

**NSPCC Cymru/Wales**

**Response to:**

**Welsh Government's Consultation on  
Revised professional standards for education  
practitioners in Wales**

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## 1. About us

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) aims to end cruelty to children in the UK by fighting for their rights, listening to them, helping them and making them safe.

We share our experience with governments and organisations working with children so together we improve the protection of children and we challenge those who will not learn and change. We campaign for better laws and we educate and inform the public to improve understanding about child abuse.

Our services include the NSPCC Helpline, for adults worried about a child, and ChildLine, the UK's free, confidential helpline for children and young people.

As part of the NSPCC's Strategy to 2016 we are reshaping our services to be more innovative, distinctive and designed to capture and disseminate learning. Through providing cutting edge new services we hope to better understand the real issues and challenges in prevention, protection and the treatment of abuse.

## 2. Introduction

NSPCC Cymru/Wales welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation on professional standards for education practitioners in Wales. We feel that it is appropriate that these standards are revised to work as a coherent system to support national priorities and that these standards will directly link to performance management and Continuous Professional Development (CPD). NSPCC Cymru/Wales recognises that basic skills, children's rights and the link between poverty and under-attainment are embedded in these revised professional standards. However, as education professionals play a crucial role in protecting children and young people and ensuring that abuse is identified and acted upon, we strongly recommend that child protection and safeguarding is also embedded in these revised standards.

## 3. Answer to Question 1: Do the standards capture the required knowledge, skills and behaviours required of educational practitioners?

Safeguarding children is a core part of the role of an educational practitioner and an essential part of schools fulfilling their legal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. The duty to have arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children came into force in Wales on 1st September 2006 and the guidance 'Safeguarding Children in Education: The role of local authorities and governing bodies under the Education Act 2002' was circulated in 2008 following consultation in 2007.

The perception of many people is that very few children are maltreated. However recent NSPCC research into the prevalence of child maltreatment in the UK reveals that almost one in five 11-17 year old children has been physically attacked by an adult, raped or sexually assaulted or severely neglected during their lives<sup>1</sup>. Consequently, NSPCC Cymru/ Wales calls for safeguarding and protection of children and young people to be embedded into all relevant policy areas.

It is widely recognised that the wellbeing of a child is linked to academic achievement. Most children spend more time with teachers and support staff than with any other professionals and so are well placed to recognise any problems or concerns and also are more likely to receive disclosures of abuse. It is also not unusual for teachers to experience child protection issues: our research has shown that 52% of newly qualified teachers will be involved with a child protection case during their first year of teaching. It is therefore essential that teachers and support staff know how to safeguard children in their care and to identify and respond to any concerns about a child<sup>2</sup>.

We therefore strongly recommend that under knowledge and understanding for teachers and HLTAs that the following standards are added:

- Be aware of child abuse, its impact on children and be able to identify the signs and indicators of abuse
- Knowledge of the multi agency child protection system and how to act if there are concerns about a child as laid out in the All Wales Child Protection Procedures

For headteachers we would recommend that safeguarding and protecting children from harm is added as a core purpose and that building safeguarding into the knowledge and ethos of the school is included as a standard.

#### **4. Answer to Question 2: What practical steps could we take to raise awareness of the standards and ensure that all educational practitioners use the standards to improve their practice?**

We would recommend three practical steps that need to be taken:

4.1 Ensure that the standards are embedded into Initial Teacher Training (ITT). The NSPCC has extensive experience of providing school and institution-based child protection awareness programmes as part of ITT. We have also conducted research into teachers' experiences of, and training in, child protection issues. Based on our experience and evidence base, we recommend that robust training and assessment on child protection should be mandatory for all prospective teachers, regardless of where they train. There needs to be an increase in the quantity and quality of content about child protection in ITT programmes. Currently, teaching on child protection is delivered for between 2.5 hours to a full day throughout the entire ITT year and we consider this to be inadequate. Research has shown that teachers identify the need for additional training of this nature and that it is highly effective.<sup>3</sup> NSPCC Cymru/ Wales recommends that a tailored progressive

programme on safeguarding and child protection, from basic information to more advanced, should be incorporated into ITT courses.

4.2 That these revised standards for educational practitioners should determine the content of CPD. Teachers who are well equipped with knowledge, skills and positive attitudes can respond and assist abused children by enhancing their learning potential and assuring their future safety. Further we would recommend that it becomes mandatory that one INSET day per annum in every school is dedicated to wellbeing. This would ensure that school staff are fully prepared for their role in child protection, safeguarding and promoting welfare.

4.3 NSPCC Cymru/ Wales would recommend that there is a more robust approach taken to performance management and that there is a clear framework for supervision and mentoring that provides opportunities to explore, analyse and discuss all aspects of children's wellbeing including those attributable to notions of protection and safeguarding.

### **5. Answer to Question 3: Do the standards provide a sound basis for performance management arrangements for practitioners and identify appropriate development needs?**

As stated in 4.3 above we recommend that there is a more robust approach taken to performance management and that educational practitioners receive regular supervision. We feel that it is essential that the staff member who is designated Senior Child Protection Lead receives regular supervision and support to enable them as individuals to cope with the emotional impact of dealing with child protection.

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<sup>1</sup> NSPCC (2011) [Child cruelty in the UK 2011: An NSPCC study into childhood abuse and neglect over the past 30 years](#). NSPCC: London.

<sup>2</sup> Baginsky, Mary (2003) Newly Qualified Teachers and child protection. *Child Abuse Review* 12(2): 119-127.

<sup>3</sup> Baginsky, Mary (2000) Child protection and education London: NSPCC; Baginsky, Mary (2000) Training teachers in child protection. *Child Abuse Review*, 9(1): 74-81.