Summary
There is some limited synergy between the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership and the elements of the Schools as Learning Organisations model. Although both have much to offer, they also have shortcomings. Providing these shortcomings are understood, acknowledged and addressed, they could usefully contribute to a National Model of Professional Learning that underpins all aspects of the Welsh Government’s National Mission for Education. The extent to which these two approaches could support each other is inextricably linked to the interpretation and enactment of these policies. Further clarity and guidance, both on what is to be achieved and how to achieve it is required as without this there is a danger that in practice these policies could be oversimplified. When this happens it can breed conformity, cynicism and the very opposite of the goal to support a new kind of professional responsibility (Furlong, 2015).

Research Questions
- What is the nature and extent of synergy between the Welsh Government’s Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership (Welsh Government, 2017) and the OECD’s Schools as Learning Organisations model (Kools and Stoll, 2016)?
- Do these two approaches support each other?
- Are there any areas of conflict or dissonance?
- How together can they add value to the national model for professional learning?

Methods
Analysis of the two key sources (Welsh Government, 2017 and Kools and Stoll, 2016) and the draft of the OECD survey on the pilot in Wales of the Schools as Learning Organisations model (OECD, 2018). Use of the wider knowledge base of the research team in this field of educational research.

Conclusions
Schools as Learning Organisations is based on a model from outside education (Schleicher, 2012) and the Professional Standards for Teaching and Learning position professional learning as an aspect of professionalism rather than the underpinning feature. In order to support the interpretation and enactment of both models further clarity and guidance, both on what is to be achieved and how to achieve it, will be essential. Without this these policies could be performed anywhere on a continuum between highly managerial/techno-rational to more educative and supportive of the development of autonomy of professional judgment. A cosmetic but superficial compliance with concepts (such as pedagogy, or collaboration) may have the potential to be a vehicle for consideration and reflection. In practice, however, in busy schools and in the hands of individuals who have not yet become enthused by a reform agenda, such things can be over simplified and translated into checklists of specific examples.

Within this context of busy schools working to meet multiple initiatives and agendas, teachers and school leaders exist in a highly pressured environment. These demands notwithstanding, teachers should be wary of buying off-the-shelf programmes positioned to address teacher and learner improvement. Whilst these products can allow schools to believe they are meeting the requirements of the Professional Standards for Teaching and Learning and the Schools as Learning Organisations model, they may in fact instead be facilitating the consideration of issues at a superficial level rather than offering a sustained approach to supporting a deep and critical consideration of practice.

Further detailed guidance and cases to illustrate a range of approaches to the interpretation and enactment of these policies in alignment with the National Model for Professional Learning would be valuable to the sector.

References