

Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

"The Learning Country" October 2001

Welsh Language Board Response to The Paving Document

Introduction

1 This response is set in the context of the Welsh Language Board's strategic overview of Welsh medium and bilingual education, and also its statutory role in agreeing Welsh Education Schemes with all 22 LEAs under the Welsh Language Act 1993. The Board's particular interests in the promotion and development of early years provision, special educational needs and post 16 education and training are emphasised below, as is our role in terms of Welsh for Adults provision and continuity of Welsh medium provision within statutory and post-statutory education.

2 If this education and lifelong learning programme is to set the agenda and "Pave the Way" for our education system up to 2010, there must be consensus as to its aims and objectives which is shared by all possible partners involved in the processes of lifelong learning. Striking a balance between all providers and facilitators is therefore vital, and cross-sectoral and inter-authority working must be actively facilitated and adequately funded, and this within a holistically bilingual environment. Planning for the Assembly's agenda for bilingualism needs to be both strategic and integrated, and the Board welcomes the references to this within the Document.

3 This response proffers comments by chapter, and does not respond to all the questions raised by the Assembly at the end of each chapter. A number of additional issues are raised during the course of the response.

Chapter One

4 Continuity and Progress - The text of paragraph 5 notes that there are now "bespoke arrangements in place" and the Board feels that in terms of the role of the National Council for Education and Training in Wales, ELWA and CCETs still have much to clarify in terms of the way in which they will operate in order to facilitate Welsh medium and bilingual provision.

5 Paragraph 10 notes the objective of betterwales.com of making "genuine progress towards realising the benefit of bilingualism", and in order to achieve this there are a number issues which will need addressing, particularly in the area of Careers Education, PSE, Citizenship

teaching and community based approaches to lifelong learning. For example, the increased provision of bilingual work experience for Welsh medium school pupils would aid in the process of raising awareness of the importance of bilingualism in the workplace.

6 At the youngest end of the spectrum the measures taken recently by the Minister to provide nursery education to all children from the age of three will be instrumental to nurturing bilingual skills, but only if this provision is available within every community through the medium of Welsh. The document emphasises "wrap around" childcare, and the Board feels that this must develop in such a way as to ensure that all children are given the opportunity to experience bilingual care within their local area or community. Given that the language acquisition skills of pupils are at their maximal ability when they are under five, the greatest window of opportunity to create young bilinguals will be afforded at this end of the lifelong learning process.

Basic Skills

7 In the area of Basic Skills research has yet to be undertaken into the literacy of Wales in terms of the Welsh Language and bilingualism. The Board understands that the Basic Skills Agency in London is currently considering tenders for such a research project, and this will provide a valuable insight into the skills base of Welsh speakers and learners. This research must inform our national strategy, and the strategy should include a plan for bilingual literacy which is tailored to meet the needs of an increasingly bilingual Wales. It should take into account the opportunities to use the Welsh language at 16+, particularly in vocational and FE/HE contexts. It may well be premature therefore to launch into any basic skills strategy prior to the publication of the above research. The complex factors surrounding language usage and choice for bilinguals need exploring, and in particular the choices made by the 16+ age group.

The Welsh Baccalaureate and ICT

8 The Board has always been a firm advocate of the Welsh Baccalaureate, and to this end we feel that the pilot must be taken forward with a clear emphasis on Welsh and bilingual skills being at the core of the studies undertaken by all students. This would offer a means of continuity after KS4 in terms of first and second language skills, and would better prepare students for the bilingual workplace. Paragraph twelve mentions ICT transforming teaching and learning, and the development of bilingual/Welsh medium ICT programmes and software is long overdue. The Board feels that parity of provision is needed to this end, and that provision for Welsh speaking pupils and students currently lags behind the ICT provision available through the medium of English.

The Voluntary Sector

9 The Board welcomes the fact that the document recognises the "distinctive needs and circumstances" of Wales and the vital support of the voluntary sector. This is clearly illustrated

in the work of Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, which has contributed significantly to the development of Welsh medium pre-school provision throughout Wales. The work of such organisations should be at the core of our future strategies in Wales, and we should seek to identify and develop their best practise, and learn from their models of co-operative working when planning provision.

Primary-Secondary Transition

10 Ensuring better transition between primary and secondary schools is a target to be welcomed, and the educational and social links underpinning this transition have not as yet been tackled on a national level. The Board is especially concerned with continuity of linguistic provision and the medium of education between KS2 and KS3, and has already funded some small-scale transitional projects via its grants to support Athrawon Bro in Wales. Several interesting and effective models of transitional projects also exist within Welsh medium schools, whereby transition summer courses combine end of year 6 work with a year 7 project, and this is often coupled with a summer residential course and pupil mentoring with active year 12/13 involvement. Welsh medium schools in the South Wales Valleys have adopted this pattern of work for at least a decade, and this good practise has much to offer the English medium sector in terms of its successes. The Board suggests that the Assembly looks into existing transitional models and outlines best practise in order to inform its national strategy. The Board would be happy to assist with this process.

Chapter 2

The Early Years

11 As noted above, the Early Years are a key area of interest for the Board. The work of MYM has already been mentioned, and in the context of establishing Early Years Centres the Board welcomes the aim of setting up at least one such centre within every authority by 2002, and notes that this should be in partnership with bodies such as MYM. These centres need to operate as fully bilingual resources from the outset, and "wrap around care" needs to be planned with bilingual provision in mind. Given that we are at the planning stages in these developments, Wales is now afforded the opportunity to plan for a system whereby every child in Wales has some experience of Welsh medium immersion early years provision, and this in such a way as to inform parents about the benefits of bilingualism when they move on to make choices about their child's primary education and the language medium of instruction.

Special Needs

12 When providing for pupils with special needs we all acknowledge that early identification of need and intervention is the model to aim for, and in tailoring a curriculum to meet pupils' needs, Wales needs appropriate mechanisms, resources and personnel to be able to

assist pupils from Welsh speaking and bilingual families, and those whose parents wish them to receive Welsh medium provision. The Board has recently published a report on SEN which was part-sponsored by the Assembly, namely "Acknowledging Need", and we suggest that this be used to inform the strategy for SEN provision in Wales. Its recommendations not only identify key areas for development, but seek to foster greater levels of cross-agency working in this area. The report outlines examples of good practise throughout Wales.

13 In terms of SEN, one area of concern to the Board is the lack of appropriate data and mechanisms for identifying SEN pupils from Welsh speaking homes. They are often provided for in English medium settings, where their linguistic needs are not necessarily being met, either in an educational or healthcare context. This needs addressing as a matter of urgency if equal opportunities are to be provided for these pupils. For example, paragraph 21 notes the number of pupils with statements, but we have no way of knowing how many of these have bilingual or first language Welsh needs - these pupils are, for this purpose, "lost in the system", and need to be provided for.

14 Paragraph 22 encourages schools to benchmark their performance against other schools in terms of SEN provision, and great care must be taken here since it would be both wrong and patently unfair to require Welsh medium/bilingual SEN settings which struggle with issues such as a lack of Welsh medium resources and Welsh speaking specialist personnel to compare themselves directly with, say, a custom-built "holistic" SEN English medium school. It is fair to say that Welsh medium SEN units do not receive parity of provision when it comes to funding and resources, and that the number of SEN Welsh medium units and schools in Wales able to provide the full range of services to pupils with moderate and severe SEN is woefully small in number.

15 The adoption of a strategic approach to providing services for low incidence disabilities is welcomed, particularly in light of the fragmentary nature of current services to pupils with autism, visual and hearing impairment and who also have bilingual needs. A possible means of improving such services is to fund the appropriate voluntary organisations at a higher level, and to provide models of good practice which may be applied across a number of settings. One of the main findings of the Board's SEN report is that there is almost universal willingness to share good practise, but little in the way of a forum/opportunity to facilitate the necessary processes. We would see this a key co-ordinating function for the Assembly, and welcome its stated aim to establish a set of common data for SEN which may be used across all services. The needs and numbers of those clients from bilingual/Welsh speaking homes and/or schools should be clearly identifiable within this data. This is an opportune time to begin planning data collection and its nature in order to meet the needs of a bilingual Wales. The Board would be happy to assist with this process wherever necessary.

16 As far as the new SEN Code of Practise is concerned there is scope to eliminate the considerable variation between authorities in terms of when it is necessary to provide a pupil with a statement, and to formulate a Code that facilitates parity of linguistic provision. The

stated aim of setting up a Tribunal for SEN and Educational Disability rights in Wales is welcomed, and this mirrors a recommendation of the Board's SEN report .The proposed SEN Tribunal for Wales should operate on a fully bilingual basis in all its operations. With specific reference to Disability Rights however, we ask whether this presents the Assembly with a possible legal problem in that we understand that Disability Discrimination is not a devolved power to the Assembly.

17 One way to meet demand for therapies in both languages would be to recruit and train more therapists such as speech and language therapists, but in order to do this, more training places need funding and sufficient clinical work placements need to be ensured. Research into the level and nature of the availability of work/training placements must be carried out alongside an increase in the numbers trained.

Primary Schools

18 The Board agrees with proposed cuts in class sizes and welcomes the fact that the targets stated for tests and assessments in Welsh, English, Science and Maths for 2000 have been met or exceeded. The notion of discontinuing national testing arrangements for 7 year olds is to be welcomed in that the current resources used for his purpose would be better used to assist teachers in raising standards at that stage of the curriculum. However, the Board feels that a statutory foundation phase from age 3 to 7 which integrates "Desirable Outcomes" with the National Curriculum should be carefully planned so as to maximise all pupils'opportunities to become bilingual. A less prescriptive curriculum could be tailored so as to allow more class time for bilingual acquisition skills within a cross-curricular environment.

19 The Board is disappointed to see that the document does not offer possible frameworks for respondents to consider in terms of this Foundation Phase, and asks whether such 3-7 Phases in other countries have been studied in order to identify good practise to this end. Any Phase which intends to promote a seamless transition between the Early Years and Primary Education needs an overlap period which combines the best of both phases, and integrates play with education in the early stages. A "seamless transition" should be aimed for which allows all children access to fully bilingual provision across the entire curriculum, and the Assembly should consider increased investment in bilingual teacher training and the continuing professional development agenda to further this objective. As a starting point for discussion we suggest the following pattern of provision that could form a basis for considering the Foundation Phase:

i Age 3 - early years provision which affords all pupils a degree of immersion Welsh medium provision and bilingual wrap around care to suit parents'needs, and this within the local community with suitable travel arrangements.

ii Ages 4-5 - a combined early years/primary curriculum in which a balance of curricular and

play-based approaches will be used, and this fused with use of ICT and the aid of advisory teachers such as Athrawon Bro (with additional funding). This should be either bilingual provision or immersion Welsh medium provision.

iii Ages 5-7 –a curricular approach in the language medium of the parents' choice, with enhanced Welsh second language provision or first language provision in a Welsh medium setting. However, the Board feels that the level of second language contact should be increased considerably as compared with current provision so as to raise standards of bilingualism throughout the school community. It should involve a more cross-curricular approach and could involve structured partnership work with local Welsh medium schools so as to foster language awareness and community working. ICT would also be vital to this working partnership.

A Bilingual Language Continuum

20 All the above would of course mean "narrowing the gap" between first and second language pupils, thus allowing for a streamlined bilingual continuum which the pupil may move along according to ability and parental choice throughout their school career.

21 Increased learning exposure to bilingualism should be ensured for those pupils whose parents have opted to send them to an English medium school, and this so that they acquire early bilingual skills which may better furnish them for bilingual education at a later stage should they consider transition from English medium to Welsh medium provision. Such transition is currently very difficult in that pupils who wish to make it may not have sufficient "early acquisition" bilingual skills - and international research recognises their value to a child's thinking and learning processes – to enable them to pick up on their Welsh skills quickly enough to be able to transfer to Welsh medium provision.

22 The above format is clearly only an initial working suggestion, but any which is adopted should aim to promote the concept of the bilingual continuum for all pupils, and close the gap between immersion pupils and second language learners. It has long been the aim of the Board (and this has always been stated in our strategy documents to the Assembly) to create one language continuum which allows entry and progress at a point suited to the pupil, and which does not demarcate so strongly between two distinct programmes of study. Instigating such a policy would of course require much investment in terms of research, resources and training, and would also require changes to the curriculum currently administered by ACCAC. If we all share the aims of a bilingual nation, this would seem to be the logical way forward, since it would also pave the way for similar continuity and development of pupils skills into secondary education and beyond. The Board would be eager to assist the Assembly, in partnership with others, on the implementation of any proposed Foundation Phase. The Board asks that the Assembly undertake a review of the National Curriculum in terms of the Programmes of Study and levels of attainment for Welsh as a second language. Progress has already been made in

terms of schools implementing second language programmes of study, and the valuable contribution of Athrawon Bro to this process must be noted. However, we feel it is now time to review curricular targets, the effectiveness of these programmes of study in terms of pupil attainment and continuity of provision, to study other possible methods of raising second language standards and the overall educational effectiveness of the current time spent in schools delivering this Programme. New targets for attainment need agreeing - and this on a national level- and more guidance is needed in terms of classroom methodologies for teachers. A more "creative" cross-curricular approach should be considered to this end.

Transition, Governing Body Consortia and Defining School Categories

23 Paragraph 24 notes transition from Primary to Secondary Schools as its focus, and this response has already mentioned patterns existing in some Welsh medium schools. As noted, Athrawon Bro teams are involved with this transition in several areas, and existing good practise exists in several areas of Wales. The families or consortia noted in paragraph 28 already exist in some Welsh medium schools, and if more are to be established they ought to be formed with linguistic needs in mind from the outset. If small primary schools are to form "groups under one leadership team and a single governing body", great care must be taken in addressing the needs of Welsh speaking communities and Welsh medium schools. The added dimension of bilingualism must be scrutinised across Wales in this context, and it should be remembered that many schools operate as naturally bilingual schools which are not designated Welsh medium schools. Indeed, the problem of a lack of clear definitions as to the nature of bilingual and Welsh medium schools must be dealt with before this process of "grouping" may happen.

24 A recent research paper published by WLGA makes several key points to this end, and this should inform the Assembly's next steps. The Board took part in WLGA's task and Finish Group Discussions on this subject, and aided WLGA in its formulation of the final paper for Local Government.

Community Planning

25 In boosting the participation of children and young people in community life the work of Mentrau Iaith and The Urdd should be explored and developed, and their good practise could be used as a basis for further community work. In order to achieve the best possible results community based resources and ICT resources should be used, and partnership planning across all sectors needs to be more structured. As to the question of Schools Councils as part of the wider picture, the Board welcomes their existence and development, but only as part of a meaningful programme of PSE and Citizenship within all schools. Too often in the past, they existed in a vacuum and pupils did not feel that they could relate directly to their activities. In order that they are truly representative, pupils must feel ownership of them and they must feed into local partnership plans and community strategies. This could mean that more pupils feel

that their school is a part of their own community in which their voice is heard. This could be a boost to community life, especially where there is disaffection among amongst young people.

Chapter Three

Comprehensive Education and Lifelong Learning.

26 The Board welcomes that noted in paragraph 31 regarding a range of provision in both languages, but wishes to note that we have not been included in the "Narrowing the Gap group", which clearly includes a long list of other interested parties. We ask therefore how the Welsh medium and bilingual focus of this Group is ensured, and how this will input into the identification of action required for Welsh medium and bilingual schools?

27 The Board agrees that schools should be more of a community resource, and that more possibilities need investigating in terms of using them for lifelong learning purposes within the community. The Board also supports the concept of strengthening the role and use of distance learning and ICT, but notes that more bilingual software and ICT resources need developing in order to maximise the access to this for Welsh speakers and learners alike.

PFI

28 When noting Ysgol Penweddig as a flagship model of private-public partnerships, we note that this avenue should be further investigated in order to provide more Welsh medium and bilingual comprehensive schools, but agree with that noted in paragraph 38 in terms of the real risks involved in any "Wholesale shift" to untested measures delivered solely through the private sector. The strength of our education system is widely acknowledged to be in its LEA delivery model, but this may be strengthened so that all LEAs are able to deliver the same level of services and funding, be this alongside private partners or with extra Assembly funding. In the delivery of additional services to schools such as those of the advisory services, many smaller LEAs struggle financially to deliver a range of services which may not always match those of larger authorities, and this needs addressing in terms of funding.

Proposals for England

29 The Paper asks for our response to the proposals being considered in England, and the Board feels that they are not automatically also appropriate for our system in Wales. This may be especially true of the proposal to give "defined successful schools greater autonomy" over such issues as pay and what is taught. This has manifold potential problems, particularly in the case of popular schools that are over-subscribed. With this in mind, parity of linguistic provision could become a contentious issue in an area, say, where a Welsh or English medium school is specialising to some degree but only through one medium. This would mean that in one area there may not be equal opportunities in terms of the curriculum. Indeed, this proposal strikes

the Board as being too alike the specialist schools agenda of England, which may only widen the gap between lower and higher standards, and with it raise many equal opportunities tensions, create disaffection and perceived unfairness within communities. If community planning in its broadest sense is to succeed, this may prove an obstacle in its path.

Admissions Fora

30 If LEAs are to be required to establish an admissions forum, this should operate bilingually in all LEAs, and if governing bodies are to be provided for so that they may work together, this process must also be "enabled" bilingually.

Secondary Schools and Performance

31 The Board feels that it is now time to improve the language continuum mentioned earlier, especially in terms of Welsh as a second language and subjects taught and externally tested/ examined through the medium of Welsh. Current education legislation makes it complicated for a school that wishes to offer more subjects through the medium of Welsh, and the programmes of study for Welsh first and second language have no "middle ground" whereby a second language pupil may easily transfer to the first language programme. This demarcation is hampering progress and creating frustrations, and a single language continuum in which the second language scale gradually ascends to the first language scale must be created as a matter of urgency. We also request that the Assembly review its regulations as to the numbers of subjects that schools may vary annually in terms of their medium of instruction.

Citizenship and Conduct

32 If, as paragraph 41 suggests, the team of practitioners and others is to be formed to develop guidance on standards and literacy/numeracy approaches, this must be formulated so as to meet the needs of Welsh medium and bilingual pupils. The Board welcomes the report's comments on Citizenship and Conduct and feels that the Citizenship agenda should include a programme (with bilingual resources) on equal opportunities, language awareness and bilingualism in society. These should form part of the Cwricwlwm Cymreig and the PSE programme of schools.

The 14-19 Phase

33 The Board wishes to emphasise the need for more bilingual and Welsh medium vocational courses and opportunities, more continuity of Welsh medium provision into further and higher education and increased courses taught either through the medium of Welsh or using bilingual teaching methodologies. As noted, we welcome the Welsh Baccalaureate and ask that the Assembly ensure it has a Welsh dimension and the teaching of Welsh at its core.

34 Improved Work Experience Programmes and the Entrepreneurship Action Plan are to be welcomed so long as ample opportunities through the medium for Welsh are ensured. With regard to the options in paragraph 53 the Board is very concerned about the aim of asking ACCAC to advise on possible options for flexibility to schools through "disapplication of the National Curriculum", particularly since this notes KS4 as a target area for such disapplications. Considering the historical development of Welsh as a subject at KS4 we ask that the Assembly does not allow any changes to the national curriculum in terms of the teaching of Welsh to all pupils in Wales up to the end of Key Stage 4. LEA Welsh Education Schemes already state that all pupils should be able to sit an externally verified examination in Welsh by the end of Key stage 4, and changes to this situation would seriously undermine the work which has been carried out in all 22 LEAs. It would also undermine the Assembly's bilingualism agenda. Disapplications at KS 3 are also a cause for concern to the Board and we would like to know more about the detail of such proposals. We ask on what basis such disapplications would be permitted and how these would be monitored?

Supportive Environments

35 The Board agrees with the aim of supporting families during and outside the school day. Current working patterns and lifestyles mean that many pupils and their families need help in this context. Increased support after school is needed, and this should be provided bilingually. This has clear training and personnel requirements, and should form part of the community planning agenda.

36 Paragraph 56 notes the aim of commissioning an arts survey from ESTYN (KS2/3) and the Board feels that the good practise of many Welsh medium and bilingual schools alongside that of the Urdd, National Eisteddfod and Theatre in Education projects should be investigated. Wales has a strong cultural base to its extra curricular activities, and this may be strengthened within the curriculum. The "Cardiff-Wales" bid to become European City of Culture should be considered in this context as should the work of our museums and galleries. The Board is of the opinion that community planning and the arts should have an even closer relationship, and this because this relationship strengthens communities, can promote bilingualism and a variety of social skills, and can cut levels of disaffection via youth involvement. The way forward is a creative, inclusive community based approach to all the arts and education. There are opportunities to combine this approach with "wrap around care " programmes and the work of voluntary bodies and Mentrau Iaith. All this clearly has funding implications for the Assembly.

Recognising Success

37 Paragraph 58 aims to invite ESTYN to produce an Annual Compendium of best practice, and we welcome this so long as it includes useful examples from Welsh medium and bilingual

provision. This would be particularly useful in the areas of post 14 provision, vocational provision and SEN.

Chapter 4

38 We welcome the section in this Chapter on Learning in Welsh, and believe that the ELL policy review of the Welsh Language will be a useful study in terms of mapping the way forward. The growth of Welsh medium and bilingual education has been hampered by a lack of resources and bilingual training, and the area of vocational training and post 16 provision are in serious need of further development.

39 The document notes the aim of providing for Welsh medium provision to be managed as part of each LEA's strategy for balancing school places in terms of supply and demand, and this is warmly welcomed by the Board . We agree that post 16 provision through the medium of Welsh is "patchy and slight" and have concerns about the role of ACCAC in terms of Welsh medium vocational provision and Welsh medium Key skills tests. The Assembly's current support for Welsh medium NVQ development has as yet achieved comparatively little despite several years of investment, and we ask that current arrangements be reviewed completely and a new strategy devised so as to build on the work of this project as part of a more holistic approach to bilingual vocational training.

Welsh for Adults

40 The demand for Welsh for Adults courses is expanding rapidly. The figure for enrolled learners for 2001 was 21,011 compared with 13,330 in 1994. This increase indicates clearly that Wales needs a nationally structured route for learning at all levels, and one which is adequately funded to meet increasing demand. No specifically targeted funding for training Welsh for adults tutors and the creation of resources exists at present, and this has resulted in a lack of adequately funded provision in several areas. This is especially true of rural areas where lack of funding has meant courses may not run, and the Board feels it must point out that the programme weighting for Welsh for adults courses is less than that for English as a foreign language. Considering the status afforded to Welsh in the Welsh Language Act 1993 and its official use by the Assembly, such a situation is unacceptable.

41 The Board asks that the Assembly consider the following developments:

1 To invest in Welsh medium education and training at all levels in order to create a bilingual Wales, and to ensure that Welsh for Adults provision is at the core of any such investment.

2 To establish a virtual learning centre which develops and promotes Welsh medium and bilingual lifelong learning. This should encompass early years provision, schools, SEN provision, FE,HE, vocational learning, community-based lifelong learning and Welsh for adults.

A central administration for this could be run by such a body as ELWA and regional "satellites" could also be established. This could become part of the Assembly community planning agenda and could also include vital research into Welsh medium provision, bilingualism and Welsh for Adults. This resource could work with Mentrau Iaith to map need for Welsh speakers within the workplace. Such a development could include the work of the Welsh medium NVQ project and aspects of HE through the medium of Welsh. There is merit in strengthening links with the University for Industry, the Wales Digital College, the General Teaching Council for Wales and other key partners. Attached to this could be a database of childcare providers who operate bilingually from the early years upwards in terms of wrap-around care. If we truly wish to promote access to ELL, this integrated approach is the way forward in the view of the Board.

HE and Welsh medium provision

42 In 2000 only 2,900 students enrolled with HE institution in Wales and received any teaching in Welsh, and half of these were enrolled on teacher training courses. There is a clear need to market and increase HE provision through the medium of Welsh. The establishment of a virtual learning centre could assist in this process.

Proposed Reviews

43 The proposed funding review of Welsh medium early years provision is welcomed, as it the aim of encouraging schools to act on the findings of ESTYN's study of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig. Further research to assess the "supply and demand balance" of Welsh medium provision via ELWA is welcomed, but it should be noted that assessing demand should be carefully executed, taking into account the fact that many potential students may not be aware of which courses are available bilingually. Research into the awareness levels of potential students may also be necessary in terms of Welsh medium courses, and this needs undertaking as a matter of urgency.

Immersion Language Teaching

44 Further research into this area is required, including into language acquisition skills at age 5-7 and 11. This research should be combined with the needs of continuity of linguistic provision across all key stages and sectors. This section also notes the Assembly's wish to strengthen the links between Mentrau Iaith and Schools, and this is a development which could prove highly beneficial in terms of community planning. Encouraging networks of employers to work with schools in terms of demonstrating the demand for Welsh in the workplace should be done with EBP providers and planners, and include Careers Companies. The work of Menter a Busnes on their "swyddiaduron" provides one model of effective practise to this end.

ICT and linguistic barriers

45 As noted previously in this response there are clear linguistic barriers within the area of ICT for those with bilingual needs. These barriers need removing in order to promote social inclusion. We clearly need better ICT skills, facilities, resources and learning centres, and all this within a bilingual framework. We welcome the proposal to establish an e-learning advisory panel and would wish to be part of this panel. E-learning could do much to support Welsh language course provision, but it should be remembered that this should not exist as a sole resource, but should be coupled with effective bilingual teaching and materials.

The Main Priorities

46 The Chapter asks what the principle priority should be in order to develop well-used lifelong learning through the medium of Welsh, and we note that one key priority is insufficient. The Board feels that the key priorities are **funding , research, training and marketing provision.**

Chapter 5

Bilingual Methodology

47 We agree with this Chapter's emphasis on teacher training but feel it fair to point out the need for professional development courses for FE/HE providers who wish to learn how to use bilingual teaching methodologies. If the aims of the previous chapter are to be realised, this must be a key priority. Dr Cen Williams' (University of Wales, Bangor) research into this area provides pointers recommending specialist training and also proposes several models for practitioners' use. ELWA should certainly be involved in planning and funding such training.

Tutors

48 The Board feels that Chapter 5 does not afford sufficient attention to Community based educators/tutors in Wales. It makes no mention of part-time or full time community tutors in terms of their training, and when we consider that in the Welsh for Adults area alone there are over 700 such tutors operating in Wales, we must acknowledge that training for them must be in line with equal opportunities in the contexts of access to professional development and training courses. Many tutors across several subject areas are employed on an ad-hoc termly basis without job security or proper professional development – this situation can only hinder lifelong learning of a worthwhile standard across Wales.

Teacher Training

49 The Chapter states that in 2001 Wales had 28,700fte teachers in service, and whilst we realise that this is an increase of 400 on the previous year, we wish to reiterate the point made in several papers to the Welsh Office and Assembly that Wales appears to lack any clear method of mapping supply and demand for Welsh medium and bilingual teachers for all levels of education. Questions to the appropriate Division of the Assembly Office over previous years have not as yet yielded clear answers, and yet the Board's contact with Welsh medium schools indicates that they are experiencing difficulties in appointing suitable teachers across many subject areas. This is almost at a crisis situation in terms of subjects such as Science and Mathematics, and a strategy to recruit and train Welsh medium teachers must be created. The fact that responsibility for marketing teaching as a career in Wales would still appear to lie with the TTA in England does nothing to help this situation. Current methods used to map job re-advertisements in the press by assembly officials are clearly rather a simplistic and unscientific a method of assessing demand for Welsh medium teachers. If the vacancy rate in Wales is low "at 0.4%", why are Welsh medium schools, especially at secondary level, experiencing such problems?

We must remember that Initial teacher training does not always include modules on bilingual teaching methodologies, and more partnership between training institutions should be encouraged so as to share expertise. This has funding implications and ICT implications, both of which could do much to alleviate current gaps in provision.

Best Practise

50 The Board agrees that FFORWM and HEFCW should assist governing bodies to apply best practise standards in all their human resources policies, including bilingual policies. The continuing development of teachers and lecturers needs to provide for the needs of bilingual students and pupils, and the GEST programme could be revised to include professional development for FE lecturers, with a budgetary line for Welsh medium development. Attracting high quality entrants into teaching is a matter of positive marketing and pay and conditions packages, and if our teachers are to be equipped for lifelong learning, they must all receive some training in bilingualism and in SEN, given that mainstream inclusion of SEN pupils and young adults is the current policy.

Continuing Development

51 If continuing development is to include all our teachers and lecturers, we must nurture their skills with sufficient time and funding, and the Board suggests a system whereby they may have access to a sabbatical period to follow appropriate courses. This system is used in other parts of the world and benefits the educational establishment when the teacher returns to share skills and research with colleagues.

Chapter 6

52 The Board welcomes the proposed co-operation between the two Councils within ELWA under the new brand name, especially in terms of its possible work in the area of Welsh for Adults provision, FE and HE. Funding methodologies need to be simplified under the new body and access must be widened. Careers Wales, ILAs and Basic Skills initiatives need a more strategically bilingual focus, and the Board wishes to note that the Knowledge Exploitation Fund, supplemented by objective one funding, should be used for a number of bilingual areas of provision, particularly vocational and Welsh for adults provision.

Careers Education and EBPs

53 If we are to extend entitlement, the work of EBPs and partnerships across providers and employers will be vitally important, and the local consortium principle for ELL needs to further integrate the needs of bilingual learners. Careers Wales needs a more workshop orientated focus in terms of its bilingual activities, and the need for pupils to meet with "real" workers in many areas has never been greater – the role of EBPs will be a key to future success.

54 The Board agrees that the Assembly should build on the role of CCETs with an expanded role starting at KS3, but only if this truly includes meeting all the needs of Welsh medium pupils and students. Parity of choice and provision will be an essential part of this development, and indeed to the concept of continuity of linguistic provision throughout education and training.

Chapter 7

55 The Board supports the aim of increasing HE enrolments and widening access to HE, and notes that the investment requirements of Welsh medium and bilingual HE need to be matched with a strategy for training lecturers in bilingual methodology, providing them and their students with high-quality Welsh medium resources - both publication based and ICT based - and practical infrastructures which allow establishments to share expertise and resources. The virtual centre referred to earlier would go some way to promoting the necessary steps in this area. The Board's concerns with lack of continuity of bilingual and Welsh medium provision across all sectors of learning are particularly pertinent in HE, since many of our post 16 students leaving Welsh medium schools for HE institutions in Wales are not currently able to follow their courses through the medium of Welsh.

Learner Support

56 In response to the question regarding learner support being principally restricted to Welsh domiciled students who also choose to study in Wales, we feel that in order to express an opinion on this issue we would need to know in more detail how this mechanisms might be operated, and on what precise bases. We would certainly welcome the introduction of some sort of incentive programme which targets shortage areas in terms of training for professions such as Speech and Language Therapists and Educational Psychologists, and this in

particular in the context of training and retaining Welsh speakers in posts within Wales. However, this is a highly sensitive and possibly contentious issue when equal opportunities and freedom of movement in terms of place of study are in question. The Board would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues in more detail with the Assembly.

57 In responding to the question asked at the end of this Chapter, if we are to promote ELL and seamless transitions between stages in lifelong learning for every individual, streamlining our system would seem the obvious route to take, and this logically implies the eventual combination of the two Councils of ELWA.

Chapter 8.

58 We welcome the targets set out in this chapter since they are both measurable and ambitious. We ask how the Assembly proposes to measure their attainment in terms of progress, and we are disappointed to note that no targets for Welsh medium and bilingual teaching / lifelong learning are included.

59 The Board wishes to emphasise the need for measurable targets for Welsh medium and bilingual ELL, since their omission would simply give unfortunate messages to the public about provision, and suggest that its strategies for Welsh medium ELL are an addendum to the mainstream of ELL in Wales rather than an integrated part of the main agenda .

60 The questions section asks if anything "has been overlooked" and put simply, the answer is "**targets for bilingual skills and Welsh medium education**". In our mission document presented to the Assembly last year we set out a number of measurable targets for Welsh medium / bilingual education and training, and this document was warmly received by the Assembly at that time. It was therefore not unreasonable to assume that some of these targets may have been included in this document and combined with those set out in its text.

Conclusion

61 As noted throughout this response the Board would welcome the opportunity to discuss this response with the Assembly, and to assist in any way practicable and possible in terms of the bilingual ELL agenda in Wales during the next decade.