to lead to increased use of the Welsh language.

**It was suggested that English-medium schools will require specific support over a sustained period of time** in order to be able to increase the use of Welsh in a way that becomes embedded and impacts positively on learners. Additional INSET days form only a small part of the support required. Examples of specific support required by English-medium schools include: access to structured Welsh language learning programmes (as noted above); access to bilingual resources to support the use of Welsh (see below for more information); further opportunities to observe good practice in the use of Welsh in English-

medium schools as part of Professional Learning activity; and engagement with Welsh-medium specialists during INSET.

*“The approach to bilingualism and plurilingualism in the new curriculum and the new professional standards places a responsibility on all practitioners to consider their own language skills and their place in supporting Welsh language development across the curriculum. Teachers should feel supported to be able to achieve where current language skills are limited and be clearly signposted to local, regional and national opportunities for Professional Learning, particularly language learning.” (Practitioner or school)*

**Other also noted that the needs of English-medium schools extend beyond that which is possible through INSET.** Many respondents acknowledged that the new curriculum and the Cymraeg 2050 strategy provides opportunities to introduce innovative pedagogical approaches and developments.<sup>4</sup> However consultation responses also revealed anxieties among some practitioners who feel they may be expected to deliver learning *“through a medium that they have little mastery of.”* This also highlights the need for schools (and individual practitioners) to be able to access support relevant to their needs and skills gaps in order to support the planned Welsh language continuum.

It was suggested that support and guidance from Welsh Government, regional consortia and Estyn will be required to encourage parents to see the significance of Welsh across the curriculum in the English-medium sector.

**Consultation respondents provided a wide range of comments relating to the need for bilingual resources to be available to support INSET and Professional Learning more generally.** Respondents noted that resources developed to support Professional Learning should be made available through the medium of Welsh and English at the same time. This was from the standpoint of fairness and equity so that Welsh-medium schools and learners in those schools are not disadvantaged.

*“It is essential that any resources are presented in both languages simultaneously, and that there are full opportunities for people to contribute through the medium of Welsh as part of any [INSET] activities. This is not always the case currently during presentations on the Curriculum for Wales.” (Practitioner or school – translated from Welsh)*

It was argued that a lack of bilingual resources can leave Welsh-medium practitioners at a disadvantage in terms of being able to incorporate training into their planning and teaching practice.

*“Consortia must be able to deliver training in Welsh and provide translated resources. It is often the case during training that resources are not available and some trainers have no awareness of Welsh-medium education.” (Practitioner or school – translated from Welsh)*

Representatives from English-medium schools also underlined the need for bilingual resources to help teachers incorporate the Welsh language into their lessons in the new curriculum.

Practitioners and representative bodies also referred to the benefits of encouraging Welsh and English-medium schools / communities of professionals to work together on the

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<sup>4</sup> Welsh Government (2017), *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers.*

creation and dissemination of materials. This, it was suggested, could be valuable in terms of promoting consistency and equity as resources are prepared.

*“Resources should be co-constructed with practitioners teaching in both Welsh and English medium schools, together, to ensure that linguistic and cultural aspects of the curriculum are approached by all schools and practitioners in the same way. Joint development will ensure that there is parity of provision and suitable content for all practitioners in all schools in Wales.” (Practitioner or school)*

**Respondents presented a range of suggestions of how additional INSET days could be implemented in order to have positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language.** Suggestions raised on numerous occasions included:

- Delivering training – or elements of the training – bilingually. It was suggested that this could also help familiarise teachers across English and Welsh-medium sectors with the key terminology and pedagogical terms relating to the new curriculum in Welsh.
- Signpost (or sign up) interested teachers during the INSET to Welsh language training programmes for teachers, including the Sabbaticals Scheme or any other relevant programmes or courses.
- Focus on the development of conversational Welsh skills, rather than on written Welsh. This will help to develop a Welsh culture in schools where children will be more easily able to converse with their peers and staff using the Welsh language.
- Link the training to the Siarter Iaith / Welsh Language Charter and Cymraeg Campus programmes which are designed to promote the informal and social use of Welsh.<sup>5</sup>
- Focus elements of the training on language awareness and fostering positive attitudes towards the language.
- Give consideration to supporting Welsh language skills among learners with ALN, including those learners who are non-verbal or have limited speech who may be at a disadvantage where Welsh is taught alongside English. Guidance on effective teaching methods for particularly groups of ALN learners would be beneficial.

**INSET days could be used to foster closer collaboration between schools, including collaboration between English and Welsh-medium schools.** Some respondents suggested that any additional INSET could be delivered jointly to a mix of English and Welsh-medium schools, providing an opportunity for peer-working and discussion of pedagogical approaches across the sectors. It was suggested that this could encourage increased use of the Welsh language in English-medium schools and provide these schools with a greater insight into how Welsh-medium schools use language immersion methods and other pedagogies.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://cymraeg.gov.wales/learning/schools/SiarterIaith./?lang=en>  
<https://www.erw.wales/schools/teaching-and-learning/language-charter/>

Many respondents referred to opportunities afforded by additional INSET days to promote greater fluidity between the English and Welsh-medium sectors.

Respondents also noted that there could be opportunities for staff from different schools to come together and share good practice, whether this be related to Welsh across the curriculum, their own professional development in the context of the teaching standards, resources or strategic planning. It was suggested that across the regions there are different cluster models, network groups or school improvement groups that could be used as a basis to plan and deliver joint INSET activity.

*“Get schools together so they can see each other’s practice and get out of their own schools. Schools can be too insular.” (Practitioner or school)*

**Respondents feel that clear guidance is required to ensure that partners understand what any additional INSET is expected to deliver in relation to supporting the Welsh language.** It was suggested that, in order for INSET to have a positive effect on the use of the Welsh language, the Welsh Government, consortia and schools should have a shared understanding of what the INSET is expected to achieve and how schools should work towards intended outcomes. Respondents also felt that in policy documentation or national guidance, it should be made explicit that time should be designated (and protected) for matters relating to the Welsh language or Welsh-medium education. Unless this was the case, it was felt that the additional INSET risks not having any effect on the language.

**Many respondents expressed broad support or outlined examples of positive effects from the proposals, without elaborating in detail.** Below the most frequently raised positive effects are summarised, categorised under four key headings.

Supporting wider policy goals: it will support the Welsh Government’s aim to create a million Welsh speakers; could support greater school-to-school working and engagement, enabling schools to work together on curriculum development, review and improvement.

Increase and enhance the use of the Welsh language and Welsh across the curriculum: raise the focus and emphasis on Welsh and raise standards; support schools with ongoing work through the Siarter Iaith and Cymraeg Campus programmes; develop cross-curriculum ideas to embed Welsh in new ways.

Deliver benefits to Professional Learning the teaching workforce more generally: providing additional time for teachers to engage in Professional Learning; additional time and ideas to support teachers’ planning in this area; will increase knowledge and understanding of new curriculum which will support better delivery for learners; additional training for staff who are less confident or anxious about further use of Welsh language across the curriculum.

Benefits to learners: increased understanding among children of their language, heritage and culture; additional opportunities for learners to use Welsh.

**Amongst those who expressed reservations or disagreements about the proposals, the most frequently raised issues are set out below.**

**There are insufficient teachers with Welsh language skills and the additional requirements for Welsh language teaching will place additional burdens on an already stretched teaching workforce.** Some respondents felt that the demands on teachers in preparing for the new curriculum are already significant and that an additional

focus on Welsh (with accompanying Professional Learning requirements) will lead to unnecessary pressures. Others underlined the shortage of specialist Welsh teachers, particularly in the English-medium sector where there are aspirations to extend the Welsh language teaching.

*“I believe that staff expertise is prohibitive to treating the Welsh language equally to the English language - one additional day will not be able to fill gaps in staff Welsh language expertise.” (Practitioner or school)*

**Other respondents felt that the Welsh language should not be prioritised.** These respondents felt that time and resources should be focused on improving standards in other key subject areas.

*“Concentrate on getting English right. That is a far more valuable language to equip learners with as it’s a language used globally” (Practitioner or school)*

Others felt that Welsh should not receive any greater attention or priority than other aspects of the LLC Area of Learning and Experience. Some thought that prioritising Welsh – particularly in the English-medium sector – could be received negatively.

*I think people will be under pressure to prepare for the new curriculum so giving time to use Welsh if it’s a second language won’t be seen as a positive. If the INSET day is about preparing for new curriculum, that’s what the focus should be on.” (Practitioner or school)*

**Linked to the above, respondents felt that schools should be free to choose to what extent they engage with the Welsh language and associated Professional Learning opportunities.** It was suggested that schools should opt to have training in Welsh or English, depending on their normal practice. Respondents – many of whom were practitioners and school representatives from the English-medium sector – made the point that teachers’ language skills would present challenges in terms of accessing any training delivered bilingually or through the medium of Welsh.

*“This depends on staff competency in Welsh. In English-medium settings some staff use incidental Welsh but would not have a high enough level of competency in order for training to be held through the medium of Welsh.” (Practitioner or school)*

However similar views were also expressed by some respondents who identified themselves as Welsh-speakers.

*“Enhance curriculum Cymraeg, keep it positive, fun & engaging. Do not force it on staff & pupils with assessments / criteria. As a first language speaker I am saddened by the negativity ‘forced’ Welsh creates.” (Practitioner or school)*



## Question 9 analysis

**We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.**

There were 191 comments provided in response to this question.

Respondents either took this opportunity to raise themes they had been able to raise elsewhere in the consultation and/or re-emphasise themes they felt were particularly important. Not all of the themes raised related directly or only to the proposed additional INSET days. The themes raised most frequently were as follows.

**Respondents provided further comments relating to the possible structure and approach to INSET and Professional Learning.** Some of these comments focused on the need to minimise disruption for pupils, discussing different delivery timescales such as whether or not delivering during holiday periods would be appropriate and delivering in more intensive blocks at the beginning or end of school terms. Other comments focused on the possibility of designing a more structured, regular approach to Professional Learning; rather than additional INSET days (or in addition to), it would be possible to release staff on a particular timetable to work on particular elements of curriculum design. Respondents also raised queries about the way in which training on INSET days will be delivered in practice; by whom and how to ensure training is accessible to all practitioners.

*“Many schools nationally are currently exploring/discussing other, innovative ways of releasing time on a regular basis for staff training. These include collapsing an afternoon perhaps once a month, for specific input, following consultation with parents. Alternatively, extending the school day Monday – Thursday to release Friday afternoon weekly/fortnightly for staff training. Another idea is to re-organise the school day slightly to create an hour one morning a week for intensive staff training. The interesting aspect of such thinking is the frequency and the sustainability of such models.” (Middle tier organisation)*

**There was some concern over a perceived lack of information about the new curriculum, and/or the amount of guidance available for practitioners.** Respondents expressed concern about the lack of information available on curriculum content, assessment structures and expectations placed on practitioners in terms of implementing the new curriculum from now onwards. Some respondents commented that recent information they had received had not provided a substantially new level of detail (instead re-iterating principles with which they were already familiar). Similarly, respondents felt that practitioners would benefit from clearer guidance from middle tier organisations and unions on each element of the new curriculum and support to address more challenging elements. This guidance should comprise information about how the new curriculum could work in practice, within classrooms. While some respondents expressed a degree of excitement with the opportunities offered by the new curriculum, there was nonetheless a degree of anxiety over the perceived lack of defined expectations.

**Similarly, further information is needed about proposed assessment and inspection arrangements.** Some responses support the move towards a less cumbersome accountability system but request further detail about how assessment arrangements will work in practice and how Estyn inspections will be amended in future years.

*“I feel that a lot of professionals are excited about a change and a new opportunity to improve education. However, a significant proportion are anxious about the bureaucracy that can come during a transition period and are concerned that they don’t know enough about what they should be doing before it is statutory. WG has a responsibility to provide a clear vision of what the new curriculum will entail and will look like in practice. There is a lot of documentation but I don’t feel that professionals are particularly engaged with them, maybe some videos for schools to use in staff training, a live-streamed training day for teachers across the country, consistent trainers to visit every school.” (Higher education institution)*

**Respondents also expressed some concerns about the way in which additional Professional Learning opportunities and wider curriculum reform would be resourced.** It was emphasised that schools are facing continuous challenges as a result of declining budgets even before the requirements of implementing a new curriculum are taken into account. Respondents express concern that schools will not be able to fund the additional training requirements (whether these are to be implemented in the form of an additional INSET day or in a different format). Particular concern is expressed about the lack of resources to fund the wide range of training required to respond to wider education reform (including ALN provision). Resources will also be necessary to support schools to create teaching resources, to release staff for planning and to ensure IT equipment is of a high enough standard to support the digital competency elements of the new curriculum.

*“There are huge training implications for the new curriculum and ALN Bill. How will WG ensure schools can fund this training? We currently have a non-existent training budget.” (Individual respondent)*

**Teachers need sufficient time to familiarise themselves with, understand and prepare for the new curriculum.** Respondents acknowledge that the new curriculum represents a wholesale change from the previous curriculum and will be complex for practitioners to implement. There is acknowledgement that the education sector has invested significant time and effort in the development of the curriculum to date and it is now important to allow all practitioners to put an equal amount of time and consideration into their own plans. Respondents emphasised that it takes time and space to allow practitioners to develop a creative and flexible new curriculum; sufficient Professional Learning time will help ensure practitioners can do justice to the new vision.

*“For the curriculum to succeed additional inset is essential. School staff need time to engage and develop their practice in line with CfW. Without this, there is a large concern that there will be over assimilation and the positive impact will be lessened. We cannot build a world class education system on a shoestring, or through small pockets of time grasped on an ad hoc basis. Time is something which will help Welsh teachers to build something fantastic for all our future citizens.” (School or practitioner)*

**Respondents expressed concern that current practitioner workload is excessive and work-life balance is poor; this will be aggravated by the implementation of the new curriculum.** These respondents re-iterated concerns about the pressure currently placed on practitioners, which they reported as having a negative impact on the morale of the teaching workforce. Respondents emphasised that the increased workload resulting from the implementation of the new curriculum shouldn’t be underestimated; additional INSET time and wider Professional Learning support will show an appropriate level of consideration for this workload.

*“School staff need this extra day to improve their own pedagogy without giving up more of their own time. This goes some way to ensuring work-life balance.” (School or practitioner)*

**It is important to take into consideration the scope of education reform as a whole while making decisions relating to Professional Learning and additional time.** Respondents expressed awareness that additional INSET days should be considered within the context of a range of educational reforms occurring over the next few years. Key changes to consider include changes to Professional Learning structures, teacher pay and conditions, self-evaluation approaches, new approaches to assessment and inspection and ALN reforms, as well as wider policy developments in the education sector. Respondents commented that INSET days and other Professional Learning opportunities should have clear priorities, ensuring practitioners do not get pulled in multiple directions trying to respond to a variety of educational reforms.

*“The question of how the agenda for Professional Learning is linked with effective self-evaluation, ALN reform and other key local/national issues is not entirely clear. We need to make sure these coalesce and do not become issues that pull schools in different directions.” (School or practitioner)*

**The views and needs of parents or guardians should be taken into account when amending school days.** Two main themes were raised by respondents with regard to parent or guardian engagement. Firstly, additional INSET days will place a burden on parents with regard to childcare cost and arrangements; this should be borne in mind when decisions are made. Secondly, there is scope to communicate the value of INSET days more effectively, ensuring parents or guardians understand the necessity of INSET days and the positive impact this time would have on their children’s education.

*“I am a proponent of parental involvement in schools with a requirement for schools to be open and accountable to those who are the guardians of the pupils. The use of INSET days is currently not widely understood, and schools do not communicate with parents what they do and why they do it on these days. The addition of another day is an opportunity to add an accountability element to ensure parents are being clearly told how the people educating their children are improving their skills and knowledge.” (Individual respondent)*

**Respondents re-emphasised the need for more than one additional INSET day per year and/or additional days for more than three years.** These comments echoed those raised in earlier questions within the consultation, noting that the complexity of the new curriculum requirements necessitates more than one additional INSET day per year for three year.

**It was re-emphasised that additional dedicated Professional Learning time, such as INSET days, are particularly valuable as they provide an opportunity for collaboration.** Cross-boundary working is noted as a core principle of the new curriculum and the required collaborative planning and innovation cannot be carried out during independent planning activities (such as PPA periods). This collaboration requirement is seen to apply not only to practitioners within each school, but also to schools within clusters and regions who need to develop a fairly consistent approach to curriculum design and delivery and share good practice.

*“I would like to see one additional INSET day for schools within counties to share ideas and collaborate on projects and then one additional day within the school to act on ideas. It is vital for neighbouring schools to work together so that the workload will not be even more difficult to manage than now.” (Individual respondent – translated from Welsh)*

**Respondents took this opportunity to emphasise that the particular circumstances of Special Schools and learners with Additional Learning Needs should be taken into consideration when making decisions relating to Professional Learning opportunities.** Respondents emphasised that Special Schools already face significant requirements in terms of mandatory Professional Learning and training and therefore face particular challenges with regard to allocating time for curriculum reform. Respondents also emphasised that the introduction of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act will have immediate consequences for teaching practice and should be prioritised alongside curriculum reform within INSET days.

*“We welcome the Welsh Government’s recognition that this period of substantial change may mean schools and teachers need additional time for training to help them prepare. Rather than a sole focus on delivery of the new curriculum, we recommend that any additional training focusses more holistically on the wider context of change and transformation within education in Wales. In particular, we would like this opportunity used to ensure that schools and teachers are fully prepared for the implementation in 2020 of the ALNET Act”. (Third sector organisation)*

**A small number of respondents also emphasised a range of other themes including:**

- Suggestions relating to **curriculum content** (such as including an emphasis on physical literacy, a holistic curriculum focused on Welsh culture and history and avoiding overburdening the curriculum);
- Emphasis on ensuring practitioners have sufficient **autonomy in their teaching practice**;
- **Criticism** of the consultation questions;
- The importance of **including all practitioners** (early years practitioners, supply teachers, teaching assistants and part-time practitioners) in Professional Learning opportunities;
- The importance of **ensuring consistency** in curriculum implementation and Professional Learning opportunities across schools;
- The importance of **stakeholder engagement** in curriculum development;
- INSET days must provide **high-quality content**;
- **General opposition** to curriculum reform;
- Ensure **all education sectors and providers are considered within Professional Learning discussions**, including the non-maintained sector, the further education sector, youth workers and Initial Teacher Education providers.