

**Consultations on additional Curriculum for Wales guidance – Careers
and Work-Related Experiences
July 2021**

1. The NASUWT welcomes the opportunity to comment on the consultation on additional Curriculum for Wales guidance – Careers and Work-related Experiences (CWRE)
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

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

resulted 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.¹⁵
19. Whilst the guidance is statutory for schools and states: 'CWRE is best delivered in partnership with a wide range of people and organisations,' the guidance is not statutory for organisations such as Careers Wales. The guidance also states that organisations such as Careers Wales have little experience and involvement in primary education to date. As is it expected that such organisations will participate in delivering the CWRE curriculum, it is regrettable that the Welsh Government has not identified clear levers to ensure cross-organisational compliance and understanding in terms of responsibilities in relation to curriculum development and implementation.
20. The section 'Contextualising the Area of Learning and Experience through CWRE' is helpful as it sets out which sort of Work-Related Experiences (WREs) each AOLE's is required to offer. Given that most schools will align AOLE to school departments and / or faculties, or Subject Lead (in the case of Primaries) this is helpful in minimising opportunities for overlap and lacunae in the over-all curriculum offering of a school.
21. However, teachers will still have to develop the curriculum to cover these approaches and, as detailed above, the NASUWT is concerned that the Welsh Government have not put forward any clear plans to show how they will provide adequate classroom release for teachers to enable them to do this.
22. It would enhance the value of the guidance if it included practical examples as to what the Welsh Government expect to see when they refer, for example, to 'providing opportunities for learners to be creative through play-based and authentic experiences.' Naturally schools would not be expected to offer these specific examples but they would provide object lessons which would be a powerful way of ensuring individual

practitioners benefited from the expertise of the Welsh Government's practitioners.

23. The NASUWT is unclear as to the extent of work the Welsh Government requires in terms of providing parents and carers with a level of knowledge and understanding of CWRE learning so they can support learners in making ambitious, realistic decisions. Clearly most teachers are experienced in communicating with parents and carers, but, once more, it would be helpful to have practical examples from the expert practitioners to illustrate how they would see this working in practice so that schools have a clear understanding of the expectations and resources required to fulfil this.
24. The section 'Contributors to effective CWRE' suggests that the key contributors will be 'CWRE Leaders.' In recent years many schools have removed these sorts of positions and instead used outside agencies to deliver 'stand-alone' careers and vocational events. Given the nature of Welsh Government's expectations that CWREs will be authentically embedded within each area of learning, this requires cross-school co-ordination and leadership and will have implications for staff recruitment and classroom release time and therefore resources.
25. The importance of professional learning in devising and delivering this curriculum is acknowledged in the statement 'schools and settings should ensure their staff engage in appropriate and relevant professional learning opportunities.' This sort of statement is also included in Welsh Government guidance for a range of issues (Special Educational Needs, Child Protection and Anti-Racism etc). The reality is that unless schools are required and resourced to arrange a specific time release from classroom commitments for these specified purposes then this guidance is likely to remain aspirational in the face of the many demands on teachers' time.

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