

## Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

**Date:** Wednesday 09 November 2005  
**Title :** Minister's Report

This report updates the Committee on specific issues raised by members and on issues of current interest. **Annex A** sets out major engagements since the last report

### 1. England Education White Paper

This White Paper was published on 25 October by Ruth Kelly, Secretary of State for Education and Skills. As the White Paper says on page 116, under the heading 'Wales'

- *The policy objectives set out in this White Paper are those for England. The Bill will cover England and Wales, but most of the provisions will apply only in England.*
- *The Welsh Assembly Government has welcomed the opportunity to participate in the proposed legislation for more robust standards in school food. With regard to other legislative changes proposed, the Welsh Assembly Government is considering which changes might apply to Wales and whether to take the opportunity described in the White Paper 'Better Governance for Wales' to seek framework powers in relation to some topics dealt with in this Bill. This would give the National Assembly more permissive powers to determine how these proposals might be implemented in Wales at a later stage .*

The Assembly Government continues to support a system of community comprehensive schooling. We believe this to be the right solution for Wales and one that enjoys the overwhelming support of our schools, local education authorities, teachers and parents. In following such a course we are sustained by the evidence from Estyn, our school inspectorate, that the standards achieved by pupils in Wales continues to rise.

The document lists the areas to be covered in a forthcoming Education Bill. I am considering which of the legislative proposals should apply to Wales. As the White Paper says, I will be looking to extend to Wales the proposed power to set in regulations nutritional standards for all food served in schools. On other matters I have yet to reach a final view and would wish to seek the views of the Committee and the sector. It may be that for some topics covered in the Bill we will look to secure framework powers of the sort described in the White Paper 'Better Governance for Wales'. These would give the Assembly permissive powers to determine how legislation in these areas might be implemented in Wales at a later stage. In particular, I will want to look at the practitioners' group report, 'Learning Behaviour'. I will advise the Committee of my conclusions on coverage of Wales in the Bill in due course.

A copy of the Report can be found at the attached link.

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/schoolswhitepaper>

## **2. UK Presidency of the EU 2005 - Cardiff Youth Event, Joint Conference, and Meeting of Directors**

As part of the UK Presidency of the European Union, the Welsh Assembly Government hosted the EU Youth Event on behalf of the UK Government. The event, which took place between 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> October in City Hall, Cardiff coincided with the meeting of the Directors General for Youth. It brought together young people from 27 countries across Europe to talk about youth issues and exchange ideas about how to encourage youth participation.

The UK Presidency Youth event had two strands. The first, which took place over two days, was the conference for young people. The second was the Joint Conference involving the young people, the Directors General for Youth, the European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Multi-lingualism and key Commission officials responsible for youth policy. The event was followed by a meeting of Directors General responsible for youth policy.

Over 150 representatives from across Europe attended events during the week. Twenty two young people from the UK, via the four national youth councils, were involved in preparing the event as members of the planning working group. This *UK 22* group includes eight representatives from Wales' Children and Young People's Assembly, Funky Dragon.

Each EU member state was allocated two places for young people aged between 16 and 25. Other delegates to the youth event included representatives from the European Youth Forum and other European youth organisations. The European Economic Area (EEA) countries of Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland, accession countries Bulgaria and Romania and Candidate countries Croatia and Turkey also participated in the event.

The Conference broke new ground in putting into practice the aspirations of Wales and Europe in terms of the genuine participation of young people. Our UK22 chaired the activities, facilitated some very challenging workshops and formal sessions and engaged in mature, thoughtful and effective discussion with the Director Generals. The informal feedback from the young people and the European officials is that the Cardiff Youth Event was the most participative ever.

The skills and understanding the UK 22 brought to, and gained from, participating in this event demonstrate very clearly how important our work to develop the participation of all children and young people is. They have been excellent ambassadors for Wales and the UK to very senior officials from all over Europe.

A report on the event is currently being produced, including details of the Cardiff Declaration. Representatives of the four UK National Youth

Organisations, including the UK Presidency Officer of the British Youth Council, and the European Youth Forum will feed into that process.

At the culmination of the joint conference, young people presented the 'Cardiff Declaration' to myself and Jan Figel, the European Commissioner. The Cardiff Declaration is attached at Annex D

I was immensely proud of the effort the young people showed in the preparation and running of this event. It was a testament to the will they have to promote youth issues, and their infectious enthusiasm is something which should be celebrated throughout Wales and beyond. The tireless work of Funky Dragon and other UK based youth bodies in the organisation of the Cardiff Youth Event will surely set the standard for the future EU youth events.

### **3. ELWa/ACCAC Merger Update**

The final structure for the new department was published to staff in the three merging organisations on 13 October.

The First Minister gave an update on the progress of the mergers currently taking place at Plenary on 19 October.

The Permanent Secretary announced on 25 October that Steve Marshall, currently Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Education and Children's services for the Government of South Australia, will be the new Director of the new Education and Lifelong Learning Department.

Following the publication of the final Deployment Protocol on 29 September, all staff in the merging departments were requested to take part in matching interviews to indicate their best fit to posts within the new structure. Matching forms have been completed and following review by the Project Advisory Team, a report will be produced for consideration by the Felt Fair Committee later this month. The Committee will aim to provide letters by the end of the month to all staff indicating either their matched post or that they will be entered into a recruitment pool.

The draft Orders to abolish ELWa and ACCAC were considered by Business Committee on 1 November and will be considered by Plenary on 22 November.

#### 4. Demographic Change Affecting Schools

In the course of the Committee meeting on 13 October I mentioned the impact of demographic change on pupil numbers and provision of school places. I felt it would be useful to set out the key information for members.

- Between Jan 1999 and Jan 2005 the number of pupils in nursery and primary schools in Wales fell by 21,770.
- The number of pupils in secondary schools rose over the same period by over 10,000 but has now started to decline.
- By 2013 there will be a further estimated fall of over 41,000 pupils of all ages in maintained schools in Wales making a total fall of over 52,000 pupils since 1999.
- There are just over 54,000 empty places in primary schools, 18.5% of the total capacity. (There are some primary schools with a shortage of places; taking this into account the net figure is 50,000 empty places, or 17% of the total.)
- There are 28,600 empty places at secondary level, 12% of the total capacity. (The net secondary figure is 23,000 empty places or 10% of the total.)
- **If no action were taken then there would be a net figure of around 114,000 empty school places (41,000 plus 50,000 plus 23,000) by 2013.**

The information is set out in more detail at Annex B. The January 2005 figures are provisional.

#### 5. Implementation of the Foundation Phase

In January of last year I announced my plans for implementing the Foundation Phase which included pilot projects in schools and non-maintained settings across Wales. That pilot – 41 in total – started in September 2004 and has just started its second full year.

Since the start of the pilot much has happened:

- The draft Framework for Children's Learning has been published;
- The guidance for six of the seven Areas of Learning has been provided to the pilots for them to work with and develop.
- The Assessment Outcomes have been developed for "Language, Literacy and Communication Skills", for "Mathematical Development" and for "Personal and Social Development and Well Being".

- The University of London and UWIC have started their evaluation of the pilots and offered some early recommendations. Their work will continue until the end of the current school year.

During the first year I have taken time to look afresh at what was a very ambitious timetable, to reflect on the lessons learned from the pilot settings and consider the early findings from the Monitoring and Evaluation Team – whose report will be published in January 2006.

Following very careful consideration I have decided to extend the timetable so that the statutory rollout of the Foundation Phase will start from September 2008. I believe this puts in place a realistic timeframe and also acknowledges the School Workload Advisory Panel's comment that extensive piloting is to be welcomed. But even this new timetable is a challenge; a similar development took 10 years to implement in New Zealand.

The adjusted timetable will provide time to:

- Refine further the Framework for Children's Learning to reflect the experiences of those in the pilots;
- Develop an assessment and learning continuum for all Areas of Learning;
- Make sure the guidance material and the supporting DVD is fit for purpose;
- Learn from the pilots and reflect those lessons in the statutory proposals, particularly the adult/pupil ratios we should be aiming to establish;
- Fully take on board the recommendations that emerge from the second year of the Monitoring and Evaluation Team;
- Put in place the training programmes needed to deliver the new curriculum to the required standards;
- provide sufficient time for the consultation and legislative procedures and for the introduction of the Foundation Phase to fit better with ACCAC's National Curriculum review timetable.

During this extended pilot period I shall also be looking at bringing more schools and settings into the pilot. In particular I am very keen that we develop a synergy between the Flying Start Programme and the Foundation Phase and broaden coverage of the pilot to bring in some of the schools in the Flying Start catchment areas.

## 6. New Curriculum Materials

**The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) Curriculum Pack for Wales** was formally launched on 2<sup>nd</sup> November and is ready to be distributed to schools. The launch took place at Cardiff High School with the Director of DRC Wales, Will Bee, and the Headteacher of Cardiff High School, Mike Griffiths also present.

The Assembly Government has paid for the translation of the Citizenship and Disability teaching pack for schools into Welsh. The pack has been previously distributed to all schools in England and Scotland, and the evaluation of the usefulness of that pack has been positive.

The pack for teachers is a classroom tool that focuses on disability, diversity and equality and it can be used to deliver aspects of the PSE Framework at keystages 3 and 4.

The pack encourages students to explore their own feelings and perceptions of disability. The exercises will actively engage students in thinking how they can help make our society a better place for all.

Yesterday (8 November), I launched the **Dynamo Key Stage 3 Curriculum materials**. This follows the launch of the Dynamo Primary curriculum materials in July 2004. These materials are the result of excellent collaborative working between the WDA and ACCAC and have been designed by teachers for teachers to help support the development of entrepreneurial skills. The WDA and ACCAC are currently working on materials for use with the 14 – 19 age group with the aim of launching them next year. This will complete the set and provide a continuum of learning for pupils across Wales from age 5 to 19.

## 7. CSIW Report

I am drawing the Committee's attention to the third annual report published by CSIW on 25th October 2005. The report meets the statutory requirements of the Health and Social Care Act 2003 which requires that the Annual Report includes:

- CSIW's findings in the course of exercising its functions under the Care Standards Act. CSIW registers, inspects, deals with complaints and where appropriate takes enforcement action in respect of day care services for children
- Information on the way in which CSIW has exercised those functions.

I am bringing it to this Committee's attention because of your interest in day care services for young children. The report gives an overview of trends in these services and provides information on the quality of those services.

For **Children's Day Care Services** the overview of the report draws attention to the fact that the overall number of registered settings has remained steady for the third year running. The total number of places available having increased by 1,500. The report also indicates that there are significant variations across Wales in the number and type of settings.

It is noted in the report that there has been an improvement in the quality of a number of day services for children since the regulations came into force in 2002. This is particularly the case for childminding, sessional care and open access play. It is however noted that further work is still needed by Under 8s services to meet all the regulations and national minimum standards.

The number of complaints about settings received by CSIW has fallen by 45% since last year. Similarly the number of settings involved in child protection issues this year has fallen by 38%. CSIW has initiated limited enforcement action to date.

The Report is available to the Committee and can also be accessed by clicking on the following link:

<http://www.csiw.wales.gov.uk/fe/default.asp?n1=5>

<http://www.asgc.cymru.gov.uk/fe/default.asp?n1=5> The report has been circulated widely across Wales

## **Welsh Assembly Government Commentary**

The Welsh Assembly Government welcomes the Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales Annual Report. We acknowledge that there are examples of good quality care provided within children's homes and residential special schools in Wales, whilst recognising that there are a number of issues that require attention.

The Assembly recognises the important role of the local authority and care service managers in the provision of services to children.

### **Children's Homes**

In this the first full report on Children's services, the Assembly is pleased to note that there has been an improvement in the quality of care which children receive.

However, it is recognised that particular attention is required in the following areas:

- care planning and placements
- protection arrangements
- staffing and management

### **Special Schools**

I would also like the committee to note the annual Report which we received from ESTYN in January 2005 which referred specifically to the progress being made in special schools across Wales and I quote:

“Pupils in special schools are making better and better progress. They are reaching higher standards in all subjects and in all key stages. Almost all pupils gain national qualifications.”

“The quality of teaching in special schools continues to improve and is well above the national targets for satisfactory and good lessons. Five years ago, teaching was good or very good in more than 60% of the lessons in

special schools and satisfactory in over 30%. This year, teaching was good or very good in 90% of lessons. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. In the 90% of lessons where the teaching is good or very good, teachers:

- expect pupils to reach high standards;
  - understand the learning and behavioral needs of each pupil;
  - set interesting and varied tasks for pupils; and
  - *work well with support staff to help pupils with difficult behavior.*”)
- A group has been established to look at the current **National Minimum Standards** for Childrens Homes, Residential Special Schools, Boarding Schools and places of further education providing accommodation to young people under the age of 18 years. The Group will report in Spring 2006 when a decision will be announced on any amendments to the standards and/or regulations.

The CSIW Annual Report will also be discussed in Plenary on 8<sup>th</sup> November.

## 8. Absenteeism from Secondary Schools

On 27<sup>th</sup> October 2005 figures for absenteeism from Secondary Schools in Wales during the 2004/05 academic year were published. This shows that:

- 9.3 per cent of (half-day) sessions were missed through authorised and unauthorised absence, a slight decrease from 9.4 per cent in 2003/04.
- 1.7 per cent of (half day) sessions were missed through unauthorised absence, the same as in 2003/04.

The statistical release can be found at the following link:

<http://www.wales.gov.uk/keypubstatisticsforwalesheadline/content/schools-teach/2005/headline-schools-teach.htm>

I welcome these figures which demonstrate the continued effort of schools and LEAs in Wales to promote and improve attendance, and show that we are continuing the trend of a reduction in absenteeism – this is our fourth successive improvement. Of particular note are the significant reductions in absenteeism, greater than 0.5 per cent, achieved by Flintshire, Monmouthshire, Torfaen, Conwy and Newport.

We have made good progress in improving the quality, access and use of attendance data in Wales and the £6 million investment in electronic attendance management systems over the next 3 years will complete this solid foundation. This will support early identification and intervention at an individual pupil level, leading to more effectively targeted resources.

However despite our progress there is still much to be done. There is no single solution to tackling attendance issues; it requires a multi-faceted approach, which is why planned action on improving attendance over the next year includes:

- working to support parents through parenting contracts and parenting orders;



- completion of the review of the Education Welfare Service in Wales;
- revised guidance in the development of a whole school approach to behaviour and attendance in 'Inclusion and Pupil Support';
- working with Estyn in the production of a good practice guide identifying successful interventions for tackling attendance issues.

## **9. Rees Follow-On Activity: Development of a National Bursary Scheme**

The second main recommendation made by the Rees report was that a National Bursary Scheme (NBS) should be developed for Welsh HEIs.

In accepting this recommendation, I invited the HE sector to bring forward proposals for a scheme to be implemented by all HEIs in Wales from Academic Year 2007/08. The First Minister made clear in Plenary that we would expect the scheme to address the needs of the most disadvantaged students, but should also be directed towards the achievement of other key strategic priorities, for example teaching through the medium of Welsh and targeting shortage subjects such as mathematics, physics, chemistry and modern foreign languages.

Proposals for the scope and operation of the NBS have now been received from the sector following discussions with officials. These are set out in the attached letter at Annex C from Professor David Warner, Vice-Chair of Higher Education Wales (HEW). I am grateful to HEW for its work to date on the Scheme, which has called for agreement across a very diverse range of institutions. HEW have proposed a two-strand Scheme that will complement and build on the statutory system of student support which the Assembly Government will be putting in place when flexible tuition fees are introduced. The means tested bursary of £300 reflects the intention that the NBS should offer support to the most disadvantaged students. HEW have proposed that the other aims of the scheme should be pursued so as to reflect individual institutional missions. Institutional bursary proposals would be subject to approval by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales. I would propose to consult this Committee again once officials have agreed detailed arrangements by which this monitoring of institutional proposals for harnessing additional fee income will operate in practice. The HEW proposals are a constructive response from the HE sector in Wales to Teresa Rees's proposal for a National Bursary Scheme. They suggest a mechanism by which HE institutions could use their additional fee income to pursue Assembly Government and their own institutional priorities. The proposals also represent a positive contribution from HEW to the further discussions that will now be required to agree detailed arrangements in this area in advance of flexible fees being introduced in 2007/08.

**Minister's Engagements 13<sup>th</sup> October – 8<sup>th</sup> November**

**13<sup>th</sup> October**

MTG - Governors Wales, NAFW

MTG - HEFCW, NAFW

SPCH - National Training Awards, City Hall, Cardiff

**14<sup>th</sup> October**

SPCH - NAHT Cymru Conference, The Vale Hotel, Hensol, Pontyclun, Mid Glamorgan

**17<sup>th</sup> October**

MTG - Welsh Primary Schools Association, NAFW

MTG - Chair and Chief Executive of Careers Wales, NAFW

MTG - Childline Cymru, NAFW

**18<sup>th</sup> October**

MTG - Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru, NafW

**19<sup>th</sup> October**

NPQH Award Ceremony, St Mellons Country Club, Cardiff

**20<sup>th</sup> October**

SPCH - HE/FE Sector Skills Council Event, St Asaph Industrial Park, Flintshire

VISIT - Cyfle Young Mother's Unit, Abenbury Community Centre, Bridge Road, Wrexham

VISIT - Deeside College to open Learning Garden, Flintshire

VISIT - Wales TUC Cymru Education Service, Deeside College, Connah's Quay, Flintshire

**21<sup>st</sup> October**

SPCH - Wales Youth Agency Workforce Planning Conference, Wales Millennium Centre

Wales TUC ULR Conference, Novatel Hotel, Cardiff Bay

SPCH - Launch of the UK Film/Skillset Screen Academy, Wales Millennium Centre

### **25<sup>th</sup> October**

SPCH - UK Presidency Youth Event, City Hall, Cardiff

MTG - Barnardo's Cymru, NAFW

SPCH - LGBT Youth Research Launch Event, THT Cymru, Cardiff House, Canton

### **26<sup>th</sup> October**

MTG - UNISON, Swansea Institute, Swansea

SPCH - Ceredigion TULiP Project Launch, Plascrug Leisure Centre, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion

SPCH - Cardiff Youth Event, part of the UK Presidency of the EU, National Museum and Gallery of Wales, Cardiff

### **27<sup>th</sup> October**

SPCH - Cardiff Youth Event, part of the UK Presidency of the EU, City Hall, Cardiff

SPCH - Promoting Quality in Working with Families Event, Holiday Inn, Cardiff

### **29<sup>th</sup> October**

SPCH - Youth Cymru Annual Conference, Holiday Inn, Cardiff North

### **31<sup>st</sup> October**

MTG - John Reilly on the Erasmus Programme, NAFW

MTG - Quarterly ASPB Chairs, NAFW

### **1<sup>st</sup> November**

MTG – ESTYN Chief Inspector Susan Lewis, NAFW

SPCH - Youth Work in Wales Excellence Awards, Millennium Stadium

## **2<sup>nd</sup> November**

SPCH - Launch of Disability Rights Curriculum pack, Cardiff High School

VISIT - Cardiff High School, Llandennis Road, Cardiff

MTG - RNID, NAFW

## **3<sup>rd</sup> November**

SPCH - NPQH Event, Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells

VISIT - Gerddi Glasfryn's new residential unit, Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn School, Denbigh

SPCH - NIACE Tutors Annual Award Ceremony, William Aston Hall, NEWI, Wrexham

## **4<sup>th</sup> November**

SPCH - National Primary Centre Cymru conference, Esis Building, Treforest, Pontypridd

## **7<sup>th</sup> November**

VISIT - Roath Park Primary School, Cardiff

SPCH - Opening of new buildings at Rumney Infant School, Cardiff

VISIT - Engineering Team Challenge 2005, University of Glamorgan, Pontypridd

MTG - AUT, NAFW

MTG - Children in Wales, NAFW

MTG - Nexus Implementation (foci) Group, NAFW

## **8<sup>th</sup> November**

SPCH - Launch of Dynamo Curriculum Materials, Holland House Hotel, Cardiff

MTG - Education Counsellor for Spanish Embassy, Jose Antonio Del Tejo, NAFW

**1. Pupil numbers and projections**

January census statistics show recent trends in each type of maintained school. These are on a FTE ( full time equivalent) basis.

Type of school/ establishment	Numbers on roll Jan 1999	Numbers on roll Jan 2005 (provisional)	Difference Jan 99 - 2005	Projection Jan 2013	Total Change 1999-2013
Nursery	1,793	1,262	-531	1,300	-493
Primary	280,559	259,320	-21,239	242,500	-38,059
Secondary	204,158	214,626	+10468	190,600	-13,558
Special	3,784	3,815	+31	3,400	-384
Total Wales	490,294	479,023	-11,271	437,800	-52,494

Total reduction in pupil numbers from 1999 projected to 2013 is over 50,000

2. Net empty school places in Wales – the figures are taken from published School Organisation plans and other information provided by LEAs. Excess pupil numbers (compared to capacity) in some schools have been offset against the total numbers of empty places.

Primary* Schools	Jan 2000	Jan 2001	Jan 2002	Sept 2003	Sept 2004
NOR*	262,913	257,839	256,387	247,845	243,258
MOE **	298,440	296,462	295,952	294,837	293,025
Difference	35,527	38,623	39,565	46,992	49,767
% surplus	11.90	13.03	13.37	15.94	16.98

\* Nursery schools and nursery school age pupils normally not included in these figures

\*\* MOE = More Open Enrolment . This represents the number of places which are available based mainly on the capacity of the school.

Secondary Schools	Jan 2000	Jan 2001	Jan 2002	Sept 2003	Sept 2004
NOR	205,608	210,732	211,974	216,274	215,990
MOE**	226,866	232,894	235,645	238,711	239,084
Difference	21,258	22,162	23,671	22,437	23,094
% Surplus	9.37	9.52	10.05	9.40	9.66

3.The gross numbers of empty places are:

Primary schools	Jan 2000	Jan 2001	Jan 2002	Sept 2003	Sept 2004
Unfilled places	42,199	45,806	46,307	50,904	54,285

MOE	298,440	296,462	295,952	294,837	293,025
% unfilled	14.12	15.45	15.66	17.27	18.53

Secondary schools	Jan 2000	Jan 2001	Jan 2002	Sept 2003	Sept 2004
Unfilled places	25, 895	27,228	28,586	27,476	28,646
MOE	226,866	232,894	235,645	238,711	239,084
% unfilled	11.4	11.7	12.1	11.5	12.0

Mr John Howells  
Head of Further and Higher Education Division  
National Assembly for Wales  
Crown Buildings  
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CF10 3NQ

7 October 2005

Dear John

### **National Bursary Scheme for Wales**

As Vice-Chair of Higher Education Wales (HEW), I am writing to you to set out our proposals for the scope and operation of a National Bursary Scheme (NBS) in Wales. This submission was endorsed by the HEW Committee on 5 September 2005. The proposals therefore have the support of all Vice-Chancellors and Principals in Wales. Recognizing the diversity of the higher education sector in Wales, you will appreciate that reaching agreement has not been easy. Moreover, it has been accomplished within a very short timescale indeed. We look forward to working through the detail of our proposals with you.

As with existing fee income, increased income from student tuition fees will be required to contribute towards a range of institutions' costs, including the improvement of the learning and teaching environment, as well as the provision of additional student support through scholarship and bursary schemes.

The National Assembly's decision to introduce a fee remission grant for Welsh students studying in Wales represents a huge commitment. The value of the fee remission grant for every Welsh-domiciled student studying in Wales, up to £1,800 in the case of an HEI charging tuition fees of £3,000/year, goes well beyond the Rees Review's recommendations for additional financial support for poor students and for a distinctively Welsh dimension to any scheme adopted by the National Assembly.

### ***Our rationale***

Although the fee remission grant is not the same as additional cash payments to students, it provides the same kind of incentive for Welsh students to study in Wales which the Rees Review was seeking through the inclusion of a non means-tested element in the NBS. Certainly this very generous level of provision must be seen as part of the total financial support available to all Welsh-domiciled and non-UK EU students studying in Wales. It compares very favourably indeed with the minimum support package provided for English-domiciled students studying in England.

In coming to our recommendations for an NBS in Wales, HEW has been guided by four key principles:

- Whatever form of NBS is adopted, it must be easy for students and institutions to understand and operate;
- The means-test should be independent of institutions, as choosing a central body to devise and implement the means-test for the NBS would help create an efficient, simple, customer-oriented scheme which would provide value for money;
- Assuming agreement is reached between Universities UK and the SLC about a bursary scheme for England, we would hope to operate the Welsh NBS through the Student Loans Company (SLC); and finally
- The need to balance the financial needs of institutions and of students from an NBS in Wales.

### ***A National Bursary Scheme for Wales***

The approach we are recommending is based around an NBS with two distinct but complementary elements. Although different, we see both together forming a flexible framework that will deliver a single, workable and distinctive NBS for Wales.

The first element of the NBS would be a universal entitlement to a £300/year means-tested bursary to be paid in cash to students from institutions' tuition fee income. Each institution should meet the costs of the means-tested bursary from its own tuition fee income. We have called this the "core NBS". It would apply uniformly across the sector and be based upon the same means-testing and thresholds as statutory student support. Clearly institutions with the highest numbers of widening access students will be making the largest commitment to this element of the NBS.



Every full-time HE student would have the same means-tested cash entitlement wherever they chose to study in Wales. One single, common means-test should determine both entitlement for the core NBS and for student support funding. To simplify administration and promote equality of treatment, HEW recommends that the same means-test is applied in Wales as in England. (However, we have some concerns about the present means-test and look forward to discussing these with Assembly colleagues in due course.)

This proposal has the merits of:

- comparability of entitlement with England to a means-tested bursary of £300;
- comparability of operation with England, where bursaries will be paid via the SLC in most cases; and
- a cash payment for Welsh-domiciled students already benefiting from a fee remission grant.

It meets expectations that within the NBS there should be targeted means-tested support for disadvantaged students, both Welsh and non Welsh-domiciled, to promote equality of opportunity and widen access to Welsh HEIs.

The second element of the NBS we are proposing is complementary to the means-tested core provision for students. It is equally important and will contribute towards meeting national priorities for higher education, but will not require the same flat-rate contribution by each institution. As part of our existing strategic planning process and in dialogue with the Funding Council, each institution will contribute, in accordance with its individual mission, student mix and academic profile. Accordingly we propose that each institution should make a distinctive and important contribution towards national objectives within the flexible framework of the NBS and funded from fee income. Higher education contributions will include the provision of cash payments to students, through an appropriately developed programme of means-tested bursary, non means-tested scholarship support, and “in kind” support for students through the development of additional services and facilities to underpin provision for students appropriate for their academic and pastoral needs.

Examples of the areas we might expect to see supported within the flexible framework of the NBS include: scholarship schemes and excellence bursaries to address recruitment difficulties in specific subjects. the development of additional services and facilities to underpin provision in support of widening access, such as those targeted towards students with particular disabilities; and course development and staff support to enable a wider range of subjects to introduce modules through the medium of Welsh. Each institution's contribution through the NBS flexible framework will be identified and shared with the Funding Council as a specific element of the strategic planning process each year and performance will be subject to monitoring and audit as part of the present annual cycle.

This represents an additional and detailed reporting requirement on institutions. You are aware that HEW is concerned that the reporting requirement imposed on the sector in Wales is already greater than that required of institutions in England where significant progress has been made to reduce the accountability burden. In proposing that institutions' specific contributions to the flexible framework of the NBS are individually monitored by HEFCW, HEW is not departing from its established position. Rather, we are declaring that the NBS structure we are proposing is so significant for the sector and for Wales that we want to share with you and with Assembly Members the progress we are able to make towards national priorities through a flexible structure that enables each institution to make specific, identified contributions appropriate to its own particular circumstances.

Rather than require every institution to achieve identical national NBS benchmarks, we are convinced that the Assembly will achieve better value for money and make real progress through appropriately targeted investment by each institution, taking account of its relative strengths and opportunities. We already have a model for the sector as a whole that enables each institution to make a discrete and appropriate contribution towards national policy objectives that is monitored by the Funding Council. Through the flexible framework we are proposing that a similar structure be adopted for the NBS in Wales.

It is essential that the overall package of financial support offered to students in Wales is high enough to make an appropriate and genuine contribution towards overcoming barriers that may discourage disadvantaged students and other priority groups from entering HE. Equally it is important that any uniform NBS

requirement be set at a level that provides sufficient “headroom” for individual institutions to provide additional incentives, appropriate to their particular student body, over and above the core NBS, set at a level which the additional fee income they receive could reasonably be expected to support.

We hope you will agree with us that the NBS structure we are proposing addresses these requirements. Additionally we believe it provides flexibility for institutions to respond appropriately to Wales’ national priorities without reducing their ability to attract quality applicants in the face of strong English competition.

On the issue of funding for the NBS, it must be borne in mind that it is by no means certain that the total sum available for scholarships and bursaries in English institutions will be maintained in later years. Welsh HEIs should not be committed to a structure that is less flexible than the English one in this respect.

#### ***Administration of the NBS***

HEW is strongly supportive of working with the SLC to bring the Welsh NBS within the scope of the proposed scheme for England. We understand that this could be achieved on very favourable terms, since agreement has been reached on meeting the full set-up costs for the English scheme. It is important to move quickly to engage with the SLC if this kind of benefit is to be secured, and we are signalling our strong support to you for such a move.

Clearly some additional arrangements would be required for Wales, which fall outside the scope of the set-up costs for England and which we would have to meet. One obvious additional requirement is for the provision of information services available through the medium of Welsh. Another addition we would hope to develop is a short summary report, produced by the SLC individually for each applicant in September, confirming details of their personal financial entitlements and commitments on the course they intend to commence. This would detail their tuition fee payment, their student loan details, their means-tested student support and ALG funding entitlement, and the support they would receive from the NBS (both the means-tested £300 core and other bursary/scholarship support awarded by the institution under the flexible framework).

We are recommending that the modest level of additional set-up costs for establishing a Welsh NBS scheme operated by the SLC should be met, as in England, from within the public funding provided for higher education. Specifically this should be met from the Reaching Higher funds. The recurrent costs due to the SLC for administering the NBS once it is in operation should, as in England, be met by institutions from their fee income. All HEW Members have signalled their intention to use the full NBS administration service as proposed by the SLC for England. On this assumption we are advised by the SLC that administrative charges will be levied at a cost per student per year of £3.75 (it has to be confirmed if VAT is to be added on top of this figure) as in England.

The National Bursary Scheme as envisaged by HEW would be a flexible framework of two elements; the £300 core means-tested bursary and each individual institution's distinctive contribution towards national objectives within the scheme. It would provide a coherent and distinctive student support mechanism for Wales. We hope that you are sympathetic to and supportive of the NBS proposals. As noted at the start of this letter, they have received the endorsement of the HEW Committee. We look forward to receiving your comments on our proposals and discussing them with you very shortly.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

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## CARDIFF YOUTH DECLARATION

Young people are not just the future of Europe, they are the present! Nevertheless young people across Europe still often feel excluded from many parts of society and youth work's role within society is not being fully recognised. The young people of Europe need to be fully included in society and political life -from local to European level.

In light of the lack of support shown by European societies to the European project and the direction it is taking, the EU should address the question of European Citizenship and promotion of citizens' sense of belonging to the EU. On national and local community level this sense of belonging is built on an active civil society. In order to build the same kind of civil society on European level the importance of associative life needs to be acknowledged. To bring Europe closer to young people, the EU and member states have to recognise the vital role and the contribution played by youth work through ensuring the active inclusion of young people and youth organisations in decision making. Part of this process should be to include them actively in the Plan D discussions on the future of Europe.

Consultations with young people have to be seen and sincerely used as a tool to improve youth policy. Therefore they have to be more transparent and more inclusive to reach a wide range of young people. Using simple language, involving youth organisations and giving enough time in these consultations is necessary. The results of all consultations should be public and used as basis for the decision-making.

The most inclusive process for involving young people in decision making is the co-management structure, which means 50% of those taking a decision are young people themselves. This method has to be applied to all bodies deciding on youth policy, from a policy, from a local, national and European level.

Declarations and rhetoric alone do not make enough of a difference. Specific National actions plans are essential to tackle issues at the heart of young people's interests. A way to do this is to include in the national action plans for the Lisbon strategy a chapter on youth. These should include, for example, strategies to tackle the problems of youth unemployment and lack of access for young people to affordable, quality housing, particularly within their own communities. Young people have to be involved in the evaluation of the implementation of all points of the action plans.

The image of participation must change. Participation is exciting and participating in the organisation of activities and political discussions is a real chance for all young people no matter what their background is, to become fully involved in society and civic life. But these advantages of participation are not visible to all young people. Young people must be

given the lust for participating by involving them in decision making. We would like to see a promotion of active citizenship, the recognition of NGOs and voluntary work as an essential part of society, specifically concerning young people.

Sustainable funding is essential to support youth organisations in delivering participation opportunities. Unfortunately, problems continue to be encountered by youth organisations in accessing these funds. To ensure these projects become embedded in society and produce lasting results, long term funding is needed beyond the initial investment. Youth organisations are therefore an essential element of youth work which cannot be financed through project based funding alone. Sufficient administrative funding and material support for youth work and participation must be made available.

Recognition of the benefits of active participation and non-formal education remains underdeveloped. Participation should be recognised as a method to gain key skills and competencies essential for employment. Public bodies, businesses, employers and trade unions etc, should actively engage with youth organisations to promote the importance of skills gained by young people through active participation in non-formal education and civic society.

We demand the inclusion of young people at local, regional, national and European level in decisions concerning them, specifically through the establishment of co-management structures for all youth policy in the EU concerning youth.

All issues raised in this declaration are in line of the aims with the Lisbon Process and the European Youth Pact. Therefore it is essential that Youth Pact itself will be implemented by the Member States and the EU level. The Lisbon agenda can not be achieved without the active involvement of youth organisations and young people. Therefore EU and the Member States should live up to the commitments on participation made in the Common Objectives on Youth Policy.

Recognising that most of the issues of concern for young people regarding inclusion, participation and active citizenship is being addressed by the European Charter on Participation for Young People in Local and Regional Life, we demand that the EU endorses this document and it is implemented by the member states.

## Appendix Employment, skills and competencies

*How can participation help to develop young peoples' skills and competencies and employment?*

Formal education should be actively complimented with non-formal education by allocating certain time shots in the national curriculum's and provide the possibility of gaining credit units for participating in non-formal education programmes. Also a quality assessment scheme that ensures recognition of non-formal education outcomes should be created.

Measures should be taken at the European level to supplement the European framework with instruments giving recognition of and visibility to Non-formal education. We therefore welcome initiatives such as the Youthpass and Council of Europe Portfolio for Youth Leaders and Youth workers, and suggest they are being included in the Europass from 2007. It is crucial that these and any other initiative to increase the recognition of Non-formal education is built on the principles of openness and flexibility and being non-bureaucratic, adaptable to national contexts and the specifics of the various non-formal education programmes.

The EU, National Governments and Local authorities should provide sustainable and realistic funding to Youth Organisations and projects to ensure the continuation of participation even after the initial funding has been spent. Specific attention is needed to address the lack of administration funding available to support youth organisations.

Participation should be recognised as a method in which to gain key skills and competencies needed for employment. Specific recognition of non-formal education is needed from Governments, Institutions, Society and the Business World.

Public bodies, businesses, employers and trade unions etc, should actively engage with youth organisations to promote the importance of skills gained by young people through active participation in non-formal education and civic society.

*They did it!*

*GirlGuiding UK works on specific programme areas with the labour market. Recently a partnership has been created with the construction industry to education both them and Girl Guiding about the skills gained through participation in non-formal education and how these could be benefit the construction industry.*

## Appendix Participation and Inclusion

### *How can participation support inclusion?*

1. Consultation of young people should be seen as an opportunity to improve policy, current consultations are not reaching young people, they should be more engaging for a more diverse audience.
2. Creating committed citizens for both less advantaged people and participating people, by getting them involved in the decisions at local, national and European scale and by giving them the lust for participating if they do not feel included enough in society. This means creating more ownership for policy by really using the opinion of youth.
3. More diverse groups of people should be informed in an attractive way about the opportunities to participate: media campaigns, schools should be visited NGOs, non-formal education, this kind of initiative should be supported by all institutions.
4. Strong resolutions must help young people not to be left out when they are not studying anymore and have trouble finding a job. We think this gap must be filled by fighting against youth unemployment and poor housing offers. For example, positive discrimination on labour and housing market.
  - Developing the social housing and offering decent, affordable flats to all young people.
  - Strong actions against youth unemployment and in favour of traineeship and internship that are paid.
  - Positive discrimination should improve possibilities for young people to be included.

The aim is to make them financially independent from anybody (parents, relatives etc) so they can really contribute to society.

5. For a cohesive society language and understanding are more important for young people with a migrant background. There must be an easy way to get educated, formally and non-formally, it must be accessible for everyone (free of charge) who needs it.
6. Funding opportunities and youth organisations must be more structured at both a national and European level to make them easier to understand and to give these structures more visibility to all young people. This should lead to more participation of more diverse groups of young people.



*They did it!*

*ATD Fourth World Youth is an International Youth NGO fighting against poverty and social exclusion that believes in the importance of local youth groups.*

*For example in Luxembourg we run a youth group which brings together young people from other social backgrounds.*

*Such youth groups are built on the basis of mutual respect, tolerance and acceptance.*

*The participation of the most disadvantaged young people is at the heart of our ethos but first we have to be able to reach and engage them.*

*This requires a long term commitment to try to meet young people through street work (e.g. regular cultural activities in deprived neighbourhoods, street libraries etc) and links with local services (social cafes, homeless hostels, housing offices etc).*

*It is important in the eyes of the young people we meet that we are volunteers and not professionals because we want to work with them not for them.*

## **Appendix Participation and Active Citizenship**

*What can be done to encourage and support local participation and active citizenship?*

### **Citizenship Education**

Young people should be encouraged to participate in society and being taught what it means to be active citizens from an early age. Interactive classes on citizenship should therefore be part of the school curricula, while being adopted to each age group. This teaching should include participatory citizenship, rights and duties within our society, democratic systems and the possibility offered for young people to participate on a local, regional, national and European level. In this way all youngsters will develop a sense of belonging to the community and be encouraged to play an active role in it.

### **Supportive measures for active citizenship**

To enable participation and active citizenship enough support must be given, both in terms of financial support but also in terms of facilities that can make engagement and NGO work easier. In order to make real participation of young people at all level possible local authorities are also encouraged to give small concrete assistance to youth organisations and youth work , like offering free photocopying, web hosting, training, venues etc, that make a big difference for local participation.

### **Recognition of participation**

In light of the current crisis of the European project the citizens sense of belonging to Europe and European citizenship needs to be addressed.

On national and local communities level the sense of belonging is build on an active civil society. In order to build the same kind of civil society on European level the importance of associative life needs to be acknowledged. To bring Europe closer to young people EU has to recognise the vital role and the contribution played of youth work through ensuring their active inclusion in the decision making. Part of this process should be to include them actively in the Plan D discussions.

### **Co-management**

To make participation of young people reality and the co-operation with institutions effective, we need real partnership of young representatives and the institutions. We need more than consultations, we need involvement at every stage of the work. It should be done by the co-management system. It means creating bodies consisting of 50% of young representatives and 50% of the institution workers to work together on equal basis on everything what concerns youth. The system already functions effectively in Lithuania and in the Joint Council on Youth of the Council of Europe. Co-management has to be the rule of all decisions in the EU concerning youth policy. It has also to be applied on the national, regional, local and municipalities level.

## **Information**

Ensuring wide access to information about possibilities to get involved and transparent system of work in the field of youth, eg it's essential to make the national reports on OMC public, so we could learn from the experience of our countries. Guidelines (recommendations from European Commission) are a very useful tool to ensure transparency, equal opportunities in all member states and learning from international exchange of experience.

## **Removing barriers to existing opportunities**

Reducing barriers to existing opportunities is necessary to achieve their results, e.g. the visa barriers in youth mobility (no visas for international youth activities) block international youth co-operation and mobility; juridical complications for NGO work discourages active involvement; not providing material resources to use the opportunities make them unreachable for many interested young people .

### *They did it!*

*In Lithuania a co-management system exists on all levels from local municipalities to national level. Decisions on matters concerning young people are taken in structures composing 50-50 representation of young people and officials. Young people and officials decide together on the priorities of youth policy as well as on different instruments to implement it, such as different programmes and financial support for youth organisations. The system gives young people real say in the decision making process and not only possibility to comment decisions that are taken by others.*

### *They did it!*

*In Malta, the National Youth Council has felt the need to educate youth on "Key Issues" of the Youth Pact.*

*They have printed leaflets containing the key issues of the pact and these were distributed to youths at university and at places of leisure(Bars, Pubs etc.*

*Furthermore they organised a national conference on the matter. Speakers on the pact answered questions raised by youths.*