

**Welsh Government
Curriculum for Wales
Enabling Pathways
16 July 2021**

1. The NASUWT welcomes the opportunity to comment on the consultation on Curriculum for Wales Enabling Pathways guidance.
2. NASUWT - The Teachers' Union, represents teachers and headteachers in Wales and across the United Kingdom.

GENERAL COMMENTS

3. The NASUWT maintains that securing high outcomes for all children and young people means that action is needed to:
 - a. provide a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum experience fit for the 21st century;
 - b. ensure parity of esteem between academic and vocational pathways and the cognitive, emotional, cultural, creative, ethical and social dimensions of learning;
 - c. require all state-funded schools and colleges to work together to secure a comprehensive curriculum entitlement for all 14 to 19 year-olds;
 - d. equip children and young people to be research-driven problem solvers;
 - e. extend entitlements for all children and young people to high-quality academic and vocational education, coupled with equality

- of access to high-quality, practical, hands-on, work-based learning opportunities;
- f. refocus the accountability system to reflect and support the expectation that all young people should remain in education and training until the age of 18;
 - g. restore the morale of the teaching profession by tackling poor employment practices, including workload, securing professional entitlements and respect for teachers, and refocusing the efforts of teachers and headteachers on their core responsibilities for teaching and leading teaching and learning;
 - h. establish a Masters-level profession and raise the pay of teachers in recognition of the increased knowledge and skills that they bring to the job; and
 - i. ensure access to high-quality professional development for all teachers throughout their careers.¹
4. It is clear that in many respects, the current curriculum framework does not meet these important tests. For this reason, the NASUWT supported the Welsh Government's decision to commission a fundamental review of curriculum and assessment arrangements.
5. In general, the report of the review of the curriculum undertaken by Professor Graham Donaldson, *Successful Futures*, set out a coherent and rational basis for the future development of the curriculum framework in Wales.
6. However, in a range of critical respects, the proposals for the curriculum published by the Welsh Government have failed to reflect many of the key principles articulated in *Successful Futures*.
7. In particular, the recommendation that the curriculum should be developed by the workforce, for the workforce, has not been given practical effect. The exclusion of the voice of the profession has resulted

¹ NASUWT (2013). *Maintaining world class schools*. NASUWT; Birmingham.

in a proposed curriculum model that would, if implemented, generate significant workload burdens for teachers and undermine the ability of schools to secure for all children and young people their entitlement to a broad and balanced range of learning experiences.

8. The NASUWT continues to have profound concerns about current proposals for curricula reform. These concerns relate to critical aspects of the structure and content of the curriculum; its implications for the qualifications system and assessment practice; and the intention to proceed with implementation of the curriculum without a coherent evaluation of its workforce and resource requirements.
9. The NASUWT considers that the current health crisis and the recovery phase that will be necessary is the wrong time to initiate wholesale changes to, not only, the curriculum but also the accountability and assessment framework aligned to it. Space is needed to allow teachers and schools to recover from this time of extreme stress. Progressing at this time could lead to irretrievable mistakes being made.
10. The Union has also called on the Welsh Government to delay the implementation of the new curriculum in the face of the disruption to schools and the education system, stemming from the health emergency owing to the pandemic of COVID-19.
11. Teachers and teaching will remain disrupted for the foreseeable future, and teachers and schools have learnt a whole new way of working online and have poured their efforts into secure blended learning opportunities for pupils. The NASUWT considers that it is entirely unreasonable to place additional burdens on teachers at this time
12. The Union remains clear that in these circumstances, it would not be appropriate to proceed with implementation of the proposed curriculum by the start of the academic year 2022/23.

13. The NASUWT is therefore pleased by the Education Minister's recent decision to postpone the planned roll out of the New Curriculum for Year 7s in September 2022. This was the right decision given that the teaching profession continues to operate at full capacity providing education in the midst of a global pandemic. The Union remains concerned however at the Welsh Government's decision to retain the 2022 roll-out date for primary schools and the decision to require the New Curriculum for Year 7 and 8 to be introduced simultaneously in 2023.
14. The NASUWT is also very concerned regarding the offer of greater "flexibility" to secondary schools in deciding for themselves whether to delay the introduction of the new curriculum. The Union maintains that this is much too vague and leaves too much to the determination of individual school leaders. We are concerned some schools will choose to plough on regardless of whether they are ready for these changes.
15. This is not helped by the decision to make schools which do choose to delay roll out the new curriculum to both years 7 and 8 next year.
16. A universal and unified approach by the Welsh Government would have helped avoid a rushed and disjointed patchwork approach to the new curriculum which risks jeopardising its success, pushing up workload and stress for teachers and sowing confusion for pupils and parents."

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

17. The following comments must be read in the context that the NASUWT continued concerns, set out above, regarding the delay in the implementation of the new curriculum and the associated assessment and accountability frameworks to allow for a period of sustained recovery from the crippling effects of the pandemic.
18. The NASUWT's response is informed directly by serving teacher and headteacher members and also by the work of its representative

committees and consultative structures, made up of practising teachers and school leaders working in the education system.

19. The NASUWT notes that the document is a little more than a summary of the aspirations of the New Curriculum as a whole for practitioners managing education leading up to Progression Step 1. As such the Union suggests that this response is cross-referenced with the NASUWT response to the consultation on the curriculum for funded non-maintained nurseries
20. Whilst this document gives some understanding as to the philosophy behind the curriculum, which may be useful) it provides insufficient guidance or examples as to what this would look like in practice.
21. The NASUWT maintains that practical improvements could include a clear indication in the introduction for whom this guidance is most likely applicable. This may include those teaching ages 3-5 and those teaching older pupils with additional needs.
22. The Union also considers that it would also be helpful if practical examples were also included of what the Welsh Government consider to be "opportunities for deep-level involvement and uninterrupted active learning... rooted in real-life, authentic situations".
23. The NASUWT also notes that there are a number of phrases highlighted in the text but the links do not always work which limits the ability to assess the helpfulness of the document. In general, the Union find these links unhelpful as it tends to lead you down a rabbit hole of a succession of links. They are also, obviously, only accessible when using the document on a device; they are meaningless in a printed document.
24. The Union therefore suggest that a stand-alone document or annex be included with a summary of the phrases which are linked to other documents, so as to provide more detail where required.

25. The NASUWT also reminds the Welsh Government that in many instances those managing statutory funded provision for this age group will not necessarily be qualified teachers.



Dr Patrick Roach
General Secretary

For further information on the Union's response contact:

Neil Butler
National Official
NASUWT Cymru
Greenwood Close
Cardiff Gate Business Park
Cardiff
CF23 8RD

029 2054 6080

www.nasuwt.org.uk

rc-wales-cymru@mail.nasuwt.org.uk