

18 April 2025

Dear _____,

ATISN 24599: Documentation related to Mandating the Hwb platform in Welsh Schools

Information requested

Thank you for your request which I received on 31 March 2025. You have requested information under the Freedom of Information Act regarding the requirements for schools to migrate to the Hwb platform. Specifically, you have asked for details on the following:

1. Any and all documents mandating the use of the Hwb platform in Wales
2. Any and all documents mandating the use of Hwb Cloud Services in Welsh Schools.

Our response

We can confirm that the Welsh Government does not hold the information requested, as the use of Hwb is **not mandated** in Welsh schools. However, we can provide the following contextual information regarding the role of Hwb in the education sector in Wales.

Hwb is a Nationally Funded Service

Hwb is a Welsh Government funded platform, ensuring that all maintained schools in Wales have equitable access to appropriate digital services which are safe, secure and compliant for educational use.

The Welsh Government is committed to delivering a national approach that provides access to a wide range of bilingual tools, resources, and services. Through this approach, we can maximise value for money through national negotiations and eliminate duplication of expenditure on alternative or local infrastructure and systems.

Local Authority Role and Decision-Making

While the Welsh Government provides Hwb as a nationally available service, local authorities are responsible for managing and supporting schools' education technology strategy. The decisions regarding the migration of schools from existing, legacy, or corporate systems to the Hwb platform are made at the local authority level. Schools are not required to migrate but are encouraged to consider the benefits of adopting the national approach.

Hwb Cloud Services and Migration

There are no formal requirements for schools to migrate to Hwb cloud-based services. However, local authorities, in collaboration with the Welsh Government, provide support to schools wishing to transition to cloud-based services via Hwb. Migration is encouraged as it ensures compliance with security and data protection standards while reducing the burden of maintaining separate platforms.

Schools already have access to a range of benefits through Hwb, including:

- Free access to Microsoft 365 (Teams, One Drive, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.) and Google Workspace for Education (Google Classroom, Drive, Docs, Sheets, Meet, etc) for collaborative digital learning and school operations.
- Adobe Express for creative digital learning projects.
- Bilingual digital resources to support the Curriculum for Wales.
- Cybersecurity and safeguarding tools managed at a national level.
- Access to professional learning resources and training resources, including digital skills/literacy and cyber resilience.

Education Digital Standards

The Welsh Government has established [Education Digital Standards](#) to ensure that schools across Wales adhere to best practice around the design, architecture and management of the digital infrastructure and networks.

Schools that fully adopt Hwb services benefit from compliance against these standards where appropriate, as well as appropriate due diligence on the security, accessibility, and educational requirements. For schools that choose to use alternative platforms, it remains the responsibility of the local authority and the school to ensure compliance with these digital standards. This includes implementing appropriate safeguarding measures, securing cloud storage solutions, managing software licences, and ensuring equitable access to digital learning tools for all learners.

The only mandatory requirement for schools is the use of Personalised Assessments, which are a statutory element of assessment in Wales. Beyond this, all Hwb services remain optional, though their use is strongly encouraged to ensure a consistent and secure digital learning environment.

Use of Alternative Platforms

Schools may continue to use their own platforms. However, using separate tenants may result in additional licensing costs, administrative burden, and potential cybersecurity risks. Schools who use Hwb services benefit from a seamless and fully supported experience at no additional cost, while local authorities and schools can focus on maximising the transformational benefits and opportunities of digital and technology in education.

For further information about the Hwb platform, including guidance and support for local authorities and schools, please visit our [Support centre](#).

Should you require further clarification or assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely