

## Children and Young People Committee

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Meeting Venue:  
**Committee Room 1 – Senedd**

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Meeting date:  
**26 January 2012**

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Meeting time:  
**09:15**

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Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales



For further information please contact:

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### Agenda

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#### **1. Introductions, apologies and substitutions**

#### **2. Implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009: Evidence Session (09:15 – 10:45)** (Pages 1 – 7)

Leighton Andrews, Minister for Education and Skills

Jeff Cuthbert, Deputy Minister for Skills

Chris Tweedale, Director, Schools and Young People Group

Jo-Anne Daniels, Deputy Director, Curriculum Division

John Pugsley, Head of 14–19 Learning Pathways

**Break (10:45 – 11:00)**

#### **3. Flying Start (11:00 – 12:00)** (Pages 8 – 14)

Gwenda Thomas, Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services

Martin Swain, Head of Children, Young People and Families Division

Glyn Jones, Head of Statistical Services

#### **4. Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the following business and for the meeting on 1 February 2012: (12:00)**

#### **5. Children's Oral Health in Wales (12:00 – 12:30)**

Consideration of the draft report

**6. Adoption Inquiry – Appointment of Expert Adviser (12:30 – 12:45)**  
(Pages 15 – 21)

**7. Papers to note** (Pages 22 – 23)

**Information from Higher Education Wales** (Pages 24 – 28)

## **Children and Young People Committee**

CYP(4)03-12

### **Written evidence to the Children and Young People Committee Inquiry into the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009**

#### **Evidence from the Minister for Education and Skills**

##### **Introduction**

The Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009, ensures that learners in Wales, no matter where in Wales they study or their language of choice (i.e. Welsh or English), have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and to learning support services which will help them to overcome any barriers to their learning and to achieving their potential.

The 14-19 grant funding provided by the Welsh Government plays an important role in the successful implementation of 14-19 Learning Pathways and in assisting local authorities, schools and further education colleges to meet their responsibilities under the Measure. However, it is important to set this enabling grant funding in the context of the overall funding provided by the Welsh Government to support the education of 14-19 year-olds through the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) for 14-16 year-olds and the National Planning Funding System (NPFS) for post-16 learners.

While we welcome the Committee's inquiry into the implementation of the Measure and the opportunity to provide evidence to the Committee, we share the concerns expressed by a number of other contributors about its timing. Given that the Measure will not be fully implemented until this September, we also believe that it is too early to assess its full impact and the difference that it is making at this point.

##### **Implementation**

The Committee will be aware that the local curriculum requirements of the Measure have been implemented over a four year period, with the first year, 2009-10, being implemented on a non-statutory basis. The evidence that is already available indicates that 14-19 Learning Pathways policy and the Measure have made a real difference to the breath of subjects being offered to young people and to the support that they receive to help them to overcome any barriers to their learning and achieving their potential.

Attendance levels have improved and exclusions are down, educational outcomes have increased and the number of young people becoming NEET has reduced. More young people are choosing to remain in education or training beyond the compulsory learning age. Cooperation between schools and colleges

has also increased, with a corresponding growth in the number of courses being run collaboratively.

We are pleased that the commitment to 14-19 Learning Pathways demonstrated by stakeholders has ensured many of the concerns that were raised during the passage of the Measure have not materialised and that the requirements of the Measure are being met across Wales, at Key Stage 4 and post-16, whether in Welsh-medium, bilingual or English-medium provision. The 14-19 Learning Pathways grant funding that the Welsh Government has provided has supported this and to provide stability the Welsh Government has already confirmed the continuation of grant funding for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 financial years.

### **1. What effect has the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 had to date on young people aged 14-19 years?**

The Measure has delivered wider choice for learners at KS4 and post-16, in both general and vocational courses. In September 2011 all schools and further education colleges met the local curriculum minimum requirements for 28 course choices, including all Welsh-medium and bilingual providers.

At Key Stage 4 over 97% of all schools in Wales are already meeting the full September 2012 requirement for a minimum of 30 course choices, including a minimum of five vocational options. Networks have put in place the necessary arrangements to ensure that all schools will meet the full requirement for September 2012. At post-16 all schools and further education colleges are already meeting the full requirement of 30 course choices, including a minimum of five vocational options.

The average Key Stage 4 offer for September 2011 was 35 courses. The average number of courses actually run in 2011 was 32, which clearly demonstrates that the offer was genuine and that learners have opportunities to follow a wide range of courses which they find both interesting and challenging. The average offer in September 2008 was 24, but 40 schools offered 20 courses or less.

The average offer in 2011 for post 16 students was 40.

The policy of wider choice has contributed to improvements in learner attainment, attendance and behaviour, at Key Stage 4, as highlighted by Estyn in their 2009-10 Annual Report.

However, the widening of choice has also brought into focus the subjects that are being offered and whether they are those which help young people to develop the skills that employers and higher education demand. The review of 14-19 Qualifications, being chaired by Huw Evans, will help to ensure that the qualifications that are being offered are those which are seen as relevant and valued by employers and universities.

### **2. Do Welsh language pupils get the same depth and range of choice?**

There has been an increase in the number of courses available, both academic and vocational, through the medium of Welsh with all Welsh-medium learners

being offered access to the minimum number of courses required by the Measure. Although the number of Welsh language vocational courses available is marginally lower than those available in English we have, through the ring fencing of an element of the 14-19 grant funding, ensured that there has been a significant expansion in the number of vocational courses offered; since 2008 some £4.2m has been ring fenced for this purpose.

The establishment of three regional Welsh-medium 14-19 fora, with the support of 14-19 grant funding, has played an important part in coordinating Welsh-medium provision and in securing linguistic continuity in vocational courses at Level 3, for post-16 learners. In 2010-11, the fora supported the development of 12 new collaborative courses; 10 at Level 3. In 2011-12 a total of 20 collaborative courses, both vocational and general, are available with 17 at Level 3; of these 20 courses 14 are new courses, with 13 of these at Level 3.

### **3. If the Measure has resulted in a wider choice of academic and vocational courses, has this had any unintended consequences for other subjects, for example modern languages?**

The Measure requires the development of Local Curricula which meet the needs, interests and aspirations of learners, as well as the demands of the local labour market.

Through wider choice and collaboration we have seen many courses being safeguarded. For example in the Vale of Glamorgan collaboration between two schools has ensured the viability of a GCSE A Level German course which could otherwise not have been run; and there are plans to offer A Level French through a similar arrangement in 2012. This shows the importance of schools and colleges collaborating to ensure courses can be viable when run in partnership and thereby safeguarding subjects which otherwise would not be available.

With regard to modern foreign languages, the Welsh Government is working with CILT Cymru, the National Centre for Languages to promote the learning of Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) across Wales. It has developed an action plan which sets out how it will work with stakeholders and CILT to develop and promote the learning of modern foreign languages. The Qualifications Review will also include an assessment of the current situation in respect of MFL provision.

### **4. Has the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 had any effect on the numbers of young people choosing to stay on in education or training after the end of compulsory education at age 16?**

The Committee has already received evidence that the number of young people staying on in education post-16 has increased and that the number of young people classified as being NEET has decreased.

Information from Careers Wales shows that the number of young people remaining in full-time education or training, beyond the compulsory learning age, has increased as follows:

- 2008 – 79.2%

- 2009 – 82.2%
- 2010 – 82.8%

We believe that by offering young people, at 16, access to courses which they see as being relevant and interesting more will choose to continue in education or training beyond the compulsory learning age. This is why the Welsh Government decided against the raising of the compulsory learning age.

## **5. What practical problems are being addressed in order to implement the Measure?**

The development of effective local partnerships is key to ensuring that the requirements of the Measure are being met and that the 14-19 Learning Pathways policy is successfully delivered. Effective collaboration and good planning has helped to address many of the issues that have been raised.

We recognise that this is an evolutionary rather than revolutionary process and that partnerships and cooperative working arrangements need time to mature. Cooperative working has helped to not only secure wider choice but also to make better use of the available resources. There are good examples of effective partnerships and cooperative working across Wales, one example being in Carmarthenshire where Coleg Sir Gar and the local secondary schools in Llanelli achieved national recognition for collaborative working in the Association of College's 2010 Beacon Awards.

We also have examples of how collaborative provision has saved significant funding for schools. For example, the Bryn Tawe - Gwyr Partnership in Swansea has saved around £83,000 for each school by providing 20 collaborative courses. These savings take into account the additional travel costs associated with the joint provision.

However, we recognise that such collaborations may be more difficult in rural areas and/or with some Welsh-medium providers where the distance between settings can make collaboration more difficult. Such circumstances call for innovative solutions. Common timetabling can be used and learner travel undertaken at the beginning or end of the school day. ICT and video conferencing is also being used effectively by some partnerships to deliver collaborative courses and this saves on both travel time and resources.

It is important that all providers act in the best interests of their learners and not of the institution. While there was some reluctance on the part of some providers to collaborate, progress is being made and we are moving in the right direction.

There is also anecdotal evidence of the added benefits that studying at another institution can bring to the learner wellbeing, in terms of being able to experience another setting and meet new peers. We will be looking to gather further evidence on this in the future.

## **6. Is the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 being implemented consistently across all local authorities?**

As stated earlier, all providers in each local authority area met the 2011 statutory requirements under the Measure and we are confident that all schools and further education colleges will also be able meet the full 2012 statutory requirements.

### **7. Are vulnerable learners, particularly those with additional learning needs, able to benefit from the provisions in the Measure?**

All learners in maintained secondary schools and further education colleges, including those with additional learning needs, have the same entitlement to wider choice. Special schools fall outside of the remit of the Measure with regards to wider choice. However, learners who are able to follow courses of study within mainstream settings already have access to wider choice through dual registration arrangements. Those learners whose particular circumstances mean that they are unable to follow a course of study in a mainstream setting will already be receiving individualised learning tailored to their individual learning needs. Special Schools fall within the remit of the Measure in relation to learner support services.

Those planning the local curriculum must consider and include suitable provision for those learners whose needs may be best met by courses at a lower or higher level. At Key Stage 4 this means taking into account the needs of those with Additional Learning Needs and make sure that learners who are unable to access Level 2 courses due to their ALN have opportunities to pursue a choice of courses that allow them to make good progression towards Level 2 qualifications.

Similarly at post-16, those planning the local curriculum should ensure that learners who are unable to access Level 3 courses have opportunities to pursue a choice of courses that allow them to make good progress at the appropriate level for the learner. There should be an appropriate level of courses below Level 3 to meet the needs of learners for whom these programmes are most suitable.

Under sections 31 and 32 of Learning and Skills Act 2000 (“the LSA”), the Welsh Ministers must secure the provision of proper facilities for education and training suitable to the requirement of 16-18 year olds and reasonable facilities for education and training suitable to the requirements of those aged 19 and over, (post 16 education). In performing those duties the Welsh Ministers must take account of the education and training required in different sectors of employment for employees.

Under sections 34 and 35 of the LSA the Welsh Ministers may provide financial resources to providers of post-16 education or training and may impose conditions on such funding. ‘Post-16 education and training’ includes full-time and part-time education (other than higher education) and vocational training. Under section 41 of the LSA, in discharging its functions in relation to sections 31, 32 and 34, the Welsh Ministers must have regard to the needs of persons with learning difficulties.

As indicated above, while the wider curriculum requirements of the Measure do not apply to special schools the learning support elements do. This means that all learners should have access to impartial information, advice and guidance, which will help them to make informed and realistic choices, overcome barriers to their

learning and to realise their individual potential. There are examples of good practice in delivering learning support services in special schools, including Trinity Fields School in Caerphilly, which was highlighted in the Welsh Local Government Association's evidence to the Committee.

## **8. Is learning support being delivered effectively?**

Learner support comprises careers information, advice and guidance, personal support and learning coaching, the latter of these was introduced directly through 14-19 Learning Pathways. The Welsh Government has published guidance setting out our expectations on local authorities, schools and colleges. There is no prescribed model of delivery for learner support services and a range of different delivery models have been developed across Wales. The important thing is that the provision of learning support should be related to learner need. This will mean that while some learners might need minimal support to achieve their potential, others may require more intensive one-to-one support over a period of time.

While careers information, advice and guidance and personal support are long standing services, the learning coach function is relatively new and the Welsh Government has supported the development and delivery of a Level 4 national training programme.

The Welsh Government has determined that there should be a minimum ratio for learning coaching of 1:80; and we are pleased that all schools and further education colleges have indicated that they will have achieved this ratio by March 2012.

The new work-based learning contracts, issued in August 2011, also ensure that learning support, including learning coaching, is available to young people undertaking work based learning.

In due course we will ask Estyn to undertake an inspection of learner support services.

## **9. What effect is the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 having on further education colleges?**

Further education colleges have a vital role to play in ensuring the successful delivery of 14-19 Learning Pathways and the Measure. Colleges across Wales are cooperating with schools to provide high quality vocational provision for KS4 pupils, which has necessitated them adjusting to be able to facilitate 14 and 15 year olds within their settings. Some college lecturers are teaching at the schools themselves, which means that the learners are saved from having to travel. We expect to see continued growth in collaboration between schools and colleges as we embed the regional working model across Wales.

We do however, need to focus more efforts on ensuring young people can follow courses through the medium of Welsh at post-16. We are pleased to report that through the Welsh-medium Education Strategy, the Welsh Government has increased its commitment to the post-16 education phase to enable further



education colleges, in particular, to develop Welsh-medium and bilingual progression routes. The number of Bilingual Champions in colleges increased from four to eight in April 2011 and four new colleges have already started to implement strategies in order to build firmer foundations for Welsh-medium and bilingual developments for post-16 learners.

# Agenda Item 3

CYP(4)-03-12 (Paper 2)

## **Evidence paper for the Children and Young People's Committee**

Date: 26 January 2012-01-06

Title: Flying Start

### **Purpose**

To provide the Children & Young People's Committee with an overview of the Flying Start programme. The paper includes sections on:

- Delivery;
- Funding;
- Targeting Arrangements;
- Planning for Expansion; and
- Evaluation.

### **1. Introduction**

Flying Start is the Welsh Government's flagship early years programme and provides a path towards improving the life chances of children in our most disadvantaged communities. It provides a "universal" set of entitlements which all children and their families within designated deprived areas can access without associated means testing or stigma. International evidence is that intensive intervention in the early years can make a real difference to outcomes.

### **2. Delivery**

#### ***The expansion of Flying Start***

The expansion of Flying Start is one of the top 'Five for a Fairer Future' manifesto commitments to be delivered over the next four years. The manifesto commitment states that the Welsh Government will:

*Double the number of those gaining from Flying Start to 36,000.*

The expansion of the programme will be phased over a number of years to allow for the necessary infrastructure to be put in place, including the recruitment and training of additional health visitors; childcare workers and staff to deliver parenting programmes. The phasing of the expansion will also enable the development of capital infrastructure, and in particular childcare settings, to deliver the programme in its new target areas.

### ***Ensuring steady state delivery prior to expansion***

Welsh Government officials are working closely with local authorities and their partners to ensure the consistent delivery of the programme across Wales. A number of authorities are already delivering the programme as prescribed by the guidance and are at a “steady state” of delivery. However, as highlighted by the Evaluation’s Interim Report of October 2010, there remain a number of authorities where variances in the delivery of the entitlements are still apparent.

Work has been ongoing to address the issues faced by some local authorities in delivering the programme in line with the guidance. Officials are working with individual local authorities, and are providing support and advice to resolve those issues that impact on local ability to reach steady state prior to expansion. This will be essential to ensure a consistent approach to the delivery of the core entitlement across Wales. It should be noted that the variances described refer to those instances where the guidance is not being adhered to – for instance, where the childcare offer is limited - and not to those instances where the guidance allows local discretion to tailor services to meet specific needs within communities.

We are aware, from the findings of the National Evaluation, that in some instances there have been difficulties engaging with some of the hardest to reach, including socio-economically deprived groups. We will continue to work with local authorities to ensure they can meet the diverse needs of all the individuals and communities that Flying Start supports. Welsh medium provision and provision of support that meets the needs of ethnic minority communities will continue to be an integral part of the programme.

### **3. Funding**

Prior to 2012/13, Flying Start funding has been allocated to each local authority using the Children’s Personal Social Services Standard Spending Assessment Formula, which draws on a range of indicators from the 0 – 18 age group. Whilst this method for the distribution of resource has enabled the programme to reach a number of disadvantaged communities within each local authority, the data used to inform this method is now out of date. It is also based on children aged 0 – 18 which does not fit well with the age range of children eligible for Flying Start services. Whilst the existing provision will continue to be funded on this basis, to reduce turbulence within the existing target areas, the basis on which funding is allocated to local authorities for the expansion of the programme has been revised. Funding for the expansion of the programme will be derived from the estimated number of 0-3 year olds living in income benefit households in local authority areas. There are a number of advantages to this revised approach:

- it is a proxy indicator for poverty;
- it is an indicator for worklessness and a proxy indicator for children living in households with parents who have poor basic skills; both of which have been shown to impact negatively on child outcomes;

- it reflects the absolute levels of 0-3 year olds living in income deprived households across Wales;
- it only uses data from the Flying Start target age group: families with children aged 0-3

The Flying start budget for the next three financial years is as follows:

Flying Start Revenue BEL	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
	£40.494m	£46.494m	£62.994m	£72.994m

Local Authority indicative allocations are at annex A.

The expansion of Flying Start cannot be delivered using revenue alone. There is a strong interdependence in the programme between capital investment and revenue spend; it is not possible to deliver the services, funded by the revenue grant, unless the necessary capital infrastructure is in place. A total of £6 million capital funding has been made available over the next two financial years 2012-13 and 2013-14. Officials are working closely with local authorities to develop plans for the expansion of Flying Start capital infrastructure. The emphasis will be on the creative use of resources, efficiency and the utilisation of existing private, 3<sup>rd</sup> sector and local authority owned infrastructure.

#### 4. Targeting arrangements

In December 2011, local authorities were issued with their allocations for 2012-13, indicative allocations for 2013 - 15, target cap numbers<sup>1</sup> and a list of their LSOAs that included detailed estimates of the total number of 0-3 year olds, and the number of 0-3 year olds living in income benefit households, within them. This data provides the broad basis for local authorities to begin identifying their new target areas for the expansion of the programme. Within these LSOAs there will inevitably be a proportion of 0-3 year olds that do not live in income benefit households and others that do not need the support of Flying Start. The programme will still be geographically based and local authorities will be required to use local knowledge to define their target areas, on concentrations of children living in income benefit households, to ensure that the programme reaches those most in need of support.

#### **Outreach**

In order to ensure that services reach those most in need of support, as part of the expansion of the Flying Start, local authorities will be expected to use outreach work in identifying those families that do not live within target areas, but who would nevertheless benefit from Flying Start services. In this way, the

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<sup>1</sup> The cap number is the number of children a local authority is expected to support from within their funding being made available to them. These numbers are put in place to ensure the intensity of the programme so that services are not diluted.

expanded programme will be more flexible and will be able to better respond to the needs of transient families and those in rural areas. For the first year - on a pilot basis where local flexibilities will be applied – funding for this outreach work has been set at 2.5% of a local authority's uplifted revenue allocation, with families being referred through appropriate referral mechanisms such as the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or the Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF). We will be working closely with local authorities over the coming months to develop this aspect of the programme further.

## **5. Planning for expansion**

Local authorities were notified of their 2012-15 indicative allocations in December 2011. At the same time they were provided with the necessary data to begin planning an expansion of Flying Start within their borders. Outline plans are due for submission on 31 January 2012 and will provide an indication as to what can be achieved during the first two years of expansion. The key dates in the planning process at this stage are as follows:

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 31 January 2012 | Local authorities to submit detailed one-year revenue plan for the 2012/13 financial year and an outline capital plan spanning 2012-15  |
| March 2012      | Welsh Government to issue revised guidance for the Flying Start programme to inform plans for 2013 onwards  |
| 31 May 2012     | Local authorities to submit three-year strategic revenue grant plan for 2012-15 based on the revised guidance. The planning for 2012/13 will largely be an iterative process with Welsh Government officials working closely with local government stakeholders to agree early details for expansion. |

### ***Workforce development activity***

Delivery of the manifesto commitment to double the number of children who benefit from Flying Start is dependant upon an appropriate workforce being in place to expand the services, and in particular on having sufficient numbers of health visitors (to maintain the 1:110 caseload) and childcare workers.

### ***Health Visitors***

An assessment of requirements indicates that the provision of health visiting services at the same caseload level as currently employed (i.e. one health visitor per 110 children) would require an additional resource of 160 new posts to deliver the manifesto commitment. There are currently approximately 570 health visitors in the generic service and therefore a significant recruitment and training drive is required to achieve the number of health visitors that the expanded Flying Start programme will require.

Welsh Government officials are working closely with colleagues from NHS Workforce and Organisational Development and the National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare (NLIAH) and Higher Education providers to develop a strategic health visitor workforce training plan that will support the expansion of the Flying Start programme. A significant recruitment drive is already underway to achieve the number of health visitors that the expanded Flying Start programme will require.

### ***Childcare workforce***

To enable the successful expansion of Flying Start, local authorities need to ensure that the right number of childcare workers and leaders are in place at the right time and at the right quality with the appropriate qualification levels. Local authorities have been asked to plan for the development of their childcare workforce in readiness for the expansion of the programme. The childcare sufficiency assessment refresh analysis which is being undertaken by local authorities will help inform this process. Consideration is also being given at a national level to the quality of childcare, appropriateness of qualifications and availability of suitable training provision.

## **6. Evaluation of Flying Start**

Evaluation is key to ensuring that our programmes are making an impact and I recently published the Wave 1 evaluation survey report *'Findings from the baseline survey of families – mapping needs and measuring early influence among families with babies aged 7-20 months in December 2011.*

The report has provided us with important information on the needs of families in Flying Start areas and the challenges they face as well as the early influence of the programme. The survey highlighted that:

- Flying Start has been successful in increasing the levels of support that families have been receiving;
- Families in Flying Start areas receive higher levels of support for health visiting services, parenting programmes and Language and Play (LAP) than those living in comparison areas;
- Parents feel more positive about the services and support provided to them.
- Parents who have attended specific Flying Start groups report that their confidence as a parent has increased, they feel better able to make decisions about how to look after their baby and have a better understanding of their child's general development;
- Many report seeing positive changes in their child's behaviour since attending Flying Start parenting courses.

The focus on improving language development appears to have been successful and many parents in Flying Start areas are engaged in home learning activities with their children.

The report also suggested that Flying Start has yet to show a positive difference on breastfeeding and immunisation rates and weaning within the recommended timescale. However, the timescales involved in achieving family and community level change in parenting behaviour are often relatively long and certainly longer than the time period up until the survey fieldwork. For this reason, the range and level of behavioural change that it is realistic to expect from Flying Start at the time the survey was conducted is relatively limited. I will look to future monitoring and evaluation activity to track progress on these and other indicators.

This survey report is part of the wider evidence base for Flying Start and part of the ongoing evaluation of the programme. A second survey wave is scheduled for summer 2012 and will involve returning to as many of the same families from Wave 1 as possible when the children are older. At this point, the families will have had the opportunity to receive a fuller range of Flying Start services and therefore the second survey wave will provide a fuller assessment of impact.

## **7. Implications for Delivery**

Officials have considered the findings of the National Evaluation wave 1 survey and Interim Report and are working with local authorities and their partners to identify examples of good practice. Where appropriate, these will be reflected in revised programme guidance. Officials will also be rigorously monitoring local authority performance to ensure that Flying Start services are delivered to those children and families who are most in need of support.

In addition to longitudinal evaluation activity I have also approved the commissioning of evidence reviews to support the provision of effective family support and early language development activity, both of which are core elements of the Flying Start offer. The findings from all research and evaluation activity in conjunction with internal monitoring data will be used to inform programme guidance and to support the development of Flying Start as we expand the programme.

## **8. Integration with wider Welsh Government policy**

Links are in place at policy and programme level to ensure the successful delivery of this commitment. The Flying Start programme board membership ensures that flagship programmes - including Families First, Integrated Family Support Services and Communities First - are supporting the expansion of Flying Start and working towards the delivery of a truly holistic service for children, young people and families in Wales.

**Gwenda Thomas AM**  
**Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services**

Local Authority	2011-12 Allocation	2012-13 allocation	2013-14 Indicative Allocation	2014-15 Indicative Allocation
Anglesey	£781,628	£823,477	£1,182,183	£1,391,429
Blaenau Gwent	£1,197,463	£1,257,355	£1,770,717	£2,070,178
Bridgend	£1,617,297	£1,714,236	£2,545,141	£3,029,835
Caerphilly	£2,716,042	£2,857,849	£4,073,334	£4,782,367
Cardiff	£4,844,853	£5,157,418	£7,836,542	£9,399,365
Carmarthenshire	£1,949,651	£2,057,978	£2,986,498	£3,528,135
Ceredigion	£613,900	£643,469	£896,915	£1,044,759
Conwy	£1,186,173	£1,247,780	£1,775,843	£2,083,880
Denbighshire	£1,081,613	£1,142,877	£1,668,000	£1,974,321
Flintshire	£1,526,181	£1,608,301	£2,312,189	£2,722,790
Gwynedd	£1,167,996	£1,228,780	£1,749,786	£2,053,707
Merthyr Tydfil	£1,082,250	£1,140,358	£1,638,431	£1,928,973
Monmouthshire	£647,482	£678,423	£943,630	£1,098,335
Neath Port Talbot	£1,956,858	£2,066,832	£3,009,465	£3,559,334
Newport	£2,402,786	£2,534,233	£3,660,924	£4,318,160
Pembrokeshire	£1,368,347	£1,437,844	£2,033,532	£2,381,016
Powys	£992,387	£1,041,851	£1,465,830	£1,713,151
Rhondda Cynon Taf	£3,548,173	£3,736,357	£5,349,359	£6,290,277
Swansea	£3,066,017	£3,243,155	£4,761,483	£5,647,173
Torfaen	£1,421,567	£1,492,848	£2,103,824	£2,460,228
Vale of Glamorgan	£1,354,446	£1,422,434	£2,005,184	£2,345,122
Wrexham	£1,520,891	£1,610,146	£2,375,190	£2,821,466
All-Wales Total	£38,044,000	£40,144,001	£58,144,001	£68,644,001



By virtue of paragraph(s) ix of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted

# Agenda Item 7

## Children and Young People Committee

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Meeting Venue: **Committee Room 3 – Senedd**

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Meeting date: **Wednesday, 18 January 2012**

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Meeting time: **09:00 – 12:16**

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This meeting can be viewed on Senedd TV at:

[http://www.senedd.tv/archiveplayer.jsf?v=en\\_400000\\_18\\_01\\_2012&t=0&l=en](http://www.senedd.tv/archiveplayer.jsf?v=en_400000_18_01_2012&t=0&l=en)

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Wales



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### Concise Minutes:

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#### Assembly Members:

**Christine Chapman (Chair)**  
**Angela Burns**  
**Jocelyn Davies**  
**Keith Davies**  
**Suzy Davies**  
**Julie Morgan**  
**Lynne Neagle**  
**Jenny Rathbone**  
**Aled Roberts**  
**Simon Thomas**

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#### Witnesses:

**Tony Leahy, Sema**  
**Bill Peaper, Semtra**  
**Gareth Williams, ConstructionSkills**  
**Sioned Williams, Care and Development**  
**Eifion Evans, Director of Education and Community Service, Ceredigion County Council**  
**Arwyn Thomas, Assistant Director of Education and Community Service, Ceredigion County Council**

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#### Committee Staff:

**Claire Morris (Clerk)**  
**Claire Griffiths (Deputy Clerk)**  
**Anne Thomas (Researcher)**

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### **1. Introductions, apologies and substitutions**

1.1 The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting. There were no apologies.

## **2. Implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009: Evidence Session**

2.1 The Chair welcomed the witnesses. Members questioned the witnesses on the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009.

Action point:

Sioned Williams agreed to provide further information on why some local authorities are recruiting social workers from outside the United Kingdom when it appears that colleges in Wales are training adequate number of social workers.

## **3. Implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009: Evidence Session**

3.1 The Chair welcomed the witnesses. Members questioned the witnesses on the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009

## **4. Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public for the remainder of the meeting**

4.1 Members agreed the motion to exclude the public for the remainder of the business.

## **5. Legislative Consent Motion on the Welfare Reform Bill**

5.1 The Committee considered the reply from the Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services and agreed to prepare and table a short report by 20 January.

## **6. Adoption Inquiry: Methods of working**

6.1 Members agreed in principle to appointing an expert adviser to assist with this inquiry and requested a paper for the next meeting.

## **7. Papers to note**

7.1 Additional information on EU level action against child sex trafficking (identified in meeting on 1 December 2011)

7.2 Additional information from Governors Wales' (identified in meeting on 7 December 2011)

7.3 Additional information from Colleges Wales (identified in meeting on 7 December 2011)

7.4 Information from the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales

### **TRANSCRIPT**

View the [meeting transcript](#).

# Agenda Item 7a

## Children and Young People Committee

CYP(4)-03-12 Paper 3

### Inquiry into the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure (2009)

#### Evidence from Higher Education Wales



#### About Higher Education Wales

Higher Education Wales (HEW) represents the interests of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Wales and is a National Council of Universities UK. HEW's Governing Council consists of the Vice-Chancellors of all the HEIs in Wales. HEW provides an expert resource on the Welsh Higher Education sector.

#### Introduction

Higher Education Wales welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Inquiry into the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure (2009). Although HEW considers it too early in the process, with too few young people having gone through the system, to provide hard evidence of the impact that the Measure has had on the higher education sector, it is helpful that the Committee has requested information based on evidence received so far to allow us to add further clarity on specific matters.

This response addresses the specific questions in 4 groups:

1. Widening Access
2. Progression Routes
3. Parity of Esteem
4. Independent Advice.

#### 1. Widening Access

- ***What changes do the higher education institutions in Wales expect to see as a result of the implementation of the Learning and Skills Wales Measure 2009? For example changes to the numbers and qualifications of applicants to higher education courses.***

The latest available data from HESA on entry qualifications shows an increase in students entering higher education with vocational qualifications. As these figures predate the

Measure, it is not possible to attribute its introduction to the changes but it is a positive indicator and there should be no reason why this increase will not continue.

It is possible that there will be a variable impact on the number of qualifications, based on resourcing differences within and between local authorities in respect of the learning support component of the Measure, as well as variable impact of the coordination and management of the 14-19 Learning Networks by those authorities. It is anticipated that the introduction of the Measure will result in the further development of the Welsh Baccalaureate, with many schools using coaches when developing students' vocational skills and work experience portfolios.

- ***How will the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure help to progress the Welsh Government's priority to address social injustice and to widen access to higher education?***

The Committee has heard anecdotal and empirical evidence that the wider choice of courses, both vocational and academic, resulting from the Measure, has led to more young people staying on at school or college until age 18/19. This could potentially increase the number of young people (especially those from non-traditional backgrounds) who may apply for higher education courses. It is crucial that the new tuition fees regime in Wales and the support available to Welsh domiciled students from the Welsh Government and individual universities, is clearly communicated. If prospective students do not understand the offer available to them, there is a risk that the new fees arrangements could work against the very groups that the Government is seeking to reach with its social justice and widening access policies.

It is accepted that those prospective students from more affluent areas are generally better informed with regard to access to university and the support available, and that those from Communities First neighbourhoods and families with previous low participation in higher education, less so. This is a growing concern as we move forward. The evidence base for these concerns is not yet available.

## **2. Progression Routes**

- ***Has the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure had any effect to date on progression routes into higher education?***

There have been examples of changes in decisions made by young people, to continue onto higher education, drawing on the evidence from Learning Coaches case studies published in 2008 by Welsh Government, as well as local authority and individual school and college initiatives, for example in Caerphilly, Merthyr, the Vale, Powys and Neath. This is not a consistent pattern for all parts of Wales. Fundamentally, there is a requirement to improve the Key Stage 4 school attainment rate, currently 40%, to improve progression on to HE.

- ***How will the wider choice of academic and vocational courses for young people age 14 and 16, as a result of the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure, affect the admissions policies of Welsh higher education institutions?***

There is evidence of wider choice through the publication of options menus by each 14-19 network, but the evidence base of how this wider choice has impacted on admissions policies in HE is not yet available. More information on admissions is detailed below and is linked into the question of parity of esteem.

### **3. Parity of Esteem**

- ***Has progress been made towards parity of esteem between vocational and academic courses in respect of admission policies into higher education courses?***

An institution's admissions policy underlies everything it does in the area of the admission of students - from enquiries, recruitment and outreach to making decisions, transmitting data to UCAS, relationship building, diversity, transition support, registration and beyond. All universities across the UK work closely with the Supporting Professionalism in Admissions Programme (SPA) on the development of fair admissions to maintain and enhance excellence and professionalism in admissions, student recruitment and widening access. Most universities employ the same admissions policies for vocational and academic courses, although the former tend to use interviews for professional suitability as an extra requirement. As the admissions criteria for courses evolve, many universities are mindful that some qualifications better prepare students for HE study than others. However, this is not along a vocational/academic divide per se and admissions officers continuously monitor course and curriculum content of 'new' qualifications (vocational and academic). As a general point, much will depend on the definition of vocational or academic that is applied. For example, is a degree in medicine considered a vocational course or an academic one?

All universities in Wales have a strong tradition of evaluating the suitability of applicants 'in the round' whether or not the qualifications presented at application are vocational and/or academic. In this way, parity of esteem between vocational and academic courses does exist. As part of widening access policies, universities seek to provide opportunities for all who are able to benefit - the important point is one of the assessment of an individual's potential to succeed in higher education and not just the qualification they achieve.

- ***Are there clear vocational progression routes for students who wish to enter higher education for some, or all, HE courses?***

The number of young people engaged in many different progression routes into FE and HE is growing in Wales. Routes include First Campus, 14-19 Level 4 Tasters and Outreach –

Family Learning. The Universities Heads of the Valleys Institute, for example, has developed a 14-19 taster strategy that maps progression, which is due to start in Merthyr and Blaenau Gwent in January 2012.

#### 4. Independent Advice

- ***Is there professional independent advice available to 14 and 16 year olds (and their parents) on progression into higher education courses, especially for young people intending to choose vocational courses?***

There is some anecdotal evidence that parents have particular views over the question of vocational versus academic. At this stage, it is difficult to see how legislation alone will change perception of vocational courses, but it is possible this will evolve over time.

There is, however, independent advice available:

**Existing Services** - Young people in Wales are entitled to independent advice from qualified careers advisors. The programme of independent careers information, advice and guidance supplements the careers planning skills that are delivered to all young people in the age range 11-19 as part of the basic curriculum under the Careers and World of Work framework.

**Future Services: Future Ambitions** – An independent study of the careers service in Wales '*Careers Wales: A Review in an international perspective*' (Professor A G Watts May 2009 Research Document No: 033/2009) concluded that 'The attention to quality-related issues within Careers Wales is impressive and comparable with the best international practice.' (page 47). Professor Watt's study also highlights high levels of resourcing and outputs in Wales compared with other parts of the UK. (page 14).

*'Future Ambitions: developing careers services in Wales'* (WAG 10-11 11097) was published in November 2010, building upon Professor Watts' study and looking beyond the services provided by Careers Wales to the wider careers 'family'. It describes in some depth the wide-range of careers services providers in higher education, further education, schools, colleges, Work Based Learning Providers, Jobcentre Plus, Union Learning Representatives as well as Careers Wales – a whole 'family' of careers services providers. The report analyses their inter-relationships and attempts to scope a more co-ordinated service that has a shared identity and a shared outcome – citizens who are able to make well-informed learning and careers choices and are aware of the services on hand to help them towards fulfilling choices. The 60 detailed recommendations in *Future Ambitions* form the basis of a medium to long-term Action Plan to realise this vision.

#### Summary

Higher Education Wales welcomes the introduction of the Measure and looks forward to the benefit of further data so that it can provide a more evidence based analysis in the future.

**HIGHER EDUCATION WALES**  
**JANUARY 2012**