

Education and Life-long Learning Committee

Work Based Learning for Adults: New Proposals

Purpose

1. The Education and Life-long Learning Committee is invited to note: the outcomes of the recent review of *Work Based Learning for Adults*; the improvements which the Minister has agreed to make to the programme from April 2001; and that an analysis of the responses to the consultation exercise, together with the main findings, will be passed to the National Council for Education and Training for Wales (CETW) for it to develop an appropriate programme response in due course.

Summary

2. The proposals advocate the retention of a programme that helps long-term unemployed people improve their employability and develop the skills which will help them get and keep a job. Proposals include the development of approaches which more effectively address the needs of employers and seek to increase their involvement in the programme. However, the majority focus is on meeting the needs of long-term unemployed people and measures designed to tackle barriers to employment, including problems with transport and difficulties faced by those with caring responsibilities. In addition, it is proposed that greater use should be made of measures which have proved very effective in helping long-term unemployed people to return to work in other programmes, such as the New Deal (helping the transition from unemployment to work through the use of Personal Advisers, mentors and so on).
3. A full list of the proposals is at Annex 1.

Background

4. *Work Based Learning for Adults* aims to provide long-term unemployed people, and others at a significant disadvantage in the labour market, with the skills necessary to obtain sustainable employment. The programme seeks to achieve this by providing clients with training, work experience and other support necessary to improve employability.
5. *Work Based Learning for Adults*, originally known as *Training for Work*, was established in 1993, and has changed little since that date. In recent years, however, the

unemployment rate has fallen significantly, and several new labour market interventions, notably the New Deal, have been introduced. The review sought to identify areas of overlap and gaps in provision, so that the needs of clients would be better met and greater value for money achieved.

6. A consultation exercise was held (between 19 May and 17 July) enabling the review to benefit from the views of organisations involved in delivering *Work Based Learning for Adults*, as well as those with knowledge of the needs of business and unemployed people. The consultation paper was distributed to over one hundred organisations (a list is at Annex 2) and placed on the internet. Thirty-two responses were received. A detailed analysis of the responses is at Annex 3.
7. The Post-16 Education and Training Committee also contributed to the consultation process. It confirmed its view that *Work Based Learning for Adults* should be transferred to CETW. It also recommended that ICT training should be considered a priority for the programme, and that the needs of clients with caring responsibilities should be taken into account. Finally, it underlined the importance of the programme being sensitive to the needs of employers. These issues have already been addressed in guidance issued to TECs (in preparation for CETW) for 2001-2002. The outcomes of the consultation on the report of the Wales Skills Task Force will inform TECs and CETW about skills demands and also help them meet employer expectations from this programme.
8. During the consultation, a number of respondents raised common issues, and it is felt that these are of sufficient importance to make slight changes to the programme from April 2001, in advance of CETW's consideration of the wider outcomes of the review. The changes are the extension of early eligibility to two additional groups, and the provision of a much wider range of outcomes.

The Minister has therefore decided that:-

the definition of 6 months continuous unemployment is to be redefined, to allow those who have repeat spells of short-term unemployment (perhaps temporary or seasonal work) to count these towards the qualifying period;

all over 50s are to be allowed immediate entry to the programme as soon as they become unemployed, rather than having to wait 6 months to qualify for help; and

a wider range of qualifications are to be offered (ie those qualifications on Schedule 2 of the Further and Higher Education Act, rather than restricting this to NVQs, as is currently the case).

10. The analysis of the responses, together with the proposals for action, will be passed to CETW in the new year for it to develop a programme in response to the outcome of the review.

UK Perspective

11. A review of adult training provision has also been undertaken in Scotland, where it will remain under the control of the Scottish Executive, and in England, where responsibility for *Work Based Learning for Adults* will transfer to the Employment Service from April 2001.

Compliance

12. The National Assembly has the authority to support training and selected employment measures under the Employment and Training Act 1973, which has been transferred to the Assembly and delegated to the Minister for Education and Life-long Learning. This provides the statutory basis for the *Work Based Learning for Adults* programme. There are no issues of regularity or propriety.

Financial Implications

13. One of the most important aspects of the review will be the degree to which the current programme delivers value for money, and how to secure even better value for money with any future programme. Both the proposals for greater coherence with other programmes and the proposals for monitoring and continuous improvement should ensure that value for money continues to be achieved.

Cross-cutting themes

14. The organisations responding to the consultation represent a wide range of interests. They include: other government departments; local authorities; Training and Enterprise Councils; training providers; voluntary sector organisations; and, business organisations. A full list of respondents is at Annex 4.

Action for the committee

15. The Committee is invited to note the proposals at Annex 1.

Contact point

16. For further information please contact Mei Lin Ng, Training, Skills and Careers Policy Division (ext. 3317).

ANNEX 1

PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK-BASED LEARNING FOR ADULTS

Introduction

1. The main outcomes of a consultation exercise form the basis for the following proposals for the modification of Work-Based Learning for Adults. A range of partners involved in delivering the programme, as well as organisations with a particular understanding of the needs of either business or unemployed people, were consulted on the future of the programme. Thirty-two partners responded and a detailed analysis of their responses has been produced.
2. The consultation exercise was held as part of a review of the future of Work-Based Learning for Adults. The programme, originally known as Training for Work, was established in 1993 and has changed little since then. However, in recent years, the economy has become more buoyant and unemployment rates have fallen. As a consequence, many of those who remain unemployed face significant barriers to employment. It is essential that any improvements to the programme are designed to meet their needs.
3. In addition, new labour market interventions, notably the New Deal, have recently been

established. It is important that Work-Based Learning for Adults complements the New Deal provision, without duplicating it. This should help to ensure that unemployed people receive the assistance they need and that value for money is achieved.

4. The proposals, arising from the consultation, cover:

- The relationship between Work-Based Learning for Adults and other programmes;
- Measures aimed at improving the programme from the employers' perspective and enhancing the role that they can play;
- Greater support for Work-Based Learning for Adults clients; and,
- General points, emerging from the consultation, which the National Council for Education and Training in Wales may wish to take forward.

Continuation of Work-Based Learning for Adults

5. There was widespread support for Work-Based Learning for Adults to continue. In particular:

- The programme should continue to assist long-term unemployed people and others at a severe disadvantage in the labour market;
- Clients should continue to receive the training they need to secure sustainable employment;
- The programme should continue to provide training in both basic employability skills and occupational skills, according to the needs of clients; and,
- The programme should seek to match clients with the skills and qualifications required by the local labour market.

Relationship with Other programmes

6. Ideally, Work-Based Learning for Adults should be integrated as one element in an all-age, all embracing training programme or complementary suite of programmes. This should ensure that:

- The programme is sufficiently flexible to provide appropriate training for clients, whatever their skill level;
- Coherence between the programmes is improved; and,
- Greater cost effectiveness is achieved.

7. Care should be taken, if a single all-age programme is established, to ensure that the needs of adults over the age of 25 continue to be met. In addition, integration into an all age training programme should not result in reduced provision for the most disadvantaged groups. Provision for those groups should not merely continue, but should be enhanced. In particular, integration should not be allowed to disadvantage disabled trainees, some of whom may

require specialised and even individual training to enable them to secure sustainable employment.

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Proposals Aimed at Employers

8. Proposals in this section seek to meet the needs of employers and to encourage their involvement with Work-Based Learning for Adults clients.

9. As one of the aims of Work-Based Learning for Adults is to provide clients with the skills required by the local labour market, employers' needs are clearly important. Although efforts are currently made to identify the types of skills that employers require, the information obtained from labour market studies and communication links with employers, should be used to evaluate the programme's effectiveness in this regard. The information obtained by those means should be reflected in the types of training which Work-Based Learning for Adults provides and in the careers advice available to clients.

10. Sensitivity to employers' needs should also be reflected in the types of qualifications that Work-Based Learning for Adults provides. At present, the programme focuses largely on NVQs. This ignores the fact that a number of other qualifications are valued by employers in particular sectors. The programme should, therefore, be sufficiently flexible to provide clients with the types of qualifications that employers require.

11. Although the programme seeks to provide unemployed people with the skills that employers need, employers may be reluctant to take on long-term unemployed people and people from other disadvantaged groups. Consideration should therefore be given to providing job subsidies as an incentive to employers to employ Work-Based Learning for Adults clients. Use of job subsidies will have the added advantage of ensuring that Work-Based Learning for Adults clients are not discriminated against in favour of New Deal clients.

12. Consideration should also be given to improving employers' perceptions about people from disadvantaged groups. This could be achieved through:

- Seminars and workshops aimed at raising employers' awareness;
- Greater use of work trials;
- Advertising success stories; and,
- Demonstrating to employers that people from disadvantaged groups have the skills they

need.

Measures Aimed at Unemployed People

13. Two types of measures will be suggested under this heading:

- Measures which address the barriers faced by many unemployed people; and,
- Labour market interventions.

Measures to reduce barriers to employment

14. Steps may need to be taken to increase current transport provision for clients on the Work-Based Learning for Adults programme. Where the cost of transport is a barrier, this needs to be addressed creatively, perhaps drawing on the experience of New Deal within which many innovative approaches have been tested. Some training providers currently provide transport to Work-Based Learning for Adults clients. Further provision of this type may need to be encouraged, particularly in rural areas where public transport is inadequate.

15. Many people are prevented from working, or training for work, by their caring responsibilities. Although some training providers have established childcare facilities, others should be encouraged to provide this. If this is not possible, steps should be taken to ensure that the childcare costs of Work-Based Learning for Adults clients continue to be met. Consideration should also be given to providing appropriate assistance to clients who have caring responsibilities for sick or elderly relatives.

Labour market interventions

16. It is important to continue to provide the types of assistance which have proved particularly effective in assisting unemployed people in securing employment. Measures which received widespread support among partners were:

- Greater use of work placements;
- Training in a wide range of "soft" skills;
- Training in basic, key, generic and transferable skills;
- Training in a wider range of occupational skills; and,
- Provision of job search skills.

Programme Content

17. In addition to the general measures listed above, modifications to the programme strands are also recommended.

18. The Employability Training and Occupational Skills Training strands should continue, though there should be sufficient flexibility to ensure that clients, who need both employability and occupational skills, receive the training they require. Care should be taken, however, to ensure that clients enrolled on Employability Training are given work experience where this is appropriate.

19. A **Pre**-Employability Training strand should be introduced for the most disadvantaged clients. A possible model for this strand is the Initial Guidance and Assessment Training (IGAT) scheme developed by West Wales TEC. A description of the scheme is included as an annex to the analysis.

20. The only strand that may need to be entirely re-designed is Recruit and Train. Although this strand is aimed at encouraging employers to recruit from long—term unemployed people, there is a risk that the clients most likely to receive places on the programme are the most job ready, rather than the more disadvantaged clients. Another problem is that the training provided on Recruit and Train tends to be limited. Indeed, some partners felt that this strand should place more emphasis on training than at present. Job subsidies for employers, to encourage them to take clients trained on Work-Based Learning for Adults, may be a more effective way of using some of the funds currently spent on Recruit and Train. Other suggestions for more effective use of Recruit and Train funding will be discussed later.

21. Work-Based learning for Adults should continue to provide support to clients when they first obtain employment. This is particularly necessary for clients who obtain employment before they have completed their Individual Training Plan, but limited support, in the form of mentoring and follow up contacts, may also benefit others and help to ensure that they remain in employment.

22. The timescales within which clients achieve qualifications should be more flexible than at present, to recognise the range of abilities and skill levels within the client group.

Eligibility Criteria

23. Current eligibility criteria cater for most of the clients who may face difficulties in obtaining employment. Some disadvantaged groups have, however, been overlooked and the eligibility

criteria should be modified to meet their needs.

24. The six months eligibility period should be reduced for the following groups:

- Clients over the age of 50; and,
- Clients with a record of short-term, casual or seasonal work, interspersed with short periods of unemployment.

25. Consideration should also be given to reducing the six months eligibility period for all unemployed adults. This will avoid the demotivation and loss of confidence associated with long periods of unemployment. This may, however, have the effect of increasing expenditure on clients who would obtain employment without the assistance of Work-Based Learning for Adults, and diverting valuable resources away from longer-term unemployed people.

Referral and Assessment

26. It is essential to ensure that those clients who could benefit from Work-Based Learning for Adults are given access to the programme. In addition, their needs must be assessed so that they receive the most appropriate provision. However, care must also be taken to ascertain that clients who are ineligible for the programme, or who would not benefit from it, are not given access. The continuing role of the Employment Service, in conducting pre-entry eligibility checks, is important in this context.

27. Effective assessment of clients can be achieved by fostering a strong partnership between the organisations involved in referring clients onto Work-Based Learning for Adults and those involved in delivering the programme. This should improve the quality of the assessments that clients receive and ensure that their needs are met. In addition, the types of assessment used for clients should be reviewed to ascertain their effectiveness. All assessments should cover basic and key skills.

Funding

28. The current funding arrangements, which reward training providers for starts on the programme and for the attainment of (primarily) jobs and NVQs has two major disadvantages: The system encourages training providers to target those who are most job ready and capable of achieving outcomes quickly. As the aim of the programme is to assist people who are long-term unemployed, or at a disadvantage in the labour market, the funding arrangements may need to be modified so that they further the programme's aims more effectively.

29. The second disadvantage with the funding arrangements is that they can cause training providers cashflow problems as they have to wait for clients to achieve a successful outcome before they receive the bulk of their funding. In the event of clients failing to achieve a

successful outcome, financial hardship could result to the training provider.

30. The following adaptations will make the funding arrangements more compatible with the aims of the programme:

- The Introduction of on-programme payments, so that training providers receive part of their funding when clients achieve milestones, rather than having to wait for the bulk of their funding until outcomes are achieved; (Milestones could include successful completion of work experience, improved motivation and improved attendance.)
- The Extension of the definition of "successful outcomes" to cover achievements other than jobs and NVQs; (These could include completion of part of a training programme, completion of the Individual Training Plan and obtaining certificates for competencies achieved.) and,
- The availability of additional funding for training the clients who are hardest to help.

Sharing Information

31. Organisations involved in Work-Based Learning for Adults should be encouraged to work together more closely, as this will benefit clients and ensure the smooth running of the programme. Closer co-operation should be encouraged by assisting organisations to share best practice and discuss challenges. A national network or forum for training providers should be established to enable them to share information more easily. In addition, measures should be adopted to encourage greater networking between all organisations involved in Work-Based Learning for Adults. However, the development of CCETs may provide a vehicle for achieving these aims.

Evaluation and Improving Work-based Learning for Adults

32. We need to instil a process of continuous improvement. The programme must continue to be monitored thoroughly on an ongoing basis and improvements should be made where necessary. The following aspects of programme delivery must be considered:

- The extent to which Work-Based Learning for Adults meets the skills requirements of employers;
- The perceptions of employers and organisations involved in the programme; (Information to be obtained through surveys, followed up by sample, face to face interviews).
- Client perceptions regarding the programme; (Continuation of the 100% follow-up? and/or sample face to face interviews?)
- Referral and assessment procedures;

- Individual Training Plans; and,
- Funding mechanisms, with a particular emphasis on monitoring quality.

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Other matters

33. One issue which received considerable support from respondents, and should therefore be considered, is provision of access to training for employed people over the age of 25, who are in "entry level" jobs and have poor basic skills. This assistance need not, however, be connected with the Work-Based Learning for Adults programme. It will be a matter for the National Council for Education and Training in Wales to decide.

34. As mentioned earlier, the future of Recruit and Train needs to be considered. Other methods of encouraging employers to recruit employees from the WBLA client group may need to be considered. Alongside this one possibility would be to replace Recruit and Train with a programme providing assistance to people in employment whose poor basic skills will prevent them from advancing in their careers and make them particularly vulnerable to unemployment. Although they are in employment, they are unlikely to have sufficient means to fund their own training. Provision of this kind of assistance will provide assistance to people who are at high risk of becoming and remaining unemployed and will also raise the skill level of the Welsh labour market.

ANNEX 2

LIST OF ORGANISATIONS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE

ACCAC

Accents Training Systems Limited

ACT Limited

Age Concern (Cymru)

Age Concern (England)

All Wales Training Forum

Antur Teifi

Basic Skills Agency

Benefits Agency

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Bridgend College of Technology

Bridgend County Borough Council

British Gas Wales

British Retail Consortium

BTCV Enterprise Limited

Business Connect Wales

Business Wales

Caia Park Partnership

Caerphilly County Borough Council

Career Paths (Cardiff and Vale) Limited

Careers Plus

Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services

Carmarthenshire County Council

CBI Wales

CELTEC

Ceredigion County Council

Coleg Gwent

Coleg Menai

Commission for Racial Equality (Wales)

Community Enterprise - Wales

Community Music Wales

Council of Welsh TECs

CSV Limited

Cwmni Gyrfaedd Dyfed Careers Company

Cyngor Gwynedd Council

Dash Training

Department for Education and Employment (DfEE)

Department for Social Security (DSS)

Disability Wales

Dyfed Careers Company

Employment Service (Wales)

Equal Opportunities Commission

ESTYN

Federation of Small Businesses

FEFCW

Flintshire County Council

Fforwm Limited

Fresh Start Consortium

Further Education Funding Council for Wales

Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO)

Gwent Careers Company

Gwent Careers Service Partnership

Holyhead Opportunities Trust Limited

Hyfforddiant Gwynedd

Instant Muscle Limited

Institute of Music & Multimedia Technology

Interlink – Voluntary Action in Rhondda

JHP Group Limited

Jobforce Wales (GVCE) Limited

MAC Relocation

MENCAP in Wales

Menter Mon Limited

Merthyr Tydfil College

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Mid Glamorgan Careers Limited

Mid Wales TEC

National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE Cymru)

National Training Organisation Wales

Neath Port Talbot College

Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Services Limited

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

New Deal Swansea Partnership

Newport County Borough Council

NIACE Cymru

North East Wales Careers Service Limited

North Wales Training Limited

Pembrokeshire County Council

Peter Linton Consultancy

Pontypridd College

Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations

Powys Careers Guidance Service Limited

Powys County Council

Powys Training

PRP Training Limited

Quadrant Broadcast

Rathbone Community Industry

Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council

SCOPE

Scout Enterprises (Western) Limited

Scottish Executive

SCT Wales Limited

Shaw Trust

SOVA

Swansea College

Swansea Employment Service (Wales)

TD Management Services

Technocentre

TEC South East Wales Limited

The Arts Factory

The Prince's Youth Business Trust

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Torfaen Training

Track 2000

Tydfil Training Consortium

UFI – Wales

Wales Co-operative Centre Limited

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Wales TUC

Welsh Local Government Association

West Glamorgan Careers and Education Business Company Limited

West Glamorgan Careers Business Company

West Wales TEC Limited

Wrexham County Borough Council

Ystrad Mynach College

ANNEX 3

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Ref :	
1	Mr Tony Sawyer SOUTH WALES ASSESSMENT & TRAINING SERVICES
2	Mr Andrew Whitcombe CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
3	Mr Brian Dunford NEWPORT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
4	Ms Angela Pulman COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE WALES
5	Mr David Manson COLEG GWENT
6	Mr Ian Jones RHONDDA CYNON TAF

7	Mr Russell Lawson FEDERATION OF SMALL BUSINESSES - WALES
8	Unnamed WEST WALES TRAINING FORUM
9	Mr Russell Symmons CARMARTHENSHIRE TRAINING & TECHNOLOGY CENTRE
10	Mr Chris Heavyside MENCAP
11	Mr Rob Jenkins JOB FORCE WALES
12	Mrs Sheelagh Keyes EMPLOYMENT SERVICE - WALES
13	Ms Anne Meikle BTCV ENTERPRISE LIMITED
14	Ms Sandra Brown AGE CONCERN TRAINING
15	Mr Richard Parkes POWYS TRAINING
16	Ms Carol Toms RATHBONE

17	Mr Jeff Greenidge UFI (WALES) LIMITED
18	Mr Malcolm Sanders SCT (WALES) LIMITED
19	Ms Anne Poole NIACE CYMRU
20	Mr Bob Taylor ESTYN
21	Unnamed UNIVERSITY OF GLAMORGAN
22	Unnamed WALES TRAINING & ENTERPRISE COUNCILS
23	Unnamed CIPD
24	Mr J Edgar Jones POWYS COUNCIL
25	Mr Gavin Thomas FFORWM
26	Mr Allan Herbert SOUTH RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

27	Mr Richard Hart FEFCW
28	Dr Bernard Capaldi EMTA
29	Ms Catrin Jones ARGORIAD CYF
30	Charlie Mason INDIVIDUAL
31	DfEE
32	ACCAC