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Consultation Document

Statutory induction of newly qualified teachers in Wales

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Statutory induction of newly qualified teachers in Wales

Overview

This consultation seeks views about proposals to revise arrangements for the statutory induction of newly qualified teachers in Wales.

How to respond

Responses to this consultation should be emailed/posted to the address below to arrive by 8 April 2022 at the latest.

Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

Information on the current induction arrangements are available on [the induction pages of Hwb](#).

The consultation documents can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at gov.wales/consultations

Contact details

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In order to show that the consultation was carried out properly, the Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then redact them before publishing. You should also be aware of our responsibilities under Freedom of Information legislation.

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Introduction

Developing a high-quality education profession is central to the realisation of our vision for education in Wales and is one of four enabling objectives in [Our national mission](#).

Statutory induction of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) forms a part of this vision by:

- enabling NQTs to build on the knowledge and experiences gained in initial teacher education (ITE).
- supporting NQTs to have the best start to their teaching career and encouraging career-long professional growth.
- providing all NQTs with the opportunity to develop their practice by focusing on the requirements set out in the professional standards.
- establishing the skills, knowledge and behaviours that are consistent with the requirements of the new curriculum for Wales set out in the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021.

A process of induction for NQTs, consisting of achieving professional standards and a minimum period of teaching, has been a statutory part of teachers' professional learning in Wales since 2003.

In 2012, changes were made to the induction process in response to the increased number of ITE students gaining qualified teacher status (QTS), and the reduction in the number of full-time teaching posts available for NQTs. Since then, periods of employment of half a day or more count towards completion of induction for NQTs, and there is no limit to the time that NQTs may take to complete the induction period.

New professional standards for all practitioners, including those who assist teaching, were developed with the profession, and their introduction began in 2017. The five standards (pedagogy, innovation, leadership, professional learning and collaboration) provide a career-long, shared focus for students in ITE, teachers, leaders, teaching assistants (TAs) and higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs).

For ITE students and NQTs, the professional standards must be met before they can satisfactorily gain QTS and complete the induction period, and move on to the next career stage.

The purpose of this consultation is to inform our proposals for revising the induction arrangements in line with our vision for education in Wales. The consultation period is for a period of 8 weeks and will close as schools break for the Easter holidays. This is to ensure that there's no expectation on the sector to respond to a consultation during school holidays. It also makes it potentially possible that legislative amendments could be made and brought into force, in readiness for the start of the 2022/23 academic year.

What is the current position?

The current arrangements are set out in the [Education \(Induction Arrangements for School Teachers\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2015 \(the 2015 Regulations\)](#) and [Induction for newly qualified teachers guidance \(2017\)](#).

All NQTs are required to undertake an induction period of not less than three terms, or 380 sessions if working as a supply teacher or on a part-time basis. There is no flexibility for NQTs who meet the professional standards to complete their induction if they have not completed the minimum induction period. The induction period may only be served in certain settings, and there is no flexibility to enable induction to be served in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs).

There is no limit to the length of time a NQT may take to complete their induction, and all periods of employment (as a teacher) of half a day or more count towards the completion of the induction period.

NQTs are entitled to support from an induction mentor (IM) based within their school. NQTs employed on short-term supply are supported by an external verifier (EV). The Welsh Government does not fund the IM role, but provides funding for the EV role, either to the school that employs them or on a consultancy basis via the consortium/local authority (LA).

It is the role of the EV and IM to provide recommendations to the appropriate body (AB) using the NQT's induction profile. The AB role and the co-ordination of induction is carried out by the same person in some regions/LAs. The AB considers the recommendations and decides whether the NQT:

- has completed their induction period satisfactorily;
- requires an extension (of a maximum of three school terms) to their induction period; or
- has failed to complete their induction period satisfactorily.

The AB's decisions regarding the outcome of induction are subject to local and national moderation processes.

All NQTs are expected to engage in the induction programme provided by consortia/LAs, and it is the responsibility of head teachers to ensure that this happens with NQTs employed by the school or the LA. Supply agencies on the [National Procurement Service Framework](#) are expected to ensure that the NQTs they employ receive the support they need to meet induction requirements.

NQTs employed under the School Teachers Pay and Conditions (Wales) Document (STPC(W)D) are entitled to a 10% reduction in teaching time (in addition to the 10% reduction for Planning, Preparation and Assessment time), to undertake induction-related professional learning.

The Welsh Government makes funding available for schools in relation to NQTs' release time (time when NQTs are released from teaching to carry out induction-related professional learning).

In order for NQTs to receive the support to which they are entitled, once they achieve QTS (and prior to employment either by an LA, a school or a supply agency), they must register with the Education Workforce Council (EWC) in the category of 'school teacher'. NQTs must complete an induction notification form and submit it to EWC in order for a mentor to be assigned, and for the school to receive funding for the NQT's release time. NQTs undertaking induction via the supply route must submit a form for each period of employment in a school.

To minimise the impact of the pandemic on the opportunity for NQTs to complete their induction, temporary amendments to the 2015 Regulations were introduced in July 2020 and expired on 31 August 2021. The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 allowed NQTs to count a proportion of time engaged in stand-alone professional learning towards their induction period. They also gave ABs the discretion to allow an NQT who met the professional standards to successfully complete the induction period after a minimum of 110 school sessions.

NQTs who achieved QTS during the academic years 2019/20 and 2020/21, and were unable to complete induction due to lack of opportunities during the pandemic, were offered a teaching placement in a school for the autumn term, commencing in September 2021. The induction placement scheme funded by the Welsh Government enables eligible NQTs to gain classroom experience in one school for a term, and to engage in all aspects of teaching. It also provides additional capacity for schools to support learner recovery and the development of the new Curriculum for Wales.

We are working with consortia/LAs and other stakeholders to develop a national early career support package (ECSP) for the first five years of a teacher's career. Induction will form part of this, along with a further period of professional learning for early career teachers, culminating in the opportunity to undertake the new Masters in education. The ECSP is being developed to coincide with the proposed revised induction arrangements, and will be available from September 2022 onwards. Further information on the ECSP will be available in due course.

Induction arrangements in England

Early career framework reforms in England include changes to statutory induction arrangements. From September 2021, NQTs moved from a one year to a two year induction period, during which time they are entitled to a two year training and support programme. The change is accompanied by a tapered extension to NQTs' entitlement to be released from teaching for a proportion of their time, for professional development. Release time in year one remains at 10%, decreasing to 5% in year two and a zero release from teaching time in year three.

Reciprocal arrangements are currently in place with England to enable NQTs who have started induction in England to be able to continue their induction in Wales and vice versa. We don't propose to change these arrangements.

Why are we proposing change?

Ongoing dialogue between Welsh Government and key stakeholders involved in the induction programme has highlighted a number of issues that need addressing. This led to the commissioning of two independent reviews focusing on NQTs' experience of induction ([Research on teachers' statutory induction](#) by OB3) and consortia induction programmes ([Learning to be a teacher for Wales: the induction of teachers into the profession](#) by Professor Mick Waters), which were published in 2020. Both reviews supported the views of key stakeholders and indicated the need for wholesale reform of induction to address a number of issues that broadly fall into four categories:

Variability of induction arrangements and inconsistency of support across Wales

- Mentors who support NQTs have differing levels of experience and training.
- The mentoring role is currently not funded and the turnover of mentors is high.
- Arrangements for mentoring NQTs undertaking induction via the short-term supply route vary.
- The provision and availability of support for NQTs is variable.
- Under the current arrangements, there is no time limit for NQTs to complete their induction. EWC data shows that a small proportion of NQTs who are working in schools and gained QTS prior to 2017, are yet to complete their induction for a variety of reasons. The induction period forms part of the professional development of NQTs. It is intended to assist NQTs to develop their practice in their early career, with a view to ensuring that they are fully prepared for their career in teaching.
- Some NQTs do not register with EWC before they begin induction. This means they cannot log the sessions worked, they do not receive the support to which they are entitled, and they may not attend professional learning events.

Practicalities of meeting the statutory induction requirements, particularly for NQTs undertaking induction via the short-term supply route

- Some NQTs wish to specialise in teaching in certain settings e.g. PRUs. However, under the 2015 Regulations, NQTs cannot count time served in PRUs towards their induction period. This limits the opportunities for some NQTs to develop their practice and also places recruitment constraints on PRUs, as they are unlikely to attract NQTs into vacant roles.
- NQTs undertaking short-term supply work may not be able to fully develop all aspects of their practice, such as curriculum planning and assessment for learning over a period of time, due to its transitory nature.
- The transitory nature of supply teaching creates challenges for mentoring and attending professional learning sessions. Evidence suggests that the support provided to short-term supply NQTs is variable in both provision and quality. Some supply NQTs do not attend professional learning sessions if they have to make the choice between employment (paid) or professional learning (unpaid). Some NQTs are difficult to locate, or are not 'visible' because they do not log their sessions with EWC. This means that the trigger for assigning an EV will not occur.

Low levels of teacher retention during early career years

- Welsh Government data¹ collected from 2016-2020 indicates that the proportion of students awarded QTS who do not go on to register for induction is between 19% - 22%. These figures are collected in October each year and are subject to reduction throughout each year.

¹ Pupil Level Annual School Census (Welsh Government Stats Wales)

A level of bureaucracy and focus on time served that overshadows the central purpose of induction

- The evidence that NQTs are required to provide in their Professional Learning Passport (PLP) can in some cases be lengthy and burdensome. For example, the requirement for NQTs who are employed on a short-term supply basis to log all periods of employment of half a day or more with EWC is onerous, and does not always happen. Timesheets must be signed by a member of the senior management team within the school before being uploaded by the NQT to their induction profile. This is impractical, particularly in cases where the NQT may be employed for short periods in several schools during one week.
- The current focus on the number of sessions worked, and the absence of any flexibility, creates a high volume of work for all involved. It also means that a short-term supply NQT who is demonstrably an effective teacher and has gathered evidence of meeting all the professional standards, cannot complete induction if they have not logged 380 sessions. In some cases this means the NQT has to find employment as a supply NQT the following academic year, in order to make up the remaining few sessions. This arrangement is at odds with practice, as the decision on whether the NQT meets the professional standards (based on observation and evidence in the NQT's induction profile) is made before the end of term i.e. before an NQT may have completed 380 sessions. However, until 380 sessions have been logged, induction is not complete and the NQT cannot move on to the next stage in their career.

Vision for induction

By making changes to the statutory induction arrangements we want to ensure that:

- a) Wales is seen as an attractive place to enter the teaching profession, providing opportunities to innovate with the introduction of the new Curriculum for Wales. NQTs benefit from focussed, bespoke support and reflect on their professional development using the PLP.
- b) Induction is re-cast as an integral part of the five-year early career support package (ECSP), rather than existing as a discreet period in a teacher's career, after which time the mentoring support stops, and arrangements for professional learning or progression vary according to the individual setting and circumstances. Teaching is a rewarding and respected profession, and this is reflected in a reduction in the number of teachers leaving the profession in the first five years of their career.
- c) NQTs are able to undertake induction in a flexible way, in a range of settings that fits with their employment status. The quality and scope of NQT mentoring and professional learning, together with the strategic use of time and resources (the PLP and Hwb for example), would allow most NQTs the opportunity to become effective practitioners and successfully complete induction over the period of a year (or equivalent).
- d) NQTs would be required to complete induction within five years (from gaining QTS), to ensure that their skills and knowledge are developed and that all teachers working in schools in Wales, whether on a full-time, part-time or supply basis, have demonstrated that they meet the professional standards.

- e) The focus of induction is on reaching a level of experience, skill and knowledge in accordance with the professional standards, rather than completing a specified period of employment. NQTs have the expectation, opportunity and confidence to actively contribute and innovate as part of their role in school.
- f) All NQTs benefit from a high-quality, stimulating and comprehensive induction programme, regardless of whether they are employed or work as a supply teacher, and irrespective of the sector/phase/language medium in which they are employed.
- g) There is a streamlined induction governance system that provides assurance and accountability, clarity of induction roles and reduced bureaucracy that does not distract from the purpose of induction.

What changes are we proposing?

The proposed changes fall within four areas, and are detailed below. Some of the proposals will lead to changes to the 2015 Regulations. We have noted these below where applicable, and ask that respondents take these into consideration when responding, as we will not be undertaking a further consultation on the regulatory amendments. Other proposals will lead to changes to the guidance, funding or administrative arrangements for the induction programme. Any changes to these arrangements as a result of this consultation will be developed in partnership with our key stakeholders.

Time:

- **A nominal minimum length of the induction period would be set at one term/two consecutive half terms (pro-rata for part-time NQTs). NQTs would be able to apply for validation when they and their mentor agree they have the skills, knowledge and experience to demonstrate they meet the professional standards.**

The majority of NQTs take around three school terms or 380 sessions to demonstrate, via their induction profile, that they meet the professional standards and successfully complete induction. No NQT would be expected to complete induction in one term/two consecutive half terms. However, by introducing a nominal minimum length, this proposal would eliminate the problem of NQTs who meet the standards but are short of a few sessions being unable to successfully complete induction. It would provide more flexibility to short term supply NQTs than the current system, which requires the completion of 380 sessions. The requirement for short term supply NQTs to complete and log individual sessions of employment would not be necessary. It would shift the focus from the number of sessions worked to gaining the skills, knowledge and experience to enable them to demonstrate the professional standards. It would reduce the administrative burden associated with the current system for short term supply NQTs, as they would no longer need to log sessions nor have sessions signed off before they leave every school.

The benefit to short-term supply NQTs of a flexible approach that takes account of individual variations in progress is evident in EWC induction data. Figures show that during the period April to December 2020 (when the temporary amendments made to the 2015 Regulations by the Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 applied), 47 out of 121 NQTs who were employed on a short-term supply basis for all or part of their induction period,

were able to demonstrate they met the professional standards and successfully complete induction in less than 380 sessions.

This proposal would require amendments to be made to the 2015 Regulations.

- **All NQTs would be required to undertake a continuous period of work in one school of a minimum of one term, or two consecutive half terms (or equivalent if working part time), at some point during the induction period.**

The aim of this proposal is to ensure that in the course of their induction period, all NQTs will experience and be a part of the working life of a school. Evidence from the reviews of induction and on-going stakeholder engagement suggests that NQTs undertaking only short term supply work may not otherwise have the opportunity, for example, to take part in parents evenings or curriculum planning. They may not therefore gain the professional experience and skills required to evidence the required professional standards and/or to fully prepare them for a career in teaching.

During the course of their induction period, NQTs would be required to work in a school for a full academic term, or two consecutive half terms spanning two academic terms. The remainder of the induction period could be undertaken flexibly as a short-term supply teacher.

This proposed requirement would align with the proposal above to set a nominal minimum length of the induction period at one term/two consecutive half terms.

It will be our intention in the event that this proposal receives support and is accepted, to introduce this requirement from September 2023. This is to ensure a sufficient lead-in time to notify ITE students of the requirements before they start their induction period. During this time we would also work with local authorities, regional consortia and schools to establish whether any measures may be required with a view to ensuring that NQTs are able to fulfil this requirement, and if so the type and extent of any such measures. We would use evidence from a previous pilot for cluster working and the current NQT placement programme, which has been providing employment for some NQTs during the 2021/22 academic year, to inform the development of any such measures.

This proposal would require amendments to be made to the 2015 Regulations.

- **NQTs would be required to complete their induction within five years of gaining QTS.**

The 'five year rule' was a provision in previous induction regulations, but was removed in 2005 as a measure to address increased numbers of ITE students gaining qualified teacher status (QTS) and a reduction in the number of full-time teaching posts available. The majority of NQTs currently take between one to two school years to complete their induction. This proposal would give NQTs a 5-year window from gaining QTS in which to complete their induction. ABs would retain the ability to extend the induction period should this be required in certain circumstances e.g. illness or caring responsibilities.

This would ensure that all teachers working in schools in Wales, whether on a full-time, part-time or supply basis, have demonstrated that they meet the professional standards i.e. that they develop their skills and experience, within a reasonable time-frame. It would

also bring teaching in line with other professions such as the legal profession where time limits are imposed for the completion of qualifications.

This proposal would require amendments to be made to the 2015 Regulations.

Support for the NQT:

- **The provision of a more structured and consistent national professional learning programme for NQTs across Wales. Mentoring and support would be carried out by a funded, trained IM based in the school where the NQT is employed. Mentoring of short-term supply NQTs would be carried out by an IM who works with several NQTs. The same IM would remain with the NQT throughout the induction period wherever possible.**

The current professional learning programme that is offered to NQTs is varied. The regional consortia/LA induction leads have worked closely over the past few years to develop and deliver a more consistent programme. In order to continue to strengthen and ensure consistency in the provision of support available for NQTs, we propose to revise the guidance to provide a more structured support programme for NQTs, which focuses on building professional behaviours as well as building skill and knowledge in accordance with the professional standards. As proposed in *Learning to be a teacher for Wales*, the induction programme would be expected to include 13 days of professional learning provided by the consortium/LA and school, and this would be set out clearly in guidance.

The 13 days would consist of:

- three days (or equivalent) of differentiated training provision for all NQTs, delivered by regional consortium or local authority. Each NQT would be expected to attend all three days;
- the equivalent of five days to be spent within school guided by the IM, and
- the equivalent of five days co-ordinated by the regional consortia or local authority to extend insights through partnership learning, including extensive reading of theory and research.

In order to ensure that the IM can provide the proposed five days of guided support, we propose to fund the IM role. The role is not currently funded and mentors may be selected based on availability rather than expertise, training and a wish to take on the role. There are school-based mentors with a high level of variability in experience and quality. Funding the role could raise the profile and attractiveness of mentoring to reduce the turnover of mentors, and provide them with the opportunity to develop in the role.

Mentoring of short-term supply NQTs is currently undertaken by an external verifier rather than a mentor. Mentoring sessions can be delayed due to difficulties in locating/contacting the NQT. Under these proposals, in most cases the induction mentor will be a school-based colleague. In other circumstances it could be a mentor working on a local/regional basis (e.g. servicing a number of schools or mentoring supply teachers).

These proposals would help address the current variability and inconsistency of support seen across Wales, by ensuring that each NQT has access to a national programme delivered regionally or locally, and is supported in school by a trained mentor that is funded and given time to support the NQT.

Settings in which induction can take place:

- **We propose to allow induction to take place in pupil referral units (PRUs) that teach the new Curriculum for Wales.**

NQTs are able to work in PRUs, but are not currently able to count their teaching time in those settings towards their induction.

There is currently no requirement for PRUs to follow the full curriculum as set out in Part 7 of the Education Act 2002 that is taught in mainstream maintained schools in Wales.

However, the requirements introduced by the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 for the new curriculum for Wales are similar for PRUs to those for mainstream maintained schools, and the new curriculum will begin to be rolled out in schools and other settings (including in PRUs) from September 2022.

This will provide opportunities for NQTs to develop their teaching practice, knowledge and skills in accordance with the professional standards, in these settings, and on this basis, we propose to allow NQTs to count their teaching time at PRUs that teach the new Curriculum for Wales, towards their induction.

This would enable NQTs to undertake induction in a wider range of settings, and would mean that PRUs would no longer lose members of staff because they are unable to count their teaching time towards the completion of their induction.

This proposal would require amendments to be made to the 2015 Regulations.

Governance and roles:

- **We propose to separate the decision-making function on the outcome of induction (validation) from the NQT support function, by clarifying roles and to simplify the administrative processes associated with the induction programme.**

Under the current arrangements, it is not always clear how the decision-making and support functions differ. The AB, in some instances, delivers the professional learning programme and oversees the moderation process that leads to making decisions on induction outcomes for NQTs. Therefore, there are mixed responsibilities, and there is not always a clear separation of duties.

The AB is responsible for the overall supervision and training of a person serving an induction period under the 2015 Regulations. This will remain. However, we propose to revise the guidance and provide clarity on the roles and governance of the induction programme as follows:

- IMs provide mentoring and support; observe the NQT and determine whether the NQT meets the standards using the induction profile.
- EVs validate a sample of induction profiles and make final recommendations to ABs.
- ABs operate at LA level and are responsible for moderating the EVs' recommendations at a national level.

The separation of induction roles would ensure a governance system that provides assurance and accountability.

The delivery of the induction support programme would continue to be overseen by induction co-ordinators (on a regional or LA basis) in collaboration with schools and ITE providers, to support the development of NQTs in their area (as outlined in Support for the NQT above). This would include organisation of effective mentoring (including for NQTs undertaking induction via short-term supply), and the design and co-ordination of an appropriate programme of professional learning.

Subject to the outcome of the consultation process, the administrative processes associated with registration with EWC and undertaking the induction programme would be reviewed by Welsh Government in collaboration with induction leads and EWC, and simplified wherever possible to lessen the bureaucratic experience of NQTs. For example, the requirement for short term supply NQTs to complete and log individual sessions of employment would not be necessary if the proposal to set a nominal minimum length of the induction period at one term/two consecutive half terms is taken forward. This would lessen the administrative burden associated with logging sessions for NQTs.