

RAISING THE BAR IN ITET AND EARLY CAREER DEVELOPMENT

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Scope of the advice

1. In light of Wales' performance in the PISA 2009 survey, GTCW was asked in late December 2010 to bring forward advice to the Welsh Assembly Government on Initial Teacher Education and Training (ITET) and Early Career Development by early February 2011.
2. This document sets out what the Council perceives as the issues and problems with the current arrangements for ITET and Early Career Development. It proceeds by making recommendations for improvements in these areas.

1.2 Research evidence

3. In providing this advice, the Council emphasises that improvements in Wales' standing in the PISA survey will not be resolved by making changes to ITET and Early Career Development alone. Evidence from countries such as Finland, that have consistently been at the top of the international rankings indicate that a whole range of other factors need to be addressed for a country to have an effective education system.
4. That said, research evidence does indicate that one of the features of countries that perform well is a coherent and supportive structure for teachers in the early part of their career.
5. Furthermore, the McKinsey report (2007) emphasises that the "quality of a country's education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers" and that the three elements that matter most are:
 - recruiting the right people to become teachers;
 - developing these persons into effective instructors;
 - ensuring the education system is able to deliver the best possible instruction for every child.

2.0 Current arrangements – Issues and constraints

2.1 Initial Teacher Education and Training (ITET)

- (a) **Persons recruited to teacher training in Wales.** It is evident that Wales is not recruiting the quality of entrants to ITET programmes that other countries do. In recruiting postgraduate trainees, teaching does not enjoy the same high status as it does in countries such as Finland or attract the same remuneration or conditions as other professions, hence the quality of entrants is affected. Furthermore, the average UCAS tariff for entry into undergraduate ITET courses in Wales is significantly below that for other degree courses and there are much higher ITET entry requirements in some other parts of the UK such as Northern Ireland.
- (b) **Too many teachers trained in Wales.** GTCW data on QTS, teacher registration, employment and Induction show that Wales continues to train too many teachers relative to the employment opportunities available.

In 2006-07, 2062 persons were awarded Qualified Teacher Status in Wales having completed programmes of ITET. Following the Furlong Review of ITET in 2006, the Welsh Assembly Government announced a reduction in teacher training numbers in Wales of 50% in primary and 25% in secondary by 2012. However, reductions of this magnitude have not been followed through and in 2010-11, 1823 persons were awarded Qualified Teacher Status through ITET programmes.

Unfortunately, many teachers who train in Wales fail to secure permanent teaching posts in Wales, teach outside Wales or are lost to teaching. In fact, between 2005-06 and 2009-10, the number of teachers meeting the Induction standard in Wales fell from 1324 to 1036 as permanent posts for new teachers continued to fall.

Funding provided by the Assembly via HEFCW to ITET institutions for PGCE students or each year of a B.Ed is over £4,000. Thus, it is clear that a significant sum of money is being spent each year in Wales through overtraining.

- (c) **The content of teacher training programmes.** The Council argues that the current content of ITET programmes is not fit for purpose, primarily due to the length of courses which mean that there is insufficient time to cover all of the relevant areas in sufficient detail in order to properly prepare a new teacher for the classroom and embed key principles such as the importance of enquiry led practice and self reflection. This is particularly true for the PGCE where a large percentage of the nine month programme will be spent on school placement. The Council remains concerned that the current Assembly CPD Review incorporates Induction and EPD but excludes QTS.

2.2 Statutory Induction

- (d) **Variation in the Induction experience received by NQTs.** From GTCW's work in administering the funding of Induction on behalf of the Assembly, it is aware of significant variations in the quality of the Induction year received by new teachers. Influencing factors include, the commitment or experience of the Local Authority or School concerned, the quality and amount of mentor support received and geographic factors. There is no national system of quality assurance for school based Induction programmes.
- (e) **Building upon QTS.** While Assembly guidance emphasises that the Induction year should build on QTS, making use of the career entry profile, this is not always the case in practice. As such, Induction is often seen as a period which is more concerned with "time served" rather than gathering the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the Induction standard.
- (f) **Failure rates.** As at 31st December, nearly 8000 teachers have met the Induction standard in Wales. However, in this period, only 8 teachers have failed to meet the Induction standard. Such a failure rate must call into question the rigour of the statutory Induction year in Wales.

2.3 Early Professional Development (EPD)

- (g) **Too much flexibility.** The current Assembly arrangements for EPD allow teachers a huge amount of flexibility in how they spend their £1,000 in years 2 and 3 of their career. From its work in administering the funding of EPD on behalf of the Assembly, GTCW has previously raised its concerns about the activities that teachers spend their funding on and the fact that some teachers do not use all of the funding available. In evaluating teachers' EPD Planning forms, the Assembly has asked the Council to apply a process of "light touch" evaluation rather than rigorously scrutinising the value of the activities teachers wish to pursue.

- (h) **Building upon QTS and Induction.** As is the case with the relationship between QTS and Induction; during their EPD years, teachers very rarely view their early years as a continuum and do not seek to use their EPD funding to build upon their QTS or Induction years.

2.4 Further professional Development

- (i) **Teachers in the midst of their careers.** Whilst the Council admires the commitment of the Assembly in providing funding support in the first three years of their career, it remains concerned that thereafter there are no national CPD arrangements for teachers who do not wish to become headteachers. The Council has previously advised the Assembly on the matter in its advice on a Professional Development Framework for teachers between 2005 and 2007. It seems illogical to provide extensive support to teachers in their early years, but leave them without national, quality assured and funded CPD thereafter. Given that the majority of teachers fall into this group, this may be a factor that is impacting on the PISA results.

3.0 Recommendations for improvement

- (a) **Recruiting the right number and quality of persons to teacher training.** The Council recommends that the Assembly should revise its initial teacher training in-take targets to give a closer alignment with the number of permanent “inductable” posts in Wales. In addition, it should put in place strategies so that, like other countries such as Finland, it is able to recruit high quality entrants to initial teacher training.
- (b) **Make QTS and early professional development a true continuum.** The Council recommends that a fresh approach should be taken to QTS and early professional development in Wales. The structure of QTS and early career development should be reconceived as a “continuum” rather than 3 separate stages as it often the case at present. The Council considers that Wales should seek to clearly set out the knowledge and skills that new teachers need to acquire in their early years and then make decisions as to how and when best to deliver this over the period of the continuum (whatever this period is considered to be) through a mix of formal learning, application, review and reflection.

This approach would provide scope to incorporate key Assembly priorities such as literacy, numeracy, narrowing the gap, behaviour management, additional learning needs, reflective practice and the underlying principles of the School Effectiveness Framework at appropriate stages of a new teacher’s development. It would also give new teachers time for action-based research and proper reflection on their practice in light of their developing theoretical knowledge.

- (c) **Quality assurance.** There are clear deficiencies in the existing quality assurance arrangements for Induction and EPD. As such, the Council recommends that local and national quality assurance arrangements are established for any revised early professional career arrangements.
- (d) **Mentor support.** Similar to point (b), the Council recommends that the Assembly reviews the existing mentor support arrangements for new teachers to ensure that mentors are properly trained and provide the best possible support to new teachers within their care.
- (e) **Academic and professional accreditation.** New teachers who complete a PGCE are awarded a range of academic credits by ITET institutions in Wales. In some institutions, this is 60 credits at Masters level. The Council supports the principle that any restructuring of QTS and early career development should include opportunities for new teachers to gain academic

and professional accreditation for their learning and practice. Such a programme should allow new teachers to build upon their early teaching experience, expose them to leading edge pedagogical and research approaches and give them an opportunity to not only apply this “learning” in their own classrooms but also critically reflect upon the results. In this regard, the Council advises that consistent with other leading education systems such as in Finland, Wales should move towards teaching being a **Masters profession**. However, the Council remains of the view that teachers should not be required to complete a Masters degree in their first 2 or 3 years of teaching.

- (f) **Post QTS and early career development.** The Council asks the Assembly to consider again its advice on a Professional Development Framework (2005 – 2007). In particular, the Council finds it irrational to have in place good quality, funded professional development for teachers in the early part of their career, yet offer no such support thereafter for the duration of a teacher’s career. Continuing professional development and reflective practice must be seen as career long processes and all teachers post EPD should have opportunities to carry out focused and rigorous CPD which impacts directly on their classroom practice and on pupil learning. The Council continues to advocate its previous advice to the Assembly Government (Professional Development Framework, 2005-07) that a programme such as Chartered Teacher should be introduced in Wales.
- (g) **More information - GTCW surveys.** The Council believes that there is a lack of hard evidence about the views and perceptions of new teachers concerning their experiences of ITET, Induction and EPD. The Council intends to undertake two surveys in 2011-12, one of relating to the experiences of NQTs in their teacher training period and one relating to the experiences of new teachers in their Induction year. These studies will be funded by GTCW and the results will be made available to the Assembly Government and other stakeholders in 2012.

4.0 Affordability

- 6. In the current economic climate, it is recognised that any proposals to restructure ITET and early career development in Wales must be affordable.
- 7. The Council believes that considerable funds can be freed up by reducing the number of teachers trained in Wales to levels more consistent with the numbers required to fill available posts. For example, based on the financial figures provided by HEFCW in section 2, a reduction of 200 undergraduate trainees and 200 PGCE trainees would save around £3 million. Bigger reductions would yield bigger savings.
- 8. Furthermore, the Council believes that the existing EPD funding arrangements can be tightened or streamlined (as explained earlier), offering better value for the same or less Assembly funds.
- 9. The freeing up of funding from these two sources alone would give the Assembly considerable scope to restructure ITET, early career development and CPD for teachers in the midst of a teacher’s career.