



Cynulliad National  
Cenedlaethol Assembly for  
Cymru Wales

## **The Petitions Committee**

### **Completion Report**

**Summary of the Petitions Committee's consideration of  
P-03-177 NASUWT  
January 2009**

**Petition Received**

30 September 2008

**Ruled Admissible**

30 September 2008

**Initial Consideration****16 October 2008**

The Committee gave initial consideration to the petition, and agreed to write to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills to ask for the Assembly Government's position

(See Annex 1 for the relevant extract from the transcript of the meeting on 16 October 2008 and Annex 2 for the letter sent by the Chair to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills)

**Further Consideration****13 January 2009**

The Committee considered a response from the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills and agreed to close the petition as it has taken it as far as it can.

(See Annex 1 for the relevant extract from the transcript of the meeting on 13 January 2009, and Annex 2 for the response received from the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills)

**Petitions Clerk**

**January 2009**

## **Annex 1**

## Extracts from Petitions Committee meeting transcripts

### 16 October 2008

**Val Lloyd:** Thank you very much. We will now move on to the next one, which is a petition from the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers.

'We, being Officers and Members of the Executive Council of NASUWT Cymru, call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to ensure that teachers working in Wales are reimbursed fully for the cost of registration with the General Teaching Council'.

The petitioners did give us a little more supporting evidence.

**Michael German:** Again, I think that this one is very much worthy of our having the petitioners in, but let us wait for a reply from the Minister first.

**Val Lloyd:** I would just like to make an additional point. I am surprised by this. It is clearly set down in their terms and conditions of employment and it is news to me that teachers do not have to pay their own registration fee—nurses do, as do other members of professional bodies.

**Michael German:** A commitment was given, I think, back at the time when the General Teaching Council for Wales was established that support would be given for registration fees. I think that the Minister may have given that guarantee some time ago.

**Val Lloyd:** I am just saying that I am surprised.

**Bethan Jenkins:** If we get the petitioners in, you can say that to them.

**Michael German:** We will be able to ask them that question.

**Val Lloyd:** I think that we have to wait for the Minister's response. That completes the new petitions.

### 13 January 2009

**Val Lloyd:** We then have a petition from the NASUWT, P-03-177, urging the Government to ensure that teachers in Wales are fully reimbursed for the cost of registration. We have had a very interesting response from the Minister, which basically tells us that teachers actually get some £2.10 above the allowance. Therefore, there are gains. I do not think that we can take this petition any further. What do Members think?

**Andrew R.T. Davies:** As group spokesperson on education, I have not received any lobbying on this particular issue. In the light of what the Minister has said—it is there for all to see—I fail to see how we can take the matter further.

**Val Lloyd:** Interestingly, I will be meeting a representative from that particular union later this week. As the matter is on the agenda for that meeting, I read the reply with interest. We can close that petition now.

## **Annex 2**

## Y Pwyllgor Deisebau

### Petitions Committee

Jane Hutt AM  
Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong  
Learning and Skills  
Welsh Assembly Government  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

Our ref: PET-03-177

28 October 2008

Dear Jane

#### **PETITION: NASUWT CYMRU**

As you may be aware, at its meeting on 16th October the Petitions Committee gave initial consideration to a petition from NASUWT Cymru requesting that teachers in Wales are fully reimbursed for the cost of registration for the General Teaching Council for Wales. A link to the petition wording is attached below:

<http://assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/dogfennau-busnes-deisebau/p-03-177.htm>

During the meeting, the Committee agreed to write to you to ask for the Welsh Assembly Government's views on this issue.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter, and I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely



**Val Lloyd**  
Chair, Petitions Committee

Jane Hutt AC/AM

Y Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau  
Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PET-03-177  
Ein cyf/Our ref JH/01494/08

Val Lloyd AM  
Chair of the Petitions  
Committee  
National Assembly For Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

25 NOV 2008

November 2008

Thank you for your letter of 28 October about the NASUWT Cymru's petition in relation the General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW) annual registration fee.

To help put the issue of the fee into context, you may find it helpful to know that it was always intended that the GTCW would be self financing, generating its own income through the collection of a registration fee from teachers; a practice adopted by other professions such as nurses, social workers, doctors and dentists, who do not have their registration fees reimbursed by central Government

When the fee was first introduced in 2002, however, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) decided to make provision for the fee within the teacher's pay settlement. Since then, teachers in England and Wales have received a £33 allowance each year to cover the cost of the fee.

As the fee has only now risen above the £33 allowance, teachers have effectively been overcompensated over the last six years. In addition, in Wales, the GTCW has made arrangements with the Inland Revenue to ensure that teachers receive tax relief at source on the payment. In effect, this has meant that when the fee was £24 in 2002-03 teachers actually paid £18.72 after tax relief and in 2005-06 when it was £32 the amount was £26.40 after tax relief.

In terms of other GTCs there are differences in the level of fee that apply, and teachers in both Scotland and the Republic of Ireland are expected to pay the fee in full with no element of reimbursement. The attached table provides a summary of the position.

Turning to current fee level, my decision to increase the fee from £33 to £45 from 1 April 2008 was based on a sound and robust business case presented to me by the GTCW to ensure it fulfils its statutory functions in relation to registration,

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suitability and the significant increase in the number of disciplinary cases that the Council considers. A primary function of the GTCW is to ensure that only suitable people are working in our schools, and this must remain of paramount importance.

I considered a wide range of options in looking at the Council's request to increase the fee beyond the £33 allowance set in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document. These included considering whether employers should make a contribution to the fee or whether the Assembly Government could either meet the cost of the shortfall or fund the GTCW for an element of its core work. I did not consider that these options provided a good solution. In addition we were unable to affect the £33 allowance as school teachers' pay and conditions are not devolved to the Welsh Assembly Government, and remain the responsibility of DCS (without a case being made in England for a rise in the reimbursement, the School Teachers Review Body (STRB) will not consider an increase for teachers in Wales).

In making my decision, and in view of the need to maintain the Council's independence from Government, I felt the time had come to separate the fee from the £33 allowance, so that the GTCW's fee is fixed with both the Government and teachers paying a contribution.

While it is understandable for comparisons to be made between fees in England and Wales given cross border movement, there are issues in terms of economies of scale. For example, given the number of teachers in Wales, every £1 added to the registration fee only generates a guaranteed £28-£29k (based on the number of teachers required to be registered), with potential additional income of a further £6-£9k from supply teachers and voluntary registration. In comparison, in England every £1 on the fee generates between £450-£500k.

I fully appreciate the impact of my decision on the profession with teachers being asked, for the first time, to contribute towards the cost. This was a significant change and in order to help provide a degree of certainty I decided to fix the fee at £45 for the next three years, until 31 March 2011. As in previous years, the registration fee is eligible for tax relief which has the effect of reducing the cost of the fee this year to £35.10, some £2.10 above the £33 allowance.

