

MANIFESTO



UCAC
Undeb
Cenedlaethol
Athrawon
Cymru

2025

Foreword

The Welsh Government Programme 2021-26 outlines ambitious goals for education in Wales, stating its intention to “continue the long-term programme of education reform, reduce educational inequalities, and raise standards.”

That was the goal set in 2021, but it has not yet been achieved. As we approach 2026, we face major challenges, and there is no doubt that it is a critical time for education in Wales. Teacher shortages, lack of resources, challenging behaviour from learners and parents, overwhelming workloads... and yet we must remember that education is the future of our country and that “the future of Wales depends on the success of our children and young people.”

Therefore, it is essential that any Government, from whatever political party, pays very close attention to the education system, in order to ensure the best possible start and the best opportunities for the children and young people of Wales.

In this manifesto, UCAC presents its aspirations for education. Our aim is to secure the best future for our children and young people and the best working conditions for our educators. We believe these two goals go hand in hand and cannot be separated.

Our Manifesto

Our manifesto can be summarised under four points which, in Welsh, spell out our union's acronym - UCAC

We stand for what is important - defending, campaigning and acting for real change.

U

UCHAFSWM ORIAU GWEITHIO WYTHNOSOL MAXIMUM WEEKLY WORKING HOURS

We want to ensure that there are clear boundaries to educators' working days.

C

CYLLID YSGOLION SCHOOL FUNDING

We want fair funding for schools, in order to warrant enough staff and resources.

A

AMODAU GWAITH WORKING CONDITIONS

We want to ensure educators can focus on their core task - teaching children & young people.

C

CYMRAEG WELSH LANGUAGE

We want to ensure the Welsh language has the status it deserves and that there are realistic and valuable opportunities to promote and extend its use.

MAXIMUM WEEKLY WORKING HOURS

We want to ensure that there are clear boundaries to educators' working days

The current situation:

- **Teachers work long hours – preparing lessons, marking, assessing learners' work, attending after-school meetings (staff, parents, departmental, training e.g. WJEC).**
- **The “School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions (Wales) Document 2025” includes a section entitled “Specified Working Hours” which is misleading. It states:**

50.5. A teacher employed full-time must be available to perform such duties at such times and places as may be specified by the headteacher (or, where the teacher is not assigned to any one school, by the employer or the headteacher of any school in which the teacher may be required to work) for 1265 hours, those hours to be allocated reasonably throughout those days in the school year on which the teacher is required to be available for work.

However, paragraphs 50.7 and 50.8 state:

50.7. In addition to the hours a teacher is required to be available for work under paragraph 50.5 or 50.6, a teacher must work such reasonable additional hours as may be necessary to enable the effective discharge of the teacher's professional duties, including in particular planning and preparing courses and lessons; and assessing, monitoring, recording and reporting on the learning needs, progress and achievements of assigned pupils.

50.8. The employer must not determine how many of the additional hours referred to in paragraph 50.7 must be worked or when these hours must be worked.

In practice, there is no limit to teachers' work.

- **Leaders are exempt from these paragraphs, so they have no “specified working hours”.**

We call for:

- **Clear statutory boundaries to educators' working hours (including leaders), considering models like Scotland's 35-hour week.**
- **Teachers' working hours to be more flexible, in order to attract more to the profession and make it comparable to other professions.**
- **Fewer contact hours and more PPA (Planning, Preparation, and Assessment) time – increasing PPA from the current 10% to 20%.**
- **More than 20% PPA time for new teachers and increased PPA for those responsible for Areas of Learning and Experience within the Curriculum for Wales.**
- **Less bureaucracy and more time to focus on teaching and learning.**
- **All training (including WJEC training) to be within school hours and in accessible locations.**

SCHOOL FUNDING

Fair funding for schools, in order to warrant enough staff and resources.

Current Situation:

- Schools are in crisis, with headteachers saying they cannot run schools safely on current budgets.
- Without reserves, schools have been obliged to cut key services and reduce staffing levels.
- As a result, the teacher:pupil ratio has decreased.
- Inflation has significantly increased costs, necessitating cuts in areas which are vital for schools e.g fuel and resources in general.
- Similarly, ALN (Additional Learning Needs) demands have increased in schools.
- Schools face pressure to provide more mental health support and additional assistance for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- With increasing pressure, staff absences are rising, leading to higher costs for supply teachers.
- New initiatives (e.g. Curriculum for Wales, new GCSEs) require new resources – and it goes without saying that these incur additional costs.
- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills have deteriorated significantly since the pandemic, requiring intensive interventions – these interventions also have cost implications.

We call for:

- Adequate funding for schools to enable appropriate teacher:pupil ratios.
- Full funding for pupils with ALN.
- Attention to deprivation to ensure no pupil is denied high-quality education due to background.
- Ensuring “fully funded pay rises” for every individual school, with the sums allocated for pay rises not based on averages.
- Strong social partnership between schools and Local Authorities in relation to school funding.
- Consistency across Wales, with everyone working within the same financial conditions.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Ensure educators can focus on their core task – teaching children and young people.

Current Situation:

- Educators across Wales report a severe decline in pupils' and young people's behaviour and attitude, making lesson delivery a constant struggle.
- Lack of respect for educators among some parents, with school and college decisions regularly challenged.
- Following recent incidents involving knives, educators are increasingly concerned about safety.
- Media portrayal of educators can be negative.
- Teachers' workloads are increasing due to:
 - i) Larger class sizes (due to funding issues).
 - ii) The need to prepare materials for new courses.
 - iii) New courses including more non-exam assessments.
 - iv) Less funding for interventions (e.g. literacy and numeracy).
 - v) An increase in social problems and fewer services to support learners due to budget cuts.
- As a result of these challenging working conditions, the number of teachers has decreased – a 1.9% drop between 2024 and 2025.

We call for:

- Clear steps to address behaviour issues across the whole age range.
- Clear steps to address teacher workload.
- More respect for teachers from parents and the media.
- National guidelines for parents – expectations and steps to take when communicating with/contacting schools.
- Adequate funding for schools.
- Time for teachers to be able to fulfil the additional requirements for new courses or non-examination assessments.
- Less bureaucracy.
- Support for ALN learners within the classroom.
- Better methods for measuring success without depending solely on data

WELSH LANGUAGE

Ensure the Welsh language has the status it deserves and that there are realistic and valuable opportunities to promote and extend its use.

Current Situation:

- Teachers teaching through the medium of Welsh have to adapt English materials or create new ones.
- Resources for new GCSE exams refer to English sources and ignore existing Welsh materials.
- Shortage of teachers to teach through Welsh and shortage of Welsh subject teachers.

We call for:

- Financial recognition for the skill of teaching through Welsh.
- Welsh-medium resources available at the same time as English ones – ensuring respect and status for Welsh.
- A sufficient workforce able to teach through the medium of Welsh and promote the language in schools. Currently, around 33.5% of teachers speak Welsh and 26.9% say they can teach through Welsh.
- Support and fairness for the Welsh language.
- Initial Teacher Education (ITE) training to include a unit on teaching through the medium of Welsh and all ITE training to include linguistic training to deliver/refresh Welsh skills.
- More learners receiving education through Welsh.
- Every child in Wales to have the opportunity to receive Welsh-medium education.
- A radical plan to make all primary and secondary schools in Wales genuinely bilingual within a set timeframe (not too long).

CONCLUSION

It is interesting to read the quotes below about the state of education in Wales:

“There is a shortage of science teachers in our secondary schools and it does not look as if the situation will improve in the coming years. What the current government should recognise is that the working conditions and salary levels available in new technological industries for those with a science degree are much better than what is offered to the same person if they choose a career as a teacher. If the Government wants to succeed in attracting more science graduates to become teachers in our schools, it must also significantly improve teachers’ working conditions and salaries.”
(July 1985, R. Silyn Hughes)

“If the Government wants to convince us of the sincerity of its claimed educational progressiveness, well, it’s all about the money. It all comes down to money.”
(April 1986, G. Wyn James)

“The definition of what constitutes a Welsh-medium school became crucial as the Government kept changing its definition time and again.”
(September 1988)

These quotes are from the 1980s, yet they remain just as true nearly forty years later. It is clear that core issues for ensuring educational success have not been resolved over the decades.

Education is the key for a better future – investing in education is investing in our children, our communities and our nation. If we want to ensure a successful and prosperous future for Wales, the education of our children and young people must be a priority, as well as ensuring the best conditions for our teachers. Only by offering the best conditions to our teachers can we ensure the best conditions for our pupils.

We’ve heard enough talk about improving teachers’ working conditions – we urge the next government to act effectively and boldly, ensuring tangible outcomes.



UCAC
Undeb
Cenedlaethol
Athrawon
Cymru