



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

CLOSED CONSULTATION

Additional professional learning INSET days: impact assessment

An assessment of additional professional learning INSET days.

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Section 1: what action is the welsh government considering and why?

Proposal

The world's highest-performing education systems have vibrant, engaged teachers and support staff who are committed to continuous learning. This career-long commitment to professional learning is critical to the quality and impact of a country's teaching and learning. In Wales, we have developed a national approach to career-long professional learning for our school workforce, including teachers, teaching assistants, supply staff and leaders. We want to support practitioners in Wales to be lifelong professional learners who reflect on and enhance their own practice to motivate and inspire the children and young people in their schools.

However, the education system has faced significant challenges over the last 2 years as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Although additional INSET days were added in 2019 the pandemic meant their use was not fully realised. There is therefore a need to reinforce a system wide universal engagement with application and awareness of the implications of the new curriculum, ALN reforms and equity in education - and we therefore recognise the need to provide time for all practitioners to be able to do this.

The new curriculum will begin to be rolled out from September 2022 and the National Professional Learning Entitlement was launched in September 2022. The proposal for time limited additional In Service Training (INSET) days therefore forms one of many ways the Welsh Government is seeking to support all practitioners to be able to engage with their professional learning and develop their skills to have a positive impact on learners in the classroom.

This is a short-term proposal covering the three academic years between 2022

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and 2025.

Background: why are we acting?

The additional INSET day is planned to complement the National Approach to Professional Learning (NAPL) and our investment in professional learning. It will help to create time in schools for practitioners to engage with professional learning to support the new Curriculum for Wales, ALN reforms and equity in education; work collaboratively within and across schools and reflect on their learning in line with the expectations outlined in the National Professional Learning Entitlement. It will also support career long professional learning and engagement with evidenced based research.

Traditionally teachers and headteachers are entitled to five INSET days (or equivalent) each academic year, which are already being used for a variety of professional learning activities and statutory training provision. The existing five INSET days are part of teachers' pay and conditions and are included within the Working Time section of the statutory *School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (Wales) Document (STPC(W)D)*. This requires full time teachers to be employed for 195 days per year - of which no more than 190 must be days teaching pupils. The other five are designated INSET days.

To increase the number of INSET days we will need to amend the Education (School Day and School Year) (Wales) Regulations 2003. This change would require maintained schools to use one day (i.e. two school sessions) for the purpose of INSET, specifically aimed at professional learning for the curriculum, ALN Reform and equity in education. This would mean that schools would hold six INSET days (or equivalent) per year, with the school being closed to learners on the additional INSET day.

This proposal follows calls from across the education system including practitioners, education workforce unions and other parts of the middle tier, such

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as Regional Consortia, for the Welsh Government to continue to create time for engagement with the changes in the education system in Wales.

The Welsh Government is also amending the Education (School Day and School Year) (Wales) Regulations 2003 (“the Regulations”) to accommodate the two additional bank holidays on Monday 19 September for the State Funeral of HM Queen Elizabeth II, and HM King Charles III’s Coronation on Monday 8 May 2023.

The Regulations provide for the number of school sessions that must be delivered in any school year. This number is periodically adjusted to accommodate additional INSET days provided for a specific purpose or for additional bank holiday, by amending the Regulations.

In line with the School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions (Wales) Document 2022 to 2023, the required number of school session (half days) that must be delivered in the 2022 to 2023 school year has been reduced by four.

Similar amendments were made earlier this year in 2022 for the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee and in 2011 for the Royal Wedding and again in 2012 for the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee. For these bank holidays, each of the four UK nations have agreed a common approach.

Long term: the role of INSET Days

While this proposal is for the next three academic years to allow time to support the roll out of the new curriculum and other priorities, and to engage with the National Professional Learning Entitlement, we are aware that there is a lack of comprehensive evidence around the use and effectiveness of INSET days as they stand.

An Estyn review in 2013 conducted a small-scale sample of INSET in schools

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and found that generally they were used well in individual schools but could benefit from being more themed and strategic. As a result of the pandemic, INSET days in the last two years have largely been used to address immediate priorities and it was also not possible to undertake a full evaluation of the effectiveness of the increased INSET days from 2019. These additional days were often needed to focus on developing practitioners' skills to teach remotely or in a blended learning way. Although the skills developed during the pandemic will continue to support practitioners to deliver on our national priorities there continues to be a need to ensure that practitioners embrace the changes in the education system.

In addition, we are aware that INSET days are often used for statutory training, particularly in special schools, but that there is no general oversight of INSET days, including when they are taken or how they impact on practitioners and learners.

We therefore recognise a need for more evidence on the use and effectiveness of INSET and will consider with our key partners the best way of undertaking a review. It is proposed that a review will be undertaken in 2024.

In the longer term, by 2025 we will evaluate how INSET days are used, gather evidence, and conduct an in-depth analysis of their use which will feed into the School Teacher Review Body (STRB) and linking to the work being undertaken on changes to the school day and school year. There are therefore long-term opportunities to consider the use of INSET, and the STRB is also likely to be asked to review this from the perspective of teachers pay and conditions.

We will also seek to understand the ways INSET are used by some of the best performing systems and how they impact on pupils.

Prevention

The proposal has clear long term aims to facilitate the introduction of the curriculum, ALN Reform and addressing equity in education with associated benefits for both learners and all practitioners.

The curriculum forms the basis of statutory education and has been developed to engage the interest of all children and young people to enable them to reach their full potential. This has important implications for their progression through adult life. The four purposes of the curriculum contribute to breaking multiple negative cycles by supporting children and young people to be: ambitious, capable learners; enterprising, creative contributors; ethical, informed citizens; and healthy confident individuals when they leave statutory education.

However, in the short term there are likely to be negative impacts on working parents/carers who will have to find additional childcare or take annual leave as schools will be shut for an additional day per year.

We have also considered the impact of loss of learning on children and young people, especially since the pandemic, which may have in some cases had a negative impact on learner development.

The additional INSET specifically for professional learning would support a number of our priority areas and reinforces our commitment to providing and facilitating career-long professional learning for teachers in line with the National Professional Learning Entitlement.

Integration

The proposal is intrinsically linked to the Programme for Government and the Co-operation Agreement in particular “continue our long-term programme of

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education reform, and ensure educational inequalities narrow and standards rise” as it seeks to enable the successful implementation of the new curriculum, ALN Reform and equity in education. It is also an enabler of the education reforms, giving time to practitioners in all schools to embed the curriculum as well as supporting the National Professional Learning Entitlement.

Collaboration

The curriculum has been co-developed with the education profession across both the middle tier (organisations such as Estyn, the regional consortia, the National Academy for Educational Leadership) and with practitioners. Partners with a shared interest included the regional consortia, local authorities, education workforce unions, schools and other settings and practitioners themselves. These partners along with the education workforce unions have called for the addition of INSET days to be continued in the short term. Following consultation on the proposals, 81.49% of respondents agreed that there should be an additional INSET day for the next three academic years. We will work with our partners to ensure that all practitioners are able to access their professional learning.

The delivery of the content of the INSET days is likely to be by the schools themselves or schools working in their clusters collaboratively to address their needs taking account of local needs. They will also be supported by the regional consortia, who have developed professional learning programmes and materials to support all practitioners. The National Academy for Educational Leadership have developed resources to support schools in making the most of INSET and professional learning which is identified in the 8 Hallmarks they developed.

We know that some schools are better placed for the changes in the education system and we need to ensure all schools are well placed to implement the curriculum. We will need to understand the different levels of knowledge and understanding to successfully support all schools, and this will require us to work

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with colleagues in curriculum reform and external partners in preparing for the INSET days identifying any gaps in provision that support all practitioners accordingly.

Involvement

The people most affected by the proposal are practitioners in various settings, parents/carers and children and young people themselves. For parents/carers this will require them to arrange for care of their children whilst they are off school, which may involve logistical difficulties with childcare. For learners they will miss a day's schooling.

The proposal has been suggested by leaders, representative bodies and teachers themselves, and its delivery will involve their input. Parents/carers and learners were not specifically targeted although both may have chosen to respond to the full public consultation which ran from 20 September 2022 until 28 October 2022. The consultation was promoted on social media, including Twitter and Facebook. The consultation was also shared with stakeholders including the Children's Commissioner for Wales and governor support officers.

We have consulted informally with the regions and local authorities before setting the period for the INSET day and have agreed that it should be taken in the summer term. In this way we may be able to minimise disruption (for example, adding the INSET day to the beginning or end of school holidays).

Impact

The main driver for the additional INSET day is for schools to focus on the education reforms, what it means for them and for all schools to embed professional learning and ensure that they become informed practitioners.

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The biggest gap in our knowledge is what INSET days are currently used for, and if one or more of the current five days could be used for this proposal. Estyn's research (mentioned above) seems to agree with anecdotal evidence that their use is varied, with some schools suggesting they are essential time for working together as a school or cluster, and others that they are used for mandatory training but less strategically focused. As outlined above, we recognise a need for more evidence on the use and effectiveness of INSET and will consider with our key partners the best way of undertaking a review. It is proposed that a review will be undertaken in 2024.

Respondents to the consultation agreed that we should provide flexibility to schools on the timing of the additional INSET day. However, schools will be asked to provide parents/carers with as much notice as possible of planned INSET days so they are able to make any necessary childcare arrangements, as they do currently. However, it is possible that parents/carers will have limited notice for 2022 to 2023 due to the timing of the changes.

We will discuss with local authorities and regions to avoid periods such as national testing windows and recognise the cyclical nature of the school year. This would also allow local authorities to inform bus providers of the need not to provide transport.

Costs and Savings

In terms of the cost of holding additional INSET this should be cost neutral for schools.

We do not foresee savings for schools as they will still be paying teachers, and we expect them to still pay for their support staff on this day so they can be involved in the learning. There may be peripheral savings for school transport.

There may, however, be cost implications for the wider system which should be

considered. There are potential increased costs for some families, especially for those who may need additional childcare or to take additional annual leave, as they do with the current INSET days. Schools with wrap around childcare may well choose to act in a similar way to current INSET and holiday periods, offering provision for parents/carers for those days.

Section 8: conclusion

8.1 How have people most likely to be affected by the proposal been involved in developing it?

The people most likely to be affected are practitioners, learners and parents/carers. A full public consultation was undertaken from 22 September to 28 October 2022 and was publicised on social media, through Dysg and during the launch of the Professional Learning Entitlement.

The changes will have impacts on several groups:

Practitioners

Developing a highly effective education profession through the provision of career long, high quality professional learning is central to the realisation of our vision for education in Wales. The implementation of the **National Professional Learning Entitlement** will mark the beginning of a new phase in our professional learning journey in line with the roll-out of Curriculum for Wales. Professional learning is a change process to improve and develop professional knowledge, skills or understanding.

Additional INSET days ensure that all practitioners in Wales have more time to engage with professional learning that will support them to develop their practice

and knowledge to fully engage with and deliver our priorities that will lead to better outcomes for learners in the longer-term.

Parents/Carers

An additional INSET day could lead to childcare problems for some parents or carers. We anticipate schools notifying parents or carers of the date of the additional day as soon as possible to enable them to make the necessary arrangements for childcare.

There has been a focus on the importance of school attendance and the addition of a further INSET day could be seen as a conflict with the pressure to ensure face to face learning and could impact on learners by the loss of a further day of learning. However, we believe that this additional day is essential as it will make a positive difference to teaching and learning in the classroom in the longer-term.

There has been no consultation on the decision to allow schools to take the additional bank holidays during the 2022 to 2023 school year. The bank holiday has been provided by the UK government department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) for the State Funeral of HM Queen Elizabeth II, and for the Coronation of HM King Charles III, for all four nations of the UK.

School staff are entitled to take the extra bank holidays as part of their terms and conditions laid out in the School Teachers' Pay & Conditions (Wales) Document 2022. The change to the Regulations simply gives legal effect to schools providing four fewer sessions (half days) during this school year.

8.2 What are the most significant impacts, positive and negative?

The following specific assessments were undertaken and the main findings were:

Equality Impact Assessment

we believe the main impact will be upon children and lower income families who will have less annual leave allowance or ability to arrange additional childcare. In 2019 our decision to limit the additional INSET days to one per year was partly as a result of conducting a similar impact assessment, which enabled us to mitigate some of the impact by ensuring parents and carers had sufficient notice and that the additional day was taken during the summer term to reduce costs.

While the impact on children as a group will be limited, there will be benefits in the long run as the additional INSET day will support the successful embedding of the curriculum, support ALN reform and consider equity in education.

The impact on lower income families with both parents/carers working is harder to mitigate, especially at a time of a cost of living crisis. However, by timetabling it during the summer term and providing notice of the additional day this should help mitigate some of the impact. Low income families will be the most negatively affected group by the bank holidays as finding childcare and/or taking time off work to provide childcare for two extra days could impact them financially. Conversely, some families may benefit from a wellbeing perspective from having extra time to spend together.

Welsh Language

We conducted the Welsh language impact assessment and this has been updated to consider the responses to the two mandatory questions on the Welsh language within the consultation.

Some schools could use the additional days to provide professional learning on developing Welsh in their schools as part of the Curriculum or developing expertise in teaching through the medium of Welsh, in line with the Welsh in Education Workforce Plan. This suggestion was reflected in the consultation responses.

UNCRC

In the short term learners will miss an additional day of school per academic year. However, in the long term this will support practitioners to confidently deliver the new curriculum and other reforms, leading to improvements in teaching and learning in schools.

8.3 In light of the impacts identified, how will the proposal:

- **maximise contribution to our well-being objectives and the seven well-being goals**
- **avoid, reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?**

The additional INSET day has clear long term aims which fit with the wellbeing objectives and well-being goals. It seeks to facilitate the introduction of the new

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curriculum, ALN reform and equity in education with associated benefits for children and young people as well as practitioners.

The curriculum forms the basis of statutory education and has been developed to enable schools to deliver a local curriculum that engages the interest of children and young people in their schools to enable them to realise the four purposes. This has important implications for their progression through adult life. The four purposes of the curriculum contribute to breaking multiple negative cycles by supporting children and young people to be: ambitious, capable learners; enterprising, creative contributors; ethical, informed citizens; and healthy confident individuals when they leave statutory education. It is essential that practitioners are adequately supported to deliver the changes in teaching and learning required by the new curriculum.

We have identified minimal financial impacts on low-income families, and on working parents/carers in particular and, in the short term on children and young people who will miss an additional day of school per academic year.

In developing our policy approach, we will seek to mitigate these as outlined below, whilst also recognising the results of the consultation and the need for practitioners to have sufficient time to develop their skills and participate in professional learning:

- limiting the number of additional days to one per year.
- suggesting that as a minimum, one of the five existing INSET days also be used for the same purpose as the additional day, to ensure that practitioners have the time to engage with professional learning.
- advising schools ahead in a timely manner when they are due to commence, so that they can give parents/carers as much notice as possible although this may be limited in 2022 to 2023. The need to provide sufficient notice was noted by respondents to the consultation.
- not to mandate a particular date. Consultation respondents agreed that schools should be given the flexibility to decide the timing of the additional

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INSET days.

- engaging with recreational providers to offer activities to learners on INSET days. This approach was suggested by a few respondents to the consultation, including the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

8.4 How will the impact of the proposal be monitored and evaluated as it progresses and when it concludes?

We intend to monitor the impact by undertaking a review of the use and effectiveness of INSET days during 2024.

Ensuring the effectiveness of these INSET days will mean that their value, and therefore the cost for parents/carers, is not wasted.

The amendment to allow for the additional bank holidays is a one-off change to the Regulations which will only be valid for the 2022 to 2023 school year.

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