

21 May 2025

Dear ,

**ATISN 24678: Hwb Permissions and Hwb Platform costs**

### **Information requested**

Thank you for your request which I received on 29 April 2025. You have requested information under the Freedom of Information Act regarding the Hwb platform. Specifically, you have asked for details on the following:

The rationale as to why features/permissions are delegated to local authorities rather than directly to schools

Why local authorities are responsible for deciding whether or not to delegate permissions to schools, particularly considering schools that have employed dedicated staff to manage their IT provision

Whether schools can ask Hwb directly for access

Conversations/correspondence regarding the current allocation of access control/permissions

Any other relevant information

In addition, you have also requested:

Details on the structure of the Hwb platform including staffing

The cost of the Hwb service

Any other associated costs such as third-party services

Any other related information

### **Our response**

It's important to note that, under the Freedom of Information Act, public authorities are not obliged to create new information to respond to requests. As confirmed by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in *The Guide to Freedom of Information*:

*“The Act does not cover information that is in someone’s head. If a member of the public asks for information, you only have to provide information you already have in recorded form. You do not have to create new information or find the answer to a question from staff who may happen to know it.”*

With that in mind, I’ve set out our response to each of your questions below.

1. The rationale as to why features / permissions are delegated to local authorities rather than directly to schools

The Welsh Government does not hold recorded information of this description. However, I can confirm that the Hwb platform operates within a national tenant model, with features and permissions delegated to local authorities to reflect their statutory responsibilities for education, safeguarding, and data protection. This approach enables:

- consistency across all maintained schools in Wales.
- alignment with regional and local governance arrangements.
- and tailored support to schools with varying levels of digital capability.

This model allows local authorities to manage access appropriately based on their understanding of local contexts and needs.

2. Why local authorities are responsible for deciding whether or not to delegate permissions to schools, particularly considering schools that have employed dedicated staff to manage their IT provision

The Welsh Government does not hold recorded information of this description. However, I can confirm that local authorities are best placed to assess the digital capability of schools and determine whether further delegation is appropriate. In some cases, where schools have dedicated IT staff and capacity, local authorities may choose to grant them greater administrative control. However, the initial decision and responsibility remain with the local authority, in line with their wider accountability for safeguarding and data protection.

3. Whether schools can ask Hwb directly for access

The Welsh Government does not hold recorded information of this description. However, I can confirm that schools are advised to direct any access requests to their respective local authority. The Welsh Government does not grant administrative-level access to individual schools directly, in order to maintain a secure, standardised governance model and reduce the risk of misconfiguration or inconsistencies across the national platform.

4. Conversations / correspondence regarding the current allocation of access control / permissions

The scope of this part of the request is unclear and we are not sure of exactly what information you are seeking. If you are able to specify particular dates, topics, or correspondents, we would be happy to consider a more focused request. Without this clarification, we will be unable to proceed with this part of your request.

#### 5. Any other relevant information

Under the Freedom of Information Act, a requester is obliged to describe the information they are seeking. The scope of this part of your request is unclear; 'relevant' is a subjective term and we are not sure of exactly what information you are seeking. Without further clarification, we will be unable to proceed with this part of your request.

Part 2 of the request covered the following questions:

##### 1. Details on the structure of Hwb platform including staffing

Your request does not contain a sufficiently clear description of the information you are seeking. We are unsure what is meant by the 'structure' of the Hwb platform, and the level of detail you are looking for.

However, I can confirm that the Hwb platform is managed by a dedicated team within the Welsh Government's Schools Digital Services Division. The team is responsible for the strategic oversight, service and technical management, and continuous development of the national cloud infrastructure and services are available to all maintained schools in Wales.

The Hwb team currently consists of 55.9 full-time equivalent staff. These roles span a wide range of responsibilities, ensuring the platform remains secure, reliable, and responsive to the needs of schools and learners across Wales. The roles included across the Division include architecture roles, service operations, service management, cybersecurity and information assurance through to content design, product management, digital resilience and safeguarding, digital maturity and adoption support, as well day-to-day service delivery and support.

The structure has been designed to be flexible and responsive, bringing together both technical and educational expertise to support the effective running of Hwb services for over 468,000 learners and 70,000 practitioners and school staff.

If this information does not answer your request, then we'd be grateful if you could clarify and set out exactly what information you are seeking.

##### 2. The cost of the Hwb service

The annual combined capital and revenue budget for the Hwb platform in 2025-26 financial year is £8.8m. This budget is made up of several components, including WG staff costs, service contracts, licence agreements, cybersecurity and

safeguarding services and associated activities related to the Welsh Government's education technology and digital resilience programmes.

3. Any other associated costs such as 3rd party services

All costs are included in the combined capital and revenue budget outlined above.

4. Any other related information

Under the Freedom of Information Act, a requester is obliged to describe the information they are seeking. The scope of this part of your request is unclear; 'relevant' is a subjective term and we are not sure of exactly what information you are seeking. Without further clarification, we will be unable to proceed with this part of your request. We appreciate that some of the issues you've raised are complex and may benefit from further explanation. We would be happy to arrange a meeting to discuss any of the above points in more detail and provide any clarification you may require.

In relation to your correspondence received on the 8 May in relation to requirements for schools to directly access Hwb administrative tools and EdTech funding provided by the Welsh Government, these are not direct requests for recorded information and, as referenced above, public authorities are not obliged to create new information to respond to requests. Given the nature of your queries, I believe it would be more effective to discuss your questions during a meeting (in-person or via Teams) with representatives from Cardiff local authority also in attendance. This approach will ensure any questions or concerns can be discussed and clarified.

If you could confirm if you are content to meet, I will coordinate a convenient date and time that works for all parties. I look forward to discussing this further with you.

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: [Freedomofinformation@gov.wales](mailto:Freedomofinformation@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