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Press Article

Teacher recruitment and retention in Wales: Issue or crisis?

The Education Workforce Council, the regulatory body for education practitioners in Wales, held its first national policy briefing on 18 May, revealing exclusive statistics on the recruitment and retention of teachers in Wales

The unique data collated from the EWC's register of education practitioners shows that despite there not being a recruitment and retention crisis in Wales, there are concerns in four areas: new teachers, head teachers, Welsh-medium teachers, and teachers of STEM subjects.

Historically, teaching has been a popular choice in Wales, however EWC findings showed that universities are finding it harder to recruit than in the past, with over 30% of postgraduate secondary places left unfilled in each of the last two years. Reasons for the shortfall include perceptions over the quality of teacher training in Wales and the demands expected of new teachers. EWC data also uncovered that over 80% of newly qualified teachers in Wales have to start their careers in temporary posts.

At the other end of the scale, the EWC highlighted that rising numbers of headteacher posts remain vacant, with declining numbers who gain the national headship qualification in Wales reducing the pool of available candidates.

Applications for Welsh medium posts and for secondary subjects such as Mathematics, Science and Modern foreign languages remain low, a trend that the EWC explained has prevailed for over 15 years.

EWC Chief Executive Hayden Llewellyn said, "We often read about recruitment and retention problems in England and elsewhere. The picture in Wales is more positive, however we do have challenges that need to be tackled to ensure that we have an appropriate supply chain of high quality motivated teachers. Looking across other nations and professions, there are a number of positive measures that could be introduced to improve the current situation".

For more information, please contact us on 029 2046 0099 or e-mail information@ewc.wales

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