

Culture Committee - CC-18-01(p.3)

Date: 21st November 2001

Time: 9.00am - 12.30pm

Venue: Committee Room 1, National Assembly Building

ELWA - EVIDENCE TO THE CULTURE COMMITTEE

INTRODUCTION

This evidence is provided on behalf of the two Councils which work in partnership as ELWa – the National Council for Education and Training for Wales and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales.

The National Council was formed in April this year, by bringing together most of the responsibilities of the Further Education Funding Council for Wales (FEFCW), the four Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) in Wales and the Council of Welsh TECs, together with the responsibilities previously held by local authorities for adult and continuing education. It is responsible for funding, planning, securing and promoting post-16 education and training in Wales, except for higher education. It will also assume responsibility for funding post-16 provision in schools from April 2002. The National Council is consulting on its draft corporate strategy for the next ten years and reviewing its inherited programmes. Its proposed Corporate Strategy and Corporate Plan will be submitted to the Assembly for approval in December.

Bilingualism has been identified as a cross-cutting theme in the National Council's draft corporate strategy. The draft strategy recognises the call for increased demand and improved opportunities for bilingual learning post-16 and a commitment to work with partners to better understand the patterns of demand.

The Higher Education Council is responsible for the funding of Wales' higher education institutions, including teaching, research and 'third mission' outreach work, and higher education provision in further education colleges. The Higher Education Council has submitted evidence to the review of higher education in Wales being carried out by the National Assembly's Education and Lifelong Learning Committee, in which Welsh medium provision has been discussed. Evidence has also been given on this subject by other individuals and organisations. The final report of the review may therefore include recommendations which have a bearing on Welsh medium provision in higher education.

The Higher Education Council has, in recent years, fundamentally reviewed its policies in relation to Welsh medium provision in higher education resulting in the introduction of new policies in 2000/01. These focus on encouraging institutions to plan their Welsh medium provision strategically and on developing collaboration and networking in the sector, as well as providing substantial funding in support of these aims. Although the outcome of these new approaches will take some time to feed through into increased Welsh medium enrolments, progress to date is encouraging.

The two Councils have identified that they can work together on language learning more generally, in terms of progression, resources and technology.

The Councils are also preparing a joint Welsh Language Scheme, as required under the Welsh Language Act 1993. The target date for submission is May 2002.

It is anticipated that the Higher Education Council and the National Council will be invited to give evidence to the forthcoming review of the Welsh language by the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee. This review can also be expected to impact on the development of ELWa's policies in this area.

BACKGROUND

The Higher Education Council and the National Council (by virtue of its inheritance from the former FEFCW) have policies to support the expansion of Welsh medium opportunities in the higher and further education sectors. (See Annex 1).

As part of the consultation process on the National Council's draft corporate strategy, a Welsh Medium and Bilingual Learning Focus Group was convened on 7/8 November 2001 to comment on past and present activity and to generate ideas for future developments. The Focus Group's assessment of the overall position can be briefly summarised as: schools are making progress, in further education only a small percentage of assessments are through the medium of Welsh (figures are presented at Annex A), and in work based training there is little formal Welsh medium or bilingual provision. It is from this inheritance that the National Council moves forward.

The remainder of this paper draws on the work of the Focus Group which considered primarily the National Council's work in this field, but also took account of relevant issues in higher education, and made recommendations about future direction. As yet these points have not been considered by either Council. The Committee will be aware that, as far as the National Council is concerned, it is in the early stages of development. Some of the changes to policy steers will be through the new national funding system which will be implemented in 2003. In the interim, it is the National Council's intention to implement pilot projects to test how more effectively to use funds to achieve better learning opportunities. Bilingual and Welsh medium learning will be considered during this phase.

KEY AREAS FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Leadership

The Focus Group was strongly of the view that ELWa should take a leading role in developing the post-16 Welsh medium and bilingual education agenda. The benefits of this would be the development of a clear national strategy and policy framework which would:

- give direction and leadership to all key players;
- improve co-ordination between providers and other bodies;
- improve the dissemination and embedding of good practice; and
- stimulate dynamic and innovative approaches.

Co-ordination

The Focus Group considered that there is need for a recognised expert resource under the auspices of ELWa, although not necessarily located within ELWa. This pool of expertise would provide the operational means of realising policy objectives and it would ensure that there is effective co-ordination, an appropriate infrastructure and that resources are well used.

Development Issues

The key policy development areas are emerging as:

Teaching Staff / Trainers

There is a shortage of staff able to teach through the medium of Welsh. Addressing this requires increasing the proportion of Welsh-speaking staff/trainers recruited and providing training and support to new and existing staff to enable them to acquire the confidence and skills to teach through the medium of Welsh.

Raising Demand and Awareness

The successful creation of a bilingual Wales and the needs of the economy, communities and individuals would entail a powerful demand for Welsh language skills and education. Evidence from employers already shows that bilingualism is important economically. Work by Cwmni Iaith and Mentrau Iaith shows that employers increasingly want workers with bilingual skills. However this is not reflected in the numbers participating in Welsh medium or bilingual further and higher education or work-based training. There are many reasons for this. One of ELWa's most important tasks is to raise student and trainee demand to match the need. Possible actions could include building upon the Menter a Busnes Gorwelion project to demonstrate the employment value to students of Welsh language skills.

ELWa's new Participation and Communications Directorate will have an important role in raising awareness of the advantages of bilingualism.

Provision

Having invested heavily in Welsh language and Welsh medium education as part of the national curriculum, it is vital that there is provision for students when they enter the post-16 sector.

There is a general perception that the pre-16 national curriculum does not fully develop oral skills. The Welsh for Adults post-19 programme nurtures oral skills but there is currently a gap in provision for the 16-19 age group. There is a need to improve Welsh language fluency in this group so that they are better able to use Welsh in their daily lives and work. This could be particularly beneficial for businesses which have a direct relationship with their customers. It could also give them the confidence and capacity to study bilingually, with a knock-on effect on Welsh medium participation, including progression to higher education.

Equally important is addressing the drop in participation at different stages of Welsh medium education because students do not see the value of remaining in the Welsh language system. Further work needs to

be undertaken on the reasons for this², including the possible impact of post-16 provision on pre-16 participation.

From April 2002 the National Council will fund school sixth forms. This additional dimension reinforces the need for ELWa to develop models of delivery which reflect the linguistic profiles of the different parts of Wales. A key part of this is the role of CCETs in local planning, including the need to consider cross-boundary issues and solutions.

Learning Resources

The Focus Group recommended considerable investment in learning resources. Beyond traditional materials, the opportunities afforded by new ICT must be exploited. A strategic approach is essential to do this well.

Developing Pedagogy

The large pool of bilingual people in Wales provides an excellent basis for developing multi-lingual skills in the population, which affords economic benefits. There is an opportunity to use the experience of Welsh / English bilingual teaching as a test bed to develop effective second language pedagogy more widely.

Data and Research

Much data is available but there are critical gaps in our knowledge. It is vital that data is collected coherently and comprehensively across all facets of Welsh life, not just the education system. Policy developments also require a soundly-researched evidence base.

Targets

Aspirational but realistic targets need to be established and the resources necessary to achieve them clearly and thoroughly identified.

CONCLUSIONS

The two Councils of ELWa will wish to respond energetically and dynamically to these challenges, building upon the foundations already in place. The particular challenge is to increase demand and supply in sustainable balance in the years ahead to meet Wales' economic, social and cultural needs, and priorities as determined by the National Assembly.

The views of the Focus Group have human and financial implications. These cannot be worked out until strategies and policies have been formulated by the two Councils.

Annex 1 (a)

Welsh medium and bilingual provision in the post 16-sector (excluding higher education)

1. National Council – Inherited Policies and Funding

The National Council - ELWa has inherited a mixture of support initiatives for Welsh language education and training in the post-16 sector as follows:

- **Welsh for Adults (WfA) provision** – is funded entirely by the National Council and involves a wide range of providers who work together in WfA consortia. As the name indicates, this provision is to teach adults Welsh and in the current academic year £3.1m is being spent.
- **National Officer for WfA and WfA examinations** - £100k is provided per year to pay for a National Officer to develop WfA and to fund examinations for learners.
- **Bilingualism Unit** – £55k will be provided this financial year to the new Sgiliaith Unit at Coleg Meirion Dwyfor. The Unit was conceived to serve further education institutions by developing learning resources and offering training and advice on bilingual teaching methodologies. It will now embrace post-16 in its wider meaning, by working with school sixth forms and other providers.
- **Bilingual post-16 provision** - £1.69m has been allocated for 2001/02 as premium funding for FE institutions providing courses through the medium of Welsh and/or bilingually. This is on top of the standard unit of funding. The total funding to FE colleges for Welsh medium and bilingual provision is expected to be some £10 million. Money is allocated using the Recurrent Funding Methodology, which is under review, with a target date of Autumn 2003 for the implementation of major changes.
- **Bilingual Materials via the Internet Project** - £100k will be provided to Dysg to manage this project, which produces new internet based learning materials. Like the Unit, the project is broadening into the wider post-16 sector.

1. Sources of information

There are several sources of information which can help to inform future policy development:

The funding of bi-lingual and Welsh FE provision (Canolfan Bedwyr Research for FEFCW)

Commissioned by the Further Education Funding Council in 1999/2000 this considered how FE bilingual and Welsh provision is funded and concluded that the current methodology had not stimulated growth in Welsh medium/bilingual education. It suggested reasons:

- the current approach does not tackle the genuine lack of learning resource materials and making good the deficiency is slow and expensive;
- there are too few staff capable of teaching in Welsh;
- where Welsh medium education is not a core activity, it receives little awareness and recognition in institutions, and it is therefore a low priority; and

- the reluctance of some students to follow bilingual courses for varying reasons such as: peer pressure; eagerness to sever links with 'school traditions'; perceptions that Welsh courses are more work perhaps because of a lack of learning materials and the fact that too few awarding bodies offer tests or exams in Welsh; and students' lack confidence in their Welsh language ability.

The researchers considered the premium for Welsh language and bilingual courses in the recurrent funding methodology and explored alternative funding models. This concluded that it would be best to take into account wider sociological factors as well as numbers of students on courses, types of qualifications, numbers of courses, infrastructure costs etc. In addition, it suggested that payments should reflect teaching methods used (several models were analysed) to support best practice. The report was received by FEFCW in early 2000 and is available on the FEFCW web-site. Its recommendations will be taken into account in the development of the new national funding system, and also in the development of the National Council's strategy and policies.

Continuity in Welsh Language Education (Welsh Language Board)

This research in 1999 found that the future of Welsh is dependent upon the creation of speakers by the education system to maintain the current proportion of Welsh speakers in the population (18.7% according to the 1991 census) or increase it. It reported that, although 20.9% of primary school pupils attend schools where Welsh is the sole, main or part medium of teaching, the proportion drops to 12.9% in secondary schools. In FE institutions less than 2% of students were assessed in Welsh (statistics were not provided for sixth form students and so this is undoubtedly an under-recording of the true position post-16). These data mask regional variations, but overall the fact that only 12.9% of pupils complete education up to the age of 16 in Welsh means that too small a proportion do so to maintain the current proportion of speakers in the population of Wales.

A Study for the Need for Welsh/Bilingual Language Skills in North Wales SMEs and Indications for HR Development and Training with regard to Welsh (Cwmni Iaith for Celtec)

Commissioned by Celtec (in early 2001) the report concluded that support for Welsh medium training has not been as effective as it could have been. It identified a lack of initiatives to support training and provision, and a failure to ensure that Welsh language training is delivered according to demand or facilitated by providers (even though Celtec had expected its providers to have a Welsh language policy). The research found employer demand for Welsh language skills in business but training providers did not deliver the kind of Welsh language training provision required for the economy's needs. Looking to the future, the report recommended, amongst many things, that ELWa should:

- respond to local need by working with strategic and local partnerships;
- make providers aware of ELWa's requirements;
- make learners aware of the benefits of Welsh language skills, including the needs of employers;
- co-ordinate resource development and get providers to work together; and
- support development of a key skills course in bilingual communication - as compulsory or strongly

recommended for all trainees.

Statistical Evidence

Data is provided at Annex A about bilingual/Welsh medium provision and at Annex B about Welsh for Adults.

From Annex A it is clear that:

- the number of institutions offering such courses fluctuates but activity is heavily concentrated in six institutions in north and west Wales;
- the number of students enrolled on these courses who are assessed in Welsh has increased but total numbers are very small.
- as a proportion of all the students enrolled on these courses, the number assessed in Welsh/ bilingually has declined; and
- the proportion of all students enrolled on courses funded by the former FEFCW assessed in Welsh/ bilingually is very low.

From Annex B it is clear that the numbers enrolled on Welsh for Adults courses:

- grew substantially for 1994/95 to 1999/00 but have fallen somewhat in 2000/01. It is too early to say why this has happened and whether it represents a longer term trend; and
- due to the method of data collection, it is not possible to analyse the progression of learners but there is strong evidence from other sources that only a small proportion of students become fluent.

Annex A

Welsh medium/bilingual courses in further education institutions

Academic Year	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01
Number of institutions providing courses	17	16	19	19	17	11	12	15
Number of enrolled students assessed in Welsh	2023	2288	2830	5550	4431	3503	4895	5483
Number of enrolled students on same courses not assessed in Welsh	1882	2346	3875	5498	4521	6821	6232	6022
Welsh assessments as a % of all enrolments on these courses	51.8%	49.4%	42.2%	50.2%	49.5%	33.9%	44.0%	47.7%

Total enrolments funded by FEFCW/National Council	136468	193735	255039	298873	304348	308381	353972	435106
Welsh assessments as % of total enrolments funded by FEFCW/National Council	1.5%	1.2%	1.1%	1.9%	1.5%	1.1%	1.4%	1.3%
<i>Data source: Midfess C</i>								

Annex B

Funded enrolments on WfA courses between 1994/95 and 2000/01

Academic Year	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01
Number of funded enrolments	15894	18966	20762	21643	21500	23634	21011

Source: RFM (fundable Form C - best of FEES/MIDFESS including predictions)

1994/95 and 1995/96 are obtained by filtering by [subject of study]='Q520' and FE programme area=18A. No data on sponsored provision were available for 1995/96.

1996/97 is based on enrolments where [programme area]=18A and [superclass code]=FK.357

Annex 1 (b)

Welsh Medium Provision in Higher Education

1. Enrolments

1.1 The number of recorded Welsh medium enrolments has remained fairly static over the last five or six years at around the equivalent of 1,000 full-time students, although there has been some fluctuation from year to year. Thus, the figures for 1999/2000 (the latest year for which we have figures available)

were 1,044 full-time equivalents. It should be recognised that this figure represents a larger number of students (around 1,500), as many students do not take the whole of their course through the medium of Welsh. (Annex C)

2. Higher Education Council Policies and Funding

2.1 The Higher Education Council supports Welsh medium provision in higher education in three main ways:

3. Welsh medium premium

- The premium is paid for enrolments on to Welsh medium courses/modules and is equivalent to a weighting of 0.26 on the standard unit of resource. It is based on an average of HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency) Data for the most recent two year-period available. Thus 2001/02 allocations are based on data for 1998/99 and 1999/00.
- A total of £1.1 million will be allocated in 2001/02 to ten institutions. This is three more institutions than last year, probably because institutions are recognising the benefit in accurately recording their Welsh medium enrolments to qualify for premium funding and the Welsh medium provision fund (see below). Allocations to University of Wales, Aberystwyth, University of Wales, Bangor and Trinity College Carmarthen account for £1.01m of this sum. UW Institute, Cardiff will receive £70,000.
- Smaller allocations (between £1,000 - £10,000) will be made to the University of Glamorgan, Cardiff University, UW Lampeter, UW Swansea, UWC Newport and the Welsh College of Music and Drama.
- Initial teacher training numbers account for a substantial proportion of the premium allocations.
- The purpose of the premium is to acknowledge the extra costs associated with delivering provision through the medium of Welsh. It should also act as an incentive to encourage institutions to increase the numbers of their enrolments and, where there is a reasonable concentration of numbers, to provide a platform for further developments.

4. Welsh medium provision fund

- The Fund was established in 2000/01. Allocations are made to institutions pro-rata to their Welsh medium enrolments. Funding is released subject to receipt of acceptable Welsh medium strategies for the maintenance, development and extension of Welsh medium provision. £284,000 will be allocated in 2001/02; this represents an increase of nearly 12% on 2000/01.

- The reasoning behind making allocations on the basis of strategies is to encourage institutions to take a longer term approach to planning the development of Welsh medium provision, rather than having to respond to short-term competitive bidding exercises.
- Again, the major allocations go to UW Aberystwyth, UW Bangor and Trinity College.
- Where institutions reach a minimum level of enrolments (1 full-time equivalent) floor provision of £10,000 is offered. Six institutions qualify in 2001/02 - University of Glamorgan, Cardiff University, UW Lampeter, UW Swansea, UWC Newport and WCMD. Although the threshold may seem low, because data is recorded by module, it can represent a number of students. The floor provision is intended to help these institutions develop pockets of existing provision, which may be in a niche market which they can serve particularly well.

5. University of Wales Welsh medium Teaching Unit

- In 2000 the University of Wales established a Welsh medium teaching unit on behalf of the whole sector (not just UW). Its purpose is to increase the number of students studying through the medium of Welsh and to extend the range of provision available. It will achieve this primarily through the promotion and marketing of Welsh medium provision to potential students, encouraging more collaborative working between the sector and developing new provision. The Council is providing around £50,000 a year, initially for two years, but with the possibility of an extension following a review of progress. Institutions also contribute to the funding of the unit. The University of Wales has recently presented evidence to the National Assembly on how the role of the Unit could be developed further.

6. Other Activities

6.1 In addition, the Higher Education Council supports these related activities:

Initial teacher training

- Funding of some £126,000 has been made available by the Council for the HATT (Hyfforddi Athrawon/Teacher Training) project for the development of a bilingual open and distance learning PGCE in Wales. This is being taken forward by a consortium of institutions (University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, University of Wales, Bangor, University of Wales, Swansea).
- The Council has also provided £14,500 for an all-Wales project for the development of training for Welsh medium mentors in schools. The project is being co-ordinated by UW Aberystwyth and is nearing completion.
- The Council provides around £200,000 a year to support the acquisition of skills by teacher trainees to teach Welsh as a second language in English-medium primary schools.

Welsh Language Board (WLB)

- Officers have regular contact with the WLB to discuss issues of mutual interest. At present, this includes encouraging institutions to develop their Welsh medium strategies and Welsh language schemes in parallel to ensure consistency and coherence.

University of Wales Dictionary

- Although not directly related to Welsh medium teaching, the Council provides support to the UW Board of Celtic Studies for the UW Welsh Dictionary Unit. For 2001/02, the grant (£132,720) will be slightly lower than in previous years as the major work on the dictionary will have been completed and ongoing work will consist of maintenance and updating.

Earlier Welsh medium provision development fund

- Between 1994 and 1999 the Council made £500,000 available as part of the Welsh medium provision development fund. Funding was awarded by a competitive bidding process for projects to extend existing/develop new Welsh medium provision. Although the evaluation of the fund showed that a number of valuable developments had taken place, a more strategic approach was needed – hence the move to making allocations on the basis of strategies.