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**Factors Contributing to  
Teachers' Non-participation  
in the General Teaching  
Council for Wales'  
Professional Development  
Pilot Projects**

**A Consultation with Teachers, Headteachers  
and LEA Officers**

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**Report of Findings**

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**Factors Contributing to Teachers' Non-participation in the GTCW's  
Professional Development Pilot Projects: A Consultation with  
Teachers, Headteachers and LEA Officers**

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## List of Abbreviations

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CPD - Continuing Professional Development

GEST - Grant for Education Support and Training

GTCW - The General Teaching Council for Wales

LEA - Local Education Authority

NafW – National Assembly for Wales

SMT – Senior Management Team



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## Acknowledgements and Preamble

ORS is pleased to have been commissioned to conduct the research reported here and have greatly enjoyed undertaking the work for the General Teaching Council for Wales. We hope that the findings will be valuable in informing decision making and assisting with the consolidation and widening of teacher participation throughout Wales in the Council's Professional Development Projects. We have tried to portray the range of views that participants have shared with us, and hope that the Council find the varying perspectives as interesting as we have.

We are grateful to the General Teaching Council for Wales for commissioning the research and would particularly like to thank Maria Boex and Tegryn Jones for their assistance. We would also like to acknowledge the valuable contributions made by all those who participated in the interviews and gave their views readily.





## Section

# 1

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## Executive Summary

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Continuing Professional Development funding has been made available to eligible teachers in Wales since September 2001. Research commissioned by the GTCW demonstrated that there were noticeable inequalities in take-up rates amongst certain groups of teachers.

Opinion Research Services was commissioned by the GTCW to investigate factors which prevent teachers throughout Wales from participating in the GTCW's Professional Development Pilot Project.

The research focused on the following areas:

The marketing of the pilot projects

Factors which prevent teachers from applying for funding

Possible changes which could improve the take-up of funding

### 1.2 METHODOLOGY SUMMARY

There were four target groups of consultees: Participant Teachers, Non-participant Teachers, Headteachers and LEA Officers.

Participant teachers – included to provide a benchmark, so that differences between this group and non-participants could be identified. They were surveyed by postal questionnaire sent to



600 teachers. The target response rate of 150 completed forms was achieved.

Non-participant teachers – 156 teachers were interviewed face-to-face drawn from schools with a high rate of participation and ones with a low and/or nil rate of take-up (see Section 3 for sampling methodology). Each interview followed a semi-structured format.

Headteachers – 23 face-to-face interviews were undertaken in schools with a high rate of participation and ones with a low and/or nil rate of take-up

LEA Officers – 16 telephone interviews were undertaken with officers in different LEA areas.

### **1.3 MAIN THEMES**

It should be noted that there were significant differences between the views of participating and non-participating teachers. However, where participants in the Professional Development Pilot Projects were asked for suggestions on improving the process or paperwork, they tended to highlight similar areas to those mentioned by non-participants. It would therefore be possible to surmise that areas which are of little significance if a teacher is motivated to apply become obstacles where the motivation is lower. The main findings identified below should be read in this context.

1. Overwhelmingly, teachers considered their Headteachers and managers to be supportive
2. Headteachers in low-participant schools were not as adept at sharing information and being pro-active in the approach to promoting the schemes, but high-participation schools had pro-active Heads or SMTs. The



information from the interviews suggested that in order to maximise take-up rates at schools, one of three things needed to be in place: a pro-active Head, a pro-active member of staff with responsibility for staff development / CPD, or good informal networks of supportive colleagues with experience of the schemes.

3. Many older members (50+) of staff saw the schemes as not being relevant to them, whereas some newly qualified teachers and teachers in the first year at a school stated that they had more pressing issues of establishing themselves.
4. Some teachers also expressed 'initiative fatigue', finding that the number of different ideas and opportunities was beginning to be overwhelming. They felt that they 'just want to get on with the job'
5. The activity or lack of activity at LEA level had no noticeable impact on take-up amongst individuals
6. LEA officers feel that they have been sidelined, and would welcome a dialogue with the GTCW
7. In some schools finding suitable supply teachers was seen as a problem, and hence this acted as a deterrent to teachers who were reluctant to take time out from the classroom
8. Teachers in smaller schools report difficulties in finding the time to put bids together given their lack of non-contact time in the school day.
9. Some staff and SMT members were unsure or unconvinced of the relevance of the schemes to things like existing CPD (INSET), Performance Management, and School Development Plans



10. The size of the booklets puts some individuals off. Some suggested this was to do with insisting on sending bilingual information to everybody, instead of asking people for their preferences – English, Welsh or Bilingual.

#### **1.4 TEACHERS IDEAS FOR IMPROVING TAKEUP**

2. Providing a named contact or a face-to-face briefing about the schemes
3. A member of staff from the GTCW could visit schools to promote the schemes. Contact could be made with colleges to promote CPD amongst soon to qualify teachers
4. Linking the funding to the academic year rather than the financial year, so that teachers can more easily take advantage of courses beginning in September.
5. A tutorial system on how to apply
6. More flexible budgets (within reason)
7. More examples in the literature of possible uses for funding.
8. More examples of successful bids and projects
9. Mock completed applications with booklets
10. Ring-fence the funding and allocate it to schools with an entitlement for every individual.
11. The option to apply online
12. A 'How-to' guide to applying (Flow-chart / Step 1 etc.)
13. Consider strengthening the relationship with the LEAs



14. Targeting Headteachers to improve their knowledge and understanding and encouraging them to promote applications

## **1.5 MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. For a fuller discussion see the concluding section. The main recurring themes identified are:
2. Face to face contact is the most effective means of communicating information. This could be achieved through a variety of means such as:
  - a. Facilitation of a network of teachers who have successfully applied for funding
  - b. Working more closely with LEA Officers who will have closer links with schools
  - c. Greater involvement of Headteachers in a support/facilitation role

There is probably some scope for simplifying the application form and associated literature. However, we understand that some changes have already been made which may well address this point.



## Introduction

### 2.1 CONTEXT

#### *The Commission*

Since September 2001 the General Teaching Council for Wales has offered funding for continuing professional development to eligible teachers throughout Wales who make successful applications to the Council. Research already commissioned by the GTCW had demonstrated that there were noticeable inequalities in take-up rates amongst certain groups of teachers.

Opinion Research Services was commissioned by the General Teaching Council for Wales to investigate factors which prevent teachers throughout Wales from participating in the GTCW's Professional Development Pilot Project.

### 2.2 PROJECT OVERVIEW

ORS was asked to consider the following:

The effectiveness of the Council's marketing of the pilot projects

Any factors which prevent or discriminate against teachers or groups of teachers from applying for funding

Actions which could be undertaken to eliminate or reduce these factors

Additional Opportunities that could be provided that will encourage participation

- Different access issues highlighted by different groups of teachers.



We identified four target groups of consultees: Non-participant Teachers, Participant Teachers, Headteachers and LEA Officers. Interviews were undertaken with Non-participant Teachers, Headteachers in high and low-participant schools and telephone interviews were conducted with LEA Officers with responsibility for Continuing Professional Development. Participant teachers over the first two years of the programmes were consulted via a questionnaire.

### ***Bilingual Working***

All research resources were produced bilingually by ORS in English and Welsh and participants were given the choice of being interviewed in their preferred language.



## Methodology

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Given that consultation with several distinctive groups was necessary, we decided that a suitable approach would be to balance the practical accessibility of a given group with the type of information sought from them. Therefore, a variety of data collection and sampling methods were employed during the project according to the group being consulted.

### 3.2 INTERVIEWS WITH NON-PARTICIPANT TEACHERS

The largest group consulted during this study was Non-Participant Teachers, defined as teachers eligible for GTCW funding who had not yet made an application or received funding for a CPD activity. In total we interviewed 156 non-participant teachers from a range of schools throughout Wales.

On the basis of previous reports commissioned by the GTCW and aggregate data on take-up amongst teachers in LEAs throughout Wales we decided to take an approach to sampling which would take account of potential motivating and demotivating factors at LEA level and school level. We selected LEAs from all four economic areas of Wales, choosing a mixture of high-participating and low participating LEAs in each area. See Table 1.

Table 1: Aggregated take-up of GTCW CPD funding by LEA against teachers as a percentage of those on the GTCW register.



LEA	LEA no.	Teachers by LEA as a % of those on GTCW register	% take-up of CPD funding at end of Phase 1	% take-up of CPD funding at end of Phase 2	Take-up Aggregates 1 and 2	Aggregated Take-up against % of teachers on GTCW register
Anglesey	660	2.2	1.8	1.0	1.4	-0.8
Bridgend	672	4.5	3.8	5.4	4.6	+0.1
Blaenau Gwent	677	2.3	0.5	2.3	1.4	-0.9
Cardiff	681	10.3	14.1	10.3	12.2	+1.9
Carmarthen	669	5.8	5.7	4.9	5.3	+0.5
Conwy	662	3.6	3.0	3.7	3.35	-0.25
Caerphilly	676	5.8	6.1	7.2	6.65	+0.85
Ceredigion	667	2.5	2.2	1.6	1.9	-0.6
Denbighshire	663	3.2	3.5	2.5	3	-0.2
Flintshire	664	4.9	1.6	3.3	2.45	-2.45
Gwynedd	661	4.1	5.2	3.4	4.3	+0.2
Merthyr Tydfil	675	2.1	3.9	5.8	4.85	+2.75
Monmouthshire	679	2.5	3.2	2.6	2.9	+0.4
Neath Port Talbot	671	4.9	3.9	5.4	4.65	-0.25
Newport	680	4.7	2.2	2.4	2.3	-2.4
Pembrokeshire	668	4.0	1.9	2.4	2.15	-1.85
Powys	666	4.5	6.1	4.7	5.4	+0.9
RCT	674	8.6	15.8	9.1	8.45	-0.15
Swansea	670	7.7	8.4	9.0	8.7	+1
Torfaen	678	3.3	2.5	3.1	2.8	-0.5
Vale of Glamorgan	673	4.2	9.6	6.1	7.85	+3.65
Wrexham	665	3.8	2.8	4.1	3.45	-0.35
Other			0.2			



We interviewed teachers in a total of 11 LEAs:

Gwynedd, Ynys Môn and Flintshire in North Wales

Powys and Ceredigion in Mid Wales

Blaenau Gwent, the Vale of Glamorgan and Newport in South East Wales

Pembrokeshire, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot in South West Wales

Our approach was to conduct interviews in two low take-up LEAs and one high take up LEA in each area, with the exception of Mid-Wales which only covers two whole LEAs. However, Powys was a high-take up case and Ceredigion a low case. The area of Gwynedd covered by the Mid-Wales economic region was considered as part of North Wales in our sample as LEA-specific factors were considered far more likely to impact upon participation rates than geographical position.

From this basis we then selected low-participant schools from each LEA using GTCW data provided on successful applications over Phase 1 & 2. We tried to achieve a ratio of three secondary schools and seven primary schools in each economic area of Wales, although given that some of research occurred in small rural schools with small staff numbers, this was not the case for all of the regions. Data on staff and pupil numbers, socio-economic demographic and linguistic provision and context was obtained via the NafW's schools census and a workable cross-section selected.

Interviews took place in the school setting after negotiating access and a convenient date with the Headteacher or member of the SMT.



### **3.3 INTERVIEWS WITH HEADTEACHERS**

A similar format was used to consult with Headteachers, though the emphasis was somewhat different. The sample took in comparable number of Headteachers from high participation and low participation schools.

The interviews took a semi-structured format, and sought to establish whether the approach of the Headteacher was significantly influential in determining the rate of teacher take-up of CPD opportunities.

A total of twenty-three Headteachers were interviewed.

### **3.4 TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS WITH LEA OFFICERS**

Seventeen LEA officers were interviewed by telephone.

A relatively structured format was employed, covering a range of issues under two broad banners:

Quality of information, and access to information about CPD funding opportunities

The way in which LEAs worked with the schools to promote CPD funding take-up

Each interview took between 10 and 15 minutes.

### **3.5 POSTAL QUESTIONNAIRE COMPLETED BY PARTICIPANT TEACHERS**

600 questionnaires were sent out to a sample of teachers drawn randomly from the total number of applicants. The resultant sample provided a cross-section of teachers representative of the varying schools, areas, length of service and grade.



159 participant teachers returned a completed questionnaire giving a response rate of 26.5%.



## Non-Participant Teachers

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

156 teachers from all over Wales participated in the interviews. They represented a broad cross-section of the profession, divided into low participation and high participation schools in the different economic areas.

It should be borne in mind that the people interviewed, although being from a broad spectrum of schools, experience and age groups, include those who are likely to be the least well informed and those who have a high level of resistance to undertaking CPD. Consequently, a number of negative comments were made, that are unlikely to be representative of teachers overall.

A clear majority view emerged that indicated that teachers generally find their line managers and/or head teachers supportive and encouraging of staff development, though with the needs of pupils and the school as a whole being an overriding factor.

### 4.2 PRACTICAL ISSUES

Those teachers who worked in the primary sector and particularly in the smaller schools felt that there were problems of time availability which made it difficult to put a bid together. Timetables are inevitably full and there is little opportunity to discuss non-essential matters during the day.

Time – or lack of it – was cited on numerous occasions by teachers as being a barrier to making an application; either because of pressure of work, or because people expected to be able to deal with an application during the school day, and a full timetable prevented this.



In some schools there were limitations on how much time a teacher could spend away from the classroom. This could sometimes be an unwritten agreement amongst all staff that there would be no more than X days spent in non-contact time, or could be a response to an event like a school inspection. It was an issue particularly in the smaller schools, and placed a moral if not legal pressure upon the individual teachers.

School inspections were also cited as generating a considerable amount of work, and this tended to deflect attention away from CPD initiatives.

In some rural areas supply teachers were said to be difficult to obtain, and there was a broader unease about quality and continuity of teaching when using supply staff.

Certain subject areas, e.g. maths were said to be particularly difficult to find supply cover for, and this was sometimes given as a reason for not applying.

Many people saw CPD as something that was likely to increase their workload, and there was a resistance to taking on additional commitments.

Several people commented that the timing of the initiatives could be better. They thought that the literature arrived at a point when they were normally very engaged in classroom work and were less likely to take the time to read the information. They thought that if the literature was sent out to coincide with the summer term, people were more likely to have time over the holiday period to consider the literature and digest it properly.

The principle of reimbursing money spent means that some people saw it as creating a cash flow problem for the school and/or the LEA, particularly when supply staff has to be employed (though it suggests that individuals have not fully



understood the system). There was also confusion expressed about what the funding would pay for and whether it was a flexible budget. Some commented that often course fees would be more than the bursary available, and it would be helpful if the amount available was less strict when sometimes a case could be made for a higher amount.

### **4.3 PERCEPTUAL BARRIERS**

From the interviews, it was evident that the greatest barrier to take-up is the individual teachers' view of CPD and how much effort and commitment they are prepared to undertake.

Older teachers and particularly those approaching retirement did not see CPD as being relevant to them, but rather something for younger members of staff. Some, in effect, 'didn't want to be bothered' with anything other than the basic INSET days.

Conversely recently qualified teachers saw themselves as still finding their feet, and for many it was too soon to consider further professional development. Their concern was to establish themselves within a classroom setting and to be comfortable with their role before considering putting time and energy into CPD.

There was some confusion expressed about the role of CPD initiatives via the GTCW and the GEST funding from the LEA. A few felt that the funding had been taken from the GEST budgets and redirected into the GTCW projects. Amongst some teachers there was a negative image of GTCW, which was seen as creating an additional tier of bureaucracy and paperwork. This led to a certain cynicism and hence resistance to taking up opportunities. An inability to see the whole picture also led to uncertainty. People wanted to see the links between



Performance Management, School Development Plans, CPD, and INSET, and expressed some reservations about the relevance of the CPD opportunities to the other schemes. Others were unsure about the main impetus for the schemes – is it about individual development, staff development or both?

Some of the small rural schools felt isolated and somewhat neglected, which had an impact on how teachers approached CPD – they expected other schools to get money but not themselves.

Other teachers felt that the smaller their bid, the more likely it was that the Headteacher would authorise the application. Larger applications were seen as more likely to require the employment of supply staff and cause disruption within the teaching programme.

The CPD schemes were referred to as being a top-down approach that was not sufficiently empowering for individual teachers. The fact that it was devised and administered by an unelected body made it seem remote, whereas school led initiatives were much more accessible and felt by some to be more inclusive.

#### **4.5 LITERATURE AND APPLICATION FORMS**

There were a number of critical comments made about the literature issues to promote CPD and the associated paperwork. Some people thought that the flyers and booklets contained too much jargon which was off-putting. The names given to the different types of bursaries were not in the type of language that was easily or immediately understood. For example – ‘Sabbatical’ or ‘Research Scholarship’. Consequently they were less likely to bother to read the information. A possible



approach might be to highlight how much money might be available for particular CPD projects to attract attention at the outset.

A simpler more direct approach was suggested, that made it much clearer what the CPD programme was about, how it worked and the steps involved.

Fully bilingual booklets meant that they appeared to be more substantial than they were, and this deterred people from reading them. They thought that it would be better to send the information out in the language of the individuals' choice.

The application forms were said to be daunting and intimidating, and many thought that it would take quite some time to complete them. The level of effort that would need to be expended discouraged teachers who often felt that they were already over-stretched.

Even if these barriers were surmounted, the reporting requirements were seen as yet another hurdle to be crossed, and some suggested that it felt as though the GTCW did not trust teachers.

#### **4.4 CHANGES TO PROCESS SUGGESTED BY INTERVIEWEES**

People wanted to have a better idea of what type of application might succeed. Many lacked confidence in their ability to put forward a successful bid, and were deterred by what they saw as a possible expenditure of effort for no reward.

It was suggested that there should be examples or case studies given in the literature of successful projects and ideas about the types of submissions that could be made.



Presenting the information differently could include a flowchart, so that people could easily establish whether their ideas met with the criteria. A similar format could be used as a 'how to apply' guide, giving step-by-step instructions

The application form could be simplified and it would be useful to include a dummy completed form so that people could be sure that they had completed it correctly. A few people thought that it would be helpful if they could complete the form 'on-line' via the Internet.

Some felt that the level of award was too rigid, and (within reason) there could be more flexibility, which could for example, allow people to make applications that led to recognised qualifications.

The most radical suggestion was that the funding be 'ring fenced' then allocated to schools, but each teacher should have an entitlement to a certain amount to be spent on CPD.

#### **4.6 SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT**

Teachers would like to have a named person to contact at GTCW for help and advice. A more accessible face would appear to be important in encouraging applications.

Within schools, one teacher could be designated to take a lead in helping and encouraging others with applications. Being able to attend a tutorial session on CPD applications was also seen as helpful. This could include guidance on working up ideas into an application, and assistance with the application form itself.

Staff from GTCW visiting schools to advise and promote the scheme was thought likely to encourage people to apply, partly because teachers would have the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification; but also because face-to-face contact would make the GTCW appear more accessible.



Arranging a visit to colleges when student teachers are approaching the end of their course would help to promote the CPD concept amongst newly qualified teachers.

#### **4.7 OTHER IDEAS**

The problem of obtaining good supply teachers was mentioned on numerous occasions. One suggestion was that a pool of Welsh based teachers should be maintained by GTCW which would make it easier for schools to find suitable temporary staff.



## Headteachers

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Twenty three Headteachers were interviewed. They represented a cross section of schools from the same areas of Wales as the teacher interview sample. (See Section 3 for sample methodology). Interviewees were asked about:

The quality and accessibility of information received

The type of support provided within the school

Their views on the value of CPD and ideas for enhancing take-up

### 5.2 INFORMATION

All Headteachers had seen the literature and had familiarised themselves with it. In general they found it well presented, with clear concise information.

Where there were criticisms, they were mainly related to a need to simplify the layout and language to make it more accessible. More of a 'question and answer' format might be easier than the essay type of format currently used. The amount of paper was thought to be excessive, and the weightiness might put some teachers off from properly reading it.

In the schools where there was a low or nil rate of participation there were more comments made about the need for a 'how to' guide, particularly in relation to 'how to plan a project'.

Some Headteachers (low/nil participation schools) expressed reservations about the shift towards sending information about



CPD directly to teachers and making it a personal initiative. They felt that many teachers were more used to having information 'cascaded down' and not used to being proactive about their professional development.

Most Headteachers had raised the issue of CPD funds at a SMT meeting particularly in the larger schools, but discussion had not necessarily gone beyond this.

### **5.3 SUPPORT MECHANISMS**

What was very apparent from the interviews was that in schools with a high rate of take-up of CPD opportunities, Headteachers had taken a proactive approach to supporting and encouraging applications. In larger schools a CPD officer has taken a lead, whereas in the smaller ones, it was often the Headteacher who worked with the staff, looking at CPD in the context of the needs of the school. It could be said that some took what was a fairly directive approach, making the links between the needs of the individual staff and the needs of the school.

Help encouragement and advice was provided during the application process, and this often led to staff becoming enthusiastic about the opportunities that the funding presented.

In the schools with a low/nil take-up, there was more of a tendency to leave the initiative up to the individual teacher, and although the opportunities offered by the CPD programme were raised they were not 'sold' to staff. Often discussion did not necessarily move beyond the SMT level unless it was a Whole Staff Initiative.

The difference is really one of active as opposed to passive encouragement. Although there was a virtually universal view amongst teachers that Headteachers were supportive this often



meant that the teacher would take the initiative and their Headteacher would back ideas brought to them.

In schools where several members of staff have taken up CPD opportunities, other teachers felt more encouraged to try for themselves. It seemed to be a combination of success breeding success, and feeling reassured about the process by talking to somebody who had experienced it. Peer group support was an element that is likely to increase as more and more teachers take up the funding opportunities.

#### **5.4 IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES**

There is a need for more work with Headteachers to improve their awareness and understanding of how CPD opportunities can improve the quality of what is offered by the school. Possibilities include the Headteachers conference, either a stand or a presentation which may raise the profile of GTCW amongst Headteachers, some of whom appeared to still be somewhat vague as to its role.

#### **5.5 CONCLUSIONS**

Headteachers have had a critical role to play in the take-up rates of CPD funding in their schools. However, this influence may well be less in future as more and more teachers participate in the scheme, and peer support becomes more significant.

An enthusiastic mentor, whether the Headteacher, a member of the SMT or a designated CPD officer can significantly influence those who have less initial enthusiasm or confidence, and who will benefit from support in making an application.





## Section

# 6

## LEA Officers

### 6.1 AWARENESS

Sixteen LEA officers were interviewed by telephone, who between them covered the majority of LEAs in Wales.

All of them were aware of the GTCW's CPD funds, and most recalled information being sent to the LEA office. A few said that they had learnt about the funds through colleagues and teachers, and in one case, via a presentation by the GTCW.

Generally people had seen the application form, information booklet and to a lesser extent, the flyer, or had accessed the website.

### 6.2 INFORMATION

Officers thought that the quality of information was reasonably good, though it sometimes lacked clarity. Suggestions were made regarding the inclusion of flow charts to make the process clearer, more information about the available budget, and some clarification about how the money available complements the existing schemes such as INSET. Network applications require that every participant teacher fill in a form, which was said to be an unnecessary duplication of information.

All but three of the officers spoken to had made information about the CPD funds available to schools. Some had forwarded details, or e-mailed/written specifically to the school. Several had set up meetings with teachers/head teachers, including workshop sessions and informal discussions.

### 6.3 SUPPORT

All but one LEA Officer had provided support to teachers with their applications through a variety of mechanisms, which included:



Help with the application form, sometimes delegating a specific officer to help with bids

Providing additional information

Holding meetings to review the process

Acting as network co-ordinator

Offering interim funding to schools

Several LEA officers took on an administrative role to foster network bids.

There was some frustration expressed that as LEA officers and not practising teachers they were not eligible for funding themselves even though they may be registered with the GTCW.

#### **6.4 INTEGRATION**

The lack of integration and co-ordination between the GTCW funds and the GEST provision was highlighted by a majority of interviewees. There was strong feeling that the LEAs were sidelined in the whole process, and that there was a need for more 'joined up' thinking. People commented on the need for there to be a partnership approach, so that they could better plan the programme of INSET so that it complements what is happening with GTCW funds. Concerns were expressed about overlap and duplication occurring because of the stand-alone nature of the funds. More information was sought about the take-up rates and the type of projects that receive funding at an LEA level. Typical comments are:

*The GTCW should communicate directly with LEAs. We need a strategic and operational forum, and should be regarded as full partners if we are to do our jobs properly*



*More consultation is needed. We can't plan a programme of INSET when we don't know what is being done by GTCW applicants in our LEA*

*Key school priorities should be done through GEST, not through GTCW CPD*

One LEA had undertaken a survey of schools in their area to establish the rate of take-up

### **6.5 BARRIERS TO TAKE UP**

Several LEA officers highlighted the role of the Headteacher in encouraging and supporting staff in their applications, and the need for them to be proactive in encouraging their staff to apply.

The difficulties that very small schools face in getting suitable relief cover was mentioned, as was the problem of very busy workloads which meant that teachers give something like CPD a very low priority.

The amount of paperwork involved in making an application was mentioned by several officers, echoing what teachers themselves have said.

### **6.6 SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS**

The desire to work in partnership with the GTCW was reiterated by a number of LEA officers. They felt that the respective roles of CPD and GEST funding were unclear to them and probably to teachers as well. On the one hand it was part of their role to encourage CPD, but on the other, they had no role to play in the initiatives coming from the GTCW. This meant that there was potential for overlap and duplication which was not the best use of resources.



Several officers pointed out that they had no mechanism for finding out how many bids there had been in their area, and hence what the take-up rate was, or the types of CPD that had been undertaken.

Amongst some officers there was a strong feeling that a competitive bidding process was not the best way to approach CPD, and they were in favour of an entitlement on the part of all teachers to have their CPD needs funded.

As one officer put it:

*Not having a bidding-in culture would help. What other profession would expect its practitioners to 'bid in' for CPD*

Others felt that there should be more targeting of Headteachers to encourage take-up, rather than expecting individual teachers to take the initiative.



## Participant Teachers

### 7.1 RESPONDENT PROFILE

Of the 159 completed questionnaires, a fairly low proportion (14%) of respondents were aged under 30 years with 29% being aged 31-40. A fifth were aged 41-50 and 35%, the highest proportion, were aged 51-60.

78% of respondent teachers were women, which is slightly higher than the 72% ratio of women on the GTCW register.

66% of respondents were primary school teachers and 31% were secondary. The remaining 3% worked in other types of schools, as listed in figure 7.2.2 below.

Type of school	% of Respondents
Primary	66
Secondary	31
Nursery	1
Special	2
Other	1
* Totals may be affected by rounding up of figures	

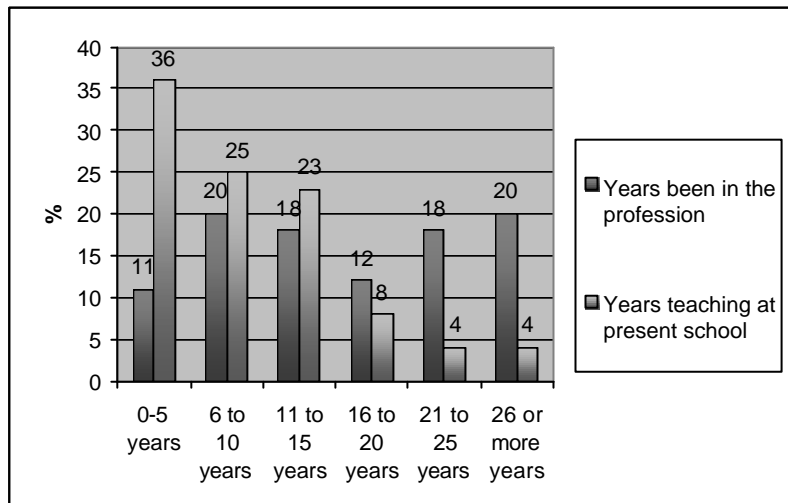
**Figure 4.1.2: Type of school, by all Respondents.**

The vast majority of these respondents (84%) worked in English medium schools, whilst 8% worked in Welsh medium schools and a further 8% in bilingual schools.



A third of respondents were standard national scale teachers and only a fraction less (32%) were senior management. 23% were Head of Department/Curriculum Leader or other Middle Management, 8% were special needs teachers and one was a supply teacher. Two respondents worked in another capacity.

The split between those who had been in the profession for 0-15 years and those who had been teaching for 16-26+ years was virtually equal, 49% falling into the former category and 51% into the latter. However, the vast majority (84%) had been teaching at their present school for 15 years or less, the remaining 16% having been there for 16-26+ years. See figure 7.1.3 for a full breakdown.



**Figure 7.1.3: Years respondents have been in the profession and at their present school**



## 7.2 MAIN FINDINGS

42% of respondents had first heard of the GTCW'S Continuing Professional Development funds through information sent to their home.

47% had found out about the funds at school (23% through information they had seen, 16% through their line/senior manager 8% through another member of staff).

3% of participants had been made aware by an LEA officer

8% had learned of the funds by other means.

See figure 7.2.1.

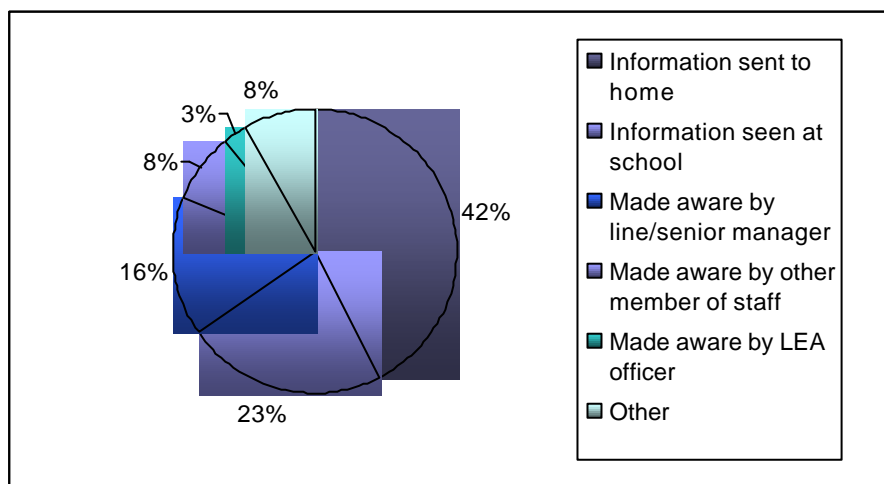


Figure 7.2.1: How respondents first heard about the GTCW's Continuing Professional Development funds.

The vast majority of the respondents (92%) had seen the information booklets.



44% had also accessed the website to gain information  
25% had seen flyers on the topic.

Encouragingly, almost all respondents thought the detail of information given on the GTCW'S Continuing Professional Development was good, 60% rating it very good and 39% fairly good. The clarity of the information was again rated good by almost all respondents, 53% rating it very good and 46% fairly good. The format of the information was rated good by 95% of participants, 40% finding it very good and 55% fairly good. The remaining 6% found it fairly poor. See figure 7.2.2.

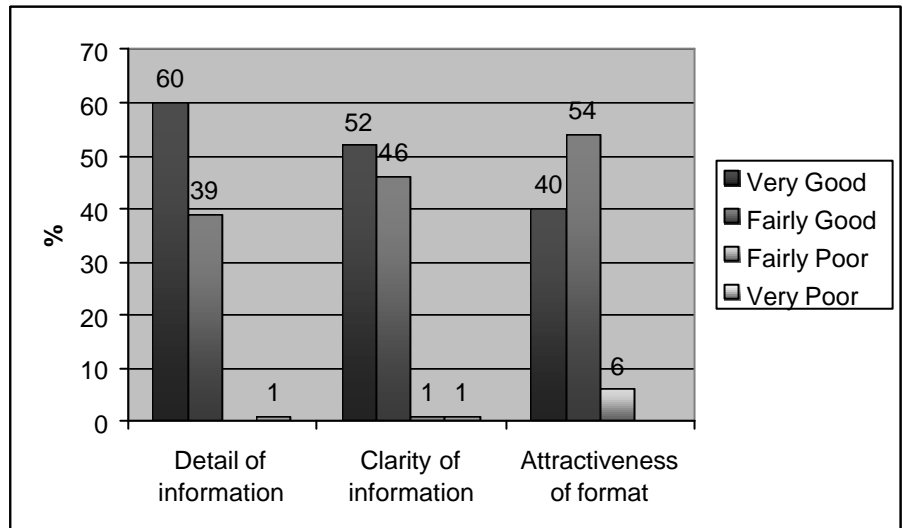


Figure 7.2.2: Respondents ratings of various aspects of the information seen regarding the GTCW's CPD funds.



\*Totals may be affected by rounding up of figures

Almost two-thirds (63%) of participants had received support in applying for funding, most (57%) receiving it from a member of their Senior Management Team. A total of 32% had received support from others within their school; 20% from a member of staff with responsibility for staff development, 7% from the Head of Department and 5% from their Line Manager. 11% had received support from an LEA officer and 14% from another source. See figure 7.2.3.

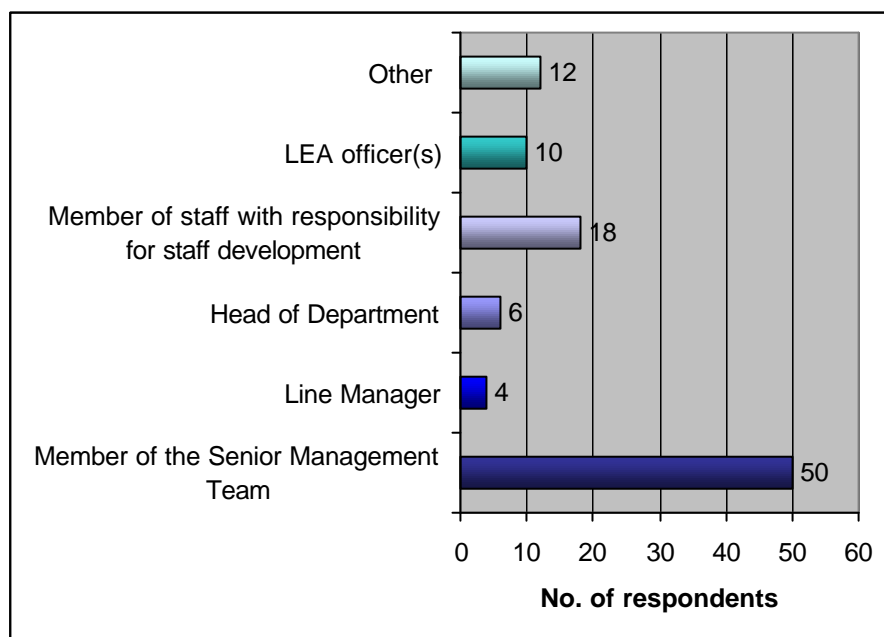


Figure 7.2.3: Sources of support in applying for CPD funding.

61 of the 99 respondents who had received support with their application had participated in informal discussions and 58 of



the 99 had received help with the application itself. 32 had been provided with useful information and 28 had had meetings to review the application process (See figure 7.2.4). The vast majority (84%) felt that the support they received was a significant factor in encouraging you to apply for funding. However, over half (57%) of teachers surveyed still felt that they would have applied for Continuing Professional Development funding without support with their application.

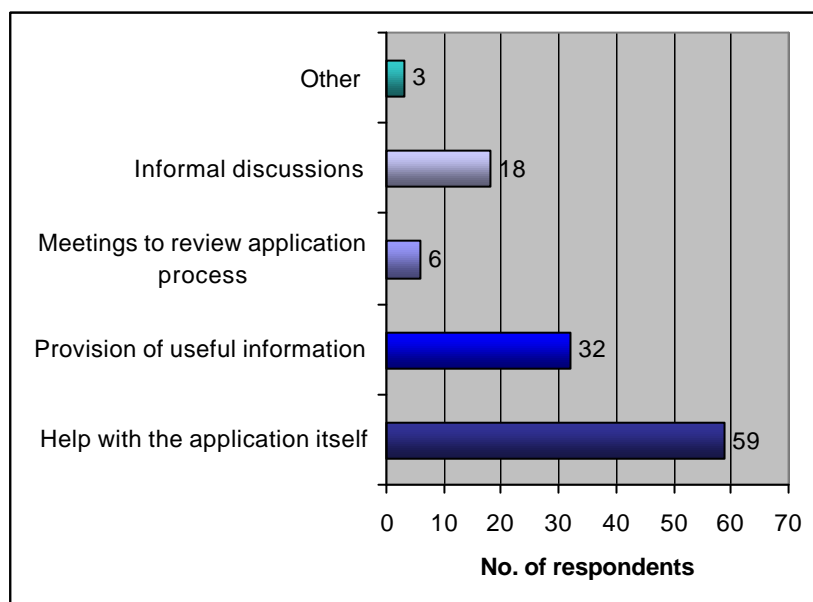


Figure 7.2.4: Type(s) of support received.

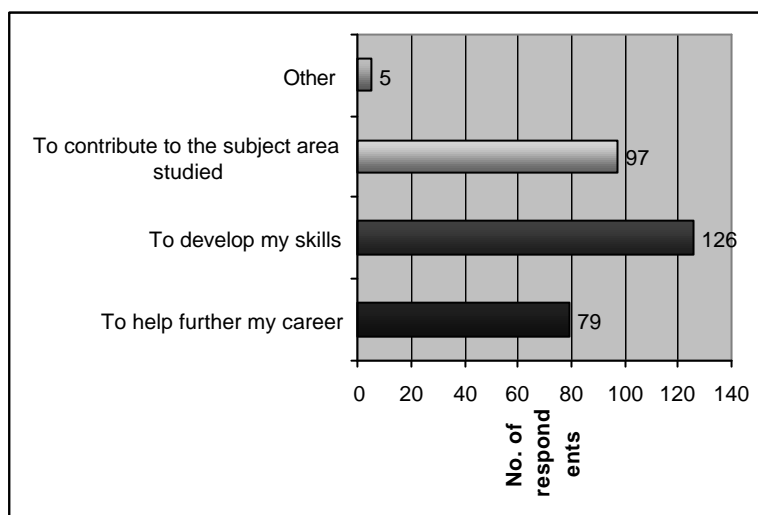
Note: Multi-response

11 of the 158 respondents were Professional Development Network Co-ordinators and of these almost half (5) were



encouraged to be the project co-ordinator by their Headteacher. A further 3 were encouraged by their LEA and one by colleagues. Co-applicants nominated one and the other had encouragement from nobody.

126 of the 154 respondents who answered the question applied for Continuing Professional Development funding in order to develop their skills and 97 did so in order to contribute to the subject area studied. Almost half (79) applied to further their career (See figure 7.2.5).



**Figure 7.2.5: Views of respondents on what motivated them to apply for CPD funding**

Note: Multi-response

61% of the 158 respondents had applied for a Professional Development Bursary. 11% had applied for a Professional Network, 7% for a Teacher Research Scholarship and 4% for Visits and Exchanges. Of the remaining 17%, 2% had applied for International Visits and Exchange, 1% for a Whole School



Initiative. The 14% who had applied for 'other' types of funding had, in fact, applied for more than one, the most popular combinations being a Professional Development Bursary and International Visits and Exchange or a Professional Development Bursary and Whole School Network. See figure 7.2.6.

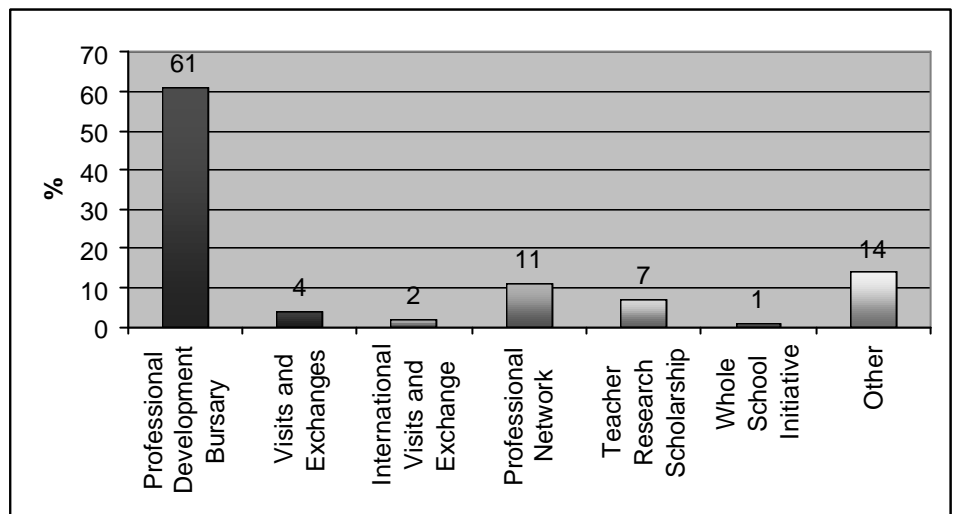


Figure 7.2.6: Types of funding applied for

It is very encouraging for the GTCW that only one respondent who had received funding felt that they would definitely not apply again. However, although 76% of respondents felt that their school does do enough to encourage professional development; the other 24% believe their schools could do more in this respect.



### 7.3 SUMMARY OF MAIN TEXTUAL FINDINGS

A selection of verbatim quotations are given below. The numbers in brackets are the number of times the particular theme was mentioned.

7.3.1 Respondents' suggestions on how to improve the information they saw:

#### **More clarified and detailed information about projects (18)**

*A lot more examples are needed of the cross-section of activities that you offer for us e.g. details of successful projects*

*Give examples of the type of courses which have gained approval in the past*

*Information booklets: more ideas about the scope of activities which can be undertaken and more examples*

*Background information with pictorial evidence in information booklets*

*Some examples of activities teachers might do. One feels unsure if one's ideas might qualify*

*Send information to schools in the form of a colourful poster showing examples of successful application*

*Booklet could be received colour-coded for specific funding. More overt separation of the different categories highlighting the principles you are trying to promote*



*Information booklets could be more interesting – page per type of funding with examples of previous projects obviously visible*

*When applying for a project funding for a network I was unaware this would prevent one from applying as an individual – perhaps they should have been highlighted*

*Not always clear what an appropriate application would include*

*Try to make it clear that one can apply annually not just once. Perhaps it was me but I wasn't clear how many I could apply for*

*Adequate/update if funding increases opportunities for further whole school developments*

*It's not clear which project is most suitable for the projects we are doing in school*

### **Information cannot be improved (6)**

#### **All good service**

*All information was presented in a user-friendly format*

*The information has been very clear and easy to read*

#### **Improvements to the Website (6)**

*Difficult to navigate around. Where are the reports which have been submitted by teachers? Where are the abstracts of the reports?*

*Does not contain all the forms you have to complete i.e. assessment of project*



*I found it difficult to find the exact information I was looking for easily on the website*

*It was hard to find what I was looking for on the website*

*On website try to have more project reports available*

*It would have been better if there was a way of submitting and processing applications via the web instead of in handwriting*

More concise information (5)

*A pamphlet with bullet points showing a summary of the process so that it's easy to read and grabs attention*

*Information should be clear, concise and brief! Put the main facts at the front with the detail inside. Many teachers would be put off by the bulk of the information provided and would not wade through it all*

7.3.2 Respondents' views on why they did not receive support with their application

Didn't think it was necessary/didn't ask (30)

*Because I had read about the CPD plan and understood it. The only thing I needed was the permission of the Senior Management Team*

*Because I was focused about applying...there was no issue Information booklets were very clear, I knew what I wanted to do using the funds*

*Everything was sorted out easily with the GTCW so there was no need for any support – apart from signing documents etc*

*Felt comfortable doing it myself*



*Forms easy to complete and self-explanatory*

*I have applied before and received help last time*

*I have experience of applying for research money*

*I telephoned the GTCW office and was given enough support from the staff there*

*The application form was clearly laid out and the supporting notes meant I was able to complete the form independently*

Not enough knowledge in the school (8)

*No-one had enough experience or knowledge at the time*

*I was much more aware than the head*

*Headteacher not able to advise on the kind of project for CPD which would be successful*

*Nobody in school was familiar with or had used GTCW funding  
The funding had only just been offered and people were not familiar with the process*

No staff available to help (4)

*Pressure of work by line manager involved – clarity of information provided was very good anyway*

*There are symptoms of depression within the school. Head and many staff are worn down by their task and lack of external support. They've lost the big picture and lack any desire to change their lot. I'm leaving! Sad, isn't it?*



*I am the Headteacher, there was no-one to support me*

*Head offered support but was not available due to commitments etc. when the time came*

### **Application left up to the individual (3)**

*It was made clear that we ourselves were responsible for the applications*

*Application was up to each individual although the Headteacher encouraged staff to do so*

### **Personal decision (2)**

*It was my decision to do the course to further my professional development and not the school's*

*There was no need for it with my application as it was for a personal Professional Development Bursary*

### **7.3.3 Factors that might have discouraged respondents from applying**

The amount of paperwork and form-filling, particularly the report at the end (42)

*Having to write a lengthy report on the activity*

*The amount of time taken up by paperwork was a big pressure*

*Paperwork and report writing can sometimes be off-putting with the already increasing workload in teaching*



*The administration – writing a submission, report etc., all takes time*

*If the forms and paperwork became unmanageable  
Filling out too many forms to claim. Expense of paying out then reclaiming*

*Filling out the application form and time limit for report submitted*

*If there was lots of red tape involved I might not have bothered but it was straightforward*

*I found the timing of the written report a burden*

*I haven't always sought funding when the chances of success have been disproportionately low to the amount of work needed to apply*

*More work with recording, such as writing longer reports, would have made me think twice about applying*

*Lack of time to fill in details needed on the form, all the follow-up requests for information and opinions previously*

*Apathy or lack of support from Senior Management Team (6)*

*Being promised supply cover to complete the work and time with the advisor and it never happening*

*If there was a lack of interest or support from the Headteacher  
Negativity from the staff – feeling that I was on a 'jolly'*

None (17)



*I found the application form and report an acceptable task to complete in order to receive the funding*

*Forms are easy to complete*

### **Cost (5)**

*Cap on funds available limits courses which may be considered*

*Initial outlay of monies*

*That the school would not be reimbursed quickly – this didn't happen but the thought it might happen was slightly worrying*

*The amount granted did not cover the cost of a diploma*

*Difficult to go on two-day courses away from home because cost goes over the limit and is not a project*

### **7.3.5 Additional comments on the GTCW's CPD funding**

#### **Positive comments/good idea (35)**

An excellent opportunity to provide non-contact time for teacher development

An excellent resource to have available to further career without relying on school budgets

*Excellent for teachers who wish to take control of their own professional development. Excellent opportunity to pursue own interests*

*Colleagues in England are envious*



*Grateful to be awarded funding and for the support for my professional development – thank you*

*I have found it invaluable*

*I would be unable to fund my Masters without the financial help  
Great!*

*If it wasn't in place, it would not have been possible for me to do the work I carried out. Funding allowed time which would have been limited in school due to financial situation*

*It has been a most important factor in accessing funding for our small school to allow myself and other members of staff to improve our CPD and take our school forward*

*It has been an invaluable opportunity to develop skills which would have been difficult as I don't have a permanent job*

*It is a very positive step in raising the status and morale of teachers*

*It is an excellent scheme giving more sustainable and wide ranging opportunities for professional development than simply GEST money*

*It is an excellent way of meeting personal and school objectives and it is good to have supply cover provided by the funding...Teacher, children and school benefit*

*It's marvellous, please don't stop. It is a wonderful opportunity and I don't understand why more people don't apply*

*Keeps teachers interested and so they stay.*



*This is the best thing that has happened in the world of education, ever!*

*This is the first time in my professional career that I feel I have been given time to further my own professional development and been given the finance and opportunity to do it*

*Was simple and straightforward to apply for. The payment was prompt. Well-organised people were helpful*

*What an excellent scheme. I'm convinced it will make a huge difference to the professionalism and encouragement of teachers.*

### **Negative comments (5)**

*Although worthwhile the additional work was very stressful*

*Completing the application form and the report is a bit of a burden*

*Difficult for supply teachers to access information of available courses etc. whilst not attached to one school. No support to help with application*

*Some staff over phone need to be better informed and more helpful. Found a couple at the beginning hostile to my efforts to claim*

### **Suggestions**

*Should be able to apply for funding in more than one area i.e. individual bursary and sabbatical... or visits and exchanges*



*It would be useful to be assigned a contact who could help with any problems*

*It would be wonderful if larger grants were available to cover the cost of a diploma*

*Please introduce a fail-safe system so schools cannot re-route the funds*

*Courses in open and distance learning cost £2 to 2 ½ K. Such courses also deserve full funding*



## Section

# 8

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### 8.1 COMMON THEMES

The overwhelming majority of teachers found their Headteacher to be supportive when applying for and where applicable, undertaking CPD. Those who had not applied were confident that had they chosen to do so, they would have received support from their Headteacher.

Whilst many teachers broadly welcomed the opportunities offered by the funding from CPD even though they may have been critical of particular aspects, Headteachers and LEA officers tended to have more reservations. This was partly because they were concerned about the relationship between CPD funding and GEST funding. There was a lack of clarity for them about the respective roles, and concern that having different sources of funding might not lead to the most effective and efficient use of resources. Teachers had less involvement with the strategic issues, and hence were more likely to see opportunities from a personal viewpoint not the whole school perspective.

### 8.2 PRACTICAL IDEAS

#### Literature and Application Forms

It was generally agreed by all parties to the consultation that the application forms could benefit from some streamlining and simplification.

Less use of 'unstructured' space with more tick boxes or text boxes may help to make form completion less daunting.



Dummy completed forms that could be used as a model was an idea put forward by a number of people.

More examples and case studies in the literature about the different funding opportunities showing successful projects would be welcomed.

It appeared from the interviews that teachers sometimes lacked the confidence to apply without very clear guidance. The amount of effort required was off-putting unless they thought that they stood a reasonable chance of success. Hence the request for more case studies which would give them clearer indications about the type of project that is likely to succeed, and the dummy completed application form to minimise the likelihood of omissions or incorrectly filling it in.

Many teachers said that they felt overstretched, and spending time completing an application that might not succeed took a low priority. Maximising the chance of success through clear guidance and advice is likely to improve the number and quality of applications.

Some of the small schools, particularly in rural areas had such difficulties obtaining suitable supply staff that they were reluctant to make an application that could result in real problems for the school. It would be useful to have a dialogue with the LEAs about how supply teacher provision can be managed so as to minimise disruption and allay the fears of teachers.

### **8.3 SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE**

All parties emphasised the need for support, however what became evident was that there is a distinct difference between take-up rates in schools with a proactive Headteacher as opposed to schools where the initiative was left up to the



individual member of staff. This was a view expressed both directly, particularly by LEA officers, and come through obliquely in discussion with teachers and Headteachers about how the issue of CPD had been dealt with in their school.

Where the Headteacher or another member of the SMT had taken it upon themselves to actively encourage staff to make applications, including guidance with completion of the application form where necessary, the take-up rate was likely to be much higher. Support from peers could also prove to be a catalyst.

The fundamental point to be made is that without advice and active encouragement many teachers are unlikely to make an application for CPD funding.

#### **8.4 CONCLUSIONS**

The postal survey sent out is inevitably self-selecting, and the following comments need to be viewed in that light. Nonetheless the respondents represent approximately 5% of the teachers who participated in the bursary scheme, and the profile of the sample is reasonably similar to the profile of those on the GTCW register. The results can therefore be said to be accurate +/- 7.7% at the 95% confidence level.

It is interesting to note that a high proportion of the participant teachers who responded to the postal questionnaire were a higher grade than the normal standard national scale.

53% of the secondary school teachers described themselves as 'Head of Department/Curriculum Leader or Other Middle Management'

Only 11% of primary school teachers described themselves in this way.



Primary school respondent teachers tended predominantly to be either Senior Management (42%) or Standard Scale National Teacher (34%)

This may reflect a pattern that would be expected in the early stages of a new initiative and could change in the subsequent phases. It could also indicate the higher level of awareness and willingness to undertake CPD amongst middle management staff. There may also be issues of Middle Managers being more willing to take the time to respond to a questionnaire.

The face to face interviews were selected on a school and area basis, but the individuals that we interviewed within the schools were people who were prepared to spend the time with us. However, the sample represented a cross section of ages and levels of responsibility.

There was inevitably a contrast in views between participant and non-participant teachers. On the one hand, participants tended to rate the information and process as clear and straightforward, whereas non-participants often felt that it appeared to be difficult and demanding. This was echoed by LEA officers who also thought that there was a need for greater clarity and simplicity in the literature and application forms.

This was a view expressed by those *least likely* to make an application, as those who expected to apply in the next phase were generally more positive, and didn't see the paperwork as a barrier. However, even the postal questionnaires from participants included a number of comments about making the forms easier and simpler (see pages 35 &36).

It was clear to us that the process of visiting a number of schools to discuss the CPD funding opportunities generated a considerable amount of interest. Many people felt that they had a better understanding of the possibilities presented purely



through the process of discussion. A common comment was that teachers felt that they would now be seriously considering submitting an application at the next round.

In schools where one or more teachers had already taken up CPD funding, other staff felt reassured that it was not as onerous as first thought, and word of mouth was evidently acting as an encouragement. Being able to talk to somebody who had direct experience of the process appears to be a very valuable way of encouraging people who might be reluctant to commit themselves.

We note the strong view expressed by the majority of LEA officers that we spoke to, that they were sidelined and had no input into the strategic deployment of CPD funds. There appeared to be a genuine commitment to promoting CPD and to ensuring that a high quality service was delivered. However, their anxiety that there may be overlap and duplication should be addressed with possibly a stronger dialogue between the LEAs and the GTCW. We would recommend that suitable avenues for exchange of information and partnership working are instigated, so that schools benefit from a cohesive approach.

The evaluation undertaken by PPI Group for the GTCW noted that take-up of CPD opportunities was less amongst a number of groups including recently qualified teachers and teachers who had been in the profession for 21+ years. From the interviews that we conducted, the evidence suggests that:

Newly qualified teachers – feel that they need to get to grips with their jobs first, but may be encouraged to apply if connections were made with the colleges to promote the role of CPD as a *continuous* process



Teachers in the profession 21+ years – whilst many in this category would have a number of years service yet, it is probably unrealistic to try and encourage those approaching retirement to apply. They saw CPD as something for younger people, and a poor use of resources when directed at them.

Supply teachers were identified as underrepresented and as it appears that the presence of a support structure is fundamental, it is unsurprising that supply teachers do not apply in any number. If more applications are to be encouraged, then some mechanism for offering support, advice and encouragement needs to be looked at.

We found no evidence that the LEA influenced the take-up of CPD directly. Their lack of involvement in the strategic planning of CPD has largely neutralised any influence they may have had. In the process of undertaking the interviews, we found little or no reference to the LEA made by teachers or Headteachers. LEA Officers themselves indicated that they have tried to provide help and support to schools, but from the school and teacher perspective, there is a low level of awareness of the role of the LEA.

Although a number of suggestions were made about how networks and advice could be improved, the theme that was recurring is that people prefer to talk face-to-face, and to a named contact. As the number of people who have taken up CPD opportunities increases, the likelihood is that a wider spectrum of people will put in applications as they find out more about the schemes through networks and colleagues. Facilitating the sharing of information, experience and good practise appears to be an effective way of encouraging wider participation by the profession.

