



REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

19 FEBRUARY 2025

Report by: **Euros Davies - Head of Service - School Improvement**
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Subject: **Continuity of Service - 01/04/2025 to 31/05/2025**

1.0 **Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1. To share information with Joint Committee members on GwE operating arrangements for the period 01/04/2025 to 31/05/2025.

2.0 **Background**

- 2.1 The Chief Executives of the six Local Authorities have now confirmed the GwE termination date as 31st May rather than 31st March, 2025.
- 2.2 This means that the Service continues past the current financial year, and the existing Commissioning Agreements and Business Plans, for a period of two additional months.
- 2.3 The agreements of individuals seconded or working on commission to GwE come to an end on 31st March which will have an impact on the capacity of the Service.
- 2.4 This decision raises two specific questions:
- How will the Service be funded during this extended period? (Refer to previous report 'GwE Budget 2025/2026').
 - What will be the requirements on the Service during the period?

3.0 **Matters for consideration**

- 3.1 **Implementation 1st April – 31st May** - Although it is a two-month period, schools will only be open for six weeks during the period due to the Easter and half term holidays.
- 3.2 It is not practical to draw up a Business Plan or a Commissioning Agreement for this short period.
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3.3 During 2024-25, the Service has supported schools under two headings within our Business Plan which are:

1. Objective 1 – School Improvement
2. Objective 2 – Professional Learning

3.4 Below it is explained how we will continue to support our schools during the period in question.

3.5 **Objective 1 – School Improvement**

- It is not practical to draw up a Commissioning agreement for a period of six weeks. We will continue to support schools in accordance with the requirements that sit within the aspects below:
 1. Providing a 'Core Lead' function for the Local Authority.
 2. Provide a general core offer to fulfil the Local Authority's statutory function to support, monitor and challenge schools and settings.
 3. Provide additional support based on schools' needs.
 4. Supporting schools that cause concern (using a consistent approach across the region)
- Supporting Improvement Advisors will respond flexibly to schools' requirements ensuring a smooth and uninterrupted service during this transitional period. This will include the usual monitoring visits and ensuring the quality of teaching and learning in the schools.
- As staff numbers are decreasing, in some cases different Supporting Improvement Advisors will work with schools and catchment areas.
- In the event of a shortfall that cannot be filled, we will consider commissioning headteachers by agreement with the Chief Education Officers and in accordance with what has been agreed in the Joint Committee on 2 October 2024.

3.6 **Objective 2 - Professional Learning**

National Programmes

- National professional learning programmes timetables mean that cohorts in the following areas, which are presently the responsibility of GwE, will not be completed by the end of this financial year:
 - Middle Leadership Development Programme
 - Senior Leaders Development Programme
 - New & Acting Headteachers Development Programme
 - Teaching Assistant development programmes – Aspiring HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistant) / HLTA
 - Newly Qualified Teacher Programmes
- The costs of employing staff, administration and hiring training rooms are linked to the above programmes.

- Welsh Government have verbally committed to ensuring that any National professional learning programme that is delivered locally/regionally continues until its end. This is to ensure equity across Wales and to ensure that practitioners and Local Authorities in the North do not lose out.
- The following financial streams have historically contributed to the running of the above professional learning: Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG), Education Workforce Council (NQT) etc.
- There are sessions in the calendar to take place in the period between the end of the financial year and the date GwE comes to an end on the 31st of May, 2025.
- It is therefore necessary to ensure that funding equivalent to 2/12 is transferred to GwE in order to honour continuation of sessions that have been organised for April and May 2025 after the grant funding has come to an end.

3.7 Local/Regional Training

- Historically, GwE provides professional learning to all practitioners in the Region in the form of a Professional Learning Offer that derives from the Service's Business Plan.
- This year, 2024/25, the Offer has evolved to coincide with the financial year and the offer is limited to the terms and conditions of the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG).
- As GwE no longer ends at the end of the financial year, there will be two months where no Professional Learning Offer will be offered to schools. It is not practical to draw up a Business Plan, formulate and administer a new Professional Learning Offer for a period of two months.
- Staff who historically provide training through the Professional Learning Offer will be available to support schools for this period (at the request of the link Supporting Improvement Advisors through the relevant Core Supporting Improvement Advisors in accordance with the needs of the schools).
- There will be flexibility for these staff to hold a specific individual professional learning session(s) if they see the need and have the capacity. This can also mean supporting In-Service Training at the request of a Cluster or Authority following if enough notice is given. Training will not be limited to the terms and conditions of the new LAEG for April 2025.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to accept the content of the report and approve GwE operating arrangements for the period 01/04/2025 to 31/05/2025.

5.0 Financial implications

- 5.1. GwE will operate within its financial resources for the period 01/04/2025 to 31/05/2025.

6.0 Equalities Impact

- 6.1. There needs to be an agreed timetable across authorities to avoid equality implications in relation to the transition period.

7.0 Personnel Implications

- 7.1 With decreasing staff members post 31/03/2025, this will affect the capacity of the Service. In the event of a shortfall that cannot be filled, we will consider commissioning headteachers by agreement with the Chief Education Officers.

8.0 Consultation undertaken

- 8.1 Consultation with GwE Management Board.
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VIEW OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

Statutory Finance Officer:

The report offers a practical way forward for the period from 1 April to 31 May. As noted in that part 5 of the report, GwE is expected to operate within the budget agreed for 2025/26.