

Study examines education reforms in Wales

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Changes to how schools are assessed and improved professional learning are critical to the success of education reforms in Wales, a study concludes.

Researchers at Cardiff University interviewed policymakers and those

who hold a strategic role in designing and implementing the Health and Well-being aspects of the Curriculum for Wales, which was rolled out in schools from September, as part of a series of projects to measure its long-term success.

Published in the *British Educational Research Journal*, the findings suggest the reforms to the [education system](#) require changes at multiple levels to achieve the bold aspirations and goals of the Curriculum for Wales.

Dr. Sara Long, a research fellow at the Center for the Development and Evaluation of Complex Interventions for Public Health Improvement (DECIPHer), said, "Schools are operating in a climate of limited resource, with them having to organize their actions around ensuring performance against measures for which they are held accountable, perhaps to the neglect of measures which actually matter for young people.

"The need for increased [school](#) and practitioner-level autonomy and freedom was discussed at length throughout interviews and this will undoubtedly be key to the success of the new curriculum. But with such radical changes to how [young people](#) learn, giving those in the education profession the knowledge, skills and tools to implement the curriculum, as well as health and well-being outside of the curriculum, is also going to be vital."

Interviews for the study included senior members of government and schools with a remit in either design of the curriculum or professional learning, Estyn and those with a multidisciplinary remit in health and education.

The [curriculum](#) in Wales has experienced [major reform](#) with a substantially increased emphasis on Health and Well-being. It is now one

of six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE) alongside Expressive Arts; Humanities; Languages, Literacy and Communication; Mathematics and Numeracy and Science and Technology.

More information: Sara Jayne Long et al, School health and wellbeing and national education system reform: A qualitative study, *British Educational Research Journal* (2023). [DOI: 10.1002/berj.3861](https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3861)

Provided by Cardiff University

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