



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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The Structure of the School Year

We want your views on proposals to amend school term dates. So that terms are more equal in length, with more evenly distributed breaks, for maintained schools in Wales.

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Overview

The Programme for Government and Co-operation Agreement sets out the Welsh Government's commitment to consider the school year to help tackle disadvantage and support well-being, in order to benefit learners, staff, and parents. This is part of the Welsh Government's **national mission** to achieve high standards and aspirations for all by tackling the impact of poverty on educational attainment to support every learner.

In 2023, we follow broadly the same school term structure or “school calendar” as was followed in 1873, despite living, learning and working in a very different world today compared to 150 years ago. We want the school calendar to be better aligned with life in the 21st century and help us to address disadvantage, reduce educational inequalities and support learner and staff well-being.

We are asking for your views on three matters:

- (a) The principle of modifying the school year.
- (b) Options for implementing any modification of the school year including some changes being made in 2025 to 2026.
- (c) Suggested term dates for 2025 to 2026 school year implementation.

This consultation is complementary to the many recent changes and progressive improvements we have made to education in Wales. We have a new Curriculum for Wales, there is greater emphasis on professional learning for teachers, we have new ways of supporting learners with additional learning needs, and, in the coming years, we will be introducing ‘Made-for-Wales’ qualifications aligned with the ambitions of the new Curriculum for Wales.

In this consultation, we are seeking your views on a number of specific modifications (or changes) to the school calendar. We are proposing working with relevant bodies to reframe the traditional parameters of the school calendar

to create more consistent term-lengths and increase some half-term breaks so that each half-term is broadly the same length. Specific consultation questions are set out at the end of this document.

The total number of days provided for learning, breaks, and staff training will not change. We will maintain the existing provision of 190 days/380 sessions (38 weeks) of learning, 13 weeks of school breaks, and the existing number of staff training (INSET) days per school year^[Footnote 1]. Similarly, all public holidays will remain.

The current structure of the school year

The school year in Wales begins in September and ends in July.

The structure of the school calendar is not set out in legislation and there is no stipulated way of distributing the 13 weeks of school breaks.

School terms

The current school calendar typically has a longer autumn term compared with shorter spring and summer terms. These terms are punctuated with 13 weeks of breaks which vary in length.

School breaks

The current school calendar typically has a one-week break dividing each term into half-terms (referred to as the “half-term break”), a two-week break at the end of the autumn and spring terms (that currently coincide with Christmas and Easter, respectively) and roughly a six-week break at the end of the summer

term.

Differences across Wales

A pattern of structuring the school calendar, as described, has emerged over the last 150 years. However, because the school calendar is not set out in legislation, term dates are not always the same across the UK or across Wales. The law states that local authorities and school governing bodies must work together to try to keep term dates as consistent as possible, but there are small local differences.

This is how the current school calendar looks:

Option 1	Autumn Term				End of Term 1	Spring Term			End of Term 2	Summer Term				End of Term 3
Breaks		1			2		1		2		1			6
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug		

Autumn term (September to December)

- Half-term break: 1 week (in October/November)
- End of term break: 2 weeks (in December/January)

Spring term (January to March/April)

- Half-term break: 1 week (in February)
- End of term break: 2 weeks (in March/April at the same time as Easter)

Summer term (April to July)

- Half-term break: 1 week (in May/June)
- End of term break: 6 weeks (in July/August)

Why change the school year

In Wales, children's rights are at the heart of everything we do, which is why we want to ensure that the school calendar is built around learners and education first. The Welsh Government is considering changing the structure of the school calendar for several reasons.

This is an opportunity to design a calendar intentionally to better support learners, education systems, and families.

The current school calendar has uneven term lengths with a longer autumn and shorter spring and summer terms. The length of each term and associated half-terms is not intentional, term dates have traditionally been determined by the placement of public holidays, such as Christmas and Easter. For example, Easter Sunday does not fall on a fixed date each year.

Reason 1: A changed school calendar to better support the needs of disadvantaged learners and their families

It is essential to consider how we structure learning and teaching so that high standards and aspirations are achieved for all learners, particularly for learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and socio-economically disadvantaged learners.

When exploring the impacts of the current school calendar, these learners were found to be most affected by the structure; similarly, they also have the most to gain from a new structure^[Footnote 2].

Research suggests there is a relationship between the structure of the school calendar and the well-being and educational achievement of learners. For example, learning loss which refers to learners falling behind academically during school breaks, is more prevalent during the summer break compared to other breaks, as summer is longer than other school break periods^[Footnote 3].

Time then has to be devoted, during the autumn term, to recover the ground lost rather than advancing learning. However, this recovery can take longer for learners with ALN and those who are socio-economically disadvantaged. Additionally, for learners with ALN, learning loss and disruptions to routine are significant changes, and the school calendar is one contributory factor in this^[Footnote 4]. As a consequence, the length of the summer break could contribute to the attainment gap between socio-economically disadvantaged learners and their peers.

As well as this, for low-income families, school breaks can exacerbate existing financial pressures and food insecurity, putting pressure on families as well as learners themselves^[Footnote 5].

The summer break can be a positive experience for learners who are able to participate in activities that extends learning and promotes social and emotional skills. However, we recognise that other learners are not afforded the same opportunities which can contribute to an attainment gap. Additionally, significant numbers of parents perceive that a six-week summer break is too long, citing boredom, less physical activity and risk of isolation over the break^[Footnote 6].

Reason 2: A changed school calendar to better support the well-being of learners and teachers and reduce fatigue

If terms are too long without a sufficient break, fatigue can negatively impact the amount of teaching, learning and engagement taking place in classrooms. This is particularly true during the autumn which is the longest term with the most teaching weeks^[Footnote 7]. School staff are more likely to be impacted by instances of fatigue and illness during longer half-terms, and teachers often work through much of the one-week break in autumn^[Footnote 8] which can contribute to fatigue. Whilst the length of the autumn term presents an opportunity to cover large amounts of curriculum content, there is little opportunity for rest, leading to fatigue^[Footnote 9]. Learners similarly suffer a sense of fatigue by the end of long terms, with effects particularly notable for neurodivergent learners and those who travel long distances to school^[Footnote 10].

Consequently, term length can impact the quality of learning and teaching and potentially impact of learning experiences. When there are comparatively fewer teaching weeks in a term, teachers have less time to cover curriculum content and learners have less time for curriculum exploration.

We recognise the importance of school breaks in allowing learners and the education workforce time for recreation and rest. A changed school calendar would still provide opportunities for children and young people to rest and potentially to benefit from the experiences that play schemes and extracurricular camps offer during breaks from school.

More generally, impacts stemming from the summer break include instances of boredom, isolation^[Footnote 11], lack of routine and support, and less focus on well-being and physical activity. Additionally, the summer break, as the longest break from school, presents the biggest safeguarding concern as learners are without face-to-face professional support from schools for six weeks or longer.

At the same time, a one-week break during the longer autumn term may not be sufficiently long for learners and teachers to rest and recuperate. Understanding whether school breaks could be redistributed to better support learner and teacher well-being is crucial, and gathering public input on this point is one underlying reason for this consultation.

Reason 3: A changed school calendar to better support learning and teaching

Term lengths that vary considerably can have a negative impact on learners and the education workforce. As stated, variations in term length mean that teachers are faced with unequal lengths of time to cover curriculum content and learners are presented with an 'uneven playing field' from one year to the next, meaning that one year there would be additional weeks to teach and learn a topic than in other years. The inconsistency of spring and summer term lengths can also impact revision for those learners in exam years^[Footnote 12].

More equal term lengths, on the other hand, could have a real and practical benefit for both teachers and learners. Terms of equal length promote consistent opportunities for curriculum exploration across the year while also offering flexibility to teachers regarding the point in the school year when topics/modules are taught based on what is right for learners rather than being based on term length constraints. Research suggests that some teachers report that they plan content delivery in blocks and struggle to effectively fit blocks of teaching into particularly short terms of five weeks or fewer^[Footnote 13].

Redistributing break periods so that terms are more equal in length could help schools plan curriculum delivery with even greater focus on improving learner progression and attainment.

There is evidence to suggest that the distribution and placement of breaks can have an impact on learner progression and attainment. Variations of term

lengths can have a negative impact on learners. This is a particular concern in the longer autumn term (when learners become fatigued) and when Easter falls later on in spring, resulting in less time in school immediately prior to external examinations.

Learners at Welsh medium schools who speak little-to-no Welsh at home, for example, have been found to struggle with learning loss over the six-week summer break. Time then has to be devoted upon return to school in the autumn to recover learning which had already been achieved at the end of the previous term^[Footnote 14]. Though most learning is recovered in autumn upon return to school^[Footnote 15], this does of course come at the cost of time to advance learning. The same issue is true for learners in English medium schools who speak little-to-no English at home^[Footnote 16].

Reason 4: A changed school calendar to better support modern patterns of living and working

The way we live and work, has changed vastly over recent decades and will likely continue to change further. However, the school calendar has remained the same. Patterns and rates of employment have altered^[Footnote 17], meaning that more women work outside the home than in the past and people are living and working until older in age. With extended families often living farther apart, grandparents more likely to be in formal employment, and families less likely to have a parent or carer that remains in the home^[Footnote 18], childcare during school breaks can be very challenging for families.

The average number of annual leave days for those in full time employment is 28, equivalent to 5.6 weeks. The shortfall between average annual leave entitlement and the 13 weeks of school breaks may mean that working parents or carers need to source childcare for around seven weeks across the year. Many families rely on formal childcare. However, during school breaks, families can be under pressure in terms of increased living costs, including the need to

find and fund longer provision of childcare to enable them to continue in their work or study^[Footnote 19]. While redistributing breaks does not remove the need for childcare for 13 weeks of the year, more evenly distributed breaks could allow families to better plan informal childcare or be better able to budget for the cost of formal childcare.

The Welsh Government understands that when looking at the structure of the school year, consideration must be given to the subsequent impact the school calendar has on other sectors including tourism and hospitality, transport, childcare and play, the voluntary and public sectors (including the NHS and social care), as well as groups with protected characteristics. Engagement has already been undertaken with representatives from these groups to establish views around the school calendar, and this engagement will continue throughout the consultation.

What change would look like

In taking forward our wider education policies and reforms, it is important to understand that the school calendar can help support learners, families and the education workforce in terms of addressing disadvantage, supporting learning and well-being, and reflecting how we live and work now.

We want to modernise the school calendar to achieve a more balanced structure throughout Wales. We are proposing a different distribution of breaks throughout the year to achieve more consistent term-lengths.

Any changes we make, are intended to bring about the following potential benefits:

Terms of more equal length

Would promote a more stable rhythm for continuous learning with regular down time, enabling better spaced recuperation opportunities for both teachers and learners. It could support learners to make more sustained progress by affording opportunity to consolidate and build on learning over time, giving schools more opportunity to plan progression consistently and utilise all terms fully.

The redistribution of break periods

To reduce fatigue throughout the year. Redistributed breaks to help manage workload may also support educational outcomes; if teachers are less fatigued, they may be better equipped to plan and teach, and similarly, well rested learners may be better able to learn. Similarly, allocating breaks to different times of the year may present more affordable opportunities for travel and leisure.

A reduction in the length of the summer break

By redistributing some of this time so that breaks are spread more evenly throughout the year. This could help to reduce the impact of learning loss over the summer break and ensure school time is used rather than for learning recovery, to advance learning to improve education outcomes, close the attainment gap, and better align the school calendar with modern living, learning and working patterns. The summer break currently uses six out of the 13-weeks of school breaks a year.

What specific changes are we proposing

These changes are outlined in the options below and it is proposed that implementation would begin in the 2025 to 2026 school year. These changes would include the following:

- Extending the October half-term break to two weeks and shortening the summer break by one week.
- The flexibility to de-couple the spring break from the Easter public holiday. We recognise the importance of Easter to many people, and it is important to note that should Easter fall outside of the school break, the public holidays would still apply, and learning time should be re-distributed, for example, schools would be closed on Good Friday and Easter Monday. Broadly, Easter and Holy Week will stand outside the spring break for two years in every 10-year period.

While an approach to the school calendar which has more equal term dates is being proposed, there would remain room for some flexibility in response to particular needs. For example, there may be local, cultural, one off or national events which may necessitate a change to the normal pattern.

What other proposals are we considering implementing later on

We are also seeking views on further potential changes which could be introduced at a later date. These would include the following:

- Providing the flexibility to extend the May half-term break and/or if necessary, moving the break away from the public holiday with an associated shortening of the summer break by one week.

- Moving GCSE results day to the same week as AS/A-level results day.

This could have benefits, particularly for secondary school staff. These benefits include ‘freeing up’ more weeks within the break to offset a shortened summer break. If GCSE results day were to occur in the third week of August in the same week as AS/A-Level results^[Footnote 20].

What changes have we ruled out

Through stakeholder engagement, evidence and research we have considered various alternative school calendar options that could help us to achieve the ambitions of a more equal distribution of learning weeks.

From this, we have ruled out several alternative options. For example, we do not intend to propose an option in which the school year would begin in January and end in December. We have also ruled out options with a longer Christmas break, and any with less than a four-week summer break.

We will retain the same number of schools days as present, but the proposal is to redistribute those more evenly over the school year. In light of that, we do not consider that the proposal would necessitate a change to School Teachers’ Pay^[Footnote 21] and Conditions or to the Burgundy Book^[Footnote 22].

Suggested changes

To achieve a more equitable school calendar that is designed to support educational outcomes for all, well-being, and modern life, we therefore propose a new school calendar for all maintained schools in Wales. All options retain the flexibility or sometimes require the use of half-weeks to ensure 190 days of

provision are met.

The following tables and descriptions are approximations for illustrative purposes only and are not intended to show exact dates.

Option 1: The existing school calendar (Status Quo)

The current structure consists of a one-week break in October, two-week Christmas break, one-week break in February, two-week break for Easter, one-week break in May and a six-week summer break.

Option 1	Autumn Term				End of Term 1	Spring Term			End of Term 2	Summer Term				End of Term 3
Breaks		1			2		1		2		1			6
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug		

Autumn term (September to December)

- Half-term break: 1 week (in October/November)
- End of term break: 2 weeks (in December/January)

Spring term (January to March/April)

- Half-term break: 1 week (in February)
- End of term break: 2 weeks (in March/April at the same time as Easter)

Summer term (April to July)

- Half-term break: 1 week (in May/June)
- End of term break: 6 weeks (in July/August)

Option 2: A new school calendar (“New Option”) from 2025 to 2026

In this option, we propose a school calendar with a two-week October break, the flexibility to de-couple the spring (“Easter”) break from Easter, and a five-week summer break to be introduced from the 2025 to 2026 school year.

*The February, Christmas and May breaks would not change in this option.

Option 2 (from 2025/26)	Autumn Term				End of Term 1	Spring Term			End of Term 2	Summer Term				End of Term 3
Breaks		2			2		1		2		1			5
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug		

Option 2 changes

Autumn term (September to December)

- Half-term break: 2 weeks (in October/November)
- End of term break: 2 weeks (in December/January)

Spring term (January to March/April)

- Half-term break: 1 week (in February)
- End of term break: 2 weeks (in March/April which could be de-coupled from Easter)

Summer term (April to July)

- Half-term break: 1 week (in May/June)
- End of term break: 5 weeks (in July/August)

Option 3: A New School Calendar (“New Option Plus”) in the future

This option for a new school calendar would be rolled out in two phases.

Option 3 Phase 1

Phase 1 would be implemented from the 2025 to 2026 school year and would be the same as Option 2. In this phase, we propose a school calendar with a two-week October break, the flexibility to de-couple the spring (“Easter”) break from Easter public holiday, and a five-week summer break.

Option 3 Phase 2

In addition to the changes in Phase 1, we propose additional changes to the school calendar following implementation of Phase 1 changes. These additional changes include a two-week May break and a four-week summer break. Further

changes could also include AS/A level and GCSE results days held in the same week.

*The February and Christmas breaks would not change in either phase of this option.

Option 3 Phase 1	Autumn Term				End of Term 1	Spring Term			End of Term 2	Summer Term				End of Term 3
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec		Jan	Feb	Mar		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	
Breaks		2			2		1		2		1			5

Autumn term (September to December)

- Half-term break: 2 weeks (in October/November)
- End of term break: 2 weeks (in December/January)

Spring term (January to March/April)

- Half-term break: 1 week (in February)
- End of term break: 2 weeks (in March/April which could be de-coupled from Easter)

Summer term (April to July)

- Half-term break: 1 week (in May/June)
- End of term break: 5 weeks (in July/August)

Option 3 Phase 2	Autumn Term				End of Term 1	Spring Term			End of Term 2	Summer Term			End of Term 3
	Breaks		2			2		1			2		
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	

	Option 3 phase 1 changes (the same as Option 2)
	Option 3 phase 2 changes

Autumn term (September to December)

- Half-term break: 2 weeks (in October/November)
- End of term break: 2 weeks (in December/January)

Spring term (January to March/April)

- Half-term break: 1 week (in February)
- End of term break: 2 weeks (in March/April which could be de-coupled from Easter)

Summer term (April to July)

- Half-term break: 2 weeks (in May/June)
- End of term break: 4 weeks (in July/August)

Next steps

The consultation exercise will run from 21 November 2023 until 12 February

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2024. Welsh Ministers will then consider the findings and make a decision on the school calendar for future years with a view to commence some changes in 2025 to 2026.

We recognise any changes to the school calendar will impact learners, families, schools, and wider society. As such, significant preparation time will be given ahead of any changes so all stakeholders can plan and adjust accordingly. Similarly, we would look to implement any changes in line with Made-for-Wales qualifications.

Proposed term dates for the 2025 to 2026 school year

Should option 2 or 3 of the above be supported, we propose the following term dates for the 2025 to 2026 school year.

Proposed term dates for the 2025 to 2026 school year

Period	Start	End (For the purposes of this document if a term ends on a public holiday it is included as part of the term.)
Autumn term 2025	Monday 1 September	Friday 19 December
Autumn Half Term 2025	Monday 20 October	Friday 31 October
Spring Term 2026	Monday 5 January	Friday 3 April

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Period	Start	End (For the purposes of this document if a term ends on a public holiday it is included as part of the term.)
Spring Half Term 2026	Monday 16 February	Friday 20 February
Summer Term 2026	Monday 20 April	Wednesday 29 July
Summer Half Term 2026	Monday 25 May	Friday 29 May

These term days achieve a school calendar with:

- 190 learning days (five days of the above option will be used as INSET days to be decided by relevant bodies at a local level).
- A two-week October break with an associated five-week summer break.
- A spring break that is de-coupled from Easter to achieve more equal term lengths.
- All other breaks remain at the same point and the length as the current system.

We are seeking your views on these specific dates as part of the consultation questionnaire.

In the event that a decision is made to proceed with any changes to the school year for the 2025 to 2026 school year then it would be necessary for the Minister for Education and Welsh Language to issue a direction pursuant to section 32B Education Act 2002. A draft direction based on proposals for option 2 and option 3 phase 1 are set out at Annex A.

From the 2026 to 2027 school year, the relevant bodies who are normally responsible for setting term dates would retain responsibility and liaise with the Welsh Government to decide term dates taking into account the outcome of this consultation.

Consultation Questions

Select all that apply to you from the below:

- Age 17 years and under
 - Age 18 years and older
 - Education workforce
 - Tourism sector
 - Childcare sector
 - Full-time work - please specify
 - Part-time work - please specify
 - Parent or carer (The term 'parent' has been used as a shorthand to include mothers, fathers, foster carers, adoptive parents, stepparents, 'kinship' parents and grandparents, guardians)
 - Other
1. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the school calendar could be better designed to support the way we live, learn and work today?
 2. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the school calendar could be better designed to support socio-economically disadvantaged learners?
 3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the school calendar could be better designed to support learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN)?
 4. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the school calendar could be better designed to support teacher and/or learner well-being and ease fatigue?
 5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with an additional break week

(taken from the summer break), dividing the longest term (autumn)?

6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with having the flexibility to de-couple (separate) the spring break from the Easter public holiday?
7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with an additional break week in May or June (taken from the summer break and added to the existing May break), to even term lengths?
8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with holding A level, AS level and GCSE results days in the same week?
(Currently examination results are distributed on the third and fourth Thursday in August respectively. Aligning results days would mean that WJEC GCSE results be moved forward to the same week as A level and AS level results.)
9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option 1: Maintaining the existing school calendar?
10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option 2 and the proposed draft direction: a school calendar with a two-week October break, a spring break at broadly the same time each year (despite when Easter falls), and a five-week summer break?
11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option 3: a school calendar with a two-week October break, a spring break at broadly the same time each year (despite when Easter falls), a two-week May break, and a four-week summer break?
12. For 2025 to 2026, do you agree or disagree with the proposed term dates as set out for Options 2 and 3?
13. 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?
14. 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?

15. 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

UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

The Welsh Government will be data controller for any personal data you provide as part of your response to the consultation. Welsh Ministers have statutory powers they will rely on to process this personal data which will enable them to make informed decisions about how they exercise their public functions. Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about or planning future consultations. Where the Welsh Government undertakes further analysis of consultation responses then this work may be commissioned to be carried out by an accredited third party (for example, a research organisation or a consultancy company). Any such work will only be undertaken under contract. Welsh Government's standard terms and conditions for such contracts set out strict requirements for the processing and safekeeping of personal data.

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

You should also be aware of our responsibilities under Freedom of Information legislation.

If your details are published as part of the consultation response, then these published reports will be retained indefinitely. Any of your data held otherwise by Welsh Government will be kept for no more than three years.

Your rights

Under the data protection legislation, you have the right:

- to be informed of the personal data held about you and to access it
- to require us to rectify inaccuracies in that data
- to (in certain circumstances) object to or restrict processing
- for (in certain circumstances) your data to be 'erased'
- to (in certain circumstances) data portability
- to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection.

For further details about the information the Welsh Government holds and its use, or if you want to exercise your rights under the UK GDPR, please see contact details below:

Data Protection Officer:

Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Email: data.protectionofficer@gov.wales

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are:

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Tel: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123 1113

Website: <https://ico.org.uk/>

Footnotes

[1] Subject to any adjustment year on year.

[2] MR report.

[3] MR report.

[4] MR report.

[5] **Kelloggs (2015) Isolation and hunger: the reality of school holidays for struggling families [Online]**. [Accessed 04 October 2022].

Details: “41 per cent of parents on low household incomes say they sometimes feel isolated in the school holiday due to being unable to afford to go out and entertain their children” (Kelloggs, 2015).

[6] CPAG.

[7] Miller Report 2023, paragraph 5.7.

[8] MR report.

[9] MR report paragraph 5.7 Teacher Tapp, 'Which half term do teachers find the most and least enjoyable?', July 2022; TES (2019) [Autumn term is the NQT slayer \[Online\]](#). [Accessed 29 June 2022].

Details: The Education Support Partnership, a charity that runs a helpline for teachers suffering from mental health issues, says stress builds in teachers during the autumn term. For Miller work to corroborate.

Teacher Tapp (July 2022) found that 39% of secondary teachers state that autumn 2 is their least enjoyable half term, compared with 24% of primary teachers saying this.

Some NQTs will spend the majority of autumn half-term working, with the Christmas holiday being the biggest 'quitting point' (TES, 2019). Miller report.

[10] MR report.

[11] School Health Research Network (2021) Student Health and Well-being in Wales: [Report of the 2019 to 2020 School Health Research Network Student Health and Well-being Survey \[Online\]](#). [Accessed 22 September 2022].

School Health Research Network (2022) Youth Mental Health and Well-being in Wales: [Comparing findings from the 2019 and 2021 School Health Research Network Student Health and Well-being Survey. \[Online\]](#). [Accessed 22 September 2022].

Details: The SHRN found that in 2019, 31 per cent of secondary learners felt lonely during the summer holidays.

[12] MR report.

[13] Miller report 2023, paragraphs 5.7 and 5.8.

[14] "Learning loss was also thought to be a problem for learners at Welsh-

medium school who spoke little or no Welsh at home, resulting in six weeks without speaking the language. A few education workforce participants explained that the long break impacted on these learners' language development and made it difficult for them to re-engage with the language" (Beaufort and Cazbah, 2022).

[15] MR report.

[16] MR report.

[17] Office for National Statistics (March 2022) **Families and households in the UK: 2021 [online]**. [Accessed 14 November 2022].

Office for National Statistics (July 2022) **Families and the labour market, UK: 2021 [online]**. [Accessed 14 November 2022].

Details: ONS (2022) reports that in 2021 71.9% of females were in employment compared to 52.7% in 1971 whereas 78.3% of males were employed in 2021 compared to 91.4% in 1971.

[18] Office for National Statistics (July 2022) **Families and the labour market, UK: 2021 [online]**. [Accessed 14 November 2022]. Details: ONS (2022) found that "from 2020, in families where both parents are employed, it has become more common for both parents to work full-time, rather than a man working full-time with a partner working part-time" (ONS, July 2022).

[19] TUC (2021) **Summer holiday childcare: no let up for working mums A TUC Gender Equality Briefing [Online]**. [Accessed 10 October 2022].

"Families on low incomes experience a range of challenges during holiday periods, including financial pressures and difficulties in sourcing childcare or holiday activities which are accessible, affordable and fit with parental employment and the needs of the family" (CPAG, 2015).

TUC (2021) reports that "nearly two thirds (63 per cent) of mums with primary

aged children do not have sufficient childcare for the summer holidays. This rises to three quarters (76 per cent) for single parents” (TUC, 2021).

“Where holiday childcare is unavailable or too expensive, parents are left with few options. Rather than looking forward to the long break, many parents dread the juggling act between family, friends and annual leave to make sure that their children are well looked after, and some struggle to stay in work” (Cottell, Descateaux and Coleman, 2019).

[20] The reasons for exploring the above proposals from the 2029 to 2030 school year are that the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) are responsible for the overall examination timetable across England and Wales and include a five-day break in May/June during the summer examination series. The expectation is that as the Made-for-Wales qualifications are rolled out, Wales could move away from JCQ alignment, allowing for the option of a moved or extended May break to be taken forward. Moving GCSE results day forward would require the overall GCSE timetable to move forward to facilitate earlier awarding. This is dependent on a move away from JCQ alignment.

[21] The current terms and conditions are set out in the **School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions (Wales) Order 2023** (S.I. 2023/443), which was made pursuant to s. 122 of the 2002 Act (concerning the power of the Secretary of State to prescribe pay and conditions of schoolteachers).

[22] The **Burgundy Book** is an agreement between the National Employers’ Organisation for School Teachers, teachers’ unions and the English and Welsh Local Government Associations. It is a ‘collective agreement’ under s. 178(1) of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

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