



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Consultation – summary of responses

Revised professional standards for assisting teaching, teaching and leadership

March 2026

Overview

This report outlines the responses gathered from the Welsh Government's consultation on the revised professional standards (the standards) for assisting teaching, teaching and leadership.

The consultation was aimed at all educational professionals working in schools in Wales. This included teachers, newly qualified teachers, teaching assistants and Higher-Level Teaching Assistants, school leaders at all levels, including headteachers, and those in wider system leadership roles.

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.

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Additional copies

This summary of responses 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: [hyperlink](#)

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Introduction

About the consultation

This document presents the findings from the Welsh Government's consultation on the standards for assisting teaching, teaching and leadership.

The findings of this consultation will shape the final version of the standards which will be launched in the next Senedd term, pending final ministerial approval.

Next steps

The Welsh Government will carefully consider all responses received through the consultation. Where proposals have raised questions or concerns, Welsh Government will assess the changes that are required to the proposed standards and identify the areas where further work is required.

Where appropriate, the Welsh Government will make the necessary amendments to the standards based on the consultation responses. Guidance and supporting resources will also be made available on Hwb to support the implementation of the standards and will reflect the feedback received during the consultation.

This consultation exercise marks the first stage of the wider changes that the Welsh Government is currently making to the whole suite of standards for school-based practitioners. This suite of standards will include revised standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) which are currently in development. Formal consultation on the revised standards for QTS is expected to take place in the autumn term 2026 and are expected to be launched in September 2027, pending ministerial approval.

Methodology and analysis

This section outlines the approach taken to gather and analyse responses to the Welsh Government's consultation on the "Revised professional standards for assisting teaching, teaching and leadership."

Consultation process

The consultation was conducted over twelve weeks, from 3 November 2025 to 30 January 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.

Survey design

The consultation questionnaire included:

- Fourteen closed questions seeking the views of respondents on each of the proposed data items. The questions asked the respondent to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the proposal (using a Likert scale). An open text comments box was also provided after each of the closed questions to enable respondents to add any supporting comments.
- Six open text survey questions to enable respondents to provide feedback and views on specific areas, or to provide any feedback that respondents hadn't been able to add within the consultation questions.

Profile of online consultation respondents

A total of 90 responses were received to the consultation. 73 were submitted on-line and 17 via e-mail. Responses were received from local authorities, independent bodies, schools, higher education institutions, Unions and individual members of the education workforce.

Seven organisations agreed to have their names published as part of this consultation response. They are:

- Children's Commissioner for Wales
- Comisiynydd y Gymraeg
- Education Workforce Council
- Estyn
- National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers
- National Early Years Advisory Teachers Group
- National Education Union Cymru

All other respondents asked to remain anonymous.

Workshops

Eight consultation workshops were held across Wales during November 2025, with over 275 individuals attending. Attendees included teaching assistants (TAs), HLTAs, school based practitioners, newly qualified teachers (NQTs), induction mentors, local authority induction leads, Estyn, the Unions and representatives from the diocesan authorities. The sessions ranged between two and six hours.

Analysis of consultation responses

Quantitative analysis of the closed questions

Frequency totals were produced for each of the fourteen closed questions posed as part of the consultation to outline the extent to which respondents strongly agreed, agreed, neither agreed or disagreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed with each proposal.

Analysis of the supporting comments

Thematic analysis of the qualitative data (comments submitted by respondents to the open-text questions) took place with each response reviewed and themes identified.

Analysis of workshop feedback

Notes gathered from each consultation workshop were reviewed in full and input into the appropriate open or closed question via the consultation online portal.

This report sets out the most frequently raised themes arising from the responses to the consultation. The themes and points set out throughout this report are derived from comments made by respondents to the consultation and do not represent the views of the authors of the report nor Welsh Government.

Consultation questions

Question 1a: Do you agree that the structure for the revised professional standards is clear and easy to understand?

Table 1: Responses to Question 1

Response category	Response percent	Response total
Strongly agree	13.70%	10
Agree	68.49%	50
Disagree	10.96%	8
Strongly disagree	2.74%	2
Don't know	4.11%	3

Among those who strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- Respondents agreed that the standards and associated descriptors are easy to navigate. Many see them as strong tools for professional dialogue, coaching and reflection across career stages.
- The alignment across assisting teaching, teaching and leadership roles is seen as supporting professional growth and coaching conversations. Several respondents noted good alignment with newly qualified teacher (NQT) induction and the National NQT Programme.

Among those who disagreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- Some respondents describe the standards as overly wordy, jargon-heavy and abstract, which could lead to disengagement.
- Calls for shorter explanations, practical examples and role-specific illustrations to support consistent understanding.
- Non-school based roles are underrepresented such as additional learning needs (ALN) specialists, local authority staff and those outside classroom roles.
- Lack of higher level teaching assistant (HLTA) specific questions.
- Risk of overload if standards are not filterable by role.

Workshop feedback

Workshop feedback reflected similar themes to the written responses.

Question 1b: Do you agree that the structure for the revised professional standards is relevant to current needs and practices?

Table 2: Responses to Question 1b

Response category	Response percent	Response total
Strongly agree	14.29%	10
Agree	54.29%	38
Disagree	20.00%	14
Strongly disagree	7.14%	5
Don't know	4.29%	3

Among those who strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- There was broad agreement that the standards are generally relevant and align well with the Curriculum for Wales, pedagogy, professional learning, collaboration, and learner centred practice.
- The standards are seen as strongest when used as a developmental tool rather than a compliance mechanism. Respondents emphasise that their effectiveness could depend heavily on school culture, leadership engagement, and protected time for professional learning.

Among those who disagreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- The standards are primarily school based and do not adequately reflect the diversity of roles within the education workforce e.g. advisory, specialist and non-classroom roles.
- There were concerns about the removal of separate descriptors for HLTAs. Respondents highlight that HLTA specific descriptors are currently essential for assessment, qualification, and clarity of role. The lack of distinction between teachers and HLTAs risks blurring professional boundaries, creating confusion about responsibilities, leadership expectations, and progression, and undermining established assessment processes.
- The standards raise an issue for NQT induction, which is a pass/fail process in Wales. Respondents stressed the need for clear, nationally consistent criteria for what constitutes a pass or a fail. The broad and interpretive nature of the standards might lead to increased inconsistency and inequity.
- Some respondents describe the standards as overly detailed and overwhelming, limiting their practical usefulness. There were also concerns about the pace of change. Many stress that implementation must be supported by clear guidance and sufficient time to avoid adding further pressure on practitioners.

Workshop feedback

Workshop feedback reflected similar themes to the written responses.

Question 2a: Do you agree that the revised professional standards, linked questions and supporting descriptors are appropriate for teaching assistants?

Table 3: Responses to Question 2a

Response category	Response percent	Response total
Strongly agree	10.00%	7
Agree	45.71%	32
Disagree	22.86%	16
Strongly disagree	14.29%	10
Don't know	7.14%	5

Among those who strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- Broad support in principle for including TAs within a single suite of standards, alongside teachers and school leaders.

Among those who disagreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- Some respondents viewed the descriptors for TAs as too vague or open to interpretation, especially when compared with the more detailed and specific standards for teachers.
- Expectations appear to some as over ambitious, particularly given the variation in TA roles and limited access to professional learning.
- The absence of separate descriptors and linked questions for HLTAs was one of the most consistent concerns.
- Concerns were raised about whether support staff would have time, funding, and paid access to the professional learning needed to engage meaningfully with the standards.
- The standards risk being unevenly applied to TAs and dependent on individual confidence or school culture.

Workshop feedback

The standards were enthusiastically received by the TAs who participated in the consultation workshops. There were sustained calls for the standards and descriptors to be more frequently and better used across schools in the future, rather than the variability of use at present.

Question 2b: Do you agree that the revised professional standards, linked questions and supporting descriptors are appropriate for teachers?

Table 4: Responses to Question 2b

Response category	Response percent	Response total
Strongly agree	7.94%	5
Agree	60.32%	38
Disagree	17.46%	11
Strongly disagree	9.52%	6
Don't know	4.76%	3

Among those who strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- There was broad agreement that the standards are an improvement on previous versions and would provide a clearer, more coherent framework for reflective practice and professional growth.

Among those who disagreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- There is an over emphasis on classroom-based roles and perhaps there should be explicit recognition of non-classroom contexts.
- There were concerns about the lack of explicit reference to the Welsh language, Cymraeg, and bilingualism.
- The standards might not adequately distinguish between early career teachers, experienced teachers, and those progressing to leadership or upper pay scales.
- Although the use of questions was welcomed in principle, many felt the current wording is overly evaluative (e.g. “How well...”) and risks creating performative, compliance driven conversations. Respondents recommend more invitational, developmental language to support trust, wellbeing, and genuine professional dialogue.
- Respondents stress that reflective practice, collaboration, and professional learning require protected time, resources, funding, and employer responsibility. Without these, there is a risk the standards become another bureaucratic exercise rather than a meaningful developmental tool.
- Clearer expectations, plain language, and guidance on how questions should be addressed (e.g. evidence, qualitative reflection rather than scoring) are requested.

Workshop feedback

Workshop feedback reflected similar themes to the written responses.

Question 2c: Do you agree that the revised professional standards, linked questions and supporting descriptors are appropriate for in-school leaders?

Table 5: Responses to Question 2c

Response category	Response percent	Response total
Strongly agree	9.68%	6
Agree	71.88%	46
Disagree	9.38%	6
Strongly disagree	3.13%	2
Don't know	6.25%	4

Among those who strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- Strong consensus that the standards, questions and descriptors are appropriate for in-school leaders.
- The standards were praised for appropriately emphasising:
 - Pedagogical leadership
 - Professional learning
 - School culture, ethos and values
 - Collaboration and collective responsibility
- There was advocacy for the more invitational, reflective and developmental framing (e.g. “Can you tell me about a time...”), which better aligns with the stated intent of professional learning and growth.

Among those who disagreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- Concerns were raised that the standards may not be suitable for roles outside school settings, such as advisory teachers, school improvement officers or some system level roles, without adaptation.
- The need for clearer differentiation by role and career stage, including middle leaders, senior leaders, assistant/deputy heads, new leaders and experienced leaders.
- The evaluative tone of many questions (e.g. “How well do you...”), can feel like a test or judgement of competence or encourage performative rather than developmental conversations.
- A few respondents describe the standards and associated documentation as overly wordy and overwhelming, with the potential to increase anxiety rather than support practice.
- Respondents highlighted the possible unrealistic expectations, particularly for secondary teachers and in-school leaders with large numbers of learners. There

were calls for clearer terminology and dedicated time and resources for engagement with the standards.

- Concerns were expressed about language that implies individual responsibility for professional learning, when access to high quality professional learning is largely determined by employers and system leaders.
- Respondents emphasised that head teachers and system leaders must be clearly accountable for enabling access to professional learning opportunities.
- Respondents also called for stronger emphasis on horizontal and vertical collaboration, aligning more clearly with national and local expectations.

Workshop feedback

Given the workshop audience, this was only briefly touched on. No one left feedback.

Question 2d: Do you agree that the revised professional standards, linked questions and supporting descriptors are appropriate for headteachers?

Table 6: Responses to Question 2d

Response category	Response percent	Response total
Strongly agree	9.68%	6
Agree	69.35%	43
Disagree	8.06%	5
Strongly disagree	3.23%	2
Don't know	9.68%	6

Among those who strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- Broad support for the standards. Many respondents agree that the standards are more comprehensive and better aligned with the strategic and pedagogical responsibilities of headteachers. The emphasis on vision, culture, wellbeing, innovation, and self-evaluation was widely welcomed.

Seven respondents out of fifty-six disagreed. Among those who disagreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- A recurring theme was unease about the language and framing of the reflective questions. While the idea of using questions to support professional dialogue is welcomed, respondents felt the repeated use of evaluative phrasing (“How well...”) makes the standards feel like a test or compliance exercise.
- There were concerns that the standards are designed primarily for school-based staff and are not suitable for roles outside schools, such as advisory teachers, system leaders, or school improvement officers.

- The standards are aspirational but unrealistic given current pressures. Respondents noted that headteacher roles are already “porous” and overloaded with limited time, funding, and capacity which could undermine the feasibility of expectations.
- Respondents also questioned whether the standards adequately reflect the differences between new, aspiring, acting, and experienced headteachers and their progression and professional maturity over time.
- Some responses stressed the need for clear implementation guidance, particularly on how the standards interact with the professional development review and their relationship to school improvement.

Workshop feedback

A workshop with all the headteachers from one local authority showed the questions to be helpful, supportive and intriguing. The questions were positively received, and the participating headteachers had a range of suggestions for their practical use. Within the workshop there was little focus on compliance and considerable opportunity for headteachers to delve into successes and challenges in their role.

There was little reflection on this question at the other workshops.

Question 2e: Do you agree that the revised professional standards, linked questions and supporting descriptors are appropriate for system leaders?

Table 7: Responses to Question 2e

Response category	Response percent	Response total
Strongly agree	9.52%	6
Agree	68.25%	43
Disagree	7.94%	5
Strongly disagree	1.59%	1
Don't know	12.70%	8

Among those who strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- There was overall support for the standards for system leaders, with strong endorsement of their focus on strategic leadership, ethical practice, collaboration, and system wide improvement.
- Many respondents see them as a significant improvement on previous versions and better aligned with a self-improving education system in Wales.

Among the six who disagreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- The absence of a clear, explicit definition of what constitutes a ‘system leader’ and how system leadership differs from headship or school-based leadership. Clarity would improve consistency, usability, and fairness in interpretation.
- While the use of reflective questions was widely welcomed, respondents raised concerns that the language is overly evaluative (e.g. “How well...”) and risks creating performative or intimidating conversations. Many argued for more developmental, invitational, and reflective phrasing to support trust, professional growth, and wellbeing.
- There were concerns about clarity of language, with some descriptors viewed as overly complex, generic, or unclear.
- Respondents emphasise the role of system leaders and headship in enabling access to high quality professional learning rather than placing responsibility on individual practitioners.

Workshop feedback

Given the workshop audience, this was only briefly touched on. No one left feedback.

Question 3a: Do you agree that the revised professional standards and supporting descriptors are appropriate for use in mandatory statutory induction (Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT))?

Table 8: Responses to Question 3a

Response category	Response percent	Response total
Strongly agree	6.35%	4
Agree	49.21%	31
Disagree	20.63%	13
Strongly disagree	9.52%	6
Don't know	14.29%	9

Among those who strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- There is broad agreement that the standards can be useful as a developmental and reflective framework, particularly for professional dialogue between induction mentors and NQTs. However, respondents caution against their use as a checklist or compliance tool.

Among those who disagreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- A recurring theme was the need for clearer, more explicit guidance for NQTs. Respondents suggest that high level, aspirational standards are not sufficient on their own for statutory induction, particularly given the pass/fail nature of

induction. There is concern that reflective, ambiguous descriptors make it difficult for mentors and validators to make fair and consistent judgements.

- Another theme was that the current wording of many descriptors do not reflect the realities of supply teaching. Many NQTs work on short term or day to day supply, often across multiple schools, yet the standards frequently assume NQTs work in one school, have involvement in curriculum design and have familiarity with a school’s vision.
- Small but important wording changes (e.g. focusing on ‘adapting’ rather than ‘designing’ learning or removing references to “the school”) to make the standards demonstrable and fair for supply NQTs.
- Clear national guidance and mentor training are seen as essential for consistent and equitable implementation.
- The need for a developmental pathway between initial teacher education (ITE), NQT/early career, experienced teacher, and leadership with support voiced for either a distinct NQT/early career tier, or clearer progression markers within the standards.
- Greater alignment with Curriculum for Wales and Cymraeg. While the standards are generally seen as aligned with the spirit of Curriculum for Wales, many responses note that this alignment is not explicit enough in the descriptors. There is also concern about the absence of explicit reference to Cymraeg, despite its prominence in policy and teacher training expectations.

Workshop feedback

Workshop feedback reflected similar themes to the written responses.

Question 3b: Do you agree that the revised professional standards and supporting descriptors are appropriate for use in the contexts of both validation and accreditation (for example Teaching Assistant Learning Pathways (TALP) and the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH))?

Table 9: Responses to Question 3b

Response category	Response percent	Response total
Strongly agree	7.69%	5
Agree	40.00%	26
Disagree	15.38%	10
Strongly disagree	15.38%	10
Don't know	21.54%	14

Among those who strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- There was agreement that the standards support professional reflection, enquiry and ethical practice and provide a shared professional language across career stages and programmes (e.g. NPQH, TALP). Respondents also indicated that the standards are fit for validation purposes, provided they are used developmentally.
- There is broad support for the principles and intent of the standards, but strong consensus that clarity, differentiation, and role specific descriptors, especially for HLTAs are essential if the standards are to function credibly for assessment, accreditation, and progression, not just reflection.

Among those who disagreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- Accreditation processes were where concerns were most voiced and that the standards are seen as suitable for accreditation only if several issues were addressed. Issues included clearer expectations about what evidence is required, who assesses it, and how consistency is ensured across Wales.
- Another recurring theme is the loss of a visible progression model across roles (TA → HLTA → teacher → leader). Respondents noted that progression steps were less explicit in the revised structure and that HLTAs, in particular, appear invisible within the framework.

Workshop feedback

Workshop feedback reflected similar themes to the written responses.

Question 4: Do you agree that the revised professional standards and supporting descriptors will facilitate informal developmental conversations?

Table 10: Responses to Question 4

Response category	Response percent	Response total
Strongly agree	13.04%	9
Agree	69.57%	48
Disagree	5.80%	4
Strongly disagree	5.80%	4
Don't know	5.80%	4

Among those who strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- There was strong support for a developmental, reflective approach. The standards could support meaningful professional dialogue. Respondents value the reflective focus, use of open questions, and shared language, seeing these as strengths that encourage professional trust and growth rather than judgement.
- There is strong belief in the potential of the standards to improve professional dialogue, but only if accompanied by training, time, guidance, and safeguards against misuse.

Among those who disagreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- Many respondents expressed worry that, in practice, the standards are likely to be used for formal appraisal or the professional development review, rather than informal developmental conversations. There is anxiety that they may become tick box or evaluative tools, undermining their intended purpose.
- One theme was the lack of coaching and mentoring skills across the workforce. Respondents highlighted that without accessible (and ideally funded) coaching training, the potential of the standards could not be realised.
- A few respondents question the realism of informal conversations happening regularly, given workload pressures. This is particularly relevant for support staff, who often lack protected time for reflection and development. Respondents argue that without explicit time allocation, conversations could either not happen or could take place outside working hours.
- There was concern that the standards do not offer clear progression pathways for experienced TAs and HLTAs. Respondents note limited aspiration, lack of role specific clarity, and historical inequities in access to meaningful development reviews for support staff.
- The standards were described as too long, overwhelming, or overly complex, making it difficult to know where to start. Calls were made for simpler, more user-friendly language, clearer descriptors, and practical exemplars to support understanding and use.
- Respondents stress that success could depend heavily on school leadership and culture. Clear guidance on intended use, strong professional learning, and leadership commitment to developmental practice are seen as essential.

Workshop feedback

Workshop feedback reflected similar themes to the written responses.

Question 5a: Do you agree that the revised professional standards, supporting descriptors and linked questions are supportive and developmental?

Table 11: Responses to Question 5a

Response category	Response percent	Response total
Strongly agree	13.04%	9
Agree	52.17%	36
Disagree	26.09%	18
Strongly disagree	5.80%	4
Don't know	2.90%	2

Among those who strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- Many respondents recognise that the standards are intended to be supportive, reflective and developmental rather than compliance driven. However, there is a persistent concern that, in practice, they could be interpreted as evaluative or reduced to a checklist for appraisal or performance management, undermining their developmental intent.

Among those who disagreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- The impact of the standards could depend heavily on school culture, leadership attitudes, and the quality of professional dialogue. Without clear national guidance, respondents fear wide variation in how the standards are applied, leading to inconsistency.
- There was broad support for the intent of the standards, but concern about implementation, equity, progression, and resourcing. Respondents stressed that without clearer guidance, stronger coaching capacity, explicit progression pathways, and genuine investment in time and training, the standards risk becoming performative rather than transformational.

Workshop feedback

Workshop feedback reflected similar themes to the written responses.

Question 5b: Do you agree that the revised professional standards, supporting descriptors and linked questions promote a sense of professionalism?

Table 12: Responses to Question 5b

Response category	Response percent	Response total
Strongly agree	11.76%	8
Agree	66.18%	45
Disagree	7.35%	5
Strongly disagree	2.94%	2
Don't know	11.76%	8

Among those who strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- Many respondents noted that the education workforce in Wales already demonstrates a strong sense of professionalism. The standards could be seen as potentially reinforcing this but not creating it from scratch. Some caution that professionalism is difficult to “evidence” or quantify and should not be framed as something practitioners currently lack.

Among those who disagreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- There was emphasis on the position of TAs and support staff, where the language and descriptors are often seen as inaccessible or overly academic.
- Some respondents were worried about the use of abstract or technical language, arguing that it could risk alienating practitioners, particularly TAs whereas clear, simple language and practical examples would support more meaningful reflection.
- Some respondents welcomed the reflective, conversational approach but others worried it could undermine professional autonomy if implemented poorly.
- The impact of the standards could depend on careful, collaborative rollout with the profession aligned with adequate time, resources, and funding.
- Without the right conditions for roll out the standards risk becoming aspirational rather than meaningful.

Workshop feedback

Workshop feedback reflected similar themes to the written responses.

Question 6a: Do you agree that the revised professional standards and supporting descriptors will prompt professional conversations that will encourage a focus on the priorities for the education sector in Wales?

Table 13: Responses to Question 6a

Response category	Response percent	Response total
Strongly agree	7.46%	5
Agree	56.72%	38
Disagree	22.39%	15
Strongly disagree	7.46%	5
Don't know	5.97%	4

Among those who strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- There is broad agreement that the standards reference national priorities such as the Curriculum for Wales, equity, inclusion, wellbeing, digital competence, and collaboration. However, many respondents argue that this alignment is often implicit rather than explicit, limiting the standards' power to consistently drive professional learning across the system.
- One consistent theme is concern about the absence of specific descriptors relating to the development and use of Cymraeg. This was highlighted as an oversight given its statutory and strategic importance in Wales, noting that previous standards did this more effectively and that Cymraeg should be embedded across all five standards.
- Respondents generally agree the standards have the potential to stimulate meaningful professional conversations aligned with national priorities. However, this is seen as dependent on strong leadership, shared understanding, and supportive professional culture. Without these, conversations risk becoming superficial or inconsistent.

Among those who disagreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- There were concerns that the standards do not adequately recognise the full range of roles, especially teaching assistants and HLTAs. Without role specific clarity, professional conversations may exclude or marginalise support staff, reinforcing existing inequities unless leaders actively promote inclusive practice.
- A few respondents stress that standards alone are not a solution. Effective use of the standards depends on time, funding, training and mentoring. There were some calls for making the standards mandatory to ensure consistency and equity across Wales.

Workshop feedback

Workshop feedback reflected similar themes to the written responses.

Question 6b: Do you agree that the revised professional standards and supporting descriptors will enable the developing school improvement agenda?

Table 14: Responses to Question 6b

Response category	Response percent	Response total
Strongly agree	7.46%	5
Agree	53.73%	36
Disagree	25.37%	17
Strongly disagree	4.48%	3
Don't know	8.96%	6

Among those who strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- There were strong, repeated support for the standards promoting reflective practice, enquiry, collaboration, and continuous professional learning. Many respondents see these elements as central to a “self-improving” school system and as a positive driver of improvement when embedded meaningfully in day-to-day practice rather than treated as a compliance exercise.
- While many believe the standards can support school improvement, this is often expressed conditionally. Their impact is seen as dependent on how they are embedded in professional learning and improvement planning alongside the commitment and understanding from leaders within the school.
- There appears to be cautious optimism that inclusion of system leadership could improve alignment across stakeholders and support coherence. However, respondents stress this could only be realised if:
 - the standards align with national and local frameworks.
 - they connect clearly to the profession development review and school improvement guidance.
 - implementation avoids bureaucratic overload.

Among those who disagreed with the proposal, the most frequently raised themes were:

- Respondents appear sceptical about their effectiveness if they add workload, become performative, or operate in isolation from wider improvement frameworks.
- Respondents highlighted a lack of clarity and specificity in the descriptors. Concerns included some ambiguity making standards less ambitious and unclear descriptors leading to inconsistent interpretation.
- Some responses expressed concern that the standards do not adequately prompt or enable professional dialogue around expectations for Cymraeg. This is

viewed as a significant omission given statutory Welsh language duties and Welsh Government policy priorities.

Workshop feedback

Workshop feedback reflected similar themes to the written responses.

Question 7: Are there any descriptors that are unclear, should be changed or are missing?

This was an open-ended question; a summary of the responses is given below.

- Several responses highlighted that wellbeing and safeguarding, as key themes were either absent or poorly articulated. This includes pupil wellbeing, staff wellbeing, behaviour management, and attitudes to learning. Respondents view wellbeing as foundational to teaching and learning and argue it warrants distinct, clearly worded descriptors rather than being implied or embedded indirectly.
- There were concerns that Welsh language development and bilingual practice were not sufficiently embedded, despite being a statutory and national priority. Respondents note the lack of Cymraeg specific descriptors across roles, weak reference to the Curriculum for Wales, and inconsistencies between English and Welsh versions of the standards.
- One theme is that the descriptors are overly school and classroom centric, limiting their relevance for advisory and specialist teachers, supply teachers and supply NQTs, TAs and HLTAs. Respondents called for clearer differentiation between roles, explicit recognition of influence beyond the classroom, and reinstatement or development of role specific descriptors (e.g. for HLTAs).
- Respondents noted a lack of career stage progression, with no clear distinction between new, experienced, and advanced practitioners. This weakens alignment with ITE, induction, and early career support, and reduces the standards' usefulness for structured professional dialogue and progression planning.
- Across the roles, the descriptors were described as too wordy, vague, or open to interpretation, using academic or imprecise language. This raises concerns about inconsistent interpretation, workload burden, and difficulty evidencing practice. Respondents requested clearer, plainer language and tighter framing.
- There was strong support for including concrete examples showing how descriptors can be demonstrated in different roles and contexts. This is seen as essential for consistency, fairness, and meaningful professional dialogue—particularly for TAs, NQTs, and non-school based practitioners.
- Respondents questioned whether the standards are workload aware, particularly for teachers with large timetables or in-school leaders.

Workshop feedback

Workshop feedback reflected similar themes to the written responses.

Question 8: What sort of support might be useful to enable the standards to be used effectively?

59 respondents provided written comments in response to question 8.

The most frequent points raised were:

The most dominant theme was the need for absolute clarity about the purpose of the standards. Respondents repeatedly stress that the standards must be positioned as a developmental tool, not a mechanism for accountability, performance management, or pay progression.

There were also concerns that, without strong guidance and training, the standards could be reduced to a tick-list. Many respondents explicitly warned against checklist approaches and use in judgemental appraisal.

There were numerous calls for clear illustrations of what good practice looks like. Respondents want real-life examples and case studies with examples across different roles (i.e. teachers, TAs, HLTAs, leaders). Many noted that reflective questions alone are insufficient without reference points for quality and rigour.

There were calls to ensure that professional learning is essential for effective implementation. Key points raised included nationally consistent messages, face-to-face professional learning (not solely online) and rolling programmes to address staff and leadership turnover. Professional learning is seen as critical to building shared understanding and avoiding the potential misuse of the standards.

Respondents also stressed that meaningful engagement requires protected time for professional conversations and funded release time, particularly for mentors (ITE, NQT/Early Career). Without time and funding, the standards risk becoming an additional burden rather than a support for development.

Workshop feedback

Given the workshop audience, this was only briefly discussed. No one left feedback.

Question 9: Are there other impacts of these proposals which you would like to share your views on?

50 respondents provided written comments in response to question 17. The most frequent points raised were:

- There was strong support for the standards as tools for reflective professional dialogue, not performance checklists.
- Calls for clear national guidance from Welsh Government to ensure consistent use across Wales.
- Calls for protected time (e.g. INSET days) and sufficient resourcing for meaningful professional learning.
- Concerns about the absence of explicit reference to Welsh, seen as undermining the wider Welsh language agenda.
- Challenges that literacy and numeracy were omitted, while digital skills were named explicitly, despite literacy being a national priority.

- Are the standards seen as too high level and aspirational for student teachers and early career practitioners?
- The wish to include safeguarding aligned to the Keeping Learners Safe guidance and other professional Codes and practices.
- Wish for better alignment with school improvement guidance, pay and conditions the professional development review processes and initial teacher education and TALP programmes.

Workshop feedback

Given the workshop audience, this was only discussed. No one left feedback.

Question 10: What, in your opinion, would be the likely effects of the proposals 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?

48 respondents provided written comments in response to question 17. The most frequent points raised were:

- Respondents were concerned about removal of explicit, role-specific Welsh-language descriptors, which many feel could be a step backwards from previous standards.
- There were concerns that Welsh language development and bilingual practice were not sufficiently embedded, despite being a statutory and national priority. Respondents note the lack of Cymraeg specific descriptors across roles, weak reference to the Curriculum for Wales, and inconsistencies between English and Welsh versions of the standards.

Workshop feedback

Given the workshop audience, this was only briefly discussed. No one left feedback.

Question 11: In your opinion, could the proposals 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?

48 respondents provided written comments in response to question 17. The most frequent points raised were:

- Concerns were highlighted that the proposed standards do not give Welsh sufficient or explicit prominence. Many responses argue that Cymraeg is a national priority and should be clearly embedded across all standards, rather than being implicit or confined to professional learning.
- Bilingualism and authentic Welsh first practice, rather than reliance on translation, were seen as essential for fairness, quality, and credibility.

- There were calls for clear Welsh-language professional learning pathways and concerns about current capacity to deliver Welsh across the curriculum and the need for workforce planning and training.
- Respondents asked that Welsh should sit within pedagogy and not solely in professional learning.
- There were also calls for Welsh practical case studies, descriptors, and guidance which could show what strong Welsh-language practice looks like across diverse contexts, roles, regions, and learner backgrounds.

Workshop feedback

Given the workshop audience, this was only briefly discussed. No one left feedback.

Question 12: 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:

32 respondents provided written comments in response to question 12. The most frequent points raised were:

- One theme was that the standards are too abstract, aspirational and open to interpretation, particularly for ITE, NQTs, support staff and regulatory use. There were calls for perhaps more specific plain descriptors of practice, reduced reliance on reflective prompts alone, and practical examples to support consistent interpretation across Wales.
- Many responses argue that a single career long framework does not sufficiently distinguish between the different layers of practitioners from student teachers up to the leaders and system leaders.
- While several national commitments were acknowledged, many respondents call for more reference to anti-racist practice across a career, inclusive pedagogy, children's participative rights and poverty and safeguarding.
- Capacity, time, high-quality mentoring, consistent national messaging and training for school leaders must come hand in hand with the standards. There was scepticism, based on past experiences, that the standards could be used for accountability or the professional development review.
- Overall, respondents support the ambition of the standards but there is caution that without greater clarity, differentiation and implementation support, the framework risks limited impact.

Workshop feedback

Given the workshop audience, this was only briefly touched on. No one left feedback.

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 standards for assisting teaching, teaching and leadership.

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.

Following full analysis of the consultation responses, it is clear that the majority of respondents agreed with the proposed standards and their suitability for the education system in Wales. Nearly 70% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the proposals.

Taking all of the consultation feedback into account, it is clear that the wording and language within the standards was seen as appropriate; accessible and relevant. The Welsh Government is keen to ensure that our education professionals share a language and vocabulary which is technical and complex which embraces complex professional terminology. It is accepted that some descriptors within the standards are complex – but the overlap and interconnection is deliberate, providing opportunity to move between descriptors seamlessly in professional conversations and in professional development reviews. One of the key benefits of the standards is that they encourage individual practitioners to consider their ongoing growth and development in their own role and carefully consider the impact of their practice on their learners.

The evolving education system in Wales aspires to see practitioners working between schools collaboratively, in flexible ways. The revised standards deliberately reflect this, offering opportunities for individuals to reflect on the different aspects of their roles in different contexts and to determine their future professional learning needs and future career choices.

The question prompts within the standards are a new addition, and are deliberately evaluative, rather than inviting binary responses. The prompts are a way to begin the professional conversation. The national pilot process, run in conjunction with the consultation, concluded that the prompt questions were seen as invitational and built trust. This was also found at the consultation workshops where participants practised with the question prompts and voiced their positive reflections on the resulting conversations and the new directions that the questions opened for discussion and exploration.

It is important to highlight, that there is no expectation that any practitioner will be required to address all of the descriptors annually – this is unrealistic. The intention is that a selection of descriptors across all five standards are chosen which are relevant to the individual, within the context of their school and which reflect the needs of their local authority.

Within the consultation responses there are a number of recurring issues raised, including anti racism, Welsh language, specific and separate standards for certain roles and time constraints. These issues all need further exploration, and the Welsh Government will continue to work collaboratively with practitioners and stakeholders to ensure these issues are addressed and included in the final version of the standards. In order to facilitate the roll out of the standards, the Welsh Government intends to work in collaboration with practitioners and stakeholders to develop a range of guidance and supporting resources. It is intended that these resources will be supported by a programme of national engagement events, subject to final approval.

We intend, subject to final Ministerial decisions, to implement the new standards from 1 September 2026.