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Consultation Document

Proposals to amend the requirements for registration of the education workforce in Wales

Date of issue: **16 December 2011**

Action required: Responses by **30 March 2012**

Proposals to amend the requirements for registration of the education workforce in Wales

Overview	This consultation document outlines proposals for the future of registration of the education workforce in Wales.
How to respond	Response forms should be e-mailed to practicereviewanddevelopment@wales.gsi.gov.uk (please enter 'Registration consultation' in the subject matter box) or posted to Katherine Newbrook at the address below by 30 March 2012.
Further information and related documents	<p>Large print, Braille and alternate language versions of this document are available on request.</p> <p>The consultation and response form are available on the Welsh Government's website at www.wales.gov.uk/consultations</p> <p>The current requirements for registration of the education workforce in Wales were established by the Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998 www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/30/contents and by subsequent Regulations.</p> <p>Further information about the Welsh Government's Programme for Government can be found at www.wales.gov.uk/about/programmeforgovernment</p>
Contact details	<p>For further information: Katherine Newbrook Project Manager Learning Improvement and Professional Development Division Welsh Government Cathays Park Cardiff CF10 3NQ</p> <p>e-mail: practicereviewanddevelopment@wales.gsi.gov.uk</p>

Data protection

How the views and information you give us will be used.

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about. It may also be seen by other Welsh Government staff to help them plan future consultations.

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

Names or addresses we blank out might still get published later, though we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including the Welsh Government. This includes information which has not been published. However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone's name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we finally decided to reveal the information.

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Ministerial foreword

In February 2011, I set out my agenda, delivered through a twenty point action plan for education in Wales, to raise standards and narrow the current attainment gap.

I have made clear how much I value the work of all the people working in schools, colleges, work based learning and informal learning settings, who directly support our children and young people to achieve their full potential. This in turn means that we have a responsibility to support the practitioners working in our education system, to value their contribution and enable them to achieve the highest standards. I am, therefore, planning a number of reforms to support the wider workforce and plan to use the provisions of one of the forthcoming Education Bills to bring these changes into effect.

A key feature of many professions is that their members register with a professional body that sets and maintains professional standards, and so retains public confidence. An effective professional body can also analyse workforce information and trends and identify gaps or opportunities for professional development and so support our improvement agenda.

I am therefore proposing that we should widen the current requirement for teachers to register with a professional body to cover a wider sector which will include further education, work based learning and teaching assistants. However, I am also seeking views on whether other members within the education profession who contribute to the development of children and young people, such as youth workers and other support staff, should also be able to register. I am also seeking views about the functions that such a registration body should undertake.

I welcome your views on our proposals which will assist me in taking forward proposals in the Education (Wales) Bill.

Leighton Andrews AM
Minister for Education and Skills

Why are we reviewing the requirements for the registration of the education workforce in Wales?

Currently registration of school teachers is carried out by the General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW) which was established as a statutory self-regulating professional body in September 2000 under the Teaching and Higher Education Act of 1998. There are currently just over 38,700 teachers registered in Wales. Similar General Teaching Councils exist within England and Scotland although there are some differences between the scope of the functions carried out by the different bodies.

There have been significant changes to the education system in Wales since the GTCW was established. Reforms such as the Foundation Phase and 14–19 Learning Pathways require learning support staff, teachers and post 16 teachers, trainers and lecturers to collaborate to support learners more effectively to improve educational standards and attainment for the people of Wales.

Currently only school teachers with qualified teacher status are required to register with and be regulated by a professional Council. There are also very different requirements for professional standards, qualifications, professional development, and performance management across the different groups of practitioners. Registration of the wider education workforce could provide a sound basis for future development of greater coherence across the workforce in Wales.

The strategic direction for the Welsh Government's work is set out in the Programme for Government and includes a commitment to review the General Teaching Council for Wales. It also includes proposals to introduce an Education (Wales) Bill which will be used to deliver changes arising from the review of the Council.

Where are we now?

The GTCW's current key responsibilities are to:

- a. Maintain a Register of teachers with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) in Wales to ensure they are properly qualified and suitable to work with children.
- b. Develop and maintain a Professional Code for Teachers setting out the standards of practice and conduct expected of registered teachers.
- c. Investigate and hear cases of unacceptable professional conduct, and serious professional incompetence (it has the power to discipline and disbar teachers found guilty of professional misconduct or incompetence).
- d. Provide advice to the Welsh Government and other organisations on teaching issues.

This remit is limited to school staff with qualified teacher status (QTS) and as such excludes the wider education workforce. Similarly it does not include other responsibilities that could drive a 'profession led' improvement in standards of education. For example, the GTCW does not set minimum qualifications, professional standards or requirements for professional development.

With its current remit, the GTCW provides a 'one stop shop' for labour market information including those barred from teaching for child safety or other reasons. In addition its database provides valuable information to support workforce planning, allowing informed assessments to be made about the numbers of new teachers that should be trained.

Why is there a need for change?

In February 2011, the Minister for Education and Skills set out his agenda, through his twenty point action plan for education in Wales, to raise standards and narrow the current attainment gap.

To deliver this agenda the Minister has made it clear that there is a need to ensure that the education workforce, from foundation phase through to 14-19, works together as a single coherent group of professionals working cooperatively to improve educational standards and attainment for the people of Wales.

There is a large number of professionals working in the education workforce, with over 21,300, school support staff in 2010/11 and just over 7,000 direct teaching staff in the further education sector in 2008/09, who are currently not required to register. In other sectors, the data collection has been limited and therefore makes workforce planning difficult across the sector.

There are considerable differences between the requirements for professional standards, qualifications, initial training, performance management and continuing professional development across the different sectors of the education workforce. Whilst some of these differences are entirely appropriate, reflecting real differences in sector requirements, others are more artificial, creating barriers to co-operation and mobility amongst the workforce and limiting the career development of individuals. It also does not assure the public that all education professionals exhibit similar high standards of professional conduct and competence and so can undermine parity of esteem.

A body registering the education workforce has potential to be a key partner in delivering better coherence. It could support the improvement agenda and could monitor and potentially help to drive up standards maintaining and enhancing public confidence in the profession. The scope and functions of the GTCW as they are currently constituted are too narrowly focussed however to fully achieve this.

What changes are we proposing?

We intend to reconstitute the GTCW or establish a new education registration body for Wales. As a minimum, this body will register school teachers to ensure that only those who are qualified and fit to practice can teach in Wales. We are seeking views on the wider scope and functions of the registration body and propose:

1. That the work of the body should be overseen by the profession. This could be achieved through a professional council consisting of persons with expertise in the sectors and functions covered by the body, or a series of sector councils each considering a particular area of the workforce.
2. That the scope of the body should be extended beyond teachers to include the wider education workforce. This would include, as a minimum, school learning support staff, further education lecturers and the work based learning workforce, and we are considering and seeking views through this consultation whether additional categories of staff should be included. We intend to adopt a phased approach to registering the additional categories of the education workforce so that, over time, a complete picture of the whole workforce can be built up.
3. That the potential functions of the body should be broadened to enable it to play a key role in establishing and monitoring standards within the education workforce. These new functions would be phased in over time as and when the Minister considers that the body is ready to take them on. These functions could include approval of initial teacher training courses, requirements for continuing professional development and setting professional standards.
4. That those registered with the body should be required to pay a registration fee. We propose to avoid a complex fee structure that would be costly to administer but would consider a limited range of differential fee rates where these could be properly justified.
5. That alongside these changes we should also consider the differences in requirements for qualifications, professional standards, performance management and professional development and consider whether greater coherence across these issue could support our drive to improve standards
6. That we should seek broad powers in the proposed Education Bill to enable these changes to take effect.