



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Number: WG53967

Welsh Government
Consultation – Summary of Responses

INSET

Provision of INSET (in-service education and training) days in Wales

March 2026

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd / This document is also available in Welsh
Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg / We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh

Overview

This document provides a summary of the responses to the consultation on the provision of INSET (in-service education and training) days in Wales.

Action Required

This document is for information only.

Further information and related documents

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

Contact details

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Additional copies

This summary of response and copies of all the consultation documentation are published in electronic form only and can be accessed on the Welsh Government's website.

Link to the consultation documentation: <https://www.gov.wales/provision-inset-service-education-and-training-days-wales-html>

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Introduction

High-performing education systems are characterised by a skilled, engaged workforce that is supported to undertake continuous, career-long professional learning. This sustained focus on professional development is critical to improving the quality of teaching and leadership and, in turn, securing better outcomes for children and young people. In Wales, a national approach to professional learning has been established to support all school practitioners, including teachers, teaching assistants, supply staff and leaders, to reflect on and strengthen their practice throughout their careers.

The education system in Wales continues to face significant and ongoing reform and challenges. These include the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales, reforms to the additional learning needs (ALN) system, the introduction of new qualifications, and the continued focus on equity and inclusion. Alongside these reforms, schools and practitioners are managing workload pressures and balancing the need for professional learning with the impact that time away from the classroom can have on learners and families. Providing sufficient time and space for high-quality professional learning remains a key consideration in supporting effective implementation of national priorities.

In this context, the Welsh Government undertook a public consultation on proposals to revise the number and use of in-service education and training (INSET) days in Wales. The consultation sought views on:

- maintaining six INSET days per academic year by retaining the additional INSET day introduced for the 2025 to 2026 school year (and provided previously since 2019), and prescribing the main purposes of INSET days, by amending the Education (School Day and School Year) (Wales) Regulations 2003 and the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (Wales) Document (STPC(W)D), and
- changes to non-statutory guidance to strengthen the purpose, planning and use of INSET days.

The consultation formed part of a wider programme of work to support career-long professional learning for the school workforce and was informed by emerging evidence, including research commissioned by the Welsh Government on the use and impact of INSET days, and engagement with children and young people undertaken by Children in Wales.

This report summarises the responses received to the consultation and presents the key themes and issues raised by respondents. It also outlines how the responses will be used, alongside the findings of commissioned research and stakeholder engagement, to take the proposals forward.

The Consultation

Views were invited as part of an eight-week consultation period, which began on 10 December 2025 and closed on 4 February 2026. The consultation contained questions relating to the policy proposals, alongside standard questions on the Welsh language, and was published on the consultation pages of the Welsh Government's website. Respondents were able to submit their views and comments online, by email or in paper form, and in either Welsh or English. The link to the consultation was shared with a range of stakeholders, including representative bodies, professional bodies, sector organisations, Unions and local authorities.

A plain language version of the consultation, and the response questionnaire, were issued for children and young people.

Who responded to the Consultation?

A total of 316 responses were received to the main consultation. All the responses have been considered and analysed. The respondents represented a range of interest groups.

A total of 5 responses were received to the children and young people consultation

A list of respondents other than those who requested anonymity is at Annex A.

Summary of Responses – main consultation

This section is a summary of the responses received. It does not aim to capture every point raised by respondents. The consultation document asked 10 questions and the responses to each are summarised below.

Question 1 - Do you agree that 6 INSET days should be provided every year from 2026 to 2027 by changing the school teachers' pay and conditions (Wales) document?

84.71% of respondents agreed

7.32% disagreed

7.96% neither agreed or disagreed

We received 314 responses to this question, with 97 supplementary comments.

Among the comments by respondents who agreed with the proposal:

- Many comments referred to an increased need for training and preparation time to maintain effective teaching practice, without giving specific reasons.
- Many comments referred to the need for an additional non-teaching day to plan and prepare for changes and reforms. These included teaching and assessment under the Curriculum for Wales, new qualifications, and ALN reforms.
- Many comments referred to increased expectations of teachers and schools, such as supporting the increasingly diverse needs of learners, and to what respondents termed “mandatory training” in areas such as safeguarding, behaviour and health and safety, which took up increased time.
- A number of comments said that INSET days help schools to continue to provide professional learning opportunities during a time where time and budget for other training (on days when children attend school) is limited. A number of comments also said the additional INSET day was valuable because of teachers' increased workload.
- Some comments gave examples of improvements as a result of the additional INSET day provided since 2019, or INSET days generally, including through collaboration with other schools, and the benefits of all school staff having time together.
- Some comments said more than 6 days were needed.
- Some comments noted a need for clarity on the impact on practitioners' terms and conditions.

Among the comments by respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal:

- Some comments conveyed uncertainty around the impact on practitioners' terms and conditions (eg holiday entitlement and pay).
- Other comments referred to ensuring current provision was impactful and planned effectively.

Among the comments by respondents who disagreed with the proposal:

- Some comments indicated that an additional INSET day was not needed as 5 were sufficient or the existing INSET provision was not impactful, with some referring to the wider challenges facing education in Wales.
- Some comments referred to the impact on teaching and learning, and on family life, of days when learners are not at school, and one comment suggested that INSET days should be held within the school holidays.

Question 2 - Do you agree that INSET days should be used mainly or wholly for training, planning and preparation in relation to the purposes outlined (which relate to ALN, curriculum and assessment, qualifications and national priorities)?

85.62% of respondents agreed

6.07% disagreed

8.31% neither agreed or disagreed

We received 313 responses to this question, with 97 supplementary comments.

Among the comments by respondents who agreed with the proposal:

- Many comments welcomed the proposal and emphasised the importance of professional learning, or planning and preparation activity, to support teaching and learning under the Curriculum for Wales, and ALN support, specifically
- Many comments referred to the need for time to complete training in areas not explicitly listed, and this was sometimes referred to as "mandatory training". Examples cited of this type of training included safeguarding, PREVENT, health and safety, Team Teach, fire safety, violence against women and girls, IT system training.
- A number of comments referred to the importance of preparation and planning time, including within departments, as well as training.
- A number of comments noted the importance of giving schools and their leaders autonomy to plan professional learning and preparation suitable for their needs.
- Some comments referred to the well-being of staff.
- Some comments stated that time for sector-specific activity, especially in faith-based schools, was important.

- Some comments said it was important for support staff to be included and engaged in INSET days.
- There was a suggestion that equality, diversity and inclusion should be mentioned in relation to the priorities noted.
- There was a comment emphasising that “training” should not be interpreted too narrowly and should encompass a wide range of professional learning activities.

Among the comments by respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed, or disagreed, with the proposal:

- Many comments noted the importance of giving schools and their leaders autonomy to plan professional learning and preparation suitable for their needs.
- Many comments were focused on additional or alternative issues that respondents felt should be given priority on INSET days, such as safeguarding training, subject-specific training, departmental preparation and planning, pedagogy, staff wellbeing time, classroom and environment design.
- There were some comments on various points such as the possibility of nationally-directed training for all schools, specific training for support staff, departmental preparation days, and allowing staff time on INSET days to manage their workload.

Question 3 - We propose to change the guidance to advise that schools engage with other schools and local authorities to coordinate the timing of INSET days across groups, clusters or local authorities. This is to reduce disruption for families with children in multiple schools and to enable better collaboration between schools where possible. This will be coordinated between headteachers and local authorities. Do you agree?

75.56% of respondents agreed

14.29% disagreed

10.16% neither agreed or disagreed

We received 314 responses to this question, with 97 supplementary comments.

Among the comments by respondents who agreed with the proposal:

- Many comments stated that this was already common practice and beneficial, and others said that collaboration was productive in general, including in relation to Welsh language professional learning. Some commented that increased collaborative working would be beneficial.

- Some comments referred to the reduced impact on families, and teachers, who have children in different schools.
- Some comments referred to possible difficulties in sourcing external training providers if all schools had INSET on the same day. Conversely, some suggested that it could lead to better-attended professional courses.
- There were some references to maintaining school-specific focus where needed, especially when schools within the same cluster had different needs, and to some logistical considerations (eg the ability to have vertical collaboration during secondary school examination periods).
- Some comments referred to headteachers and local authorities' capacity to coordinate activities.
- There was a suggestion of providing childcare for children of teachers and vulnerable families.

Among the comments by respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed, or disagreed, with the proposal, the focus was on logistical considerations (e.g. arranging external training, vertical collaboration during examination periods) and protecting schools' autonomy to plan INSET provision to address their particular needs. Examples of particular needs included the different requirements of primary and secondary schools, faith schools having to work at a broader level than local cluster to collaborate within dioceses, and schools with significant numbers of learners from Muslim families needing to plan INSET days to coincide with festivals. There were suggestions from some commenters of having nationally designated days. Some comments recognised the benefits for families of coordinated INSET days.

Question 4 - We propose to change the guidance to ask schools to communicate the purpose and timing of their training with local authorities and parents or carers at the beginning of the academic year. Do you agree?

65.40% of respondents agreed

22.22% disagreed

12.38% neither agreed or disagreed

We received 314 responses to this question, with 101 supplementary comments.

Among the comments by respondents who agreed with the proposal:

- Many comments stated this was existing practice, was practical and worked well.
- Many comments drew attention to the benefits for families, and for teachers with children, in being able to plan ahead. Some also drew attention to the

potential for sharing dates in advance to enable collaboration between schools.

- A number of comments referred to the proposal to share the purpose of INSET days with parents as being helpful in countering parents' perceptions regarding the use of INSET days, and teacher holiday entitlements.
- A number of comments stated that sharing dates in advance could be challenging if plans were to change, for example due to the availability of training or changing requirements.
- Some comments suggested that sharing the purpose of the INSET days in advance would be more challenging than sharing the date, as the intended content may change during the year.
- Among the comments by respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed, or disagreed, with the proposal: Many comments indicated that they would agree with sharing the timing, but not the purpose. Some comments indicated that schools should be trusted to plan INSET days to suit their own needs, without scrutiny by or reporting to local authorities, or (to a lesser extent) families).
- Many comments referred to a need for flexibility to adapt to changing requirements and emerging challenges during the year, which need to be addressed via INSET but could not be planned before the beginning of the academic year. Some comments suggested that the timing and content for the majority of INSET days were determined in advance, but that some days were reserved for emerging needs. Some comments also referred to the availability of external partners or training providers.

Question 5 - We propose to change the guidance to advise that schools do not group more than 2 INSET days together in a block. Do you agree?

67.41% of respondents agreed

17.25% disagreed

15.34% neither agreed or disagreed

We received 314 responses to this question, with 71 supplementary comments.

Among the comments by respondents who agreed with the proposal:

- Many comments referred to the need for INSET days to be spread throughout the year. A number of comments said having two days together at the beginning of the school year was useful (with the rest spread throughout the year).
- A number of comments referred to disruption to teaching and learning, or to family life, when days are grouped together, with some references to the

impacts on younger learners, those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with ALN.

- A number of comments said more than two days together would be less productive because of fatigue.
- A number of comments indicated that grouping days was not current or usual practice.

Among the comments by respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed, or disagreed, with the proposal:

- Many emphasised the benefits of having two days in a block, with some stating that more than two days would be too much, and it is therefore unclear why these respondents did not agree with the proposal of advising schools not to block more than two days together.
- A number of comments emphasised discretion and flexibility for schools, to address schools' particular needs and enable collaboration.
- A number of comments said having two days together at the beginning of the school year was useful.
- A number of comments said some training needed to be delivered over two days, with a suggestion that booking training in blocks was also more cost-effective, or that preparation needed two days (especially at the beginning of the year).
- There were some suggestions that blocks of INSET – before or after school holidays, or even as a full separate week – allow families to access cheaper holidays.
- There was a suggestion of determining consistent dates across Wales.

Question 6 - We propose to change the guidance to advise that schools do not arrange more than 2 INSET days as twilight sessions within the academic year. Do you agree?

53.67% of respondents agreed

29.71% disagreed

16.61% neither agreed or disagreed

We received 314 responses to this question, with 82 supplementary comments.

Among the comments by respondents who agreed with the proposal:

- Many comments referred to the impact of twilight sessions on teachers who have children

- Many comments said that twilight sessions meant long days, with an effect on productivity because of fatigue. A number of comments also stated that twilight sessions were less effective without giving a specific reason.
- A number of comments referred to the impact on workload and wellbeing, especially within the weeks twilight sessions were held.
- A number of comments referred to difficulties for teachers who work part-time, and support staff, in attending twilight sessions.
- Some comments referred to the benefits of twilight sessions for some activities.
- There was a comment regarding the lack of contractual provision for twilight sessions, and a number of comments reflecting that twilight sessions should be subject to local agreement (including discussion with union representatives).
- There was a suggestion that the length of twilight sessions should be defined (for example, 2 x 3-hour sessions or 3 x 2-hour sessions to make up a single INSET day).

Among the comments by respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed, or disagreed, with the proposal:

- Many comments emphasised the importance of autonomy and flexibility for schools to address their own particular needs.
- A number of comments referred to benefits of twilight sessions, for example distributing professional learning or improvement activity continuously throughout the year, and shorter training being more engaging. Some also referred to the availability of training providers.
- Some stated that they believed taking two INSET days as twilight sessions in a year was too many, with some stating that having 6 twilight sessions (3 sessions to make up 2 INSET days) impacted a large number of weeks, impacting workload and wellbeing.
- Some stated that one or two days were currently taken in twilight sessions, and that this worked well.
- Some suggested a maximum of 3.

Question 7 - Do you agree that the guidance should emphasise that at least 4 INSET days are used wholly or mainly to deliver professional learning relating to learning and teaching, in line with the proposed purposes of INSET days in schools? (This will mean no more than 2 INSET days will be used on training not related to learning and teaching.)

66.13% of respondents agreed

16.29% disagreed

17.57% neither agreed or disagreed

We received 314 responses to this question, with 87 supplementary comments.

Among the comments by respondents who agreed with the proposal:

- Many comments said the proposal was good practice and a good balance, or emphasised the importance of improving teaching and learning.
- Many comments referred to other training requirements, often termed by respondents as “mandatory training”. Safeguarding was the example given most often, with references also to health and safety, Team Teach, Prevent, violence against women and girls, and fire, medical and emergency procedures.
- Among the comments by respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed, or disagreed, with the proposal: Many comments emphasised the importance of autonomy and flexibility for schools to address their own particular needs. A number mentioned responding to Estyn recommendations, and in one case the needs of faith schools was particularly mentioned.
- Many comments referred to other training requirements, often termed by respondents as “mandatory training”, with similar examples to those by commenters who agreed.
- A number of comments mentioned other important areas, alongside teaching and learning, such as ALN, behaviour and wellbeing. (Some of these are included within the proposed prescribed purposes.)
- A number of comments said planning and preparation time, within departments or collaboratively, was as important as training.
- Some comments said that INSET days often covered a number of different aspects.

Question 8 - What, in your opinion, would be the likely effects of the proposal on the Welsh language? We are particularly interested in any likely effects on opportunities to use the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English. Do you think that there are opportunities to promote any positive effects? Do you think that there are opportunities to mitigate any adverse effects?

We received 170 comments in response to this question. Among these:

- The majority of comments stated there would be no impact, with some saying there would be no impact unless INSET time was used specifically for activities relating to Welsh.
- Many comments suggested some INSET time could be used to develop staff’s Welsh language skills or develop schools’ activities to promote the language. There was a suggestion that Welsh-language heritage should be integrated into curriculum design.

- Many comments said that Welsh language development should not be prioritised within INSET days given other needs and requirements.
- A number of comments emphasised the importance of training and resources being available in Welsh. There was a suggestion of collating information on training providers able to deliver through the medium of Welsh.
- There were some suggestions that collaboration with other schools – either between Welsh language schools, or between schools in different categories – would facilitate Welsh language development.

Question 9 – In your opinion how could the proposed policy be formulated or changed so as to:

- **have positive effects or more positive effects on using the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English, or**
- **mitigate any negative effects on using the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English?**

We received 128 comments in response to this question. Many reiterated views, in response to the previous question, that there would be no impact or that the Welsh language should not be prioritised. A number of comments related to issues wider than INSET provision. Suggestions shared related to:

- Activities to develop the Welsh-language skills of staff, although a number of comments said INSET time was not sufficient to do this meaningfully.
- Activities to develop the promotion of Welsh within schools.
- Ensuring training and resources are available in Welsh, especially if provided by local authorities or other public bodies.
- Collaboration between schools.
- Welsh-language activities for children on INSET days, organised by external organisations such as the Urdd or Mentrau Iaith.

Question 10 – 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.

We received 65 comments in response to this question. Many comments related to issues which were the focus of specific questions. Other issues identified included:

- The importance of autonomy and flexibility for schools to address their own particular needs.
- The particular needs of faith schools.

- Current effective use of INSET days.
- Workload pressures on staff, especially school leaders.
- Monitoring the quality and impact of INSET training and preparation, including a suggestion that Estyn should assess schools' INSET provision.
- School funding pressures.
- Inclusion of part-time staff and support staff.
- A need for more than 6 INSET days, or increased planning, preparation and assessment time.
- Addressing public perception on the use of INSET days.
- Increased expectations on schools beyond teaching and learning.
- Applying INSET days to early years education.
- Developing consistent national resources for use on INSET days.

Summary of Responses – children and young people consultation

This section is a summary of the responses received. It does not aim to capture every point raised by respondents. The consultation document asked nine questions and the responses to each are summarised below.

Question 1 – 6 INSET days: Do you agree that schools should have 6 INSET days every year starting from 2026?

100% of respondents agreed

0% disagreed

0% were unsure

Question 2 – What INSET days are for: Should these days be mainly for teachers to learn, plan and prepare for things like the new curriculum?

100% of respondents agreed

0% disagreed

0% were unsure

Question 3 – Working together: Should schools try to plan INSET days at the same time as other schools nearby? This would help families with children in different schools and let teachers work together.

80% of respondents agreed

20% disagreed

0% were unsure

Question 4 – Telling families: Should schools tell parents and carers at the start of the year when INSET days will be and what they're for?

60% of respondents agreed

0% disagreed

40% were unsure

Question 5 – Not too many together: Should schools avoid putting more than 2 INSET days in a row?

80% of respondents agreed

20% disagreed

0% were unsure

Question 6 – Twilight sessions: Sometimes INSET happens after school (called twilight sessions) so teachers get an extra free day when learners are not in school. Should schools only do this twice a year?

80% of respondents agreed

0% disagreed

20% were unsure

Question 7 – Focus on teaching: Should at least 4 of the 6 INSET days be about learning and teaching? Sometimes, teachers need to learn about things not related to the classroom.

40% of respondents agreed

40% disagreed

20% were unsure

Question 8 – The Welsh language: How do you think these plans will affect the Welsh language? Will it help people use Welsh more? Could it make things harder for Welsh speakers? How can we make sure Welsh is treated at least the same as English?

We received 4 comments in response to this question. Two responses argued Welsh should not be prioritised over English, especially in English-medium schools. One said the Welsh language was not relevant to the proposals. One response suggested having at least one day focusing on the Welsh language and integrating Welsh language and culture into planning on other days.

Welsh Government Response

The Welsh Government would like to thank all those who took the time to respond to this consultation. The views and evidence provided are important in informing decisions on the future provision and use of in-service education and training (INSET) days in Wales.

As this is a summary report, it is not possible to reflect every individual point raised by respondents. All responses have been carefully considered, and the absence of specific issues or suggestions from this report does not indicate that they have been disregarded. Many of the points raised will continue to be relevant to the Welsh Government's wider programme of work to support career-long professional learning and the effective use of INSET days across the school system.

The responses received have been considered alongside other sources of evidence, including commissioned research and engagement with children and young people, to ensure that decisions are informed by a comprehensive understanding of the potential impacts of the proposals.

The views shared in response to the consultation strongly support the proposal to maintain the sixth INSET day on an ongoing basis, and support the proposal to prescribe that the main purposes of INSET (training and preparation in relation to curriculum and assessment, ALN, and national priorities). We will take forward legislation to implement these proposals by the beginning of the 2026/27 academic year, subject to ministerial decision after the 2026 election.

There was support, of varying degrees, for the various proposals to change the non-statutory guidance to strengthen the purpose, planning and use of INSET days. We will revise the guidance to implement these proposals and issue the revised guidance by the beginning of the 2026/27 academic year. In doing so, we will fully consider comments made in response to this consultation and issues raised in the wider research and stakeholder engagement. In particular, we will make clear that the guidance recommends good practice but does not seek to unduly reduce the autonomy and flexibility of schools and their leaders. Additionally, we will ensure the guidance includes advice on support for learners, and on ensuring INSET provision contributes to inclusion and the wellbeing of learners and school practitioners.

These changes will be implemented in the next Senedd term, and will be subject to final Ministerial decisions at that point.

Next steps

The Welsh Government intends to prepare legislation, and issue revised guidance to the sector, by the beginning of the 2026/27 academic year.

Annex A - List of Respondents

This list includes the names of respondents who stated they were happy for their names to be published. The names are provided as shared in the consultation responses.

Main consultation

Alastair Gittins, UNISON Cymru

Ben Lester, Education Workforce Council

Catherine Falcus, ASCL

Cerys Louise Harvey, Cwmtawe Community School

Christine Edwards, Wrexham LA

Claire Merfield

Craig Stewart

Dan

Darren Uren

DCR

e. owens, school

E.Rowlands

Emily

Gemma Blakeley, Castell Alun

Hayley Davied

Hywel Parry, Ysgol John Bright

Isobel Yacomén

Jones

Julie Miller

Kate Evans

Kate, Primary school HT

Katherine Durbin, Llangattock Church in Wales Primary School

Kirsty Retallick

Megan Davies

Mickey Mouse, Lowering Tax for Welsh Workers

Natalie

Niamh

Nicola Bennett, Ysgol Bryn Hedydd

Nicola Davies, Castell Alun

Owen Evans, Estyn

Paul

Rachel Gibbins

Rachel Sier

Rebecca Owen

Robert Bell, St. Brigid's Denbigh

Samantha Griffiths, Ringland Primary School

Sean Thomas, Milford Haven school

Simon Marshall, Maindee Primary School

Siôn Amlyn, NASUWT

Children and young people consultation

Rachel Evans

Rachel Roberts

Neil Arthur