

# Strategic education workforce plan for schools



**March 2026**

## **Strategic education workforce plan for schools**

### **Audience**

School and settings-based teachers, leaders and support staff, as well as the specialist education workforce and those working in non-teaching pastoral roles employed by local authorities. Key partners include: local authorities, Estyn, Dysgu, education workforce unions, universities and initial teacher education partnerships, the National Centre for Learning Welsh, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, CYDAG, third sector organisations, the Education Workforce Council, Adnodd, Medr, Qualifications Wales, the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body and school governors.

### **Overview**

This strategic education workforce plan for schools sets out the actions the Welsh Government and partners will take to deliver on the commitments identified within five priority themes. The plan will help to support practitioners in their teaching, supporting teaching, leadership and specialist professional roles. Actions are set out in the short, medium and long-term and aim to address ongoing challenges and pressures in the education system. The actions respond to the need for a well-supported, high-quality and valued workforce in Wales that is equipped to enable all learners to achieve their potential.

### **Action required**

The roles and responsibilities of those involved in implementing the plan are included.

### **Further information**

Enquiries about this document should be directed to:

School Practitioner Division  
The Education Directorate  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

**e-mail:** [SchoolPractitionerDivision@gov.wales](mailto:SchoolPractitionerDivision@gov.wales)

### **Additional copies**

This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at:  
[www.gov.wales/education-and-skills-planning-and-strategy](http://www.gov.wales/education-and-skills-planning-and-strategy)

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## Ministerial foreword

I am pleased to be able to publish this strategic education workforce plan for schools outlining the actions that we will take with our partners to support our workforce. A strong, confident, and well-supported workforce is fundamental to raising standards across our schools and enabling every learner in Wales to thrive and reach their full potential. Our practitioners – teachers, leaders, teaching assistants, support staff and the specialist professionals who work alongside them – shape the life chances of our children and young people every single day. Their commitment, professionalism and compassion are central to our education system.

We are fortunate to have an exceptional workforce in our schools and settings. We value the wide range of roles they undertake and understand that they bring their own individual aspirations, interests and circumstances to their work. However, we must confront the persistent challenges that they face.

Teacher recruitment has become more challenging in recent years, particularly in key subject areas and in Welsh-medium settings, and too many teachers and leaders are leaving the profession prematurely. Support staff – who play a critical role in enabling inclusive, equitable learning – need clearer pathways, better recognition and improved terms and conditions. At the same time, demographic change, increasingly complex learner needs, communities' growing expectations of schools, and the ongoing impact of the important reforms we have made, require our workforce to be agile, well-supported and confident.

This plan sets out a clear and collective vision for how we will support, develop and strengthen the workforce in our schools and settings during the years ahead. It responds directly to what practitioners, education workforce unions, local authorities and partners have told us: that while our workforce is dedicated and resilient, the pressures they face are growing and increasingly complex. Addressing workload, meeting all learner needs, strengthening access to high-quality professional learning, providing clear and rewarding career pathways, and the need to build a diverse, bilingual and future-ready profession are all essential to building a thriving and sustainable profession. Above all, the wellbeing of our workforce is vital and forms the foundation of this plan.

While this plan focuses on schools and settings, its guiding principles and commitments can be broadly applied across the wider education sector. Further work to develop the actions required to support practitioners in post-compulsory education and training is also underway.

Delivering this plan will require sustained collaboration across the whole system. I am grateful to our partners – local authorities, education workforce unions, Estyn, the Education Workforce Council, Dysgu, universities and third sector organisations – whose insight and leadership have shaped this plan and will be vital in its implementation. But above all, the success of this plan will be how it enables practitioners to support learners in our schools and settings. Your voice, your professionalism and commitment to children and young people remain at the heart of everything we do.

By working together, we can build a workforce that is confident, valued and prepared for the future; a workforce equipped to support every learner to reach their potential; and a profession that is one of the most vibrant and respected in Wales.

**Lynne Neagle MS**  
**Cabinet Secretary for Education**

## Introduction

This strategic education workforce plan for schools sets out the actions we will take with our partners to support the continued development of our schools and settings-based teachers, leaders and support staff alongside specialist education and non-teaching pastoral staff employed by local authorities to support our learners (referred to as practitioners throughout the plan). We have also included actions to improve our understanding of the workforce that supports delivery of education other than at school (EOTAS).

For the purpose of this document, support staff include: teaching assistants; higher-level teaching assistants; staff who support learners with additional learning needs; non-teaching pastoral support staff; and business leaders. Local authority specialist education and non-teaching pastoral staff include: educational psychologists; speech and language specialist teachers; teachers of the deaf and visually impaired; specialist teachers to support literacy and numeracy, autism spectrum disorder, multi-sensory impairment, physical medical needs or emotional health and wellbeing; habilitation specialists; and inclusion or family liaison officers.

## Context

The plan has been developed in the context of our National Improvement Framework and our vision for a learner-centred, inclusive education system with collaboration and self-evaluation at the heart of system improvement. To underpin these new arrangements professional learning, leadership development and strategic workforce planning need to be effective. This will support with building a resilient, diverse and future-ready education workforce, equipped to deliver teaching and learning that meets the needs of all learners.

The plan has been informed by a broad evidence base, including the School Workforce Annual Census, Estyn reports, independent evaluations commissioned by Welsh Government, OECD reports and the findings of the Senedd's Children, Young People and Education Committee's report on teacher recruitment and retention.

Alongside this evidence base, stakeholder engagement with practitioners, education workforce unions, local authorities, Estyn, the Education Workforce Council and other key partners has identified consistent priorities for the school workforce. These priorities include: improving working conditions; addressing workload and wellbeing; strengthening career pathways; and enhancing support for teaching assistants and school leaders.

We recognise the ongoing impact of our education reforms on the workforce, the need for better workforce succession planning and the importance of increasing the number of Welsh-speaking teachers. Flexible working, improved conditions for our teaching assistants, more sustainable arrangements for covering teacher absence and clearer roles and responsibilities across the workforce were also recurring themes.

Data from the School Workforce Annual Census and other sources collected during the 2024 to 2025 academic year provide the following evidence.

- There were 25,225 teachers and headteachers working in our schools alongside a further 26,765 support staff who undertake a range of roles including teaching assistants and pastoral staff (excludes exam invigilators and midday supervisors).
- Teacher numbers have declined by 2.4% since November 2023, with a 7.4% drop in primary and 5.3% drop in secondary teachers since the academic year 2020 to 2021. In contrast, special schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) have seen increases of 16.8% and 19.6% respectively. This is in line with patterns seen in the declining number of learners in primary and secondary schools and an increase of learners in special schools and EOTAS settings.
- Leadership roles are predominantly held by older staff, raising succession concerns.
- Support staff numbers have also declined in some roles such as librarians (by 27.3%) and ICT staff (by 16.7%).
- Diversity remains limited, with only 1.3% of teachers and 3.6% of support staff from Black, Asian, Mixed or other ethnic backgrounds, compared to 15% of learners.

- Welsh language capacity is a concern with only 39.0% of teachers who report intermediate Welsh skills or higher, and just 24.7% who currently teach Welsh or through the medium of Welsh.
- Recruitment and retention challenges persist, particularly in Welsh-medium and science subjects and among underrepresented groups. While some secondary subjects meet intake targets, others (such as chemistry, physics, Welsh and modern foreign languages) fall significantly short.
- On average, 10.0 applications were received per post advertised in the academic year 2023 to 2024, an increase from 7.8 from the academic year 2022 to 2023 and the highest since 2020 to 2021. The average was lower for Welsh-medium posts (5.1) compared to English-medium posts (11.5). The average was also lower for secondary school posts (5.2) compared to primary school posts (15.2).
- At the end of the 2023 to 2024 academic year, 1,926 of a total of 2,172 posts advertised were filled (88.7%).
- The proportion of teachers who have left the profession (including retirement) has increased significantly since 2020. Between academic years 2020 to 2021 and 2023 to 2024, the number rose by 39.7%, with a 54.6% increase among primary teachers.
- Of the 1,465 teachers that left the profession in 2023 to 2024, 455 (31.0%) retired (at normal or early retirement age).

Unofficial data collected by the National Association of Principal Educational Psychologists in Wales in 2021 showed that there were 136 full-time equivalent (FTE) educational psychologists employed by local authorities in Wales. However, official data on the specialist workforce is not currently available.

Projected demographic changes could have significant implications for school planning and workforce need. Data sources show that between 2025 and 2041:

- the number of compulsory FTE learners in Wales is projected to decline by 14.5%
- maintained primary school learner numbers are expected to fall by 11.8%, with most of the decrease occurring between 2025 and 2035. After 2035, numbers are projected to stabilise, suggesting reduced demand for primary teachers in the short to medium term
- maintained secondary schools (under school leaving age) are projected to see an 18.2% decrease in learner numbers, covering the core secondary phase (Years 7 to 11), which suggests a likely reduction in demand for secondary teachers
- maintained special schools (all ages) are projected to see a decline in learner numbers from roughly 6,300 to 5,300 (a 15.4% decrease) over the same period

These headline figures do not capture expected compositional changes in the learner population, such as shifts in the proportion of learners with ALN, changes in ethnic diversity, geographical distribution, or the planned increase in the proportion in Welsh-medium education. Nor do they capture likely changes in socio-emotional support needs, or the existing challenges schools are seeing around mental health

and wellbeing, neurodiversity, behaviour and learners not meeting early development milestones. Such changes will affect the type and level of demand for teaching and support staff across Wales. When planning for future demand, it will be important to account for both overall learner numbers and compositional changes, including the potential for increased demand for specialist and non-teaching pastoral staff (for example ALN support or behavioural specialists) and for the potential that the number of learners in EOTAS, or the number of learners electing to be educated at home, could increase.

## Guiding principles

To realise our vision for a learner-centred, inclusive education system that enables all learners to reach their potential, we must have a high-quality, supported, respected and professional workforce. The principles this plan is built upon are intended to foster a shared recognition of the important role our education workforce plays in enabling our learners to achieve their potential.

- Our practitioners are empowered professionals, with a clear professional identity, who are committed to high standards and career-long professional learning and working with agency, integrity and in collaboration with others.
- The wellbeing of our practitioners is vital.
- The professional status, national and community pride in, and respect for, our education workforce is strengthened, sustained and celebrated.
- Our practitioners understand the central importance of the Welsh language and culture and are drawn from all the diverse communities they serve, including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.
- Our practitioners have access to, and the ability to progress along, clear career pathways within an aspirational, inclusive and self-reflective community of practice.
- The profession in Wales is fit for the future – forward-looking, confident with digital technology and open to change and challenge.

## Roles and responsibilities

The successful delivery of this plan will require close collaboration across all partners. These include:

- Welsh Government, including the Education, Cymraeg 2050, Tertiary Education and Health Directorates
- local authorities
- schools and settings
- Estyn
- Dysgu
- education workforce unions
- universities, including initial teacher education (ITE) partnerships and learned societies
- the National Centre for Learning Welsh (the Athrofa, National Institute for Learning Welsh, once established in 2027), Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and CYDAG
- third sector organisations who support learners and practitioners
- the Education Workforce Council (EWC)
- Adnodd
- Medr
- Qualifications Wales
- Independent Welsh Pay Review Body (IWPRB)
- school governors

We have identified lead organisations for each action set out in the plan and have also identified the broader responsibilities of key organisations who will support the delivery of each key theme.

We expect all partners to work collaboratively and constructively to implement this plan to avoid duplication of effort and to ensure effective use of resources. Welsh Government will provide the overall leadership for the plan and will establish arrangements to monitor and evaluate the impact of the actions.

## Our commitments

Our commitments are set out under five key themes.

- Ensuring quality of teaching and learning.
- Addressing workload issues.
- Responding to new challenges for the school workforce and ensuring access to support through a specialist and pastoral workforce.
- Ensuring that teaching, supporting teaching and educational leadership are attractive career pathways.
- Ensuring effective and timely use of data and evidence to inform workforce planning.

The wellbeing of staff is addressed under each theme and will be at the heart of our implementation of the plan.

Under each theme we have outlined the actions we will take with our partners over the short, medium and long term. For the purpose of this plan, actions will be delivered against the following timelines.

- Short-term = developed and delivery commenced within 1 to 2 years
- Medium-term = developed and delivery commenced within 3 to 5 years
- Long-term = developed and delivery commenced from year 5 onwards

## 1. Ensuring quality of teaching and learning

Consistent and career-long access to the highest quality professional learning, which is continually quality assured, is critical to supporting the development and professionalism of the practitioners working in our schools in Wales. A supported and valued workforce is vital to a school or setting and to its learners.

Our ambition is that all teaching assistants, teachers and leaders will be supported to engage with nationally available, coherent and high-quality support to sustainably improve outcomes for all learners. Working directly with practitioners, Dysgu will have a key role in supporting this ambition alongside our local authorities and universities. In addition, Estyn will continue to inspect the quality of teaching and learning to reflect the changes and priorities delivered following implementation of the plan.

### Short-term actions

Action	Lead organisation(s)
1.1. Create improved conditions for practitioners to engage with genuine and relevant professional learning by making the additional INSET day, provided since 2019, a permanent entitlement for schools to embed into the school year to enhance teaching quality, staff wellbeing, and ultimately learner outcomes.	Welsh Government
1.2. Empower and increase agency of practitioners to collaborate with each other by promoting and creating regular, reflective professional dialogue opportunities across all layers of the system, in line with our new school improvement arrangements.	Welsh Government and local authorities
1.3. Develop a coherent programme of evidence-informed professional learning for teachers, based on evidence of need, to continually develop their practice and improve the quality of teaching at different stages of their careers and within different school contexts. Professional learning to continually develop practitioners' understanding of effective pedagogy and the use of research and enquiry and to support literacy and language development, numeracy and inclusive practice will be central to this provision.	Dysgu
1.4. Develop and deliver a structured Early Career Pathway to support teachers during their ITE and their first 3 to 4 years of teaching, including quality mentoring. The pathway will be aligned to the Professional Standards.	Welsh Government, universities and Dysgu

<p>1.5. Review and refine the professional learning pathway for teaching assistants, to provide opportunities for them to develop expertise in supporting learners with a range of needs and in key priority areas, and work with local authorities to ensure that they are fully supported to engage with the pathway.</p>	<p>Dysgu and local authorities</p>
<p>1.6. Review and refine the professional learning pathway for school leaders, including the National Professional Qualification for Headship and provision for headteachers in post, ensuring that they are supported by a skilled and experienced mentor or coach and that there are opportunities for them to develop expertise in a range of areas, including effective self-evaluation and improvement planning.</p>	<p>Dysgu and local authorities</p>
<p>1.7. Continue to deliver and increase participation in a comprehensive programme of courses to enable all school practitioners to develop their Welsh language skills to support the delivery of the Welsh Language and Education Act (Wales) 2025.</p>	<p>Y Ganolfan Dysgu Cymraeg Genedlaethol (and Athrofa once established)</p>
<p>1.8. Develop a national professional learning programme to develop effective teaching and learning of Welsh and subjects through the medium of Welsh.</p>	<p>Dysgu and local authorities</p>
<p>1.9. Develop opportunities for secondary teachers to enhance their subject knowledge to enable them to confidently teach across a broader range of subject areas.</p>	<p>Dysgu and universities (academic departments and ITE departments)</p>
<p>1.10. Promote the role of E-sgol in delivering hybrid learning solutions to ensure that learners can access a broad curriculum and to support schools who may face challenges in the recruitment of subject specialists.</p>	<p>E-sgol</p>
<p>1.11. Review the National Strategy for Education Research and Enquiry and work with our universities and the Education Improvement Team to develop a clear and ongoing programme of education research and evidence to inform policy and classroom practice.</p>	<p>Welsh Government and universities</p>

1.12. Review the ITE Accreditation Criteria and work with ITE Partnerships, Estyn and the ITE Accreditation Board to ensure a consistent approach to the development of student teachers' competence in understanding child development, relational practice, mental health, neurodiversity, literacy, numeracy, the development of their Welsh language skills and other key priorities.	Welsh Government
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### Medium-term actions

Action	Lead organisation(s)
1.13. Consult on whether the professional standards for assisting teaching and professional development review (performance management) arrangements should be placed on a statutory footing for teaching assistants to bring them in line with the arrangements for teachers and leaders to ensure that they have equitable access to professional and reflective dialogue.	Welsh Government
1.14. Establish a national professional learning programme to develop a pool of qualified coaches and mentors that practitioners can access at all stages of their careers to support their individual needs and to refine and extend their skills and knowledge.	Dysgu and local authorities
1.15. Develop a system understanding of the professional learning priorities for the workforce in the medium to longer-term, based on intelligence gathered from practitioners and through our school improvement partnership arrangements to inform future provision.	Welsh Government, Estyn and Dysgu
1.16. Develop a system understanding of how to measure the impact of professional learning to inform improvements to self-evaluation arrangements and to inform the future professional learning offer.	Welsh Government, Estyn and Dysgu
1.17. Building on the existing <a href="#">Cynllun Pontio</a> , review the opportunities for primary teachers to develop their practice and subject specialism to teach in secondary schools.	Welsh Government and universities
1.18. Develop a clear offer of professional learning for supply teachers that can be accessed flexibly.	Dysgu

### Long-term actions

Action	Lead organisation(s)
1.19. Explore options for strengthening the regulatory basis for practitioner engagement with professional learning. This will require scoping a range of options, for example protected time for professional learning or a further review of the use and effectiveness of INSET days.	Welsh Government

### How these actions will be delivered

Welsh Government will:

- align and streamline our current models and tools to provide policy clarity on our actions to support improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and to support improvements in self-evaluation
- work with our partners to ensure that nationally funded professional learning is having a sustainable and positive impact on learner outcomes and that funding is directed to schools transparently to support school-to-school collaboration and local professional learning

Local authorities will:

- create the conditions for senior leaders to have the consistent support to undertake their roles
- provide clarity on the mandatory professional learning that practitioners are required to undertake and work collaboratively to ensure consistency across Wales
- create the conditions for practitioners to collaborate to improve outcomes as part of the new school improvement arrangements

Dysgu, our ITE partnerships and other delivery partners will:

- ensure alignment across ITE and career-long professional learning to reduce duplication, ensure sharing of resource and practice and to provide clarity of offer to practitioners

Headteachers will:

- develop a culture of continuous learning within their schools, in line with the Schools as Learning Organisations model, and create the conditions for senior leaders, teachers and teaching assistants to engage with professional learning and to collaborate with other practitioners to reflect on and support their individual development and the development of the school
- support the development of future teachers by actively providing high-quality student teacher placements

## 2. Addressing workload issues

In order to support the wellbeing of our school workforce, we must continue to take action to reduce workload pressures by creating more time for essential professional activities and supporting the effective use of digital technology. This will include refocusing effort on agreed priorities through our school improvement arrangements, exploring options to enable teachers and staff to dedicate more time to planning, professional learning and collaboration, and harnessing digital technologies to drive efficiency and support innovative practices. Together, these actions aim to improve wellbeing, effectiveness and sustainability across the education workforce.

### Short term-actions

Action	Lead organisation(s)
2.1. Use the workload impact assessment as a routine requirement for all policy areas which affect schools before introducing any policy changes to minimise the impact on schools and broaden its use across Welsh Government, local government and other key partners.	Welsh Government, local authorities, Estyn and key partners
2.2. Ensure that all partners embrace the principles for professional engagement guidance to develop and support a positive culture of engagement and collaboration within the sector.	Welsh Government
2.3. Provide clarity on the key Welsh Government priorities on an ongoing basis through the National Improvement Framework to simplify and streamline reporting and monitoring and reduce unnecessary teacher workload.	Welsh Government
2.4. Undertake research on international models to provide non-contact time for teachers and leaders to undertake planning, preparation and assessment, to collaborate and to engage with professional learning, and cost options to increase non-contact time and any staffing implications this could have for schools.	Welsh Government
2.5. Ensure that there is a comprehensive offer of wellbeing support, including professional supervision, available for all leaders, teachers and support staff through employer-led programmes.	Local authorities
2.6. Make changes to the School teachers' pay and conditions (Wales) document STPC(W)D based on the recommendations of the IWPRB to secure protected time for our school leaders.	Welsh Government

2.7.	Following conclusion of the pilot to support school business leaders, consider potential options for expansion to ensure that they are supported to develop in their roles leading to reducing workload for senior leaders.	Welsh Government
2.8.	Building on the <a href="#">Generative artificial intelligence in education</a> guidance, develop structured professional learning and practical support for teaching assistants, teachers and leaders in the effective and appropriate use of digital technology, to support teaching and learning and to reduce workload.	Welsh Government and Dysgu
2.9.	Promote the role of Adnodd and the resources available to support teaching and learning in order to reduce workload and support practitioners.	Adnodd
2.10.	Work with schools and local authorities to explore areas of effective practice in undertaking the additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) role and to explore how utilising digital platforms could improve efficiency and transparency of individual development plans (IDPs). Provide professional learning and support in leadership and management skills to ease administrative burden on ALNCoS.	Welsh Government and local authorities
2.11.	Work with local authorities to implement new school funding regulations, providing more consistency, comparability and transparency.	Welsh Government and local authorities

### Medium-term actions

Action	Lead organisation(s)
2.12. In light of projected demographic changes, an increase in Welsh language education and the increased diversity and complexity of learner needs, consider how the school funding model could be further reviewed to take into account the need to ensure transparency and sufficiency of funding to adequately fund the staffing of schools to deliver the breadth of Curriculum for Wales, to support inclusive education and to reduce class sizes.	Welsh Government and local authorities
2.13. Work with local authorities to scope options for reducing the burden of managing school estates on school leaders to address workload and wellbeing concerns.	Welsh Government and local authorities

2.14. Keep under review the reporting requirements in relation to Welsh Government grants and other accountability measures on a national and local level.	Welsh Government and Estyn
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### **How these actions will be delivered**

Welsh Government will:

- work across Government to improve the integration of education, health and social services to better understand and respond to learner needs
- work with our partners to ensure that the impact of all Welsh Government policy developments and legislation on practitioner workload is fully considered and costed in partnership with the profession and that positive actions are taken to address any anticipated impact

Local authorities will:

- work collaboratively to create the conditions to reduce workload for school leaders through clear and transparent funding and reporting requirements

Education workforce unions will:

- inform the development of policy and procedures that support reduction in workload for practitioners through continued social partnership

Headteachers will:

- develop a culture of collaboration within their schools and create the conditions for practitioners to engage with AI and digital technology to support learning and a reduction in workload, while recognising that teaching is fundamentally a relational activity

### 3. Responding to new challenges for the school workforce and ensuring access to support through a specialist and pastoral workforce

We recognise the pressures across the education profession in Wales and are working with partners to better understand the increasing reality of practitioners taking on additional tasks and activities, previously considered the role of families, health practitioners or partner agencies. We further acknowledge this is often done without the resources to support them alongside effectively discharging 'day to day' teaching duties.

Our vision for community focused schools is to make every school in Wales a hub that works in partnership with families, communities, and other services to support learners and strengthen local communities. Alongside our whole-school approach to mental health and well-being our aim is to ensure that every learner and staff member feels safe, valued and able to thrive.

Moving forward, strengthening our coordinated, multi-agency approach is essential for supporting the school workforce to respond to wider societal changes, to support learners with healthcare needs and to address a wide range of other learner needs, including our most vulnerable learners, those with protected characteristics and those from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds. We also need to ensure the effective development and deployment of non-teaching pastoral staff to address challenges such as learner behaviour, attendance and wellbeing, alongside other specialist staff who support our learners with healthcare or additional learning needs.

#### Short-term actions

Action	Lead organisation(s)
3.1. Develop a full understanding of the increasing ask on schools and practitioners to undertake tasks previously carried out by other social partners as a basis for reestablishing multi-agency collaboration between education, health and social services to plan and secure suitable specialist services to support learners.	Welsh Government
3.2. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of teaching assistants in supporting learners with healthcare needs and ensure that adequate professional learning and support is available to enable the delivery of safe and effective support.	Welsh Government
3.3. Develop guidance and effective practice for leaders and governors on how to champion the role of teaching assistants and their effective deployment in various school settings and across clusters to maximise use of funding and support for learners.	Welsh Government and local authorities

3.4.	Actively promote the statutory role of the ALNCo and clearly communicate its strategic importance to learners, parents and schools.	Welsh Government and local authorities
3.5.	Undertake a review of the availability and requirement for specialist education workforce qualifications, particularly for teachers of visually impaired and deaf learners, educational psychologists and speech and language specialist teachers to inform future delivery arrangements.	Welsh Government
3.6.	Support practitioners to further develop their understanding and practice in a range of equity related areas, including creating equitable and inclusive learning environments, addressing learner behaviour and embedding anti-racist principles.	Dysgu
3.7.	Invest in and support non-teaching pastoral roles including but not limited to Family Engagement Officers and the work of Community Focused Schools Managers, including access to professional learning and career development, with the aim of supporting learners, families and the wider teaching workforce.	Welsh Government and local authorities
3.8.	Work with local authorities and the education unions to develop clear protocols around positive and constructive parent or guardian school interactions, setting out expectations. As part of this clarify complaint and escalation arrangements.	Welsh Government
3.9.	Raise practitioner awareness of the wider support services for families that schools can access and signpost to.	Welsh Government and local authorities
3.10.	During 2026 to 2027, advance from implementation of the whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing to support school leaders and practitioners to embed activities to ensure it's part of every school's ethos.	Welsh Government, local authorities and schools
3.11.	Work with local authorities to develop an understanding of the professional learning needs of the workforce that supports the delivery of EOTAS, to support greater consistency in approach across a range of different delivery models and contexts.	Welsh Government and local authorities

## Medium-term actions

Action	Lead organisation(s)
3.12. Review the professional learning available to local authority pastoral staff to support their day-to-day practice and to continually develop their understanding of related Welsh Government policy and legislation.	Welsh Government and local authorities

## Long-term actions

Action	Lead organisation(s)
3.13. Undertake a review of the current roles within the school workforce to determine whether there are missing roles and functions in the constitution of the school workforce and the extent to which the need for, and nature of, any additional roles are understood.	Welsh Government

## How these actions will be delivered

Welsh Government will:

- ensure cross-government understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all in the delivery of support services for learners
- work with our partners to ensure that the funding allocated to local authorities to provide a range of additional support services for learners enables a sustainable workforce

Local authorities will:

- work collaboratively to ensure the sufficiency of the specialist education and non-teaching pastoral staff to support the school workforce to respond to wider societal changes and address learner needs in both English and Welsh

Education workforce unions will:

- advocate both for the education workforce and the school-based pastoral workforce, particularly around clarity in role definitions and effective deployment

Headteachers will:

- build on their deep understanding of the communities that they serve and the needs of their learners in order to deploy resources effectively and equitably
- further embed the ALN reforms as part of whole-school leadership to ensure that inclusive practice and supporting learners with ALN remains a shared responsibility for all staff

## 4. Ensuring that teaching, supporting teaching and educational leadership are attractive career pathways

We have truly inspiring teachers, leaders and support staff in Wales, who are invested in the profession and want to achieve the best outcomes for their learners.

We need to create the conditions for a highly attractive and respected education profession, supporting the recruitment, retention and development of our workforce.

### Short-term actions

Action	Lead organisation(s)
4.1. Further refine our communications campaign to celebrate the vital role of schools and practitioners, highlight the professionalism of the workforce and emphasise the important contribution of parents and carers in supporting learning.	Welsh Government and all partners
4.2. Review and refresh the Educators Wales website and Teaching Wales campaign to promote and provide accessible information about a career in teaching to all prospective teachers. Promoting workforce diversity, priority subject areas and teaching through the medium of Welsh will be at the forefront of activity to ensure that our teaching profession more closely reflects the communities that schools serve.	Welsh Government and EWC
4.3. Further develop careers advice and advocacy support for prospective teachers, particularly in priority subject areas. Working with schools, universities and professional organisations to develop the next generation of teachers should be a key priority.	Welsh Government and EWC
4.4. Pursue the priorities identified by our social partners for taking forward key recommendations made by the IWPRB in their strategic review of teachers and leaders' terms and conditions and the recommendations in relation to ALNCOs and supply teachers.	Welsh Government, local authorities and workforce unions
4.5. Build on existing effective practice in providing flexible working models that support practitioner wellbeing, which do not impact negatively on learners.	Welsh Government and local authorities

<p>4.6. Develop structured career pathways for teaching assistants aligned to the professional standards and a range of qualifications and professional learning that enables them to develop their expertise in specific roles or progress to become teachers.</p>	<p>Welsh Government, Dysgu and Qualifications Wales</p>
<p>4.7. Develop legislative proposals for a School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB) for Wales to improve pay and terms and conditions for our teaching assistants.</p>	<p>Welsh Government, local authorities and workforce unions</p>
<p>4.8. Whilst scoping and development of the SSSNB is taken forward, work with local authorities to move teaching assistants currently employed in Level 1 roles to Level 2, to reflect the changing nature of the role.</p>	<p>Local authorities</p>
<p>4.9. Develop structured career pathways for teachers and leaders that clarify the opportunities for them to progress to middle or senior leadership roles within a school, or specialist, advisory or policy roles within the education sector.</p>	<p>Welsh Government and local authorities</p>
<p>4.10. Review the Welsh in education workforce plan and work with key partners to refine the actions to be taken to ensure that there is a sufficient workforce to deliver against the targets that will be set on local authorities through the National Framework on Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh, required under the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act.</p>	<p>Welsh Government and key partners</p>
<p>4.11. Review the effectiveness and value for money of our ITE incentives and the Welsh in education retention bursary pilot. Develop proposals for future recruitment and retention support based on these findings, an understanding of the recruitment and retention challenges in rural and disadvantaged areas and the financial barriers to entry and completion of ITE.</p>	<p>Welsh Government</p>
<p>4.12. Pilot subject knowledge enhancement programmes in priority subject areas to enable undergraduates and graduates to develop subject expertise and progress to undertake secondary ITE programmes.</p>	<p>ITE partnerships</p>

4.13. Identify and promote the most effective and sustainable models for covering teacher absence ensuring the best value for money and continuity of learning for our learners to inform revised effective management of school workforce attendance guidance. This will include consideration of the appropriate deployment of supernumerary teachers and cover supervisors.	Welsh Government, local authorities and workforce unions
4.14. Develop the new framework for supply agencies with a focus on improving value for money for schools.	Welsh Government

### Medium-term actions

Action	Lead organisation(s)
4.15. Work with our social partners to review the role and remit of the IWPRB in respect of pay and conditions for teachers and leaders.	Welsh Government, local authorities and workforce unions
4.16. Formalise and standardise the role of an Executive Headteacher within a career pathway for school leaders.	Local authorities
4.17. Undertake a feasibility study on alternative routes into teaching that will strengthen the ITE system, including post-16 vocational pathways, degree apprenticeships and undergraduate secondary pathways.	Welsh Government
4.18. Work with Qualifications Wales and Care Inspectorate Wales to develop an understanding of existing common entry requirements into supporting teaching, childcare and early years and play roles. Where possible, develop common features for the various sector qualifications to enable a range of career opportunities.	Welsh Government
4.19. Based on the forthcoming evaluation of ITE policy and the proposed feasibility study on alternative routes into teaching (outlined above), review the structure of ITE to ensure that provision is viable and accessible across Wales.	Welsh Government

### How these actions will be delivered

Welsh Government will:

- create the conditions and mechanisms for teachers, leaders and teaching assistants to work in an attractive and valued profession that has a strong and positive professional identity and an appropriate work life balance

Local authorities will:

- work collaboratively to consistently implement policies that support the recruitment and retention of practitioners, including working with schools and ITE partnerships to support the next generation of teachers

Education workforce unions will:

- inform the development of policy and procedures that support the recruitment and retention of practitioners through continued social partnership

EWC will:

- continue to review and refine their work in promoting teaching as a career in line with their statutory functions

## 5. Ensuring effective and timely use of data and evidence to inform workforce planning

Effective workforce planning in the education sector is essential for ensuring that schools and settings have the right people, with the right skills, in the right roles, at the right time.

We need to refine our approach to data collection and intelligence about the workforce in order to support workforce planning in a more comprehensive and agile way.

### Short-term actions

Action	Lead organisation(s)
5.1. Explore the feasibility of joining the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) to gather the voice of practitioners about working conditions and learning environments to inform policy. Participation would enable comparison with over 60 education systems across the world.	Welsh Government
5.2. Undertake succession planning for headteachers in Wales to inform the allocation of places on the National Professional Qualification for Headship and leadership pathway, taking into account the availability of those who already hold the qualification but are not yet headteachers or not applying for the roles.	Local authorities
5.3. Develop local or cross-authority workforce planning models for the specialist workforce employed by local authorities to support learners, taking into account trends in the number of learners with additional needs in order to inform future support for these roles, particularly for the Welsh-medium sector. They include, but are not limited to, educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, behaviour therapists and teachers of the deaf or visually impaired.	Welsh Government and local authorities
5.4. Develop local or cross-authority workforce planning models for teachers taking into account changes in demographics, the planned increase in Welsh-medium education and other local factors in order to inform national workforce planning.	Welsh Government and local authorities

5.5.	Make recommendations for the future role of governing bodies in the recruitment of teachers, leaders and teaching assistants with a view to improving opportunities for local authorities to better support redeployment or employment across schools, particularly in light of changing demographics.	Welsh Government (through the review of governing bodies)
5.6.	Review and refine the statutory School Workforce Annual Census to ensure that national consistent data sets provide the key information that we need to inform effective workforce planning and policy development. Examples of current data gaps include reasons why practitioners leave the profession, and the number of redundancies made each year.	Welsh Government

### Medium-term actions

Action	Lead organisation(s)	
5.7.	Subject to the recommendations of the review of governing bodies above, action legislative or guidance changes to the role of governing bodies in the recruitment of teachers, leaders and teaching assistants.	Welsh Government and local authorities
5.8.	Work with local authorities and EWC to develop a comprehensive and reliable data set for understanding trends in the employment of supply staff in schools.	Welsh Government, local authorities and EWC
5.9.	Work with local authorities to develop an understanding of the workforce that supports the delivery of EOTAS.	Welsh Government and local authorities

### How these actions will be delivered

Welsh Government will:

- work closely with local authorities and EWC to ensure coherent data sets that enable effective workforce planning
- rationalise the need for schools to provide data

Local authorities will:

- work collaboratively to develop coherent data collection on the specialist workforce and other key workforce trends

EWC will:

- provide information to the Welsh Ministers on the school workforce in line with their statutory function