



Education Workforce Council

Fitness to Practise Annual Report 2024/25

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1. About the EWC

About us

The Education Workforce Council (EWC) is the independent, professional regulator for the education workforce in Wales.

Established by the Education (Wales) Act 2014, practitioners across 13 different groups within the education workforce, from the foundation phase through to further education, youth work, and work-based learning, are legally required to register with the EWC. Our Register of Education Practitioners in Wales is the biggest public register of any profession in Wales, and the most wide-ranging register of education professionals in the world, with over 91,000 practitioners registered.

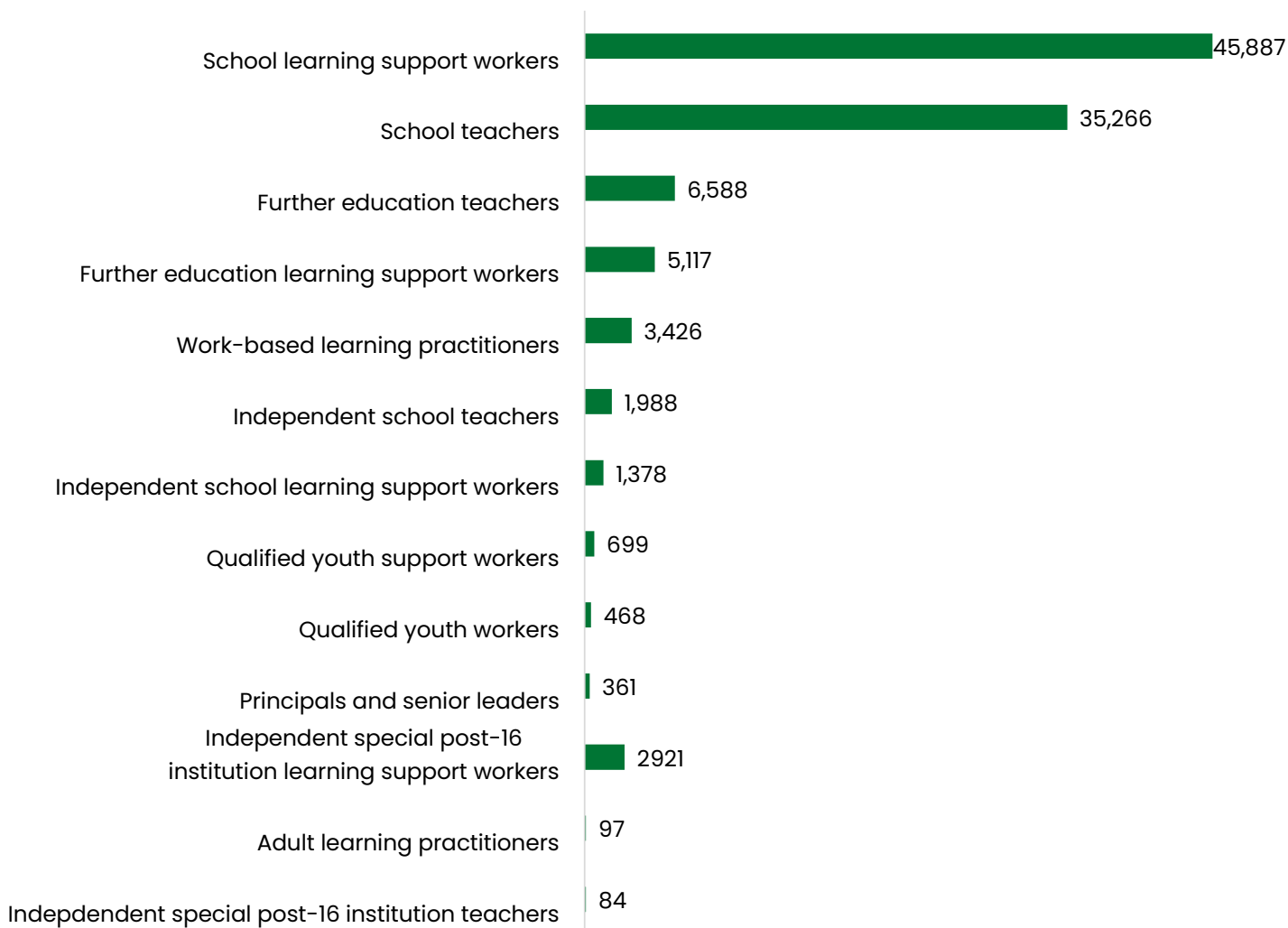
Our aims

- Contribute to improving the standards of teaching and the quality of learning in Wales
- Maintain and improve standards of professional conduct amongst teachers and others who support teaching and learning in Wales
- Safeguard the interests of learners, parents/guardians, and the public, and maintain public trust and confidence in the education workforce

Our functions

- Establish and maintain a Register of Education Practitioners
- Maintain a Code of Professional Conduct and Practice
- Investigate and hear allegations that may call into question a registered practitioner's fitness to practise
- Accredite and monitor programmes of school teacher ITE
- Provide advice to Welsh Government and others
- Monitor induction and hear induction appeals
- Promote careers in the education workforce
- Undertake specific work at the invitation of Welsh Government

2. The Register of Education Practitioners



3. The Code of Professional Conduct and Practice

All new registrants receive a copy of the Code upon registration (19,058 new applications in 2024/25) and all employers receive copies of the Code annually to disseminate to registered employees. In addition, the Code has been viewed 13,278 times on the EWC website.

Our registrants commit to upholding the five key principles of personal and professional responsibility, professional integrity, collaborative working, professional knowledge and understanding, and professional learning.

The Code is intended to guide registrants' judgements and decisions. It also informs learners, parents/guardians, employers, and the general public of the standards they can expect from a registrant.

Failure to comply with the Code may call a practitioner's registration into question.

We deliver regular training sessions and presentations which focus on the Code, the use of social media, and professional ethics and responsibilities. We offer a suite of 12 good practice guides, designed to complement the Code and help guide registrants' day to day professional judgments and decisions. We have also produced an [online video](#) which talks about the Code, as well as other fitness to practise (FtP) topics. This video can be easily accessed by all stakeholders.

In line with legislation, the Code was reviewed and subject to public consultation during 2024/25. A revised Code will be available to registrants, learners, the public, and parents/guardians in September 2025.

4. About fitness to practise

We have a statutory duty to investigate and hear cases against registrants of alleged unacceptable professional conduct, serious professional incompetence, and/or convicted (at any time) of a relevant criminal offence.

Our Disciplinary Procedures and Rules 2024 set out the procedures we follow in undertaking our work in this area including our powers to impose Interim Suspension Orders (ISO) in specific circumstances.

As at 31 March 2025, we had 53 independent panel members who undertake all fitness to practise work. This pool of panel members is made up of registered practitioners from across the registrant groups, lay members and retired practitioners. No member of Council has any involvement in fitness to practise cases, and they do not sit on panels.

5. Referral of cases

The EWC receives referrals in one of the following ways:

Police referrals

Police forces can make direct referrals to the EWC under common law police disclosure (CLPD).

Employers/agents

Employers and private supply agencies have a statutory duty to refer a registrant to the EWC where:

- a registrant is dismissed, or leaves employment prior to a possible dismissal (for example, resignation or settlement agreement) (employers)
- an agency ceases to use the services of a registrant, or may have done so had the registrant not stopped providing those services (agents)

In both cases, the grounds for a referral are:

- misconduct; and/or
- professional incompetence; and/or
- conviction of a relevant offence

Complaints

Any individual or organisation can make a complaint about the alleged conduct or incompetence of a registrant.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The EWC receives direct referrals from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

EWC

The EWC is able to self-refer registrants where it becomes aware of information about a registrant and considers it is in the public interest to investigate.

6. What happens when a case is received?

Most referrals received are considered first by an Investigating Committee and the meetings are held in private/virtually.

The Investigating Committee includes a minimum of three independent panel members, including at least one practitioner currently registered with the EWC, and one lay person. The Investigating Committee is supported by an independent legal adviser who does not participate in the decision-making process, but ensures the investigation is fair.

The Investigating Committee's role is to decide whether or not it is likely the facts of the case will be proven, and then whether those findings might amount to unacceptable professional conduct, serious professional incompetence and/or a conviction of a relevant offence, if the case proceeds to a public hearing.

A public hearing is held when an Investigating Committee has decided that a registrant has a 'case to answer'. The registrant is invited to attend and/or be represented at the hearing.

A Fitness to Practise Committee comprises a minimum of three independent panel members, including at least one practitioner currently registered with the EWC, and one lay person. The Fitness to Practise Committee is supported by an independent legal adviser. The Fitness to Practise Committee which sits at a hearing will not have had any previous knowledge of the case before it.

Possible hearing outcomes are as follows:

- facts not proved
- facts proved but not unacceptable professional conduct/serious professional incompetence and/or a relevant offence
- facts proved – no order
- reprimand – recorded for two years on the Register
- conditional registration order – recorded on the Register for a period indicated by the committee – if no is period set, then this order will apply permanently
- suspension order – removed from the Register for the period specified by the committee (not exceeding two years) – conditions can be applied to a suspension order
- prohibition order – removed from the Register indefinitely – no application can be made for re-admission to the Register until at least two years has elapsed

Following the hearing of a case, should a fitness to practise committee impose a disciplinary order (other than an ISO) upon the registration of an education practitioner, a notice to that effect will appear on the EWC website (www.ewc.wales). The notice will remain for a period of six months from the day it is published.

Any disciplinary order imposed will be recorded on the practitioner's record on the EWC's Register, and will be available publicly for the duration of the order.

7. Summary of fitness to practise casework

This year, we concluded 76 fitness to practise cases (excluding ISOs). This included 53 fitness to practise hearings, 48 of which were virtual hearings, and 5 in person.

The majority of hearings are held virtually. However, in line with the approach of many other regulators, registrants are invited to confirm whether they wish their case to be heard in person. For an in-person hearing to be confirmed, the registrant must commit to attending or be represented in person at the hearing.

Notes on the data

A practitioner can be registered in one or more categories at any one time. For the purpose of this report, where a person is registered in more than one category, they are included under 'multiple category registrant'.

7.1 Number of fitness to practise cases concluded by registrant group and year

Registrant group	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
School teachers	24	25	21	22	22
FE teachers	6	11	9	6	10
FE learning support workers	2	3	0	6	4
School learning support workers	19	21	21	26	29
Work-based learning practitioners	5	9	5	10	9
Independent school teachers				0	0
Independent school learning support workers				0	0
Independent special post-16 institution teachers				0	0
Independent special post-16 institution learning support workers				0	0
Youth support workers	1	1	0	0	0
Youth workers	0	0	0	0	1
Adult learning practitioners				0	
FE Principals and senior leaders				0	
Multiple registrant categories	9	16	15	4	
Total	66	86	71	74	76

Of the 74 cases referred to above:

- 53 cases were considered at fitness to practise hearings (not including ISO hearings)
- 10 cases were considered as 'no case to answer' by an investigating committee
- 5 cases involved registrants who were DBS barred prior to the final decision being made by the EWC

Additional note: two new categories of registration were added to the Register on 10 May 2024. To the end of 31 March 2025, no cases were received or concluded for either of these new groups.

7.2 Referral source

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Employer	75.8%	73.3%	85.9%	71.3%	73.7%
Police	9.1%	10.5%	7.0%	13.8%	6.6%
EWC referral	7.6%	3.5%	0.0%	8.8%	6.6%
Self-referral	0.0%	11.6%	2.8%	6.3%	11.8%
Others	7.5%	1.2%	4.2%	0.0%	1.3%

*Other includes complaints, referrals from the DBS, and other regulators.

7.3 Outcomes of FtP cases by year

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Concluded with no order imposed	28 (42%)	27 (31%)	25 (35%)	28 (38%)	27 (36%)
Reprimand	9	20	19	18	20
Conditional registration order	1	1	0	4	1
Suspension order (no conditions)	5	4	2	2	1
Suspension order (with conditions)	4	2	2	1	5
Prohibition order	15	23	17	17	17
Application for variation/breach of conditions	1	0	1	0	0
Application for eligibility following a prohibition order	0	3	0	1	0
DBS barred before EWC concluded	3	6	5	3	5
Case closed – registrant deceased	0	0	0	0	0
Total	66	86	71	74	76

Note – of the 28 cases concluded with no order:

- 9 were concluded at hearing stage
- 10 were considered as ‘no case to answer’ by an investigating committee
- 8 related to minor convictions and were closed as ‘no further action’

7.4 Types of behaviour – cases concluded 2024/25

Type of behaviour	Number of cases
Convictions and conduct	18
Conviction(s) only	14
Combination of misconduct issues	11
Unprofessional/inappropriate behaviour towards learners	8
Inappropriate level of punishment/force/restraint/physical contact	7
Failure to meet practitioner standards	5
Examinations/assessment malpractice	2
Failure to comply with procedures	2
Under the influence of alcohol at work	2
Abusive language	1
Breach of trust	1
Bullying/harassment of colleagues	1
Bullying/harassment of learners	1
False claims, declarations, and/or forged documents	1
Inappropriate contact with learners via social media	1
Inappropriate relationship with learners	1
Total	76

7.5 Completion time for concluded cases in 2024/25

There are a number of factors which affect the timescales for concluding cases including:

- employment tribunal claims (which means the EWC will place its consideration of the case on hold until the tribunal is concluded)
- the registrant suffers from ill-health and medical evidence confirms they are not fit to participate, but they wish to do so
- requests for postponement of an investigation or hearing, or other issues raised by the registrant or their representative during their case preparation
- further concerns established during hearing preparation which require referral back to an investigating committee in the first instance

The EWC monitors its own timescales for concluding cases compared to other regulators/professional bodies and it continues to be a leader in this area.

	Number of cases	% of cases
Case concluded within eight months (35 weeks)		
	66	87%
Case not concluded within eight months (35 weeks)		
Issues raised by the registrant/employer	3	4%
Other third party delays for example, the police	1	1%
Issues raised by the EWC	6	8%
Total number of cases concluded in 2024-25	76	100%

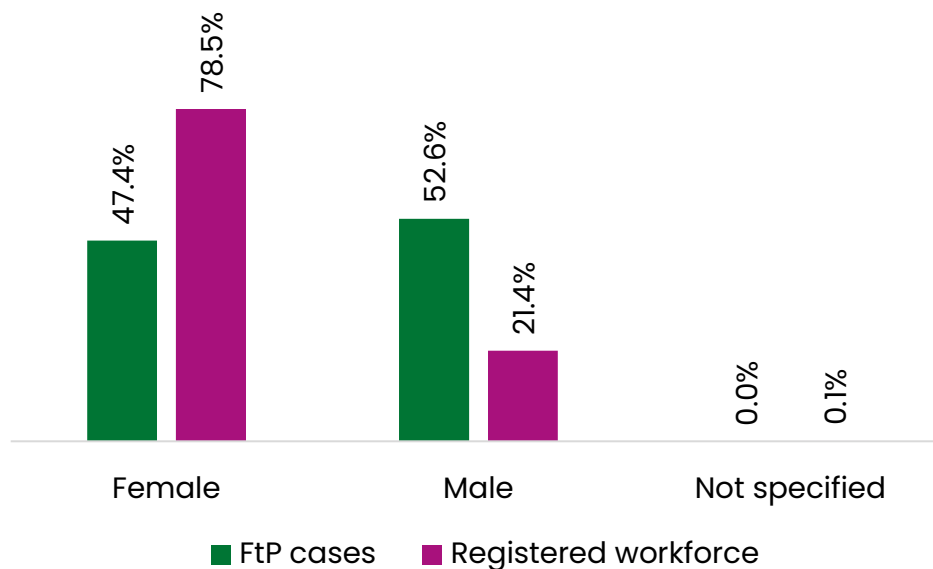
Of the 66 cases concluded within eight months, the average time taken from receipt to conclusion was 24 weeks (five and a half months).

7.6 The demographic of disciplinary cases concluded in 2024/25

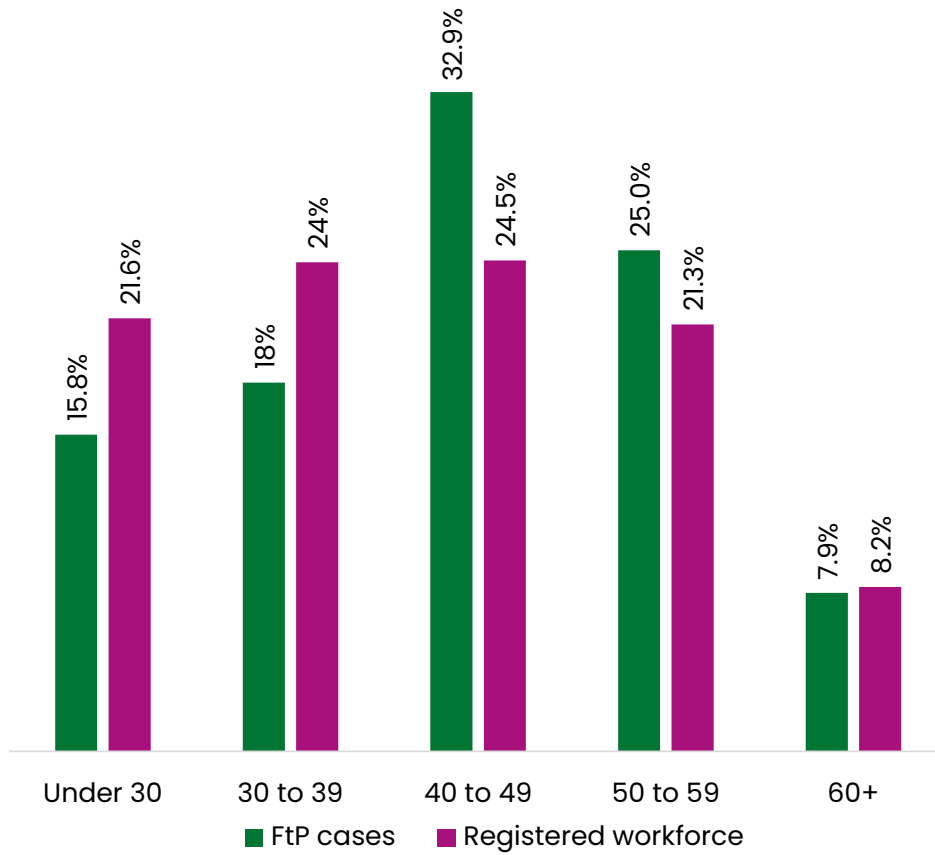
Note:

- 'FtP cases' means fitness to practise cases.
- 'Registered workforce' is derived from the Register of Education Practitioners as at 31 March 2025.

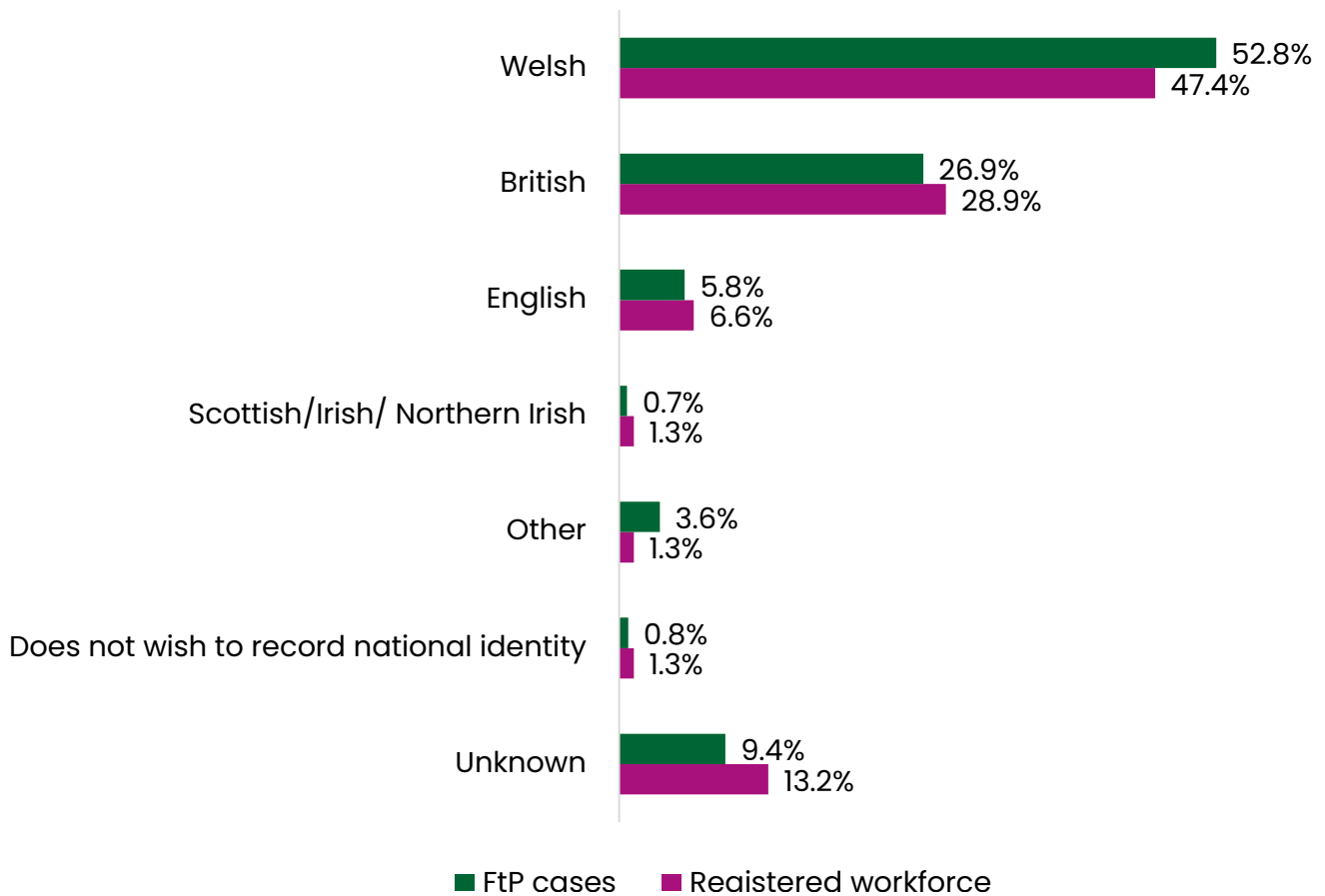
Gender



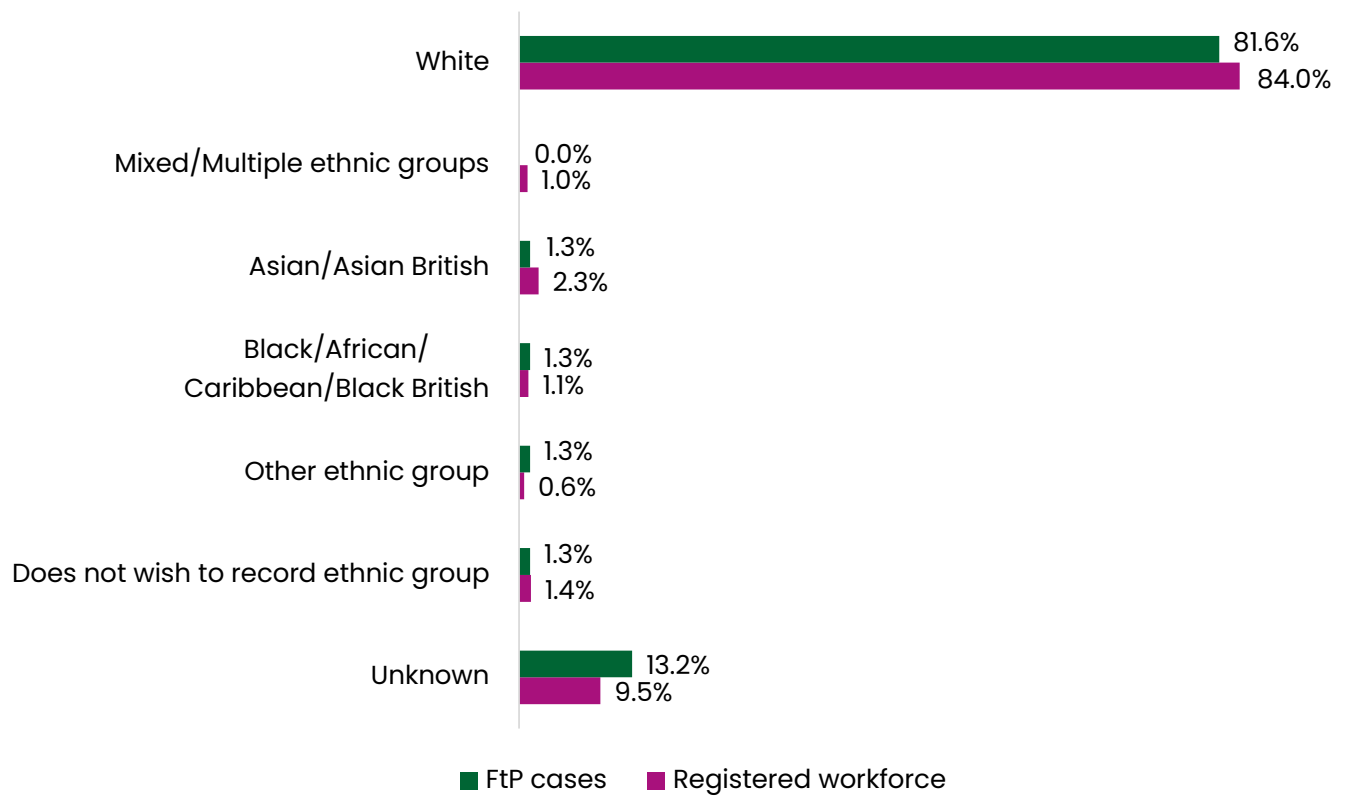
Age



National identity



Ethnic group



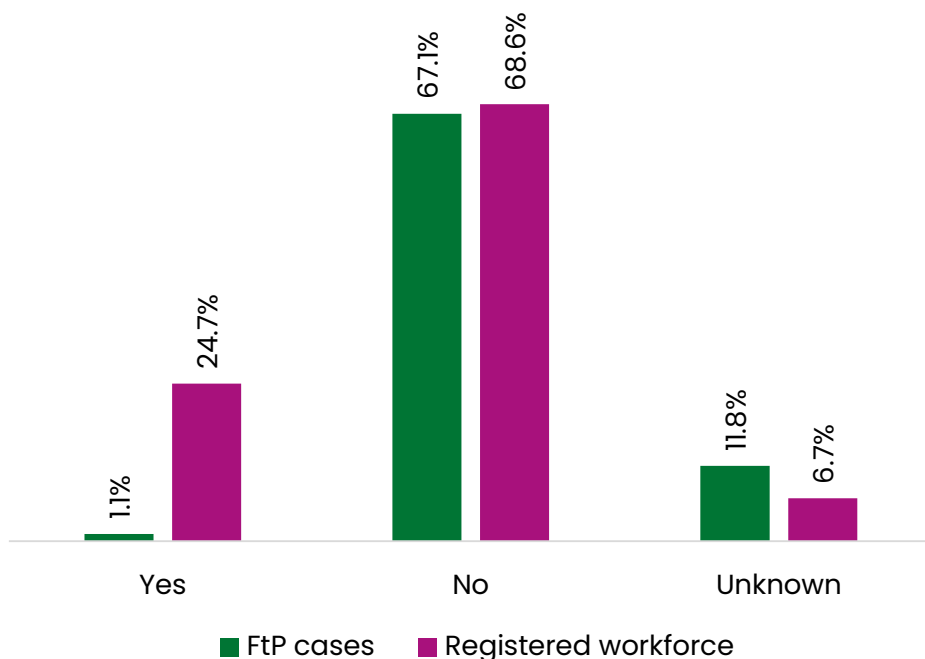
Welsh language

When a practitioner applies to join the Register, they are asked to confirm whether or not they are able to speak through the medium of Welsh. A response of 'yes' means that they are fluent, or fairly fluent in the language.

They are also asked to confirm whether they currently deliver, or are able to deliver education and training through the medium of Welsh.

In both cases, the responses are based on 'self-declaration'.

Welsh language speaker



Able to deliver education and training through the medium of Welsh



8. Interim Suspension Orders (ISOs)

If the EWC is informed that a registered person has been accused of very serious misconduct, we have statutory powers to impose an Interim Suspension Order (ISO). An ISO will temporarily remove a registered person from the Register as 'an emergency measure' pending an investigation. This is to protect learners and the public while, for example, a police investigation is concluded.

An ISO can be in place for up to 18 months. Our independent ISO committees also hold regular ISO reviews to make sure that no ISO is in place for longer than is necessary and proportionate. Those reviews are usually held at six month and 12-month intervals after an ISO is imposed. A review can also be held at any point where there is a change in the risk which led to the ISO being imposed.

All ISO committee hearings are held in private/virtually.

Number of ISOs imposed

Registrant group	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
School teachers	1	5	9
FE teachers	0	0	2
FE learning support workers	0	0	0
School learning support workers	1	4	2
Work-based learning practitioners	0	0	0
Independent school teachers	N/A	0	1
Independent school learning support workers		0	0
Independent special post-16 institution teachers		0	0
Independent special post-16 institution learning support workers		0	0
Youth support workers	0	0	0
Youth workers	0	0	0
Adult learning practitioners	N/A		0
FE Principals and senior leaders			0
Multiple registrant categories	1	0	0
Total	3	9	14

In addition to the 14 ISOs imposed during 2024/25:

- two recommendations to impose an ISO on a school teacher in 2024/25 were not approved
- two recommendations to impose an ISO on a school teacher in 2024/25 were withdrawn before reaching an ISO Committee

Of the 14 cases concluded in 2024/25, the average time taken from receipt to conclusion was six and a half weeks.

Since ISOs are an 'emergency measure', the cases are, by their nature and purpose, dealt with quickly.

9. Assessment of suitability for registration

Prospective registrants are asked to answer a number of questions about their previous history when applying for EWC registration. If an applicant answers 'yes' to any question in the declaration, their application will be assessed by the FtP team.

The onus is upon the applicant to demonstrate their suitability for registration with us.

Suitability assessment

Stage 1

Officers consider the declaration made to be relatively minor, and that which would not affect the applicant's suitability for registration. Registration is granted.

Stage 2

The applicant is asked to provide more detailed information about the circumstances of their declaration and some testimonials/representations in support of their suitability for registration. If officers are content with the applicant's response, registration is granted.

Stage 3

Officers decide to refer the application for independent scrutiny by a suitability committee at a private meeting. These referrals relate to declarations where officers are not content to grant registration at stage 2. The applicant is invited to attend the meeting.

Suitability meeting

The suitability committee meeting is private/held virtually, and is an opportunity for the applicant to explain to the suitability committee why they consider they are suitable to be registered with the EWC.

The suitability committee consists of a minimum of three independent panel members, including at least one practitioner currently registered with the EWC, and one lay person. The committee is supported by an independent legal adviser.

Once it has heard from the applicant, the suitability committee retires to consider, in private, whether to grant registration or not. If registration is not granted, the applicant is not able to make any further applications in the same registration category/categories for a further 12 months, after which time they can reapply for registration.

9.1 Number of suitability assessments following an applicant's declaration by registrant group, and by year

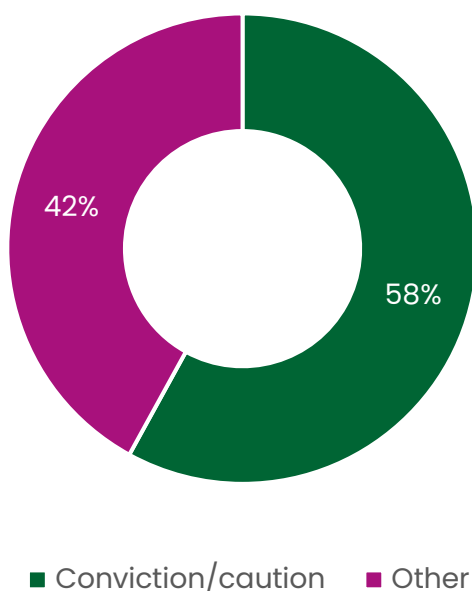
Registrant Group	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
School learning support workers	80	86	96	137	117
School teachers	33	30	24	22	25
FE teachers	16	20	12	9	10
FE learning support workers	5	6	7	8	12
Work-based learning practitioners	14	9	13	17	7
Youth workers	0	0	1	0	3
Youth support workers	6	3	0	2	1
Independent school learning support workers				3	8
Independent school teachers				1	1
Independent special post-16 institution learning support workers				0	0
Independent special post-16 institution teachers				0	1
Adult learning practitioners					0
FE Principals and senior leaders					0
Multiple registrant categories	27	29	33	19	23
Total	181	183	186	218	208

9.2 Outcomes of suitability assessments following a declaration being made, by year

Outcomes	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Application granted (stage 1/2)	143 (79.0%)	149 (81.4%)	159 (85.5%)	159 (72.9%)	148 (71.2%)
Application granted (stage 3)	2 (1.1%)	10 (5.5%)	4 (2.2%)	8 (3.7%)	6 (2.9%)
Application refused (stage 3)	1 (0.6%)	2 (1.1%)	4 (2.2%)	1 (0.5%)	3 (1.4%)
Application withdrawn/closed	35 (19.3%)	22 (12.0%)	19 (10.1%)	50 (22.9%)	51 (24.5%)
Total	181	183	186	218	208

Note: Applications can be withdrawn/closed by both the EWC and the applicant. For example, where an applicant fails to respond to enquiries about the declaration they have made, we may discontinue our assessment. An applicant may also decide to withdraw their application at any time during the assessment process.

9.3 Type of declaration made - applicants for registration where a declaration has been made - assessment completed 2024/25

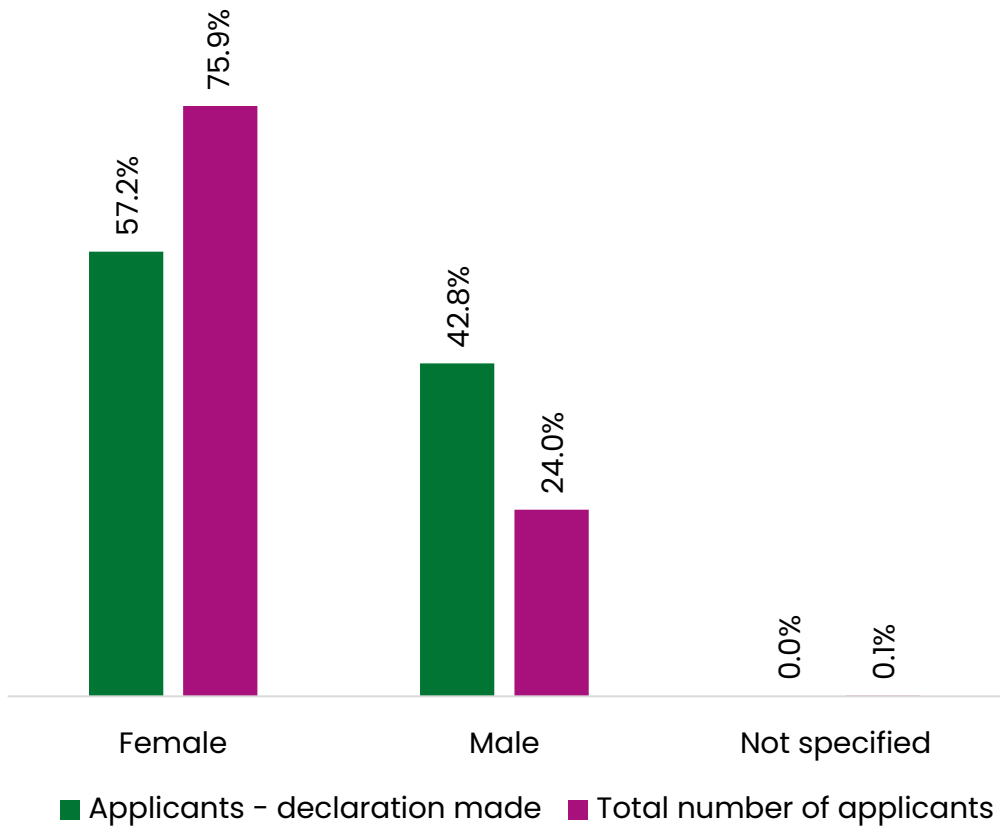


Other – includes:

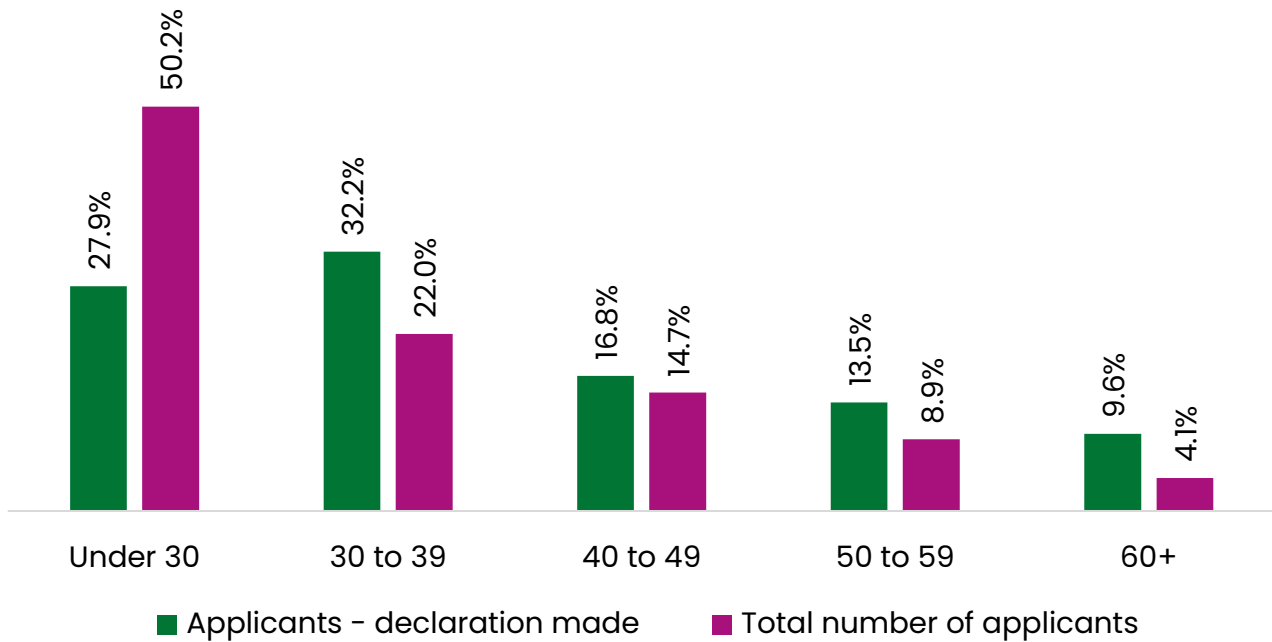
- past or pending action by an employer or another regulatory body
- a failure to declare information
- making a declaration which did not meet the threshold for disclosure

9.4 The demographic for registration in 2024/25

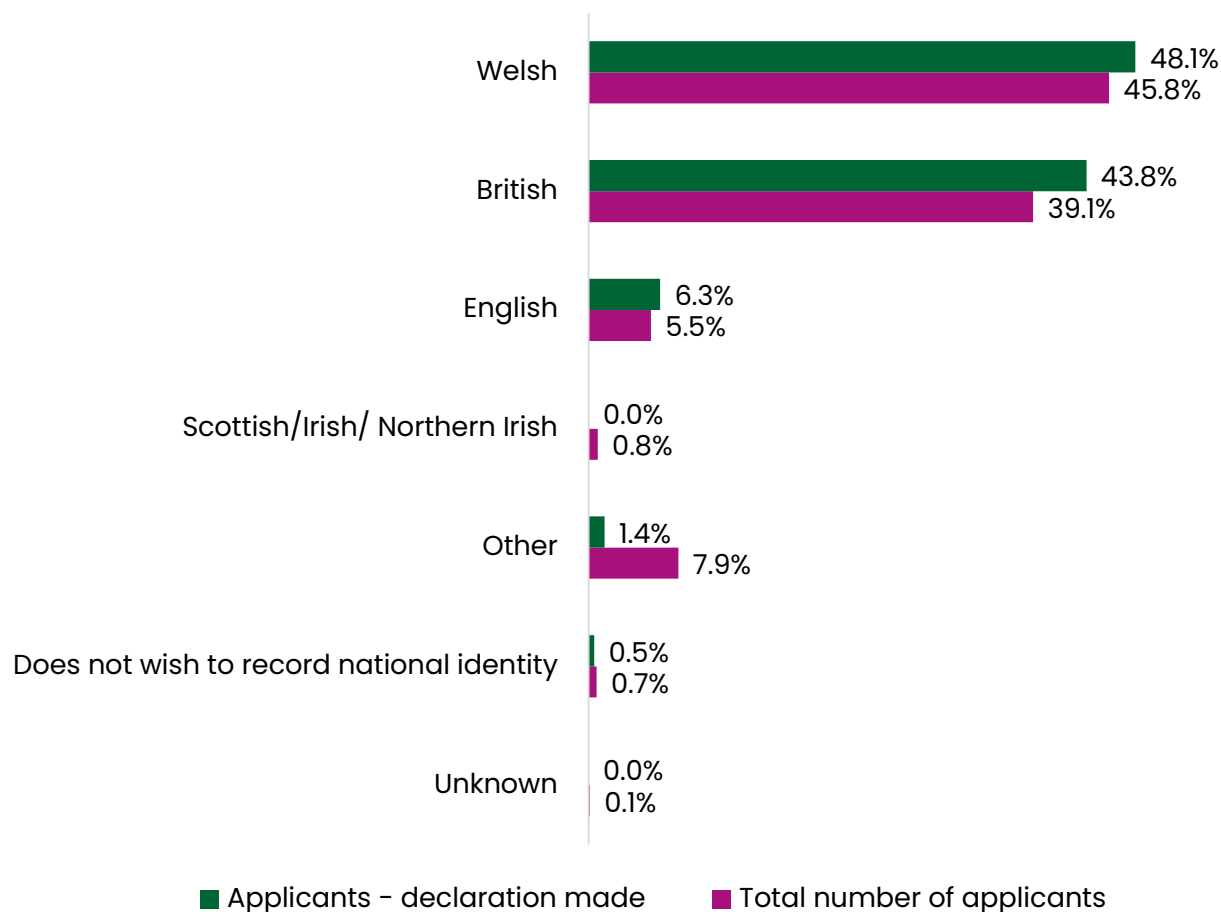
Gender



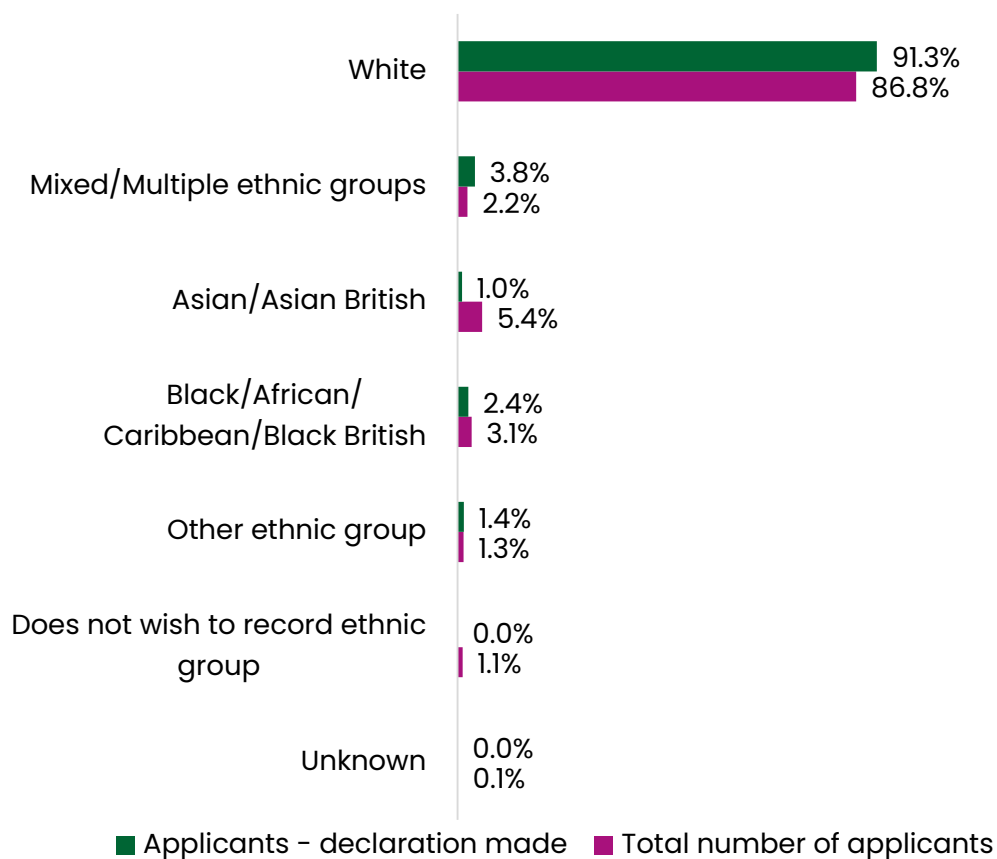
Age



National identity



Ethnic group



10. Induction Appeals

We are the appeals body for those Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) in Wales who:

- fail their statutory Induction period
- have their statutory Induction period extended

and wish to appeal against those decisions, as made by the local authority involved.

In 2024/25, no induction appeals were received by the EWC.

11. Looking forward to 2025/26

We will:

- recruit additional panel members in order to maintain a complement that allows the effective administration of our casework
- continue work on developing a range of online material and resources including a number of information videos which inform the public about this area of our work and to assist and support all parties involved in FtP casework
- re-publish our Code following review and public consultation in line with the Welsh Government requirement to do so every three years - our aim is to ensure it is relevant, accessible, and meaningful to all categories of registrant including those who have joined the Register since May 2023
- continue to deliver training to a range of different audiences (46 sessions were completed in 2024/25) - current and future registrants, employers, agents, and other key stakeholders about the Code of Professional Conduct and Practice