



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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# Provision of INSET (in-service education and training) days in Wales

Amendment of the STPCD(W) working days and the Education (School Day and School Year) (Wales) Regulations 2003 to confirm the provision of INSET days in maintained schools in Wales for professional learning and development.

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# Introduction

The world's highest-performing education systems have vibrant, engaged teachers and support staff who are committed to continuous learning. This career-long commitment to professional learning is critical to the quality and impact of a country's teaching and learning. In Wales, we have developed a national approach to career-long professional learning for our school workforce, including teachers, teaching assistants, supply staff and leaders. We want to support practitioners in Wales to be lifelong professional learners who reflect on and enhance their own practice to motivate and inspire the children and young people in their schools.

The education system in Wales continues to face significant challenges. There is a need to reinforce system-wide engagement to enable implementation of the Curriculum for Wales with a focus on literacy and numeracy, enable implementation of additional learning needs (ALN) reforms, and ensure inclusive education. We recognise the need to provide time for all practitioners to receive training, prepare and plan in relation to the curriculum.

In service training (INSET) days were first introduced in the 1980s. They are a number of days on which learners do not attend school, but the staff are required to attend for training. The entitlement to 5 non-teaching or INSET days (for a teacher employed full-time) forms part of the statutory 'School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (Wales) Document' (STPC(W)D) ("STPC(W)D INSET days"), which sets out the total number of days on which a teacher must be available for work within a school year, including the number of those days which must be teaching and non-teaching STPCD INSET days. Powers over the STPC(W)D were devolved to Wales in 2018, and an annual independent process has been established to consider both teachers' and head teachers' pay and conditions via the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body (IWPRB).

Employment terms and conditions for teaching assistants are not the same as those for teachers and head teachers and are not governed by the work of the STPC(W)D. They are set by individual local authorities. The Welsh Government

is determined, however, that teaching assistants should have opportunities to engage with professional learning. We have worked with local authorities and education partners to ensure professional learning is available for teaching assistants, and our guidance clearly states that schools should be using the professional learning grant to support all practitioners' development, in line with the quality of provision that is available to qualified teachers. This is part of our wider work to improve pay and conditions for teaching assistants, to provide them with fair recognition and reward for the important work they do, including with our most vulnerable learners.

Supporting practitioners to develop professionally, focusing on our key priorities for improving education, is intended to lead to improved learner outcomes across the school sector. At the same time, we recognise that INSET days reduce learners' time at school and can pose challenges for parents and carers.

The purpose of this consultation is to seek opinions on our proposals to change the number of days teachers will be made available to teach learners, and the number of days that the teacher may only be required to attend INSET days, as will be laid out in the STPC(W)D.

The consultation will be open for a period of 8 weeks and will close on 2 February 2026. This is to ensure that any changes to regulations can come into force in September 2026, allowing local authorities, schools and parents and carers to make any necessary arrangements.

## **The current position**

All teachers and head teachers are entitled to 5 STPC(W)D INSET days per year as set out in the STPC(W)D. Those days have been used for a variety of professional learning and school development activities.

In Wales there is an additional INSET day provided through the Education (School Day and School Year) (Wales) Regulations 2003 ("the 2003 Regulations"). In 2019 the 2003 Regulations were amended to provide an additional INSET day. We introduced an additional national professional learning

INSET day to support practitioners to prepare for the Curriculum for Wales. This additional INSET day was initially made available for three academic years, 2019 to 2020, 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022. The additional INSET day was allowed to be used for the following purposes:

- provision of training (including training attended by both teaching and non-teaching staff and training conducted jointly with other schools), or
- preparation and planning for teachers in maintained schools

As a direct result of the pandemic, many practitioners were unable to use the additional INSET day for the purposes that were originally specified. Instead, school leaders and teachers had to develop new ways to engage with learners and ensure that learners could continue to learn during the pandemic. The additional INSET day was therefore also provided for the 2022 to 2023, 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025 academic years.

In 2025 we further amended the 2023 Regulations to provide the additional INSET day for the 2025 to 2026 school year. For that school year, schools may use 1 school day as an additional INSET day for the provision of training (including training attended by both teaching and non-teaching staff and training conducted jointly with other schools) or preparation and planning, in relation to one or more of the following:

- a. reducing the impact of poverty on the progression and attainment of learners at the school
- b. the operation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 for learners at the school
- c. the curriculum to be provided at the school under Parts 2 and 3 of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021
- d. the assessment arrangements to be made under Part 4 of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021

The current guidance on the use of INSET can be found here: **Creating time and space for professional learning** ([https://hwb.gov.wales/professional-learning/planning-and-designing-professional-learning/creating-time-and-space-for-professional-learning/#in-service-training-\(inset\)](https://hwb.gov.wales/professional-learning/planning-and-designing-professional-learning/creating-time-and-space-for-professional-learning/#in-service-training-(inset))) (Hwb). This consultation seeks views on proposals to amend and strengthen this guidance on specific points, to support

schools, local authorities and families.

Schools have the flexibility to manage their staff's professional learning according to local and individual priorities. Although the Welsh Government will continue to recommend national themes and topics that should be considered, it is a matter for schools to decide which ones they address first. However, it can be difficult for local authorities and parents and carers to understand what content can be covered during these days, and how this will have the intended positive impact on learner outcomes. We advise good communication between schools and the local community so that parents and carers can plan ahead and understand the purpose of the training.

Twilight sessions happen after school hours. Some schools use 3 x 2-hour twilight sessions spread throughout a term to make up one INSET day and are then not required to work on one of non-teaching days when children are not in school. These can be useful sessions to complete statutory or compulsory training that doesn't require a full day. Schools should think carefully what needs to be covered during these sessions, and what will be the best outcome for teacher development and learner outcome.

In order to understand the landscape better, Welsh Government has commissioned Miller Research to undertake research into the use of INSET days in schools in Wales. The initial findings of this research, along with other evidence, which is outlined in more detail in the next section, have informed the proposals in this consultation.

We have also been working with Children in Wales, the national umbrella body for organisations and individuals who work with children, young people and their families in Wales. They have been tasked with speaking with children and young people to collect their opinions on INSET days provision and how this affects their education. Children in Wales met with learners from across Wales from primary and secondary settings.

This research found that learners typically spend INSET days resting, socialising with friends, enjoying hobbies like watching films or playing sports, and catching up on schoolwork, especially older learners. They value the time for relaxation and connection. When asked how they'd like to spend INSET days, children

suggested active and fun experiences such as trips, sports, and time with friends and family, while still appreciating the chance to rest and recharge.

To support wellbeing and learning on INSET days, learners suggested schools offer safe spaces, online contact with staff, and optional attendance for those who need it. Ideas included homework clubs, virtual social activities, and practical support like food parcels or access to local services.

Learners shared mixed views on the number of INSET days. Some felt the current amount is appropriate, valuing school time and recognising practical issues like childcare and missed learning. Others wanted more INSET days for rest, family time, or personal responsibilities, especially in rural areas. A few preferred fewer days to avoid missing lessons. Most agreed teacher training is important, but opinions varied on how often it should happen, some suggested more INSET days, while others proposed creative alternatives like online learning or learner-led activities to reduce disruption.

Children in Wales summarised their findings by saying:

“ Overall, pupils want more INSET days to be spread over the school year. While there were only very small differences in how different age groups felt about INSET days, INSET days were viewed as valuable time off for everyone. We note that older pupils wanted more INSET days to be able to use for revision, while younger pupils wanted them just for another day off. Pupils would like decision makers to consider their suggestions for supporting at risk individuals and initiatives to support care for teachers who are parents. ”

As well as this important consultation, we will consider the findings of the Children in Wales fieldwork and the evaluation of INSET days conducted by Miller Research carefully before making a decision on whether to proceed with the proposals in this consultation. The responses to the consultation will be analysed, alongside the findings of the research and evaluation, and all evidence will be fully considered in making the decision. This will ensure the voices of children, families and practitioners are heard in the process, and that that the decision is based on robust evidence.

## Why we are proposing a change

While the traditional five STPC(W)D INSET days have supported school development for many years, the evolving demands of the education system, such as the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales, ALN reforms, new qualifications, and the drive for equity, require a more consistent and strategic approach. Local authorities also increasingly require the use of INSET days for corporate training, placing additional pressure on schools. Alongside this, the new school improvement arrangements encourage greater collaboration between schools, which takes time and planning. The establishment of Dysgu, the new national body for professional learning and leadership support, from September 2025 reflects our commitment to ensuring that professional learning is coherent, accessible, and impactful across the system.

Estyn's recent report on the teaching of the curriculum in Wales stated the following:

“ Where high-quality professional learning has the greatest impact, it is sustained, collaborative and focused directly on improving teaching. In the best schools, staff work together to explore evidence-informed practices, reflect on pedagogy, and refine approaches in the light of classroom experience. Leaders create protected time for professional learning and ensure it aligns with whole-school goals and individual development needs. ”

[Footnote 1 ([https://www.gov.wales/pdf-optimised/node/72674#\\_ftn1](https://www.gov.wales/pdf-optimised/node/72674#_ftn1))]

Estyn offer caution however, as they find:

“ time and budgetary constraints often limit the provision and impact of professional learning in some schools. In these cases, staff report a lack of opportunity to focus on pedagogy, with training often dominated by compliance or statutory content. This presents particular challenges for staff who would benefit from ongoing, phase or subject-specific professional learning, which is not always consistently available as part of

their regular professional development. ”

[Footnote 2 ([https://www.gov.wales/pdf-optimised/node/72674#\\_ftn2](https://www.gov.wales/pdf-optimised/node/72674#_ftn2))]

The OECD commented in 2021 that:

“ the changes being enacted, along with the supportive environment, create the space to rethink established practices and to develop and implement new and effective approaches. It is important to build on the momentum generated by the curriculum reform to maintain commitment to and pursue the further development of effective professional learning in Welsh schools. ”

[Footnote 3 ([https://www.gov.wales/pdf-optimised/node/72674#\\_ftn3](https://www.gov.wales/pdf-optimised/node/72674#_ftn3))]

The additional INSET day, that has currently been in place since 2019, was a step towards giving schools time and space to respond to important developments. Although its impact was initially limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the extra day is now an integral part of the school calendar and enables practitioners to devote additional time to professional learning. Removing this additional day would be a backward step in our efforts to support school practitioners, in particular at a time where there is recognition of increasing workload pressures.

We also recognise that some schools need to structure and time their INSET days in a more effective way, allowing for better collaboration between other settings. The Schools as Learning Organisation model recognises four transversal themes of trust, time, thinking together and technology, purposeful INSET days enable these within and across schools. Ensuring schools plan INSET days carefully and share their intentions with parents and carers and their local authority will improve collaboration between schools and with local authorities, and it aims to mitigate the impact of INSET days on parents and carers, by allowing them to plan childcare arrangements in advance.

We would encourage schools in the same local authority area, diocesan

authority or from the same cluster to take some of their INSET days on the same day. This would help to minimise the impact on parents or carers who have learners in different settings and would also support and enable collaboration between schools to consider national priorities and to discuss learner transition and the 3 to 16 continuum.

If we are to see purposeful learning and collaboration within our schools and across Wales, leaders should be mindful on their use of twilight sessions when planning to develop their workforce and respond to important priorities as stated above. Over-use of these sessions will take away the opportunity available to our teachers and teaching assistants to learn and develop with appropriate time and space to do so. It also hinders the possibility of intentional collaboration. They should be used carefully and thoughtfully throughout the year as a way to support development and learning.

## **What we are proposing**

We are proposing a revised approach to INSET days and professional learning to better support the school workforce in Wales.

We propose future INSET days be devoted (wholly or mainly) to the provision of training for school teaching staff (including training attended by both teaching and non-teaching staff and training conducted jointly with other schools), and preparation and planning work in relation to one or more of the following areas:

- The operation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 for learners at the school.
- The curriculum to be provided at the school under Parts 2 and 3 of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021.
- The assessment arrangements to be made under Part 4 of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021.
- The new qualifications being introduced by Qualifications Wales in Wales commencing from September 2025.
- Current national priorities as set out in the School Development Plan (Wales) Regulations 2014. Those are as follows:

- a. Improving learners' progression by ensuring their learning is supported by a range of knowledge, skills and experience.
- b. Reducing the impact of poverty on learners' progression and attainment.

To achieve this, we propose the following changes.

## **Maintaining six INSET days per academic year**

We propose to amend the STPC(W)D, which outlines the number of days a teacher should work. It will note that, of the 195 days a teacher is required to work, 189 days must be days on which the teacher may be required to teach, and 6 days will be days on which the teacher may only be required to perform other duties, such as attending INSET days.

Six INSET days will allow schools to focus on national education priorities, professional development and learning and responding to school, cluster and local needs.

Therefore, the 2003 Regulations will be amended as follows:

- There will be 390 school sessions.
- Of those 390 school sessions, 378 will be teaching days. In other words, they will be sessions where both teachers and learners are required to attend. There will continue to be 1 morning and 1 afternoon session per school day and so 2 school sessions are equal to 1 full school day.
- The remaining 12 school sessions must be used for the INSET days (days where the teachers attend the school but the learners do not).
- Those INSET days must be used mainly or wholly for certain prescribed purposes (see *What are we proposing*).
- The STPCD(W)D which sets out the terms and conditions of school teachers in Wales will be amended to provide that teachers will be required to teach for 189 school days (for example, 378 school sessions) and will be required to work a further 6 days (for example, 12 school sessions) but will not be required to teach of those days. Those days will be set aside for teacher taring as described above.

## **Improving the planning and timing of INSET days**

We want to maximise the impact of INSET days on professional learning and lessen the negative impact on families.

We propose to revise the guidance to schools on INSET days to:

- Encourage schools not to have more than two consecutive INSET days, for example, only to use up to two INSET days at a time, rather than have blocks of three or more INSET days concurrently. This is intended to ensure that INSET days are distributed across the school year.
- Encourage schools to engage with other schools in their area and their local authorities to time INSET days in collaboration across clusters, groups of schools and local authorities where possible. This is intended to further improve the peer learning available to our practitioners, and to make childcare arrangements easier for parents and carers with children in more than one school. For example, parents may have a child in a primary school and an older child in a secondary school. If there are different INSET days that may well cause practical childcare problems. It would preferable for schools and local authorities to work together to agree when the days will fall.
- Encourage schools not to use more than two INSET days in the form of twilight sessions. This is intended to ensure teachers and teaching assistants are able to have the space and time to develop their learning in the most effective way possible.
- Encourage schools to share the purpose and timing of their INSET days with parents and carers and local authorities at the beginning of the academic year. This is to enable better planning, and better communication with parents and carers.

## **What outcomes we expect**

Professional learning is a change process to improve and develop professional knowledge, skills or understanding.

We expect that revising the number of INSET days and strengthening the guidance for professional learning will lead to:

- Improved learner outcomes: by ensuring that practitioners have dedicated time to engage with high-quality professional learning, we aim to enhance teaching and learning across Wales.
- Stronger implementation of national priorities: for example, additional time and support will help practitioners better implement the Curriculum for Wales, ALN reforms, and inclusive approaches.
- Enhanced collaboration and reflection: more structured time for professional learning will encourage reflective practice, peer collaboration, and school-wide development planning.
- Sustainable system-wide improvement: supporting career-long professional learning will help build a resilient education workforce that is equipped to meet current and future challenges.

These outcomes align with our long-term vision for education in Wales: to empower practitioners to inspire and support every learner to reach their full potential. The responses to the consultation will be analysed, alongside the findings of the research and evaluation, and all evidence will be fully considered in making the decision.

## **Consultation questions**

### **Question 1**

Do you agree that 6 INSET days should be provided every year from 2026 to 2027 by changing the school teachers' pay and conditions (Wales) document?

### **Question 2**

Do you agree that INSET days should be used mainly or wholly for training, planning and preparation in relation to the purposes outlined (which relate to ALN, curriculum and assessment, qualifications and national priorities)?

### **Question 3**

We propose to change the guidance to advise that schools engage with other schools and local authorities to coordinate the timing of INSET days across groups, clusters or local authorities. This is to reduce disruption for families with children in multiple schools and to enable better collaboration between schools where possible. This will be coordinated between headteachers and local authorities. Do you agree?

### **Question 4**

We propose to change the guidance to ask schools to communicate the purpose and timing of their training with local authorities and parents or carers at the beginning of the academic year. Do you agree?

### **Question 5**

We propose to change the guidance to advise that schools do not group more than 2 INSET days together in a block. Do you agree?

### **Question 6**

We propose to change the guidance to advise that schools do not arrange more than 2 INSET days as twilight sessions within the academic year. Do you agree?

### **Question 7**

Do you agree that the guidance should emphasise that at least 4 INSET days are used wholly or mainly to deliver professional learning relating to learning and teaching, in line with the proposed purposes of INSET days in schools? (This will mean no more than 2 INSET days will be used on training not related to learning

and teaching.)

## **Question 8**

What, in your opinion, would be the likely effects of the proposal on the Welsh language? We are particularly interested in any likely effects on opportunities to use the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English.

Do you think that there are opportunities to promote any positive effects?  
Do you think that there are opportunities to mitigate any adverse effects?

## **Question 9**

In your opinion how could the proposed policy be formulated or changed so as to:

- have positive effects or more positive effects on using the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English, or
- mitigate any negative effects on using the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English?

Please use the consultation response form to respond to the above questions.

## **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)**

The Welsh Government will be data controller for Welsh Government consultations and for any personal data you provide as part of your response to the consultation.

Welsh Ministers have statutory powers they will rely on to process this personal data which will enable them to make informed decisions about how they

exercise their public functions. The lawful basis for processing information in this data collection exercise is our public task, that is, exercising our official authority to undertake the core role and functions of the Welsh Government. (Art 6(1)(e)).

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about or planning future consultations. In the case of joint consultations this may also include other public authorities. Where the Welsh Government undertakes further analysis of consultation responses then this work may be commissioned to be carried out by an accredited third party (for example, a research organisation or a consultancy company). Any such work will only be undertaken under contract. Welsh Government's standard terms and conditions for such contracts set out strict requirements for the processing and safekeeping of personal data.

In order to show that the consultation was carried out properly, 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. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then redact them before publishing.

You should also be aware of our responsibilities under Freedom of Information legislation and that the Welsh Government may be under a legal obligation to disclose some information.

If your details are published as part of the consultation response, then these published reports will be retained indefinitely. Any of your data held otherwise by Welsh Government will be kept for no more than three years.

## **Your rights**

Under the data protection legislation, you have the right:

- to be informed of the personal data held about you and to access it

- to require us to rectify inaccuracies in that data
- to (in certain circumstances) object to or restrict processing
- for (in certain circumstances) your data to be 'erased'
- to (in certain circumstances) data portability
- to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection

For further details about the information the Welsh Government holds and its use, or if you want to exercise your rights under the UK GDPR, please see contact details below:

Data Protection Officer:

Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

Email address: [dataprotectionofficer@gov.wales](mailto:dataprotectionofficer@gov.wales)  
(<mailto:dataprotectionofficer@gov.wales>)

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are:

Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Website: [ICO website](https://ico.org.uk/) (<https://ico.org.uk/>).

## Footnotes

[1 ([https://www.gov.wales/pdf-optimised/node/72674#\\_ftnref1](https://www.gov.wales/pdf-optimised/node/72674#_ftnref1)): **Teaching the Curriculum for Wales** (

[curriculum-for-wales/](#)) (Estyn)

[2 ([https://www.gov.wales/pdf-optimised/node/72674#\\_ftnref2](https://www.gov.wales/pdf-optimised/node/72674#_ftnref2)): **Teaching the Curriculum for Wales** (<https://estyn.gov.wales/improvement-resources/teaching-the-curriculum-for-wales/>) (Estyn)

[3 ([https://www.gov.wales/pdf-optimised/node/72674#\\_ftnref3](https://www.gov.wales/pdf-optimised/node/72674#_ftnref3)): **Teachers' professional learning study: Diagnostic report for Wales** ([https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2021/07/teachers-professional-learning-study-diagnostic-report-for-wales\\_499e77bc/caf912c7-en.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2021/07/teachers-professional-learning-study-diagnostic-report-for-wales_499e77bc/caf912c7-en.pdf)) (OECD)

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