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Comments

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Bath Spa University (BSU) Institute for Education has a history of teacher training that spans over 70 years. In partnership with local and regional schools, it trains over 500 pre-service teachers each year.

Because of its excellent reputation and proximity to Wales, Welsh pre-service teachers are trained by BSU in both Welsh and English partnership schools. The high quality training provided by the BSU Partnership, in both Welsh and English school, has been recognised by Ofsted as 'Outstanding' as recently as the 2015/16 academic year.

The training places and the ability to actively recruit Welsh students to ITE programmes allows providers, such as BSU, to greatly improve their recruitment of individuals into the teaching profession, both in Wales and England. On completion of their training, many of the trainee teachers return to Welsh schools to teach. The strong partnership between Welsh schools and English ITE providers is mutually beneficial for trainees, schools and, training providers, especially in the area of shortage subjects.

The issue with these partnerships is regarding the allocation of training places by NCTL for ITE providers in England. One of the central criteria NCTL in England uses to determine three-year allocation numbers for ITE providers is the percentage of trainee teachers securing a teaching position in English state funded schools. This means that a teacher who completes their training in England and takes a teaching position in Wales counts against their ITE provider as if they were not teaching at all. They are treated as if they have left the teaching profession entirely. In other words, English ITE providers are penalised for training teachers who begin their teaching career in Wales. This causes some institutions near the Welsh border to receive fewer training places and gives incentives to institutions to attempt to keep teachers from eventually teaching in their Welsh homeland.

This challenge can cause both allocation issues for providers with close proximity to Wales, and teacher recruitment issues for schools in Wales. One in eight of our Bath Spa Teachers (the name we give our trainee teachers) are Welsh and are likely to return to Wales to teach after their training year.

Bath Spa University values its partnerships with schools in Wales and continues to actively recruit Welsh trainees. Similarly, a number of Bath Spa Teachers will benefit from spending some of their training in Welsh partner schools. As we have heard in this forum, institutions in Wales struggle to gain enough trainees in certain shortage subjects to meet the increasing needs of schools. While we at Bath Spa University value our Welsh trainees and Welsh school partnerships, it is challenging to expand recruitment of Welsh trainees and develop further partnerships with Welsh schools given the parameters and expectations set by government.

While our institution will continue to seek ways to address these challenges, we would ask that the Welsh government and Welsh schools support ITE providers in England by requesting that NCTL and DfE do not penalise providers for supporting or encouraging trainees to teach in Wales.

In the end, we believe that all children and young people across the UK deserve access to great teachers and a great education.