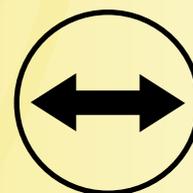


Consultation on Welsh Assembly Government Key Stages 2-3 Transition Grant

Consultation
Document



Date of Issue: **28 February 2006**
Action Required: **Responses by 28 April 2006**

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Adran Hyfforddiant ac Addysg
Department for Training and Education



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

- Title of Document:** Consultation on Welsh Assembly Government
Key Stages 2-3 Transition Grant
- Audience:** Chief Executives of County and County Borough Councils
in Wales; Directors of Education of County and County
Borough Councils in Wales; WLGA; Wales Audit
Commission.
- Copied to:** 10% sample of maintained primary and secondary schools
in Wales, Children's Commissioner for Wales, and relevant
national and local bodies in Wales.
- Overview:** This document consults on the proposed criteria for the
use of the Welsh Assembly Government grant to
improve transition from Key Stages 2-3 including the
proposed arrangements for the distribution of funding
and approval of exemplar projects.
- Action required:** Consultees to respond to this document by
28 April 2006. Responses should be made on the
enclosed proforma and returned to the address below or
electronically to: SPD3Consultations@wales.gsi.gov.uk
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CONSULTATION ON WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT KEY STAGES 2-3 TRANSITION GRANT

SUMMARY

This consultation invites comments on the proposed criteria for the use of Welsh Assembly Government grant to Improve Transition from Key Stages 23. The grant will be made available in 2006-07 and the following two financial years. The intention is that grant should support the development of exemplar projects which have the capacity to become self sufficient and can be replicated elsewhere. The consultation sets out the proposed arrangements for the distribution of the grant, the approval of proposals and the audit arrangements. The grant will be paid to local education authorities (LEAs) before the start of the September 2006 school year. In the meantime, LEAs are encouraged to start discussing potential projects with their schools and others on the basis of the indicative allocations set out in Annex A.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND LEGAL BACKGROUND

Transition Plans

1.1 Section 198(3) of the Education Act 2002 provides for the National Assembly for Wales to require the governing bodies of maintained secondary schools and their feeder primary schools, jointly, to draw up plans to facilitate the transition of pupils moving from primary to secondary school who have completed Year 6.

1.2 The Welsh Assembly Government has consulted on the application and content of Transition Plans and the duration and review of plans. Overall, the proposals were well received and regulations are being brought forward for consideration by the National Assembly with a view to the first plans being put in place by September 2007. Further details and supporting guidance will be published in the Spring.

1.3 To support the development of transition plans, the Assembly Government is planning to make additional INSET days available in the 2006-07 and 2007-08 school year. There is also specific ring-fenced funding to support the development of Transition Plans in the Better Schools Fund (BSF) for 2006-07 that can be drawn on by LEAs and to meet staff development costs associated with the development of Plans.

Key Stages 2-3 Transition Grant

1.4 To complement the support provided for the development of Transition Plans the Assembly Government is also making available grant funding to enable LEAs and schools to develop exemplar projects on one or more aspects of transition. The accent is on developments that are innovative and can be used as models of good practice. Funding of £1million has been secured for 2006-07 and indicative provision of £2m in each of the following two financial years to assist local authorities to do this.

1.5 The grant is being provided under Section 14 of the Education Act 2002, which gives powers to the National Assembly for Wales, delegated to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, to provide financial assistance for purposes related to education and childcare. The intention is that the funding should be administered on the Assembly's behalf by LEAs under Section 17 of the Act.

SECTION 2: PROJECTS ELIGIBLE FOR KEY STAGES 2-3 TRANSITION GRANT

Grant Objectives

2.1 The aim of the grant is to assist LEAs and schools to develop a range of exemplar projects on specific aspects of transition from Key Stages 2-3.

Eligibility Criteria

2.2 It is proposed that projects should focus on one or more of the key development areas set out in the Assembly Government's consultation document "Transition from Primary to Secondary School" (November 2004) including:

- Joint curriculum planning, for example, shared schemes of work targeted at continuity in learning in one or more of the four core subjects or cross-curricula themes such literacy, numeracy, ICT and thinking and learning skills;
- Continuity in teaching and learning methods, for example, observation of classroom practice so that subjects are taught in ways that provide for continuity and progression;
- Consistency in assessment, for example, improving opportunities for joint assessment of the work produced by pupils and moderation of teacher assessment;
- Sharing information about pupils' achievements, attendance and behaviour.

Question 1. Do you agree that projects should be targeted at the areas of work identified at para 2.2? If not, what areas would you wish to see removed or added?

2.3 It is envisaged that projects will in most instances be undertaken by a cluster of schools comprising of a secondary school and feeder primaries although the cluster may elect that one school take the lead in the management and running of the project. However, there should also be the potential for local authority led work that can be applied to a range of schools. For example a number of authorities have already developed units of work in specific subject areas that can be used to bridge Years 6 and 7.

Question 2. Do you agree that funding may be applied to both work undertaken in specific clusters and authority wide initiatives? If not, how would you wish to see funding targeted?

2.4 Given the accent on promoting innovation it is important that good practice is made widely available. It is proposed therefore that LEAs be allowed to use grant to disseminate project outcomes for example through production of case studies and provision of workshops for practitioners.

Question 3. Do you agree that LEAs be allowed to use grant to disseminate project outcomes?

SECTION 3: GRANT ARRANGEMENTS

Grant Funding

3.1 It is proposed that £1m be made available to LEAs in 2006-07 and indicative funding of £2m in each of the two following financial years. It is proposed that allocations for each LEA be calculated with reference to the funding formula used for Activity 1 of the Better Schools Fund. The approach used is considered relevant in that Activity 1 focuses on raising standards and achievement through the use of targeted opportunities to enhance the delivery of the curriculum. The formula used includes equal weightings for the number of pupils, child deprivation and settlement. Indicative allocations for each authority in 2006-07 on this basis are set out at Annex A.

Question 4. Do you agree that the grant should be allocated by reference to the Better Schools Fund formula used for Activity Area 1 – Curriculum Development? If not, what approach would you propose?

Administration of the Grant

3.2 LEAs would have responsibility for determining the use of the grant including where appropriate inviting schools to submit proposals, approving proposals against the eligibility criteria set by the Assembly Government, reporting to the Assembly Government on the use of the grant, monitoring outcomes and meeting audit requirements. We propose that LEAs should meet the costs of administering the grant from retained money to a maximum of 5% of the total grant.

Question 5. Do you agree that LEAs should be able to retain centrally 5% of their formula allocation to meet management and administration costs? If not, what percentage do you suggest?

3.3 To help reduce the administrative burden on schools and LEAs, the Welsh Assembly Government will provide a standard application form with the final guidance on the grant that could be used to invite proposals from schools. A specimen application form is attached at Annex B. It is proposed that the form will also be available in interactive format on the Learning Wales website.

Question 6. Would it be helpful to have an application form with the final guidance which LEAs can customise for their own use? If so please provide any comments on the specimen form at Annex B.

Duration of Grant

3.4 Grant is available for the 3 year period up to and including the 2008-09 financial year. Amounts allocated to individual LEAs will vary each year with the updating of the formula factors, and the total funds made available but shares should not vary significantly. Accordingly it is proposed that LEAs would be able to approve grant for schemes for periods of one to three years. No commitment to funding beyond 2008-09 can be given at this stage.

Unused Grant

3.5 The Welsh Assembly Government is concerned that all available grant is spent. It is proposed that LEAs notify the Welsh Assembly Government by 31 December each year of any grant that they were unable to award in that financial year for possible re-allocation to other authorities.

Question 7. Do you foresee any problems in LEAs being able to utilise appropriately all of their allocations in 2006-07 or subsequent years? Notification of Approved Schemes to the Welsh Assembly Government

3.6 It is proposed that LEAs submit to the Welsh Assembly Government by 31 December each year full details of all approved schemes, the amount of the grant awarded, the duration of grant and the arrangements in place to evaluate the outcomes of each scheme.

3.7 If the Welsh Assembly Government considers that any of the schemes do not meet the eligibility criteria, it may notify the LEA that the scheme should not receive grant beyond the end of the financial year in question and, in such a case, it will require the LEA to repay grant for the scheme.

Audit Arrangements

3.8 In view of the amount of grant involved for each LEA, the grant will not be separately certified by auditors appointed by the Wales Audit Office, but will be subject to normal local authority internal and external audit arrangements.

3.9 In addition to the information proposed to be provided as described in paragraph 3.6, as a condition of the grant LEAs will be required to review the initiative under their internal audit arrangements during 2006-07 and periodically thereafter. Accordingly each LEA will be required to confirm by 31 July 2007 that there has been an internal audit review, to give details of the action taken in response to the internal audit findings and to confirm the frequency of future audit reviews.

Question 8. Are the proposals for internal audit review adequate?

Next Steps

3.10 It is proposed to allocate the grant to LEAs once the grant arrangements have been finalised in the light of consultation responses and before the start of the September 2006 school year. In the meantime, LEAs are encouraged to start discussing potential schemes with schools and others on the basis of the indicative allocations set out in Annexe A.

**WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT KEY STAGES 2-3 TRANSITION
GRANT**

Indicative grant allocations 2006-07 (£000):

Isle of Anglesey	28
Gwynedd	47
Conwy	41
Denbighshire	33
Flintshire	51
Wrexham	43
Powys	49
Ceredigion	26
Pembrokeshire	47
Carmarthenshire	64
Swansea	69
Neath Port Talbot	47
Bridgend	41
The Vale of Glamorgan	37
Rhondda Cynon Taff	86
Merthyr Tydfil	21
Caerphilly	66
Blaenau Gwent	27
Torfaen	28
Monmouthshire	26
Newport	44
Cardiff	79
Wales	1,000

The formula is based on equal weightings of:

- Number of pupils in maintained primary, secondary and special schools.
- Child Deprivation Index - from the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000 - defined as the number of children aged 0-17 living in households where one or more adults received receiving Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, Family Credit, Disability Working Allowance or Housing Benefit.
- Settlement - the number of people living outside settlements of 7,500 or higher.

NOTE: This formula applies to provision for Activity 1 of the Better Schools Fund with the exception of the Additional Revenue Funding transferred to BSF in 2005-06 which is allocated using the ARF formula.

**WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT KEY STAGES 2-3
TRANSITION GRANT**

SPECIMEN GRANT APPLICATION FORM 2006/07

This form is for use by schools to apply to their local authority for the Welsh Assembly Government grant to develop an exemplar project on specific aspects of transition from primary school to secondary school. The form should set out the criteria for the use of the grant, the arrangements for the distribution of grant, the approval of projects and the audit arrangements.

Local education authorities are responsible for inviting proposals from schools and approving bids. This form should be returned to [LEA contact details to be inserted] and NOT to the Welsh Assembly Government.

Name of School:

Address of School:

School contact name and contact details:

Description of scheme

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Please provide details of how the project meets grant criteria and will contribute to the school developing effective transition arrangements.

To be eligible for grant, schemes must:

- a) be exemplar schemes that require 'pump-priming' funding and will lead to further community focused developments; or
- b) be innovative and can be used as models of good practice for other schools; or
- c) require only 'start-up' costs (with any on-going running costs being met from other funding or charges).

Please tick which of (a), (b) or (c) applies to your scheme

- (a)
- (b)
- (c)

Please describe how the project meets the grant criteria indicated

Details of project Objectives, Outputs and Performance Measures including Timescales for Achievement

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Funding

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Amount of Welsh Assembly Government grant sought			
Amount and sources of any other funding (please list)			