

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Y Bil Drafft Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol a'r Tribiwnlys Addysg (Cymru) | The Draft Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill

ALN 05

Ymateb gan : Cyngor y Gweithlu Addysg

Response from : Education Workforce Council

I am writing in response to the Children, Young People and Education Committee's call for evidence as part of its consideration of the draft Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill.

The Education Workforce Council has already responded separately to the Welsh Government consultation on the Bill, and what follows is based on that submission.

About the Education Workforce Council (EWC)

The EWC came into being on 1 April 2015. The EWC is the professional regulatory body for the education workforce, covering school teachers, Further Education (FE) teachers and learning support workers in school and FE settings. It is also the policy intention of the Welsh Government to further extend the new Council's remit to Youth workers and Work based learning professionals from April 2017.

General comments

In responding to the consultation, the Council has restricted itself to matters that are within its remit. It is the Council's view that there is much to welcome in the Bill. In particular, the introduction of the terms 'additional learning needs' and 'additional learning provision' to replace special educational needs / provision; the conscious and deliberate child and person centred ethos behind the Bill, and the measures designed to improve provision and ensure that provision continues up to 25 years of age.

Draft Additional learning needs code

We note that during the course of its original consultation of the draft Bill, the Welsh Government published a draft ALN Code. While we appreciate that this draft Code has a wide application across professions, we would wish to draw to the Committee's attention that practitioners registered with the EWC already have a 'Code of Professional Conduct and Practice'.

Additional learning needs coordinator (ALNCo)

As the professional body for the education workforce, the EWC is particularly interested in the proposal under paragraph 46 of the Bill, which imposes a duty on schools and Further Education institutions to designate a member of staff as the 'additional learning needs coordinator':

46 Additional learning needs co-ordinator

(1) The duty in subsection (2) applies to the following bodies—

- (a) the governing body of a maintained school in Wales;*
- (b) the governing body of an institution in the further education sector in Wales.*

(2) The body must designate a member of its staff (to be known as the "additional learning needs co-ordinator") as having responsibility for co-ordinating additional learning provision for pupils or students (as the case may be) with additional learning needs.

(3) Regulations may—

- (a) require bodies to ensure that additional learning needs co-ordinators have prescribed qualifications or prescribed experience (or both);*
- (b) confer functions on additional learning needs co-ordinators in relation to provision for pupils or students (as the case may be) with additional learning needs. (page 27)*

With little detail on the face of the Bill, we anticipate that there will be more information to come on this proposal in the Regulations and any complementary documentation / guidance.

The EWC looks forward, therefore, to responding more fully to a consultation on the Regulations. It is Council's view that high standards of ALN provision can be achieved only through well qualified and supported professionals. In particular, we hope the Regulations and other documentation will include more detail around the following key aspects pertaining to ALNCoS:

- Whether there are plans for any mandatory minimum qualifications or training for those practitioners designated ALNCo's?
- Whether there will be separate professional standards for ALNCo's in school and FE sectors?
- Clarity on whether ALNCo is to be a 'pay standard'.
- Plans for support for ALNCo's. For example, quality assured, nationally available and funded training provision.
- Potential consequences for those practitioners who already perform SENCo (ALNCo) duties.
- Potential impact on courses of Initial teacher training, and the Masters in Educational Practice.

Given the Council's statutory role and remit, it would expect to be involved in the development of any qualifications or professional standards for those designated ALNCo's.

Finally, the Committee will be aware that the EWC's Register of Education Practitioners already holds data on school and FE teacher qualifications including many of those already designated as SENCos. Furthermore, from April 1 2016, the Register will also include data on learning support staff in school and FE settings. This data may be useful to the Welsh Government in developing qualifications and other arrangements for ALNCo's.

Yours sincerely



Hayden Llewellyn

Chief Executive

Education Workforce Council