

Welsh Government integrated impact assessment: National Professional Learning Entitlement

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. There is 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 additional support for all practitioners to be able to do this.

The new curriculum will begin to be rolled out from September 2022, together with a consultation to provide an additional professional learning INSET day for schools or settings for each of the next three academic years. The new National Professional Learning Entitlement 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 that will have a positive impact on learners in the classroom.

This is a long-term proposal to support practitioners to successfully realise the Curriculum for Wales and also support ongoing professional learning beyond curriculum implementation.

Background

Building on positive feedback from the OECD which described Wales' commitment and focus on professional learning as "exceptional in comparison to many other OECD jurisdictions," in February 2022, the Minister for Education and Welsh Language reiterated a commitment to further enhance support education professionals in Wales.

The new National Professional Learning Entitlement has been developed to ensure all practitioners have access to quality professional learning to enable them to deliver high standards and aspirations for all. The Entitlement will support the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales and other national priorities including,

supporting learners with additional learning needs and embedding equity, well-being and the Welsh language across the whole-school community.

The National Professional Learning Entitlement aims to support:

- the realisation of our national education priorities
- equity of access to high quality professional learning for all education professionals
- clarity around the local, regional and national professional learning available to education practitioners
- access to a blend of professional learning experiences for education practitioners, including professional enquiry, collaboration, coaching and mentoring.

The National Professional Learning Entitlement sets out the support education professionals are entitled to along with ways practitioners can make best use of their Entitlement. The professional learning element of the Entitlement will make it easier for practitioners to access professional learning programmes and experiences. It will also ensure that practitioners are able to easily find professional learning that equips them to deliver our key national priorities.

Long-term

This proposal will support practitioners to successfully realise the Curriculum for Wales and also support ongoing professional learning beyond curriculum implementation in the longer term.

System leaders or advisors, including the education consortia, will support schools and settings to deliver the National Professional Learning Entitlement. This will include monitoring how schools and settings are progressing in terms of implementing the Entitlement as part of their wider school development plans. Building on an evidence-informed approach, schools and settings will also have a key role to play in capturing the impact of the Entitlement at a school or setting level.

To evaluate early impact consideration is being given to working with a range of schools and settings to track their progress in terms of the National Professional Learning Entitlement implementation. If schools and settings are agreeable, their professional learning journey will be captured as a series of video case studies. In the longer term a wider review of INSET scheduled in 2024 would assess the effectiveness of the delivery of professional learning and identifying long term requirements.

Since the launch of the National Approach to Professional Learning, considerable progress has been made to make a wide range of accredited, endorsed and recognised professional learning available to practitioners. This approach will be further reinforced through the Entitlement, through ongoing work to establish an approach to quality assure all national professional learning provision to ensure we have a consistent, validated, and reputable offer moving forward. In addition, the professional learning offer will be added to and actively curated to ensure that it evolves and responds to the future needs of practitioners.

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 pupils and all practitioners.

The new National Professional Learning Entitlement will contribute to the delivery of the following Programme for Government objectives:

- continuing our long-term programme of education reform, and ensuring educational inequalities narrow and standards rise
- supporting schools and teachers to deliver our world-leading Curriculum for Wales
- expanding the proportion of the education workforce who can teach and work through the Welsh language
- implementing the new Additional Learning Needs Act.

Integration

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

The National Professional Learning Entitlement will be key in supporting national priorities such as implementing the Curriculum for Wales and the additional learning needs system and embedding equity, well-being, the Welsh language across the whole-school community.

It is also an enabler of evolving education reforms, by providing a national Entitlement to support professional learning to ensure all educational practitioners are equipped to successfully realise the new curriculum from September 2022 and beyond.

The Entitlement also aligns with plans to further develop the existing education consortia professional learning offer to align more closely with the requirements of the new Entitlement.

Schools and settings will also be supported to align the requirements of the new Entitlement with wider school development plans in order to monitor and track progress in working towards the aspirations of the Entitlement.

Collaboration

Collaboration and co-construction have been integral to the development of the National Professional Learning Entitlement. The following middle-tier education partners have played a key role in defining the principles of the Entitlement:

- Education unions
- Education consortia professional learning leads
- National Academy for Educational Leadership Wales senior team and associates
- Education consortia induction leads
- Skills higher education and lifelong learning (WG)
- Professional learning and collaboration group
- Education consortia leadership group
- The Association of Directors of Education in Wales
- The Teaching Assistant Learning Pathway Group
- Education consortia Welsh language leads

Involvement

Construction work also involved teachers, teaching assistants, and leaders from schools and settings along with supply teacher agencies and governors in a series of co-construction meetings held between April and June 2022. The meetings have supported the development of national guidance for all schools in Wales in relation to the new Entitlement.

Welsh Government are also working with education consortia to ascertain how the regional professional learning offer aligns with the National Professional Learning Entitlement and how this will be articulated.

Impact

Developing a highly effective education profession through the provision of career long, high quality professional learning is pivotal to the realisation of our future vision for education in Wales. The launch of the Entitlement marks the next important step in our system-wide professional learning journey.

The main argument for the proposal is the opportunity it would bring for schools to focus on the education reforms, what it means for them and for all schools to embed professional learning and ensure the entire education workforce become informed practitioners.

The National Professional Learning Entitlement aims to support settings to develop a culture of mutual responsibility for professional learning. This should involve all practitioners actively pursuing professional learning and this should be supported by school leaders. The ways that this support should be demonstrated by school leaders is set out in the roles and responsibilities section of the Entitlement. We would expect that in instances where individuals feel they are not receiving their Professional Learning Entitlement, this would be managed through the usual performance management channels starting with an informal conversation with the line manager.

As schools and settings begin to implement the National Professional Learning Entitlement, we will continue to work with our education partners to ensure that our vision for professional learning is realised. This will include work with education

consortia to ensure that the professional learning offer is updated, accessible, coherent and easy to navigate. Discussions on how we ensure all professional learning is of high quality are ongoing.

Costs and Savings

There are no direct costs associated with the publication of the National Professional Learning Entitlement and the professional learning offer. Funding totalling over £38m has already been committed to support professional learning and practitioner development during 2022-23.

This funding is allocated to our middle-tier partners to resource the system to:

- develop common national professional learning programmes and resources that can be used at a regional or local level
- enable education consortia, local authorities, universities and the National Academy for Educational Leadership to support or deliver professional learning at a regional or local level
- enable schools to engage with professional learning through the professional learning grant and In Service Educational Training (INSET)

Mechanism

No additional legislation will be required to deliver this proposal.

Section 8. Conclusion

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

Collaboration and co-construction have been integral to the development of the National Professional Learning Entitlement. Officials engaged with the following middle-tier education partners to define the principles of the Entitlement.

- Education unions
- Education consortia professional learning leads
- National Academy for Educational Leadership Wales senior team and associates
- Education consortia induction leads
- Skills higher education and lifelong learning (WG)
- Professional learning and collaboration group
- Education consortia leadership group
- The Association of Directors of Education in Wales
- The Teaching Assistant Learning Pathway Group
- Education consortia Welsh language leads

Co-construction work also included teachers, teaching assistants, and leaders from schools and settings along with supply teacher agencies and governors.

This approach ensured that both partners and practitioners had an opportunity to influence the develop the common priorities aligned to the National Professional Learning Entitlement.

We will continue to work with the education consortia and local authorities after the launch to ensure that the professional learning offer is updated, accessible, coherent and easy to navigate.

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

Developing a high-quality education profession supported through professional learning is central to the realisation of our vision for education in Wales and is 1 of 4 enabling objectives in 'Education in Wales: Our national mission'.

The Entitlement will support the realisation of national priorities such as the implementation of Curriculum for Wales, supporting learners with additional learning needs and embedding equity, well-being and the Welsh language across the whole-school community.

The overarching aim of the National Professional Learning Entitlement is to promote the support education practitioners and education system leaders or advisors are entitled to and how they should engage with and reflect on it as individuals.

The Entitlement marks the beginning of the next phase in our system-wide professional learning journey. We want to further develop reflective, enquiring and collaborative education professionals and a culture of mutual responsibility in relation

to professional learning. The Entitlement articulates our vision for professional learning in Wales and provides guidance on roles and responsibilities across the system to support its implementation.

The Entitlement brings the existing professional learning offer together in one place to make it easier for education professionals to navigate and access local, regional, and national opportunities to support their continued development.

The Entitlement will support all education practitioners to meet the professional standards and provide equity of access to quality professional learning for all education professionals to deliver high standards and aspirations for all.

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; and/or,**
- **avoid, reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?**

The National Professional Learning Entitlement calls for a culture in schools and settings where professional learning for all is valued and planned for to benefit and meet the needs of all learners. This will support the realisation of national priorities such as the implementation of Curriculum for Wales, supporting learners with additional learning needs and embedding equity, well-being and the Welsh language across the whole-school community.

We will continue to work closely with our partners and stakeholders to avoid, reduce or mitigate any risks that develop as we move forward to implement the Entitlement.

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

As schools and settings begin to implement the National Professional Learning Entitlement, we will continue to work with our education partners to ensure that our vision for professional learning is realised.

To support the introduction and implementation of the National Professional Learning Entitlement and other national priorities, we are proposing the continuation of one additional INSET day per year for the next three academic years. The additional INSET day will be dedicated to professional learning for the Curriculum for Wales, supporting learners with additional learning needs and embedding equity, well-being and the Welsh language across the whole-school community. The proposed additional INSET day will also provide education professionals with time and space to consider their Professional Learning Entitlement and expectations and reflect on how their own development journey supports the realisation of our national education priorities and in turn, improve outcomes for learners.

To further support implementation, exemplification materials will be developed and made available on Hwb to further support practitioners as they begin to apply the National Professional Learning Entitlement in their own settings.