

TEACHING TOMORROW'S TEACHERS

Options for the future of initial teacher education in Wales

A Report to Huw Lewis, AM, Minister for Education and Skills

JOHN FURLONG
ITT Adviser to the Welsh Government

March, 2015



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY

From: Emeritus Professor John Furlong
March 2015



Dear Minister,

In his 2013 review of Teacher Training in Wales, Professor Ralph Tabberer suggested that the Welsh Government appoint an ITT Adviser in order to help raise standards within the sector. In March 2014 you asked me to take on that role for two years – an invitation that I readily accepted.

During the course of the last year I have tried to build on Professor Tabberer's Report by gathering a range of evidence about the current strengths and weaknesses of teacher education and training in Wales. I have talked to senior colleagues in each of the three ITT Centres, to regional Consortia, to schools and representatives of all of the national bodies that have a stake in current provision. I have also drawn extensively on evidence of what constitutes high quality teacher education and training in other parts of the UK and internationally. Finally, in looking to the future, I have talked in detail to Professor Graham Donaldson about the implications of his recent Review of Curriculum and Assessment for the future of initial teacher education and training in Wales. As a result of this work I am now in a position to bring forward a preliminary report for you to consider.

The report is in two parts, each of which focuses on the need for change in the current system. In part one I set out what I see as the main challenges facing the initial teacher education sector – the reasons for change. In part two, I set out a range of different options that the Welsh Government might take in order to raise the quality of provision. In each case I make recommendations as to what I personally think might be the most appropriate option to take. Clearly though it is for you and the Welsh Government itself to decide which, if any, of the options I have outlined are most appropriate.

Once you and your officials have had a chance to consider my report and decided on which options to pursue, I will be willing to begin work with colleagues both within the Government and beyond in order to help bring about the changes that are needed. If the Government, national agencies, schools and higher education work together on an agreed plan, then I am sure that in the not too distant future, Wales can have a teacher education and training sector of which it can be proud; one that can help deliver the high aspirations that you and your Government have for the children and young people of Wales.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Furlong'.

Professor John Furlong
ITT Adviser to the Welsh Government

Acknowledgements

A wide range of individuals and organizations have helped in the development of this report. I would like to thank the senior colleagues in the teacher education and training sector, senior university staff, colleagues in the regional Consortia as well as heads and other senior teachers in Wales who willingly gave their time to talk to me during the last year. I am also appreciative of the time given by colleagues in the various national bodies that have a stake in teacher education – Estyn, HEFCW, GTCW, UCET Cymru. I would particularly like to thank the ITT team in the Welsh Government who, while scrupulously observing my independence, have been both efficient and helpful in supporting my endeavours. Finally, I would like to acknowledge colleagues from across the UK, Ireland and beyond (Patricia Broadfoot, John Coolahan, Richard Daugherty, Graham Donaldson, Joe Hallgarten, Hazel Hagger, Nick Johnson, Gordon Kirk, Áine Lawlor, Ian Menter, Pamela Munn, James Noble Rogers, Pasi Sahlberg and Geoff Whitty) who have engaged with my ideas as they have developed over the last 12 months. During that time, in addition to working in Wales, I have had the privilege of working with colleagues on the BERA-RSA Inquiry into the role of research in teacher education and the Northern Ireland Government’s review of the infrastructure for initial teacher education. Although the analysis and proposals contained in this report are my responsibility and mine alone, they have benefited substantially from the input of all of these different colleagues in their development.

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| A Initial Teacher Education in Wales – the case for change | 4 |
| 1. Teacher Education in Wales – reasons for change | 5 |
| 2. What does the international research evidence tells us about high quality initial teacher education? | 8 |
| 3. How is current provision in Wales organised? | 9 |
| 4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of current provision when benchmarked against the international evidence? | 10 |
| 5. The National level | 11 |
| 6. The Institutional level | 14 |
| 7. The programme level | 16 |
| 8. Conclusion | 19 |
| B. Initial Teacher Education in Wales – options for change | 20 |
| Introduction | 21 |
| 9. Options for future accreditation of initial teacher education programmes | 22 |
| 10. Options for a future accreditation body | 25 |
| 11. Estyn’s future role | 27 |
| 12. Options for the future of the primary BA (Hons) QTS degree (the BEd) | 28 |
| 13. Options for raising the quality of entry to the profession | 30 |
| 14. Options for the future of professionally oriented research capacity | 32 |
| 15. University providers | 34 |
| 16. Conclusion | 38 |
| List of recommendations | 39 |
| References | 40 |

SECTION

A

Initial Teacher Education in Wales –
the case for change

1. Teacher Education in Wales – reasons for change

Initial teacher education¹ in Wales needs to change and for two quite different reasons. Firstly, it needs to change because despite some strengths in current provision there is a widespread consensus that overall it is not of sufficient high quality to serve the needs of Wales either now or in the future. Professor Ralph Tabberer in his recent report on initial teacher education put the problem quite baldly:

The current quality of ITT in Wales is adequate and no better. This judgement does not solely come from the findings of Estyn..... This assessment is largely shared by providers, officials and leading stakeholders. (Tabberer 2013: para 36)

In her Annual Report for 2012-3, Estyn's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales expressed similar sentiments when she stated:

We have not been recruiting enough trainee teachers with the best qualifications and we need more consistency in the quality of what is provided for them in initial teacher education and training in order to give them the best start to their teaching career (Estyn 2013: 41).

In April 2014, the OECD, while acknowledging a will to reform, noted that further improvements were required. Particularly important, they argued, was the need to attract and increase the quality of new entrants to the teaching profession and raise the standard of provision on offer to make it more attractive to prospective candidates. Building 'professional capital and collective responsibility' (p66) throughout the system, they argued, was one of the four priority areas that the Welsh Government urgently needed to address.

The quality of provision therefore does need to improve. But there is a second and perhaps even more important reason that reform is needed and that is to do with the changing nature of schooling in the 21st century. In our 2006 report on 'Initial Teacher Training Provision in Wales', I and my colleagues (Furlong et al 2006) pointed to the many challenges facing the future of the teaching profession in Wales. One of the biggest we suggested was that the 'teachers of tomorrow' will have to respond to the changing nature of knowledge in society. In a world of rapid change, teachers will not only need to be experts in teaching **something** (history, chemistry or mathematics), they will also need to be experts in teaching their students to 'learn how to learn'. This, we argued, must be one of the key outcomes of students' learning in the 21st century. It is a challenge that has been taken up by a growing number of

1. There is a range of different ways in which the initial professional preparation of teachers is described in policy documents within the UK. In England, and indeed in Wales until now, there has been an insistence on the term – 'training' – hence 'initial teacher training' or 'ITT'. In this report the term 'initial teacher education' or 'ITE' is used instead. This is because the word 'education' is being used as an inclusive term. It is fully accepted that ITE courses necessarily include within them important elements of both 'education' and 'training'.

countries around the world and it is a challenge that has major implications for both the form and content of initial teacher education.

In 2006, we also pointed to a range of other important factors affecting teaching: demographic changes which are resulting in an increasingly diverse society in Wales; the changing employment structures in schools where there is a growing emphasis on collaboration with other professionals working with young people; the fact that parents are becoming increasingly 'discriminating consumers' with increasing expectations of schools' achievements, information and consultation; and the growing recognition of the importance of evidence informed practice which is raising the level of debate about effective practice. All of these challenges, we argued, were likely to be added to the constant demand from parents, from Government and from others in the community to raise educational standards further.

If Wales was to achieve the school system that it needs and wants in the future, then it seemed clear to us that the teaching profession needs to provide a lead. Wales, needs a new form of professionalism amongst its teachers. It needs teachers who:

- have high expectations of and a commitment to the achievement of all pupils;
- take responsibility for innovation;
- relish change and help to lead it;
- are able to take a sharper focus on the needs of individual learners, including helping them in 'learning how to learn';
- accept and respond to demands for their accountability;
- take personal and collective responsibility for professional development;
- are able to evaluate and use different sorts of evidence relevant to the improvement of practice;
- are willing to work collaboratively with other teachers and other professionals both day to day and in the development of their practice;
- are willing and able to work in ways that draw on best practice from across the UK and internationally.

None of the challenges we identified in 2006 has lessened in the intervening years; indeed in many ways the pressures on the profession have increased.

What *has* changed in the last months though is that the Welsh Government's review of the curriculum and assessment, led by Professor Graham Donaldson (Donaldson 2015), has now placed many of these issues at the very top of the policy agenda.

The Donaldson proposals suggest a new vision for both curriculum and assessment. Rather than transmitting established bodies of knowledge, the Review argues that the aims of the curriculum should be fourfold. It should aim to create: ambitious, capable learners who are ready to learn throughout their lives; enterprising, creative contributors who are ready to play a full part in life and work; ethical, informed citizens who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world; healthy confident individuals who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society. As a result, instead of being based on traditional subjects, the Review recommends that the curriculum is organised in terms of 6 key 'areas of learning and experience' (expressive arts; health and wellbeing; humanities; languages, literacy and communication; mathematics

and numeracy; and science and technology) with teachers themselves having much greater freedom in the selection of material appropriate for their learners' needs. The review also proposes that **all** teachers should have responsibility for literacy, numeracy and digital competence, that there should be an increased focus on the use of the Welsh language in all schools, and that there should be a much greater emphasis on teacher led assessment than at present.

As the Review notes, these proposals will have major implications for the teaching force. Greater control over the curriculum will demand 'much more than the implementation of a pre-determined repertoire of methods and requires high quality teachers with a sound understanding of the 'why' and 'how' of teaching as well as the 'what' (Donaldson 2015: 58). The assessment proposals will require 'a deep and secure understanding of the curriculum and of the roles of both formative and summative assessment together with the skills associated with designing and interpreting the wide range of techniques that good assessment demands' (p69). There will also be major implications as a result of the increased focus on digital literacy and the Welsh language.

In short, the Donaldson Review proposals have significant implications for the form and content of teacher education – both initial teacher education and continuing professional development (CPD). The primary focus of this report is on the first of these – initial teacher education (ITE) – but as will become clear in later sections of this report, there are vitally important links to CPD as well.² What is needed in Wales are forms of ITE and CPD that will allow and encourage the achievement of a new kind of teacher professionalism of the sort proposed by Donaldson; one that is appropriate for the challenges of 21st century schooling.

2. The importance of linking ITE and CPD is something that is noted in recent reviews of teacher education that have been undertaken across the whole of the UK and Ireland: in Scotland (Donaldson, 2011), the Republic of Ireland (Sahlberg et al 2011), Northern Ireland (DEL 2014) and England (Carter 2015).

2. What does the international research evidence tell us about high quality initial teacher education?

What does high quality initial teacher education actually look like and how does current provision in Wales measure up? In order to answer the first of these questions it is instructive to look at the international research evidence. Last year, the British Educational Research Association (BERA), working in collaboration with the Royal Society of Arts (RSA), produced a review of the international research evidence on high quality teacher education (BERA-RSA 2014). The Inquiry commissioned 7 teams of researchers to review international evidence on a range of different dimensions of teacher education; it also led a national call for evidence and held a range of consultative meetings across the UK.

As a result of their inquiry, BERA-RSA argue that there is robust evidence to suggest that high quality initial teacher education has the following five core features.

The best programmes internationally:

- ensure that ITE programmes attract the best and most suitable candidates into the teaching profession;
- offer academic awards that are competitive, practice-focused and built on relevant educational research;
- develop strong links between theory and practice, in a way that helps students to understand and explore the interconnectedness of educational theories and classroom practices;
- establish strong links between initial teacher education and continuing professional development of teachers in schools;
- ensure that all of the above principles are underpinned by a clear understanding of evidence about how student teachers learn to teach and that courses themselves are the constant subject of research and development.

This would suggest that in order to be of the highest quality, initial teacher education needs its universities to provide strong, research led courses; it needs a school system that is willing to take responsibility and provide leadership in key parts of all programmes; and it needs to ensure that both university and school components are carefully integrated with each other. The BERA-RSA findings also have vitally important implications for the statutory 'Standards for Newly Qualified Teachers' that underpin provision.

3. How is current provision in Wales organised?

As a result of the organisational changes introduced following the 2006 review, initial teacher education in Wales is now provided through three collaborative university Centres – the North and Mid Wales Centre led by Bangor and Aberystwyth Universities, the South East Wales Centre led by Cardiff Metropolitan University and the University of South Wales, and the South West Wales Centre led by University of Wales Trinity St David. A large majority of the provision is university led but this is complemented by two small employment based programmes – the Graduate Teacher Programme and Teach First, though both of these programmes have strong links to the university sector as well. Three quarters of university led provision is designated for the postgraduate PGCE route, one quarter for the undergraduate route. Both primary and secondary provision is available in each of the three university Centres; all three Centres also offer the same range of secondary ‘priority subjects’ though there is some variation in the other secondary subjects offered by each Centre. Welsh medium provision is available in all three Centres across Wales for both primary and secondary programmes. There is, additionally, specific Welsh Government assistance for trainees who need extra support to raise their confidence in their ability to teach effectively through the medium of Welsh.

Details of initial teacher education provision across Wales are set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Initial Teacher Education numbers in Wales (2014/5) by Centre, Phase, Route and Subject

| Secondary | | Primary | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|------|
| University led provision | | University led provision | |
| UG Secondary | | UG Primary | |
| North and Mid Wales | 14 ¹ | North and Mid Wales | 83 |
| South East Wales | 81 ² | South East Wales | 104 |
| South West Wales | 0 | South West Wales | 113 |
| UG Secondary total | 95 | UG Primary total | 300 |
| PGCE Secondary | | PGCE Primary | |
| North and Mid Wales | 243 ³ | North and Mid Wales | 174 |
| South East Wales | 270 ⁴ | South East Wales | 123 |
| South West Wales | 272 ⁵ | South West Wales | 153 |
| PGCE Secondary total | 785 | PGCE Primary total | 450 |
| Total Secondary – University led | 880 | Total Primary – University led | 750 |
| Employment based provision | | Employment based provision | |
| Teach First | 50 | Graduate Teacher Programme | 30 |
| Graduate Teacher Programme | 30 | Total primary | 780 |
| Total Secondary | 960 | Total ITE | 1740 |

Priority subjects: Maths, Chemistry and Physics, Modern Languages, Welsh, Information Technology

1. Design and Technology

2. Maths, science, D&T, Welsh, Music

3. Priority subjects plus: Art, Biology and Integrated Sciences, Drama, English, Geography, History, Music, Physical Education, Religious Education, Outdoor Activities

4. Priority subjects plus: Art, Biology and Integrated Sciences, Design and Technology, Drama, English, History, Music, Physical Education

5. Priority subjects plus: Art, Biology and Integrated Science Business Studies, Design and Technology, English, Geography, History, Religious Education

4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of current provision when benchmarked against the international evidence?

As has already been noted, there is a broad consensus across Wales that in relation to current requirements, initial teacher education is not as strong as it should be. But there is also evidence, that those current requirements in key respects fall well short of what the international evidence suggests is best practice. They also fall well short of what will be required if the recommendations of the Donaldson Review of Curriculum and Assessment are accepted by the Welsh Government. From published evidence and from meetings held with a wide range of stakeholders across Wales in the last year, it is clear that there are currently weaknesses in provision at a variety of different levels: the National level, the Institutional level and the Programme level. Each of these is discussed below.

5. The National level

5.1 The need for more effective coordination and leadership

There is a widespread view held across the higher education sector that initial teacher education is not currently well led at the national level. During institutional visits, higher education colleagues gave many examples of a lack of communication, problems with confused messages, and the fact that innovations often take place in the school sector which are not always linked systematically to the work of initial teacher education. Not *all* of these criticisms can be substantiated and there is now evidence that national bodies are making an increased effort to ensure that teacher education Centres are fully informed of relevant policy developments and that where appropriate, teacher educators themselves are able to contribute to policy development.

However, the problem runs deeper than mere communication. What these criticisms reveal is that at present it is unclear who or what body is charged with providing leadership of the sector. Both HEFCW and the Department for Education and Skills have important administrative roles which they would appear to undertake appropriately, and the current Teacher Education Liaison Group,³ when it works well, is able to channel information between the different stakeholders represented on it. However, coordination and communication, even when they work well (which is not always the case) are very different from strategic leadership. In England, the National College for Teaching and Leadership provides that leadership for the sector, while in Scotland the General Teaching Council for Scotland takes on that role. In Wales at present there is a vacuum both in terms of institutional leadership and in terms of a strong cadre of individuals willing and able to take on national leadership roles. Without effective leadership there will be little chance of the sector responding to the many challenges posed by the recommendations of the Donaldson Review. And without effective leadership there is little opportunity for the sector benchmark its current work nationally and internationally and to become a self-improving system. Given the current lack of leadership of the sector it is perhaps not surprising that the quality of the programmes is not as strong as it should be.

5.2 Estyn Inspections.

The periodic inspections of providers by Estyn play a key role in the assurance and ideally the enhancement of the quality of initial teacher education provision in Wales. In principle, there is widespread support for the system. However, there is considerable disquiet amongst many stakeholders about the current capacity of Estyn to undertake its inspections in a timely manner. At present only two of the three Centres have been inspected within the normal timeframe of 6 years. As a result of other demands on Estyn, the third Centre (the North and Mid Wales) has not yet

3. The Teacher Education Liaison Group (TELG) which meets three times a year, brings together representatives from University Faculties and Departments of Education, UCET, Estyn, HEFCW, GTCW and the Welsh Government. The main purpose of the meetings is the exchange of information about current developments in initial teacher education in Wales.

been fully inspected.⁴ Clearly that is not an effective or appropriate way of monitoring or managing quality. Moreover, some stakeholders have questioned whether the current inspection process, with its strong emphasis on public accountability, is as effective as it might be in contributing to the enhancement of quality.

5.3 Standards for Qualified Teacher Status

The Standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) issued and periodically updated by the Welsh Government play a crucial role in the management of teacher education in Wales. Standards for initial teacher education were originally introduced in Wales in the mid-1990s by the Westminster Government prior to devolution and although they have been updated since introduction, they have not been fundamentally reconceptualised. As a result, the current QTS Standards in Wales, as in England, remain conceptualised as a set of behaviourally based ‘competences’: things that newly qualified teachers ‘must know and do’. For the Foundation Phase for example, trainees must ‘know and understand the *Framework for Children’s Learning for 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales*’; all teachers must ‘set challenging teaching and learning objectives which are relevant to all learners in their classes’; and they must ‘make appropriate use of a range of monitoring and assessment strategies to evaluate learners’ progress towards planned learning objectives, and use this information to improve their own planning and teaching’.

There are a number of difficulties with standards conceptualised in this manner. For example in contrast to similar standards in use in other parts of the UK and internationally,⁵ the current standards in Wales do not conceptualise teacher learning in a developmental way. There are no formal links to the Practising Teacher Standards (Welsh Government 2011); newly qualified teachers are simply expected to be fully practically competent on point of entry to the profession. One consequence of this is that the Standards give little emphasis to the contribution of initial teacher education to teachers’ long term professional development. The Welsh Standards also place much less emphasis on ‘knowing and understanding’ than those of other countries. Because of the dominant focus on what newly qualified teachers must be able ‘to do’ at their end of their programmes, there is virtually no explicit recognition of the role of research or critical reflection in teachers’ professional learning. As a consequence, newly qualified teachers are not conceptualised nor is there a requirement that they are prepared to be active professionals, with their own judgements to make and with their own responsibilities as *leaders* of children’s learning.

It is hard to overstate the impact of this overly narrow conception of teacher standards on the provision of initial teacher education in Wales. They form the basis on which Estyn inspections are undertaken. And as Estyn reports themselves become the basis for accreditation and re-accreditation of programmes by HEFCW, a programme’s ability to ‘deliver’ high quality as defined by the Standards is exceptionally important.

Given the significance of the Standards, it is perhaps not surprising that in many cases they have become a *de facto* curriculum in many teacher education programmes. As Professor

4. Bangor University ITE programmes were last inspected in 2004/5 and Aberystwyth programmes in 2007. Estyn has recently announced that it will be inspecting ITE provision in the North and Mid Wales Centre during the first half of 2015.

5. See for example the equivalent Australian teacher standards issued by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership <http://www.aitsl.edu.au/australian-professional-standards-for-teachers/standards/list>

Tabberer commented in his Report, in most cases he could establish no rationale for the design of many programmes beyond the requirements of the Standards themselves. Standards have also indirectly influenced who universities recruit to teach on their teacher education programmes and how they develop them. If universities are to be assessed, and only assessed, on the extent to which they are able to prepare student teachers for the practical, day to day realities of the classroom, then the best staff to recruit are those who themselves have only very recently left the classroom. Moreover, given that there is no reference whatsoever in the Standards to research or the need to develop student teachers as critical consumers of or participants in research, there is little requirement on the part of universities to help their staff develop as research active university lecturers. Again, in other jurisdictions, standards set out a very different vision for the contribution of universities.

But as has already been noted, change is on its way. The conception of the teacher's role implicit in the current Standards is fundamentally different from that imagined in the Donaldson Review. Here teachers are seen as active professionals with major responsibilities for key aspects of the design as well as the implementation of curriculum and assessment. As the Donaldson Review itself argues, 'The high degree of prescription and detail in the national curriculum, allied to increasingly powerful accountability mechanisms, has tended to create a culture within which the creative role of the school has become diminished and the professional contribution of the workforce underdeveloped.' (Donaldson 2015: 9). If the recommendations of the curriculum and assessment review are accepted by the Welsh Government, then that will change. The Donaldson Review necessitates a fundamental re-conceptualisation of all of the teaching Standards in Wales- from the Standards for Qualified Teacher Status right through to the Standards for Head Teachers.

6. The Institutional level

6.1 Estyn's evidence about the quality of provision

Reference has already been made to the fact that overall, Estyn has raised questions about the quality of current provision in Wales. Such concerns are further elaborated in the individual inspections of the South West Wales and South East Wales Centres that have been carried out to date. For example the last full inspection of provision at the South West Centre for Teacher Education in 2012 assessed current performance as 'adequate' while 'prospects for improvement' were judged to be 'good'. More recently a monitoring report for this Centre has concluded that most recommendations have now been addressed. In 2013, current provision at the South East Wales Centre for Teacher Education was judged to be 'adequate', while prospects for improvement were judged to be 'unsatisfactory'. In September 2014, a monitoring review of this Centre reported significant progress in relation to the recommendations made by Estyn but the report itself has yet to be published. As has already been noted, no inspection of the North and Mid Wales Centre for Teacher Education has yet been completed, though one is currently being undertaken.

6.2 Centre collaboration

Following the 2006 Review, six existing providers were required to come together into three Centres each based on collaborations between two neighbouring universities. Since that time, two of those universities (Trinity College Carmarthen and Swansea Metropolitan) have themselves amalgamated to form the University of Wales, Trinity St David so that there are currently five universities involved in the three Centres. One of the main rationales for the development of the Centres was to ensure that there remained sufficient capacity within the higher education sector at a time when student numbers in teacher education had to be substantially cut.⁶ During the reconfiguration process, universities' numbers were protected so that they could develop new 'non QTS' courses, thereby ensuring that their faculties and departments of Education remained financially viable. One very positive outcome of reconfiguration is that in all cases Education faculties across the sector have indeed managed to diversify and now offer a range of other courses.⁷ As a result, ITE has remained part of a financially viable system even though it has itself been significantly reduced in size.

What has been less successful however, has been the operation of the Centres themselves. There is extensive evidence, both from Estyn and from senior stakeholders across the system that effective collaboration has been much more challenging than was originally anticipated. Different universities, necessarily have different processes and procedures for staffing, for course management, for quality assurance, for financial accounting and many other things as well. Despite some reported advantages of collaboration, (for example, sending a more coherent message to partner schools), bringing universities together into an effective management strategy for an individual Centre has

6. Overall ITE intake numbers have been reduced by a third – 34% in total

7. In this regard, the system in Wales has been significantly more successful than either the systems in Scotland or Northern Ireland where there continues to be significant overproduction of teachers (see e.g DEL 2014)

in every case proved time consuming and sometimes impossible. Perhaps a more direct challenge to the Centre concept is to ask, what, if they worked well, would Centres add to the quality and coherence of provision. Only a few colleagues within the sector seem willing or able to answer that question positively. Despite the considerable achievements that have been made in managing the substantial reduction in ITE numbers since 2006, it now seems sensible to re-visit the Centre concept and ask whether it is the most effective way of managing provision in the future.

6.3 University leadership and support

Universities in Wales remain central to the provision of initial teacher education. Unlike England or some states in the USA, there seems little appetite to move away from university led provision. Employment based routes (GTP and Teach First), though important in their own ways, remain very small compared with the numbers enrolled in university led courses. In some ways this is unsurprising. Wales' universities have a very strong tradition of engagement in teacher education.⁸ However, the fact that teacher education remains very much a university led process in Wales does not necessarily mean that the sector has been well served by contemporary universities. On a number of key indices, teacher educators themselves seem less well supported than their colleagues in other disciplines and in other parts of the UK.

In looking at current faculties and departments of Education in Wales, three features stand out as key indicators of quality of university support. The first is the fact that in 2014, no single academic from any of the teacher education Centres was returned for the Research Excellence Framework (REF). REF/Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) returns for education in Wales have declined dramatically over the last three assessment periods (See Furlong and White 2001) and in the recent round, only Cardiff, which has only a very modest engagement with initial teacher education, was entered. While entry to the REF is not the only indicator of research activity, it is a vitally important benchmark. On this bench mark Wales has the lowest profile of any of the four home nations of the UK and by a very long way. A second indicator is the number of staff employed on teaching only contracts within universities providing initial teacher education. Contracts differ quite substantially across different universities. However, in Bangor for example, only 6 of 39 FTE staff are on teaching and research contracts.⁹ In Aberystwyth there are 7 full time and 34 part time staff; of those 41 staff, 31 were on teaching only contracts. While there are more robust staffing models in the other two Centres, outputs in terms of research remains very low. A third indicator of effective investment might be numbers of staff with doctorates. These too are low; in Cardiff Metropolitan for example, despite the established staffing structure only 25% of academic staff teaching in Education have doctorates; amongst former Newport staff the number is 10% and in the South West Wales Centre, the figure is 14%. What these figures collectively indicate is a substantial underinvestment and support for staffing by universities in their education departments and faculties.

A key challenge for the future therefore is how the universities can be encouraged to remedy this long term lack of investment in what is such a strategically important sector in Wales as a whole.

8. Day Training Colleges in Wales, with a university link, were some of the earliest to be established in Britain – Cardiff (1890), Aberystwyth (1892) and Bangor (1894). Teacher education colleges, many of which have now amalgamated with or become universities in their own right began somewhat earlier – Trinity College Carmarthen was established in 1847 quickly followed in 1855 and 1858 by the creation of colleges at Caernarfon and Bangor. Four additional local authority colleges in Barry, Caerleon, Swansea and Bangor were all established before 1914. Two other colleges, City of Cardiff College and Cartrefle College, Wrexham, were established in the early 1950s.

9. Figures provided by the universities themselves are for 2013/4

7. The Programme level

In considering weaknesses at the programme level it is instructive to return to the five principles of high quality provision identified by the BERA-RSA (2014) Inquiry in their extensive reviews of the international research literature. To what extent does current provision match up to these criteria?

7.1 Ensure that ITE programmes attract the best and most suitable candidates to teacher education programmes

Estyn (2012-3), the Tabberer Report (2013) and particularly the OECD (2014) all raise questions as to whether current ITE provision is attracting the highest quality candidates. While Teach First is making a welcome contribution to raising the quality, the numbers involved remain small. More generally, it is evident that there are different challenges in terms of raising quality for different routes into teaching.

With the PGCE the difficulty is to how raise entry standards in a market driven system where universities' income is dependent on filling places and where students can easily move to England for their courses. Able candidates, who might otherwise be committed to undertaking their teacher education in Wales, can easily opt for courses elsewhere in the UK if there are incentives to do so or if entry standards are lower. Evidence from UCET Cymru highlights the fact that financial incentives offered to students (which include scholarships offered by leading subject associations such as the Institute of Physics) are in some cases more generous in England than in Wales.¹⁰ This, course leaders suggest, is having a negative impact on their ability to recruit the highest quality candidates. There are also differences from England in relation to entry requirements. In Wales all candidates are expected to have at least a 'B' at GCSE in Maths and English; primary candidates are also expected to have at least level 'C' in Science. Currently in England those requirements are lower. While few would dispute that the Welsh requirements are highly desirable, some colleagues within the sector suggest that the fact that this requirement is different from England means that again some otherwise very able students are lost to teacher education in Wales.

There are also concerns at the undergraduate level where the quality of entrants is not as high as that of many other comparable professional programmes.¹¹ And there are questions as to whether the current three year undergraduate route is the most appropriate vehicle for

10. For example UCET Cymru report that for 2014/15 a secondary PGCE candidate with a 2.1 in Maths would be £10,000 better off by studying in England; an MFL secondary PGCE candidate with a 2.2 would be £12,000 better off in England; and a PGCE primary maths specialist with a 2.1 degree would be £11,000 better off in England. In addition, selected subject associations are offering competitive scholarships of £25,000 to some STEM graduates who have a place on a PGCE programme in England. However, it should be noted that these comparisons do not take account of the non-repayable Tuition Fee Grant (£5,315 in 2014/15) available via general student support arrangements to eligible PGCE students ordinarily resident in Wales.

11. In Bangor for example, those entering the Primary BA (Hons) QTS have an entry requirement of 240 points while those studying for a degree in English, Biology or Psychology at the same university have requirements of anywhere from 280-320 points. The University of South Wales has an entry requirement of 280 points for its Primary BA (Hons) QTS programme while its Bachelor of Nursing degree has an entry requirement of 300 points. At 260 points, the entry requirements for a *non*-QTS Education Studies degree at Cardiff Met are higher than those of either Bangor or Trinity St Davids for Primary BA (Hons) QTS degrees. The non-QTS Education degree at Cardiff University has an entry requirement of 300-320.

attracting and producing the highest quality primary school teachers. Courses in the Republic of Ireland are in the process of moving from three to four years with a view to raising their quality. In Scotland and Northern Ireland, both of which attract much higher quality entrants, the degree is already four years in duration. As a consequence of the Donaldson Report in Scotland (Donaldson 2011), undergraduate education degrees in their traditional form are currently being phased out, with undergraduate education courses being more fully integrated into other university based disciplines. This is likely to raise the quality of intake further as well as place more emphasis on the personal and professional education of future primary school teachers.

7.2 Offer academic awards that are competitive, practice-focused and built on relevant educational research

As the Tabberer Report notes, there is clear evidence in Wales that courses are strongly practice focused and this is an important strength of the current system. However, there is much less evidence that they are always built on relevant educational research. As the BERA-RSA Report makes clear, there are multiple ways in which research should inform teacher education programmes: in the knowledge that underpins the content, in the design of programmes and in preparing student teachers to be both critical consumers of as well as participants *in* research. Given that research is not explicitly referenced in any form in the current 'Standards' and given the lack of a robust research culture within teacher education in Wales at present, it is hard to see how these features of high quality teacher education can currently be in place.

7.3 Develop strong links between theory and practice, in a way that helps students to understand and explore the interconnectedness of educational theories and classroom practices

There is strong evidence internationally that this principle is central to ensuring high quality teacher education. As both the recent report on teacher education in Northern Ireland (DEL 2014) and the BERA-RSA Inquiry make clear, this involves the development of some form of 'clinical practice' in schools. In clinical practice models of teacher education, the schools themselves play a leading role in key aspects of the training offered. They provide careful mentoring with a staged development of students' teaching experiences. In addition however, such programmes also provide student teachers with routine opportunities to link their developing practical school experience with other forms of professional knowledge – with research, with theory and with knowledge of practice in other contexts. It is the bringing together of these different forms of professional knowledge that encourages students to reflect, analyse and challenge what they are learning in their practical work. But if schools and universities are to work closely on the development of clinical practice models, then this demands a very different conception of 'partnership' from the one that is currently in place in most of Wales.

At present it seems that most schools have only a small role in professional education, often with very small numbers of students. Teacher education is undertaken primarily on a voluntary basis – an 'add on' to schools' normal work. Internationally however, there is strong evidence that in the most effective systems, universities work with much smaller numbers of schools which take larger numbers of students. Moreover, schools themselves are encouraged to take leading responsibility in key aspects of the training programme.

One particular difficulty in encouraging schools to work in closer partnership with universities on a regular basis is that it is indeed voluntary. As a result, it is widely reported that few schools are willing to make long term commitments, often withdrawing, sometimes at the last minute, particularly if they are facing an Estyn inspection. What is needed therefore is the contribution of schools to initial teacher education to be much more publically recognised. Making a systematic and sustained contribution to teacher education should be one way of demonstrating that a school is a good school, or is aspiring to be good.

7.4 Establish strong links between initial teacher education and continuing professional development of teachers in schools

The Masters in Educational Practice (MEP) has been a significant development in Wales in providing an important link between initial teacher education and early professional development. Now the proposed new masters degree framework and the New Deal more generally, have the potential to ensure that teachers' professional learning can be supported in a systematic way throughout their careers. However, while these are very positive developments there are currently no systematic links between those with responsibility for CPD, the new Consortia, and Wales' teacher education Centres in universities. Staff in university faculties and in departments of Education are a major resource for the more sustained development of the teaching force in Wales and at present that resource is significantly underutilised. This may be the product of the lack of any systematic coordination and leadership of the sector as a whole.

7.5 Ensure that all of the above principles are underpinned by a clear understanding of evidence about how student teachers learn to teach and that courses themselves are the constant subject of research and development

As both the BERA-RSA and Northern Ireland (DEL 2014) reports make clear, much is known about the principles of effective professional learning both in initial teacher education and within CPD. The most effective forms of provision draw on this knowledge in the design and implementation of their programmes and subject their own work to ongoing research in order to develop it further. At present, however, as the Tabberer Report makes clear, there is little evidence that provision is based on such an approach. This may in part be attributable to the current narrowly conceived set of 'Standards' that, with Estyn inspections, govern the system. While Estyn inspections are very important, there is much more to university led professional education than is captured in an inspection process. It is also true that the best courses are themselves the subject of on-going research and review. While there is now evidence that providers are developing and sharing more forms of data in order to monitor their work, this is not necessarily the same thing as taking a research based approach where there is a clear link to literature on professional education, as well as links to excellent practice elsewhere.

8 Conclusion

If Wales is to meet the challenges of educating its children effectively for the 21st century then high quality initial teacher education has a vitally important part to play. What is clear from the foregoing discussion is that on a wide range of different measures the present system is not fulfilling its role effectively. There is evidence that it is falling well short of what we know is best practice in other parts of the UK and internationally. Moreover, the changes to curriculum and assessment being advocated by the Donaldson Review will significantly raise the bar in terms of what we expect of our teachers. In the future, Wales will need a different type of teacher professional; one who has significantly more responsibility, one who understands the 'why' and the 'how' of teaching as well as the 'what'. These aspirations have major implications for both initial teacher education and CPD. The case for change is therefore undeniable.

Changes are needed at all three levels of the initial teacher education system – the national level, the institutional level and the programme level. Much of the responsibility for the changes that are needed will lie beyond the direct purview of the Welsh Government. It is the universities both at their central and programme levels and practices in schools that need to change. What Government can do, however, is to set up the appropriate structures that will encourage and support the changes that are needed. It is these structural changes that are the focus of options outlined in the next part of this Report.

SECTION B

Initial Teacher Education in Wales –
options for change

Introduction

The options for change in the structures governing initial teacher education in Wales take a number of different forms. The two most significant changes concern firstly the re-drafting of the 'Standards' for qualified teacher status. As has already been noted, these Standards have a vitally important role to play in the shaping of provision. The second and related recommendation is that the Welsh Government revises its accreditation procedures for teacher education providers. In combination with a new and more appropriate set of Standards, re-accreditation will allow the opportunity to consider a range of different factors that are important in raising the quality of provision, including the content of courses, the contribution of schools, the quality of providers and, indirectly, the leadership of the system overall. However, re-accreditation also raises a number of other key questions such as: what should the accreditation process cover; which body should undertake the accreditation process; how many institutions should be accredited for the provision of initial teacher education; and how would re-accreditation affect the future role of Estyn?

In addition to these two key measures, there are further specific options that need to be considered in relation to: entry requirements and financial incentives for student teachers; the future of the undergraduate route into teaching – the BA (QTS) degree; research capacity; and the links between initial teacher education and further professional development. In each case the options set out below need to be evaluated in terms of their potential contribution to raising the quality of the system, their value for money and their 'achievability'.

9. Options for future accreditation of initial teacher education programmes

At present, under Regulation 7 of the School Teachers Qualifications (Wales) Regulations 2012, all providers of initial teacher education in Wales are required to seek accreditation from HEFCW. The accreditation process has a number of different dimensions. The broad framework is established by Criteria set out by Welsh Ministers from time to time. These criteria briefly cover a range of different issues such as entry requirements, partnership with schools and quality assurance. On the content of programmes, there is an explicit reference to the need for providers to 'Design the content, structure and delivery of training to enable trainees to demonstrate that they have met the QTS Standards.'¹² The primary evidence used by HEFCW in assessing whether providers have indeed met the specified Criteria are Estyn's periodic inspection reports of providers. Here too the QTS standards have a central role. In other words, in the current accreditation arrangements, the QTS Standards play a central, if not defining role.

As was noted in 5.3, the current QTS Standards in Wales, like those of England, are conceptualised primarily as a set of competences. As the Handbook of Guidance on the QTS Standards states, 'The QTS Standards are outcome statements which set out what trainees must know, understand and be able to do at the end of an ITT course or employment based programme to gain QTS'. And in the majority of cases, what it is specified they should 'know and do', relates to a range of government specified directives and advisory documents. As was also noted, it is significant that the Standards are conceptualised as a set of 'stand alone' competences. Unlike those of Scotland or the Republic of Ireland,¹³ they are not conceptualised as part of lifelong professional development.

Given that the Standards for Newly Qualified Teachers in Wales are so narrowly competency based and given that they are not clearly linked to teachers' future professional learning, it raises questions as to whether, in their current form, they are actually appropriate as the primary driver for institutional accreditation. Certainly when considered in relation to the vision of teacher professionalism foreshadowed by the Donaldson Review (2015) or compared with practice in other jurisdictions, they seem overly restricted.

In Scotland for example, the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) Standards for Initial Registration (GTCS 2012), which are also used in accreditation processes, explicitly recognise that teaching is a complex professional activity, demanding high levels skills, knowledge and professional judgments all of which need to be developed throughout teachers'

12. Requirement R2.1 of the Criteria for Initial School Teacher Training Accreditation by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales 2014 (2014 No.1)

13. GTCS (2012) The Standards for Registration: mandatory requirements for Registration with the General Teaching Council for Scotland Edingburgh: GTCS <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/standards/standards.aspx> Teaching Council (Ireland) (2011) Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers <http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/publications.157.html>

professional careers. There is also a strong emphasis on knowledge and understanding derived from multiple sources such as research and theory, as well as covering what students should 'know and do'. Standards are conceptualised as developmental: there is an explicit and clear link between the Standards student teachers need to have acquired at the end of their training and those needed at the end of their probationary period, when they apply for full registration with the GTCS.¹⁴ In broad terms therefore, the Standards for Initial Registration Scotland set out a developmental curriculum for the university, as well as the school contribution to initial teacher education. It is these Standards that are then used as a basis for institutional accreditation.

In the Republic of Ireland the accreditation process goes further. The Teaching Council's Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers (Teaching Council 2011) not only outlines, in broad terms, a content for courses, it also sets out criteria for assessing the quality of providers themselves. These include minimum requirements for staff. For example, all university staff must be research active; they should hold qualifications at least one level higher than those they are teaching; student staff ratios on teacher education programmes should be no more than 15:1.

What evidence from other countries suggests is that there is considerable potential to address some of the current deficiencies in teacher education provision in Wales, if the accreditation procedures and the underlying QTS standards were themselves revised.

This then leads to a range of possible options:

Option 9.1 Status quo. Re-accreditation using Estyn inspection information against the current Standards

If the Government agrees that re-accreditation is necessary, then the quickest way to undertake that process would be by using existing procedures. However, this would be unlikely to ensure good practice as defined by the international literature; Wales's accreditation procedures have not done so in the past and therefore seem unlikely to do so in the future.

Option 9.2 Re-accreditation with a revised set of developmental standards including a broadly specified curriculum as in Scotland

Certainly including some reference to a broadly specified curriculum to be covered in both universities and schools would be a valuable development; indeed it would be essential if the aspirations of the Donaldson Review (2015) are to be achieved. Such an approach would recognise and value the distinctive but complementary contribution of both contexts for professional education. It would also be an advantage if the standards underpinning the accreditation process were conceptualised as developmental, with clear links to probation and early professional development. Initial teacher education would then link more appropriately with Wales' proposed new Masters programme than is possible at present. A developmental set of standards would also encourage greater collaboration than at present between different providers – universities, Consortia and Masters' providers such as the Masters in Educational Practice (MEP).

¹⁴. A similar developmental approach is taken in other national standards, for example those of Australia – see Footnote 3

Option 9.3 Re-accreditation as in 9.2 but with revised criteria, including minimum standards for providers, as in the Republic of Ireland.

Given that one of the key weaknesses of current provision outlined in Section A has been the lack of investment by universities in their departments and faculties of education, then specifying a set of minimum standards for providers could have an important part to play in raising quality. Only if teacher education attracts high quality staff with the appropriate professional and academic qualifications and only if, once they are in post, they are given the right support by their universities in terms of their employment contracts and the opportunities to develop as active researchers themselves, can we expect the system to improve.

Option 9.4 Re-accreditation as in 9.3 but with a revised set of standards, including minimum standards for partnerships with schools

One of the major weaknesses with the majority of teacher education both in the UK and the Republic of Ireland is that the contribution of schools has, except in a small number of instances, remained underdeveloped. As the BERA-RSA (2014) inquiry made clear, the development of ‘research informed clinical practice’ is the hallmark of the very best teacher education programmes internationally. However, it demands a very different form of ‘partnership’ from that currently in place in most of Wales. Schools themselves have to have a leading role in key parts of programmes, in that they have to take a whole school approach to professional education and they have to work in close collaboration with their university partners. In addition, programmes have to develop systematic ways of integrating what student teachers learn in school, with other forms of professional knowledge that they acquire through their universities. Although most accreditation criteria, including those in Wales, specify in broad terms that teacher education programmes must be based on the principles of partnerships with schools, too often that aspiration is not realised in practice. A revised set of accreditation criteria which focus in detail on the nature of university/ school partnerships and which give schools leading responsibilities in key aspects of ITE programmes, could give Wales the opportunity to devise more consistent and effective practice than currently happens elsewhere in the UK.

RECOMMENDATION 1. That the Welsh Government, as a matter of priority, revises the Standards for Newly Qualified Teachers in line with the principles specified in Option 9.4

RECOMMENDATION 2. That the Welsh Government establishes a revised accreditation process for providers of initial teacher education as described in Option 9.4

10. Options for a future accreditation body

Accreditation of initial teacher education providers is undertaken on behalf of the Welsh Government by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW). At present, accreditation is a 'one off' process – once providers have been approved, they remain accredited unless evidence is provided by Estyn that a particular provider is no longer compliant. In those circumstances, there are established procedures for addressing 'non-compliance' including the potential withdrawal of accreditation. As was noted above, the current procedures are primarily paper based. Potential new providers are required to submit a 15 page proposal outlining provision under a set of standard headings such as 'recruitment of trainees', 'quality assurance and compliance' and 'financial management'. The proposal is then reviewed by an accreditation panel, chaired by a member of HEFCW Council. Panel members are selected on the basis of having appropriate expertise.

There are a number of distinctive features to note about current procedures. Firstly, it is relatively 'light touch'; unless there is strong evidence from Estyn that a particular provider is non-compliant, accreditation remains in place. Secondly, it is undertaken by the Higher Education Funding Council itself, rather than by a body with specialist expertise in teacher education. As a result, continuing accreditation is highly dependent on the professional judgments made by Estyn and Estyn alone. Finally, neither practicing teacher educators, nor the teaching profession has any formal representation in the process, though of course individuals may be part of the Review Panel.

If the Welsh Government agrees to establish a more robust set of accreditation processes of the kind outlined above, then the accreditation of providers will inevitably be a more demanding task than at present. Developing and maintaining a new and more detailed set of criteria will be time consuming. In addition, if, as in other jurisdictions, re-accreditation takes place on a periodic basis (say every five or six years) and if, as in many other professional fields, it is to involve more than a paper exercise (perhaps including site visits and/or panel meetings) then again it will be substantially more demanding process than at present. Inevitably, then, some re-consideration of the accreditation processes and particularly the accreditation body will be necessary. Again, there are a number of options. However, in choosing between those options it is important to recognise that in other jurisdictions, the accreditation bodies have been combined with lead organisations in the professional field itself.

As was noted in Part A of this report, one of the difficulties at present in Wales is that there is no lead body in the field of initial teacher education; coordination at national level is therefore often problematic. In selecting an appropriate accreditation body, the government should therefore consider whether it might, over time, take on this broader strategic leadership role as well.

Option 10.1 HEFCW continues to act as the accreditation body

While there would obviously be advantages in continuity if HEFCW itself were to take on a new and expanded role in the accreditation process, it would not be able to do so within its current resources. Those resources could be expanded, but it remains questionable as to whether a generic organisation such as HEFCW, with many different national responsibilities, should also become the lead body in a very specific professional field such as initial teacher education.

Option 10.2 The Welsh Government itself acts as the accreditation body

There would be some advantages if the accreditation process were taken over by the Welsh Government itself. In resource terms, it could be more efficient; coordination at a policy level would in principle be easier to achieve. However, such a model would perhaps make teacher education too close to government. It may, as in England, come to be seen as a politicised process and Government itself might be seen as directly responsible for any future weaknesses in provision.

Option 10.3 Establish a new and independent ‘Teacher Education Accreditation Board’

Again, this would have some key advantages. The Board could include representation from a wide range of stake holders (the teaching profession, higher education, parents organisations, Estyn and HEFCW); as such it would be at an appropriate ‘arm’s length’ from Government. With appropriate membership, such a Board would also be well placed to take on a leadership role of teacher education as a whole. The disadvantage of this option is that it would inevitably be more expensive than other options presented. It would also be yet one more body for Government and Higher Education to engage with; in some respects it might therefore make coordination of the sector more not less difficult.

Option 10.4 Establish a ‘Teacher Education Accreditation Board’ within the Education Workforce Council for Wales

This is the option that has been adopted in Scotland and the Republic of Ireland, where it appears to work well. As a sub-committee of the Council, the Board could include a range of stakeholders, including representation from the teaching profession itself. It would also be well placed to provide leadership and coordination for teacher education on a national level, while at the same time being at arm’s length from Government. In taking responsibility for the accreditation of providers of teacher education, the Council would also be bringing itself in line with the role of many other professional bodies; it would also send a strong message about the teaching profession itself taking a lead role in its own professional education.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That the Welsh Government establishes a ‘Teacher Education Accreditation Board’ within the Education Workforce Council for Wales – option 10.4

11. Estyn's future role

Estyn currently has a major impact on initial teacher education in Wales in two distinct ways. Firstly it has a direct impact through the inspection of provision; secondly it has an indirect impact through its inspection of schools. If, as is recommended above, a revised re-accreditation process for initial teacher education is established in Wales, then this will inevitably raise questions about the future of Estyn's role in the inspection of the sector. At present Estyn plays a crucial role in the monitoring of quality against the specified Standards. However, in many other professions where robust accreditation procedures are in place, statutory inspection of the type provided by Estyn is not normally seen as necessary. Indeed, it might be argued that if Estyn were to continue inspecting initial teacher education in its current way, it would potentially undermine the authority of the professional body itself to regulate its own training and registration processes. Potentially there are a number of options for Estyn's future role within initial teacher education. They might, for example continue as at present, monitoring quality against a revised set of standards. Alternatively, they might take on a more quality enhancement role: focusing more specifically on the quality of newly qualified teachers; undertaking thematic reviews on topics such as literacy and numeracy across ITE sector. No specific recommendations are made at this point as to the future role of Estyn as an inspector of initial teacher education. Nevertheless, it is clear that this issue will have to be addressed once a revised accreditation process is fully in place.

But Estyn is also significant for initial teacher education in an indirect way, through its inspection of schools. Recommendation 9.4 above envisages a considerably strengthened role for schools in the future provision of ITE in Wales; this will be a key factor in raising the quality of that provision. However, as was noted in 7.3 above, at present, most schools in Wales have only a modest role in initial teacher education. Schools it seems are often reluctant to make long term, substantial commitments; their role in initial teacher education is seen as voluntary and largely unrecognised by the educational system, including Estyn. Indeed it is widely reported that some schools are reluctant to take students on placements at all if they are facing an Estyn inspection.

Given the significance of Estyn in the life of Wales' schools, ensuring that the inspection process explicitly values schools' contribution to initial teacher education seems vital. Doing so would be one way of making schools' contribution more valued and more secure. This could be achieved relatively easily if some explicit reference to schools' contribution to ITE were included in Estyn's 'Guidance for Inspection'.

RECOMMENDATION 4: That the role of Estyn within initial teacher education be reviewed once a revised accreditation process is fully in place.

RECOMMENDATION 5: That Estyn's 'Guidance for Inspection' for schools be revised to include specific recognition of the contribution of a school to initial teacher education.

12. Options for the future of the primary BA (Hons) QTS degree (the BEd)

Many teacher education systems around the world continue to offer both undergraduate and postgraduate routes into teaching. Originally developed from the post war Teacher's Certificate, between the 1970 and the 1990s, the BEd degree became the main route into teaching with the postgraduate PGCE as a minority route. Over the last 30 years, that position has reversed and in Wales, as across the UK, the numbers entering by the undergraduate route have been reduced substantially. However in primary education and in key shortage secondary areas such as technology, the undergraduate route still has an important, if much reduced part to play in teacher supply. However, Wales differs in one key respect from practice elsewhere in the UK and Ireland in that the Primary BA (Hons) QTS degree is only available as a 3 year programme. In England there are both three and four year programmes; in Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, all undergraduate routes into teaching are of four years duration.

The fact that those taking the undergraduate route into primary teaching in effect have one year less higher education than those following consecutive routes (undergraduate qualification + PGCE), is or should be a cause for concern in Wales. In three short years, undergraduate students have to be provided with personal and professional education, as well as practical training and experience in schools. This is highly challenging both for students themselves and also for those responsible for designing and teaching the programmes. It is likely to be even more challenging if the recommendations of the Donaldson Inquiry are fully accepted. Inevitably the short timescale currently available means that undergraduate programmes are open to questions about their quality. There are also questions about the quality of their student intake. As has already been noted, in Wales, the quality of intake to primary BA (Hons) QTS degrees is variable but is overall lower than many other comparable degrees; in some cases entry levels to education degrees *without* QTS are higher than those with it.

Recently, the Donaldson Review (2011) of teacher education in Scotland has raised the question as to whether, even when the programmes are of four years duration, undergraduate education degrees are appropriately structured. Donaldson argues that Education undergraduates, taught exclusively by Education faculties, have not fully benefited from being integrated into universities. The result, he argues, is that students' personal education is not developed as fully as it might be.

'Initial teacher education has already undergone significant change over the last decade....Mergers between former colleges of education and universities were designed to help raise the status of the profession and to allow future teachers to benefit from the wider academic and research culture of a university. Those aims have at best been only partially achieved and there remains considerable scope to improve the synergies between dedicated teacher education schools and the wider university. Undergraduate teacher education students should engage with staff and their peers in other facilities much more directly as part of their social and intellectual development. In particular,

opportunities should be created for joint study with colleagues in cognate professions such as social work. The values and intellectual challenges which underpin academic study should extend their scholarship and take them beyond an inclination, however understandable, to want narrow training of immediate and direct relevance to life in the classroom' (Donaldson (2011:6).

As a result of these recommendations, the BEd degree in Scotland is currently being phased out by all universities and being replaced by education degrees where students spend the equivalent of two years studying alongside students from other disciplines in their university.

Wales therefore faces a number of options for the future development of its undergraduate route into primary school teaching.

Option 12.1 Status quo – the BA (Hons) QTS degree remains as it is

Clearly this would be the most straightforward option. However, given that there remain serious questions about the quality of the three year route when compared with programmes elsewhere in the UK, and given that there are questions about the quality of intake when compared with rising entry requirements in so many other subjects, some action does need to be taken. One of the key findings from international evidence is that the most successful programmes strive constantly to raise both the quality of intake and of provision. In these circumstances, it would seem that the current three year programme is no longer fit for purpose as a major entry route for primary school teachers in Wales.

Option 12.2. Extend the existing BA Education to four years

Extending the BA Education degree to four years would have significant advantages. Four year courses elsewhere in the UK generally attract higher quality students than three year courses; they also allow for greater attention to subject study and they allow an important element of advanced study – including subject specialist expertise. In all of these ways, the addition of a fourth year in Wales would contribute significantly to raising the quality of primary school teachers.

Option 12.3 Extend the degree to four years and base 50% of students' time in main subject departments

This option follows the Scottish example. In comparison with Option 12.2, it places a greater emphasis on students' personal rather than their professional education. However, with two full years available, students' professional education is still stronger than in the consecutive route. Increasing the amount of time devoted to personal education is based on the assumption that this will have significant benefits in terms of raising quality, both of the intake and of the educational experiences offered to prospective primary school teachers.

RECOMMENDATION 6: That the Primary BA (Hons) QTS in its current form be phased out and replaced by a four year degree with 50% of students' time spent in main subject departments – option 12.3.

13. Options for raising the quality of entry to the profession

As was noted in section A of this Report, increasing the quality of human capital amongst new entrants to the teaching profession is widely regarded as just as important as raising the quality of provision itself. Indeed, in many ways the two go hand in hand: developing higher quality courses is one way of attracting higher quality candidates into the profession. But raising the quality of applicants is not easy, especially in a market driven higher education sector where students have choice of where to study and where universities are themselves financially penalised if they fail to recruit their target numbers. In terms of *types* of provision, Teach First have a good track record of attracting high quality entrants into their programme. However, its numbers in Wales are small and unless there are plans significantly to expand the scheme its impact on the overall quality of recruitment will remain marginal. Potentially more significant would be a revised and extended primary BA (QTS) degree described in Section 12 above. As in Scotland, a re-launched four year joint degree should attract higher quality candidates.

But raising quality does not only involve types of provision; financial incentives and entry requirements are also important. In section 7.1 above it was noted that at present the financial incentives offered to ITE candidates are in some cases more generous in England than in Wales. As a result, programme leaders report that some of their best applicants in the end choose to leave Wales to undertake their training. Many will then opt to take up a teaching post in England as well.

Providing financial incentives to the most able teacher education candidates is expensive and involves hard choices. To date, the Welsh Government would appear to have done its best, within the resources available, to match most of what England offers.¹⁵ And there is evidence that to date, numbers of candidates with good levels of qualifications are holding up, despite the differences in incentives. However, given the need to recruit the very best candidates in Wales, it is essential that the Welsh Government continues to monitor closely the impact of differential incentives on recruitment. If, in the future, the current good levels of recruitment are shown to falter, then further investment in incentives may become essential.

As was also noted in 7.1 above there are currently some disparities in terms of entry requirements between Wales and England. All prospective candidates in Wales are required to have a 'B' at GCSE in English and Mathematics; in addition, primary candidates need to have a 'C' in science. As a result, some course leaders report that otherwise able candidates without these particular grades choose to study in England where the entry requirements are currently lower.

¹⁵ One important exception is for those with a 2.2 degree classification or lower outside of the key priority recruitment subjects in 2014/15 of mathematics, chemistry, and physics. Unlike in England, in order to encourage those with highest levels of subject specialism at degree level entering teacher education in Wales, the Welsh Government has chosen deliberately not to offer financial incentives.

However, few could argue that prospective teachers of any subject do not need good levels of numeracy and literacy and all primary school teachers need to be minimally competent in science – a subject which they will have to teach. Indeed if the recommendations of the Donaldson Review (2015) are accepted, then all teachers will be responsible for literacy, numeracy and digital competence. Although the Welsh Government should perhaps monitor the impact of its current requirements on recruitment, in these circumstances it is hard to see how any future lowering of entry standards could be either desirable or justifiable.

RECOMMENDATION 7: That the Welsh Government monitors closely the impact of financial incentives on recruitment, particularly taking into account different funding levels in comparison with those available in England.

14. Options for the future of professionally oriented research capacity

As was noted in Section A, there are multiple ways in which research should inform teacher education programmes: in the knowledge that underpins the content, in the design of programmes and in preparing student teachers to be both critical consumers *of* as well as participants *in* research. Developing and sustaining research capacity within the teacher education system is therefore essential, both for the content and for the process of teacher education itself. Having a robust research community is also vitally important for the educational system in broader terms. Research capacity is a critical part of what all educational systems need if they are to be self-improving. However, as was also noted in Section A, at present, research capacity in teacher education university faculties in Wales is at an extremely low ebb. The fact that in the current REF no teacher education faculty in Wales returned a single member of staff should be a major concern for Wales.

Over the last two years, HEFCW in collaboration with the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) has made an important investment in the development of research capacity through the establishment of Wiserd¹⁶ Education led from Cardiff University. This is a networked initiative with Wiserd Education staff working collaboratively with education colleagues from across Wales' university sector with the specific aim of increasing educational research capacity in Wales. A range of different educational data sets have been established and there are opportunities for 'residencies' in Cardiff. This is allowing for a number of joint projects to be developed across Wales – projects that have practical value and value as a vehicle for research capacity development, including capacity in quantitative methods.

Much can be learned from the Wiserd Education initiative. However, given the task it faces, it is relatively small and is only focused on one particular largely social scientific form of educational research. In addition to the type of research capacity being fostered by Wiserd Education there is an urgent need in Wales for capacity in pedagogical research; a need that will become even more pressing if the recommendations of the Donaldson Review (2015) are accepted. Developing research on teaching, learning, and assessment, especially from a subject perspective (or indeed in relation to Donaldson's six 'Areas of Learning and Experience'), would be particularly valuable in supporting teacher education. Again, across Wales, pedagogical research, even in key areas such as Welsh language teaching or mathematics, is currently at a very low ebb.

There are at least three options for the future development of such research capacity in Wales.

Option 14.1 Status quo. Allow the strengthened institutions to develop their own research cultures.

If the earlier proposals for the re-accreditation of teacher education are adopted, especially those outlined in Option 9.4 which suggests establishing a minimum set of standards for

¹⁶ Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data & Methods

providers of teacher education, then there is already a possibility that educational research capacity in Wales will improve. It might also improve if there was more concentration of teacher education provision, with a smaller number of universities involved. A reformed system would certainly set up the possibility for improvement but it would not guarantee it. Over the last 15 years, universities across Wales have allowed educational research capacity to wither. Turning around that situation may therefore demand more direct intervention.

Option 14.2 Extend Wiserd Education to include a pedagogical dimension

The Wiserd Education model does provide a useful model of how research capacity can be fostered. It could therefore be extended by the addition of a second dimension to its work covering pedagogical research in key subject areas. This would have the effect of establishing a national centre for applied educational research in Wales. Given that Cardiff University already has an international reputation as a major centre of high quality social scientific research in education, there would be a strong chance that a new pedagogical dimension in their work would be of the highest quality. With appropriately managed funding it could also be tailored specifically to the needs of Wales. Such a model would have significant advantages. However, even if it were networked on the lines of the existing Wiserd Education programme, it would only have a limited direct impact on teacher educators across Wales. Most of that capacity would inevitably be based in Cardiff University itself, which is not at present a major provider of initial teacher education.

Option 14.3 In addition to extending Wiserd Education, link it to a network of five centres of pedagogical excellence across Wales

A final option would build on Option 14.2 but in addition establish up to five centres of pedagogical excellence across Wales. Universities could bid to establish a pedagogical centre in one of a range of subjects seen as essential for Wales – for example in Welsh language teaching, Mathematics, foundation phase teaching and teaching socially disadvantaged children. Funding might be for five years in the first instance with universities themselves providing matched funding. The five centres, each with strong links to the provision of teacher education, should be networked and linked to a pedagogical research centre at Cardiff university, where there should be funding to establish a Chair in pedagogical research. This approach would serve the national need to increase research capacity in key areas of teaching in Wales. The distributed centres, networked and supported from Cardiff would also stimulate active research cultures amongst teacher education providers across the country.

RECOMMENDATION 8: That Wiserd Education be extended to include a pedagogical dimension linked to a network of five centres of pedagogical excellence across Wales, Option 14.3

15. University providers

A final set of options concerns the number of university providers. Here we must ask what the optimum number of providers is, if Wales is to achieve a significant and necessary rise in the quality of provision. At present there are three Centres accredited for the provision of initial teacher education in Wales: five universities contribute to those Centres. They are the South West Wales Centre for Teacher Education (University of Wales, Trinity St David); the South East Wales Centre for Teacher Education (Cardiff Metropolitan and South Wales universities); and the North and Mid Wales Centre for Teacher Education (Aberystwyth and Bangor universities).

Future provision might be based on one of three different options. In each case it is appropriate to consider the potential of each option for raising the quality of provision, and the financial costs and political challenges involved.

Option 15.1 – 5 University Centres

As has already been noted, one of the major challenges facing the initial teacher education sector at the time of my earlier review (Furlong et al 2006) was that there was a significant over capacity in the production of teachers as well as duplication of programmes. Today, as a result of reforms overseen by HEFCW, each of the five contributing universities now offers a distinctive range of programmes. There is also an appropriate range of bilingual provision across Wales as a whole. Moreover, most faculties of education have diversified their provision so that they remain economically viable even though their teacher education numbers have been substantially reduced.

Given the changes that have been achieved, it would therefore now in principle be possible to allow each of the existing universities to continue to offer its current range of provision as individual accredited providers.

Potential for raising the quality of provision

Allowing all five universities to continue their current provision would have the benefit of ensuring continuity in a system that has only recently undergone major reform. In the short term it would be unlikely to have either a positive or negative impact on quality. However, it would perhaps weaken the potential for further development. In at least two of the Universities, the amount of teacher education provision is relatively small. In addition, the fact that programmes are differentially distributed means that there is perhaps less potential for the development of research capacity and expertise in the future. It also needs to be recognised that raising the quality of provision across five institutions could be significantly more challenging for the Welsh Government and any agencies that it appoints to have oversight of the sector, than raising it across a smaller number of institutions.

Financial costs

As there would be no change to provision, there would be little cost in terms of reconfiguration. However, there would be greater costs in staffing 5 centres rather than a smaller number. There would also be higher costs at national level in terms of administration and inspection.

Political challenges

These would presumably be lower than any of the competing options.

Option 15.2 – A single university centre

At the other end of the scale, it would be possible for Wales to develop a single national centre for teacher education. In some ways this represents an attractive option for the future development of the field. In absolute terms, the numbers of students involved at around 1600 pa is not large compared with some other providers in the UK. A concentration of provision would allow for the development of a high quality Welsh Institute of Teacher Education on the lines of that has developed in Singapore. Such an Institute might also become a national centre for advanced CPD and research, potentially making it a major contributor to raising the quality of education across Wales. Given the geography of Wales, the Institute would need to work with a number of regional bodies across the country. A group of say 20 'Training Schools' which were themselves given additional staffing to undertake their work on teacher education could act as local hubs, linked to a network of other schools in their region. Such a system would allow for the linking of schools from across Wales with the very best international practice in terms of professional education and research.

Potential for raising the quality of provision

The potential for achieving high quality provision with this option would be strong; a single institution would in principle be more easily managed by the Welsh Government and its various agencies than multiple universities. A disadvantage of this option is that there would be little or no competition in the system.

Financial costs

The single centre model would clearly offer considerable savings in terms of the rationalisation of provision. There would however be some significant transition costs in the 'decommissioning' of the majority of existing providers. There would also be ongoing new costs in supporting a national network of 'Training Schools' or other partners. There might also be some ongoing costs if it was considered necessary to support existing universities maintain other educational provision, such as masters courses and other forms of advanced CPD.

Political challenges

Although in many ways attractive, the single centre model would be the most difficult to achieve politically. It is likely that there would be very considerable opposition from those institutions that were not selected as the main provider. There could also be considerable regional opposition from bodies outside the university sector. Despite the proposal to develop

a network of funded Training Schools, many regions across Wales might consider themselves to be substantially disadvantaged by this option.

Option 15.3 – 3 University Centres

An alternative would be to competitively re-accredit teacher education from three regional universities. As at present, these should perhaps be located in the North and Mid Wales, the South West and the South East Wales. Collectively however they would need to ensure that they provided appropriate national coverage. Such an approach would allow the current distribution of provision to continue while at the same time allowing for further consolidation. In addition, the removal of the need for collaboration across universities would allow for the development of three strong centres based in three institutions, without the need for joint planning and joint accountability. Three centres, each offering broadly similar provision would also allow more straightforward marketing of courses to prospective students. When compared with the five centre model, the primary difference between the three university Centres would be their location rather than the range of courses offered.

Potential for raising the quality of provision

The consolidation of provision into three centres would potentially allow for greater quality when compared with the five centre model. A smaller number of institutions could be more effectively monitored by national bodies; the greater concentration of provision would also potentially increase the level of expertise in each institution.

Financial costs

A three centre model would involve some important costs in terms of transition. Those institutions not selected as future providers for teacher education might need some support in order to ensure that other related provision (non QTS courses, Masters and Doctoral programmes) remained viable. There might also be some short term costs for the relocation of experienced staff or for redundancies. At the same time however there might be some reduced costs as a result of the rationalisation of provision.

Political challenges

There would be likely to be some significant opposition from those institutions and their associated schools and local authorities that were 'de-selected' as providers of initial teacher education.

Choosing between the three options

As has been made clear, there are advantages and disadvantages in each of the above options. However, deciding which option would offer the best chance for significantly enhancing the quality of provision is extremely difficult. Much would turn on the quality of the 'vision' put forward a particular university – whether it was the only provider, one of 3 or one of 5. Making that decision in the abstract is extremely challenging. In these circumstances, perhaps the best way forward would be to link the final decision about numbers of providers to the re-accreditation process outlined above. Potential university providers, (and they may not necessarily be

limited to current providers) could then be required to put forward a bid for future provision, outlining how they saw themselves in relation to the sector as a whole – as one of one, three or five providers. This would allow the Teacher Education Accreditation Board to make an informed judgement about the numbers of providers, based on the quality of specific bids.

RECOMMENDATION 9: That the Welsh Government agrees to resolve future provision of initial teacher education through a process of competitive tendering with the Teacher Education Accreditation Board making the final decision as to how many universities should become accredited providers.

16. Conclusion

Teacher education in Wales is today at a critical turning point. When I and my colleagues prepared our initial report in 2006, the quality of the system was not a major issue. Certainly there were improvements that could be made particularly in relation to the contribution of schools, but the system was not in crisis. The real challenge at that time was in the size and distribution of capacity. That problem has, in the intervening years, largely been resolved. But at the same time, there is evidence that the quality of the system has deteriorated. The difficulties experienced in establishing high quality Centres, the weaknesses in provision identified by successive Estyn reports, the lack of any effective link between initial teacher education and CPD and the collapse of research capacity are all serious causes for concern. Even more significant is the fact that as it is currently conceptualised, initial teacher education in Wales is not appropriate for developing the teachers it needs for its schools either today or tomorrow. If the teaching profession itself is to make its proper contribution to the raising of standards in our schools in the way that has been set out in the Donaldson Review (2015) then what is needed is a form of initial teacher education that is expansive rather than restricted, one that gives teachers themselves the skills, knowledge and dispositions to lead the changes that are needed. At present, that form of initial teacher education is not available in Wales.

Fortunately for Wales, it does still have a large number of individuals and institutions that remain highly committed to the provision of good quality initial teacher education. There are institutions with generations of experience; there are individuals with very high quality skills and great enthusiasm. What has been missing in recent years is a stable and high quality system in which these institutions and individuals can flourish. Once it is clear which of the above options the Welsh Government wishes to adopt, then I am sure that the sector will seize the opportunities they provide, working together to give Wales the quality of teacher education that it needs for the future.

List of recommendations

Recommendation 1. That the Welsh Government, as a matter of priority, revises the Standards for Newly Qualified Teachers in line with the principles specified in Option 9.4

Recommendation 2. That the Welsh Government establishes a revised accreditation process for providers of initial teacher education as described in Option 9.4

Recommendation 3: That the Welsh Government establishes a ‘Teacher Education Accreditation Board’ within the Education Workforce Council for Wales

Recommendation 4: That the role of Estyn within initial teacher education be reviewed once a revised accreditation process is fully in place

Recommendation 5: That Estyn’s ‘Guidance for Inspection’ for schools be revised to include specific recognition of the contribution of a school to initial teacher education

Recommendation 6: That the Primary BA (Hons) QTS in its current form be phased out and replaced by a four year degree with 50% of students’ time spent in main subject departments

Recommendation 7: That the Welsh Government monitors closely the impact of financial incentives on recruitment, particularly taking into account different funding levels in comparison with those available in England.

Recommendation 8: That Wiserd Education be extended to include a pedagogical dimension linked to a network of five centres of pedagogical excellence across Wales.

Recommendation 9: That the Welsh Government agrees to resolve future provision of initial teacher education through a process of competitive tendering with the Teacher Education Accreditation Board making the final decision as to how many universities should become accredited providers.

References

- BERA-RSA (2014) *Research and the Teaching Profession; building the capacity for a self-improving education system. Final report of the BERA-RSA Inquiry into the role of research in teacher education*. London: BERA
- Carter, A (2015) *Carter Review of Initial Teacher Training*. London: Department of Education.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/399957/Carter_Review.pdf
- DEL (2014) *Aspiring to Excellence. Final report of the international review panel on the structure of initial teacher education in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Department for Employment and Learning
- Donaldson, G. (2011) *Teaching Scotland's Future. Report of a review of teacher education in Scotland*. Edinburgh: The Scottish Government
- Donaldson, G (2015) *The Donaldson Review of Curriculum and Assessment*. Cardiff: The Welsh Government
- Estyn (2013) *Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales 2013-14*. Cardiff: Estyn
- Furlong, J. and White, P. (2001) *Educational Research Capacity in Wales; a review*. Cardiff: Cardiff University School of Social Sciences
- Furlong, J., Hagger, H. Butcher, C. and Howson, J. (2006) *Review of Initial Teacher Training Provision in Wales; A report to the Welsh Assembly Government (the Furlong Report)*. Oxford: University of Oxford Department of Education
- GTCS (2012) *The Standards for Registration: mandatory requirements for Registration with the General Teaching Council for Scotland* Edingurgh: GTCS <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/standards/standards.aspx>
- OECD (2014) *Improving Schools in Wales; An OECD perspective*. Paris: OECD
- Sahlberg, P, Furlong, J. & Munn, P (2012) *Report of the International Review Panel on the Structure of Initial Teacher Education Provision in Ireland: review conducted on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills*, Dublin: Higher Education Authority of Ireland
- Tabberer R. (2013) *A Review of Initial Teacher Training in Wales*. Cardiff: Welsh Government
- Teaching Council (Ireland) (2011) *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* <http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/publications.157.html>
- Welsh Government (2011) *Revised Professional Standards for Education Practitioners in Wales*. Welsh government Circular No 020/2011. <http://learning.wales.gov.uk/docs/learningwales/publications/140630-revised-professional-standards-en.pdf>