

# **ELL(2) 13-04 (p.1)**

## **Education and Lifelong Learning Committee**

**Date:** 13 October 2004

**Time:** 9.00 am

**Venue:**

**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. EMA Grants for 16 Year Olds Continuing in Education**

Having been successfully piloted for up to five years in parts of England, the Education Maintenance Allowance(EMA) is being rolled out throughout England and introduced in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland for this academic year. The EMA, which provides a weekly, means-tested allowance of up to £30, is being made available to 16 year olds in the first year and extended to include 17 year olds next year and 18 year olds the year after. The pilot schemes led to a significant increase in numbers returning to school or college after their compulsory schooling period had ended. The number who drop out of their courses was reduced. And there is also evidence that their performance at their studies actually improved as well.

The Education Maintenance Allowance Wales scheme is being delivered on the Assembly's behalf by the Student Loans Company (SLC). It is also delivering the Northern Ireland EMA scheme and our two administrations have worked closely in developing the delivery mechanism.

An initial information pack was sent to all schools and colleges in July before the summer break and information leaflets were issued to students with their GCSE results in August. Familiarisation sessions were held throughout Wales in early September for key staff from schools and colleges which were then issued with stocks of application forms.

There will be further training sessions in October and November for schools administrative staff on inputting attendance data on to the SLC's secure intranet and administering learning agreements. Once fully trained, staff will be able to activate their schools' webpages and payments, backdated to the

beginning of term, will begin.

I acknowledge that there will be additional administrative work caused for schools and colleges by the introduction of the EMA scheme and am therefore making funding available in recognition of this. All schools and colleges with ten or more EMA recipients will get £70 per annum per EMA recipient for the first two years of the scheme. After that the funding will need to be reviewed as part of the ongoing discussion with Treasury over funding for the EMA scheme in general.

The scheme is operating similarly across the UK.

## **2. Research into Student Preferences**

The Committee has previously asked me what research the Government has commissioned into student preferences. I can now inform you that as part of a joint research programme between the Assembly Government and the Economic and Social Research Council, we will be funding research into the relationship between access to and distribution of higher education and students' employment decisions.

The four year project will commence in October 2004 and will provide important information on the relationship between choices regarding location of study and location of employment. It will look at how Welsh students make decisions about where to study and what the impact is upon career options and decisions. It will extend understanding of the relationship between geographical mobility and career ambitions /opportunities.

This project will examine the educational and career choices of Welsh students, and those of students studying in Wales, through two key transitional periods: as they move from tertiary to higher education and then from higher education into the labour market.

It will be undertaken in the Department of Geography at Liverpool University and will incorporate a mixed methods approach:

The first part of the project will utilise secondary data to map the geography of Higher Education participation in Wales based on analysis of the 2001 Census and data on student enrolment. This will be used to explore the relationship between the geographical distribution of Higher Education Institutes (HEIs), youth population and enrolment in HEIs providing a preliminary map.

The second part of the project involves a web based survey (available in English and Welsh) of third year students in a number of HEIs across Wales which will explore students' intentions on graduating. The third part of the project will involve interviews with students in their final year of undergraduate study will explore their decisions to move or stay at home for HE, their current experience and what their intentions are following graduation.

## **3. Progress Report on Training Grants offered by ELWa**

ELWa is responsible for the funding and planning of post 16 learning in Wales, including FE provision, school sixth forms, work based learning and community learning. Funding of these core programmes accounts for approximately 90% of ELWa's total annual budget.

ELWa provides individual support to learners undertaking Work Based Learning. Support includes funding towards travel, accommodation, and childcare, in addition to other relevant costs for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. For 2004-05, the relevant budget was some £2m. Individuals undertaking work-based learning are also entitled to learning allowances of up to £50 a week. Learning allowances for adult learners are paid by Job Centre Plus; allowances for other work-based learners are met by providers out of funding made available by ELWa.

ELWa also supports learner-commissioned provision through its Individual Learning Accounts Wales scheme. Since the launch of ILA Wales in July 2003, almost 7000 applications have been approved and this has resulted in the approval of some 3500 course bookings.

ELWa also supports individuals through its ReAct scheme which allows it to respond quickly and positively to redundancy situations. ReAct aims to provide redundant individuals with the skills necessary to secure new and sustainable employment. During 2003-04, ELWa made available £3.6m for the ReAct scheme, enabling over 3200 redundant individuals to be supported.

The learners that ELWa supports are able to access a range of funding initiatives to support them through the learning process. Such initiatives include Education Maintenance Allowances and Assembly Learning Grants. In addition ELWa funds Further Education Institutions to operate Financial Contingency Funds (FCFs), currently £7m per annum, to assist learners to remain in education.

#### **4. Skills and Employment Action Plan**

We have received an excellent response to the consultation on the Skills and Employment Action Plan 2004. 106 responses have been received and, in general, these have been fully supportive of the proposed actions. A summary of the responses will be published on the internet when the final version of the Action Plan is issued. This is expected to be towards the end of the year, taking into account the outcome of ELWa's Workplace Learning Review.

There has been overwhelming support for free basic skills tuition and the majority of respondents were keen that there should be a continuation of the all age approach with equal importance given to lifting the performance of those in work as in early years and school provision.

#### **5. Report on the Impact of the Draft Charities Bill on the Regulation of FEI'S HEI's, Voluntary and Independent Schools and ACCAC**

The Charities Act 1993 places a duty on the Charity Commissioners to continue to keep a register of

charities in which every charity must be entered, unless excepted. An exempt charity is one that is largely exempt from the Charity Commissioner's jurisdiction. Such exempt charities include:

- Higher education institutions
- Further education institutions
- Foundation, voluntary and independent schools
- ACCAC
- Church Commissioners
- Housing Associations
- Museums and Galleries

The draft Charities Bill contains provisions to regulate exempt charities in order for them to continue to enjoy the status and benefits of a charity. In Wales, the Assembly Government has determined that the Charity Commission should regulate

- Higher education institutions
- Further education institutions
- Foundation and voluntary schools
- ACCAC
- Church Commissioners
- Housing Associations – bodies that describe themselves as Housing Associations but are not Registered Social Landlords registered with the Assembly.

The Assembly will regulate:

- Housing associations – bodies which are registered by the Assembly.

The proposals are designed to provide a greater degree of accountability for charities which are currently exempted from the requirement to register with the Charity Commission. The monitoring arrangements already in place for these organisations will be extended to include basic charity law requirements.

FEI's

Further Education Corporations (FECs) are exempt charities and as such, although subject to Charity Law, are not subject to scrutiny by the regulatory body (the Charity Commission) at present. In regard to the new bill, officials considered that it would be proper for the Charity Commission to regulate FECs in Wales. Similarly, officials also considered that it would be appropriate for the Charity Commission to regulate Higher Education charities in Wales.

FECs, as exempt charities, are already subject to Charity Law, therefore the only change arising from the legislation would be to make their compliance with Charity Law subject to the scrutiny of the Regulatory body. Future scrutiny of the FEIs need not be excessively onerous as FECs must already

comply with the law in this area.

## Independent Schools

Of the 62 registered independent schools in Wales, 27 currently hold registered charity status. Currently they are exempt from the Charity Commissioner's jurisdiction (see above). However under the proposed Charities Bill they must in future meet certain conditions if they are to remain exempt and thereby continue to enjoy the status and benefits of such a position. The Bill, as presently drafted, provides up to twelve possible ways this might be achieved and in so doing meet the public benefit criterion. One means would be for them to offer bursaries and scholarships.

I have held discussions with representatives of the independent schools sector in Wales and they are broadly content to work positively and constructively to meet this particular criterion.

## **6. ACCAC ADVICE ON THE REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

In May ACCAC submitted its consolidated advice on the review of the school curriculum and assessment arrangements. This coincided with the Daugherty Assessment Review Group's advice on the future of assessment for 11 and 14 year olds. I have already given full consideration to both sets of advice as they relate to assessment and made a full statement to plenary on 13 July.

ACCAC's high level advice on the curriculum, has very recently been issued as a published document. It is also available on their website : <http://www.accac.org.uk/>

I have been considering ACCAC's advice but I have yet to respond formally to the Authority. I intend to do so soon. Before that Members may wish to comment on the recommendations :

### Curriculum 5 to 14

It is recommended that:

- the National Curriculum Orders are revised to develop a learner- centred, skills-focused curriculum that is relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup> century and inclusive of all learners. The aim should be for the revised curriculum to be first taught in September 2008;
- the PSE framework is updated and published as part of the school curriculum to be first taught in September 2008;
- the Welsh Assembly Government should consider, as a long-term goal, the vision of a radically revised curriculum that is more overtly learner-centred and skills-focused, and not necessarily

subject based;

- ACCAC should co-ordinate a programme to develop, publish and disseminate guidance and support continuing professional development, with the aim that the revised curriculum will be first taught in September 2008; and
- the Welsh Assembly Government should consider ways in which schools can ensure that all pupils have opportunities to engage with, and extend their learning in, the arts.

## Curriculum, assessment and qualifications 14 to 16

It is recommended that:

- English, Welsh (as a first or second language), mathematics, science and physical education remain mandatory subjects at Key Stage 4;
- the Key Stage 4 Programmes of Study in English, Welsh, Welsh Second Language, mathematics and science should be revised. The revision should reduce the level of prescription in these subjects sufficiently to allow qualifications that provide different, more inclusive pathways through each subject, giving learners greater opportunities for choice and participation. The revised Programmes of Study for English, Welsh, Welsh Second Language, and Mathematics should link explicitly with the requirements of the related Key Skill. Formal consultation on a revised Programme of Study for Science should be based on the content within the Programmes of Study developed for Science in England;
- ICT should become a part of the mandatory curriculum at Key Stage 4. Schools should make provision that allows all students to develop and apply their ICT skills 14-16. The Section 96 Circular should make clear that schools would be expected to enter all those students who could benefit from it for a Key Skill or GCSE qualification or an appropriate Entry Level in ICT;
- the current statutory entitlement to careers education be extended to cover the whole 11-19 age range;
- schools should be required to have regard to the requirements of ACCAC's Careers Education Guidance (CEG) framework in planning provision, thus bringing CEG into line with Personal and Social Education (PSE) and Work Related Education (WRE);
- ACCAC should develop guidance in relation to the skills that are common across CEG, PSE and WRE to help schools coordinate their work in these areas of the curriculum at Key Stage 4. It should include guidance for special schools on recognising the progress of their pupils in these areas;
- ACCAC should extend its PSE framework to cover 16-19 and include advice on opportunities

and progression related to the Curriculum Cymreig at Key Stage 4 as part of the wider guidance that will support the continuum of learning 14-19;

- the Welsh Assembly Government should promote parity across all qualifications at Levels 1 and 2. Achievement in all qualifications at these levels of the National Qualifications Framework should be recognised in national statistics, and, in particular, in performance information;
- ACCAC should develop GCSE criteria, based on revised Programmes of Study for English, Welsh First and Second Language, Mathematics and Science, that define requirements for specifications offering different pathways in these subjects;
- ACCAC should develop GCSE criteria across all subjects that include requirements in relation to assessment of Key Skills;
- ACCAC should continue the work on hybrid GCSEs;
- ACCAC should investigate other subject titles that may be appropriate for the hybrid approach;
- ACCAC should further develop the range of GCSEs in applied subjects, exploring the possibility of single awards;
- ACCAC should explore means of assessment, including internal assessment by teachers, that could reduce the overall assessment burden at Key Stage 4, while ensuring valid and reliable assessments;
- ACCAC should explore the place of coursework across all subjects and ways in which its validity and reliability can be ensured;
- ACCAC should explore how GCSEs can be unitised;
- ACCAC should investigate how to take forward the recommendations related to the mathematics curriculum, assessment and pedagogy within the Smith report on post-14 mathematics ‘Making Mathematics Count’;
- ACCAC should commission research to identify vocational courses that schools have found of value in Key Stage 4, and provide guidance for schools accordingly;
- the guidance that the Assembly Government develops in support of Learning Pathways 14-19 should include advice on how schools should provide appropriate challenges for the most able;
- the appropriateness of approach in all Entry level specifications should be reviewed when these

are next reaccredited, to ensure that they are accessible to learners for whom they were intended ;  
and

- subject to the evaluation of the Welsh Bacculaureate Qualification (WBQ) pilot, the WBQ should be further developed as a qualification to recognise wider achievement for pupils across the 14-19 phase.

## Managing and supporting change

It is recommended that:

- ACCAC disseminates the main findings of the review, the emerging issues and the challenges to be addressed;
- the Welsh Assembly Government, ACCAC and Estyn should develop a clear statement vision for the future school curriculum, assessment arrangements and qualifications and consult key players and interested organisations about that vision; and
- the Welsh Assembly Government, ACCAC and Estyn should work with LEAs and other partners to develop a coordinated and multi-layered approach to change including:
  - an appropriate timescale and funding for the change
  - amendments to the subject Orders and frameworks
  - development programmes for thinking/learning skills and assessment for learning (drawing on research into models of effective practice)
  - the development of guidance materials and associated training opportunities
  - support for schemes that promote the desired change
  - new systems of reward and recognition, for schools and teachers, reflecting that change, including more broadly based performance indicators.

## Welsh Bacculaureate – Key Skills Conference

In February, in responding to the annual report of the Chief Inspector of Education and Training for 2002-03, I said that I would ask the Key Skills Support Programme Cymru (KSSPC) to organise a conference for admissions tutors to raise the profile of Key Skills with Higher Education Institutions. On 23 September I spoke at the conference organised by KSSPC, working together with the WJEC's Welsh Bacculaureate team, for admissions tutors.



The conference was designed to raise the profile of Key Skills and the Welsh Bac. It attracted attendance from a range of institutions from all parts of the UK. I was very encouraged to hear the positive comments from a number of universities which clearly recognised the value of both the Key Skills and of the Welsh Bac. The Bac was specifically included in a number of universities' information about their offers and there was a recognition that the Bac, and the Key Skills that are the building blocks of the Core, will help universities to differentiate between potential students.

The job is not yet complete, but good progress is being made in establishing the Welsh Baccalaureate and Key Skills with Higher Education Institutions.

## **8. Early Professional Development**

The early years of a teacher's career are vital and I am pleased to inform committee that I introduced a two-year programme of Early Professional Development (EPD) in September 2004 for all new teachers in Wales. EPD is a unique programme which is only available to teachers in Wales.

All teachers who successfully complete an Induction period are entitled to a flexible programme of EPD during their second and third years of teaching.

Funding of £1,000 per teacher per year is available to schools via the Better Schools Fund to support the EPD of the teacher.

The EPD programme places a strong emphasis on raising the standards achieved by all learners in Wales and will enable new teachers to address a wide range of development needs during their second and third years in the profession.

Throughout EPD, an EPD mentor will support the teacher and will help them to reflect on their development, improve their practice and plan for the future.

I have introduced EPD following the successful pilot of the programme in 72 schools across Wales during 2003/04 (which I informed committee about on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2003). The pilot will continue during 2004/05 and will focus on developing the final framework for the second year of EPD which will be implemented in September 2005.

A DfTE Information Document entitled 'Summary of the Early Professional Development Arrangements in Wales' has been issued to all schools in Wales. The document can be accessed on the Learning Wales website:

<http://www.learning.wales.gov.uk/pdfs/summary-early-prof-dev-e.pdf>

## **9. Guidance For Governing Bodies On Staff Disciplinary Procedures – Circular No.**

The Government's response to the Clywch inquiry report referred to the issue of this circular which deals with governing body responsibilities for staff -

disciplinary procedures in schools fall under the provisions of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The guidance circular is now available on the Learning Wales website and will be issued to schools and other interested parties in hard during the first half of October. The guidance covers:

- The legal framework,
- the constitution, establishment and membership of the staff dismissal and dismissal appeals committees,
- the need for fair and transparent procedures and impartiality of governing body members
  
- the various stages of a disciplinary process, the conduct of the investigation and the actions to be followed by the governing body during the disciplinary hearing and appeal hearing
  
- action to be taken by the school and governing body when the allegations made involve child protection issues with the emphasis on immediate referral to the statutory authorities
  
- the governing body's access to information and independent legal advice
- the need for training for the governing body and headteachers
  
- the use of suspension

The guidance also includes examples of lesser and gross misconduct; a list of relevant documents and guidance; and outlines the process to be followed for referral of cases to the Assembly and the General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW).

The guidance is non-statutory in accordance with the legislation laid down in the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998. However the existing legislation is replaced by Sections 35 (8) and 37 (8) of the Education Act 2002, - expected to come into force in September 2005. These make provision for the Assembly to issue statutory guidance to LEAs and governing bodies on school staffing matters, including disciplinary procedures. When the provisions of the 2002 Act come into force the guidance will be re-issued as statutory guidance and will accommodate any changes required following consultation on the new staffing regulations under the Act.

The Circular takes account of a number of the concerns raised in the Clywch report. Any changes arising from further consideration of the recommendations in the report will be taken into account in reissuing the circular.

## **10. Education Schedule to the Memorandum of Understanding with NSW 4 October 2004.**

On the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2004 I met with Mr Robin Shreeve, Deputy Director General (Schools), New South Wales Department of Education and Training. During the meeting an Education Schedule to the established memorandum of Understanding with the New South Wales Government was signed. This reaffirms the relationship on education and training matters established during my visit to New South Wales in 2003 and formalises the commitment I made in my Cabinet Written Statement of 22 September 2003 to establish firm relationships with the NSW Government.

Specifically through signing the schedule both I and the Minister for Education and Training in the New South Wales Government agree to:

- build on existing educational contacts and initiatives and explore new possibilities of co-operation, particularly where they relate to raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning;
- promote co-operation and collaboration between the respective Ministerial Departments and between learning providers, including schools, colleges and work-based learning providers.
- support teacher, institutional and inter-departmental visits together with on-line exchanges to sustain collaborative learning between pupils, students, professionals and academics in Wales and NSW.

It was agreed that the Education and Lifelong Learning Schedule to the Memorandum of Understanding would be reviewed after a period of three years from the date of execution (4th October 2004).

Following the signing of the schedule Mr Shreeve met with my Officials to discuss the ways in which the schedule can be progressed.