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Welsh Government
Consultation – summary of response

Draft professional standards for assisting teaching

Date of issue: 23 May 2019

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Draft professional standards for assisting teaching

Audience Education bodies involved or interested in those assisting teaching in Wales, including, schools, local authorities, regional education consortia, teaching unions, practitioners and public bodies.

Overview This document provides a summary of the responses received to the consultation on proposals to introduce professional standards for those assisting teaching (teaching assistants (TAs) and higher level (HLTAs)).

No action – for information only.

Action required
Further information

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Additional copies This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at <https://gov.wales/draft-professional-standards-assisting-teaching>

Related documents Information on the professional standards for teaching and leadership can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at <https://learning.gov.wales/resources/collections/professional-standards?lang=en#collection-2>

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1. Introduction

The consultation proposed to introduce a set of professional standards for all teaching assistants (TAs) and higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs) who work with learners in the classroom.

The consultation sought views on how professional standards could be used to build professional development as part of the school's performance review cycle to enable those assisting teaching to reflect on and develop their practice, identify areas for development and support their professional progression. The consultation was launched on 29 November 2018; it closed on 14 March 2019 after a fifteen week formal public consultation period.

The consultation document is published on the Welsh Government website and details were circulated to stakeholders with an interest in the proposed draft professional standards for assisting teaching.

All responses were returned using either the online response form or the downloadable response form. All responses have been considered; please see a summary of stakeholder responses below. All quotations from responses are in the original language unless specified otherwise.

2. Overview of responses

A total of 67 responses were received from various stakeholders during the 15 week consultation period. The table below shows a breakdown of respondents by type of organisation

Type of Respondent	Number of Responses	%
Consortia/local authority	5	7.5
National/professional bodies	5	7.5
Practitioners/schools	33	49.3
Workforce Unions	3	4.5
Other (no information given)	21	31.3
TOTAL	67	100

A full list of respondents is provided in Annex 1.

There was a clear majority of positive responses to every question, with respondents focusing on the benefits that the introduction of professional standards for TAs and HLTAs were felt to bring. These included recognising the professional status and value of TAs and HLTAs, clarifying their role, providing a shared focus for those who assist teaching (together with teachers and those in formal leadership) on the same five standards: pedagogy, collaboration, professional learning, leadership and innovation.

Negative responses focused broadly on the scope, accessibility and complexity of the standards. Others suggested that the two levels of descriptors should be replaced with four levels of descriptors to match the four levels within the assisting teaching community. Concerns were expressed in relation to the time, training and funding that would be required to implement the standards. There was also concern that the introduction of professional

standards for this sector of the school workforce may lead to expectations that TAs and HLTAs should perform beyond their current roles and levels of remuneration. Some suggested that this already happens, when TAs gain HLTA status, carry out an HLTA role but are not rewarded accordingly if there is not an HLTA role available.

All of those responses deemed ‘negative’ related to decisions made by the practitioner working groups that had devised the professional standards for assisting teaching. The issue of making standards reflect the levels of TAs had been debated at length. The standards sit alongside a job description and the school’s policies, which bring specificity to the job. The standards are intended as a touchstone for conversation about the individual’s contribution and the ways in which they can be helped towards continuing development. They are not level-specific. Similarly, the professional standards for leadership, which work across the many stages of the leadership development continuum, contain descriptors at just two levels, ‘effective formal leadership’ and ‘sustained highly-effective formal leadership’.

The issue of TAs or HLTAs possibly being asked to work beyond their ‘grade’ or salary is addressed by the same point. The standards sit alongside documentation that describes the detail of the job. Concerns over the potential for unrealistic demands upon TAs are more likely to be addressed by the standards and descriptors creating a consistent set of expectations. This point was made strongly in trials in schools.

The matter of complexity and scope of descriptors is again one that has been rehearsed previously and decisions made. It was a decision of the working groups developing the materials that complexity was a benefit, again born out in trials. There was dismay that it should be thought that TAs and HLTAs should not work to complex descriptors but instead could only manage simple ones. The professional standards support materials and the accompanying frequently asked questions document point out that it is not the intention for all of the descriptors to be the focus of any one review. The standards will be most effective when they are used as a means of enabling rather than proving performance. The trials demonstrated that a process of ‘getting used to using the standards’ was more important than ‘training’: conversations about development should be a natural part of work and the standards facilitate that process. All trials evidenced the benefit of complexity in descriptors.

3. Consultation questions and analysis of responses

Question 1

Do you agree that the values and dispositions, the five standards and their elements offer an appropriate shared purpose for those assisting teaching?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Agree	81.54%	53
2	Disagree	7.69%	5
3	Neither agree nor disagree	10.77%	7
		Total responses	65

Overview

The majority of respondents agreed that the standards model offered an appropriate shared purpose for TAs and HLTAs, noting that they were aligned with standards for teachers and leaders and that they would support their professional development. Comments from those who disagreed included the concerns around the scope of the standards; the complexity of language; the presentational format and the time and resources required for training and implementation of the standards.

Specific comments included:

Schools and practitioners

Throughout consultation with all Teaching Assistants at this establishment, the majority agreed that the values, dispositions, standards and their elements were all appropriate in nature.

Workforce unions

Whilst recognising that having professional standards for TAs is a good idea in principle, many of our members are concerned that the level of standards described in the draft goes too far too quickly and is of too high a standard to achieve for many TAs.

National and professional bodies

The description of the overarching values and dispositions associated with their role is useful in emphasising the importance of their work in supporting the progress and achievement of pupils.

Other

It is important that TAs see that they are valued just as much as the teaching staff.

Welsh Government Response

The values and dispositions, the five standards and their elements will remain largely as drafted and will be subject to review with practitioners and other stakeholders in due course, to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

Rather than seeing the standards as setting expectations beyond an individual's role, feedback from the schools which trialled the standards indicated that they recognised that the standards are not necessarily about 'doing more' but about 'doing things differently'. Where the standards/descriptors do refer to wider issues, the teaching and leadership standards place an expectation for the formal leader to create the conditions that allow support staff to meet their requirements.

The Welsh Government's National Approach to Professional Learning (NAPL), which has been developed in partnership with stakeholders, including the regional consortia, is clearly aligned with the professional standards and is available for all TAs and HLTAs, as well as teachers and leaders.

Question 2

Do you agree that the descriptors of effective practice (as well as the sustained highly-effective practice attached to each element) capture teaching assistants' (TAs) and higher-level teaching assistants' (HLTAs) roles?		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Agree	71.43%	45
2	Disagree	9.52%	6
3	Neither agree nor disagree	19.05%	12
Total responses			65

Overview

Of the positive responses to this question some practitioners stated that they were already benefiting from using the descriptors. Those who disagreed cited the diverse nature of the roles of TAs and HLTAs and the difficulty in capturing this in a set of descriptors. Others stated that the language used was too complex.

Specific comments included:

Schools and practitioners

They are clear to enable the TA to progress where needed.

Workforce unions

Some standards need refining and to be less open-ended in terms of language. For example, 'organising events to promote the school', could raise issues for job descriptions and adversely affect those with caring responsibilities.

Consortia/local authorities

Since there are four levels of teaching assistant job descriptions it may be more appropriate to have four descriptor levels within each of the standards elements rather than just a lower and a higher descriptor?

Other

Some of the standards need to be worded differently - to make them easier to understand for TAs. Specific examples might be beneficial in order to enable TAs to understand them better.

Welsh Government Response

We welcome the support for the descriptors from the majority of respondents. This reflects the feedback we received from the schools who trialled the draft standards before consultation. We will revisit the standards and the descriptors to see if they can be clarified further before publication.

We recognise the diversity of responsibilities encompassed by the roles of TA and HLTA, as well as the qualification levels at which they may be categorised. However, imposing a full

set of descriptors for each of the four levels of learning support staff would be complex and unwieldy and feedback from other respondents indicates there is little appetite for that.

The standards and their descriptors are not designed to replace job descriptions. They are intended to assist TAs and HLTAs to reflect on their practice, gain confidence from their achievements and identify areas for development. The professional standards should be used in conjunction with the job description and the school policies to define the individual's role.

The professional standards, which are being used by all teachers, from newly qualified teachers (NQTs) to head teachers, do not contain a descriptor for each level. We do not think it appropriate or necessary to introduce additional descriptors to the standards for assisting teaching.

Question 3

Do you agree that the descriptors attached to each element will support TAs and HLTAs to reflect on their practice and provide a focus for professional development?		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Agree	72.31%	47
2	Disagree	12.31%	8
3	Neither agree nor disagree	15.38%	10
Total responses			65

Overview

The majority who agreed with this proposal noted the appropriate description provided by the descriptors and the focus they would offer for professional development and learning. Negative responses indicated that opportunities to demonstrate practice against the descriptors and access to professional learning may not be available to all TAs and HLTAs. Some also felt that some of the language used in the descriptors was confusing. The fact that TAs and HLTAs are not entitled to planning and preparation time (PPA) was raised as a barrier to TAs and HLTAs having the opportunity to engage with the descriptors in a meaningful way.

Specific comments included:

Schools and practitioners

The descriptors (for levels 1-3) provide a clear focus for self-evaluation and a pathway for development however, there are limited opportunities for progression for HLTA's.

Workforce unions

... to have continued improvement in standards, there must be further investment in the professional development of TAs, a proper career structure with transparent fair pay and conditions, uniformly applied across the whole of the country and a spirit of inclusiveness in schools that recognises their contribution.

National and professional bodies

It is hoped that the feedback from the schools involved in trialling the standards will enable Welsh Government to provide additional support practitioners and leaders may require in order to effectively implement and embed the standards.

Consortia/local authorities

Mae'n rhaid darparu cefnogaeth gref iddynt i ddeall sut mae eu gwaith bob dydd yn cyfateb i'r Safonau. Strong support needs to be provided for them in order for them to understand how their day to day work corresponds to the standards.[Translation]

Other

The descriptors are a way for TAs to reflect on their roles and to note down how they connect with their daily work.

Welsh Government Response

We welcome the support for the descriptors from the majority of respondents. This reflects the feedback we received from the schools who trialled the draft standards before consultation.

We recognise that for many of those who assist teaching, professional standards are unfamiliar. The standards have been designed to use in the first instance as a focus for professional dialogue and to consider in relation to the individual's day-to-day work. We appreciate that professional learning and support are integral to the successful implementation of the standards. Welsh Government, in partnership with the regions have been developing a teaching assistant learning pathway (TALP). TAs and HLTAs will be encouraged to access the professional learning that will be aligned with the professional standards. Since the consultation ended, three regional conferences for several hundred HLTAs and TAs across the country has provided the opportunity to illustrate the benefit of the standards and ways in which they can be used. The reaction has been almost wholly positive and enthusiastic.

The Welsh Government has no powers over school support staff pay, which is entirely a matter for individual employers, whether this is the school or the local authority. It is the responsibility of individual employers to decide their pay structures and policies. Decisions regarding the effective deployment of all staff within a school are a decision for the governing body and the head teacher.

Question 4

Do you think that it is appropriate for HLTA status to be dependant on the provision of evidence of having met the standards and relevant descriptors?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Agree	76.92%	50
2	Disagree	7.69%	5
3	Neither agree nor disagree	15.38%	10
		Total responses	65

Overview

Many of those who supported this proposal did so on the basis of their experience of the current HLTA scheme, which was felt to provide a rigorous framework for TAs to work with to develop professionally. It was emphasised that only those TAs who were committed and ready should undertake the process to gain HLTA status. Concerns around the proposal highlight the absence of entitlement for TAs and HLTAs to planning and preparation time to undertake the HLTA programme. It was also felt that there was a lack of professional learning available for TAs.

Specific comments included:

Schools and practitioners

It was felt that this system would offer clarity and consistency in terms of staff members meeting HLTA status.

Workforce unions

Whilst this is fine in principle it does not set out what time will be given to TAs to undertake this work.

Consortia/local authorities

...Ond nid mater pum munud fyddai addasu'r rhaglen CALU bresennol i ymdebygu i'r Safonau arfaethedig. Mae angen parhau â'r cysondeb cenedlaethol sydd yn bodoli yn rhaglen CALU, gyda pharatoi trylwyr o unrhyw adnoddau a hyfforddiant aseswyr yn angenrheidiol. ...But it wouldn't be a matter of 5 minutes to adapt the current HLTA programme to resemble the proposed standards. The national consistency that exists with the HTLA programme needs to continue, with thorough preparation for any necessary assessor resources and training. [Translation]

Other

This is essential.

Welsh Government Response

The majority of responses to this question were positive, reflecting the support for the current arrangements for gaining HLTA status. We recognise that to link the HLTA programme to the new assisting teaching standards will require preparation and

professional development, both for TAs undertaking the programme, and for those administering it.

From June 2019 the Welsh Government will work with the Regional Consortia to align the HLTA requirements to the new standards with the view to the revised requirements being available from January 2020. HLTA assessment criteria will be developed in partnership with consortia in due course.

As stated in the response to questions 3, the Welsh Government has no powers over school support staff pay, which is entirely a matter for individual employers.

Question 5

Do you think that using the standards for assisting teaching will promote the importance of the role and help TAs and HLTAs to feel valued?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Agree	63.64%	42
2	Disagree	18.18%	12
3	Neither agree nor disagree	18.18%	12
		Total responses	66

Overview

Comments from those who supported this proposal focussed mainly on the importance of raising the profile of this sector of the school workforce. Respondents felt that professional standards would achieve this by aligning TAs and HLTAs with teachers and leaders, highlighting the importance of their role and the need for effective deployment. There was a suggestion that trainee teachers should be made aware of strategies to deploy and make effective use of learning support workers as part of initial teacher education (ITE) programmes.

Of those who disagreed or neither agreed nor disagreed, a number of respondents expressed the view that professional standards were only a part of the picture and other elements were also important. For example, the role of leadership and the culture within the school; the pay and contractual arrangements of this group, and the access they have to professional learning opportunities. A couple of respondents felt that there was a danger of the standards having the unintended effect of creating additional pressure or workload. There was a reference to the importance of developing a better understanding of the TA/HLTA role and effective deployment. A few felt that the intended effect would not be achieved because of the complexity of the standards and one response warned that they may make it more difficult to recruit TAs and HLTAs.

Specific comments included:

Schools and practitioners

I feel that this is an important point in re-establishing the importance that support staff play in school. Many TAs hold various qualifications and all roles should feel valued. Both the teacher and TA complement [sic] each other to promote the best for each child.

National and professional bodies

The development of the standards is a useful tool in raising the profile of the important work carried out by teaching assistants and HLTAs. The effectiveness of the standards in helping them to feel valued will rely on the implementation of the standards in schools and the quality of support for headteachers and senior leaders in understanding how they should use them to improve the professional practice of those assisting teaching. This is particularly the case if the use of the standards forms part of compulsory performance reviews and the awarding of HLTA status as the Welsh Government proposes. Therefore, the impact of the standards on ensuring that teaching assistants and HLTAs feel valued in their roles, will rely on the effectiveness of the implementation of the standards rather than the content of the document itself.

Consortia/local authorities

This will only happen where teaching staff have had time to read and understand the role of the TA and HLTA fully.

Other

This document cannot define how we are valued. This document will be seen more as a job description and the feeling of being valued comes from leadership and peers.

Welsh Government Response

We acknowledge that raising the perceptions of the role cannot be achieved by the introduction of professional standards alone. The leadership and culture within the school has an important role to play and that is why the teaching and leadership standards place an expectation on formal leaders to create the conditions that allow the whole school workforce, including support staff, to meet their requirements.

Working in conjunction with the regional consortia, the Welsh Government will further develop and enhance the TALP to align with the NAPL framework and the professional standards.

Question 6

Do you agree that performance reviews, together with access to professional learning opportunities, are key to ensuring that the standards have the greatest impact on practice?		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Agree	81.82%	54
2	Disagree	9.09%	6
3	Neither agree nor disagree	9.09%	6
Total responses			66

Overview

This proposal received the greatest percentage of positive responses. Most people emphasised the value of introducing performance development processes for TAs and HLTAs to create a dialogue, reflect on their work and identify professional learning. Some signalled that this needed to be undertaken in an intelligent and sensitive way and others warned of the implications that introducing performance management of this group may have on teacher workload.

In relation to professional learning, some responses emphasised the need for high-quality professional learning for TAs and HLTAs. Others cited budget issues preventing TAs and HLTAs from being released for professional learning. One respondent suggested that Welsh Government needed to ensure that funding for professional learning is used to benefit TAs and HLTAs.

Specific comments included:

Schools and practitioners

Nearly all involved within the consultation felt that performance reviews were an important element of their professional development and that these ensured an opportunity for dialogue with their line manager regarding possible areas of strength, development and possible CPD opportunities. Many felt that there needed to be more focus on TA specific professional learning opportunities provided by outside providers, as many who had attended external opportunities felt that these were more focused upon teaching staff rather than TA staff.

Workforce unions

Mae'n angenrheidiol i unigolion gael mynediad at ddysgu proffesiynol, ac mae'n rhaid i'r unigolyn gael mewnbwn i'r broses o benderfynu pa hyfforddiant sy'n addas; mae adolygu perfformiad – wedi'i wneud mewn ffordd ddeallus - yn fodd o hwyluso hynny. It is essential for individuals to have access the professional learning, and the individual must have input into the process of deciding which training is suitable; performance review – undertaken in an intelligent way – is a means of facilitating that. [Translation]

National and professional bodies

Estyn's work with schools through inspection and thematic reports suggest strongly that that performance reviews should be supported by high quality professional learning

opportunities. It is important that this link is emphasised as part of the roll out and implementation process for the new standards.

Other

As long as it's a constructive review and relevant to the individual roles.

Welsh Government Response

Welsh Government is committed to developing the workforce in accordance with the NAPL and the high-level priorities set out in *Our national mission*. We note the responses to this question and they will be considered again as part of a review of schools' current appraisal arrangements, which is due to commence later in the year.

With regard to the need for professional learning for TAs and HLTAs, the national approach to professional learning has been developed in partnership with consortia to provide all practitioners, including TAs and HLTAs, with opportunities for career-long development.

Question 7

Do you think that, as a matter of principle, the performance reviews of those assisting teaching should be made a statutory requirement as part of schools' performance review policy (i.e. a compulsory appraisal process set out in legislation)?		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Agree	70.31%	45
2	Disagree	15.63%	10
3	Neither agree nor disagree	14.06%	9
Total responses			66

Overview

A number of respondents suggested that statutory performance management should be linked to pay. Others felt that it formed a natural part of professionalism and accountability. One response said that introducing statutory performance management for TAs and HLTAs could address underperformance. A few comments indicated that performance management arrangements were already in place for this group of the workforce.

Specific comments included:

Workforce unions

... all members of the profession should be measured by the same standards, and [that] if these professional standards were to be applied, then they must be applied equally and simultaneously across Wales.

National and professional bodies

Given the importance of effective performance reviews linked to high quality professional learning opportunities ... [we] support performance reviews for those assisting teaching becoming part of a compulsory appraisal process set out in legislation.

Consortia/local authorities

This will ensure their professional stand [sic] within school.

Other

Provided that it is linked to pay scales.

Welsh Government Response

We note the responses to this question and they will be considered again as part of a review of schools' current performance management arrangements.

As stated above, the Welsh Government has no powers over school support staff pay, which is entirely a matter for individual employers.

Question 8

Do you consider the proposed timescale and the arrangements for introducing the new standards to be realistic?		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Agree	46.97%	31
2	Disagree	18.18%	12
3	Neither agree nor disagree	34.85%	23
Total responses			66

Overview

This question generated the highest percentage of 'neither agree nor disagree' responses compared to the other questions, although there was still a majority who agreed. Some of those who agreed felt it was important that the introduction of the standards was aligned with the rollout of the new curriculum. Others noted that it was a logical development following on from the introduction of professional standards for school teachers and leaders.

Of those who either disagreed or neither agreed nor disagreed, a few felt that further consultation was required. Others referred to there being too many other changes to the education system, specifically the additional learning needs code and the new curriculum. Others suggested that further funding and professional learning opportunities were needed. The need for time to prepare for the increased workload associated with managing TAs and HLTAs and to ensure that the standards were fully integrated into the HLTA programme was also identified.

Specific comments included:

Workforce unions

Whilst [the union] broadly agrees with the principle of applying professional standards, the current recommendations in the consultation document are too high to achieve in one stage, and should be more incremental.

National and professional bodies

Given that the suite of professional standards is already in place for the rest of the workforce, it seems appropriate that the standards for those assisting teaching, which have already been piloted, are rolled out in a timely manner. We would reiterate the need to support this group in adopting the standards.

Consortia/local authorities

Mae'n rhaid gofalu bod amser digonol i sicrhau fod y darlun cyflawn ar gyfer CA a CALU yn ei le'n genedlaethol, nid ei gyflwyno'n bytiog ac heb lawn ystyriaeth. There must be sufficient time to ensure that the whole picture for TAs and HLTAs is in place nationally, not just a piecemeal introduction and without full consideration. [Translation]

Other

Implementing such a shift would need a more realistic timescale and additional funding for training both external and internal, to embed new practice.

Welsh Government Response

Existing Welsh Government guidance indicates that it is good practice for schools to include support staff in the performance management cycle and responses to this question indicate that this already takes place in some schools. The introduction of professional standards should support them to continue to do this.

For those schools who do not include TAs and HLTAs in their performance management arrangements, we acknowledge the challenges that introducing this may raise. However, it should be noted that the majority of this group will not be required or expected to engage with all the descriptors in their entirety. Apart from those applying for HLTA status who are required to demonstrate they meet all the relevant descriptors, all others will use the standards as a backdrop to the performance management process to reflect on their work and to identify areas for professional learning.

On balance, we believe that the benefits to TAs and HLTAs, the wider school sector and, ultimately, learners outweigh the challenges. The standards will be introduced initially on a non-statutory basis. A review of the performance management arrangements of TAs/HLTAs will form part of a wider review of the existing statutory requirements for schools in due course.

Question 9

We would like to know your views on the effects that introducing professional standards for assisting teaching would have on the Welsh language, specifically on:

- i) opportunities for people to use Welsh**
- ii) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.**

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Overview

A total of 42 responses were received for this question. A number of the respondents were positive, indicating that it is important for TAs and HLTAs to be aware of the importance of using incidental Welsh and to advocate the language. Some respondents did not see that the standards would have an impact either way on the Welsh language, and others believed that TAs and HLTAs needed more opportunities to develop their Welsh language skills.

Specific comments included:

Schools and practitioners

Support staff in school, use Welsh as part of the Curriculum and therefore advocate the importance of language. The professional standards would not be less favourable and would be seen as a positive strength in supporting the Welsh language.

Workforce unions

We support the principle of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. As we have already stated, however, it should not be for TAs to support their own opportunities to learn Welsh, and this should not prevent them from becoming an HLTA. Without the full amount of training and funding for the education workforce as a whole, the Welsh language targets will not be met.

Consortia/local authorities

Yn fy mhrofiad i, mae peth tystiolaeth yn barod fod CA yn manteisio ar gyfleoedd i fynychu cyrsiau sabothol Cymraeg ac ati. Mae ethos yr ysgol - a daliadau personol Pennaeth, UDRh ac ati yn dylanwadu'n fawr ar yr agweddau hyn. In my experience, there is some evidence already that TAs are taking advantage of opportunities to attend Welsh sabbatical courses. The ethos of the school – and the personal views of the headteacher, SMT etc., greatly influence these aspects. [Translation]

Other

I think it would provide a framework within which to challenge the negative attitude many teaching assistants have in regards to the Welsh language and its teaching.

Welsh Government Response

Welsh Government is committed to developing a transformational approach to teaching and learning Welsh to enable all learners to develop their Welsh language skills and to use the language confidently in everyday life. In order to achieve this vision, we must ensure that all learners benefit from a world-class curriculum.

In January 2019, proposed changes were announced to the way that Welsh is taught, with the language remaining compulsory for all learners aged 3-16 – alongside English - but no longer separated into first and second language Programmes of Study. Under the proposals, all learners will follow the same curriculum and there would be more of an emphasis on improving learners' skills and use of the language.

However, our new curriculum cannot be delivered without a well-supported, aspirational education workforce, and the challenge that we face is to adequately prepare the workforce to deliver the new curriculum from 2022. The Welsh language Sabbatical Scheme currently provides opportunities for TAs and HLTAs to access intensive Welsh language courses. In addition, Welsh Government is working with regional consortia and other stakeholders, such as the National Centre for Learning Welsh to develop and implement a programme of Welsh language professional learning in accordance with the NAPL and through different models of delivery.

Question 10

Please also explain how you believe the proposed standards could be formulated or changed so as to have:

- i) positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language**
- ii) no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.**

Overview

A total of 29 responses were received for this question, with many respondents indicating that they could not distinguish the difference between this and the previous question. Of those who did respond, there was an emphasis on the need for time, funding and training to be made available in order for TAs and HLTAs to increase their use of the Welsh language. The remaining comments spanned a range of views. Views included: Welsh should not be compulsory; a belief that the new standards would successfully raise the profile of the Welsh language and culture; a suggestion that the Welsh language should have its own framework, similar to the literacy and numeracy framework.

Specific comments included:

Schools and practitioners

Reference to the Welsh language and culture appears only in the Professional Learning element of the standards. Increased positive effects could be maximised by including reference within the pedagogy elements, e.g. 'Real life, authentic contexts'.

National and professional bodies

... reviewing the descriptors to include some reference to the use of the Welsh language in many of the standards would increase the positive effect of the standards on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and further assist in ensuring that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language.

Consortia/local authorities

Some time for TAs / HLTAs to access Welsh speaking course in their working week would be helpful, an online course maybe?

Welsh Government Response

We note the suggestions that have been made and will consider these as we prepare the final standards for publication and as we continue to develop a programme of professional learning for TAs and HLTAs.

Question 11

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.

Overview

A total of 32 responses were received to this question, representing a range of views.

Specific comments included:

Schools and practitioners

Further information is needed to discuss how these standards will affect agency TA staff, who's [sic] responsibility will it be to carry out annual reviews of performance, offer performance management, CPD opportunities for these staff.

If these standards are to be introduced, will there be any incentive in order for people to achieve, eg, performance related pay?

Workforce unions

We would also note that these standards seem to have been written about education professionals working in schools and would highlight the need for parity with the FE sector.

Consortia/local authorities

Yn y safonau mae'n son y bydd rhaid i gynorthwydd cael lefel 2 sgiliau digidol (yn ogystal a iaith a mathemateg). Does gan y mwyafrif o athrawon ddi lefel 2 yn sgiliau digidol a gall hen cael effaith ar y nifer sydd yn ceisio i fod yn CALU. It mentions in the standards that an assistant will need to have level 2 digital skills (as well as language and mathematics). The majority of teachers do not have level 2 digital skills and this could have an affect on the numbers applying to become HLTAs. [Translation]

Other

Over focus on 'classroom-based'. This minimises the role of HLTAs who undertake specialist-roles outside of the classroom, but work with children in another guise.

Welsh Government response

Many of the issues raised have been addressed in responses to earlier questions. We note the comments that have been made and will consider these as we prepare the final standards for publication and as we continue to work with stakeholders to support their

introduction in schools. We will ensure that practitioners and other stakeholders are kept informed of progress and the timescale for implementation.

The requirement for HLTAs to have level 2 digital skills (in addition to level 2 literacy and numeracy) will be postponed until the necessary support is in place.

Annex 1: List of respondents

1. Anon
2. Anon
3. Anon
4. Anon
5. Anon
6. Anon
7. Anon
8. Anon
9. Anon
10. Anon
11. Gethin Sutton, Ysgol Pen y Bryn
12. Anon
13. Anon
14. Anon
15. Anon
16. Anon
17. Anon
18. Anon
19. Mrs A R Green
20. Alec Mills, Islwyn Cluster
21. Anon
22. Anon
23. Anon
24. Anon
25. Anon
26. Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymini, Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw, Ysgol Gyfun Gwent Is Coed, Risca Comprehensive School, Lliswerry High School and The John Frost School
27. Enid Haf Williams, GwE
28. Anon
29. Anon
30. Anon
31. Anon
32. Anon
33. Anon
34. Wendy Williams, Ysgol Deganwy
35. Richard Ebley
36. Mr K Jones
37. Anon
38. Anon
39. Anon
40. Anon
41. Anon
42. Anon
43. Terri Jones
44. Anon
45. Anon
46. Anon
47. Anon
48. Anon

49. Estyn
50. Torfaen Croesyceiliog Cluster
51. Catherine Bryan, Catholic Education Service
52. Education Workforce Council
53. Anon
54. Anon
55. Anon
56. Hilary Roberts, Loran Tanner and Cariad Davage, Blaenavon Heritage Primary School
57. Anon
58. Anon
59. Anon
60. Anon
61. Anon
62. National Deaf Children's Society Cymru
63. Ceredigion Local Authority
64. NEU Cymru
65. Unison Cymru
66. Ruth Davies, Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr
67. UCAC