



Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

Cofnod y Trafodion The Record of Proceedings

[Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#)

[The Children, Young People and Education
Committee](#)

05/04/2017

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Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynnddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal, cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd. Lle y mae cyfranwyr wedi darparu cywiriadau i'w tystiolaeth, nodir y rheini yn y trawsgrifiad.

The proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee. In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation is included. Where contributors have supplied corrections to their evidence, these are noted in the transcript.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Mohammad Asghar Bywgraffiad Biography	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Michelle Brown Bywgraffiad Biography	UKIP Cymru UKIP Wales
Hefin David Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur Labour
John Griffiths Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur Labour
Llyr Gruffydd Bywgraffiad Biography	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Darren Millar Bywgraffiad Biography	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Lynne Neagle Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Julie Morgan Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur Labour

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Steve Davies	Cyfarwyddwr, Y Gyfarwyddiaeth Addysg Director, Education Directorate
Huw Foster Evans	Ymgynghorydd Proffesiynol—Datblygu Gweithlu'r Ysgol Professional Adviser—Development of the School Workforce
Kirsty Williams	Aelod Cynulliad, Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru (Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg) Assembly Member, Welsh Liberal Democrats (The Cabinet Secretary for Education)

Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol
National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance

Jon Antoniazzi	Clerc Clerk
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Sarah Bartlett	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Joe Champion	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service
Gareth Rogers	Ail Glerc Second Clerk
Lisa Salkeld	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol Legal Adviser

*Dechreuodd rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod am 10:31.
The public part of the meeting began at 10:31.*

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau, Dirprwyon a Datgan Buddiannau Introductions, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

[1] **Lynne Neagle:** Good morning, everyone. Can I welcome you to this morning's formal session of the Children, Young People and Education Committee? We've had no apologies. Are there any declarations of interest? If I can just declare an interest as my husband is currently working for the University of South Wales and his work does include some work on teacher training. Hefin.

[2] **Hefin David:** In which case, I should declare I'm an associate lecturer at Cardiff Metropolitan University. That would be unpaid.

[3] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Thank you very much.

10:32

Ymchwiliad i Addysg a Dysgu Proffesiynol Athrawon—Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 6 Inquiry into Teachers' Professional Learning and Education—Evidence Session 6

[4] **Lynne Neagle:** So, we're now going to have our final evidence session on our inquiry into teachers' professional learning and education. I'm very pleased to welcome Kirsty Williams this morning, Cabinet Secretary for Education. Can I just ask you to introduce your officials for the record?

[5] **The Cabinet Secretary for Education (Kirsty Williams):** Of course. Bore

da, bawb—good morning, everybody. I'm joined this morning by Steve Davies, director of the education directorate in Welsh Government, and Huw Foster Evans, who is a professional adviser specialising in the development of the school workforce.

[6] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you very much. If you're happy, we'll go straight into questions.

[7] **Kirsty Williams:** Of course, Chair.

[8] **Lynne Neagle:** If I can just start with a general question—how are you ensuring that all your various reforms to the education system are working in tandem?

[9] **Kirsty Williams:** Thank you for that. It's absolutely crucial for practitioners at all levels in the education system and parents to have an understanding that all the reforms that we're currently working on are interconnected. In the case of the professional workforce, there is a golden thread that runs through our programme of initial teacher education reform, through to our professional standards and leadership standards, through to professional learning opportunities, the leadership academy, which then ties into ensuring that we have the workforce with the necessary skills to be able to deliver on our new curriculum as our new curriculum is developed—and that all feeds into the national mission that we have as a Welsh Government to raise standards in Welsh education, close the attainment gap, and to create an education system that is a source of national pride and confidence. Each one of our reforms feeds into that overall agenda. You will note, from the rapid review that the OECD recently carried out for us, that they have urged us again to look at how we bring all those things together, and that will be done in a new version of 'Qualified for Life' that will be published sometime after the Easter recess.

[10] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you very much. You'll have heard, I'm sure, Estyn speaking to us last week. One of the things we discussed was their conclusion that teaching is the weakest aspect of the system in Wales. What is your comment on that finding?

[11] **Kirsty Williams:** Obviously, I take very seriously what the chief inspector has said in his annual report, and many of the findings confirmed to me that the reforms that we're carrying out are the necessary reforms to strengthen teaching in Wales. I would like to make it absolutely clear,

though, that we have some exceptional teachers in Wales, delivering fantastic lessons. The challenge for the Welsh education system is to ensure that there is consistency, so, no matter where you are in Wales, no matter what school you're in, whether you are learning through the medium of English or through the medium of Welsh, there is a consistency of excellence in our teaching profession, and we can ensure that where there is excellent practice—and there is—that is shared, and the knowledge of what excellence looks like, and how you deliver excellence in your school, is replicated consistently through the system, which is a very important part of our professional learning offer. But it's that lack of consistency, I think, that is certainly of concern to me, and we recognise the comments made by the chief inspector, hence our reforms to ensure that there's greater rigour in our initial teacher education, that our professional standards are reviewed, strengthened, that we have a new way in which we support leadership, because often in a school, great teachers need great leadership within their organisation to allow them to be the best professional that they can be, but also an expectation that teachers, throughout their career, will continue to learn. I have consistently said the biggest learner in the classroom should be the teacher at the front of it. I have no time for people who think they're the finished product when they come out of their training. We constantly need—and the professional standards are crucial in this, in developing that ethos within the profession, and I see it in many, many teachers I meet—that desire to continue to learn, reflect on their practice, the impact that that has on learning, on their children, and revise their approach.

[12] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Hefin.

[13] **Hefin David:** I like this idea that you're not the finished product; I don't think any of us are, really. The problem with time for reflection and professional development is it's the thing that often happens after you've done all the busy, urgent stuff that's got to get done, so would you agree that, at the moment, professional development tends to be left until last, and isn't prioritised in the school week?

[14] **Kirsty Williams:** I think that there is a potential danger in that scenario, which is why we have to look at the issues of workload, and I'm sure the committee will have questions on workload, and what we're trying to do with the profession to be able to address issues of workload and create that space and time for professional learning. But it's also, Hefin, about setting that expectation, and that's where the new teaching standards come in, where it sets very clearly an expectation upon you, as a professional, that to be a

teacher is to constantly reflect on your practice, to constantly look out for new ways of doing things, to update your knowledge and reflect that in your practice. But more importantly about setting the expectation on you as a professional, it gives you the right to demand that of your school leader, and the leadership standards that are being brought in for school leaders at the same time sets an expectation on them that they will create that space for their staff to be able to take on those opportunities. But I'm absolutely aware, to do that we also need to look at the issue of workload, and the quantum of time, and the various ways in which we can make professional learning time available. I'm sure you'll have questions about INSET days, which often—

[15] **Hefin David:** Yes, we'll come on to those.

[16] **Kirsty Williams:** It's about the quantum of time that we can make available for professionals to learn.

[17] **Hefin David:** Yes. I was thinking, actually, where we are at this point in time, before we start thinking about changing, and have you, since you've become Cabinet Secretary for Education, undertaken any work to understand what professional development is going on in Wales? What do you understand it to be?

[18] **Kirsty Williams:** If I can just take a step back, I think, traditionally, what professional learning looked like for teachers was national Government creating a workshop where teachers would travel to Cardiff, or maybe travel to a venue in north Wales, and you be lectured to—by the stage, on the stage—'This is what you need to do in your classroom.' What we're doing is moving away from that, and the reason why we're moving away from it is because we know from international evidence that that's not the most effective way of doing it. And if it's not effective, that means it's a question of value for money. So, if we're spending money on that and it's not delivering, it's a waste of money, and it's certainly not what teachers are demanding. So, professional learning now is a whole variety of opportunities for individual teachers. That might be school-to-school working or cluster-to-cluster working, the opportunity to go and visit another school, to watch somebody in your subject—

[19] **Hefin David:** And is that happening?

[20] **Kirsty Williams:** Absolutely. I've just literally—I was almost late

because I've been in Cadoxton Primary School in Barry this morning to look at the digital competence framework. I met this amazing woman in the school who is seconded for part of her time by south Wales central consortia and she is working with teachers across south Wales to develop their skills to deliver the digital competence framework. It's not a one-off; she has a six-unit session with those teachers, which allows her to impart some knowledge and approaches. That allows that teacher to go back into their own classroom, try something there, reflect on it and bring it back to the group. This takes place over a period of six sessions with that person. It's a very real example of what we're doing, but I can probably go to each of your constituencies—.

[21] **Hefin David:** Two questions—

[22] **Kirsty Williams:** Bryn Elan, I had the chance—Darren, very kindly, invited me to visit one of his high schools, and that high school has a track record of going out to provide leadership, coaching and mentoring to other schools in the area. So, it's definitely happening. What do need to do as a national Government is to ensure that there is a national approach and that national priorities are fed down to the consortia.

[23] **Hefin David:** How do you capture that? How do you capture that best practice?

[24] **Kirsty Williams:** Oh, gosh. Well, there are a number of individual projects that consortia are doing to evaluate the impact of those courses. We've also asked Estyn to have a look—a thematic review of the entirety of how we're approaching this. We're working closely with universities in the higher education sector. We'll be funding some PhD work with some of our higher education institutes, to capture the effectiveness of some of this. So, there's a whole range of measures. Have I missed anything, Steve?

[25] **Mr Davies:** No—just an emphasis on the regions and the expectation. Every school is required, statutorily, to have a school development plan that plans against its priorities and against the national priority of development. But the regions are required to monitor that through challenge adviser work at individual school level, and the regions have their register of best practice across all of the areas, whether it be GCSE examination development, literacy, numeracy or Welsh. They have their register, they facilitate that cross-regional work and even, in some cases, they work across regions where those opportunities are elsewhere. And then, three times a year, we

visit the regions to evaluate and monitor the quality and range of provision that they're creating.

[26] **Hefin David:** It seems a bit scattered, this kind of project. It doesn't seem particularly co-ordinated.

[27] **Kirsty Williams:** Well, in recognition of that, we are developing a national, overarching approach so that we can ensure that there is a consistency, there is planning, there's no duplication, it's cost-effective and where there are gaps, we can fill those gaps, and to ensure that national priorities are reflected in the professional learning opportunities on the ground. But what's really important—and this is the rub—is that no one individual will have the exact learning from professional development needs. Each school is in a different place, each professional is in a different place, so, it's that balance between having a national approach to ensure consistency and key priorities, but allowing the consortia in individual schools, through their school development plans, to best identify the learning needs of their staff in their area. So, what we're working on at the moment is to develop that overarching structure, so that I can have confidence that there is a consistency, that there is proper planning and it delivers good value for money.

[28] **Hefin David:** And the final question from me, just to square some evidence that was slightly different from different sources, regarding the link between professional development and performance management: the teaching unions were very keen to separate performance management from professional development to say, 'Professional development is something that is of its own intrinsic value', whereas the Education Workforce Council, when they gave evidence, suggested there could be elements of performance management when undertaking professional development. Would you say that this happens at the moment and, in the future, what would be your view as Cabinet Secretary?

10:45

[29] **Kirsty Williams:** Professional learning has an intrinsic, vital value of its own, and I would not want people to think that you only engage in professional learning as part of a performance management process. That's not what it should be about. Every professional has, via our teaching standards, the expectation that you will continue to engage in professional learning. Now, there may be some instances, if there are issues around

performance management, where professional learning would be advised and people would be signposted to, encouraged to and required to participate, but we should never, never make the mistake, I believe, of just equating professional learning simply with performance management.

[30] Now, Huw here was recently a headteacher and has managed professional learning programmes in the north Wales consortia. I don't know if you've got anything to add from a practitioner's perspective, Huw, as someone who has managed staff.

[31] **Hefin David:** Do you agree with the unions? Sorry, no—[*Inaudible.*]

[32] **Mr Evans:** Do I agree with the unions?

[33] **Hefin David:** That's not fair.

[34] **Mr Evans:** I think the Cabinet Secretary is absolutely right. You've got to have a significant amount of investment into professional learning, both in terms of its intrinsic value to the professional as an individual, but also to the professionalism of Wales as a collective. It can't be just for the one; it has to be for the all. Professional learning has got to develop from being something for the individual professional, be it a teacher, a headteacher, a leader, a member of the school support staff—whatever they might be—it has to develop from that into something that, essentially, when they go back into school, or whether it's an experience in school, is absorbed into the bricks and mortar of that building.

[35] **Hefin David:** And you never used it as a headteacher for performance management.

[36] **Mr Evans:** Professional learning needs to be signposted clearly as a result of performance management issues, because, otherwise there isn't—. Performance management in itself, unless it results in a series of actions in order to improve performance, where that is necessary, is of no use. It has to lead to a series of professional learning activities. There may be all sorts of different things around that that need to happen, but I don't think that you can equate professional learning with performance management as being one and the same thing. No, you can't.

[37] **Lynne Neagle:** Thanks. Thank you very much. Julie.

[38] **Julie Morgan:** You mentioned a number of schools that you'd visited recently. Could you tell us about the work of the professional development pioneer schools?

[39] **Kirsty Williams:** Certainly. Those schools that are taking part in this work and reflection are there to test, discuss and plan for what are the professional learning needs going to look like in the future for the successful delivery of our curriculum. So, they're working very, very closely with people looking at individual curriculum areas of learning and experience, so that they can plan the kind of professional learning programmes we're going to need in the future. They are resourced to do that. In fact, they are going to get additional resources this year. It's a small, modest increase, but it'll go up to £10,000 a term, that they will have to work on this, which is a small increase from what we've given them previously in the past. They're working alongside those schools that are looking at individual areas of learning and experience, because we do know that we're going to have to have a professional learning offer that is alongside the demands of the new curriculum, and that's what their main objective is.

[40] They're also looking at issues around workload. So, obviously, we always have to think about—. We can have the best curriculum in the world, but if that is overwhelming for staff in terms of what workload demand will be on them, it'll be for nothing. So, we've got to be cognisant that anything that we're doing in the new curriculum has to be manageable in a school setting. So, they're looking at professional learning opportunities, but they're also looking at workload issues, and workload issues that might arise out of the changes to the curriculum.

[41] **Julie Morgan:** Right. And can you tell us what that professional learning offer will look like in 1918—2018?

[42] **Kirsty Williams:** 1980—I was going to say, my goodness me—*[Laughter.]* I can't tell you what a professional looked like. Well, I can have a guess what professional learning looked like in 1980, and what it will look like in 2018 will be very different, because it won't be, 'Come to Cardiff. We will tell you what to do in your school.' The offer in 2018 and going forward will be for you to discuss, with your school leader, with your consortia, your own professional learning needs to address the new curriculum. That might be, as I said this morning, looking at, 'What do I need to do to get ready to deliver the digital competence framework? What do I need to do? Maybe my job in my school is going to be helping to draw up the specific curriculum

that will be taught in my school; what skills do I need to develop that set of skills?’

[43] We know that some of our schools—I recently went to Lliswerry school in Newport. The school there is working incredibly hard—and schools that you’ll be familiar with, Julie—with a really, really rich ethnic mix. So, how do I, as a professional, respond to that challenge of having new pupils, recently arrived in the country, with little English and little formal education experience? How do I, as a teacher, respond now to those needs? That might be something that I never did in initial teacher education, it’s something I’ve never been exposed to, so where can I go in my region where there are areas of good practice so I can learn from that?

[44] **Julie Morgan:** And—

[45] **Lynne Neagle:** On this point?

[46] **Mohammad Asghar:** Yes.

[47] **Lynne Neagle:** I’ll bring Julie back in then.

[48] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you very much. Cabinet Secretary, I’m very grateful that you’ve been to Newport and everything. There are a number of primary schools and other schools where ethnic minorities are large in number, in Pill and Maindee, you know that. What about the teachers? Are there ethnic minority teachers at those?

[49] **Kirsty Williams:** Oscar, you raise a very, very important point. There is a startling lack of diversity in our education workforce—a startling lack of diversity. And that’s something that I would like to see us discuss with colleges, with communities about what more we can do to diversify the teaching profession, because, at the moment, it’s not as diverse as I would like it to be. For many children in our schools, having a teaching workforce that reflects the community and the city that they’re growing up in is really, really important. So, I think there is a job of work to do to look to see what we can do to increase the diversity.

[50] In Lliswerry school, one of the key factors in some of their success has been to employ a community link worker from the Roma community—who himself is from the Roma community. He has had a huge impact by working with families to increase attendance at school, to make sure that those

children are coming in—he literally sometimes goes out and brings them in himself of a morning. Having that person who's from the community has built trust and understanding, and has been very, very successful in engaging with those communities. So, it is important to have a workforce that is diverse.

[51] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Julie.

[52] **Julie Morgan:** On that same point, has there been an analysis of the workforce in Wales to analyse how many minority ethnic teachers there are?

[53] **Kirsty Williams:** We don't really do that, but we are currently looking and out to consultation at the moment on establishing a new mechanism for collecting data on the workforce. So, we are actively looking at that at the moment—

[54] **Julie Morgan:** That is something that you would include.

[55] **Kirsty Williams:** Yes, because we want to be able to have a picture. Because if we don't have a correct picture and understanding, we're not going to be able to get the workforce planning of the future right. We need to develop our systems in that area, and we're out to consultation on that at the moment.

[56] **Julie Morgan:** Then, to go back to the time element, do you think five days are going to be enough for all the different demands there are—the new demands from the Welsh Government, as well as the existing demands?

[57] **Kirsty Williams:** I think, at the moment, I'm satisfied that the five days are adequate. I think, though, we have to reflect on the enormity of the reforms that we're undertaking at the moment. I will have to judge the benefits and the disbenefits of increasing that number of days against lost contact time with the children. I also think we need to look at the quantum of time that is available, because there is absolutely a role for professional learning opportunities that take place when the children aren't around, but when I speak to teachers, some of the most effective professional learning opportunities they've had have been in real, live situations with the children. So, we need to have a mixture of times set aside for some of this work. So, five days, at the moment, I am content with, but we will constantly judge whether that is adequate, listening to the feedback from the schools that are in the pioneer network looking at these issues. And I am open-minded to

continuing to work with the profession to look at the quantum and the availability of that school-to-school working, because that, again, is having the staff available to be able to go and visit and work together collaboratively. So, we need to look at the quantum, I think, and how we deliver that time.

[58] **Julie Morgan:** And some schools do the training after school, don't they?

[59] **Kirsty Williams:** Yes, they do.

[60] **Julie Morgan:** I don't know what your views are on that.

[61] **Kirsty Williams:** Again, I'm interested in the output, so I am loath to dictate to individual schools and individual school leaders how to run their schools, because I don't see that as my job. My job is to ensure that those learning opportunities are available and if individual heads want to organise them in a certain way, as long as that, then, doesn't impact on the quality of those professional learning opportunities, because if you're doing it in a twilight session, which means you can't go and have a look at a maths lesson in school B—and actually, that's what really needs to happen is that you need to expose your maths teachers to what's going on in school B and you can't do that because they're closed and they've gone home for the day—those are the kinds of issues that I'm concerned about. So, I don't want to dictate, 'This is how you do your professional learning', but what we do know is that it has to be done in a way that affords the best possible opportunities.

[62] **Julie Morgan:** So, does this really mean that—? You're obviously determined not to dictate or direct, but is there a danger, then, that there isn't an overall—

[63] **Kirsty Williams:** Well, no, I haven't explained. What I see as my job is creating that expectation and holding people accountable for their behaviour. So, maybe the twilight session is the correct approach for the delivery of that professional learning opportunity at that moment, and a school and the consortia would be best placed to judge that, not me, sitting on the fifth floor here in this building, because what do I know about that school? But, what I am interested in is creating a national overview to ensure that there is consistency, value and effectiveness in that training, and if I was concerned about that, then we would have to then be more prescriptive in how we would expect things to be delivered.

[64] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Michelle.

[65] **Michelle Brown:** Thank you, Chair. I was wanting to ask about teacher workload. Are you content that teachers are going to have enough time in their day to do all the continuing professional development, particularly in view of the new curriculum that's coming in? There's a lot of upskilling and learning that's going to have to be done there. And, do you have any proposals about adjusting the workload so that things aren't quite as stressful for teachers?

[66] **Kirsty Williams:** Workload continues to be a real issue for the profession. That's what I hear consistently from the profession. We know that, sometimes, issues around workload can be a problem when it comes to maybe retaining teachers within the profession, encouraging people to take on more responsibility and leadership roles within their schools and leadership overall. So, we are looking at a number of projects at the moment that are looking at the issue of workload and what we can do to reduce the workload burden. So, for instance, they would include a leadership time analysis—what are school leaders, headteachers, spending their time doing? And what can we then do to reduce that? What are they—?

[67] As some Members here will know, I've spent a lot of time during my time as an Assembly Member looking at health issues. That's what I've done for many, many years. And there is a mantra in the health service: do only what you can do. So, if there is another professional who can undertake that role, then that other professional needs to do it and you do only what you're competent at, only what you can do. I'm concerned, when I listen to headteachers, that the headteachers are doing a lot of things that don't relate to teaching and learning in their schools. So, we're looking at that at the moment so that we can identify what we can do.

[68] School business managers. We do know, and there is evidence from Estyn and from around the world, about the important role that school business managers could take up. Again, taking some of the non-teaching-and-learning responsibilities away from those professionals whose job it is to do teaching and learning. We've got the bureaucracy project, testing ourselves to make sure that we're not demanding of the profession things that really aren't adding value to teaching and learning, as well as the pioneer workload projects that we've got in some of our pioneer schools. So, we're looking at a number of things. But I'm quite open with the unions and

if they're got specific proposals and if this committee has specific proposals around workload, then I would be very pleased to hear about them, because I don't think we've cracked it yet, and I'm open to suggestions about what more we could do. Steve.

11:00

[69] **Mr Davies:** Just to add, the Minister's approach to the introduction of the new curriculum and the assessment, marking and testing requirements are, in themselves, challenging the system as to how we reduce workload as part of that. So, if you look at the quantum of the current curriculum, drawn up in 1988, it's a mile wide and an inch thick in terms of what you have to cover. Our approach is reducing that quantity while keeping in key aspects of knowledge, but looking at what are the realistic expectations on marking and assessment in the interests of children's progress as against gathering a massive amount of evidence that has to be used for external accountability. So, our approach to that has workload and the impact on workload as a key aspect.

[70] **Kirsty Williams:** So, for instance, we are working with Estyn in their myth-busting project. So, teachers and headteachers have an idea of what they think Estyn requires of them—when Estyn descends upon you, they're going to expect to see all of these things. Sometimes, headteachers and individual teachers overestimate actually what is required of them and, therefore, they're driving themselves and creating work that is not necessarily required of them. So, we're working on a myth-busting project with Estyn to be very clear to school leaders especially, 'This is actually what we require of you. You don't need to do any more, and that won't get you a better inspection just because you've done more, but this is what we expect you to do.'

[71] The other thing that I'm concerned about, if I'm honest, Chair, and this is something that I'm beginning to have conversations with Cabinet colleagues about, is that I often go to schools and find teachers and leaders dealing with the responsibilities of other professionals. Time that they should be taking focusing on teaching and learning is actually time chasing other services and other interventions for their children. So, I've already sat down with my Cabinet colleague for health to look at issues about what we can do around child and adolescent mental health services. We need to continue to do that across Government, because, too often, lots of the things that are driving workload and adding stress and strain for the profession are,

actually, the jobs of other agencies, and we need, on a cross-Government basis, to address those issues. Headteachers and teachers, yes, have to have the well-being of their children central to their work, but they need to be able to access timely responses from other services to help their children, and, quite often, they're left holding the ring for those other professionals. We need to work on that.

[72] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. John, you wanted to come in on this point.

[73] **John Griffiths:** Thank you, Chair. I just wonder, in terms of the workload issues and having school leadership and school management teams that do little or perhaps no actual classroom teaching, whether there's an obvious issue here about the size of our primary schools, because I've been to some schools where they seem to have a really good system in place, but they're quite large and are able to have these leadership teams and progression routes and ease the workload for the teachers actually doing the chalkface teaching, as it were. So, is there an issue there about the size of primary schools and the number of primary schools in Wales? Is that on the ministerial horizon?

[74] **Kirsty Williams:** Certainly, there are some workload issues arising out of different sizes of school. So, for instance, it can be really challenging in a rural area where you could be the headteacher with a large teaching responsibility, with limited access to your colleagues, because you may be a two or a three-teacher school, and you've got all the administrative responsibilities. As you'll be aware, there is a small and rural schools grant that has become available in April, and some of the guidance that has gone to local authorities around that is to look at how we can use that money to address headteachers in small schools who have a high teaching workload—what can the county do in those terms? What can we do to address professional isolationism? So, being able to link up those teachers with a wider group of teachers.

[75] So, sometimes, school size does have an impact, but, as I said, we recognise that in a variety of ways, and in the small-school context we've put some new resource into that, for authorities to look at some of the challenges around delivering in schools. Sometimes those small schools aren't just rural schools, they're Valleys schools. Because of the logistics of a valley, sometimes some of our smaller primary schools aren't just in rural areas, they can be found in some of our Valleys communities as well. So, they've potentially got a small school and sometimes a deprivation issue to

tackle also. But we're looking at ways in which we can support school-to-school working.

[76] **Mr Davies:** There are good examples even in your area—Maindee, for example, is a school that we touched on earlier in terms of the challenge, and the scale. What we find is that some of those very large primary schools, because of the large amount of resource, have greater flexibility in how they use their staff. Glanusk would be another very good example that's held up across Wales in terms of the excellent deployment of senior managers who don't have a heavy teaching load. So, it's not necessarily reducing the number of those schools; it's, through consortia, sharing what works and how effective it is, and sharing that with other schools.

[77] **Kirsty Williams:** So, for instance, there can be challenges around small secondary schools. So, in south Powys, an area that I'm particularly familiar with, in terms of developing the digital competency framework, all the secondary schools in south Powys have come together to work on that together, because doing that on your own just for your school is a monumental task, and a really big job, but actually by coming together—teachers from a variety of secondary schools coming together, dividing that up between them—that means it's manageable, they get to share best practice, and there is a consistency of approach. So, whichever school you go to in south Powys, you will have a consistency of approach on how that digital competency framework will be delivered in that series of secondary schools, and it fosters that collaboration that we need to see.

[78] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you. Minister, we had evidence from the teaching unions about school funding, and obviously schools do get different amounts per head. Do you think that variance in the amount of per pupil spend is having any impact on professional development, and is that something that you're looking at?

[79] **Kirsty Williams:** I want to be the first person to acknowledge that it isn't an easy time for school budgets. I don't want to sit here and pretend that the education system is awash with money, and that's why we've got to make sure, when we are putting in money, that it's spent to good effect, and it has an effect on teaching and learning outcomes for the children. I've not received into Government feedback that this is impacting on professional learning opportunities. What we are doing is using some of the additional £100 million for school standards to increase the amount of money that's available via the consortia for professional learning opportunities. So, last

year I believe we spent about £5.5 million via the consortia on professional learning. That will go up this year to £5.85 million. Again, it's not a huge increase, but it's a bit more than what we've been able to identify previously. But we will continue to monitor the situation, and as I said, we'll be using the education improvement grant and the additional £100 million to try and ensure that we have the correct resources, so that finance doesn't become an impediment to professional learning opportunities.

[80] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Thank you. Last week, you'll have heard Professor Furlong talking about the importance of research. Have you given any consideration to the points he made about that, and are you minded to make any resources available to support education-focused research?

[81] **Kirsty Williams:** We are making resources available. As I said just earlier, we will be co-funding some PhD work, which I think is important. We are working closely with our higher education institutions to see what more we can do in that particular area. Most recently, we hosted a workshop here where we had education researchers from all over the world—America, Australia, parts of Europe—that came to work with our initial teacher education providers and our teachers to look at how they do it, and to support us in developing a programme for research. What was so pleasing about that was to talk to some of those researchers who had visited schools in Wales, schools in the Valleys, and they said that what they had seen was sector-leading practice. In fact, they wanted to film some of that and they were going to take it back to the University of Michigan because they wanted to use that as an example of sector-leading practice. So, we are working on a number of levels to try and ensure that we have that strong research base underpinning what we're doing.

[82] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you. Oscar.

[83] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you very much, Chair. Thank you, Kirsty. I will quote a statement that you made earlier, not here but previously, and your words were—. My question is around initial teacher education. It's just that area. On that area you made a statement, which is:

[84] 'I am not going to dictate what professional learning a practitioner should undertake, because everyone is different and has different requirements'.

[85] It's a wonderful statement, however there is a broad agreement and

consensus that a lot of things need to be done. So, what is the Welsh Government's current position that we should be including compulsory training for initial training for teachers?

[86] **Kirsty Williams:** Okay, well my statement that you've just quoted back at me is in relation to continuing professional learning opportunities; it's not about an either/or, or a non-compulsory approach to initial teacher education and qualified teacher status. What we're doing in Wales, Oscar, is that we have recognised that our current provision—the way we currently train our teachers—is not as robust and as good as it needs to be. So, we are in the process at the moment, following the report of John Furlong, of reforming ITE in Wales. So, we have developed a new set of accreditation standards, which we will expect ITE providers to meet. And we are in the process of recommissioning all our ITE provision set alongside that new accreditation process. So, we are currently in the—. We've had expressions of interest from a wide range of bodies, and officials are currently examining those. But let me absolutely clear that this isn't an either/or. Teachers working in our schools need to be qualified. They need to have that recognised qualification and QTS status. That's going to be delivered via a new programme of ITE that is more rigorous, more exacting and will equip our teachers with the skills that they need. There will be closer links between higher education and individual schools, and a much stronger basis of research underpinning what those students get. But it's not 'You can or you can't'—you have to.

[87] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you very much, Cabinet Secretary. My next point is very different. When an initial teacher comes in, are there any clauses that they should be teaching—they learn and qualify here, and then they start—how long they have to work, for at least a minimum in our education system?

[88] **Kirsty Williams:** Okay, so the way it works at the moment is that you do your college course, then you do your probationary time in the school afterwards, and then you are awarded your QTS. Part of the problem in the past was that sometimes those were two very distinct stages of your career. The professional standards that we're currently out to consultation on create a much more seamless link between what happens and what you can expect in your initial teacher education, as well as moving on then into your probationary year and your QTS year. So, there's a professional continuum that we're trying to build between the two areas, rather than what sometimes happens at the moment—you've finished your college course, you're out into

the classroom and it's very distinctive. So, the professional teacher standards are trying to bridge that gap, but Huw can probably put it more eloquently than me.

[89] **Mr Evans:** I'm not sure if I can put it more eloquently, but I think I can say a few things around emphasising the importance of this particular professional journey that people are on. And we all know that a young teacher is very enthusiastic going into the profession, and seeing possibly a different experience by the time they come to the end of their ITE. They move into a school and they get a very different feel for what the work is like when they get into that position. We all know about that; we all know about the issues that surround the drop-off rates and that sort of thing as far as that's concerned.

11:15

[90] However, I just want to emphasise the fact that the Minister referred earlier on to that international workshop session with the OECD right across Wales. Part of the rationale behind that was to make very clear the high level of expectations that Wales has of its initial teacher education sector, in partnership clearly with the HEIs, and with the schools, in order to ensure that that experience that youngsters are getting, the young teachers are getting, when they go into the profession for the first time, actually prepares them properly for the journey that they will take on as they move through. And part of that is to give them a research-based mindset, so that when they go into the teaching profession for real, they start thinking about evidence-informed practice, and addressing that, both from an international perspective, but also, very importantly, in terms of the really excellent practice that's already been referenced here from Wales—that they are prepared to engage with that, and are able to deliver that in the context of their own work. So, there's a lot happening, but as the Minister says, there's also a lot of change that needs to happen in this particular area.

[91] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Darren. I want to stay on ITE, not recruitment. We'll go on to that in a bit.

[92] **Darren Millar:** Can I just ask—? You're obviously reforming initial teacher education. We know it needs reform because it's been pretty poor, if we're honest, and has needed improvement for some time. But, obviously, any new teachers coming into the profession are going to be coming in at a time when there's also significant change in the national curriculum. How are

you going to make sure that that initial teacher education is aligned with the needs of the new curriculum, given that the new curriculum hasn't yet been finalised or shaped?

[93] **Kirsty Williams:** No, but the principles of what kind of professional expectations we will have of you to deliver that curriculum are clear. So, the principles underlining Donaldson are very clear to everybody. What we don't have at the moment is the exact framework of what the humanities area of learning and experience is going to look like, but the principles of the skills that you will need to impart that humanities knowledge, and the type of curriculum that we're going to have, is very clear. And that's one of the reasons why we have to change the ITE provision, to make sure that people are fit for purpose. So, there is an alignment in terms of the accreditation that we have agreed, so that a university can teach initial teacher education. That accreditation is taking into account the skills and the type of practitioner that we will need to make Donaldson a success. It's a perfect alignment.

[94] This is not a question of curriculum development—. The Chair asked a question at the beginning about how you link all this up. It is like a jigsaw, putting the pieces together. So, the ITE is not being developed just because 'Oh, we need to do that a bit better'. We're developing it in the knowledge of 'This is the kind of teacher and professional we're going to need if Donaldson is going to be a success'. So, there's no distinction and differentiation between them. The accreditation, and the standards that have been developed, which the universities will have to demonstrate to me before we'll commission them to provide this service, are exacting, and they reflect the kind of professional that we need.

[95] **Darren Millar:** But, of course, those professional standards are currently out to consultation, and could change. They could change significantly as a result of the feedback from the consultation, I assume.

[96] **Kirsty Williams:** So, there's the accreditation—

[97] **Darren Millar:** You've got the accreditation, but you've also got alongside professional standards, which you expect, presumably, the initial teacher education to ensure are delivered.

[98] **Kirsty Williams:** So, the standards are out to consultation. The accreditation has been dealt with, and we've agreed that the Education

Workforce Council—

[99] **Darren Millar:** But that's been dealt with before you've signed off the professional teaching standards.

[100] **Kirsty Williams:** So, the teaching standards were developed in conjunction with both.

[101] **Darren Millar:** But the standards haven't been agreed yet.

[102] **Lynne Neagle:** Darren, stop interrupting please.

[103] **Kirsty Williams:** No, you're right, they're out to consultation at the moment, and we will reflect on that consultation, but I am confident that there is a synergy running through all of these reforms. And the reason we know that is because I didn't write the teaching standards and then just send them out to the school. The teaching standards have been developed in conjunction with the teaching profession, with the higher education institutions. They have been tested and trialled and perfected and tweaked even before we've sent them out for the formal consultation. So, there are hundreds of teachers and hundreds of schools that have been exposed to those teaching standards, as well as our higher education institutions, because they were involved in the writing of them. So, we almost did like a pre-legislative scrutiny. So, they're out to formal consultation now, but believe me, they have been tested, challenged and consulted on even before we've got to this formal stage.

[104] **Darren Millar:** Well, we'll wait and see what the feedback is, won't we, as a result of this consultation. I hope you can publish—

[105] **Kirsty Williams:** And I would urge—if the committee possibly had time—to take evidence from Mick Waters, who has been the lead professional in developing those standards. He's a very impressive individual, and he will be able to put, so much more powerfully than I can, the rationale behind them. And he could give you exact work of what he's been doing prior to the formal consultation.

[106] **Darren Millar:** Unusually though, Cabinet Secretary, the Education Workforce Council is not the owner of those standards. They're being developed and signed off by you as Cabinet Secretary. It's an unusual arrangement, compared to other comparable bodies, is it not? Have you

considered giving the EWC the responsibility for the standards in the future, post this first set of standards being developed and finished?

[107] **Kirsty Williams:** I'm fortunate that the Education Workforce Council is an organisation that is very keen to take on all sorts of roles and responsibilities: they want a bit of this and they want a bit of that. That's good and that's a great situation to be in—to have a body that is so enthusiastic to take on more responsibility. But it is a new institution; it is a new body. We have given them an enormous task in simply registering the profession, but also in extending that registration to all sorts of other professional groups that are working with young people. They have done it very well; they have done it very, very well. But I think, as a new organisation, we have to allow them to build up their capacity and take on new roles and responsibilities when they are best able and in a position to do that.

[108] So, for instance, you'll be aware that we have just handed over accreditation for ITE to them. So, they will be the body that will sign off on those courses, taking it off HEFCW and giving it to that body. I haven't closed the door—at some point in the future—about roles and responsibilities for the EWC, but they're a new institution and we've given them a big job of work to do at the very beginning and we need to make sure that they are able to do that and to do that well before we look at piling on them more and more work. The other thing to think about is that piling more and more work on them has a budgetary consequence for those people who have to pay a registration fee with that body, and I'm also mindful of that.

[109] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you.

[110] **Darren Millar:** Sorry—

[111] **Lynne Neagle:** Very briefly.

[112] **Darren Millar:** Just one of the other powers, which, of course, they don't have, is the power to suspend somebody—suspend a registrant if a serious allegation has been made—between the time that that allegation has been made and the time that their hearing has taken place. Do you agree with me that that undermines confidence in the profession, if serious allegations are made about people and the registering body is not able to suspend them or stop them practising in Wales as a teacher in our state schools?

[113] **Kirsty Williams:** I understand the issue that you're identifying. I'm not clear how it necessarily relates to the inquiry—

[114] **Darren Millar:** It relates to confidence in the teaching profession.

[115] **Kirsty Williams:** —but what I would say is that I do have confidence in school governing bodies to be able to act swiftly on these situations.

[116] **Darren Millar:** But in terms of those individuals being allowed to continue to practise, either through an agency that they might work for or elsewhere in Wales, that's a concern, is it not?

[117] **Kirsty Williams:** Safeguarding and the safety of our children, of course, are my primary responsibility and concern. We are constantly reviewing to ensure that we have systems in place that are robust. There are issues around agencies operating out of people's front rooms or garages, which have come to light as a result of the task and finish group into supply work, and we are taking action to look to see what we can do to ensure that there is the appropriate level of robustness and governance in these arrangements. But I have no plans to change this at the moment.

[118] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you. Hefin on ITE.

[119] **Hefin David:** Have you changed your opinion about the role of Teach First in ITE?

[120] **Kirsty Williams:** I think, with regard to Teach First, that the principle around it is not something that I would argue with. The concern that we had about Teach First, and the way that it was operating in Wales, was that it's relatively high cost as opposed to how many people actually end up teaching in our system. I think, having met Teach First personally to discuss these issues, they would be the first to acknowledge that some of their cohort simply did not end up in teaching full-time in Welsh schools and that it had been an issue for them. They have subsequently changed their recruitment, so that they are specifically targeting people who are from Wales, who have a connection with Wales and who are much more likely to want to stay and teach full-time and make their professional lives here in Wales.

[121] They continue to work with the south Wales consortia around a specific project in the south Wales consortia. We'll keep under review the impact of that particular work to see if the retention rates improve and the

cost-effectiveness of that programme improves. But the principle, I've got no issue with. We are continuing to look at ways in which we can bring people into the profession. So, there's the traditional route of initial teacher education—the PGCE route—but I'm also keen to look at graduate entry and whether there are other ways in which we can enable a transition from people who've done other careers in the past who want to move on into teaching. We are reviewing how we can make the graduate entry programme more diverse than it currently is at the moment.

[122] **Hefin David:** That implies the Teach First model, even if it's not Teach First. The Teach First model is something that you would consider.

[123] **Kirsty Williams:** Yes, there's absolute merit in the principle; the issue is the cost-effectiveness. At a time of constrained budgets, I have to make sure that what we're spending our money on is as cost-effective as it can be. I've met with them, I have a very good relationship with them, and we're looking very closely at the work they continue to do in the south Wales consortia.

[124] **Hefin David:** Thank you.

[125] **Darren Millar:** Just a very brief follow-up question on that, in terms of entering the profession, obviously there are some countries around the world where there are comparable standards. In other parts of the UK, people can come from those countries—particularly North America, Australia, New Zealand and Canada—and automatically get qualified-teacher status. Is that something that you're considering introducing or bringing back into Wales?

[126] **Kirsty Williams:** I think it's important to remember why we've ended up in the situation where we've ended up, which was as a result of a previous Government's consultation. The feedback from that consultation was, actually, you did need to have exposure to and qualifications in the Welsh sense. So, the policy at the moment is reflective of how the consultation went previously. Of course, I don't want to turn away anybody who has something that could add to the Welsh education system, but we also have to be mindful of making sure that there is an opportunity for those people to be exposed to the unique Welsh education system and the culture that we have. There's nothing to stop someone acquiring that status whilst they're working, so there are opportunities to do that. I'm happy to send a note to the committee about the opportunities we're constantly looking at, because we don't want to waste a drop of the teaching talent that we can get into our schools.

[127] **Darren Millar:** Or deter people from coming into the profession.

[128] **Kirsty Williams:** Yes, exactly.

[129] **Lynne Neagle:** In terms of the structure of the course, you've opted for the three-year undergraduate and the one-year postgraduate. Professor Furlong, last week, drew to our attention the fact that, in other parts of the UK, it's four years and two years. Can you just explain the thinking behind sticking with what we've done here?

[130] **Kirsty Williams:** At the moment, the focus is on increasing the rigour in the provision that we've got in the current model. However, I continue to look at whether we can transition to the system that was recommended by Furlong. There are opportunities, as we move forward with our Diamond changes, to look at that. We have been very clear to HEIs that, in developing their offer to—I keep saying 'commission'; I can't get the health service analogy out of my mind—commission to do ITE for us, they should develop their programmes in a way that could quite seamlessly move to a four/two-year situation. At the moment, we will commission on the basis of the current set-up, but there may be opportunities. We certainly haven't set our face against transitioning to that system.

[131] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you. Moving on to recruitment—Llyr.

[132] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Thank you. Do you have any concerns over the numbers of teachers in Wales?

[133] **Kirsty Williams:** Yes, of course. I'm pleased to say, last week, I went to an international conference on the teaching workforce in Edinburgh, and what reassured me is that there wasn't an education Minister around that table who didn't have concerns about the number of teachers. The Netherlands, England especially, New Zealand, Switzerland—you know, there wasn't a Minister around that table who didn't share concerns about how we can ensure that we have people going into the profession and staying in the profession. So, yes.

[134] Of course, there are specific areas for concern. We continue to recruit beyond target for PGCE history. So, I've got fewer concerns about the teachers in that particular area. And although we've seen improvement in this year in recruitment to our maths, we're still under the target. It's better

than last year, but we're still under the target. So, there are specific issues around some of our STEM subjects, our foreign modern languages and, of course, Llyr, we also have concerns about the ability to have teachers who can deliver the curriculum *yn Gymraeg*—in Welsh.

11:30

[135] **Llyr Gruffydd:** So, why is it, then, do you think, that our teacher training centres are missing their intake targets, if you like?

[136] **Kirsty Williams:** I think it's complex. There's no one set of reasons. What I think is important to recognise is that we are in a better place than we were previously. So, applications are up, acceptances are up so far and that's a much more positive position than we would see across the border in England where applications and acceptances are down. Across a whole range of subjects, this current year's provision of PGCE is up, so we're up in maths—we're up in a range of subjects. I think we're down on art, we're down on drama and we're down on design technology. So, again it's a mixed picture. It's a mixed picture.

[137] But we need to—. I think, ultimately, the way we'll get people to apply is to make teaching a go-to profession—a high-status profession that people aspire to be in. And then, there's no one simple answer to that, but it is about all these things we're talking about—about managing workload and entering into a profession where you will continue to have those professional learning opportunities. Even as a community, even as a nation, raising the status of teaching as a job people aspire to. So, there's no one magic bullet, it's a more general issue.

[138] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Quantity's one thing, quality's another, clearly, and you reference in your paper your priority of recruiting talented individuals into teaching and headship in Wales as being a priority for you. Why do you think the current system isn't sufficiently fulfilling that priority?

[139] **Kirsty Williams:** Well, as I said, it's a mixed picture in different areas and different subjects. I think, culturally, the profession has been under the cosh. You know, when we have stories emblazoned across our newspapers saying that people are leaving the profession because it's stressful and it's hard work—these aren't ways in which you're going to entice people to look at a career in teaching. So, we need to address those issues and to promote it.

[140] The other thing that we're doing—in conversation with, again, higher education institutions—is how would you know you wanted to be a teacher? How would you instinctively know that this is a profession for you? So, the challenge I've given to some of our HEIs is that if you're in Imperial College in London doing physics—one of the best places in the UK to study for a physics degree—you will do a module in explaining physics and teaching physics. It exposes students to the possibility of teaching that subject. Now, if they can do that at Imperial, why aren't our physics departments doing the same in our universities? I'm very pleased to say that the vice-chancellor of Swansea University has written out to all of his courses saying, 'I want you to develop a module that exposes your students to explaining their subject and teaching their subject', because why would you know that you wanted to be a teacher?

[141] Some of the work that we've done on modern foreign language—one of the surprising outcomes of that project, which we hadn't anticipated, is the mentors that have gone into our schools to mentor children—. We did it to try and get more people to take foreign language GCSEs. What it's exposed is undergraduates to the career of teaching. I've met some of those Cardiff students who said, 'I never thought I wanted to be a teacher, but this experience of being in school with these young people means I'm going to do my PGCE.' So, it's also about looking at innovative ways of exposing people to the opportunities of what a career in teaching would be like.

[142] **Llyr Gruffydd:** That's an excellent idea. I like that. And is that systematically being pursued, or is it a bit ad hoc?

[143] **Kirsty Williams:** At the moment, it's a little bit ad hoc and it's one of the challenges that I've laid out to the HEIs as part of my call for them to engage in a civic mission. I'm very pleased to say that they're very keen. They see the value in it. They see it as being of intrinsic value to their students, but also an important part of what they can do for the country and the nation. So, we're looking at a whole variety of ways in which we can drive this agenda forwards.

[144] **Mr Davies:** Fundamentally, we have to have something to sell, and I think we do have something to sell. If you've looked at the back page of *The Times Educational Supplement* this week, it went out across the UK. The Central South Consortium Joint Education Service have a full-page advert on coming to teach in Wales, in the area, because of the new curriculum,

because of what we've been talking about—professional learning and those opportunities that will be there—because we've had rising standards and they don't see us an area that is underperforming. We need to sell it in a realistic way and an honest way, but I think there are lots of good-news items that we can sell. Allied with that, though, we have to attract them to our universities, and therefore selling them the profession within schools but not selling a high-quality provision within universities, so both of those are strongly interrelated.

[145] **Llyr Gruffydd:** But are you not concerned that that's left to individual consortia to pursue—that particular example—and not as being part of a national initiative?

[146] **Mr Davies:** In reality, the consortium launched—on 14 March, I think it was—a Discover Teaching programme, where all four of them have come together, with the support of Welsh Government and our communications team, to support that. We could have said, 'No, don't do it; we'll control it from the centre.' We supported them in doing it, and that advert in *The Times*, then, is part of that.

[147] **Kirsty Williams:** Huw, did you want to come in?

[148] **Mr Evans:** Yes, just quickly. I wanted to make a point about the regional consortia and the point that Steve's just made, obviously, which I think is a really important development, and they've done it as a foursome, not as an individual piece of work, but as a foursome to get it out there. And the recent advert that Central South have put out there is making teaching look attractive in Wales, because of the progress that we're making in terms of professional learning that is available to them. That message is going to filter through gradually.

[149] But I also want to make just an exemplar point about a Welsh-speaking physics graduate from last year, from one of our universities here in Wales, who was actually encouraged to do an education unit as part of her physics degree before she actually went on to study ITE further on. That resulted in a commitment to that course, similar to what the Minister described in London, and I think we need to do more of those kinds of things. If these young people can find themselves in a position where they can be exposed to education in the subject that they love, which they have signed up for, be it physics, history, art, drama, whatever it might be, before they've actually finished their graduate period, that really encourages, then, a

positive attitude and a knowing attitude, when they actually go on to our new, hopefully, initial teacher education or training schemes in a few years' time.

[150] **Kirsty Williams:** Yes, I think it was Edinburgh—it could have been Glasgow—but one of the universities, either Edinburgh or Glasgow, did this in chemistry, and they introduced a module in the chemistry undergraduate programme around teaching. They saw a significant uplift in those students then going on to apply to do PGCE chemistry. And so, these are ideas that we can look around for ourselves and implement here in Wales, and as I said, I'm being greatly encouraged by the vice-chancellors who seem to understand that it's of benefit to those individual students and their institutions.

[151] **Llyr Gruffydd:** On a slightly different theme, I'm just wondering what assessment you might have made of the potential impact on the workforce of the policy of pursuing smaller class sizes, particularly in relation to maybe needing to train and recruit more teachers.

[152] **Kirsty Williams:** So, the way in which numbers are allocated and decided upon at the moment is done by the teacher planning supply model for ITE and, of course, any policy initiative feeds into that model. That will form part of the teacher planning supply model but we also need better data, so that's one of the reasons why we're out to consultation on proper, better data collection of the teaching workforce, so that the planning supply model can be more robust and accurate than it is at present.

[153] **Llyr Gruffydd:** And just picking up on issues around Welsh-speaking teachers, now, we're all waiting with bated breath for the Welsh language strategy and the Welsh-medium education strategy as well, but I'm just wondering: why do you think we're struggling particularly in terms of Welsh speakers, and what particularly will you be pursuing in those strategies?

[154] **Kirsty Williams:** Welsh graduates, as part of our bursary model, are included in that, so Welsh forms part—. We have specific bursaries for STEM subjects, but Welsh students are also eligible for those because we regard it as a subject that we need to financially support as well, so we need to continue to do that. We also need to look at improving the skills of those teachers who, perhaps, speak Welsh at home, speak Welsh within their community, but have a reluctance to use their Welsh language skills within the classroom. Therefore, we continue to invest in support programs that help build that confidence, allowing teachers to go on sabbatical to develop

their Welsh skills, to be able to bring that back. That's especially important in English-medium schools so that the quality of Welsh teaching in our English-medium schools is improved.

[155] So, there's a number of things to do but, you're right, having the right number of teachers who can teach through the medium of Welsh is fundamental to the Welsh language strategy, to the successful delivery of the WESPs, once they're reviewed by Aled Roberts, and to the Government's goal around 1 million Welsh speakers.

[156] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Are you in a position to tell us, roughly, when we're likely to see the Welsh language strategy? I know it's—

[157] **Kirsty Williams:** That's not a matter for me.

[158] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Well, you are the senior Cabinet Secretary, it's your cue to talk.

[159] **Kirsty Williams:** I'm sure Alun Davies would be happy to come to the committee to discuss it.

[160] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Okay, thank you.

[161] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you.

[162] **Darren Millar:** Can I just ask—?

[163] **Lynne Neagle:** No, I've got John next.

[164] **Darren Millar:** It is on this issue.

[165] **Lynne Neagle:** And John's is as well.

[166] **John Griffiths:** Within the general issues around quantity and quality of teachers, is work taking place on specific challenges for schools serving more deprived areas? Sometimes, people talk of there being an inverse care law in health, where, if you're in a more deprived area, you tend to get a worse service. We certainly don't want that in our schools serving deprived areas. There are particular challenges, which you touched upon earlier.

[167] **Kirsty Williams:** Yes. So, interestingly, in the rapid review that the

OECD did for us, it acknowledges that we are a system that is striving for both equity and excellence. I think that's really an important underlying principle, about what we want the Welsh education system to be. Part of that equity is, of course, making sure that children from a more deprived background have equal chances to fulfil their potential. We do that, and we're doing it increasingly successfully via the use of the pupil deprivation grant—now renamed the pupil development grant, because I think it better reflects what we expect that money to do for the children.

[168] But the challenge from the OECD is: it's not just financial resource; it's how do we make the total resource that we have, as an education system, work for those principles of equity, and that does include schoolteachers—human beings. We know, from some of our systems across the world that are high-performing systems, that to go on to positions of leadership within schools, you have to spend some time in some of the more challenging schools in your country. It's part of your career and your professional learning and your professional development.

[169] As part of the leadership academy, we work up how we can create an environment where people aspire to be school leaders, we can begin to have some discussions around what we can do to proactively ensure our strongest teachers are working in some—. It's at an early stage, I would admit, at the moment. But we acknowledge that, when we're looking at tackling deprivation, it can't just be about financial resource. It's got to be about human resource as well.

[170] *The Times Educational Supplement* has had a lot of mentions this morning. If I could give it another one, just two weeks ago, it reported on a four-nation conference and it pointed to the strengths in the four nations' systems. One of the strengths it pointed to is poorer children in Wales are doing better than poorer children anywhere else in the UK. That's one of the strengths it highlighted of the Welsh education system.

[171] **John Griffiths:** Could I—?

[172] **Lynne Neagle:** I need to move on, really. Darren, very quickly, because I want to go to Julie.

[173] **Darren Millar:** I just wanted to ask about financial incentives. You made an announcement earlier this week about financial incentives to attract teachers. Do you want to just put on record a little bit more about that?

[174] **Kirsty Williams:** Yes. The financial incentives of up to £20,000 are to attract people into areas where we are concerned about shortages. What's really important is that we see financial incentives as just part of the package. They, themselves alone, won't be enough, but it is one element of our approach to trying to address some of the shortage subjects. But it can't be enough on its own; we have to have good-quality provision and excellent in-school training experience as well. So, the incentives alone aren't enough.

[175] **Darren Millar:** Okay.

[176] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Julie.

11:45

[177] **Julie Morgan:** Yes, thank you. This is on, when we get the teachers, how do we keep them? [*Laughter.*] Which is obviously a very key issue. I understand that the number of days lost to stress-related illness has doubled since 2009. I wondered what comments you could make about that and what impact that has in the schools.

[178] **Kirsty Williams:** As the Welsh Government, we keep absence rates, but we don't break it down into the reason for that absence. But, I am aware of the National Union of Teachers survey that reported—importantly, it reported around mental health issues as reasons for absence, and those could be wide-ranging. But undoubtedly, teaching can be a stressful profession. This then comes back down to the issue around workload and creating a manageable workload for teachers. It includes our work around developing leadership, because stress levels can arise out of working in an environment without supportive leadership and expert leadership. There are services available in all local areas to support individuals who may be suffering from stress. I think they are not known about and not utilised enough, so we're working with local authorities to make sure that people are aware of the occupational support that should be available in each of the local areas.

[179] But we continue to also look at cross-collaborative working, with myself and the Cabinet Secretary for health. So, we're concerned about the mental health of children in our schools, but in doing that, we also have to be concerned about the mental health and the resilience of the teachers in the schools. So, some of the programmes that we are looking at developing,

in conjunction with the health Minister, is resource that goes into schools to equip teachers to be better at managing high-incidence but low-level mental health issues within the school. But for them to do that, we have to empower them and train them on how they too can manage their own mental health within that situation. That's some of the work that we are talking with the health Cabinet Secretary about.

[180] **Julie Morgan:** I know you will agree that it's very important that the teacher workforce feels valued and feels that they're very important.

[181] **Kirsty Williams:** Yes.

[182] **Julie Morgan:** What do you think of the status of teachers in our society?

[183] **Kirsty Williams:** I think it has changed. I think they're not held in as high a regard as they once were. I have been shocked. Sometimes, parents copy me into e-mails that they're sending to headteachers. To be honest, I have been shocked sometimes by the way in which—. I'm sure legitimate concerns or legitimate grievances are being expressed, but the way in which they're expressed to fellow human beings and professional people I've been quite shocked at. In one case I almost felt like ringing the headteacher up and saying, 'Come on, carry on, don't worry.'

[184] So, what can we do? What can we do about this? It's very difficult, but what we can do is listen to the feedback from the OECD that says we're very bad at recognising success and celebrating success. Therefore, in May, we will have the first ever Wales teaching awards. We've never done that in Wales. We've always been part of a mishmash up in London, which has never—as all things London based—really recognised what goes on in our nation. So, we're doing our own. We will have the first ones in May. Estyn have had an excellence event recently, where everybody that had been given an excellence categorisation were able to come together. But as I said, what can we do? We can hold up best practice where we can see it, and we can celebrate it, and we will be doing that in May with our first ever Welsh teaching awards.

[185] **Julie Morgan:** Thank you.

[186] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you very much. Llyr.

[187] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Just coming back to the stress issues and workload issues, how do you think teachers are coping with workload demands at the moment, generally? How do you characterise the current situation? Because we have seen statistics showing that the number of days lost to teaching through stress has doubled over the last six years.

[188] **Kirsty Williams:** As I said, we don't quantify it, but in all the meetings I have with the teachers' unions, issues around workload and the impact that that has are raised. It's raised with me anecdotally when I visit schools and talk to people—again, workload and achieving that work-life balance. People don't mind working hard, but what has to give in return for all those hours of hard work? That work-life balance sometimes suffers as a result of that. So, trying to ensure that workload is manageable is an important issue for recruitment and, crucially, retention after people have trained, and for aspiring leaders.

[189] So, one of the challenges we've got—. You asked about which areas I'm concerned about: there are specific subject areas I'm concerned about, but I'm also concerned about people not wanting to go on to take up roles as headteachers, which is part of our work around the leadership academy. But much of that is often down to workload and wanting to maintain a work-life balance, which people feel would be jeopardised if they took on more responsibility, and we need to address that.

[190] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. A good time to move on to leadership. John.

[191] **John Griffiths:** Yes, a good time to move on to leadership issues. You've identified one of the potential barriers to teachers stepping up to leadership roles—the workload perceptions and issues. Would you identify any other major barriers that prevent teachers stepping up to leadership roles?

[192] **Kirsty Williams:** I think perception is probably the main challenge that we have. I think that we have been quite haphazard in how we have looked to develop leadership. We haven't been systematic and we haven't had very clear career development opportunity routes. Spotting people with that potential and proactively encouraging them, we haven't been very good at that. The feedback to me is certainly one of perception—what does it mean to be a head, and people not feeling clear that they want to do that job or that they have the requisite skills to do that job. So, our whole issue around the leadership academy has been much more proactive about providing the

professional learning opportunities that will give people confidence that they have the skills to be a successful headteacher.

[193] **John Griffiths:** In terms of the NPQH qualification, there are a few issues around that, I think. Could I start by asking you: do you see it as an issue, as a problem, that headteachers in England who do not have that qualification are not able to easily and readily become heads in Wales?

[194] **Kirsty Williams:** I think it was 2012 when England stopped that being an absolute requirement, but what is interesting is the statistical evidence that demonstrates that the vast majority of governors, when advertising for heads in England, still actually have that as a requirement in their advert. So, although technically you don't have to have it since 2012, the course is still available in England, people can still do that course and the vast majority of governing bodies still ask for that qualification.

[195] As part of the leadership academy work that we're doing, what constitutes NPQH is part of that. We will look to see—. Rather than a piecemeal change and tweaking NPQH here and there, any changes to the requirement to have an NPQH to be a headteacher in Wales is something that we will look at in the round. Why do we always think that because England doesn't do it, that means we're out of kilter? Maybe the fact that they've given up doing that in 2012 demonstrates that they are out of kilter with what should be done, not us. It's interesting to note that, in Scotland, they are moving to a compulsory system. So, maybe it's not us out of kilter, maybe it's them that are out of kilter.

[196] **John Griffiths:** The fact that the leadership academy is going to be asked to look at the NPQH suggests that issues have been identified with it at the moment.

[197] **Kirsty Williams:** I think, for me, it's not the requirement that is the issue, it's does the NPQH, as it currently stands, give you the requisite skills to be a great, successful headteacher. That's what I'm questioning, not the need for it, not the requirement for it, but, actually, does it give the individuals what they need. I speak to headteachers who have been through that programme who suddenly find themselves actually as a headteacher and go, 'Whoa, hang on a minute, maybe the NPQH hasn't been designed and hasn't trained me in a way that is actually relevant to the job of being a headteacher.' So, I'm not concerned about whether you should have it or shouldn't have it, but, actually, what does that mean and does it give you the

requisite skills to be a successful head.

[198] **Mr Davies:** I think just a brief thing to add to that is that it's where you set the bar to actually enter into that qualification, because there's a very large number of people in Wales who have actually gone through the NPQH, but not gone on to headship. So, it is about where you set the bar. The other significant thing that we're asking the academy to look into is—whereas they've had mentors as they've gone through the programme, because there's been a significant gap to go on to headship, what we want to look at is those mentors staying with those people who've had the qualification to go on to the delivery of the headship, which is likely to make their landing far more effective and their impact far more immediate.

[199] **John Griffiths:** Yes, okay. Can I just ask as well about, again, schools serving the more deprived areas and getting the right leadership in those schools and the academy? Because I often hear from people in the schools that we've got, thankfully, some really good examples in Wales of fantastic leadership in schools serving the more deprived areas and really doing a great job for their pupils and the local community, and if we could somehow clone those individuals, those leaders, and have enough of them for every school serving a deprived area in Wales, it would be very, very good. But what was suggested was that perhaps the academy could have a module that looked at the abilities and the particular qualities necessary to teach in those schools, and try and make sure that we do have a ready supply of leaders with the required skills and abilities. Does that—

[200] **Kirsty Williams:** I think, John, you're absolutely right. There are particular challenges in some of our schools and you need different approaches, which reinforces the need for that continuing professional learning, because each job you go to, even maybe each headship you go to, presents you with a new set of professional challenges to ensure good delivery. That's why we have to have that school-to-school working, so that headteachers who find themselves in that position have an opportunity to learn from successful headteachers in those outstanding schools that are doing really well with our more deprived communities. But I will certainly feed that comment back to Ann Keane who is looking at what the NPQH will look like in the future, because I think that's very relevant.

[201] **John Griffiths:** That's great. Could I—

[202] **Lynne Neagle:** Briefly, though, John; if you could just ask the question

briefly, that would—

[203] **John Griffiths:** Yes, okay. How many people would you expect to benefit from the national academy in the first year? Do you have a number?

[204] **Kirsty Williams:** I don't have a number at the moment. What's important to remember is that the academy themselves won't deliver the programmes: they will plan the programmes, they will accredit the programmes, they will organise, but not necessarily deliver. And the important thing is that we grow the academy. So, we're focusing very much at the moment, in the first instance when we develop it, on headship and people who are aspiring to be heads, but we hope as time goes on that we will have leadership programmes for people who aspire to be heads of department, deputy heads and actually expand it to the entire education workforce, including, dare I say, Welsh Government education officials.

[205] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Is it still the Welsh Government's position that you want teaching to be an all-Master's profession?

[206] **Kirsty Williams:** As I said earlier, we are working towards a system. I don't think we're in a position at the moment to jump, but we are on a journey towards that ultimate goal. And I'm very impressed. Just this morning, I met with a newly qualified teacher starting her Master's in September—a fantastic, bright, sparky young woman who, you could just see from the children around her, was just—. They were teaching five-year-olds—they were year 1; five and six-year olds—algorithms. Would everybody here know what an—? Well, I know Hefin would, but would everybody else here know what an algorithm was? Could you give me a definition? Because I tell you what, in that year 1 class this morning, not only could they give me a definition, they could demonstrate to me how they would develop an algorithm. I won't embarrass you; I won't ask you to—

[207] **Lynne Neagle:** That's good. [*Laughter.*]

[208] **Kirsty Williams:** I said to them, 'I'm going to committee this morning, children, and they won't know.' [*Interruption.*] The sage, the sage and the sage. [*Laughter.*]

[209] **Lynne Neagle:** Hefin, a very quick question on the professional learning passport.

[210] **Hefin David:** We have had a number of pieces of evidence. The EWC are very keen on the professional learning passport, although I'm not sure how it fits into their bigger plan for a more integrated approach. I've met with headteachers in my county borough area who are a bit 'meh' about it. What do you think of the professional learning passport?

[211] **Kirsty Williams:** I think it has the potential, but we're not there yet. It has the potential. There are other systems; I'm aware of other schools using other systems that are perhaps more useful and easier for schools to use. I think the concept is the right one, but we need to develop our thinking.

[212] **Hefin David:** It's not going to be a solution to professional development.

[213] **Kirsty Williams:** No, because in itself it's just a mechanism.

12:00

[214] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you very much. Okay. Well, we are out of time. Can I thank the Cabinet Secretary for attending this morning, and her officials, and for answering all our questions? We do appreciate your time, and you will be sent a transcript to check for accuracy in due course. Thank you very much.

[215] **Kirsty Williams:** Brilliant. Thank you very much. Diolch yn fawr.

[216] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you.

Papurau i'w Nodi Papers to Note

[217] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Item 4 then is papers to note. Paper to note 2 is a letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and the Cabinet Secretary for health around the development of the new curriculum. Paper to note 3, a letter from the Cabinet Secretary for health and the Minister for Social Services and Public Health on CAMHS and the school nursing service in Wales. And paper to note 6 is the letter that the Children's Commissioner for Wales sent to the First Minister on the due regard and the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill. Are Members—

[218] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Sorry, can I just pick up on item 4.2, the letter regarding

child and adolescent mental health—

[219] **Lynne Neagle:** If it's okay, Llyr, I wanted to come to that in the forward work programme, if that's alright.

[220] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Okay. Fine.

[221] **Lynne Neagle:** Are Members happy to note those for now? Okay. Thank you.

12:01

Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public

Cynnig:

Motion:

bod y pwyllgor yn penderfynu ar gyfer yr eitemau nesaf ac ar gyfer y cyfarfod cyfan ar 4, 10 a 18 Mai yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 17.42(ix).

that the committee resolves to exclude the public from the meeting for the next items and for the whole of the meetings on 4, 10 and 18 May. in accordance with Standing Order 17.42(ix).

Cynigiwyd y cynnig.

Motion moved.

[222] **Lynne Neagle:** Item 5 then is a motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public for the next items and for the whole of the meetings on 4, 10 and 18 May. Are Members content? Thank you very much.

Derbyniwyd y cynnig.

Motion agreed.

Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 12:01.

The public part of the meeting ended at 12:01.