

National Assembly for Wales - Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

Ufi/learndirect October 13th 2004

Ufi/learndirect attendees

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1. Introduction

The purposes of the presentation are: to outline the achievements of Ufi/**learndirect** to date; highlight the objectives set for 2004/2005; and explore longer term objectives to demonstrate Ufi/**learndirect**'s support for education and lifelong learning in Wales.

2. Background

On 1 August 2004 Ufi Cymru was established as an independent and viable separate business unit in Wales. This new approach will allow greater autonomy so that **learndirect** develops over time to better reflect the needs of Welsh learners and ensuring cost effective delivery for learners, providers and funders in Wales.

The new model will allow for economies of scale and for other services, such as Online Tutor support, to be developed in ways that will provide for an enhanced level of service to learners in Wales and expedite the Welsh Assembly Government's e-learning strategy.

Ufi Cymru will continue to contribute to the policies and priorities established by the Welsh Assembly Government and the National Council ELWa by:

- inspiring existing learners to develop their skills further;
- winning over new and excluded learners; and
- transforming the accessibility of learning in everyday life and work.

3. The learndirect Network in Wales

learndirect is delivered in Wales through operators known as **learndirect** partnerships that are primarily led by Further Education Colleges. These partnerships are working closely within local EIWa regions, to facilitate planning and identify delivery which is responsive to regional and local priorities. Ufi Cymru works with 16 such **learndirect** partnerships and over 60 learning centres.

These partnerships work in clearly defined areas across Wales, usually co-terminus with local Community Consortia for Education and Training (CCET) areas. Through this **learndirect** Network, Ufi Cymru will seek to further its contribution to the Welsh Assembly Government's aspiration of creating a 'Learning Country'.

4. Supported e-learning for Individuals

The network has delivered over 80,000 bite-sized courses to over 40,000 individuals in Wales, focusing on learners with skills for life needs, particularly those who would benefit from a literacy or numeracy qualification; learners without level two qualifications and those seeking skills to help them get a job or improve career prospects.

As well as expanding the adult learning market we are continuing to improve learner achievement levels and customer satisfaction rates. Currently, the customer satisfaction rate in Wales is 86%. Ufi Cymru has worked with the **learndirect** network and ESTYN to ensure quality in e-learning, through formulating quality toolkits, self assessment guides and e-learning standards, and staff development for providers delivering **learndirect**.

Ufi Cymru is well placed to deliver increasing and measurable success over the next two years and intends to contribute to the work of Cymru Ar lein by:

- promoting informal learning in a range of settings appropriate to the learners' preference;
- addressing needs of those not in education or training or employment and offering new ways of learning in bite size pieces through high quality interactive courses;
- encouraging **learndirect** partnerships to become even more inclusive by widening their networks and engaging with third party deliverers such as schools and voluntary organisations;
- removing barriers and providing remote learning opportunities or learning in non traditional settings;
- improving ICT skills of communities both for industry and individuals in areas of Business Management, IT and Basic skills.

In the academic year 2004/05 Ufi Cymru through the **learndirect** network will:

- deliver 27,000 courses to 21,500 learners;
- deliver 4,832 **learndirect** courses to learners without a level 2 qualification;
- deliver 4,341 courses to skills for Life learners;
- deliver 9,845 **learndirect** course completions from priority learners;
- achieve a customer satisfaction rate of 87%.

Ufi Cymru will also establish an online tutor support service for learners requiring specialist course support by 31st July 2005.

5. e-Skills for Business

Ufi Cymru works with **learndirect** partners to identify the most effective approach to skills development and has established a specialist network of premier business centres (PBCs) that are equipped with the knowledge and expertise to work with small businesses in their local communities.

During the financial year 2003/04 SME employees enrolled on almost 8,000 **learndirect** courses. Ufi Cymru is also working in partnership with many large employers; such as Borg Warner, Bosch and Remploy, and social partners such as the PCS Union helping them to establish **learndirect** centres on-site at the employer premises.

In the academic year 2004/05 Ufi Cymru through its network of PBCs and geographical partnerships will deliver 6,077 courses to SME employees across Wales.

6. Learning from Stakeholders

Through working in partnership, in particular with the National Council, EIWA and the **learndirect** delivery network, Ufi Cymru will continue to reflect the needs of Wales. By integrating our strategies and plans with key stakeholders, we will clarify our individual and shared contributions to realising the vision of the "Learning Country". By harmonising targets with our key partners we will ensure the needs of employers and learners are more swiftly met. By joint action to improve the learning capacity of each region and locality, we will make the most efficient use of all the resources available.

The National Council ELWa

Decisions about the form of the Ufi Cymru and National Council ELWa relationship from August 2004 were taken in the light of a clear understanding of the contribution that The National Council ELWa would want Ufi Cymru to make. There was need for more consistent co-ordination with the regional tier of ELWa and for economies of scale to be derived at a national level through a licence model. These economies of scale have been delivered.

A revised Memorandum of Understanding and Action Plan will be agreed and set in the context of Ufi Cymru's strategic objectives and ELWa's Corporate Plan priorities. Actions will also reflect the commitment to embedding the principles of bilingualism, sustainable development, social inclusion and equal opportunities.

Careers Wales

Ufi Cymru and Careers Wales are committed to working in partnership and continue to deliver the **learndirect** learning and careers advice helpline in Wales. The two organisations will agree a revised Memorandum of Understanding and Action Plan that will seek to create a framework of principles, practices, responsibilities and standards under which, both parties will operate consistent quality standards for customers.

Basic Skills Agency Wales

The Basic Skills Agency for Wales and Ufi Cymru are working in partnership to achieve measurable improvements in basic skills learning opportunities and achievements via the National Support projects. A revised Action Plan will set out, in specific terms, the shared aims and objectives of the two organisations and detail priority areas for joint working.

NIACE Dysgu Cymru

Ufi Cymru and NIACE Dysgu Cymru already have close relationship and will revise the Memorandum of Understanding and Action Plan in order to collaborate in areas where they can work effectively to meet shared aims, set within context of the Learning Country. The shared aims already include raising participation in learning among adults, encouraging high quality learning opportunities for adult learners, widening participation in learning, and doing so in a socially inclusive way and encouraging new and informal ways of reaching out to those who have not traditionally participated in learning.

7. The Future

E-learning for adults is already a success in Wales through **learndirect**. Ufi Cymru is well-placed to deliver increasing and measurable success over the next two years. Ufi Cymru intends to further support the "Learning Country" by strengthening its unique distribution network of online centres and by maintaining its position as the market leader for flexible, bite-size, vocationally relevant, supported e-learning, e-skills, e-qualifications, and potentially government e-services. We intend to do this by:

- ◆ delivering vocational e-learning achievements for the workforce and individuals;
- ◆ becoming the vocational e-learning choice for the workforce and for individual citizens in Wales;
- ◆ leading and embedding innovative e-learning throughout the learning skills sector;
- ◆ guaranteeing value for money.

We have consulted widely both formally and informally on the new model which came into effect in Wales on 1 August 2004, and responses indicate that stakeholders and partners in Wales would want to see Ufi Cymru

- ◆ creating more Welsh Medium resources for learners

- ◆ encouraging the network to be more inclusive with the business and voluntary communities; and
- ◆ linking more closely with the credit and qualification strategy for Wales.

To do this and build on the success in the past and the opportunities arising from the more devolved delivery of **learndirect** in Wales we are proposing to the Ufi Board that the strategic development is guided by an Ufi Board Sub Committee for Wales.

Until this time developments in Wales have been supported by a Wales Advisory Group, the new Ufi Board Sub Committee will monitor and advise on the strategic development of **learndirect** in Wales, providing advice and guidance on how best **learndirect** can meet the strategic needs of Wales as set out in policy frameworks developed by The Welsh Assembly Government and EIWA.

Specifically, in 2004/05 Ufi Cymru is developing a bilingual online tutor support system for Wales; including a dedicated National Online Tutor Service. We will be launching a Welsh medium introduction to **learndirect** IT products which has been tested by our partners and will be rolled out later in 2004. There is more to do and closer links with ACCAC and the National Council ELWA bilingual unit will ensure that decisions to commission or endorse future material are based on sound evidence.

Ufi Cymru will seek to further develop the opportunities for **learndirect** to support the Cymru ar lein strategy and the e-learning strategy.

8.0 Summary of Ufi Cymru's Objectives and deliverable outcomes

Ufi Cymru's Objectives	Outcomes to support Cymru Arlein	Outcomes for Learning Country	Outcomes for Skills and Employment Action Plan
Deliver vocational e-learning achievements for the workforce and individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ learndirect online test centres within the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Attracting new learners from priority sectors ◆ 418 Literacy & Numeracy certificates achieved ◆ 2,899 pre level 2 learner course completions ◆ 3,299 skills for life course completions ◆ 7,050 non priority completions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 500 VRQ unit test passes ◆ delivering learning in businesses; ◆ 3,646 SME employee course completions
learndirect will be the vocational e-learning choice for the workforce and for individual citizens in Wales.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Delivering learning within communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Customer satisfaction at 87% ◆ 4,832 pre level 2 course enrolments ◆ 4,341 Skills for Life enrolments ◆ 27,000 course enrolments in total ◆ 21,500 learners in total 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Customer satisfaction at 87% ◆ Via the Premier Business Centres driving economies of scale at a national level to deliver e learning to 6,077 employees of SMEs ◆
Lead and embed innovative e-learning throughout the learning skills sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Building on the existing learndirect partnerships for e-services ◆ Offer learning in bite size pieces through high quality interactive courses ◆ Online specialist tutor support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Enhancing the curriculum for existing learners ◆ Online specialist tutor support 	
Guarantee value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Efficient use of all the funding resources available at a regional and local level by co-ordinating activity with community Fund and Communities First 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Driving economies of scale at a national level with on line support managed for all of Wales ◆ Through the licence model providers have 25% more courses for the same financial outlay 	