

Children and Young People Committee

CYP(4)-01-12 Paper 4

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

Additional evidence from the University and College Union



**WALES
CYMRU**

**Further questions from NAFW CYP
Committee on implementation of
Learning and Skills Measure (Wales)
2009- UCU Wales response**

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The University and College Union (UCU) represents more than 120,000 academics, lecturers, trainers, instructors, researchers, managers, administrators, computer staff, librarians and postgraduates in universities, colleges, prisons, adult education and training organisations across the UK.

UCU is the largest post-school union in the world: a force working for educators and education that employers and the government cannot ignore.

It was formed on 1 June 2006 by the amalgamation of two strong partners - the Association of University Teachers (AUT) and NATFHE - the University & College Lecturers' Union - who shared a long history of defending and advancing educators' employment and professional interests.

Below is UCU Wales response to the further questions raised by the National Assembly for Wales Children and Young People's Committee, after our verbal evidence session.

Has there been an increase in digital learning in colleges as a direct result of the collaborative requirements of the implementation of the Measure? If yes, has this been successful for the learners involved?

UCU Wales believes there has been an increase in the use of digital learning, and we welcome this development. This development allows for learners to further access a wider range of subjects, without having

to face geographical barriers and time spent travelling from institution to institution.

Despite this, UCU Wales would like to remind the committee that digital learning should not be seen as a suitable replacement for practical sessions. Practical lessons need a lecturer or teacher present as the expertise they have are needed to oversee work that is done in these sessions, as well as from a health and safety perspective.

Are you satisfied with the quality of digital learning provision, especially if it is delivered by private providers?

UCU Wales isn't in a position to comment on the quality of digital learning provision. But UCU Wales does have concerns over the delivery of digital learning by private providers. UCU Wales believes that the public purse should not be funding, albeit through institutions, any private provider that is not subject to the same regulations as public institutions. Taking this forward, these private institutions would be receiving public funding, whilst not being accountable to Welsh Government policies and planning.

How frequently do college principals having to exercise their powers under the Measure to remove a learner's entitlement to follow a course of study?

UCU Wales is not in a position comment on the frequency of college principals exercising their powers under the Measure to remove a learner's entitlement to follow a course of study. We believe the committee would be best placed to seek the views of principals themselves on this issue.

What about the child protection issues that the Chair raised?

UCU Wales doesn't consider there to be any direct child protection issues. Lecturers in colleges across Wales are all subject to the same enhanced CRB references that teachers in schools are.

In addition, lecturers in colleges have experience of POVA (The Protection of Vulnerable Adults), which in the context of the 14-19 agenda would be very similar to a POVA environment. All lecturing staff in a college has a responsibility to report anything irregular under POVA to the Reporting Officer within the college, and we would expect that the same would apply to child protection.

Ends