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Tel: 029 2046 0099

E-mail: [media@ewc.wales](mailto:media@ewc.wales)

Website: [www.ewc.wales](http://www.ewc.wales)

Twitter: [@ewc\\_cga](https://twitter.com/ewc_cga)

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## Press Article

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### **The value of Learning Support Staff to be recognised in Wales**

Wales is leading the way with a pioneering new programme which will see tens of thousands of learning support staff in schools being registered on a central database alongside teachers.

Wales will be the first UK country to introduce this requirement, which signals that the Welsh Government recognises the important contribution they make to education in Wales.

Recent Welsh Government figures show that there are now around 25,000 full-time equivalent learning support staff in Welsh schools, only a few thousand fewer than the number of teachers in Wales. But apart from this total number, we don't know much about who these people are.

This is set to change after April 2016, when learning support staff in schools and Further Education will need to register with the Education Workforce Council (EWC) if they want to work in Wales.

Chief executive of the Education Workforce Council, Hayden Llewellyn, said, "Registration will help us build a more detailed picture of our learning support staff, what they do and what their qualifications are.

"The move will also offer essential assurances to learners, parents and the public about learning support staff credentials, conduct and performance. We're really excited to have learning support staff joining us in 2016, and are speaking to practitioners, schools and colleges in Anglesey, Pembrokeshire, Monmouthshire and everywhere in between to make sure practitioners are ready for the change.

"Registering school and Further Education teachers and learning support staff in one professional body makes sense for a country the size of Wales, and will be central to the development of an education workforce ready to meet the demands of a changing education landscape in Wales, including developing and delivering a new curriculum in our schools."

Jess Turner UNISON Cymru/Wales lead organiser for schools has welcomed the news,

"As the main trade union representing school support staff, UNISON is pleased that the Welsh Government recognises the important work of learning support staff. We welcome registration as a first step to securing dedicated investment in the professional development, career, and salary of support staff, which will do so much to help raise standards for our kids even higher."

Mike Payne of the GMB regional officers added, "The GMB welcomes the extension of registration to school support staff in Wales as an overdue recognition of the professional role that they play in the educational experience and outcomes for children in Wales."

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