

Children and Young People Committee

CYP(4)-08-11 - 09 November 2011

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

Evidence from the Wales 14-19 Network Co-ordinators

South East Region (Network Co-ordinator John Fabes)



**Evidence to the Children and Young People's Committee
on the Implementation of the Learning & Skills (Wales) Measure 2009
on behalf of SE Wales**

The effect of implementation on young people aged 14-19 – do they have a wider choice of academic and vocational courses as a result of the Measure?

The short answer to the question above is “Yes”. This is particularly so in the area of 14-16 vocational options at Level 2 where there has been a significant increase in the range available. As the local area curricula have developed so has the awareness of young people about the range of vocational provisions available and their enthusiasm to take up the offer. Young people with a wider range of abilities have been taking up vocational courses.

The post-16 offer has increased to include the vocational elements but there has been a less marked take-up of these provisions. However the range of academic subjects has certainly increased and enabled young people to try either new courses or combinations of courses that were not available through their home institution before the Measure.

The Careers Wales on-line service has helped to highlight the range of choice.

Do Welsh language pupils get the same depth and range of choice?

There are 3 Welsh medium high schools in SE Wales and 8 altogether in the South Wales Forum. Through the partnerships of schools there is a good but distinctive offer within Welsh medium and the schools all met the requirements of the Measure. The forum works to support vocational provisions across the 2 regions.

In some cases the Welsh medium schools have sourced training providers with a capacity to deliver in Welsh. In the FE sector this still remains a challenge but there is a commitment to improving capacity and where possible written assessments are through the medium of Welsh.

Overall Welsh language pupils have had a good choice of subjects both at pre and post-16. The Bilingual grant from WG for supporting vocational subjects through the medium of Welsh has helped to secure the greater range of the vocational offer.

Have there been any unintended consequences for other subjects as a result of the wider offer?

The greater range of subjects across a slightly diminishing cohort size presents problems in retaining subjects within the offer as group sizes drop. However the increase in partnership and collaboration has offset this by bringing young people together into combined groups. This has been further exacerbated by the reductions in post-16 funding. The Committee's reference to Modern Languages highlights a general decline which is not due purely to the impact of wider choice. Again increased collaboration can provide a way forward to ensure the retention of these subjects in the final offer. Another off-setting factor has been the increased use of technology and video-conferencing to enable minority subjects to survive where they might not otherwise have done so.

The numbers of young people staying on in education and training post-16.

There is evidence of more young people staying on in education and training over the past few years. In some cases this is due to new 6th form programmes provided by training providers working with groups of schools. The greater range of choice has also had some impact. Some of this increase will be related to the state of the economy and the lack of job opportunities. It is anticipated that the new work-based learning contracts will also help to push up retention rates and there is some early evidence that this is the case. Another factor encouraging retention is the active planning of progression routes from pre-to post 16 especially in vocational subjects so that there are no dead ends but instead opportunities for young people to move on in their selected area of interest.

Practical problems being addressed to implement the Measure.

Rural areas: clearly transport costs and time are key constraints; these can limit the number of schools in a collaborating partnership. However the use of technology such as video-conferencing and the flexible movement of staff rather than students and shared teaching between institutions have all helped to overcome the logistics.

The provision of 30 learning options including 5 vocational: with the establishment of formal partnerships the local area curricula have been able to meet the regulations on choice as laid down by the Minister. The main issue here has been to broker and develop the local partnerships and over-coming in some areas engrained resistance. There have been differential rates of progress at pre and post-16 sometimes hindered and sometimes supported by the parallel work on the WG Transformation agenda.

Delivering local area curricula (LAC): defining the number of these and the working partnerships has had to be addressed with local authority areas ranging from 1 LAC to 5 LAC. Once schools are working in partnership across a LAC the issues of common and block timetabling emerge and present a challenge especially if there is blocking both at KS4 and post-16. This in turn requires schools and colleges to look at the timing of the academic day and the positioning of lunchtimes to allow for movement of students and / or staff. Scheduling of facilities and times for video-conferencing also adds extra layers of complexity into the arrangements. Much as one can understand the drive behind creating the LACs they are not without their complications when it comes to the practicalities of delivery.

Delivery of learning including use of IT etc. : (to be commented upon to the committee on the 9th of November)

Transport and Travel issues: the movement of staff or students has always been recognised as a critical factor. The issues include the costs which can be significant if taxis and hire buses are involved. Also there is the time taken for the travel itself. However there can be an interesting difference in perspective on this. In urban areas students might travel across a city covering say 7 or 8 miles and take two buses and 40 to 60 minutes for the journey each way and think that is fine. In more rural areas where

the same journey time might represent 20 to 30 miles of travel this may be considered an unreasonable distance and expectation. Thus the response to the issue of travel will vary significantly from network to network. In urban areas extensive use of public transport can reduce costs considerably but may not be an option in more rural areas. In order for public transport to be used effectively adjustments to routes can be helpful but are not always easy to negotiate with the bus companies in question.

Other issues: depending on the providers working with any given network there will be additional matters to be dealt with that were not necessarily in place before the Measure. These include procurement processes, creating service level agreements, negotiating costs of provision (which can vary considerably over a region) and monitoring the quality of external provision. The need to produce area prospectuses, agree entry requirements to courses and to ensure fairness when agreeing the distribution of provision across a partnership. All these add to the workload and relationship building during the implementation phase of the Measure and although some demands will diminish over time others will remain.

Is the Measure being implemented consistently across all LAs?

It is fair to say that everyone is striving to do just this and meet the demands of the Measure and its associated regulations. However each LA area is unique and at a different starting point in the relationships among the key stakeholders and therefore each implementation journey is different. Following the WG adage of national issues but local solutions so each area within a region has had to respond to its particular set of circumstances and generate its own set of actions with stakeholders. So while some consistency can be found there will also necessarily be difference but this could be a strength. It is also worth noting that the Transformation plans for each LA will significantly shape how 14-19 Learning Pathways evolves and in turn how the network responds to the implementation of the Measure. This introduces more potential variation and issues of governance are also likely to be distinctive.

Vulnerable learners

Whilst the learners capable of accessing Level 2 provisions as laid down in the Measure have generally performed well there has always been a debate about how well the Measure supports learners below Level 2. Whilst some elements in the scoring system allow for the recognition of Level 1 provision this is not the same as enshrining an entitlement for this group of learners in the same way that has been done for Level 2. In some networks there is a feeling that resources have been directed away from vulnerable learners because of the emphasis the Measure gives to Level 2 provision and that this needs to be re-balanced. The resource imbalance across the region in relation to ESF monies in Convergence areas only serves to heighten this problem.

Learning Support

This is a very broad question resting as it does on the actions of schools and a whole range of youth support services. Currently there is not a holistic view across the whole region. With respect to Learning Coaching there has been a well developed training programme running successfully for some years so there is at least a good supply of trained coaches across the local networks providing support for learners.

FE Colleges

Further information on this area can be reported to the Committee on the 9th November.

John Fabes
Cardiff 14-19 Network Co-ordinator
For SE Wales

North Wales Region (Network Co-ordinator John Gambles)

North Wales Region 14-19 Networks

Responses to the questions raised by the Welsh Government's Children and Young People Committee

The effect that the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 has had on young people aged 14-19 years;

The Learning & Skills Measure has helped to consolidate the entitlement of young people aged 14-19 to the curriculum and support elements of Learning Pathways, widened choice and increased learner satisfaction and learner voice.

At both 14 and 16 to the development of individual learning pathways with a greatly enhanced choice form a range of relevant vocational and general courses both at Level 2 and Level 3. In particular it has contributed, at 14, to increased levels of attainment at Threshold Level 2, enhanced aspirations of students and a better understanding of progression routes

Whether the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 has 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;

Participation rates at 16 increased across the whole region between 2008 and 2010 and, in particular, between 2009 and 2010 when the Learning & Skills Measure came into operation. Some Unitary Authorities saw significant increases and there was a regional increase of 3.29 percentage points from 81.67% in 2009 to 84.95% in 2010. This increased participation applied to both school Sixth Form and college settings.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
North Wales Region						
schools	37.3	36.5	37.4	37.0	40.4	41.7
FEI	38.8	40.1	42.2	42.7	41.2	43.3
Participation rate	76.1	76.5	79.7	79.8	81.7	84.9

Source: Careers Wales

Whether young people aged 14-19 have a wider choice for academic and vocational courses as a result of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009;

Young people aged 14-19 have a much wider choice of both general and vocational courses at both Level 2 in KS4 and Level 3 at post 16 as a result of the Learning & Skills Measure. This can be evidenced in both the offer and take up data reported by Careers Wales On-line. Greatly expanded partnership working between schools, and between schools and colleges, has not only expanded the breadth of subjects but also the possible combination of subjects to better satisfy student choice. Parity of esteem between general and vocational subjects has been achieved by offering students equal access to both in combination. There are many examples that demonstrate that the offer has burgeoned where successful post 16 partnerships are operating. For example, one school could offer 20 Level 3 courses before partnership working – they now offer in excess of 50, half of which are vocational. In one partnership of four schools and two colleges the average post 16 offer before the Measure was 22; in partnership, all students now have equal access to 53 Level 3 courses including 17 vocational courses, and choice from a common timetable and options set.

At KS4 the increased access to vocational subjects has enabled students to make better choices of courses post 16, and have a better understanding of progression routes.

The Welsh Medium offer has also increased, albeit more slowly, with Bilingual and Welsh Medium schools working in partnerships within UA, and Welsh Medium schools working across the Region on blended learning provision that includes video-conferencing.

What practical problems have been addressed in order to implement the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009.

Achieving the Learning & Skills Measure through partnership working has meant addressing a number of barriers to success: Joint timetabling and timetable alignment has been managed through more flexible working by partners. Blocking timetables to reduce travel episodes to at most 2 in a weekly cycle has been welcomed by teachers of practical and vocational subjects, but has been a greater challenge by teachers and lecturers of general subjects in managing 2 sessions of 2 or more hours. Blocking post

16 provision has also impacted on the KS3 timetable and curriculum causing more split classes with teachers need for larger blocks of time in the sixth form.

Managing transport between partner schools and colleges has required central coordination and special funding arrangements. Funding of such transport has largely been through 14-19 Networks and their grant funding. The annual cost for one such Network for one post 16 local area curriculum is £85,000 or £230 per student per year, with the UA absorbing the management costs.

Partnership working has also required the development of memoranda of understanding and an extensive range of protocols to deal with attendance, attainment, monitoring of progress and other quality aspects, as well joint governance arrangements, joint marketing and an agreed financial transfer system. The latter has not been helped by the suspension of the NPFS but partners have addressed this by agreeing their own systems that take into account the number of students, subject weightings, the volume of learning per course expressed in Credit Equivalent Units (CEU) and an internal CEU value.

Suspension of the NPFS and the absence of a national system based upon learners and the volume of learning they undertake has militated against schools and colleges to expand their offer to widen choice and to take on more students. The current fixed quantum of funding has exacerbated this as there is no incentive for schools to grow their curriculum and associated learner support.

Partnerships have also had to manage the removal of unnecessary duplication of courses and the withdrawal of some courses at some schools and colleges in favour of their offer at other providers. Whilst this has achieved better value for money and a saving to the public purse, it is not clear how these saving can be shared between partners.

The colleges have been very responsive to student demand in schools for a greater vocational offer and the need for schools to have this vocational offer in order to meet the minimum requirements of the Learning & Skills Measure. The colleges have had to manage problems of capacity in the context of the increased demand. One fundamental risk is the mismatch between core funding (revenue) and the cost of college courses. This has been managed at post 16 by the adoption of financial transfers based on notional CEU values as described above; at pre 16, the 14-19 Networks have used the Learning Pathways grant to provide uplifts per student of up to 50% to pay for the difference between cost and the core funding received by schools. The reduction in Learning Pathways grant funding of 12% in 2012-13, and 7% in 2013-14, is likely to impact on how many courses (and how many

pupils) schools can access at college and could threaten the current level of successful partnership working and schools ability to meet the Learning & Skills Measure.

Successful partnership working has been facilitated by the UA and 14-19 Networks and their operational structure and groups. Again, 14-19 Learning Pathways grant funding has been instrumental in achieving this success. The geographical isolation of some schools and the impracticability of transporting learners to other schools and colleges has disadvantaged some schools and learners based there. Such schools have managed this by the creative curriculum development of school based vocational courses; such developments can make progression more complex and the achievement of industry standards more difficult. Blended learning and video conferencing has been used, particularly by Welsh Medium schools who are less able to work in meaningful partnerships locally, to widen choice, sustain what would have been small teaching groups and to meet the Learning & Skills Measure. The relative isolation of Welsh medium schools (there is just one in each of the four UA outside of Gwynedd and Ynys Môn) has been addressed by successful regional working between the six 14-19 Learning Pathways Networks who have funded the coordination and production of web based learning materials (Moodle) and the development of learning communities across the region. Additional grant funding through 14-19 Learning Pathways has financed the development and provision of new Welsh Medium vocational courses to help school meet the Measure. The planned reduction of 14-19 Learning Pathways grant funding will be extremely difficult to manage.

Other points that the Committee might want to consider:

To a large extent, Welsh language pupils do have the same depth and range of choice 14-16 as bespoke courses can be offered with the support of the 14-19 Learning Pathways grant. However, access becomes more limited post-16 as Level 3 courses are not always delivered through the medium of Welsh as viable group sizes are required.

Vulnerable learners – all of the 14-19 Networks expressed concern that the Learning & Skills Measure specifically targeted Level 2 courses pre 16 and that an inevitable consequence would be less support for Level 1 courses even those would be demanding enough for some students. However the networks have continued to use the 14-19 Learning Pathways grant to support learners in special schools. For example Ysgol y Gogarth learners in Conwy access Construction and Salon Services at Coleg Llandrillo, Ysgol Tir Morfa students in Denbighshire a wide range of taster courses at Coleg Llandrillo and Deeside College, and St Christopher's School to a wide range of vocational Level 1 and Entry Level courses with Yale College, Deeside College and other providers. The success of these learners accessing college settings has enabled progress to full-time courses at the college post-16 which is a

major step forward for these young people. 14-19 Learning Pathways grant funding has also funded other projects not directly aligned to the implementation of the Learning & Skills Measure, but targeting learners with ALN or those who are in danger of becoming NEET. Some of this funding has been used as match for ESF Projects in Convergence Areas, such as Llwyddo'n Lleol and Potensial, and is having a major impact in re-engaging young people and improving their social and employability skills. Without grant support, these opportunities would not have been available and these young people would not have been motivated to learn.

The enhanced collaborative working that has resulted from Learning Pathways and the Learning & Skills Measure has made a significant contribution to the development of professional learning communities eg deputies looking at curriculum/ timetabling modelling for partnership working; teachers from different schools the sharing delivery of a post-16 course; good practice meetings for teachers, lecturers and managers. The impact of Learning Pathways has been significant in terms of bringing teachers out of isolated working and extending their range of knowledge, skills and competencies in helping young people access an appropriate learning experience.

All of the North Wales Networks use their 14-19 Learning Pathways grants to fund personal support projects targeting those learners in danger of becoming NEET to build upon opportunities arising from the expanded curriculum offer of Learning Pathways and the Learning & Skills Measure.

		2010		2009		2008		2007		2006		2005
	NEET	cohort	NEET	cohort	NEET	cohort	NEET	cohort	NEET	cohort	NEET	cohort
NORTH WALES	307	8011	363	8156	611	8677	496	8726	523	8455	485	8471
% known NEET	3.83%		4.45%		7.04%		5.68%		6.19%		5.73%	

If the average lifetime cost to society of a young person becoming NEET at 16 is £56,300* per person, the total lifetime cost of the NEET cohort has fallen from £27,305,500 in 2005 to £17,284,100 in 2010; a fall of £10,021,400. This 'saving' to the public purse is equivalent to over twice the annual Learning Pathways budget for the North Wales Region .

(*Source: Coles, B. et al. (2010) Estimating the life-time cost of NEET: 16-18 year olds not in Education, Employment or Training Research Undertaken for the Audit Commission. York University)

South West and Mid Wales Region (Network Co-ordinator Matt Morden)

Response from the South West & Mid Wales Consortium* Regional Co-ordinators Group (swamwac)

The Children and Young People Committee are undertaking an inquiry into the implementation of the Learning and Skills Measure 2009. The terms of reference for this inquiry are:

- 1) The effect that the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 has had on young people aged 14-19 years;*
- 2) Whether the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 has 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;*
- 3) Whether young people aged 14-19 have a wider choice for academic and vocational courses as a result of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009; and*
- 4) What practical problems have been addressed in order to implement the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009.*

Response 1.

Across the 6 Networks in the swamwac region, the Learning and Skills measure has delivered positive outcomes for young people aged 14-19 years by:

- Increasing the range of courses available in academic and vocational subject areas delivered in both Welsh and English;
- Ensuring that individuals have more equal access to courses across the region;
- Developing a curriculum that better meets the needs of local learners;
- Enabling access to learning coaching and a wide range of additional personal support to overcome barriers to success in education and training;
- Improved “parity of esteem” between vocational and academic courses;
- Increased learner satisfaction and motivation due to opportunities to follow a more diverse curriculum that better reflects the interests of learners;
- Significantly reducing the number of young people who become NEET at 16.

Collaborative working by schools, further education colleges and training providers has enabled young people to:

- Study in other learning settings away from their home institution for part of their timetable;
- Learn in larger groups with young people from other schools and colleges;
- Undertake courses in specialist subject areas (e.g. fashion) that would not be available or viable in individual institutions.

Additionally, the Development of 14-19 Learning Pathways and the Learning and Skills Measure has enabled the rebuilding of the trust between Post-16 learning providers that was eroded following the incorporation of Further Education Colleges in 1993. The collaborative provision overseen by the 14-19 Networks has been instrumental in embedding genuine partnership working for young people by schools, further education colleges, training providers, the careers company and the local education authorities. This work has required many hours of brokerage and facilitation by the 14-19 Network co-ordinators and this has resulted in more effective

*The South West and Mid Wales Consortium Region comprises of the 14-19 Network co-ordinators for the local authority areas of Powys, Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire.

collaborative planning and a more integrated approach to the delivery of the Extending Entitlement, youth support services and CYPP agendas across the region.

Shared regional working has been supported via the *swamwac* 14-19 Network co-ordinators group, with a particular emphasis on Welsh Medium provision (via Welsh Medium Fforwm funding) and learning coach development.

Response 2.

All 6 *swamwac* 14-19 Networks can evidence significant increases in the number of young people staying on in Post 16 education and reductions in the number of young people designated as NEET at 16 (see appendix 1). The decrease in the number of young people aged 16-18 becoming NEET have enabled many more young people to progress to further education, training and work. This represents a very significant saving to the public purse (see appendix 2).

There have been positive outcomes for other relevant indicators, including reductions in the number of young people leaving education without recognised qualifications, Level 1 and Level 2 thresholds and the average wider points score.

Response 3.

Learners across south west and mid Wales have a wider choice of academic and vocational courses as a result of the Learning and Skills Measure. Issues relating to the parity of esteem between traditional academic courses and vocational routes are being addressed through the development of 14-19 Learning Pathways and the opportunity to combine academic and vocational courses. Learners have much improved access to information about courses available to them across their local curriculum area.

All Networks can evidence a significant increase in the numbers of courses offered to learners and the number of vocational options both pre and post 16, as required by the Measure.

Response 4.

There are a range of practical issues that Networks have had to address in order to realise the benefits of 14-19 Learning Pathways for young people in the region. These issues include:

- Developing collaboration via WG 14-19 Network funding while providers work within a Post 16 funding system that continues to encourage competition between schools, FE and training providers;
- Development of shared timetabling between schools, further education colleges, training providers and across Networks;
- Transporting learners to their chosen provision is costly, time-consuming, logistically challenging and can be unpopular with young people in both rural and urban settings;
- The absence of a national and common e-learning portal that provides access to a range of technologies, tools and resources for young people and practitioners; (see example at <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/usingglowandict//roleofictinlearning.asp>);
- Enabling the release of teaching and lecturing staff to take part in training (such as learning coach) and other staff development;
- The limited nature of labour market information at a local authority level on which decisions about course provision linked to employer need can be made
- The staff time required to build trust and effective partnership working between providers and increasingly, between Networks on a regional basis;
- Resourcing a small team to facilitate Network collaboration, meet the required standards and LA, WG and Wales Audit Office requirements.

Appendix 1

Destinations of Yr 11 School Leavers in 2005 and 2010 by 14-19 Network area, *swamwac* region and Wales

Network & Region (%)	Continuing in Full Time Education		Continuing in Part Time Education		Work Based Training - non employed status		Work Based Training - Employment status		Employed - Other		Known not be in Education, Training or Employment		No response to survey		Left the area	
	2005	2010	2005	2010	2005	2010	2005	2010	2005	2010	2005	2010	2005	2010	2005	2010
Powys	78.3	85.4	-	0.1	2.0	1.9	2.0	0.5	5.6	2.5	4.8	2.9	1.8	1.8	5.4	4.8
Ceredigion	79.0	86.2	-	0.2	5.9	5.4	2.8	0.6	5.5	3.3	3.6	2.3	0	0.5	3.1	1.5
Pembrokeshire	79.3	80.5	-	0.3	6.0	6.5	1.7	1.1	4.3	3.3	6.6	4.8	0.4	0.4	1.6	3.1
Carmarthenshire	79.8	87.3	-	0.0	7.0	5.0	1.8	1.5	3.7	1.6	5.7	2.9	0.1	0.3	1.8	1.3
Swansea	72.5	83.4	-	0.0	9.7	8.2	1.6	1.1	3.9	1.8	8.5	4.2	2.1	0	1.4	1.2
Neath Port Talbot	73.0	80.4	-	0.0	9.9	8.5	1.8	0.6	3.2	1.5	8.1	6.6	3.2	1.4	1.2	0.9
swamwac Region	77.0	83.9	-	0.1	6.8	5.9	2.0	0.9	4.4	2.3	6.2	3.6	1.3	0.7	2.4	2.1
Wales	75.6	82.8	-	0.2	6.6	5.8	2.0	1.0	5.1	1.9	6.8	5.4	1.8	1.2	2.1	1.7

Appendix 2

*The South West and Mid Wales Consortium Region comprises of the 14-19 Network co-ordinators for the local authority areas of Powys, Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire.

The number of Year 11 leavers known not to be in education, employment or training by Local Authority area, swamwac region and All Wales*

	2005	2005	2005	2010	2010	2010
14-19 Network area	%age of Yr 11 cohort	Number of young people	Estimated lifetime cost to society**	%age of Yr 11 cohort	Number of young people	Estimated lifetime cost to society*
Powys	4.8	81	£4, 560,300	2.9	49	£2,758,700
Ceredigion	3.6	32	£1,801,600	2.3	20	£1,126,000
Pembrokeshire	6.6	98	£5,517,400	4.8	70	£3,941,000
Carmarthenshire	5.7	125	£7,037,500	2.9	64	£3,603,200
Swansea	8.5	248	£13,962,400	4.2	110	£6,193,000
Neath Port Talbot	8.1	145	£8,163,500	6.6	114	£6,418,200
swamwac Region	6.2	729	£41,042,700	4.0	427	£24,040,100
All Wales	6.8	2634	£148,294,200	5.4	1967	£110,742,100

* Careers Wales West Destination Surveys 2005 & 2010

http://www.careerswales.com/prof/upload/pdf/Destinations_2010_Eng_v2.pdf

**Based on research by the University of York (2010) identifying the average lifetime cost to society of a young person becoming NEET at 16 as £56,300 per person.

Source: Coles, B. et al. (2010) Estimating the life-time cost of NEET: 16-18 year olds not in Education, Employment or Training Research Undertaken for the Audit Commission. York University

http://www.york.ac.uk/media/spsw/documents/research-and-publications/NEET_Executive_Summary_July_2010_York.pdf

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South Central Region (Network Co-ordinator Kath Durbin)

Question 1

The effect that the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 has had on young people aged 14-19 years;

- 1.1 The Learning & Skills Measure has had a positive effect on young people in that it has:
 - i). extended choice for learners and increased the number of options and learning pathways available to them across a range of domain areas
 - ii). improved equality of access to learning opportunities within and across a local curriculum/area
 - iii). encouraged flexibility within curriculum patterns which allow learners to benefit from a tailored learning provision
 - iv). supported learners through increased access to learning coaches and the benefits of learning coach functions
 - v). improved the match between the learning offer and the individual needs of learners

- 1.2 The actions put in place by Learning Partnerships in response to the Learning & Skills Measure have enabled learners to:
 - i). study in another location; this has brought with it social and cultural benefits as well as learning gains
 - ii). learn with students from other schools and local colleges (pre and post 16)
 - iii). experience vocational and work based learning opportunities

- 1.3 It has also helped Networks to :
 - i). frame their response to the Transformation Agenda (Post 16)
 - ii). articulate a framework and statement of entitlement for learners across areas of study and levels of qualifications and courses
 - iii). been a catalyst for increasing collaboration across institutions and sectors
 - iv). Increasing levels of trust and genuine partnership working in a locality and/or region.

Question 2

Whether the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 has 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;

Local Networks have reported an increase in the number of young people staying on in Post 16 education and training and overall a reduction in the number of young people designated as NEET at 16. Other indicators such as the number of young people leaving education with no qualifications has also reduced.

The Measure has been a catalyst for developing additional specialist provision Post 16 e.g. Bridgend's Studio 34 Skills Centre which provides a combination of formal & non formal learning opportunities together with dedicated learning coach support. Outcomes from this project have been very positive.

Question 3

Whether young people aged 14-19 have a wider choice for academic and vocational courses as a result of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009;

Yes, learners do have a wider choice of academic and vocational courses and they also have improved access to information about courses across a local curriculum area. This wider choice and the opportunity to mix academic and vocational courses as part of a Learning Pathway is helping to address issues relating to the parity of esteem between traditional academic courses and vocational routes.

Since the introduction of the Measure, Networks have witnessed a significant increase in the numbers of courses offered to learners at and the number of vocational options pre and post 16.

The Learning & Skills Measure has helped us to identify gaps in provision e.g. in Bridgend we identified a need to develop more Entry & L1 courses to meet the needs of vulnerable learners who were potential NEETs.

Question 4

What practical problems have been addressed in order to implement the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009?

The logistics are a challenge and include:

- i). Timing-related issues at the start of a new school year present a challenge for colleagues with responsibility for coordinating collaborative arrangements. There is a very real need to balance the time allocated for learners to make well informed choices between the time when they receive their examination results and the time when courses begin.
- ii). Tracking learners and their progress and outcomes.
- iii). Taster courses and improving induction arrangements for all learners.
- iv). Timetabling challenges and the impact of post 16 timetabling arrangements on learning in key stages 3 & 4.
- v). Funding a cost effective management team to support developments and ensure quality coordination and development on an ongoing cyclical basis.
- vi). Transport and managing travel to learn arrangements are complex and require joint working across Local Authority departments.