

EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING COMMITTEE

ASSEMBLY MINISTER'S REPORT TO THE EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING COMMITTEE ON 13 FEBRUARY 2002.

This report updates the Committee on the specific issues upon which it wished to be kept informed since my previous report of 16 of January. **Annex A** sets out my major engagements since the last report.

1. Skills and Employment Action Plan

The Committee discussed the draft Skills and Employment Action Plan at its meeting on 8 November. The consultation period has now ended and I will be making a statement on the final version of the plan at Plenary on 14 February. It will be published shortly thereafter. Most of those responding to the consultation warmly welcomed the plan as a positive contribution to driving forward our agenda to raise skills levels in Wales and increase economic activity rates. The plan is firmly rooted in research undertaken through Future Skills Wales and I am sure that such evidence-based policy is the way forward to ensure that the policies of the Welsh Assembly Government and our partners is fully joined-up, effective and sustainable in the longer term.

2. Skills and Enterprise: Entrepreneurship Action Plan - Implementation

The Entrepreneurship Action Plan is all about promoting more of a culture of entrepreneurship in Wales. And one of its six Key Action points is specifically targeted on embedding entrepreneurship education throughout the whole educational process. Significant progress has been achieved in delivering on its aims to, for example:

- train 1,200 career advisors, teachers and lecturers to deliver entrepreneurship career advice, so that 180,000 individuals will have the opportunity to consider entrepreneurship within their career every year;
- equip every school and college in Wales with the necessary materials, resources and trained teachers or lecturers so that all 5-19 year olds in Wales receive on-going entrepreneurial education; and.
- ensure that every full time student in further and higher education has access to entrepreneurship education and training so that the proportion that considers establishing a business is increased by 5% per year.

Careers Wales and the Education Business Partnership both also play major parts in delivering these Entrepreneurship Action Plan objectives. Supporting schools in offering a number of activities and programmes, they are helping to offer all 14–19 year olds the opportunity to participate in activities that promote business awareness and an awareness of entrepreneurial skills. In 2001–02, we expect some to see 250 schools and around 17,000 young people in Key Stages 3 and 4 participating in such programmes in Wales.

The Knowledge Exploitation Fund is targeted more narrowly on helping the further and higher education sector's efforts to ensure that the knowledge and research and development of Wales's institutions are more effectively exploited commercially. Thirty-seven Entrepreneurship Champions have been appointed to Institutions across Wales, each dedicated to the task of identifying and following up the opportunities for putting more of our knowledge and expertise to economic use. Twenty academic departments have been awarded the status of Centres of Excellence for their work with business and they are being supported jointly by KEF and the WDA in further exploiting that excellence.

Careers Wales have been awarded £90,000 from the Knowledge Exploitation Fund to provide initial awareness training for approximately 300 advisory staff from Careers Wales and staff from FE and HE institutions. Some 20 workshops are planned throughout Wales between December 2001 and July 2002). The Assembly has itself earmarked the sum of £50,000, without prejudice, in anticipation of a proposal to establish a parallel initiative that will support the training of secondary teachers. A National Working Party has been established by WDA/Careers Wales to take this forward, with its inaugural meeting being scheduled for 12 February.

3. Teacherline Cymru

I have approved the funding of half the costs of setting up Teacherline Cymru. The remaining costs will be met by the Teachers' Support Network. The total cost of the first year of operation is budgeted at £170,000. I expect the service to be operational early next financial year.

Teacherline Cymru will be a free counselling and support service for teachers in Wales. A similar service, part funded by the DfES, operates in England. Welsh teachers have had access to the English service but it is not staffed by counsellors who have knowledge of Welsh circumstances or who are able to offer a service through the medium of Welsh. Teacherline Cymru will provide Welsh teachers with confidential advice and support and will help to relieve stress and reduce the incidence of stress related sickness. It will be an important way of helping teachers cope with the pressures of their job and is supported by the teaching unions and the GTCW.

4. Induction and early Professional Development

I intend to make Induction statutory for all newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in Wales from September 2003. I will formally announce this at the In-service and Professional Development Association (IPDA) conference on the 15th February.

This decision was made following an analysis of the responses to the national consultation held in the Spring of 2001, and further research conducted by a serving primary deputy headteacher seconded to the Assembly from June to September 2001.

It is my intention to launch a pilot Induction programme this September. A set of national support materials for NQTs and their mentors will be developed. These will help to ensure the high quality of the Induction procedures in Wales. Induction standards will be introduced that will be distinctive for Wales and these will be consulted on in September 2002. In addition, a framework will be developed for Early Professional Development (EPD) for years two and three. This will support NQTs in those vital, early years of their career.

To support the introduction of the pilot Induction programme and to develop the Induction materials, a secondary deputy headteacher - Sue Halliwell, from Ogmores School in Bridgend - has been appointed to a six-month secondment with the Assembly to start later this month.

In addition, to ensure the profession continues to contribute to the process, I am establishing an Early Professional Development partnership group. This group, that will include representatives from schools, LEAs and other organisations including the GTCW, will contribute to the preparation of materials for Induction and EPD, and assist in the development of the Induction standards.

5. Professional Headship Induction Programme [PHIP]

Earlier this month, I launched the Pen-i-Ben pilot programme, a new bilingual on-line community for newly appointed headteachers at a national conference held at the North Wales Conference Centre in Llandudno. The conference provided an opportunity to address the first national event bringing together newly appointed headteachers, their mentors and representatives of Local Education Authorities.

Pen-i-Ben will provide all newly appointed headteachers currently undertaking the Professional Headship Induction Programme (PHIP) with opportunities to share best practice, debate professional topics and develop ways to tackle real issues facing schools today. It is hoped that the community will also reduce professional isolation and help headteachers in Wales share common challenges.

Rhys Harries, headteacher of Ysgol Treganna a Welsh medium primary school in Cardiff has been appointed as National Facilitator to lead the Pen-i-Ben initiative during the pilot year. Following the successful launch event, members of the community will now receive hardware and practical training to enable them to take advantage of the comprehensive facilities offered by Pen-i-Ben.

6. Teachers Pay

The School Teachers' Review Body Report 2002 was published by the Department for Education and Skills on 23 January. The report recommends increases of 3.5% for all teachers and a shortening of the classroom teachers' lower pay scale so that teachers would reach the top in 5 years rather than 7 or 8 as at present. In addition,

all qualified teachers will get extra money to take account of the registration fee for the General Teaching Councils, with £33 added to all pay scales.

The pay recommendations will mean that a new teacher's starting salary is £17,628 outside London. This could rise to £25,746 within five years, at which point a teacher could apply for the increased threshold payment bringing the salary up to £27,894.

The key recommendations are being accepted by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills in full and without staging, subject to the statutory consultation exercise. Teachers' pay and conditions of service is not a devolved issue. The National Assembly has no powers in its own right to set pay for teachers.

I welcome the news that new teachers in Wales will receive an above inflation pay rise. The vast majority of teachers carry out excellent work and it is appropriate for them to be properly rewarded for their efforts.

Funding for teachers' pay costs in Wales is provided as part of the local authorities' revenue settlement. It is for local authorities to determine the distribution of that funding in the light of competing demands and other requirements. The Welsh Assembly Government attaches great importance to Welsh councils making local decisions for local people. The Welsh Assembly Government's local government revenue settlement was announced on 15 January and approved by the Assembly on 24 January. The settlement provides for a 6.75% increase, on authorities' 2001-02 budgets, 5.6% excluding specific grants and funding for new burdens, which takes account of the pressures and burdens on local authorities. Over the two years 2001-02 and 2002-03, the gross increase in Assembly funding for authorities is 11.75%, equivalent to almost 7% real terms growth. This is well ahead of inflation, and education should share in this good settlement.

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills is consulting formally on taking forward these recommendations. Responses to this consultation letter have been requested by 7 March. A copy of the consultation letter, which contains details of the School Teachers' Review Body's recommendations, is attached at annex B.

Copies of the full report have been distributed to members of the Committee.

7. The Education Development Plans (Wales) Regulations 2002: Education Strategic Plans 2002-05

These regulations had been tabled and were due to be debated in Plenary on 7 February. They were withdrawn because defects were discovered at a late stage.

The major problem related to the period for which LEAs were being required to set targets for pupil attainment, exclusions and unauthorised absence. At the time of the first round of Education Strategic Plans (ESPs) for 1999-2002 schools were required to set targets in the Autumn for 4 years – the current school year plus 3 forward years. The forward years were picked up in the ESP. The requirement for schools was changed to 1+2 years because the earlier regime had required schools to set targets for pupils at the end of the

next key stage when they had not yet been assessed for the previous key stage.

The intention for 2002-05 ESPs (and the basis of consultation with local authorities) was that plans would contain targets for 2 forward years. Unfortunately the instructions given for the preparation of the new regulations did not identify this and the earlier 3-year requirement was repeated in the new regulations as drafted. This oversight was discovered at a very late stage.

The regulations are being redrafted. The date by which authorities have to submit plans to the Assembly Government for approval is being moved back from 30 April to 31 May but it cannot go back any further if approved plans are to be in place for the start of the 2002-03 school year.

The likelihood is that some of the normal procedures for Assembly consideration will have to be disapplied but we hope to avoid using the executive procedure. Until the work of revising and translating the regulations is complete we do not know the timetable for consideration but the Business Minister has given an assurance that the regulations will be debated in plenary and he is hopeful that the debate can take place before the regulations come into force.

The requirements for the second full round of ESPs are in very large measure the same as the first round. Guidance relating to the Regulations has been the subject of consultation with LEAs and others over the last 10 months and officials are now visiting every LEA in Wales to discuss initial drafts of their education strategic plans. This work is not affected by the delay to the regulations. The approval of final plans will be subject to their compliance with the regulations.

Minister's Engagements from 16th January – 12th February 2002

16th January

Visit - Bishopston Comprehensive School

17th January

Launch - Europlus

Mtg - Soccer Skills with Dafydd Wigley

21st January

HEFCW Interviews

Briefing to MPs

22nd January

Chair ELL

23rd January

VISIT - Mid & West Wales Fire/School

Opening - New Careers Centre

Opening - PRP Training Facility

24th January

Chair ELL

Opening - Maes yr Haul (Broadlands Primary School)

Mtg - Bridgend CCET

Spch - Governors Wales, Present certificates/launch new helplines

28th January

Launch/Spch - Valleys Ant-Racist Initiative Conf

Visit - Merthyr College

Mtg - Merthyr Tydfil CCET

30th January

Visit - Builth Wells High School

31st January

Press Conference - on Corus anniversary

SPCH - IPPR Seminar: Devolution in practice

1st February

Visit - St Christopher's School, Wrexham

Open - New extension Ysgol Belmont Special Needs School

Spch - New Heads Conference Pen i Ben conference

2nd February

Spch - Monmouthshire Governors Conference

4th February

Visit - St Athan Primary School

Mtg - WLGA Cllr Jeff Jones/Chris Llewellyn

5th February

Chair ELL

7th February (CUBA)

Mtg - Paul Webster Hare, British Ambassador

Visit - Higher Institute for Polytechnic Studies of Havana

Visit - University of Havana

Lunch with Deputy Minister Dr Rodolpho Alarcon

Mtg - Minister of Higher Education. MoU signing ceremony

Cocktails with British Ambassador

8th February (CUBA)

Visit - National Centre for Scientific Research Havana

Visit - National Centre of genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, Havana

Lunch hosted by Minister of Education Dr Luis Ignacio Gomez

Speech – HE Conference

11th February

Spch - Launch of Review of Education Research Seminar and Conference

Photo Opportunity/Interview - General Teaching Council for Wales - Stage 2

Press Launch

Mtg - Prof. Richard Lewis from Open University

12th February

CANLLAW Online Chat with 15-17 yr olds on Europe/White Paper

Mtg - Teresa Rees

**School Teachers' Review Body Report –Department for Education and Skills
consultation letter**

24 January 2002

Dear «Initial»

On 2 August 2001 I wrote to the Chair of the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) asking the Review Body to examine various matters and to report its recommendations to the Prime Minister and me. I enclose a copy of the Review Body's report which is being published today. Its main findings are summarised at the front of the report.

I now propose under section 2(1) of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Act 1991 to make provision by Order giving effect to the statutory recommendations. Before doing so, I am required under the Act to consult bodies representing the interests of school teachers and their employers. This letter initiates that statutory consultation.

I am minded to give effect to the statutory recommendations, subject to views expressed by those consulted, by making Pay and Conditions Orders as follows:

- A first Order in respect of changes noted below as taking effect from 1 April.
- A second Order to bring into force a new School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) with effect from 1 September, incorporating all changes to teachers' pay and conditions for 2002/03. There will be an opportunity for further comment on the detail of the Document before the making of this Order.

General pay increase

1. The STRB have said the following:

Taking all factors into account we recommend an increase of 3.5% to teachers' pay scales and allowances in 2002-03.

We recommend that a sum of £33 is added to all spine points for qualified teachers after implementation of our recommended pay uplift.

I propose to accept these recommendations with effect from 1 April 2002. The 3.5% increase would be paid in full without staging. The £33 is in specific recognition of the need for teachers to be registered with the GTC/GTCW and for the payment of the GTC/GTCW fees.

The main pay scale

2. The STRB recommend that there should be:

a six-point pay scale, starting at the current point 2, which will enable all newly-qualified entrants to teaching to be eligible to apply for the threshold after five years. We make proposals for the assimilation of existing teachers into the new scale at 1 September 2002.

I propose to accept this recommendation, and, as suggested by the STRB, bring it into effect on 1 September 2002, at the same time as teachers receive their annual increments on the existing scale. The STRB recommendation is based on the view that teachers reach full competence after five years, and that the current seven point scale does not offer sufficient retention incentive to teachers with 3-5 years experience. The current point 1, which is only used for the 10% of new teachers who do not have a 2:2 honours degree or better, would be abolished, as well as the distinction in pay terms between good honours graduates and the rest. The new scale has fairly even increases of between 7.7% and 8% between successive points. This recommendation is a positive move which could help secure both better recruitment of teachers, and improved retention of teachers with several years' experience who could otherwise be lost to the profession.

The upper pay scale

3. On the upper pay scale, the STRB said the following:

We recommend that sufficient resources are made available to ensure that teachers who meet the performance criteria for progression on the upper pay scale can in fact progress.

This is not a statutory recommendation, because funding is not part of teachers' statutory conditions of employment. The STRB have commented that pay points should not be fully funded on demand from special grant, but have recommended that the grant be increased to enable a substantial majority of eligible teachers to progress. I do not, however, intend to increase special grant funding, because it is my view that, bearing in mind both existing special grant of £100m, and the 5.7% increase in education standard spending, after adjustments, schools would have enough money in 2002-03 to deliver this recommendation, if they judge that this is their priority.

We recommend that upper pay scale points should remain an entitlement when teachers transfer between schools and also that there should not be scope for voluntary forfeiture.

I propose to accept this recommendation and bring it into effect from 1 September 2002. I believe that this approach is right, in order both to encourage teachers to advance their careers by moving between schools from time to time, and to prevent exploitation of any scope for voluntary surrender of points. This also mirrors the rules for experience points on the main pay scale.

Leadership group pay

4. The STRB made the following recommendations with respect of leadership group pay:

We recommend that the governing body has the authority to change the ISR at any time in order to attract or retain a headteacher. We also recommend that the existing provision for the governing body to set, in exceptional circumstances, an ISR to extend beyond the school group maximum should be available for retention as well as for recruitment purposes. We recommend that the justification for such a decision should be required to be recorded in writing.

We recommend that up to two performance points might be awarded in any one year to members of the leadership group when the governing body considers such action to be justified.

We recommend that where headteachers are given a temporary ISR in such circumstances [i.e. where they are seconded to turn around a failing school] and do not receive one or more performance points because they revert to their main posts, such points should be paid as a lump sum.

We recommend that two extra points are added on top of each school range, including the creation of extra spine points L42 and L43, to allow such an extension for group eight, in order to provide adequate scope for setting and reviewing individual school ranges.

I propose to accept these recommendations and bring them into effect from 1 September 2002. I welcome the increased flexibility which the recommendations could offer schools and believe that they would help to address recruitment and retention problems within the leadership group.

The performance threshold

5. The STRB made the following recommendations in respect of the performance threshold:

We recommend that monitoring should continue in order to ensure any patterns of disadvantage among applicants for the performance threshold are quickly detected and their causes remedied.

We recommend that external assessors should visit schools and local authority

services/units with applicants on a selective rather than universal basis.

We recommend that teachers reaching the top of the main pay scale in September 2002 should be eligible to apply for threshold assessment in autumn 2002 as well as teachers reaching the top of the pay scale in September 2001.

We recommend that the Department monitors the impact of this guidance [improved guidance on standards] during the third round of threshold assessment and holds further discussions with the parties on the wording of the standards themselves if significant concerns remain.

We recommend that the Department consults the parties on the issue [of recognition of sixth form college professional standards] and makes a decision accordingly.

We recommend that the Department, in consultation with the parties, ensures effective feedback arrangements are implemented and efforts continue to improve and simplify the application process.

We recommend that the Department ensures that the review process operates more quickly in future.

I propose to accept all these recommendations, and to proceed with the recognition of sixth form college professional standards.

Advanced skills teachers

6. The STRB has made no recommendations, but has invited my Department to pursue the issues it raised in evidence with the interested parties.

The STRB commented that the Department's proposals on inreach and outreach, management roles and review of pay ranges should not be subject to detailed regulation in the STPCD. However, these matters are already covered in the STPCD and changes therefore need to be set out there.

The STRB noted that the shortening of the pay scale would enable teachers to apply for the threshold after five years and they did not recommend the removal of the requirement for ASTs to first have passed the threshold. However, I do propose to proceed to remove this requirement, on the grounds that the AST grade is not a second threshold and there are excellent less experienced teachers (for example, some mature entrants). I am also keen to see more teachers joining the AST grade.

Other issues

7. A range of other issues are covered in the STRB's report. These are set out below.

We recommend that the fifth management allowance be retained.

I propose to accept this recommendation. The STRB's 2001 report said they would return to this point this year further to the pay restructuring in 2000. There is

consensus among the parties that the fifth management allowance remains part of the management structure of many secondary schools and I agree that there would be no reason to abolish it.

We recommend that the Department works together with the interested parties to establish more coherent and consistent procedures [for payment for in-service training, initial teacher training activities and out-of-school learning activities].

I propose to accept this recommendation. I propose that the three categories of payment be brought together and all types of teacher made eligible for these payments.

We recommend that the Department resolves the issue [of recognition of relevant teaching and non-teaching experience through the award of experience points] in consultation with the interested parties.

The STRB were asked to consider this issue, further to an ECJ ruling which raised the question whether experience outside the European Economic Area (EEA) and in the independent sector should attract mandatory rather than discretionary experience points. My view remains that it would be inappropriate for non-EEA experience to attract mandatory experience points, but I would welcome views on whether the award of mandatory experience points should be extended to service as a qualified teacher in independent schools, including CTCs and City Academies.

We recommend that the DfES again produce a statement on the pay structure, for issue to teachers in 2002.

This is not a statutory recommendation, but I propose to arrange this, particularly in the light of the proposed shortening of the main pay scale.

We recommend that the Department undertakes such a study [into the pay and conditions of headteachers in early years education] in 2002.

This is not a statutory recommendation. It concerns early excellence centres where some of the children may be receiving care rather than education, and some of the staff and managers (including the person in charge) may not be teachers. I propose to consider this suggestion further.

We recommend that the Department initiates, in consultation with the interested parties, a review of the pay and terms and conditions of unattached teachers to inform our next review.

This is not a statutory recommendation. The teachers concerned are those in LEA central services. I would welcome initial reactions from interested parties.

STRB's final comments

8. The STRB have asked the Department to review

- the scope and nature of the evidence, information and statistics it collects and provides on teacher recruitment, retention and labour market issues;

- how it monitors the use of pay flexibilities and advises on their application. Better monitoring and advice might obviate the need for prescriptive guidance and further the Department's aim of simpler pay arrangements;

- the nature of its advice and direction on the application of pay policies to borderline and atypical groups; and

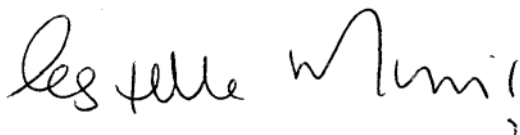
- the scope for greater co-ordination of the current support network of assessors, advisers, local recruitment co-ordinators etc.

The STRB ask for a report on progress in evidence to their next main review.

I welcome the STRB's initiative in raising these important matters and undertake to respond in evidence in September 2002 for the main 2003-04 pay review.

I would welcome responses to this consultation letter by **7 March**.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Estelle Morris".

Estelle Morris