

Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

Welsh Language Board April 2004

Paper presented to the Assembly Government of Wales SEN Review Committee

An overview of Bilingual and Welsh Medium Provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs - Early Identification and Intervention

1 Introduction

In February 2003 the Welsh Assembly Government published "Iaith Pawb", which sets out an action plan for a bilingual Wales. In it, a challenging overall target is set for bilingual skills, namely a 5% increase in Welsh Speakers by 2011. Iaith Pawb presents the Government's strategy for creating a bilingual Wales, and its commitment of resources to this end. The Foreword states:

The most important policy developments have probably been those in the education sector where the steady increase in the provision of Welsh medium and bilingual education has had a significant impact in the number and percentage of school age children able to speak Welsh.

The document offers a broad overview of the contribution of education and language transmission within the home environment. In the context of SEN and the early years, Iaith Pawb states clearly the following key issues:

- "The acquisition of competence in Welsh in the early years is identified as a priority, as is the supply of appropriately qualified and trained staff at each stage of education.
- The right of pupils with SEN to receive provision in the language of their choice is acknowledged."

(Iaith Pawb, Chapter 4.)

Special Educational Needs provision is thus placed at the heart of the Welsh Assembly Government's policy in terms of the Welsh Language and education. However, the reality in terms of provision is at best a patchy map of Wales with pockets of good practise and larger pockets of monolingual English provision with language sensitivity/ awareness deficiencies. As part of its strategic overview of Welsh medium and bilingual education, the Welsh Language Board maintains part of this overview over SEN

provision. It should be noted that the Board is not a provider, but rather a body promoting the provision of Welsh medium and bilingual education as part of the equal opportunities agenda of Wales. Indeed , the Welsh Language Act 1993 is itself part of the family of equal opportunities legislation in Wales, and the Board sees this SEN Review as an excellent opportunity for the Assembly Government of Wales to redress a number of serious imbalances in terms of equality of linguistic opportunity for pupils with bilingual needs and SEN.

Whilst the Board welcomes the opportunity to provide a paper and presentation to the Committee in a separate review meeting on Welsh medium SEN, it would have been preferable if Welsh medium issues had been viewed as an integral part of the Review at all stages. Bilingual SEN form part of the holistic provision in Wales and impact on all areas, and should not be seen as an "add on" issue given two hours of attention in an extra session at the very end of the review. The Board hopes that any strategic decisions made in the light of the Review will plan carefully for pupils with bilingual needs at every stage.

2 Background

SEN provision is an area which requires significant multi-agency attention and funding in order to provide equality of linguistic opportunity in terms of Welsh medium and bilingual provision. Following the publication of several Welsh Office and then Assembly Government documents such as "The Best for Special Education" (1997) and its subsequent "Action Programme" (1999) , the Board published a detailed report on provision in September 2002. This jointly funded Assembly/Board research, namely "Acknowledging Need" by Huw Roberts, may be viewed on the Board's website www.Welsh-Language-Board.org.uk . It details, for the first time, an all Wales cross sectoral analysis of provision with details of areas of need and recommendations for future development. In order to add to our understanding of areas outlined in this paper, it is recommended that the Report be read in conjunction with it. The executive summary is attached at the end of this document. The main recommendations of Huw Roberts' Report focus on the following needs in order of priority:

1. Ensuring equality of linguistic opportunity for pupils with SEN, including the process of preparing a Statement and bilingual support for parents.
2. Increased provision of education and all therapies through the medium of Welsh/ bilingually, from early years to lifelong learning.
3. Improved cross-agency collaboration, including partnership work with the voluntary and public sectors, sharing good practice and improved use of ICT
4. Better recognition of local and national needs in terms of bilingual services, with clear collection and collation of accessible national/local data.
5. Ensuring sufficient numbers of Welsh speaking SEN staff are trained, recruited and retained, from teachers to therapists and psychologists, with lifelong learning and vocational training implications. This should include language awareness training for non Welsh-speakers.

One important aspect of the Report is the numerous examples of good practice which it highlights. These do not seek to name individual bodies in the Research Document, but further details can be provided by the author should the Assembly require them.

3 National Data

Current Assembly Government statistics (data reference sb12/03) show that 442 primary schools out of 1,624 (27%) are Welsh medium, and that a further 80 schools teach in part through the medium of Welsh. In the secondary sector, there are 51 Welsh medium / bilingual secondary schools out of 227. While there has been steady growth in Welsh medium and bilingual education, there is no evidence of similar growth in bilingual services and education for children and young people with SEN. Pupils with moderate to severe SEN from Welsh speaking homes are regularly placed in English medium settings due to lack of Welsh medium specialist services. To date the Assembly Government has not accepted the Board's requests to collect statistics that reveal the number of pupils in this category. It must be noted that this practice does not exist everywhere in Wales and there are examples of fully bilingual provision in some areas, such as Ceredigion and Gwynedd. The growth in Welsh medium education must be considered in light of current emphasis on inclusive education, remembering that the majority of pupils with SEN are educated within mainstream schools (see below).

4 SEN Data

The June 2003 statistical return of the National Assembly (reference dr35/03) reveals a steady increase from 1999 to 2002 in the number of pupils with SEN statements, from 17,154 to 17,251. The proportion of new statements given to pupils under 5 continues to increase, with 24% of all new Statements for under 5s, compared to 14% in 1997 and 8% in 1994.

In terms of inclusive settings there is considerable variation evident among Local Education Authorities (LEAs), with 92% of Statemented pupils educated in mainstream classes in Ceredigion (which has no special schools but provides units) compared with 22% in Bridgend. In January 2001, 1,530 pupils with statements were in Welsh medium or bilingual primary schools, but it must be remembered the criteria for placing pupils on statements varies from LEA to LEA. It is reasonable to presume that this figure does not include other bilingual pupils with SEN.

There are no statistics available to show the number of SEN pupils across Wales who come from Welsh speaking and bilingual homes, nor is there information concerning the stated language choice of a parent/guardian during the placement of their child.

The statistical evidence presented by professionals during the Board's research (Acknowledging Need, 2002) revealed an increase in autistic spectrum, speech/language difficulties, and emotional /behavioural difficulties. If this trend continues there are clear planning and funding implications for Welsh medium and bilingual education.

5 Assembly Government of Wales and Welsh medium SEN provision

As we are aware, the Assembly Government of Wales is seeking to improve bilingual SEN Provision, primarily via the strategic work of its Welsh Action Group for SEN (WAGSEN) on which the Welsh Language Board is represented. Following the publication of "Acknowledging Need" the Board presented an action programme to WAGSEN, which now has plans for a dedicated sub-group working towards extending and improving Welsh medium provision. WAGSEN has since published several policy documents and undertaken reviews into areas such as Inclusive Education, Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) and Educational Psychology. The Board welcomes the fact that all policy documents and reviews undertaken by WAGSEN now feature Welsh medium and bilingual provision as an integral issue, and include recommendations to this end.

WAGSEN has steered several significant developments since 2000 which will extend parity of linguistic provision. Whilst the Board welcomes the inclusive nature of Welsh medium issues in policy documents, it is still fair to note that progress in terms of implementing the targets outlined in Acknowledging Need is slow, and without clear policy implementation and central funding many needs will simply not be met. Whilst lack of suitably qualified bilingual personnel in many fields is a problem, this is compounded by the absence of sufficient nationally co-ordinated opportunities to share good practise and skills.

6 SEN Code of Practice for Wales

The first major development led by WAGSEN has been the publication of the SEN Code of Practice for Wales 2002. This goes some way to ensuring better parity of provision under the Welsh Language Act 1993, and sections 1.7 to 1.15 of this Code note that which should be provided under the terms of the Act:

"Parity of language provision should be delivered in all services and bodies should ensure that they communicate with parents in the language of their choice". This Code notes the role of Welsh Language Schemes in this process, and quotes the Board's statutory advice to LEAs which states:

"Specialist services should be provided for children with SEN who speak Welsh or are educated through the medium of Welsh. These should include support from the sensory disability and physical disability services, speech therapists and the education psychology service".

The second development in terms of bilingual SEN services follows a key recommendation in the Board's report, namely the establishing of a separate SEN Tribunal for Wales. This was established in 2003 and now operates bilingually in all its functions.

The above seems to indicate a shift in policy and strategy, with bodies such as the Assembly Government and some LEAs now considering Welsh medium and bilingual issues in a more holistic way, but there is still much to be achieved. An example of this is the fact that the Assembly is currently

undertaking the SEN review which includes a specific strand on Welsh medium provision. The Welsh Language Board responded to initial requests for responses for this Review and we understand that Welsh medium and bilingual provision have featured strongly in responses received from bodies across Wales.

7 Early Identification of Special Educational Needs

One of the main focuses of the review is early identification of SEN, and the Board agrees that if we are to improve provision for pupils with bilingual needs, robust strategies and funding should be in place which enable a multi-agency all-Wales set of policies to enable early identification of SEN.

Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin has been active in the area of SEN and early intervention for several decades, and Mudiad will give evidence in this SEN Review. The Board wishes to note that its 599 "Cylchoedd Meithrin" and its 470 "Cylchoedd Ti a Fi" - Mother and toddler groups- provide a vitally important service to early years immersion education. In terms of SEN, Mudiad's referral scheme called "Cynllun Cyfeirio" and its "Dwylo Ychwanegol" (Helping Hands) schemes have provided numerous parents and groups with essential assistance and support. However, these Schemes face funding and personnel challenges, and significant challenges when vying for funding on LEA Early Years Partnerships. Recent developments in this context have not necessarily enabled MYM to provide SEN assistance as they would wish to. Issues surrounding sufficient early years assistance from Welsh speaking LEA personnel have further complicated this provision.

The inter-relationship between MYM and LEAs in terms of Early Years Partnerships and planning for Integrated Wraparound care provision is both important and complex. If Wales is to plan cohesively for early immersion education and care for pupils with SEN, there are complexities and strategic issues which must be resolved.

Whilst MYM is providing a service as two processes are at work, namely language maintenance for children from Welsh speaking homes and immersion education for others, it is also having to compete directly with LEAs for pupils in a number of areas. It is fair to note that MYM is the only voluntary body which provides exclusively immersion/Welsh medium provision in all its groups/classes, whilst also seeking to identify SEN at an early stage.

Complexities arise when we consider the nature of the mixed economy of providers, the financial issues of funding early years SEN support and care from public, private and voluntary sectors. The Assembly Government places emphasis on providing education and play within a pupil's community, and this has always been a primary objective for MYM. MYM groups are held in school buildings or in other community buildings, but when providing within the local community this is not always possible. This brings with it challenges in terms of transport and other costs. Free transport to attend MYM groups is not available, and if a parent of a child with SEN is offered free full time provision in a local School (often non-Welsh medium), the practical dilemma of transport and cost often unfairly outweigh language choices.

Leaders of MYM groups and Cylchoedd are not always qualified teachers, but receive training from MYM (accredited NVQ diploma at several levels can be accessed) and/or local colleges. MYM readily acknowledges a shortage of fully bilingual practitioners, and if early identification of SEN is to improve, training and recruitment needs to develop in such a way that facilitates workplace-based accredited qualifications which meet local demand for fluently bilingual playgroups leaders. Iaith Pawb notes that a target number of 150 extra early years practitioners are needed, and it is fair to note that if Wales is to be able to offer early years immersion education to every child whose parents desire this, regardless of SEN, then the number needs to be repeated as a target over several years.

The development of Integrated Early Years Centres in all 22 Counties of Wales has the WAG's target date of 2005 for opening all 22. Planning these centres with their public/voluntary partnership approach and associated "satellite" centres has clear implications for Welsh medium immersion provision and SEN. If wraparound care and education for all are to become an effective part of Wales' bilingual provision, each partner needs to plan for the provision of a range of Welsh medium and bilingual services at the outset, including for pupils with SEN and bilingual needs. Pupils with special needs should be offered parity of provision through the medium of Welsh, including any additional support from education or health providers. How then does the WAG and its partners plan to ensure that policies are in place which allow for parental choice, parental support and bilingual provision ? Despite its overview of documents such as Early Years Development Plans, the Board still feels that a cohesive approach for bilingual support is not yet in progress in the context of SEN.

8 Foundation Phase and Bilingual SEN Provision

The proposed introduction of the Foundation Phase, to be piloted for the first time in September 2004, has profound implications for the learning experiences of 3-7 year olds with SEN and bilingual needs. Proposals for the development of the Foundation Phase, as presented in the Welsh Assembly Government's Consultation document *The Learning Country: Foundation Phase 3-7 years* (February 2003) centre on developing further the numerous examples of good practice already to be found in early years settings, whilst at the same time placing more emphasis on learning through discovery and moving away from the current emphasis on outcomes. Successful implementation of the Foundation Phase clearly relies on the availability of sufficient numbers of appropriately trained staff, including bilingual staff able to provide for pupils with SEN. An analysis of the qualifications currently held by staff, and of training and professional development opportunities, is currently being undertaken on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government. It is intended for this analysis to provide the basis for an action plan for the training requirements of the Foundation Phase. The second interim report (Tribal PPI, *Analysis of the Current Training and Professional Development available within the Early Years and Foundation Phase Sectors of Education and Care*, December 2003) draws attention to a number of features, including the vast variety of job roles and qualifications currently held by staff. Considerable increases in the numbers of classroom support workers in the maintained sector over the last fifteen years have led to a plethora of roles and qualifications. The picture acquires even more complexity when the functions of staff working in settings in the non-maintained sector are taken into account.

The evidence provided in the interim report points clearly to the need for a more unified and standardised system of accreditation and training. The challenges facing Welsh-medium provision and SEN in this respect require careful consideration. The shortage of courses through the medium of Welsh are an added factor with serious implications for staff in the Welsh-medium sector who will be involved with young children with SEN. The Board believes that any proposed system for training and accreditation needs to be fully bilingual from the outset, and should include core components on early identification of SEN suitable for applying to Welsh medium immersion settings. Specific attention will be vital in the areas of language/communication and pupils with bilingual needs, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, autistic spectrum disorders and language delay. There are complex issues to be dealt with in these areas in terms of bilingualism, and research should be undertaken into the way forward. One example of early identification and intervention in terms of dyspraxia and bilingual pupils may be seen at work in Gwynedd LEA's SEN advisory service, and the sharing of knowledge and skills in this kind of area needs to be developed. The work of the Bangor Dyslexia Unit in terms of Welsh resources such as "O Gam i Gam" is noteworthy, although the range of services in terms of Welsh medium courses, training and resources/tests in the area of dyslexia needs to be developed, funded and shared.

Implementation of the Foundation Phase has wide-ranging implications for the training and professional development of staff in the maintained sector also. If Initial Teacher Education and Training Qualifications, both through PGCE and BA Education courses, are to produce specialists for the Foundation Phase who are able to deal with early identification of SEN in bilingual settings, adjustments will be required to the courses currently offered by ITET institutions. This will, in turn, have implications for the viability of modules, and for staffing arrangements for the courses involved. Whilst discussions continue on the most appropriate models for ITET provision, it is essential that the training needs of teachers for the Welsh-medium sector are taken into full account. Similarly, the Continuous Professional Development of teachers will need to reflect the specific requirements and principles of the Foundation Phase. This will involve a strategy for delivering the necessary bilingual SEN training for those practitioners already working with pupils in the Nursery – KS1 age-group, and a longer term strategy for the ongoing development of teachers in the Foundation Phase (See E-learning below).

9 Welsh Education Schemes approved under the Welsh Language Act 1993

All 22 LEAs have received the Board's approval for their first Schemes, which contain targets for SEN provision. Eight LEAs will publish second Schemes during 2004, with 4 now consulting on draft documents. The second set of these Schemes follows a detailed set of statutory Guidelines which may be viewed on www.Welsh-Language-Board.org.uk It should also be noted that the Board presented a detailed breakdown of each first Scheme in terms of problems and target implementation to the Assembly Education Division last year. This included a section on SEN provision in all LEAs.

It is fair to say that SEN policies and targets varied greatly from county to county, with many struggling to offer the Statementing process bilingually, to recruit Welsh speaking teachers, therapists, educational psychologists or provide bilingual therapies via agreements with the Health Trusts. At least three LEAs provide bilingually in all aspects of provision, but the majority openly admit to facing recruitment

problems and problems in terms of funding for SEN provision.

With a high percentage of SEN pupils in mainstream settings, there is school-based bilingual provision across Wales to varying degrees, but special units or special schools offering full Welsh medium and bilingual provision for pupils with severe and complex needs (such as those provided by Cardiff LEA) and low incidence SEN are few. All 22 LEAs responded to the Board's research data request for "Acknowledging Need", and this data showed that only 6 LEAs could provide bilingual placements for pupils with severe learning difficulties, 4 for those with physical difficulties, emotional and behavioural problems or autism, and 7 for speech and language needs. Of those LEAs which provide special schools 14 provided bilingual SEN primary units, and 7 provided secondary units. Only 6 LEAs could provide bilingual SEN pre-school units.

One obstacle to progress in these contexts is the difficulty faced by LEAs wishing to work and fund provision on a cross-county or cross agency basis. Unless the Assembly and its partners are able to take a firm lead on this issue and enable/facilitate improved co-operation, Welsh medium provision will not extend or improve.

10 Speech and Language Therapy (SLT)

Escalating demand for SLT services in Wales led to the Assembly forming the SLT Action Group in 2000 (SALTAG), on which the Board is represented. When it published its draft strategy document "Working Together" (2003) , a number of issues became clear, such as the need for a bilingual accredited system of training for all staff working in SLT and provision of increased numbers of bilingual SLTs and SLT assistants across Wales. Training for bilingual SLT assistants has also been identified as an essential development.

UWIC is currently Wales' only provider of SLT degree courses, and offers a component on bilingual therapy. The Board understands that a full course involving the detailed issues involved with bilingual SLT provision does not exist in Wales. Newly qualified Welsh speaking therapists who have qualified either at UWIC or outside Wales are not by definition immediately able to provide SLT through the medium of Welsh. Again, this is an issue requiring specialist techniques and skills, and further research into this area needs to be undertaken as a matter of some urgency. If early identification of SEN is to improve, Wales' SLTs need to be furnished with appropriate resources to enable them to provide for pupils from Welsh speaking homes and those who access immersion education.

Data provided in 2003 by NHS trusts (reference : "Working Together", Assembly Government 2003) indicates a total of 12,638 children in the 0-19 age group currently receiving English medium therapy (defined as active caseload clients), with a further 1144 noted as first language Welsh speakers. The 12,638 includes English first language and bilingual children, as many NHS trust managers do not have mechanisms in their systems in place to identify separate language needs. The percentage of bilingual children set against the total caseload from available data is therefore 9%, but the Assembly notes that this under-represents the true number of Welsh speaking /bilingual children with SLT needs.

If we are to focus on early intervention in terms of SEN then figures provided to the Assembly by 11 NHS Trusts during 2003 are important: In the 0-4 age group 2423 first language English speakers and 1921 first language Welsh speakers were receiving therapy, with a further 1000 first language Welsh speakers aged under 4 on waiting lists. This data does not mean that the 1921 were receiving their SLT through the medium of Welsh or from an SLT able to provide first language-specific therapy.

151 whole-time- equivalent SLTs are employed in Wales, with 18 of these being Welsh speakers. Not all 18 provide services exclusively to Welsh learners/speakers, and following the recommendations of the "Law Report" (2002) ,1 SLT should have a caseload of 40 clients.

From this data we may deduce that:

- A minimum of 28.5 Welsh speaking SLTs are needed to meet current demand.
- The average caseload of SLTs in Wales is currently 161, with a total potential (active and waiting list) caseload of 24416 for the 151 wte SLTs across Wales.
- The number of SLTs who have graduated from SLT training in Wales in the last 6 years is just 105, yet in terms of applications for undergraduate training figures have risen .

"Working Together" (Assembly 2003) notes the following when discussing workforce planning and postgraduate training:

"Traditionally, places for trainers on SLT have been oversubscribed on a ratio of 10:1. In 2000 for example there were 1,104 applicants for 271 places".

Although it is fair to note that increases in training numbers are taking place, we do not as yet have any system whereby any percentage of places are ring fenced for fluent Welsh speakers. Whilst the Board acknowledges the fact that finding sufficient clinical placements for trainees is a challenge, it is still a cause for concern that an SLT undergraduate course in North Wales does not exist.

Assembly data shows that in a significant number of NHS trusts children wait up to 72 weeks for an initial appointment and that the all-Wales shortfall of pediatric SLTs is at least 459. It is not known what percentage of children from Welsh speaking families are accessing English medium therapy, a matter which research should seek to clarify as a matter of urgency.

As more children receive Welsh medium or bilingual education, the demand for Welsh medium and bilingual therapists will increase, although not all children with SLT needs will have SEN statements. In terms of SLT and early years support, the Assembly document cites the ICAN national network of centres which provide integrated provision across the UK .In these centres, teachers, SLT and Learning Support Assistants work together to plan and deliver intensive programmes on a daily basis. The Board is not aware of any such provision through the medium of Welsh, and "Working together" (page 22) notes:

"40% of all SLT Departments provide a service to Welsh medium schools. The service to Welsh medium schools is not necessarily a Welsh medium service".

Since 1997 the SLT team at UWIC Cardiff has chaired the Welsh Language SLT Committee (WLSLTC). It meets regularly to share resources and discuss needs, including sharing resources using ICT. Key issues it raises include those noted above, along with the need for support for Welsh speaking SLTs, development of Welsh medium assessment materials, a clear network for Welsh medium SLTs and bilingual education and training. This group includes members of all health Trusts, the Welsh Language Board and Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin. It should be noted that the work undertaken by this dedicated group is carried out over and above their full time professional commitments, with no additional funding for professional services or time. All too often, any issues surrounding the provision of Welsh medium SLT have been assumed to be the sole remit of this group rather than an integrated part of an all-Wales strategy with national ownership of policies. This is a matter of concern to the Board and the Committee. The Board welcomes and supports all the targets set in "Working Together" in the context of Welsh medium SLT provision, but notes that they must be met in the short rather than the long term, in particular the targets to undertake a review in Welsh medium provision and of staffing (3.6.1) and the establishment of a Virtual Welsh Language SLT resource centre (3.6.2).

11 Educational Psychology (EP)

The Assembly Government is consulting on its vision for educational psychology for Wales until mid-April 2004, and its proposals will form the basis of a restructuring of training and continuous professional development. There are currently 110 training places across England and Wales, all funded via "top slice" from LEAs. Eight of these places are funded by the Welsh Local Government Association, and the only training location in Wales is at The University of Wales Cardiff, which offers 14 places per year.

No places are currently ring-fenced for Welsh speaking candidates, and candidates for WLGA places may apply to study at any of the 13 Colleges offering the course in England and Wales. No dedicated Welsh medium/bilingual course is currently available. The Assembly's document "Educational Psychology in Wales" (04) notes "there is a shortfall of EP able to offer services through the medium of Welsh", and the Board's research shows that over a third of all LEAs are unable to provide Welsh speaking EPs.

The National Association of EP for Wales (NAPEP) undertook a recent staffing survey showing that 128 EP work in LEAs in Wales, with 16 of these being Welsh Speakers. The average number of EP per LEA is 6 and at least 8-10 % of posts are unfilled.

Recruitment, retention and staffing levels are facing significant problems throughout Wales, and although the Warnock report recommends a ratio of 1 EP to 5000 children, the Assembly recommends 1 to 4000. NAPEP estimates that the ratio is currently around 1 EP to 5,600 children, with the highest ratio being 1 to 9,900 in at least one LEA. A further problem is that diagnostic tests used by EP when

assessing children are often unavailable through the medium of Welsh. Simple translation will not suffice in such specialised tests, since norms and standardized criteria must be carefully adapted.

As with SLT, the Board believes that an increased number of fully bilingual EP should be trained and employed across Wales if early intervention is to be improved. With over 20% of Wales' primary aged pupils opting for Welsh medium education, the need for sufficient bilingual EP has never been greater.

12 Support and Information for Parents

Support and Information for Parents is an area which needs developing, since the current situation means that little information is available or accessible to Welsh speaking parents, and what exists in English may be conflicting in areas such as speech development for example. The Board produces general information regarding Welsh medium and bilingual education, often in conjunction with early years' bodies such as MYM and the TWF (Language Transmission within Families) project. However, specific information targeting the parents of pupils with SEN in the early years is scarce. The Board is currently in discussion with Autism Cymru with a view to co-operating on the production of bilingual information, and other voluntary sector bodies such as "Afasic Cymru" has expressed an interest in developing bilingual support materials. The Board intends to continue with these developments, but notes that to date the highly specific leaflets produced by a number of bodies such as SCOPE, National Autistic Society and ICAN are not available through the medium of Welsh, and nor are they relevant in particular to the bilingual needs of Wales. They do not address bilingual and Welsh language concerns.

Examples of good practice in terms of information on Autism is the booklet "My Brother Gwern" by Dr Elin Walker-Jones of Conwy NHS trust, and "All About Autistic Spectrum Disorders" recently revised by Ceredigion Social Services Department and Autism Cymru, which will be printed by Y Lolfa Press. The Board feels that the way forward in terms of information for parents lies in initial research into what is currently available, followed by an agreed programme of production and dissemination of materials and contacts. This needs a collaborative focus, with all key partners' involvement and ownership.

General support for parents of pupils in Welsh medium education is provided by RHAG (Parents for Welsh Medium Education), which receives annual funding from the Welsh Language Board for the production of "Rhagolwg" and other work. However, RHAG is not primarily a SEN group, although it has a member who lobbies in this field.

13 ACCAC and NGFLCymru (National Grid for Learning)

As the body responsible for qualifications and assessment in Wales, ACCAC currently publishes a range of bilingual materials and resources for pupils with SEN. These may be viewed on info@accac.org.uk . Following the Board's recommendations and a co-operative working relationship with ACCAC in the area of SEN, a Welsh medium SEN materials and resources website has now been developed by ACCAC. It has the aim of sharing LEA teacher materials, training information, providing a bulletin board and a section for parents. This was launched on April 1 2004 and the Board welcomes the new

website, namely www.aaa-drws.co.uk. The use of ICT and Broadband where available is certainly a way forward in terms of sharing expertise and resources, and this development should be viewed as a template for possible new projects in the area of Early Identification of Needs.

ACCAC and the Assembly are currently developing Welsh medium test materials and assessment materials for pupils with complex needs, along with materials for key stages 3 and 4 testing. SEN materials and resources for Foundation Stage Education in Wales and the 14-19 curriculum will be published bilingually.

NGFL Cymru offers an excellent opportunity to develop bilingual resources for teachers, and with at least 90% of materials on the Grid being available in both languages, it is now timely to develop more Welsh medium-specific materials for SEN teachers. Since "going live" in January 2003, some 15,000 pages are freely available for teachers in Wales. In terms of good practice, the Board wishes to see further marketing of the Grid, and this in terms of possibilities of further funding, planning and displaying Welsh medium SEN materials.

14 E-learning and Training

In the field of E-learning, the Board is working with WAGSEN's sub committee which is currently developing e-enabled professional SEN training for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT). We acknowledge that training on SEN issues and identifying needs in Initial Teachers Training can be rather "hit or miss" dependent on the institution, the chosen modules and the lectures on offer, and thus many NQTs begin their teaching career with little or no training in SEN. The Course at Bangor includes a bilingual SEN component, and this should be used as an example of good practice when planning provision.

When we consider the fact that most NQTs will be presented with mixed ability classes including SEN pupils placed in the mainstream (with or without Statements), the current situation is alarming. This will now be compounded in terms of complexity when the new Foundation Phase is implemented and even younger pupils are part of the picture. When we focus this issue on Welsh medium schools, we may see that very little pre QT status training exists for teachers on pupils with SEN in a Welsh medium setting. This is far more complex than the issue of language and translation, and involves gaps in provision in terms of training materials, normed tests and training for teachers regarding detailed matters such as language acquisition in the early years.

E-Learning and e-training will go some way to addressing this issue, but must be seen as supplementary to the implementation of other policies noted in this document.

In terms of INSET provision, the work of WJEC and CYDAG should be noted here, and both provide courses through the medium of Welsh on an annual basis. However, it is fair to say that the SEN teacher in a Welsh medium school cannot currently access anywhere near the number and type of training courses available to his or her colleagues working in English medium schools. Training on complex issues surrounding language such as Dyslexia and Autism needs to be tailored for Welsh medium pupils

with specific issues being addressed, and it is not simply a matter of attending the English medium course and translating it back at the Welsh medium school. If assessment tools, resources and such like are not available, the Welsh medium teacher faces many challenges. The Board believes that the Assembly Government should undertake/fund research into this area, both in terms of identifying and sharing good practice and developing provision in order to bridge gaps in provision. Welsh medium SENCOs and teacher trainers should be lead partners in this, along with LEA SEN advisors working in a Welsh medium context such as in Gwynedd, Ynys Môn and Ceredigion and those in others Counties with Welsh medium schools such as Powys, Swansea and Cardiff.

15 Recommendations.

These take into account current Assembly proposals cited in draft and final documents. Key Bodies with responsibility for each target are suggested in brackets.

It is recommended that:

1. The entire Statementing procedure to be offered in Welsh, English or bilingually at the start of the process, including offering services to parents in the language of their choice (LEAs/WLB in terms of Welsh Language Scheme targets).
2. All documentation relating to the provision of EP services should be available and offered through the medium of Welsh, in line with policies of LEAs' Welsh Language Schemes.(EP service providers/LEAs/WLB).
3. A national SEN training strategy for Wales be formulated, with specific targets for accredited bilingual training for Teachers, Learning Support Assistants, therapists (occupational, speech and language, physiotherapists), SLT assistants and educational psychologists.(Assembly/ELWA/ Further and Higher Education Institutions)
4. A nationally agreed number of EP and SLT training places in Wales should be ring-fenced annually for fluent Welsh speakers, with all applicants for these places meeting all other admission requirements. (Assembly/ELWA/WLGA/Higher Education Establishments)
5. Bilingual SEN school-based provision should be available in mainstream, unit-based and special schools for pupils throughout Wales from 0-19. Where a "home authority" does not provide special schools e.g. for severe and complex needs, formal cross-county arrangements should be established to facilitate this.(LEAs)
6. Where a pupil with bilingual/Welsh speaking needs is placed with parental consent in a specialist SEN setting operating primarily through the medium of English, a one-to-one Welsh speaking LSA should be provided and funded by the home LEA. The SEN school/unit should provide bilingual resources/materials wherever possible. (LEA/Schools)
7. When a pupil is referred for therapy services, the provider should assess the bilingual needs of the pupil prior to the beginning of therapy, and plan for the provision of a Welsh speaking therapist or therapist's assistant when providing the therapy. (Health Sector/Therapists/LEA)
8. A review of Welsh medium SLT provision and staffing be undertaken, and a National Liaison Officer appointed to the Welsh Language SLT Committee(WLSLTC), with a brief to develop and share resources and best practice across Wales (Assembly /Health Trusts)

9. A Virtual Welsh medium SLT resource Centre be established, maximising ITC usage. It should be available on an intranet basis to all SLTs and Trainees in Wales, and provide a forum for professional development and discussion of needs of bilingual clients. (WLSLTC/WAG)
10. A website be created and managed by a Bilingual SEN Resource Centre for the purpose of collecting and standardising materials and sharing information.(ACCAC/Assembly)
11. All LEAs should undertake a review of their ability to offer EP services through the medium of Welsh, resulting in clear mechanisms being in place to facilitate this, either via their own EPs or cross-county service agreements on a cost recovery basis until such time as a Welsh speaking EP is recruited.(LEAs/EP service)
12. The role and contribution of MYM to the process of early identification of SEN in immersion education settings should be acknowledged and supported, with MYM being enabled to expand this role within its groups across Wales (MYM/WLB/Early Years Partnerships)
13. Welsh medium and bilingual SEN-specific data be collected and published annually in order to assist strategic planning across Wales (Assembly/LEAs/Health Sector)
14. A review into Welsh medium support and information for parents be undertaken with a view to providing a range of materials and support across Wales (WAG/WLB/LEAs./Voluntary bodies/Health Sector)

Appendix 1

Executive Summary of "Acknowledging Need" (Huw Roberts, University of Wales Bangor) 2001.

Full Report may be viewed on www.welsh-language-board.org.uk

1. This report presents a national overview of Welsh medium and bilingual provision and services for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in Wales. A National Steering Committee was formed under the guidance of the author and the Welsh Language Board to prepare the report which was jointly funded by The National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Language Board.
2. Following the publication of a report in March 2000 by the Welsh Language Board on Welsh medium and bilingual special educational needs, it became apparent that further research was required into Welsh medium and bilingual provision and services in the public and voluntary sectors. Information was collected through interviews, questionnaires, reports and direct mailing. For the first time, this report presents a broad picture of what is available and what the needs are for planning Welsh medium and bilingual services in the future.
3. The principles of equal opportunities and the Welsh Language Act 1993 underpinned the development of the report as its bases for identifying need, gaps in provision, and good practice. It is fair to note that examples of good practice exist in different areas of SEN work across Wales, a number of which are cited in the report. In the process of recording good practice, the report does not make judgements on the quality of any particular service; this was not in the remit of the research project.
4. Examples of good practice are set in the context of national and regional statistics, and the

questionnaire results are recorded in a series of tables listed in an appendix. Questionnaires were sent to over 170 establishments and organisations, including education authorities, health authorities, social services and voluntary organisations. Over 150 Welsh medium and bilingual SEN teachers were questioned about the needs of the sector, good practice, and recommendations for the future. Over 30 categories of establishments and organisations were interviewed. Over 700 hours were spent researching and writing the report.

5. Following an introduction to the report, and a chapter that details statistics and background information, the report is divided into five parts thus:

Part 1

Part 1 outlines the requirements and provisions of the sector in terms of statutory bodies, such as the National Assembly for Wales, Welsh Local Education Authorities, Social Services, and Health Authorities. The work and constitution of the National Assembly Committee, namely the Wales Advisory Group for Special Educational Needs, is discussed, examples of good practice are presented, and the concerns of professionals and national bodies are noted. Evidence by various organisations is presented, such as ACCAC, the Careers Companies, The SEN Tribunal, and the Welsh Joint Education Committee; regional planning is discussed, including National Assembly projects, as is bilingual training, and Welsh and bilingual educational placements for pupils with SEN. A number of recommendations are offered that are to be read in conjunction with the recommendations presented in Part 5.

Part 2

Part 2 concentrates on therapies and the educational psychology service. Evidence offered by specialists and officials in the areas of speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, educational psychology, and occupational therapy is presented, including responses to questionnaires, and some recommendations specific to these specialist services. The work of a number of specific projects and models of working for bilingual clients are also outlined.

Part 3

Part 3 details the work of other planners and service providers, such as the Athrawon bro (Area Welsh Teacher Service), Welsh Advisers, Early Years education, and further education colleges. The work of Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin (MYM) is outlined in terms of its relationship with the Referral Projects for children with SEN, with reference to a number of operational and funding issues. Work experience and work placement opportunities for pupils with SEN are addressed, as are the needs of the sector in creating Welsh medium tests and assessments. The nature and importance of the work of learning support assistants (LSA), and their bilingual training needs are discussed. The Higher Education sector and continuing education for teachers is discussed, as are examples of good practice across the sector, as well as listing specific needs in terms of appropriate and specific training, and the creation/publishing of Welsh medium and bilingual materials. The work of the Bangor University Dyslexia Unit and the future

objectives of the Wales Dyslexia Project are discussed.

Part 4

Part 4 concentrates on the voluntary sector and evidence drawn from questionnaires sent to organisations. Background information to the sector is presented, as is the role of voluntary organisations in delivering Welsh medium and bilingual services. The position of organisations such as RHAG - Parents for Welsh Medium Education, is noted, and an example of strategic bilingual planning is provided. Evidence from 'umbrella' and regional/local organisations is presented.

Part 5

Part 5 contains the report's main recommendations. Whenever appropriate, these are listed according to the body or organisation to which they refer. There are a number of detailed recommendations, including:

- The need to plan strategically for bilingual needs in Wales in all policies adopted by the National Assembly and other statutory bodies, along with the need to monitor such work consistently and in detail.
- The need to share good practice across Wales, especially in terms of resources, assessment, teaching methods, providing therapy, and other services. The report suggests that there is an excellent opportunity to do this in the near future, and information technology should be used to promote such work.
- The possibility of establishing a SEN Tribunal for Wales, which would operate bilingually and be accountable to the National Assembly.
- The need for more cross-agency working, especially in terms of bilingual working practices and providing therapies.
- The need for more Welsh medium and bilingual training in various sectors and institutions, including the need to create a national training strategy for bilingual teachers and learning support assistants, which should incorporate SEN, bilingual needs, and linguistic sensitivity. The critical problem of recruiting and training enough educational psychologists and speech therapists across Wales is noted.
- The need to gather more specific data to plan future developments effectively. The nature of the required data is listed.
- The need for bilingual recruitment policies and campaigns for areas of work experiencing staff shortages, such as speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and educational psychology. The need for a bilingual recruitment plan for health services in particular is noted.
- ACCAC is asked to review the way in which it commissions SEN materials, and to consider a way to publish Welsh medium and bilingual materials that already exist within schools and education authorities. It is recommended that a bilingual official be recruited to collect information about Welsh language resources created in LEAs and schools for adaptation and

publishing.

- It is recommended that a website be created and managed by a Bilingual SEN Resource Centre for the purpose of collecting and standardising materials.
- A number of recommendations are made concerning further and higher education, including recommendations for ELWa.

Report Conclusions and Appendices

6 The report's conclusions suggest the need for holistic and integrated planning for SEN Welsh medium and bilingual provision. This part of the report also reiterates the stated wish of those organisations that responded to the questionnaires for greater levels of co-operation. The report closes with appendices and data, a list of tables, bibliography, and a table of LEA responses.