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Chapter 11 Funding of teachers' professional development in Wales

In its 2002 advice to the Assembly 'Continuing Professional Development – An Entitlement for All', the Council stated that there was a need for "sufficient focused funding, which ensured that all teachers are able to access CPD opportunities and have sufficient time to both undertake their activities and reflect upon them. This should include time to plan, undertake, reflect on and disseminate the lessons learnt from undertaking their professional development".

While the specific focus of this advice to the Assembly is on the establishment of a Professional Development Framework, the Council advises that these recommendations can only be meaningful if there are sufficient levels of funding for teachers' professional development that the Framework is designed to support.

Concern to tackle the current lack of coherence and clarity over the funding of teachers' professional development in Wales was shared by many organisations and individual teachers responding to the Council's consultations.

Equality of opportunity and appropriate levels of funding

As described in chapter 2 of this document, current CPD activities are numerous and include:

formal and centrally organised CPD - for example, all newly qualified teachers are required to complete programmes of Induction and Early Professional Development (EPD). Support is also provided for prospective headteachers through the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) and heads who take up their first post, through the Professional Headship Induction Programme (PHIP);

professional development activities specifically organised by a particular school or LEA - this includes in-service training courses or support in schools and

the use of specialist advisors and advisory teachers;

individually focused CPD, under which activities are vast in number and extremely varied - these range from activities which are accredited such as a higher degree course to less formal learning such as a visit to a local school or familiarisation with a new software package. Activities cover ones identified both through the performance management process and ones initiated by the teacher on a personal basis.

At present, these requirements are largely catered for through the following funding arrangements:

the Assembly's Better Schools Fund (BSF) which replaced GEST;

the Assembly's unhypothecated revenue support settlement to local authorities which forms the basis of schools' budgets and which is supplemented by local authority funding;

the Assembly funded, GTCW administered individually focused CPD funding programme;

various Assembly ring-fenced budgets for specific CPD initiatives;

self-funding by individual teachers or schools.

Many of the respondents to the Council's consultations continue to be concerned that the funding arrangements for teachers' professional development are inadequate. In broad terms, the Council's consultations have indicated that there are two particular problems perceived by teachers and others:

the total level of funding available for teachers' professional development;

the lack of clarity about how funding for professional development is distributed.

Specifically, consultees expressed the following concerns:

some teachers are restricted in their ability to access funds equitably based upon the LEA or school where they work. The reasons for this vary on a case by case basis, but include:

differences between LEAs in the level of funding available;

differences between LEAs in the way funding for CPD is distributed to schools;

a reluctance on the part of some headteachers to release teachers for CPD due to internal pressures or the small size of the school;

the replacement of the GEST programme by the Better Schools Fund (BSF), which is for "pump priming" and time-related training and development administered through LEAs, has meant that a number of the specific CPD needs of teachers are not being adequately funded. This is particularly the case with the need for ongoing school professional development priorities of a "maintenance" type which enable teachers, for example, to keep their knowledge up to date regarding various processes, systems and statutory or syllabus requirements;

the level of funding available to schools does not adequately cover teachers' CPD needs, in particular, there are concerns that certain subjects are not treated equitably as a result of the BSF arrangements;

local authorities claim that extra funding from local budgets beyond that included in the revenue support settlement is available to schools. However, the unhypothecated revenue input from the Assembly and the variation of investment in CPD between local authorities mean that there is a lack of clarity about how much is or should be available for teachers' development.

The Council considers that it is important for the Assembly to address the issue of the clarity and the transparency of the funding

arrangements for CPD. A factual statement from the Assembly setting out the various funding arrangements would go some way to improving this situation. The Council also believes it is right for employers to commit financially to the development of their teaching staff and believes that a similar statement should be made by LEAs.

In addition, for schools and LEAs to provide a viable CPD programme, there is a need to develop a strategic and forward programme of activities. However, this is very difficult to undertake when funding received by LEAs and schools is provided on an annual basis, rather than over a longer period. The Council understands that the Assembly is investigating the establishment of budgets over a longer period, such as three years. The Council encourages the Assembly to continue with this approach in order that the longer term CPD needs of teachers can be planned.

Individually focussed CPD

The Council welcomed the Assembly's decision to put the GTCW administered individually focused programme on a permanent footing from April 2004. It further welcomed the Assembly's commitment to a three year budget for this programme from April 2005 and the increase in the level of funding available between 2005 and 2008.

However, the Council is disappointed that the level of funding available is still not at the level set by the Assembly in the second and third years of the pilot stages. In its 2002 advice, the Council stated that guaranteeing an annual entitlement to all teachers would cost in the region of £20million, a relatively small sum compared to the overall school budget. Unfortunately, this recommendation is a long way from being realised, and the Council looks forward to discussing further with the Assembly a date by which the Council's recommendation could be implemented.

A structure for funding

The Council re-iterates its advice to the Assembly in 'Continuing Professional Development – An Entitlement for All' namely that funding strategies should be in place at three levels, namely:

individually focused. The Council advocates that every teacher should have an entitlement to individually focused professional development, and this should be backed by an agreed sum of money available on an

annual basis;

school focused. Funding for these activities should continue to come from school budgets. However, headteachers and teachers in the consultations highlighted that there is now inadequate funding available in school budgets for headteachers to develop a CPD programme which concentrates on the school's priorities and which builds from the school development plan. This is particularly the case for professional development which might be described as of an ongoing 'maintenance' nature. At the same time, the Council is aware from anecdotal evidence that the five non-pupil contact days are not always used to their best advantage by all schools for CPD and there may be scope for development in this area;

LEA / nationally focused. The Council continues to advocate a clear stream of funding through LEAs to support local and national priorities. The Council recognises that the Better Schools Fund (BSF) has replaced GEST in this regard and provides specific support for teachers' professional development.

In repeating this advice, the Council acknowledges that in practice there is sometimes overlap between these three categories.

Recommendations:

The Council recommends that:

- 1 the Assembly Government makes a statement setting out a coherent funding strategy for teachers' professional development in Wales. This should address funding needs at three levels (the individual, the school and LEA / national) and seek to explain the mechanisms through which each of these needs is funded;
- 2 the Assembly ensures that there is sufficient funding to enable all teachers to access CPD opportunities and have sufficient time to undertake them;
- 3 all local authorities, as employers commit local resources to the funding of teachers' CPD;
- 4 the Assembly Government commits itself to a specified date to

reach a target of £20m which would give all teachers an annual entitlement to individually focused CPD.