The focus of this article is continuing professional development (CPD) for serving teachers. The term CPD covers a wide range of staff development activities, both formal and informal, designed to address individual teachers’ development needs and improve their professional practice. Activities can include:

- within-school activities such as coaching, mentoring, support for individual members of staff arising from performance management interviews, team teaching, sharing good practice, lesson observation and feedback, and whole-school development activities
- school networks, such as cross-school or virtual mentor networks, to share good practice
- sharing effective practice, knowledge and skills through cross-local authority [regional education consortia](#)
- external activities such as accredited postgraduate study or courses, conferences, or international study visits and exchanges.

This article does not cover induction for [newly qualified teachers (NQTs)](#), which is described in the article on ‘[Conditions of Service](#)’.

In 2015, the ‘[New Deal for the Education Workforce](#)’, a structured development plan, was launched, under which the Welsh Government committed to offering all teachers a 'structured entitlement to ...world class professional learning opportunities'. The New Deal focused specifically on CPD, aiming to reshape CPD opportunities and help the teaching profession deliver a [new curriculum for Wales](#).

The initiatives launched under the New Deal were further bolstered by the launch, in 2018, of the ‘[national approach to professional learning](#)’. This aims to create CPD opportunities which are ‘fit for the evolving education system in Wales’ and tailored to delivering the new curriculum. It is being enacted regionally to meet local needs.

**Organisational aspects**

**Legal framework**

In Wales, all teachers have a professional duty to participate in arrangements for their continuing professional development (CPD) throughout their careers.

In accordance with the [Professional Standards](#) (2017) ‘the teacher is a professional learner and commits to continuous engagement in career long development, collaboration and innovation’, and the [School Teachers Pay and Conditions’ Document (STPCD) 2018](#) sets out a number of specific professional duties which teachers may be required to undertake, including professional development.

The statutory conditions of service for teachers require them to be available for work under the
direction of the headteacher for 1265 hours per year, including 5 days when the school is not open to pupils. These 5 days were introduced (under the Education Reform Act 1988 [9]) to support a number of non-teaching activities, including in-service training (INSET), although schools routinely release teachers and leaders for professional learning in addition to this. Although the timing, organisation and focus of in-service training in schools are for individual headteachers to determine, in July 2019, the Welsh Minister for Education recommended [10] that one of the five INSET days should be used to prepare for the introduction of the new curriculum for Wales [11]. A further move to support this may come in the form of amendments to the regulations which would allow schools one extra INSET day for three academic years (until 2022). There is no legal minimum requirement for the length of time to be spent on CPD, which may take place both within and outside of working hours.

If CPD is organised within the 1265 hours of annual ‘directed time’ that teachers must work, they must take part. Other teachers may provide cover (stand in) for those undertaking CPD depending on when the CPD happens. Welsh Government guidance [12] (2014) recommends that ‘In determining a school’s approach to the professional development of its staff, consideration should be given to adopting strategies that minimise the negative impact of teachers’ absence from the classroom on learner progress’ (page 14).

Following the passing of the Wales Act 2017 [13], responsibility for setting the pay and conditions of service for school teachers and leaders in Wales transferred to Welsh Ministers in September 2018. The Independent Welsh Pay Review Body (IWPRB) has since been established to make recommendations on teachers’ pay and conditions to the Minister of Education; a function which was previously provided for both England and Wales by the School Teachers’ Review Body. The IWPRB published its first report [14] in July 2019 for consideration by the Welsh Government, which is expected to publish a new document to replace the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD).

**National approach to professional learning**

The national approach to professional learning, launched in 2018, sets out the entitlement of all practitioners to professional learning provision and support. It outlines eight elements, grouped into three different ‘contexts’ as follows.

- **The School context** includes the nature of the school cohort and community; the challenges each school faces; and school-level skills and expertise. It includes three elements:
  1. individual professional learning journey
  2. schools as learning organisations
  3. professional learning blend.

- **The National context** includes the requirements of the new curriculum and assessment, evaluation and accountability. It includes two elements:
  1. collaborative networks
  2. Professional Teaching and Leadership Standards.

- **The Regional context** includes priorities defined by the regional education consortia [1] and their local authorities (LAS) [15]. It includes three elements:
  1. pedagogy for professional learning
  2. professional learning offer
  3. accreditation / recognition.

The sections which follow provide further information.
Within the national approach to professional learning, **schools** are regarded as learning organisations within which all professionals undertake their own individual professional learning journey. This learning can be ‘live’ instructional or collaborative learning which takes place outside the classroom; e-based, using digital tools; classroom-based, driven by action research; or coached, involving close working with a coach, who focuses on the specific personal learning needs of the individual.

Schools are expected to:

- develop a shared vision centred on learners’ learning
- create and support continuous learning opportunities for all staff, including through ensuring that all staff have access to coaching and support, and staff ensuring that their practice is up-to-date and critically informed
- promote team learning and collaboration, including through collective learning and reflection on how staff can make their own learning more powerful
- establish a culture of enquiry, innovation and exploration, including through supporting and recognising staff for taking initiative, risks and experimenting in their practice
- embed systems for collecting and exchanging knowledge for learning, including through the use of the school development plan (see below) and through the availability of examples of good and failed practice
- learn with and from the external environment and wider learning system, including through networks and school-to-school collaborations
- model and grow learning leadership, including through participation in strong collaboration with other schools, parents/carers, the community, **higher education institutions (HEIs)** [16] and other partners.

All **maintained schools** [17] must have a three-year, rolling school development plan (SDP). This sets out how the school will achieve its targets in relation to its priorities; how it will use the resources it has available; and how it intends to develop its staff in order to meet its priorities and targets. As a result, each individual teacher’s development is planned for in the context of the SDP. The aim is to ensure that there is a coherent cycle of planning in place for whole-school improvement alongside individual ongoing development, and that access to training is an integral part of school life for teachers. 2014 **guidance** [18] on school development planning and the development of a school’s professional development strategy for staff (pages 12-15) is provided by the Welsh Government.

Schools must have a performance management policy in operation, outlining how individual teachers’ progress towards their own development targets is monitored. Under the **School Teacher Appraisal (Wales) Regulations 2011** [19], to inform the annual performance management cycle, all teachers in Wales must keep a regularly updated practice, review and development (PRD) record. This records their professional development experiences, evaluates their impact on the teacher’s practice and on outcomes for learners, and provides the framework for future planning. It takes account of the school development plan, individual performance management and professional development targets, and the **Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership** [20] for all teachers and leaders.

All teachers with **qualified teacher status (QTS)** [21] who are registered with the **Education Workforce Council (EWC)** [22] also have a **Professional Learning Passport (PLP)** [23]. This is a record of their professional learning, which is managed by the EWC. All teachers are encouraged to use this to reflect on and improve their practice. Users are able to upload and share documents and are given access to **EBSCO** [24], an online portal which provides access to academic journals and research related to education and pedagogy.

The **national** approach to professional learning is underpinned by the **Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership** [7] (2017), which aim to:
- set clear expectations about effective practice during a practitioner’s career
- enable practitioners to reflect on their practice, individually and collectively, against national agreed standards of effective practice
- support practitioners to identify areas of further professional development
- form a backdrop to the performance management process.

There is a commitment to equity of access to professional learning opportunities offered by a range of different providers across all practitioners and across all regions in Wales (see below). It also includes a common approach to learning design, so that all professional learning provision involves collaboration; reflective practice; use of data and research evidence; and coaching and mentoring.

The Welsh Government is developing options for recognition, endorsement and accreditation of the learning opportunities on offer as the new national approach is implemented.

**Providers**

Providers of CPD are numerous and varied.

- Individual schools provide training internally, through days or sessions organised by individual headteachers; through senior staff providing ongoing professional guidance and development for their colleagues, either as part of their day-to-day monitoring or as special, focused training; or through schools appointing teachers to ‘leading practitioner’ posts with the primary purpose of modelling and leading the improvement of teaching skills. ‘Leading’ or ‘lead’ practitioners are paid on a separate pay range, higher than the ranges for classroom teachers. They may also provide support to other schools in the local area through regional education consortium[1] arrangements.
- Schools work with other schools in collaborative networks such as pioneer schools[25], which lead and support work in three areas: delivering digital competence; the new [curriculum for Wales][26]; and professional learning for practitioners. Pioneer schools may also work with regional education consortia, the Welsh Government and other stakeholders as part of a regional and national network. They are spread across the country and represent a range of different school types.
- Local authorities (LAs) and regional consortia provide local support for CPD through, for example, ‘Professional Learning Hubs’ to support schools in developing their leadership, learning and teaching; ‘Curriculum Hubs’ to provide CPD support for specific curriculum areas including English, maths and science; and ‘Lead Practitioners’ to provide CPD support for the humanities, the expressive arts and pupil wellbeing.
- The [Education Workforce Council (EWC)][27] is responsible for developing and managing the Professional Learning Passport (PLP); hosts and develops the [Learning Exchange][28] platform which provides regional, national and international learning opportunities for staff working in STEM, ICT and computing subjects; and is responsible for functions related to the induction programme for new teachers (see the article on [‘Conditions of Service’][3]).
- Subject organisations, such as the [STEM Learning][29] network, provide subject-focused CPD.
- Collaborative organisations, such as the [PiXL Club][30], provide a range of CPD opportunities.
- Private companies, charities, [higher][31] and [further education][32] institutions, and third sector organisations provide a range of accredited and non-accredited CPD opportunities.

**Incentives, supporting measures and funding for**
participation in continuing professional development (CPD) activities

There is no specific funding scheme for professional development. Schools decide for themselves how much of their budget to allocate to CPD. This is based on their specific areas for development as set out in their school development plan (SDP), although some specific initiatives receive government funding.

For teachers, effective professional development is beneficial because it enhances job satisfaction. Professional development also supports both career progression and pay progression: since 2014, all pay progression for teachers has been linked to performance. In addition, although there is no automatic entitlement to payment for participation in CPD, there is discretion for schools to make a payment to any teacher who undertakes CPD over and above the contractual requirement of 1265 annual ‘directed hours’.

For schools, an incentive to continually evaluate and improve the quality of their teachers is that this is one of the key aspects of the Estyn [33] inspection process. ‘Professional learning’ is assessed as part of the ‘Leadership and management’ inspection area in the Common Inspection Framework [34]. Inspectors evaluate the arrangements which support the active engagement of all staff in increasing their professional knowledge, understanding and skills and also consider the extent to which staff participate effectively in professional learning experiences, appraisal and performance management.

Government-funded initiatives in support of teacher professional development include pioneer schools, the lead practitioner model and Professional Learning Passport (see the section on ‘Providers’ above). The Hwb [35] website also provides a range of resources, including guidance, toolkits and case studies.

Some formal CPD activities may attract academic accreditation at master’s [36] level (Level 7 [37] of The Frameworks for HE Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies [38]), and lead to awards including the Postgraduate certificate (PG Cert – 60 credits); the Postgraduate [39] diploma (PG Dip – 120 credits); a Master’s (MA – 180 credits); or Doctorate [40] (PhD – 360 credits).

The Welsh Government also previously funded the Masters in Educational Practice (MEP) for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) [2]. The MEP covered areas of professional learning identified as key priorities for NQTs by the Welsh Government, including behaviour management, literacy, numeracy, reducing the impact of poverty on attainment, additional learning needs (ALN) [41], and reflective practice. The last cohort entering the three-year programme graduated in July 2018. A searchable collection of teacher-led, classroom research projects conducted as part of the MEP is available here [42].

Article last reviewed August 2019.

DID YOU FIND WHAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR?

YES

NO

Contact *