

## Minutes of the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

**Date:** 4 July 2002

**Time:** 2.00pm

**Venue:** Committee Rooms 3 & 4, National Assembly Building

### Attendance:

#### Members

Gareth Jones, Chair	Plaid Cymru	Conwy
Lorraine Barrett	Labour	Cardiff South and Penarth
Peter Black	Liberal Democrat	South Wales West
Cynog Dafis	Plaid Cymru	Mid and West Wales
Jane Davidson, Assembly Minister	Labour	Pontypridd
Janice Gregory	Labour	Ogmore
Jonathan Morgan	Conservative	South Wales Central
Alun Pugh, Deputy Minister	Labour	Clwyd West
Owen John Thomas	Plaid Cymru	South Wales Central

#### Apologies

Mick Bates

Helen Mary Jones

Huw Lewis

#### Substitutions

Peter Black for Mick Bates

Owen John Thomas for Helen Mary Jones

## Committee Secretariat

Chris Reading

Clerk

Holly Pembridge

Deputy Clerk

## Officials

### In Attendance:

Richard Davies

Director, Department for Training and Education (DfTE)

Bob Waller

Training, Skills and Careers Policy Division

Andrew Felton

Office of the Counsel General

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## Declarations of Interest

Cynog Dafis

Registered Teacher; wife is a Registered Teacher

Jane Davidson

Registered Teacher; husband is a college lecturer and member of the NATFHE Executive

Gareth Jones

Registered Teacher; Member of Conwy County Borough Council; Member of Court, University of Wales

Huw Lewis

Registered Teacher

Mick Bates

Qualified Teacher; wife is a Head Teacher, School Inspector, member of ACCAC and Estyn committees

Jonathan Morgan	School Governor; Member of Court, University of Wales
Lorraine Barrett	School Governor
Helen Mary Jones	Registered Teacher
Alun Pugh	Wife is a college lecturer

## Chair's Opening Remarks

0.1 The Chair welcomed the Committee and members of the public to the meeting and asked members if there were any new declarations of interest. Peter Black stated that he was a Member of the City and County of Swansea.

0.2 Members were reminded of the launch of the Culture Committee and the

Education and Lifelong Learning Committee's joint report of the policy review of the Welsh Language. It would take place on Tuesday 9 July at 1.00pm in Committee Room Four, Cardiff Bay building.

0.3 The Chair informed the Committee that he had attended the Engineering Employers' Federation (EEF) award ceremony at St Athan's, the previous day.

## Item One: Chwarae Teg (Fair Play)

### *Paper: ELL 13-02(p.1)*

1. Presenters spoke from a PowerPoint presentation which highlighted the issues raised in the paper (ELL 13-02(p.1)). The Chair invited members to ask questions and the following issues were raised in discussion:
  - Members referred to Chwarae Teg' claim of being the leading agency in the promotion of the economic development activities of women in Wales. Members were interested to know in what way Chwarae Teg's work was leading edge in the UK and indeed Europe. Presenters explained that the Chwarae Teg model had originally been seen by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) as a model that could be replicated throughout the UK. Indeed the 'Fair Play' title had been used in other initiatives but no other organisations had managed to develop the range of partnerships or acquire sustainable funding as Chwarae Teg had done. The organisation had sought to network appropriately and effectively with the private, public and voluntary sectors; links with local authorities were also strong. It was felt that Chwarae Teg was one of the only leading agencies to be promoting the economic of development of women in Wales, operating in a niche market promoting gender equality. Feedback from partnerships had been positive. Colleagues within Chwarae Teg had prepared material for officials in the UK Government and for the European Commission in Brussels – feedback had indicated that the material presented had been leading-edge.

- There was some discussion regarding the measurable outcomes of Chwarae Teg's activities in relation to the economic development of women in Wales. Presenters explained that they saw Chwarae Teg's role as a facilitator/catalyst for change: everything that had been achieved had been achieved in partnership with its partner organisations. In terms of individual impact, there were some positive examples. The Women's Enterprise Wales Initiative had assisted around 200 women. A number of courses supporting the idea of childcare as a business function encouraged many women to set up childcare businesses. The 'Under- Fives' Demonstration Project' which supported the establishment and sustainability of nursery groups in the late nineteen nineties, saw the establishment of 30 nursery groups, 29 of whom were still currently in operation. In terms of public policy/impact, colleagues had been involved in local and regional partnerships and in the monitoring committees for European funding. There had also been the general promotion of women in public life and the consideration of non-traditional roles, such as engineers, pilots, professors etc. The Small to Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) Equality Project funded by the Welsh Development Agency (WDA) and European Social Funds (ESF), with organisational support from Chwarae Teg and business advisers (on issues such as gender, race and disability) had visited over 900 SMEs in Wales. 700 of these had subsequently developed an Equal Opportunities or Diversity Action Plan. However, this benefitted all employees, not just female employees.
- With regard to regional activities, 'New Directions' was a project specifically targeted towards women returners to education, which was based upon assertiveness training in preparation for Further (FE) and Higher Education (HE) entry. Nationally, an impact had been seen: the 'All-Wales Enterprise Action Group for Women' supported businesswomen in setting up their own businesses.
- Members asked what issues Chwarae Teg would like the Committee to consider with regards to the promotion of the economic development of women. The following topics were raised:
  - Initial Teacher Training (ITT) – the need for an Equality of Opportunity theme to run throughout
  - Personal and Social Education (PSE) – the need for current, relevant material
  - Affordable, on-site childcare facilities in FE/HE institutions
  - Funding for/and easy access training
  - Stereotyping: evident in schools, 'girls' and 'boys' subjects
  - Presenters were asked if the media was proactive and responsive in disseminating positive messages concerning women in employment. Presenters commented that media coverage was usually fairly positive. However, presenters were delighted to announce that Chwarae Teg had just employed a Marketing/PR Manager and a Media Officer.
  - There was some discussion about stereotyping and male-dominated careers such as Information Technology (IT). The National Council - ELWa had sponsored Chwarae Teg to invite two, lower sixth form pupils from every Local Education Authority (LEA) in Wales to attend an event at Bangor University. The purpose of the event was to ask pupils what issues they had faced so far in their education, in relation to Equal Opportunities. It would be the first time an event like this had been undertaken. Pupils would then be asked to disseminate what they had learnt to other pupils and would be delivering feedback presentations to the headteachers at their schools. Also, during National Science Week, young girls would be encouraged to consider professions/careers such as science and engineering.
  - Presenters were asked what steps Chwarae Teg had taken to ensure that Welsh-medium childcare provision was available, especially in light of early years care. Clybiau Plant Cymru kids' clubs (out of

school childcare) had managed to recruit a number of Welsh-speaking staff who had distributed themselves throughout Wales. Chwarae Teg carried out audits of provision of English-medium and Welsh medium childcare provision. Its main role was to support the work of the Early Years and Childcare Partnerships. Chwarae Teg had worked closely with Menter a Busnes and Muddiad Ysgolion Meithrin to bring the issue of Welsh-medium childcare/early years provision to the forefront.

- The Minister highlighted some important issues, which are summarised below:
- The effectiveness of the 'Babs the Builder' campaign to counteract stereotyping in the world of work.
- Consideration of training provision for part-time workers: how Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs) and the new Assembly Learning Grant (ALG) could assist people considering part-time learning opportunities.
- Caring responsibilities sometimes prevented women from taking up learning opportunities.
- There were some exciting courses for women returners; the Beacon Prize had been awarded to Rhydol College.
- The need for employees, especially in the private sector to be aware of flexible work/life balance measures.
- Job sharing for teachers was an excellent opportunity to be encouraged.
- PSE – ACCAC would soon be advising on making this curriculum statutory.
- ITT – the range of crosscutting areas within ITT were being actively looked at.

## **Item Two: Foyers**

### ***Paper: ELL 13-02(p.2)***

2.1 The Minister also made a short introduction and emphasised the following points:

- Foyers were an important type of joined up (housing and educational) provision for young people with intensive needs.
- The Minister was pleased to tell the Committee that ELWa would be undertaking research and pilot work on Foyers.

2.2 Peter Black AM, the Deputy Minister for Housing, then spoke to his paper ELL 13-02(p.2) concerning his review of Foyers.

2.3 The Chair then invited members to discuss the report and the following issues were raised:

- Members generally welcomed the report. One member asked what the Deputy Minister felt was unique about the Foyer concept in relation to other models of supported housing. Members heard that the Foyer concept was different from other forms of supported housing because tenants were required to undertake education and training opportunities. Foyers had to fit into a strategic framework encompassing local government/housing and education/training. These opportunities were not just exclusive to Foyers but were shared between other supported housing establishments.
- There was some discussion concerning the measurement of outcomes. It was felt that it was difficult to measure outcomes in this scenario. However, in relation to education and training, credits (for achievement) could be acquired. It had been suggested that objectives could be measured through the supported housing revenue grant. There was a clear need for a methodology – the ELWa research project would provide a clear steer.

- The Deputy Minister was asked if there was a gender imbalance in the tenant/client base of Foyers and if childcare facilities were available on-site. The Deputy Minister stated that there was broadly a gender balance but there were no childcare facilities. There was evidence of different levels of support and achievement in different Foyers.
- The Chair asked how the Foyers initiative related to the Communities First project and was told that there was no direct relationship between the two.
- In respect of the National Council - ELWa research project, the Minister suggested that the Committee could question the organisation on its progress with this initiative when it would come before the Committee next term in its role as an Assembly Sponsored Public Body (ASPB).

2.4 The Committee endorsed the recommendations set out in the report.

### **Item Three: Basic Skills Agency (BSA)**

#### ***Paper: ELL 13-02(p.3)***

3.1 Alan Wells OBE spoke to his PowerPoint presentation and referred to the report previously distributed to members ELL 13-02(p.3). Rhiannedd Pratley and Alan Wells outlined the nature of the work undertaken by the BSA in its first year of establishment.

3.2 The Chair following issues were raised in discussion:

- One member commented that not every secondary school teacher would be equipped to deal with poor basic skills and that peer support from older pupils could be extremely beneficial. Presenters agreed that this was a positive concept and that tackling the issue of poor basic skills needed to be tackled in an imaginative/creative manner. There had been a considerable number of peer programmes in existence in Wales and the Year Seven 'Catch-up' programme had been particularly successful.
- There was some concern that there could be potential overlap in the work of the various agencies involved in the education sector in Wales. Members were told that the Strategy Steering Group consisted of representatives from organisations such as CCETs, ELWa, Dysg Cymru and LEAs.
- Members referred to the BSA's awareness surveys and asked if there had been an increase in enquiries/take-up since the advertising campaigns. The Committee heard that there had been a significant response to the 'Read With Me' campaign. 40% of parents had addressed their own skills' requirements to help their children. The level of recruitment to adult classes was low but the BSA was still awaiting further information from post-16 providers concerning take-up. The BSA was also considering the development of self-help materials for adults, similar to those developed in the Republic of Ireland.
- One member asked how and when progress with basic skills could be evaluated. The baseline figures were tied to a time scale of a 2004 goal. The BSA would report back on progress against the baseline in 2004.
- There was some discussion concerning employer awareness, basic skills and the possible inclusion of improvement programmes within the workplace. The BSA had been in positive discussions with Investors in People (IIP). It was important to acknowledge that employers would require access to funding if they wished to provide in-house training. Basic skills improvement programmes could be integrated into Information Technology (IT) and health and safety programmes, as this would be less

stigmatising for employees in need of basic skills training. It was felt that the establishment of the Basic Skills Employers' Pledge would be a beneficial aid in raising awareness.

- One member commented on the aspirational goals of the BSA and enquired whether the BSA believed that there was a justification for a specific agency dealing with the promotion of improving basic skills. Presenters felt that it was the BSA's role to ensure that bodies such as ELWa, ACCAC and LEAs maintained the improvement of basic skills as a priority and would provide specialist advice and support to organisations that required it.
- There was some interest surrounding the BSA's staffing structure and yearly budget. Members were informed that six development staff and an ad hoc field officer were based in Wales. The Agency had a deputy director, an operations manager and three development support staff. There was also an agency publications and marketing team. As for the yearly budget, the first year had seen 6% of the budget spent on overheads and marketing. Over 93 % had been spent on teaching and learning.
- In response to a question about the number of responses to the Learn Direct information line, presenters told the Committee that it was difficult to provide figures as Learn Direct was not a recruitment line.
- The Minister emphasised some important points to note:
- Claus Mozer had commended Wales's cradle to grave strategy (lifelong learning) with regards to basic skills promotion.
- In order to move to a high-skill, high wage economy, the basic skills issue had to be tackled.
- One Local Authority (LA) in Wales was likely to be the first LA in the UK, to receive quality marks for all its schools. A second LA in Wales was soon to follow.
- Presenters felt strongly that there was a need for appropriately trained teachers to transfer teaching between basic and key skills.

3.3 The Chair thanked presenters for their contribution to the meeting.

#### **Item Four: Minutes of 26 June meeting**

***Paper: ELL 12-02(mins)***

4.1 The Committee accepted the minutes of 26 June meeting as a true record.

**There was one Paper to note:**

**The NIACE Dysgu Cymru Survey on Adult Participation in Learning in Wales 2002**

***Paper: ELL 13-02(p.4)***

**Committee Secretariat July 2002**