

Number: WG30671



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government
Consultation Document

School workforce data collection in Wales

Date of issue: 13 January 2017
Action required: Responses by 3 March 2017

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

School workforce data collection in Wales

- Overview** This consultation seeks views on the development of a data collection on the school workforce in Wales and draft statutory regulations that would enable an individual level school workforce census.
- How to respond** Responses to this consultation should be e-mailed/posted to the address below to arrive by **3 March 2017** at the latest.
- Further information and related documents** Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.
- The consultation documents can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at www.gov.wales/consultations
- Contact details** For further information:
- Education Workforce Data Branch
Workforce Strategy Unit
Education and Public Services Group
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ
e-mail: educationworkforcedata@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Tel: 029 2082 5968

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.

Contents

Summary of proposals	2
Introduction	2
Background	2
Why are we proposing change?	2
Proposals for change	3
1. Staff details	4
2. Contract and service agreement	4
3. Absences	4
4. Curriculum	4
5. Qualifications	4
6. Recruitment and retention	4
7. Welsh language and Welsh-medium	5
Outcomes	5

Summary of proposals

Introduction

The Welsh Government is consulting on draft regulations that will allow for the development and implementation of an individual level school workforce census for Wales. This consultation should be read in conjunction with the draft regulations and the Regulatory Impact Assessment. The draft regulations have been developed following extensive engagement with stakeholders to identify key knowledge gaps and future requirements with regards to the supply of information on the school workforce.

The consultation is open to all individuals and organisations. A summary of responses received to the consultation will be published in spring 2017.

Background

Currently, there is no central data collection that gathers the required level of information fundamental to the successful future planning and development of the school workforce in Wales. At present, limited information on the workforce is gathered through various data collections and surveys throughout the year. Aggregated level information on the size of the workforce is collected annually in the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC). The Education Workforce Council (EWC) captures some demographic information on teachers as part of the registration process. Additionally, data on teachers' sickness absence is collected at an aggregated level by Welsh Government, from local authorities, on an annual basis.

Following the publication of recommendations in the Silk Report in 2014, and the subsequent announcement by the First Minister as to the devolvement of teachers' pay and conditions to Wales, the need for a more detailed and robust data collection on the school workforce to support the new responsibilities has been emphasised. This collection will provide Welsh Government with a sufficient quality of data to support robust forecasting of teachers' pay in Wales, inform negotiations and decisions on pay related matters and would provide greater evidence to support future workforce planning.

If the proposals to implement the data collection are agreed, the Welsh Government is committed to phasing out the two existing school workforce data collections:

- The workforce elements of the Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC).
- The annual 'Teacher Sickness Absence Data Collection'.

Why are we proposing change?

The limited amount of information currently collected means it is difficult to provide detailed evidence to support policy decisions and monitor the development of the workforce. An increased understanding of the demographics of the workforce would allow better preparation for potential future changes and inform the recruitment, development and retention of the workforce in Wales.

The numerous data collections currently initiated both centrally and by external organisations throughout the year are often uncoordinated and may be unnecessarily burdensome for schools and local authorities. The data collected is often reported on an

inconsistent basis across data providers, is incompatible with other collections and does not include key information such as teachers' qualifications and pay.

A centrally coordinated data collection would provide consistency in the way workforce data is managed and reported, and increase the efficiency of the data processes carried out by schools and local authorities. It would also allow the gathering of currently unavailable data items, such as pay and qualifications, which are vital in understanding the size and characteristics of the workforce and its related costs.

A number of options have been considered for the development of the collection of data on the school workforce:

1. Maintain existing processes for collecting information at an aggregated level from schools and local authorities.
2. An individual level survey sent to a sample of schools and local authorities.
3. An aggregated level census collected from schools and local authorities.
4. An individual level census collected from schools and local authorities.
5. Collection and linking of individual level information from schools, local authorities and the Education Workforce Council (EWC) register of teachers and learning support workers.

To continue with current processes is neither effective nor efficient in the long term, as they will not provide results sufficiently robust and precise for future workforce planning including the allocation of places for Initial Teacher Training and workforce pay bill calculations.

An individual level census is the preferred option as it would provide a greater degree of quality and accuracy of data than that provided by an aggregated level survey or census. An individual level census would also allow a greater intelligence as to the impact of changes within the workforce. The data collected will be used to build an informed evidence base, particularly around recruitment and retention, workforce turnover and mobility, progression, equality and diversity.

Furthermore, making better use of existing administrative data sources is a key strategic aim of the Government Statistical Service¹. Increased and more effective use of administrative data has the potential to reduce our reliance on survey collections, which will enable us to minimise burden and costs. The overarching GSS strategy sets out the need to reduce the focus on data collection through increased collaboration and sharing of data, hence using existing administrative sources will fall in line with this.

Proposals for change

The purpose of this consultation is to seek users' views on the draft statutory regulations to enable an individual level census of the school workforce.

Your contributions will help us to understand the impact these proposals have on individuals and organisations as the data providers that would be affected by the introduction of an individual level school workforce census.

¹ <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/GSS-Data-Strategy-Data-for-the-public-good.pdf>

The draft regulations would impose requirements for local authorities and maintained schools (including special schools and Pupil Referral Units) to supply information on teachers and support staff within the following areas:

1. Staff details

The collection of key characteristics of the school workforce is important to understand the size and make-up of the school workforce. Certain individual identifying data items, including name, date of birth, national insurance number and teacher reference, are required for data linking and quality assurance. It will allow the checking and validation of individual data items to ensure the accuracy and integrity of information that is captured from multiple sources such as local authority systems and the EWC register. Information on gender, disability and ethnicity are crucial in identifying potential demographical issues within the workforce, such as gender imbalance and pay inequality.

2. Contract and service agreement

Data items relating to pay and contracts are necessary to develop a pay structure for Wales, as well as being able to accurately measure the cost of teachers pay in Wales and the impact of changes within the workforce. Teachers pay forecasting is currently undertaken by the Department for Education (DfE) for England and Wales based mainly on data collected for England, which does not provide an accurate reflection of the workforce in Wales. A more in depth knowledge of the school workforce would provide a strong base to model policy changes that may impact on the workforce.

3. Absences

Detailed analysis of sickness absence is required to understand workforce conditions in Wales. Additionally, the 2013 Estyn report² on teacher sickness absence suggested that most schools do not give enough priority to managing the effect of teacher absences or to evaluating its impact on the quality of learners' experiences. A more detailed level of information on sickness absence would allow schools and local authorities to carry out more effective management of absence, enabling more targeted support for workforce issues, leading to improved learner outcomes.

4. Curriculum

Collecting items relating to the curriculum such as year group and subject would allow a more informed approach to workforce and succession planning. It would enable areas of potential concern within the workforce to be identified in advance, such as a shortage of teachers in particular subject areas, and allow the impact of the upcoming curriculum reform³ to be understood in greater detail.

5. Qualifications

An improved understanding of workforce qualifications would help identify the current skill levels of the workforce and potential opportunities for further professional development programmes. This will allow the correct targeting of resources to meet the current demands of schools and the education workforce in Wales.

6. Recruitment and retention

Greater information is required in relation to recruitment and retention to understand the scale of the school workforce supply challenge. More detailed data collection

² <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/raisingstandards/estynremit/estynreports/impact-of-teacher-absence/?lang=en>

³ <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculum-for-wales-curriculum-for-life/?lang=en>

would facilitate improved workforce succession planning and stability, and allow a more informed approach to setting intake targets for teacher training courses.

7. Welsh language and Welsh-medium

We need a better understanding of the Welsh language skills of the workforce and the capacity of the workforce to deliver through the medium of Welsh and teach the Welsh language. More detailed data collection would aid the informed targeting of resources and identify the requirements needed for the development of Welsh-medium provision within schools, in line with the government's Welsh language strategy⁴ and to deliver the new Welsh language curriculum.

The census would utilise only the following sources to gather the data:

- The EWC register which holds data items relating to staff details such as gender, ethnicity and disability. It also holds information on the qualifications of the school workforce.
- Local authority HR and Payroll systems which contain contract and service agreement details and absence data.
- School Management Information Systems (MIS) which contain curriculum data items such as classroom contact time and subjects taught by a staff member. Schools also provide information on vacancies and retention.

Making use of, and improving upon, existing data sources avoids the duplication of effort for data providers, avoiding multiple collections of the same data items and minimising the burden placed on schools and local authorities.

Data items that identify an individual will be collected for linking purposes, to allow records to be matched to the relevant administrative data sources. The census would adhere to the core principles of the Data Protection Act, with the assurance personal data will be kept safe and secure and used only for the stated purpose.

Outcomes

Following the outcome of this consultation we will publish a response. This may include some of the comments received – excluding those where the respondent has asked to remain anonymous. We will also be incorporate feedback from the ongoing accompanying stakeholder engagement where appropriate.

If the proposals in the consultation are agreed, the supply of information regulations will be implemented in the first half of 2017. Welsh Government will engage with local authorities and schools to advise on the development of processes for the annual collection of individual level data on the school workforce.

The current intention is for the census to take place in November of each year, with the first collection to occur in November 2019. Schools and local authorities will be allowed an appropriate period of time to complete their data returns. This date is proposed as it avoids busy administrative periods for local authorities and schools, including the end of the tax year, the start of the academic year, school examination periods and other data collections.

⁴ <http://gov.wales/betaconsultations/welshlanguage/welsh-language-strategy-consultation/?lang=en>

The results of the census would be published at an aggregated level in an annual statistical release with data tables made available on StatsWales⁵. Current data collections on the workforce, including the teacher sickness absence data collection and the sections on PLASC that relate to the workforce, would be discontinued as part of the rationalisation of existing data collections.

⁵ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue>