

Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

Date: 17 March 2004

Title : Minister's Report

1. This report updates the Committee on specific issues raised by members and on issues of current interest. There have been no specific areas identified by members for this report. Annex A sets out major engagements since the last report.

2. Speech and Language Services for Children and Young People

Jane Hutt and I established the Speech and Language Therapy Action Group (SALTAG) in 2002, in response to concerns expressed to us over the escalating demand for speech and language therapy (SLT) services in Wales and the lack of a coherent approach by the statutory agencies to meeting this demand. The group comprised representatives of all the key stakeholder groups from across Wales and established a number of sub-groups to tackle specific issues.

The consultation document, "Working Together," published in July 2003 is a result of this group's work. This was a joint consultation document which will form the basis of guidance to LEAs and NHS Wales on the future delivery of speech and language services to children and young people aged 0-19 years across Wales. Its aim was to ensure that all professionals involved in the provision of such services, as well as the service users, parents, carers, and related voluntary organisations have an opportunity to comment on any proposed recommendations for change. The consultation period ended on 31st October 2003.

In July 2000, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the National Assembly for Wales and the Department of Health, jointly commissioned research into the provision of services for children with speech, language and communication difficulties (SLCD) across England and Wales. This comprehensive research suggested a number of key recommendations for improving service delivery and enhancing collaborative working across agencies to meet the needs of children and young people

with SLCD and forms the basis of the recommendations made by SALTAG within their report. The consultation document consists of over seventy very detailed recommendations. The seventeen key strategic recommendations that encompass these are as follows:

1. That there be a renewed emphasis on the role that speech, language and communication plays in mediating all children and young people's experiences in school and at home and that a National communication strategy should be developed in collaboration with the Basic Skills Agency.
2. The greater part of the provision for school-aged children and young people with speech and language needs should be embedded within the curriculum and take the child's educational context into consideration. When appropriate, clinic-based options should remain for those requiring specific specialist intervention over a time-limited period.
3. For those children and young people whose needs cannot be appropriately managed within the curriculum, services should work within a multi disciplinary context to ensure children's health needs are met.
4. Services should work together to appraise the level and type of inequities in service delivery and develop appropriate mechanisms to address them at a local and national level.
5. LHBs and Local Authorities should work within the Partnership Arrangements as described within the Health Act 1999 for the delivery of speech and language services to children and young people. LHBs should maintain lead responsibility for commissioning speech and language therapy services across Wales generally. However, LEAs should act as lead commissioners through local NHS providers of SLT services for children and young people within educational contexts.
6. SLT managers offering services for children and young people with SLCD should be in a position to negotiate appropriate models of service delivery.
7. A funding mechanism should be developed that supports and facilitates a co-ordinated approach to the commissioning of services to children and young people with speech, language and communication difficulties. New joint funding partnerships should be exploited to provide pooled designated budgets for services for children and young people with SLCD.
8. The level of funding for services should be considered in the light of the shortfall between necessary levels of provision and current availability.
9. Specific funding should be ear-marked for areas of identified unmet need, such as provision for children in secondary schools, those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and those for whom Welsh or English is an additional language.
10. SLT services and LEAs should be organised at an appropriate level to provide specialist management and support and respectively, professional development for SLTs and specialist teachers.
11. Information Communication Technology (ICT) systems should be developed to ensure that they provide quality management information on levels and types of needs and facilitate the sharing of such information for multi-agency planning and prioritisation purposes (in accordance with the Welsh Assembly Government's IM&T Strategy "Information Healthcare" and the Data Protection Act 1995).
12. Structures should be put in place to enable joint strategic planning across Local Health Boards, NHS Trusts and LEAs and these agencies should jointly review the implementation of processes

- to improve practitioner level collaboration within speech and language services.
13. National and local mechanisms should be put in place to monitor the level and effectiveness of collaboration and disseminate information on good practice examples of collaborative working
 14. LHBs, NHS Trusts and LEAs must take the issues of recruitment and retention seriously in planning services. They must work with professional bodies such as the RCSLT, the TTA and GTCW on innovative practice to ensure the availability of a highly skilled workforce and that this is sustained.
 15. The curricula of initial and continuing training, relevant to the whole workforce, should prepare the different professional groups to work effectively with the full range of speech, language and communication difficulties in the context of the bilingual education system in Wales.
 16. There should be a comprehensive, bilingual, accredited system of educational and training opportunities for all staff working with children with speech and language needs.
 17. The Welsh Assembly Government should issue guidance to LEAs, LHBs and NHS Trusts on the provision and delivery of services to children and young people with speech, language and communication difficulties in Wales.

I am very grateful for the work of the SALTAG in setting the scene for the future delivery of speech and language services for children and young people in Wales. The group's recommendations are well founded and form a strong evidence base for changes in the current system of delivery.

Over 180 responses were received by the end of the consultation period in December. Copies of all responses will be published on the Learning Wales website by the end of March. All recommendations received a favourable response and in fact all achieved at least 50 per cent support from respondents. Respondents ranged from professionals within Health and education, such as teachers, SLTs, paediatricians, Directors of Education and other professional bodies as well as voluntary organisations and parents.

Both the HSS Minister and myself will respond to all the recommendations by making a joint response to our respective committees in the summer.

3. 14- 19 Learning Pathways

Responses to questions raised at ELL committee of 25 February.

Q. Would money allocated to each local authority area cover the development of local options, colleges and youth officers etc? Would there be different funding streams?

A. Delivering the key elements of 14-19 Learning Pathways requires a balance between a national policy and local delivery. The knowledge and expertise of local partners of the learning and other needs of young people needs to reflect the learning, training and employment opportunities at local level. Local partnership between all those with an interest in 14-19 provision will have a powerful impact on implementing the proposals and on transforming 14-19 provision in Wales. The synergy between local

and national partnerships will be a critical factor in the success of these initiatives. The £50,000 allocated to each local authority is to facilitate the successful establishment and operation of a local 14-19 network in its area, bringing together the key partners. An additional £140,000 is being made available to support local pilot activity - specifically to fund the development of learning coach and personal support mechanisms.

Q. How would the 14-19 agenda be developed alongside the Welsh Bacculaureate?

A. The Welsh Bacculaureate Qualification is entirely consistent with 14-19 Learning Pathways which is all about giving pupils and students more flexible routes and access to a wider range of qualifications. Insofar as there are developments on the 14-19 phase in the offing in England, on the back of Mike Tomlinson's interim report (and his final report later in 2004), we shall watch those with interest. However, one of the features of the Welsh Bacculaureate Qualification is that it is adaptable enough to accommodate changes which are made to the National Qualifications Framework.

Clearly there is considerable overlap between the Core and options model for the Welsh Bacculaureate and the Continuum of Learning and Flexible Learning Pathways that we are working towards in the 14-19 agenda. We will be looking at this overlap as the pilot for the Welsh Bacculaureate continues and as the proposals for 14-19 continue to emerge.

Q. How were young people, schools and colleges involved in the consultative process?

A. We have worked hard to ensure that young people can contribute to the development of 14-19 Learning Pathways. During the initial project phase young people were actively involved in the work of the Project Team and at separate consultation events. More recently, we have established three regional Young People's Advisory Groups, involving some 300 young people, to help us develop the second phase of the project. Schools and colleges (and many others) were involved in the work leading up to the publication of the original consultation document and were invited to respond, formally, to the proposals. They continue to help us with the project through their involvement in the various task and finish groups set up to explore and define the elements that make up a learning pathway. The 14-19 project continues to be an exemplar of policy developed through partnership.

Q. Was the Welsh Assembly Government satisfied that Community Consortia for Education and Training (CCETs) were effective?

A. We continue to see CCETs as one of the key drivers for many aspects of the Welsh Assembly Government's modernisation programme for post-16 learning. We now, I believe, have a clear view of how CCETs are currently operating and how and to what extent they are adding value. The Review of CCETs undertaken by ELWa has done its job admirably in this respect. It identifies some of the good practices already happening in CCETs, together with those issues that need to be looked at carefully so as to enable greater operational effectiveness.

ELWa is now to produce an action plan which sets out clearly how we take things forward. To date, the role of CCETs has largely been focused on mapping provision, marshalling information about what is available for learners in the local area, and planning some discrete but nevertheless significant local service developments as a way of establishing themselves as planning bodies and cementing the local partnership.

In future, with ELWa's new planning and funding arrangements coming into effect over the next two years, the role of CCETs will inevitably become more intimately concerned with mainstream service planning as a catalyst of change and as a promoter of new ways of delivering services.

ELWa's Regional Committees will be focussing on the demand for learning at the macro-level on a regional basis to help the National Council determine what provision needs to be made available. The CCETs will focus on demand at the micro-level - how supply locally can best be organised to meet to the needs of the learners who wish to access the provision that ELWa decides to fund. I will expect CCETs not just to be the sounding boards for ELWa proposals on the reconfiguration of local provision, but the promoters of such changes.

Q. Does Wales have staff trained to deliver vocational learning qualifications?

A. In terms of the present position GEST recognised the importance of Work Related Education (WRE) and defined WRE as a key area for attention. To support the addition of WRE to the Basic Curriculum we have also ensured that WRE is a priority area for funding in the new Better Schools Fund to run from 2004-05.

There are staff within the FE colleges that have the skills to assist in the delivery of vocational learning within schools. I would hope that we could see the development of partnership arrangements between schools and colleges that would enable this to happen. The existing Cardiff Collegian is good model of what can be achieved through cooperation.

Q. How could meaningful work experience placements be provided?

A. Estyn's view is that work experience is provided for the vast majority of young people and is generally of a good standard. But we recognise that there are problems in finding sufficient placements in some rural areas. We have the advantage in Wales that Careers Wales provide support and advice for schools in the delivery of work experience and schools will also be encouraged to work towards a quality kite mark for work experience to be offered by Careers Wales.

However, the 14-19 developments place an emphasis on work focused learning as part and parcel of programmes of learning. This is a different scenario from "work experience" and will need to be designed to meet the needs of individual programmes of learning. The 14-19 Work Focused Task and Finish Group, whose membership includes employers, is looking at how this can be achieved. We will also be looking to explore innovative practice through pilots.

Q. Would employers accept the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification?

A. Of course it's important that the Welsh Baccalaureate is recognised and accepted by employers. That is why we ensured that employers were represented on the Steering Group for the development of the Welsh Baccalaureate from a very early stage. The recognition of the Welsh Baccalaureate by UCAS is also valuable here as it provides a benchmark by which employers can judge the value of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification. Equally, it is important to recognise that the Welsh Baccalaureate provides the broader education and Key Skills that employers look for in potential employees. Research with employers (such as the recent Future Skills Wales Sgiliau Cymru study) consistently shows that employers value transferable skills at least as highly as traditional qualifications.

Q. Had young people been asked if they believed that GCSE Welsh should be compulsory at Key Stage 4?

A. The requirements for the teaching of Welsh were extensively examined when proposals for the National Curriculum were first developed in the 1980s and early 1990s. It's unlikely that young people were asked for their views at the time - as they routinely would be now.

Q. Would reference to the needs of business be included in the document?

A. I assume this question refers to the 14-19 guidance that we intend to issue in summer 2004. The short answer is yes. 14-19 Learning Pathways recognises the importance of good, appropriate work experience for all 14-19 year olds. We want young people to have the skills that Welsh businesses require to succeed. That's why Work Focused Learning has been identified as one of the key elements of learning pathways. We are already consulting employers - directly and indirectly - and through the findings and recommendations contained in 'Future Skills Wales'. Also, see my response to earlier questions relating to employer and training issues.

4. Welsh Baccalaureate

The pilot for the Welsh Baccalaureate commenced last September in 18 schools and colleges across Wales with a view to roll out to all schools and colleges in September 2007, subject to the findings of the pilot. The qualification is available for post 16 provision at level 2 (intermediate) and level 3 (advanced) of the National Qualifications Framework.

The first cohort of centres are

- Barry Comprehensive School
- Coleg Sir Gâr
- Builth Wells High School
- Deeside College

- Cardinal Newman RC School
- Coleg Glan Hafren
- Coleg Gwent
- Coleg Llandrillo
- Coleg Meirion Dwyfor
- Coleg Morgannwg
- Coleg Powys
- Neath Port Talbot College
- Pen y Dre High School
- Porth County Community School
- St. Albans RC High School
- St. Cyres School
- St. David's Catholic College
- Swansea College

Within the Baccalaureate programme students will continue to take existing general and vocational qualifications – but all students will also follow a Core programme comprising:

- ‘Wales, Europe and the World’ – study of political, social, cultural and economic issues;
- A modern foreign language module;
- An extended individual project;
- Key Skills;
- Personal and Social Education, and a period of community participation;
- Work- Related Education and a period of work experience.

The Welsh Assembly Government is making funding available to the centres to support delivery of the Welsh Baccalaureate. Training and other support is also being provided from the WJEC. I have visited a number of centres where the Bac is being piloted and I have been impressed by the enthusiasm that is being shown by students and staff alike.

Six further centres have been selected to participate in the second cohort. They are:

Ysgol Bryn Elian	Ysgol Gyfun Plasmawr
Ysgol Brynhyfryd	Pembrokeshire College
Ysgol Morgan Llwyd	Coleg Menai

and they will be implementing the Baccalaureate from September 2004.

Later this year, the WJEC will be looking to recruit 6 more centres for the 3rd cohort from September 2005.

As I reported to Committee last October I was particularly pleased that UCAS decided to allocate 120 tariff points to the level 3 Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification, equivalent to an A grade A level. This means that students who successfully complete the Welsh Bac at advanced level will have the equivalent UCAS points score of an A grade GCE A level in addition to the points they earn from their optional studies. This was a significant boost for the centres and for the qualification itself.

This is a distinctively Welsh development which fits well with our proposals for a more flexible and inclusive 14-19 phase.

On 17 February, the English 14 - 19 Working Group chaired by Mike Tomlinson published its Interim Report which recommends a Diploma style qualification for England, which would subsume most other qualifications taken in the 14-19 phase, such as A levels and GCSEs. I am confident that the Welsh Bac is sufficiently flexible so that it could be adapted to accommodate whatever replacement modules might be developed for an English Bac and other qualifications from the National Qualifications Framework. I am sure that the lessons which will emerge from the Welsh Bac will inform thinking in England in the longer term. Later this month, I shall be taking David Miliband, Minister of State for School Standards at the Department for Education and Skills to one of our existing pilot centres and one of the centres which will be joining the project next September.

5. School Transport Bill

The draft Bill and consultation package was published on 8 March jointly by the Department for Education and Skills and the Wales Office. It has been issued to interested parties in Wales with the invitation to comment to the Assembly Government on the proposals by 25 June.

Copies have been sent to members of the ELL and EDT Committees and they are scheduled to give it joint consideration on 28 April.

6. Provision for Gypsies and Travellers

The Equal Opportunities Commission held a review of service provision for Gypsies and Travellers in 2003 and fifty recommendations were made in total. The Department for Training and Education was responsible for responding to sixteen of these recommendations as follows and has made significant progress on all sixteen.

Recommendation 32

That in developing PLASC, the electronic records system, consideration is given to the requirements of mobile groups such as Gypsies and Travellers. Particular attention should be paid to definitions to ensure that they cover all the relevant groups of Gypsies and Travellers and consideration also be given as to whether a PLASC reference can be given to children outside the school system.

Action taken

PLASC currently collects some information on mobile groups via the current ethnicity categories as agreed in public consultation in 2001. The current list has two relevant categories – "Traveller of Irish Heritage" and "Roma / Gypsy Roma".

Additional categories could be added subject to consultation, following which the data could be re-collected from pupils/parents and then form part of PLASC. Schools use commercial software to maintain electronic pupil records from which PLASC returns are generated, any change would therefore require development of school software.

Data, based on existing codes is available now for Secondary pupils as at January 2003, and will be available for all primary, secondary and special school pupils late in the summer term 2004 as at January 2004.

Assigning a PLASC reference or Unique Pupil Number (UPN) to Gypsy or Traveller children currently outside the education system is more difficult.

- Those children who have been on roll at a maintained school in England or Wales for any length of time since Sep 2002 will have been issued with a UPN. Should the pupil move outside the maintained sector after May 2004 (subject to approval and Regulation) the 'lost pupil database' could hold their educational record until they re-enter the maintained sector. See also recommendation 45.
- Assigning a UPN to those pupils who have never been on roll at a maintained school in England or Wales is more problematic. In terms of data protection it is not sufficient to say that pupils need a UPN just so that they can be counted (recommendation 3). Further it is unclear how such numbers could be issued given their dependence on LEA and school numbers and maintained.

Further information would be required on the issue of UPNs to pupils not in the maintained schools system before a more considered decision could be

A public consultation on the Individual Pupil Data project was held in July 2003.

The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (Wales) Regulations 2003, came in to force on 31st December 2003, in time for the January 2004 PLASC.

Recommendation 33

LEAs Education Strategic Plans should include detailed information on how they intend to meet the

educational needs of Gypsies and Travellers in their area and how they will remove barriers to access and attainment.

Action taken

The current ESP requirements (for period 2002-05) require LEAs to include information on Traveller children. Although LEAs can be requested to provide additional information to that specified in the ESP Regulations in their two interim Supplementary Plans, there is no legal requirement for them to provide any information that is not specified in the Regulations. The next full Plan period, for which new Regulations will need to be made, is 2005-08.

However, ESP requirements are likely to be reviewed before the next round of full Plans is due in 2005. It is likely that the existing requirements will be streamlined - in all probability by reducing the amount of information currently requested. Any proposals for additional requirements will need to be looked at in the context of the review of ESP requirements.

No undertaking can therefore be given at present that any new requirements will be added.

Recommendation 34

That the Assembly Government put the mechanisms in place to monitor how effectively LEAs are meeting their statutory duty to educate Gypsy and Traveller children, for example by including consideration of the effectiveness of LEA provision in Estyn's remit for inspections of schools and LEAs.

Action taken

Estyn will be commissioned in the remit letter for 2005-06 for monitoring to begin during that year.

This will require them to undertake inspections of a sample of LEA's providing Traveller education in order to find out whether they are meeting their duty to educate Gypsy/Traveller pupils.

One of the conditions of the Education of Travellers and Displaced Persons Grant Scheme is that LEAs allocated funding have to provide a report on the type of services that they provide to this community.

Pupil Support Division checks the information contained in the reports annually.

Recommendation 35

That the Assembly Government's Department for Training and Education (DfTE) updates Circular 52/90 on meeting the Education needs of Travellers to cover existing best practice in Gypsy and Traveller education. The revised circular should be drawn up in consultation with service providers,

Gypsies and Travellers

Action taken

DfTE has established a Local Education Authority orientated working group in order to raise awareness in this area. The first Meeting was held in December 2003.

The process to update Circular 52/90 will begin in April 2004. The target date is to have a draft copy worked up by Autumn 2004 to put out to consultation. The new circular should then be issued with invitations for the 2005-06 bidding round.

Recommendation 36

That the funding available for the Section 488 Grant be increased to enable support for specialist "Traveller Education Services" or similar in all LEAs with a Gypsy and Traveller population

Action taken

The Traveller Education Working Group will consider this recommendation.

The Section 488 grant will increase by £100,000 on the 2003-04 total to £900,000 for 2004-05.

Recommendation 37

That schools with Gypsy-Travellers living within their catchment area should be given targets for access, continuing attendance and attainment by Gypsy-Traveller pupils

Action taken

The Traveller Education Working Group will consider this recommendation.

Further consideration on the feasibility of this recommendation will need to be given in terms of whether guidance should be issued to schools.

In terms of attendance schools do already set attendance targets for their pupil population. There are Traveller Co-ordinators in most authority areas that seek to arrange a continuity of education provision as far as possible (with the assistance of the Assembly grant).

Recommendation 38

That schools should ensure their anti-bullying and anti-racism strategies include specific reference to Gypsies and Travellers.

Action taken

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 requires all schools to have in place a Race Equality Policy setting out how they will tackle racism and promote good race relations.

In September 2003, DfTE issued the first comprehensive national guidance on bullying for schools and other relevant parties (National Assembly for Wales's Circular 23/2003, 'Respecting Others: Anti-Bullying Guidance'). The guidance specifically addresses 'racist' bullying and describes it as "bullying of children on the grounds of their race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin and includes bullying of Roma Gypsy children, children who are Travellers of Irish Heritage, children from Scotland, England and Ireland". The guidance also recommends that schools' anti-bullying and equal opportunities policies refer explicitly to these issues, so that pupils know that discrimination is wrong and that the school will act.

Recommendation 39

That training provided to teachers and other staff in schools must include guidance on removing barriers to Gypsies and Travellers accessing education. This should begin at teacher training stage and be part of the continuous professional development of staff.

Action taken

The requirements for initial teacher training (ITT) courses and the Qualified Teacher Status standards are set out in Welsh Office Circular 13/98, which is under review. An initial consultation was held in March 2003. The recommendation will be factored into the review of the detail of the ITT Circular, which is planned for draft publication in a second stage of the consultation during 2004-05.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is aimed at meeting the individual needs of the teacher, as perceived by the teacher and identified either as part of their performance management arrangements or within the school development plan. The issues of compulsory training, and reaching all teachers, may need to be addressed through the use of inset days with the LEAs.

Recommendation 40

That the guidance in the revised Circular 52/90 should include advice on additional homework support for Gypsy and Traveller children.

Action taken

The process to update Circular 52/90 will begin in April 2004. The target date is to have a draft copy worked up by Autumn 2004 to put out to consultation. The new circular should then be issued with invitations for the 2005-06 bidding round.

Recommendation 41

That schools review their curriculum, lesson plans and course material to ensure that it is relevant to

Gypsy-Traveller pupils and, where appropriate, it draws on examples from Gypsy-Traveller culture.

Action taken

This recommendation is primarily for schools but to assist them in this task the following has already been done or is in the pipeline

ACCAC published comprehensive guidance "Equal Opportunities and Diversity in the School Curriculum in Wales" in 2001. This emphasises the opportunities to teach and learn about issues of equality and diversity so that young people in Wales will value the contributions of all citizens of disability, gender, race, ethnic origin, language, religion, sexual orientation or age. It also illustrates how schools can plan and provide effective education about equal opportunities through the curriculum and on a whole school basis. The "Roots to Torfaen" project cited in the Committee's Report features as one of the exemplars in ACCAC's guidance.

The draft Estyn remit for 2004-05 includes survey work to assess the impact of ACCAC's guidance Publication March 2005.

Subject to the findings of the above survey, Estyn may be asked to produce a best practice guide on ways in which the curriculum, lessons plans and course materials can be made to have greater relevance for gypsy and traveller pupils. This will also be included in the Estyn remit letter for 2005-06

Recommendation 42

That the Assembly Government should ensure that any activity to review the National Curriculum to tackle racism and promote tolerance includes specific consideration of Gypsies and Travellers

Action taken

The next review of the National Curriculum and associated assessment arrangements is being conducted against a range of policy contexts including specifically the Assembly Government's "underlying themes of equal opportunities, social inclusion and any emerging issues from the Social Justice portfolio. In addition, ACCAC is being provided with copies of the evidence on the curriculum that was made available to the Equal Opportunities Committee as part of its Review.

ACCAC's consolidated advice is expected in April 2004. Detailed proposals for revised curriculum and assessment arrangements will be drawn up thereafter.

Recommendation 43

That the Assembly Government considers making provision for additional flexibility in the National Curriculum at key stages 2, 3 and 4 to meet the needs of Gypsy-Traveller children.

Action taken

Curriculum flexibility in the round is an issue being addressed by ACCAC as part of its Review of the National Curriculum and associated assessment arrangements. Flexibility at KS4 is also addressed through Learning Pathways 14 –19.

Further consideration is needed as to whether the difficulty lies not so much in intrinsic inflexibility in the curriculum itself but in its interpretation, planning and implementation at individual school level

ACCAC's consolidated advice expected April 2004. Implementation of revised curriculum yet to be decided

Recommendation 44

That the Assembly Government pays particular attention to transition between primary and secondary education and that additional support is made available to Gypsy and Traveller pupils to enable them to make the transition effectively

Action taken

This recommendation is to be considered by the Education Traveller Working Group.

The Assembly Traveller grant supports schemes run by LEAs to educate and encourage the parents of Traveller pupils (and of course the pupils themselves) of the benefits of secondary education. The working group will look at innovative ways in which the grant can be used to further facilitate and encourage Traveller pupils to move on to secondary education.

Transition for Gypsy/Traveller children should be examined alongside the wider transition agenda on which advice is expected from Estyn in early 2004.

The process to update Circular 52/90 will begin in April 2004. The target date is to have a draft copy worked up by Autumn 2004 to put out to consultation. The new circular should then be issued with invitations for the 2005-06 bidding round.

Recommendation 45

That the Assembly Government ensures that any proposed system for transfer of pupils and data sharing takes account of the situation of Gypsy-Traveller pupils.

Action taken

We are working to implement a common transfer system across Wales that will also allow for cross border transfers in and out of England. The system allows for the electronic exchange of data on pupils when they move school. The data includes current codes on ethnic background.

Any additional fields created in the CBDS and incorporated into PLASC (see response to recommendation 32) in the future could be added to the CTS file at an appropriate point in the development round.

We have recently published the specification for May 2004 software releases so the next viable date for inclusion of any new fields would be on the May 2005 software release to schools.

Some schools are using the system on a voluntary basis. Subject to approval it is intended that all transfers outside of a LEA, or where a destination school is not known will use the secure transfer site to transfer files.

Where the destination school is not known the file is stored in a 'lost pupils database' which will be searchable. Traveller files could be stored here pending the child's arrival in another maintained school in the future.

Development of the 'lost' pupils' database where records for pupils leaving the maintained sector would be located is however in the very early stages of development.

Data as per current approved categories can travel by the secure transfer site currently but only where schools volunteer to use the system.

Subject to Ministerial approval all schools will be required to use the system from May 2004.

Recommendation 46

That schools should aim to make learning relevant to the whole family through the development of supported literacy groups etc

Action taken

Family Literacy and Family Numeracy programs are available in schools across Wales, and currently 9,000 parents and children are participating. LEAs identify the schools that will run the programmes based on local analysis of need. The Basic Skills Agency provides considerable help and support through the Assembly Government's National Basic Skills Strategy.

Recommendation 47

That schools actively encourage family members involvement in the life of the school, for example involvement in Parent Teacher Associations/Boards of Governors or by offering opportunities to work as teaching assistants.

Action Taken

Guidance Circular on Community Focussed Schools, that deals with the engagement of family members in the life of schools issued in December 2003

Recommendation 48

That consideration be given to the role of education in schools, at home and via distance learning and that having done so the guidance on education otherwise than at school is revised to ensure that its provisions are being applied appropriately.

Action taken

Discussions on the revision to the guidance on this area (currently contained in Circular 3/99) began in March 2003, with a view to developing final revised guidance in spring 2004.

7. Review of initial teacher training provision – update

I have said that I want to look at how the provision for initial teacher training - in terms of intake targets, courses and course availability - can deliver teachers with Qualified Teacher Status to better meet the needs of maintained schools in Wales. We have commissioned a scoping study to look at the precise areas a review of the provision for initial teacher training (ITT) should cover, the terms of reference for such a review and recommendations on how it might be conducted.

The scoping study has been undertaken by Mr Mike Haines of Optima Learning. The fieldwork has been completed. This included interviews with 22 organisations (including representatives of schools, all eight HE providers of ITT and other key partners with an interest in ITT). A number of other organisations also submitted or referred to documentary evidence relevant to the study.

Consultees were invited to comment on both the general need for a review of ITT provision in Wales and the weight that a review, if needed, should give to specific aspects of the planning and delivery of ITT outlined in the terms of reference for the scoping study. They were also invited to comment on what should be the terms of reference for a review, and how a review might be carried out in terms of its timing and methodology.

The essential purpose of such of a review would be about aiming to ensure that we get the right sorts of qualified teachers, in the right numbers, for the future. A review would look at all teacher needs, but within this we would certainly want to look at areas such as priority subjects (e.g. maths, science and modern languages); coverage for the foundation phase and how that links to current primary numbers; and Welsh medium / Welsh as a second language.

We are progressing with this work on initial teacher training provision as one of a number of initiatives centred on delivering the teachers we want, with the right skills, for the future. Other elements include revising the initial teacher training circular so that, within the overall aim of ensuring that students are trained to deliver the National Curriculum, ITT courses properly reflect the need for students to be aware

of the importance of valuing diversity and recognising pupils' circumstances. The measures adopted on induction and early professional development; and the work we have asked the GTCW to do on developing a Professional Standards Framework to guide teachers' continuing professional development will enable teachers to develop to meet changing requirements and raise pupil achievement.

A draft report of the scoping study is now nearing completion and I expect to be able to circulate the completed report and my proposals for the next steps to the Committee in the Spring.

8. Devolution of Student Support and HE Bill

The Devolution of Student Support project is progressing well. Two of the main priorities for the project at the moment are the passage of the HE Bill and stakeholder engagement.

On 5 February I launched a new website which will provide information about the devolution of the student support system and tuition fees regime to Wales aimed at main stakeholders - students, parents, LEAS and HEIs. It is hoped that it will help to dispel many misunderstandings, particularly about tuition fees policy and the implications for Welsh students and HEIs.

The website can be accessed from the Learning Wales website – <http://www.learning.wales.gov.uk>

A second stakeholder project workshop was held on 25 February in North Wales and was attended by representatives of HEIs, county council student support officers, the NUS, DfES and the Student Loans Company. The workshop was well received and focused on project benefits realisation. A report will be prepared and published on the project website shortly.

A third stakeholder workshop is planned for July.

On 28 January Don Touhig MP briefed the ELL Committee on the provisions of the Higher Education Bill. The Higher Education Bill has now completed its passage through Standing Committee in the House of Commons. The proceedings of the Committee are available on the parliamentary website at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmstand/h/cmhigh.htm>

Don Touhig MP has been in attendance, and the Wales Office, Assembly and Department for Education and Skills continue to work closely on the management of the Bill.

The Bill will next progress to Report Stage and Third Reading in the Commons. This is likely to be towards the end of March.

9. HEFCW 2004-05 remit letter

I sent the 2004-05 remit letter for the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) to the authority on 11 February. A copy of the letter and annexes has been placed on

<http://www.learning.wales.gov.uk>

10. ELWA'S Procurement Of Work Based Learning Provision

On 4 March, ELWa invited training organisations to submit tenders for Work Based Learning contracts over the next year. Prospective tenderers completed a pre-qualification questionnaire before Christmas and ELWa has now invited 126 organisations selected following that exercise to submit tenders. New contracts will begin in August 2004 and run until August 2005 when ELWa's new Planning and Funding System goes live. Tenders will be submitted on a standard price basis for the first time. ELWa inherited different pricing arrangements from the former TECs and has been working to gradually harmonise the different rates across Wales. The tender process and price harmonisation will enable ELWa to bid for £52 million of European Structural Funds over the next three years.

A successful ESF bid would mean up to 10,000 more young people and adults benefiting from skills programmes such as Modern Apprenticeships, Foundation Modern Apprenticeships and Modern Skills Diplomas. Additional ESF funding would also assist low-skilled young people through the Skill-Build programme and help more unemployed adults to get the training they need to return to work.

11. Wales Employment Advisory Panel

I am pleased to inform you that, in accordance with the National Assembly's appointments procedures, the Wales Employment Advisory Panel has now been established.

The Panel is the successor body to the Wales New Deal Advisory Task Force, and will provide independent advice to the Welsh Assembly Government on the development, implementation and delivery in Wales of the New Deal and other Welfare to Work programmes.

The ELL Committee's interests in the appointments process have been overseen by the two members of the Committee nominated to oversee public appointments (namely, the Chair and Jeff Cuthbert).

The key role for the Panel will be to help shape Welfare to Work provision to meet the particular circumstances and needs of communities and people across Wales, ensuring that the activities of Jobcentre Plus complement the policies and programmes of the Welsh Assembly Government, and vice versa. It will also contribute to the Welsh Assembly Government's work on raising economic activity levels throughout Wales.

The Panel consists of 17 members, possessing a wide variety of skills and attributes and representing a range of relevant interests (including employers; training providers; trades unions; the voluntary sector;

and equal opportunities interests). I consider that, with this composition, the Panel will be able to take forward its role and remit with great purpose, and make an important contribution to the Welsh Assembly Government's economic and social agenda.

Six of the 17 members served on the Wales New Deal Task Force, and this will ensure continuity. The Chair of the Panel is Ruth Marks, Chief Executive of Chwarae Teg, the leading agency within Wales to promote the economic development of women. As Chair, she will also be a member of the UK-wide National Employment Panel, enabling an effective exchange of information on developments on the Welfare to Work agenda, and on issues which are particularly relevant to Wales.

I will be attending the first meeting of the Panel, in Cardiff on 24 March, and I also intend to say more about the role of the Panel in my Plenary Statement about the progress of the New Deal in Wales, on 31 March.

12. Conversion of Arts and Humanities Research Board to Arts and Humanities Research Council: Transfer of Funding

The Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB) was established in 1998 to support research and postgraduate work in the arts and humanities. It is funded by the three Higher Education Funding Councils, the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland and the British Academy.

A review of the AHRB was commissioned in September 2001. Following a consultation exercise, the review concluded that it should become a Research Council to put the funding and planning of the arts and humanities on a par with that for science and engineering. The then ELL Committee's review of HE in Wales supported that position. All relevant Ministers endorsed the recommendation and announced in January 2003 that the AHRB would become a Research Council funded primarily by the Office of Science and Technology. The former Finance Minister approved in principal the necessary financial transfers to effect the decision.

It has now been agreed to transfer £1.747 million to DTI/OST. This sum is consistent with the provisional allocation that HEFCW has already notified to the AHRB for 2005-6. The Higher Education Bill currently before Parliament contains the legislation setting up the AHRC.

13. Comparisons of School Budgets in Wales and England 2003-04

When we discussed budgets set by local authorities for schools in Wales on July 2003 (paper ELL(2)03-03) , I agreed that the comparison with budgets set in England would be provided when the data was available. This analysis has now been done and the paper appended to my report at Annex D with Tables at Annex E shows the position.

The key points to note from this analysis are :

- Average budgeted per pupil spend in Wales in 2003-04 was £3,668 compared with £3,377 in the previous year (table 1 and chart 1). The overall budget per pupil for England was £3,697; £3,604 excluding London (table 2);
- The range was from £3,343 in Flintshire to £4,358 in Ceredigion (table 1 and chart 1);
- Between 1990-91 and 2002-03 spending (excluding nursery provision but including provision for post 16 provision) per pupil in Wales has increased in real terms by 29.1% compared with 25.8% in England (table 3 and chart 3);
- Cross border comparisons show per pupil budgets higher in mid and South East Wales than the neighbouring English authorities (table 4);
- Average primary school size in Wales is 167 pupils compared with 229 pupils in England. Average secondary school size in Wales is 944 pupils compared with 962 pupils in England. Pupil/teacher ratio in the primary sector in Wales is 20.8, lower compared with England at 21.9, and slightly higher in both the secondary and special sectors (tables 5 and 6).

14. Secondary Legislation

The programme of potential forthcoming secondary legislation is provided at annex B.

Draft Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004

The proposed regulations are a consequence of the second triennial review of the licensing regime carried out by DfES on behalf of England, Scotland and Wales in 2003, which involved consultation with interested parties in the three countries.

Under the Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act 1995 and the associated Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996 Government regulates climbing, caving, remote trekking and non-powered water borne activity where these are provided commercially or by a local authority to young people aged under 18.

The current regulations cover the licensing of activity centres in England, Wales and Scotland as there is a need to maintain an equality of standards and recognise the considerable cross border flows of people using the centres.

Inspectors check young people's safety at adventure centres in accordance with the 1996 Regulations. There have been no changes since 1996 to the regulations or the fees they prescribe. The 2003 review showed that respondents supported licensing and wished it to continue.

The authority running the inspections (the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority - AALA) is facing increasing difficulties in managing the inspection calendar and this in turn is leading to increased costs.

The intention is to revoke the existing regulations and make new ones which will apply to England,

Wales and Scotland. The proposed regulations would change inspection timings by separating inspection from licence renewal so that AALA will be able to inspect a provider's facilities at any time during the 12 months prior to licence expiry. The proposed regulations will also raise the level of fees in line with inflation, in order to keep a balance between costs falling on licensees and their customers, and costs falling on general tax-payers who subsidise each licence through DfES grant-in-aid to AALA.

Under the National Assembly for Wales (Transfer of Functions) Order 1999 (S.I. 1999/672) all the functions of the Secretary of State under the Activity Centres (Young Persons') Act 1995, including functions of the Secretary of State under 1996 Regulations, were transferred to the National Assembly for Wales in relation to Wales. In accordance with the delegation arrangements under Section 62 of the Government of Wales Act 1998 the matters involved fall within my portfolio.

The Assembly First Legislative Counsel has been consulted and is of the view that the functions in the proposed 2004 Regulations could be separated so that they could be exercised in relation to Wales. The Regulations therefore need to reflect that they are made in exercise of the powers conferred on the Assembly. The Regulations also refer to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. This Act is not devolved and therefore the National Assembly Government would need the Secretary of State for Education and Skills to exercise these powers on our behalf.

There is provision under Standing Order 23 section 3, for subordinate legislation that is made (whether jointly or not) together with a Minister of the UK Government, to be laid before the Assembly for approval prior to being laid in Parliament. Standing Order 23.9 provides that the Minister lays the draft together with a memorandum explaining its intended effect and any financial implications. The Assembly cannot under this procedure make any amendments, it can only approve or reject the legislation.

Whilst the Assembly could make separate regulations for Wales, given the complication presented by the 1974 Act and the need for a consistent regulatory regime for England, Wales and Scotland, I am satisfied that it is appropriate for there to be one set of regulations covering England, Scotland and Wales and for the Assembly to consider them under Standing Order 23 section 3.

A copy of the proposed regulations is at Annex C to this report. The timetable envisages that the draft regulations would be 27 April 2004 for consideration by Business Committee, considered in plenary on 4 May 2004 and put before Parliament on 5 May 2004. The regulations take account of the views expressed in the consultation carried out last year.

Annex A

Minister's Engagements—25th February 2004 – 16th March 2004

25th February

MTG - Edmund Fivet, Professor Constable and Elizabeth Holowell (Australian Visitors), Cardiff Bay

1st March

SPCH - Regional Conference on Nutrition and Exercise, Cardigan

INTVW - Daily Post, Llandudno

SPCH - Official Opening of Ysgol Brynhyfryd's Assembly funded classroom extension, Ruthin, Denbighshire

2nd March

INTVW - Big Issue - re: proposal for a Federal College for Wales, Cardiff

SPCH - Welsh Books Council's Launch of World Book Day, Cardiff Bay

3rd March

SPCH - Launch the Welsh Language NVQ in Customer Services, Dwr Cymru Cardiff

MTG - AWYPO to discuss Participation definition/statement, Cardiff Bay

4th March

VISIT - Green Lawn Junior School, Torfaen for World Book Day

5th March

SPCH - 'Where are we going?' All Wales Centre Of Excellence For Governor Training And Research Annual Conference, Swansea

MTG - National Chairman and the National Vice-Chairman of PAT, Cardiff Bay

6th March

SPCH - Learning Country Young People's Advisory Group, Tredomen, Caerphilly

8th March

MTG - NUS Wales along with Peter Hain, Cardiff Bay

MTG - Lorraine Barrett and Members of the Penarth Headteacher Cluster, Cardiff Bay

9th March

INTRVW - ACCAC Project - PSE Framework Key Stage Three filming, Cardiff Bay

10th March

SPCH - NIACE Dysgu Cymru Event, Llandrindod Wells

ATTEND - Arts and Humanities Research Board Event, Cardiff

11th March

VISIT - Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Llanfihangel y Creuddyn, Aberystwyth

VISIT Llwyn-yr-Eos School, Junior Artisans Scheme, Aberystwyth

VISIT/SPCH - Ysgol Gyfun Gymunedol Penweddig, Aberystwyth

SPCH - Launch UNISON's WULF Project, Haverfordwest

SPCH - BEd Vocational Training Alumni Society, Cardiff

MTG - Cardiff Governors Association AGM, Cardiff

12th March

INTVW - Nicola Heywood Thomas Show lunchtime, Cardiff

13th March

SPCH - NATFHE Wales Annual Conference, Cardiff

15th March

VISIT - Ysgol Gyfun Bryntawe, Swansea

VISIT - Ysgol Gyfun Gwyr, Swansea

VISIT - Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llwynderw, Swansea

VISIT - Gowerton Comprehensive School, Swansea

SPCH - Launch Cynllun Cyfrwng, Abersytwyth

16th March

SPCH - Evening of Celebration at the Partnership Learning Centre, Cardiff

Annex D

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF LOCAL AUTHORITY BUDGETS FOR SCHOOL SERVICES IN WALES

Purpose

1. To provide an analysis of budgets for schools set by local education authorities for 2003-04, including comparative information for England.

Summary

2. The key points to note from this analysis are :
 - Average budgeted per pupil spend in Wales in 2003-04 was £3,668 compared with £3,377 in the previous year (table 1 and chart 1). The overall budget per pupil for England was £3,697; £3,604 excluding London (table 2);
 - The range was from £3,343 in Flintshire to £4,358 in Ceredigion (table 1 and chart 1);
 - Between 1990-91 and 2002-03 spending (excluding nursery provision but including provision for post 16 provision) per pupil in Wales has increased in real terms by 29.1% compared with 25.8% in England (table 3 and chart 3);
 - Cross border comparisons show per pupil budgets higher in mid and South East Wales than the neighbouring English authorities (table 4);
 - Average primary school size in Wales is 167 pupils compared with 229 pupils in England. Average secondary school size in Wales is 944 pupils compared with 962 pupils in England. Pupil/teacher ratio in the primary sector in Wales is 20.8, lower compared with England at 21.9, and slightly higher in both the secondary and special sectors (tables 5 and 6).

Introduction

1. This paper analyses the resources that local authorities budgeted to make available for school services in 2003-04. The paper makes comparisons between Welsh local education authorities and between the Wales average and the regional averages in England. There is also brief consideration of the historical trend.
2. The figures for Wales are sourced from the same data that was used to produce the report on the Welsh local authorities education budgets for 2003/04. That report was presented to the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee as part of the Minister's report on 10 July 2003 ([paper ELL \(2\) 02-03](#)).

Data sources

3. The main source of financial information for 2003-04 is the budget returns made by local education authorities under Section 52 of the School Standards and Framework Act, 1998 (section 52 returns). The format and coverage of this return is similar in Wales and England. There are differences in the detail.
4. This return gives the basic details of each local authority schools budgets. The key components are the budgets delegated to individual schools; a breakdown of the funding for those services for schools which are not delegated; the total budget for schools services; and the budget for non-schools education.
5. Numbers of schools, pupils, teachers and free school meals are taken from the annual schools census. The census returns used in Wales and England are similar, but there are differences in detail.

Description of the analysis of 2003-04 budgets

6. The analysis of 2003-04 budgets is in two parts:
 - o Individual education authorities within Wales (table 1 and chart 1).
 - o Wales average and English regional averages (table 2 and chart 2).

The English regions used for the comparison are sub-divisions of the 9 standard regions. For the purposes of this work, London has been split to show inner and outer London separately. Other regions have been split into metropolitan and non-metropolitan components. Thus the north west region is divided into the metropolitan area – Liverpool and Manchester – and the non-metropolitan area – Cumbria, Lancashire, Cheshire etc.

For the different areas, tables 1 and 2 show the following information:

- Overall budget per pupil. This shows the budget for all school services. It includes funding for those services delegated to schools and for those provided centrally by the LEA. It includes funding from specific government grants (such as GEST and the Standards Fund).
- Delegated budget per pupil. This shows the budget delegated to individual schools. The figures are net of specific grants since in Wales delegated budgets are recorded net of any specific grants. However because in England some of the delegated funding is in the form of specific grants, LEAs in Wales appear to delegate a higher proportion of their overall school budget than their English counterparts.

These variables are shown as an amount and as a difference from the Wales average.

Charts 1 and 2 summarise the overall budget per pupil within Wales and for Wales and the English regions. The solid line on chart 1 represents the Wales average and on chart 2 the Wales and England average.

Tables 5 and 6 contain the following information:

- Number of LEAs in the area
- Full time equivalent pupil numbers. Total number for nursery, primary, secondary and special schools. Nursery classes in primary schools are included. Pupil referral units are excluded.
- Average school size. Average school size for nursery, primary, secondary and special schools using full time equivalent pupils. Nursery classes in primary schools are included. Pupil referral units are excluded.
- Pupil teacher ratio. Total full time equivalent pupils divided by total full time equivalent teachers for nursery, primary, secondary and special schools. Nursery classes in primary schools are included. Pupil referral units are excluded.
- Share of pupils entitled to free school meals. This is for nursery, primary, secondary and special schools. Nursery classes in primary schools are included. Excludes pupil referral units. This variable is included as a proxy for the level of deprivation.

These variables are shown as an amount and as a difference from the Wales average.

Historical trend in spend on school services

Table 3 shows the trends in spend on schools services, pupil numbers and spend per pupil from 1990-91 to 2002-03. The figures are based on final outturn expenditure except for 2002-03 for England where budgets have been used. Budget figures are also shown for 2003-04, although differences in the definitions for the budget forms for England and Wales make comparisons less reliable.

During this period there have been several functional changes. It is not always possible to properly adjust the figures to take account of these changes. The major changes to be aware of are:

- Grant Maintained schools. Introduced in 1990-91 and returned to local authority funding in April 1999. The expenditure includes for this period the sums deducted from local authority funds to pay for grant maintained schools.
- Removal of further and higher education from LEA control. This occurred in 1992-93 and 1993-94. The main effect on schools funding was the removal of sixth form colleges. This involved only two colleges in Wales, but had more impact in England. No attempt has been made to adjust the figures for this change.

Comparison between authorities on the Wales-England border

Table 4 provides a breakdown of school expenditure between delegated expenditure and elements of central expenditure for authorities in Wales and England. This allows a comparison of the elements of expenditure across the border.

Description of the background data (tables 5 and 6)

Table 5 looks at the characteristics of LEAs in Wales. Table 6 shows similar information in terms of the averages for Wales and the English regions. This information shows the differences between the various areas and helps to explain the differences in the budget data.

The source of the information is the annual census of schools, taken at January each year. The data presented here are from the January 2003 census and so relate to the 2002-2003 academic year. This gives a mismatch with the budget data, which are based on the 2003-04 financial year. For the purposes of this paper it is reasonable to assume that the two sets of data are consistent at the level of detail being considered.

Further information

The information presented in this paper draws on a large amount of information held by the National Assembly about spending on, and activity in, schools. More detailed analyses are available on request.

The standard published sources are as follows:

- Welsh Local Government Finance Statistics, 2003
- Schools in Wales: General Statistics 2003

Recent National Assembly statistical publications are available on the Assembly web site. These can be found at:

<http://www.wales.gov.uk/keypubstatisticsforwales/index.htm>

The Statistics Directorate holds the centrally collected information. Details of what data are available can be obtained from.

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