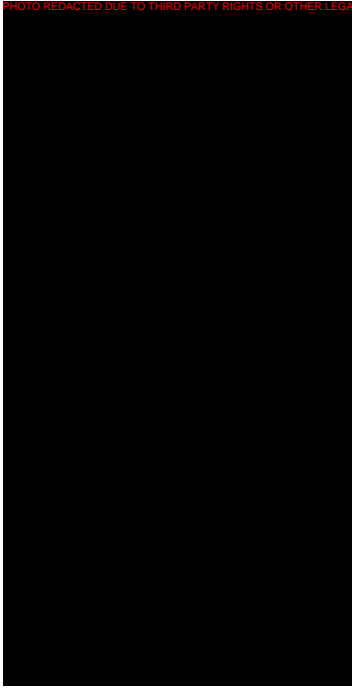


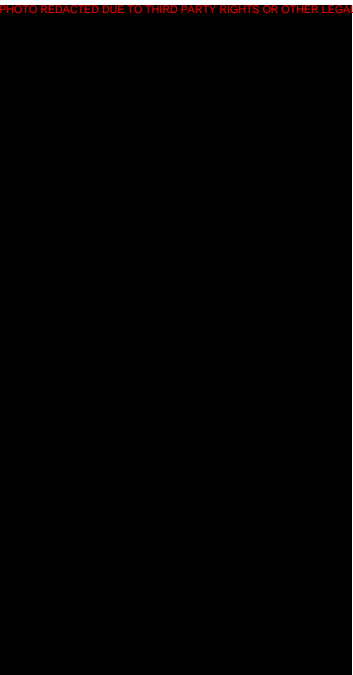
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# PROMISE AND PERFORMANCE:

*The Report of the Independent Review of the Mission and Purpose of Further Education in Wales in the context of the Learning Country: Vision into Action*

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December 2007

Acknowledgements: The Chair and Panel would like to thank all those who gave their time and evidence to the Review and supported their work over the last 12 months. Especial thanks should go to the groups of learners who made such clear, articulate and constructive contributions.

ISBN 978-0-7504-4482-8

*For further copies of this report and queries please contact:*

Webb Review Secretariat  
Welsh Assembly Government  
Unit 6, St Asaph Business Park, St Asaph  
Denbighshire LL17 0LJ

Telephone: 01745 538761  
E-mail: WEBBReview@wales.gsi.gov.uk

*The report is also available to download at:*  
[http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/  
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**This Review has been conducted by an independent panel of three experts.**

### **Sir Adrian Webb (Chair)**

Professor Sir Adrian Webb is Chair of the Pontypridd and Rhondda NHS Trust and a non-executive member of the Welsh Assembly Government's Executive Board. He was Vice-Chancellor of the University of Glamorgan until December 2005. He was previously an academic at the London School of Economics and Professor of Social Policy at Loughborough University. His academic career resulted in many research projects, publications and consultancies. He has held many committee and advisory roles both in Whitehall and in Wales, including HM Treasury's Public Service Productivity Panel, and has chaired several national enquiries. He was a member of the Beecham Review. He grew up in and currently lives in South Wales.



### **Sheila Drury CBE**

Sheila Drury has a long and distinguished career spanning education, training and business, working in the public, voluntary and private sectors, and is a current member of the Welsh Assembly Government Ministerial Advisory Group for the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS). Her experience and expertise includes running a group of electronics companies, working at the sharp end of a fast-paced, high risk business for over 20 years. In the public sector, she has been a Director of Investors in People (UK), Chairman of the North Wales Training and Enterprise Company (CELTEC) and Chair of the Welsh Industrial Development Advisory Board. Subsequently she was Executive Chair of the former National Council for Education and Training for Wales.



### **Gary Griffiths**

Gary Griffiths is the Strategic Manager for Apprentice Programmes Airbus UK. He sits on a number of advisory bodies including the Aerospace Sector Skills Group, the South West of England Regional Development Forum, the Higher Engineering Apprenticeship Working Group for the UK and the SEMTA advisory group for Credit Qualification Framework Wales. He represents Airbus UK on the Airbus Strategic International Project for Skills and the Airbus Intercultural Competency Programme. He brings knowledge, expertise and experience of the work-based learning sector and industry to the Independent Review Panel.



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# Overview

For Wales to be a successful, bilingual society, it must have an educated and well-trained population. Our education system needs to provide individuals with the knowledge and skills that equip them to pursue successful careers, become effective citizens and acquire a capacity for lifelong learning. Wales's education system must meet this challenge if it is to enable the country to compete effectively in the global economy, ensure quality in public service delivery and produce a citizenry capable of contributing to social and cultural advancement.

Significant progress has been made since Devolution. Distinctive policies have been driven forward: 14-19 Learning Pathways, the Welsh Baccalaureate and the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales. In addition, learners have done well in a number of respects: performance at GCSE and A level has improved significantly, whilst achievement at primary level has outstripped all the regions of England for English, Mathematics and Science. Estyn have highlighted the fact that, overall, Further Education Institutions (FEIs) are surpassing the Government's targets for learner achievement and for the quality of teaching.

Nevertheless, there remain issues in delivering the promise on the ground. We have yet to make substantial inroads in such areas as:

- tackling the underlying causes of the Basic Skills deficit
- ensuring a full range of vocational and academic learning opportunities for all 14-19 learners
- implementing a system that is fully responsive to the skills needs of employers
- significantly reducing the numbers of adults who are economically inactive and of young people Not in Employment, Training or Education (NEETS)
- delivering a joined up approach for the most socially disadvantaged, and
- developing programmes for the gifted and talented, including the implementation of a policy for effective science education.

To acknowledge that we are falling short is not to lay blame at the door of the many in the education system and in government who strive to achieve what is needed. It is to recognise reality: the reality of where we are, but also of how great is the task which faces us. We have inherited a UK educational history characterised by far too much wasted talent. The causes are multiple: children, young people and adults become educationally disadvantaged for very complex reasons related to culture, the family, the performance of local and area economies and the distribution of income and wealth – to name but a few. Nonetheless, the education system itself is a factor in the equation and historically it has been least good at developing and engaging those learners who seek or who need vocational and practically based learning opportunities. ***Learner entitlement will be a chimera if these issues are not tackled.***

The education system, whilst staffed by dedicated professionals, also faces critical issues that need to be tackled. These include:

- too much unauthorised absence and disengagement in schools
- too many providers in unhelpful competition
- too many empty places, and
- demographic change that will cause school rolls to fall further.

These sources of inefficiency mean that Wales is less well placed than it should be to fulfil the proper expectations of learners of all aptitudes and abilities and to meet the growing challenge of global competition graphically outlined by Lord Leitch in his report *Prosperity for all in the Global Economy: World Class Skills*. Given the progress made in the 10 years since devolution, Wales certainly has the capability, as well as the moral obligation, to more fully meet its needs and those of its citizens. We must build a 21st century education system fit for a confident nation. **To do so requires further radical change; marginal adjustments will not suffice.**

Our recommendations are designed to improve policy, but we emphasise that in large measure **it is the speed, determination and effectiveness with which policies are implemented on the ground that will determine success**. To develop good policies is difficult, but to implement them effectively is the bigger task. The need for collaboration is a case in point: many, including Sir Jeremy Beecham in his report *Beyond Boundaries: Citizen-Centred Local Services for Wales*, have argued for greater collaborative effort, but it is notoriously difficult to achieve. In this report we develop highly specific proposals for making collaboration a reality. We also argue for better alignment of strategy and delivery across the board and for a high premium to be placed on greater efficiency so as to fund development and improvement.

To achieve our goals will require better structural arrangements for the delivery of learning. We need structures that combine local delivery and leadership with effective collaboration and clear policy direction. These structures must enable diversity and choice, improved quality and greater efficiency in the face of falling rolls. For us, this means a system comprising:

- a new planning and commissioning framework, and
- provider consortia delivering across geographic areas.

Consortia capable of delivering minority as well as popular courses will promote greater choice and personalised learning, drive efficiency and allow for the development of new relationships between providers. Consortia will be self managing collaborative networks, build upon the strengths of individual institutions and foster specialisation.

To implement our recommendations will undoubtedly require significant additional investment. Such investment will have to be phased, but it will be necessary if we are to achieve our goals: goals that include a reduction in some of the long term costs that arise from avoidable social ills such as economic inactivity, poverty and unhealthy life styles. We outline in Chapter 10 a funding trend which causes us great concern, and which, if not addressed, could lead to Wales becoming educationally disadvantaged by comparison with other countries with whom we have to compete. We have no illusions about the difficulty of finding additional resources and we therefore assert unequivocally that the present post-14 education system must be more efficient. Only greater efficiency will justify the necessary additional investment. To move forward it is essential that there is long term political agreement at national and local authority level to adequately resource the system but above all to make the most efficient use of resources.



Change does not come easily; it has to be driven with energy, determination and skill. We focus on seven primary drivers of change in the course of the Report: learner entitlement, employer demand, skills, quality, funding, reconfiguration and governance. These are reflected in our seven fundamental messages:

- **Learner Entitlement: the urgent task is to make the policy of diverse and personalised learning for all 14-19 year olds a measurable reality**
- **Employer Influence: employer engagement must increase greatly in the 14-19 phase, be paramount post-19 and must drive strategy and the performance of providers**
- **Skills: the Basic Skills gap must be closed; thereafter bespoke packages of skills that drive employment and economic performance are more important to Wales than arbitrary targets for skills attainment**
- **Quality: all publicly funded provision must be good or excellent and must be embedded in excellent provider networks**
- **Funding: new approaches to funding backed by additional resources are essential to implement existing policies but can only be justified by much greater efficiency**
- **Reconfiguration: diverse and personalised learning can be delivered efficiently only through a reconfigured system, and**
- **Governance: critical outcomes can be delivered only by enhanced governance, national and local, that drives priorities, overcomes barriers and spans boundaries.**

In implementing our report, the goal – over a ten year period – must be to deliver the following outcomes:

- the virtual elimination of the Basic Skills gap and of NEETS
- the virtual eradication of disengagement among school age learners
- all learners to leave compulsory education with *meaningful* qualifications or accredited skills
- enhanced skill levels that will have contributed to the creation of an extra 150,000 jobs and to an economy with expanded higher and intermediate level occupations in high value-added sectors, and
- enhanced social skills, among people of all age groups, which underpin social cohesion, healthier and more fulfilling lifestyles and a vibrant culture.

The achievement of these outcomes will be reflected in a stronger Welsh economy, with higher levels of employment and greater prosperity. It, in turn, will provide the basis for a more inclusive society in which all Wales's citizens are equipped to play a dynamic and self-confident role in an increasingly globalised world. We believe our report – taken as a whole and as a call for further strong, disinterested action – offers a way forward that is uniquely attuned to the circumstances, needs and ambitions of Wales. It is about ways in which post-14 education and training in Wales can fully meet the challenges facing its learners, its communities and its economy in the 21st Century.



**Sir Adrian Webb – December 2007**



# Section I: Context and Challenges

## Chapter I: The Review – Scope and Process

### *The Scale of Post-14 Education in Wales*

- I.1** The need for a thorough policy review of the mission and purpose of the further education sector in Wales was identified in *The Learning Country: Vision into Action*.
- I.2** Whilst Wales is the last of the four home nations to produce a Review of Further Education, our review is the broadest in scope. If we were reviewing only the work of Further Education Institutions, we would be considering:
- 23 further education institutions
  - 270,000 learners, and
  - a budget of about £300 million a year.
- I.3** Our actual remit is holistic in approach, embracing post-14 education in recognition of the key decisions school pupils make around that age: decisions about options and routes through the education system. It incorporates an appraisal not just of Further Education Institutions (FEIs), but an analysis of the wider role of the sector as a whole in relation to:
- developments in 14-19 education and training
  - responsiveness to the skills needs of employers and the economy
  - adult learning, social justice and community engagement
  - the interface with higher education provision, and
  - responsiveness to the learning, support and advice needs of post-14 learners in Wales.
- I.4** We are therefore considering:
- 23 further education institutions
  - 170 sixth forms in schools
  - 75 private training providers
  - many voluntary and community learning providers
  - 450,000 learners
  - numerous separate budgets and funding routes, and
  - a total expenditure in the region of £750 million pounds a year.

- **1.5** Within this landscape of learning we have a number of good policies, many excellent practitioners and much good will, but, as this report illustrates, we face a significant number of challenges. We need to move from good policy development to excellent policy implementation, from good providers to excellent networks of providers and from incremental improvements in the exam results of some learners to the delivery of meaningful learning outcomes for all citizens.

## ○ **The Review Process**

- 1.6** As a panel, we have met 25 times over two- and three-day sessions since December 2006. We have taken first hand evidence from a wide range of relevant stakeholders and interested parties. This has included evidence from internal Welsh Assembly Government experts, employers, employer organisations, sector skills councils, the Sector Skills Development Agency, trade unions, local authorities, the Wales Local Government Association (WLGA), voluntary sector representatives including the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) and, importantly, representatives from further education providers – including schools, colleges, and work-based learning – as well as higher education institutions. Over 70 external stakeholders have given evidence to the Panel.
- 1.7** Additionally, we felt it important to engage directly with both the learner and employer voice by convening focus groups and visiting relevant providers, consortia and local authorities in both England and Wales. In total we carried out 28 visits and held 9 focus groups.
- 1.8** Professor Gareth Rees of Cardiff University provided independent academic support for our work and specific research was commissioned. This included an international comparative study carried out by Professor Jack Keating of Melbourne University. Independent research has also been commissioned from Tribal Consulting on learner mapping of travel-to-learn areas across Wales. We pursued enquiries on specific exemplars in Denmark and Northern Ireland.
- 1.9** A formal consultation exercise was initiated in January, with a published document being sent to 500 external stakeholders. The Consultation document was also available on the Assembly’s website. There were a total of 82 respondents.
- 1.10** We have also drawn upon the expertise of an External Reference Group (ERG) consisting of key stakeholders representing FE Colleges, schools, 14-19 partnerships, sector skills councils, the NUS, trades unions, the voluntary sector and higher education. To evaluate and provide comments on our emergent thinking, we met with the ERG six times. The Group also provided papers and additional evidence to the Panel in their sessions.
- 1.11** We would like to express our gratitude to all our evidence-givers for their time and for their positive and constructive contributions to this Review.

## **Principles and Concepts**

**I.12** Our task is to lay the foundations for both immediate and generational change, to 2020 and beyond: to design a system that will be sufficiently adaptable to meet the needs of children being born today as well the needs of the here and now. Accordingly we have adopted over-arching guiding principles to define the mission and purpose of further education, which are to:

- **enable every learner to reach his or her potential**
- **support Wales as a nation to reach its potential, economically and socially, and**
- **achieve these principles in the most cost-effective way possible.**

**I.13** These principles immediately identify multiple stakeholders: learners and their families, employers, government, communities, citizens, the organisations that provide education and all those who work in them. These interests often diverge, sometimes quite radically, but the stake in a good and effective and economically thriving society is the common bond.

**I.14** Two themes which link the many issues and concerns addressed in this report are those of social justice and employability in a transformed economy. They translate into four concepts by means of which a post-14 education designed to meet the needs of Wales can be defined and assessed:

**ENTITLEMENT**

**EMPLOYABILITY**

**EXCELLENCE**

**EFFICIENCY**



## ○ ENTITLEMENT

- **1.15** Entitlement is a central idea, but not a simple one. Rather than be mired in definitions, we focused on the question: what should people reasonably be entitled to expect of an education system in the twenty-first century?
- **1.16** Until recently the core **learner** entitlement has been a period of time in education with access to a prescribed national curriculum: education to 16 that is free to all, and compulsory. However, entitlement does not equal performance and the implications of underperforming can be expressed in stark financial terms. A recent analysis suggests that average 16 year olds with five good GCSEs will be £150,000 better off over their lifetime than those without. Success at A-Levels can bring an extra £211,000, while the average graduate can expect to earn a further £587,000<sup>1</sup>. The message is clear: both opportunity and social justice suffer when some 40% of young people in Wales fail to achieve five good<sup>2</sup> GCSEs at 16; 60% lack five good GCSEs including English or Welsh, Mathematics and a Science. Many lack even Basic Skills. These young people face a life of significant relative poverty. Learners should be entitled to expect an education that maximises their chances of fulfilling their potential in work and for personal development.
- 1.17** For **employers**, two expectations are crucial: access to a pool of appropriately educated young people from which to recruit and the opportunity to maintain and improve the skills of the existing workforce. In practice, as we outline in Section 2, many employers say that the education system fails to deliver the blend of skills, competencies, aptitude and attitudes they seek.
- 1.18** One, by now commonplace, notion of what both learners and employers need in a world characterised by constant technological and social change is lifelong learning. This means opportunities to learn throughout life, but more fundamentally it means increasing people's **capacity for learning**. This depends on our ability to **motivate** – to inspire people to want to learn – and to equip them with **learning-skills and the confidence** essential to learning. These are also the very things that are needed if we are to reduce the number of young people who underachieve or disengage from education.
- 1.19** Both learners and employers should rightly expect an education system that motivates all but a tiny handful to want to learn. Yet too many disengage at an early stage because they experience or fear failure, feel alienated, or become de-motivated. For a significant number we do not provide learning in the manner or context that fits their needs. Learning opportunities should be as varied as the motivations to learn and the differing styles of learning with which learners are most comfortable. We therefore endorse and warmly embrace one of the most significant educational developments for many years: the **14-19 Pathways policy** and the proposed Assembly Measure that would give legislative force to much of it. It entrenches the principle of learner entitlement by guaranteeing a variety of learning routes, from academic to practical, and imaginatively recognising the importance of non-formal and informal learning alongside traditional learning methods. It offers a means by which to motivate and engage many who presently achieve too little, or nothing, in their formative years.
- 1.20** Critical to the implementation of the policy is the expansion of both vocational provision and practical and experiential learning. They are vital if we are to engage with those learners who are best motivated by learning that has a practical purpose, but they will also fill one of the major gaps identified by employers. The UK has a poor record for embedding vocational alongside academic learning, comparing unfavourably with European neighbours. Practical and experiential learning seems increasingly to have been curtailed by a variety of obstacles. Wales must break with its UK inheritance in both these respects if it is to make the promise of entitlement a reality for all.

1 Learning and Skills Council, 2007  
2 Grades C to A\*

**1.21** Interestingly, universities first developed with a vocational mission – to train for the religious life – and preparation for such professions as Medicine and the Law has remained a highly prestigious role. Paradoxically, achieving a balance of the academic and vocational in schools has been hindered by the overwhelming weight attached to academic performance as a criterion of entry to university. University entrance has cast a long shadow over what is taught in schools, how it is taught, and what is valued. Indeed, for most of the Twentieth Century secondary education was something of an “Educational Grand National”: those who reached the winning post were those who had proved themselves fit for university, the rest fell by the wayside.

*The GCSE dominated national curriculum is not appropriate for a significant minority of young people.*

Meeting of Welsh College Principals and Head Teachers – May 2007

**1.22** As a country we are uniquely well placed to develop a continuum of learning that embraces academic excellence as well as vocational skills and to underpin each with the requisite social skills. The Welsh Baccalaureate, suitably enhanced (we make a recommendation on its development in Chapter 3), is precisely the vehicle that is needed and the Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales (CQFW), which spans schools, Further Education, Work-based Learning and Higher Education, provides a suitably flexible mechanism.

**1.23** The Children’s Act 2004 places responsibilities on local authorities to ensure a comprehensive range of rights for children and young people. It provides a framework of interlocking entitlements, including to education, within which to give expression to the 14-19 pathways policy. The *One Wales*<sup>3</sup> agenda adds a further commitment: to extend the present educational entitlement up to 18.

**1.24** Whilst educated, skilled young people are important to employers, so too is the upskilling of the adult workforce. This has been given insufficient priority in the past. For individuals too, adult learning opportunities are essential if employability is to be safeguarded or enhanced – and also for their personal fulfilment. In addition, adult learning opportunities provide the second chance that can often transform a life. We cover these matters in Chapters 7 and 8. As we have made clear, however, learning to 16 or 18 is the platform on which all else must rest. Wales now has excellent policies for delivering what we have a right to expect of our core education services. It is vital that this expanded vision rapidly becomes a reality in all parts of Wales; much of our report details the conditions we consider to be fundamental to effective implementation.

**1.25** For now, in summary, we believe learners and employers should be entitled to expect:

- ***compulsory schooling that delivers a strong grounding for lifelong learning, together with the breadth of provision likely to engage all learners***
- ***a diverse pattern of further educational opportunities and progression routes that are attractive to learners and that deliver the full range of more specialist practical and intellectual capabilities required by the economy***
- ***ample opportunities to learn through the medium of either Welsh or English at all levels***
- ***support to achieve a minimum of Level 2 Basic Skills, ideally pre-16 but if necessary at any subsequent age, and***
- ***an adequate range of opportunities for adults to enhance employability and social skills throughout life.***

Given the scale, nature and significance of the task – but also of the rewards – we must act with urgency, determination and imagination.

<sup>3</sup> *One Wales – A progressive agenda for the government of Wales. An agreement between the Labour and Plaid Cymru Groups in the National Assembly – 27th June 2007*



## ○ EMPLOYABILITY

○ **1.26** The skills of the workforce can be raised by recruiting from a younger generation that has been better educated, but this is a slow process. According to Leitch, far greater attention has to be paid to re-modelling and enhancing the skills of those already of working age who will form the majority of the workforce well into the future. Leitch also underlined the importance of substantial remedial action: he deemed the current competencies of both those in the workforce and those entering it to be insufficient. Given the evidence we received, we concur. We wholly endorse the principles enshrined in his report and his sense of urgency. The issue is how best to translate his concerns into an effective programme for Wales.

○ **1.27** The Leitch agenda has two dimensions: the knowledge, skills and competencies required by the economy now and those that will be needed in the future. Employers must articulate the first. We were impressed by the energy and commitment with which many employers identified their developmental needs; they would welcome flexible government support to deliver on these. While learners today are achieving a greater quantity of qualifications, employers argue that the employability of school leavers appears to have decreased in recent years. Employers want social competence and greater appreciation of the demands of working life (we consider employers' views in some detail in Chapters 5 and 6). We cannot assume that an academically sound education system incorporates an 'invisible hand' that also delivers on the skills agenda any more than a narrow skills agenda would provide the flexibility and knowledge required in a rapidly changing world.

*The Basic Skills and employability of young people leaving the education system need to be overlaid with a culture of continuous learning that enables employers to pick up responsibility for workplace skills delivery. Businesses would benefit from employer-led responsive provision and training that meets business needs and improves employability.*

CBI – response to consultation

**1.28** Meeting the skills needs of the future presents a bigger challenge. A highly dynamic economy drives the demand for skills and policy can focus on supplying them. The Welsh economy is different. It has suffered a long period of low skills equilibrium<sup>4</sup>; more recently, the Assembly Government's analyses suggest a process of hollowing out. High income, high skill jobs have been expanding relatively; but so have jobs at the low income, low skill end: the demand for intermediate skills has been in relative decline.

*There is a fairly clear pattern when individual occupations are ranked by earnings; with increases amongst the better paid jobs, reductions amongst those in the middle of the distribution and little change and some signs of increase amongst the lowest paid jobs.*

Statistics on Job Quality in Wales – October 2007 – Welsh Assembly Government

**1.29** There are specific high and intermediate skills gaps in Wales<sup>5</sup>, but there is no evidence that a generally more skilled workforce will automatically drive the economy forward. The task is both to expand employment of all kinds – the *One Wales* commitment to 80% employment means employing an additional 150,000 people – but also to expand the high value added (and therefore high and intermediate skills) part of the economy. Organisations will need to grow and new ones will need to start up: creativity and entrepreneurial flair will be as significant as other skills and capabilities.

**1.30** We must invest at least as heavily as the rest of the UK in the future of the economy and our people, but we must invest wisely. A 'mass' education and training response will not suffice. Just as personalisation is essential for 14-19 learners, a bespoke approach for employers is needed that

<sup>4</sup> The Long Tail of Low Skills in Wales and the UK – A Review of the Evidence; PJ Sloane, N O'Leary, D Watson; University of Wales Swansea and WELMERC, 2005

<sup>5</sup> Future Skills Wales, 2005

simultaneously enhances the strength of the economy and provides the newly demanded skills. We discuss the mechanisms for developing this in Chapter 4.

## EXCELLENCE

- I.31** Wales has always valued excellence in education; but what should constitute excellence as we move forward? New fields of endeavour emerge and then become fundamental to our notion of excellence: ICT did not exist half a century ago, either as a subject or as an enabling technology. There is also an international dimension to excellence; world wide benchmarking is vital. In particular, skills needs can only be assessed in the context of changes in the world economy. It was this, combined with the rates of economic progress in the east, which drove Leitch's sense of urgency.
- I.32** Following Beecham, we focused on the assessments of excellence made by users. We found their comments both moderate and astute; any process for driving excellence in learning systems for the future must actively solicit and incorporate their views. In our focus groups learners showed loyalty to their current place of learning: most would recommend their course to others, though their expectations were not always high. None the less, where they had experienced several providers they made sensible, informed comparisons. Often, what they valued most was the teacher-learner relationship: teachers or lecturers who had enthusiasm for their subject and offered individual attention and respect. Their enthusiasm also broke through when they described experiential projects, visits and trips. Many were better able to relate to learning acquired through these experiences than through classroom learning. Non-classroom time provided enduring memories and sometimes life-changing perceptions. Recognition of this underpins some of our proposals.
- I.33** Qualifications are the most widely understood proxy for educational excellence. They are a powerful educational coinage: recognised by society; the public, and by employers. Academic qualifications have the greatest currency and longest pedigree; but, as we stress throughout our report, excellence in education and training cannot simply be synonymous with the academic, with degrees and with GCSE A\*-C. We accept the difficulty of assessing value added, but it is the most useful measure of excellent teaching and excellent institutions if we are to do justice to the needs of all learners.

*The classic example of a badly chosen performance indicator in the schools sector is the proportion of 16 year olds attaining at least five 'good' GCSE passes at grades A\* to C. Originally chosen at the time of the introduction of the GCSE examination in 1988, it was supposed to be the equivalent of the five GCE Ordinary level passes that had for many years been a passport to certain types of employment and were required by some schools as an entry requirement for advanced level study. This is a bad measure both for schools and for the vast majority of their students, for whom five A\* to C passes represent either too high, or too low, a hurdle.... [and which] creates perverse incentives for schools.*

Secondary Heads Association – 2003

- I.34** For employers, the measure of excellence must include the delivery of those skills we noted in discussing employability. Alignment between education, training and the expectations of employers must be the aspiration. We are clear that there are opportunities for excellence within practical learning. We would want those routes open for learners of all ability ranges, acknowledging they can be fulfilling in themselves as well as leading to valuable work experience and higher qualifications. We must drive excellence within work-based learning just as much as in more traditional education and training settings: employers expect and deserve no less.





- I.35 The learning pathways of the future need to be so diverse that no one institution will be able to do justice to them all. Despite the very different interests represented within the External Reference Group (ERG) that advised this Review, this was the first point of complete unanimity. It informed our thinking on consortia (see Chapter 10) and led us to embrace a new paradigm. Excellent institutions are not enough; we can be satisfied with nothing less than:

***excellent institutions embedded in excellent provider networks characterised by high standards, close collaboration and an efficient use of resources.***

- I.36 Apart from learners and employers, the guardian of excellence is the quality system. Estyn has a key role, and we were much impressed by the thinking in their *Transforming Schools: a discussion paper*<sup>6</sup>. It provides a model on which to build. However, Estyn's report on collaboration<sup>7</sup> – or the lack of it – underlines the limits of assessing the excellence of individual institutions. Policies and practices that have long been focused on ensuring institutional success cannot deliver excellent outcomes across networks simply by the addition of a legal requirement to collaborate. We must increasingly measure success in ways that promote standards across whole systems. This will not be an easy road. The setting of targets, the assessment of performance and the accountabilities of governing bodies and senior staff have all to be redesigned. This approach will need to be reflected in the work of the Department<sup>8</sup> in developing its effectiveness model for providers. Without this effort, however, the excellence across well integrated provider consortia that learners and employers need and deserve will never be achieved.

## EFFICIENCY

- I.37 Efficiency is at the heart of effectiveness and social justice in public services. It should be a moral imperative, as the Beecham report made clear<sup>9</sup>. Because resources are scarce while needs are limitless, any inefficiency denies service to someone who could otherwise benefit. However, being efficient is not about making cuts in properly organised services; it is about using resources wisely and well so that they go further.
- I.38 To fund the improvements identified in this report will mean tackling a variety of different types of inefficiency. Some of the success stories of our present system are actually evidence of inefficiency. For example, FEIs and school sixth forms are increasingly successful with those who do not achieve good GCSEs first time around. This is an admirable, but expensive, way of making up for earlier short-comings. Most remedial work on Basic Skills also falls into this category.
- I.39 Another endemic inefficiency is competition between schools themselves and with FEIs, that leads to duplication rather than to higher standards. It can result in wasted resources – and opportunities – if teaching groups, sixth forms, schools and FEIs are too small to be economical or to offer a combination of choice and excellence. This waste is compounded where scarce teaching skills (for example in Welsh Language, Science or Mathematics) are not widely shared.

*Students may not benefit from being in an A level class of 2-3 students.*

Former head teacher – South East Wales

- I.40 One driver of efficiency is so called “contestability”, in the form of market competition. It requires confident, well-informed consumers who can choose between many competing providers. However, public services were invented, in part, because such conditions are often absent; for example, in large parts of Wales where rurality or poor communications prevail. A market in public services is essentially an urban, even metropolitan, idea. Wales needs something different. *Making*

6 March 2007

7 Estyn, Collaboration between schools with sixth forms and Further Education Colleges to deliver flexible high quality provision that expands choice and achieves value for money – 2006

8 Throughout this report, where we make reference to 'the Department' we are referring to the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills of the Welsh Assembly Government

9 Beyond Boundaries: Citizen-Centred Local Services for Wales – Sir Jeremy Beecham 2006



the *Connections*<sup>10</sup> and the Beecham report<sup>11</sup>, advocated a Citizen/Collaboration model for public services. This emphasis in Wales on collaboration has been endorsed elsewhere “*not merely as an ideal, but as a basic design element of government*”.<sup>12</sup> Beecham certainly saw collaboration as itself a driver of efficiency.

*[The] short-term, single organisation focus is self-defeating and self-limiting. To overcome it, organisations must raise their sights to much more long-term and ambitious approaches to efficiency, pulling together resources across organisations and driven by the citizen’s experience.*

Beyond Boundaries, 2006

**1.41** We must build upon Beecham, but in ways that acknowledge that no-one is well served by services that are supplier dominated, inflexible, unresponsive, or inefficient. In rejecting a market solution there can be no room for complacency, cosiness, or narrow vested interests. The key is to recognise that contestability does not depend on competition alone; it can be achieved through a combination of:

- intelligent and ‘cascaded’ commissioning (which we discuss in Chapter 7)
- an exacting approach to contracting
- strong and open performance management that includes benchmarking against the best in the UK and internationally, and
- the strengthening of learner and employer demand.

**1.42** We describe the conditions needed to deliver this approach in Section 3. To build on Beecham in this way is not a soft option. Without a vigorous and consistent drive towards non-market forms of contestability we will fail to deliver the efficiency, excellence and effectiveness that Wales and its people should properly expect. While additional funds are undeniably needed, they can only be justified if existing resources are better used.

10 Making the Connections: Delivering Beyond Boundaries – Welsh Assembly Government 2006  
11 Beyond Boundaries: Citizen-Centred Local Services for Wales – Sir Jeremy Beecham 2006  
12 Parker, S and Gallagher, N, The Collaborative State, Demos, 2007



# ○ Section 2: Entitlement and

# ○ Employability:

# ○ Where we are now and where we need to be

# ○ – the evidence

In this section we draw upon the large body of evidence we received to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the present situation that shaped and informed our recommendations. We believe that there are three main areas of learning provision which need urgent attention if post-14 education is successfully to meet the entitlement and employability needs of learners and employers. These are:

- Essential Skills
- 14-19 Learning Pathways
- Employer-led Training

## Chapter 2: Essential Skills

### **Basic Skills**

- 2.1** The Welsh Assembly Government currently defines Basic Skills as “*the ability to read, write, or speak in English or Welsh and to use mathematics at a level necessary to function and progress both in work and in society*”. Any Review of post-14 education is therefore bound to see the acquisition of Basic Skills as the most fundamental expectation of learners, employers and the public.
- 2.2** Yet employers and employers’ organisations reported a Basic Skills gap, even among some learners who have reached level 2 – even among some graduates. The fact that 25% of the citizens of Wales have literacy skills below level 1 and 53% have numeracy skills below level 1 gives cause for the deepest concern<sup>13</sup>. In 2005 the Welsh Assembly Government published its strategy for Basic Skills, ‘*Words Talk, Numbers Count*’, which included targets for increasing Basic Skills levels across Wales: these were lower than those subsequently proposed by Leitch for the UK as a whole. A recent longitudinal research study<sup>14</sup> of over 7,000 adults across Britain showed that Wales is lagging behind England and Scotland.

<sup>13</sup> National Survey of Basic Skills 2005

<sup>14</sup> J. Bynner and S. Parsons, *New Light on Literacy and Numeracy*, National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy, 2006

**Wales has a higher proportion of adults without basic literacy skills than any English region and the second highest without basic numeracy skills**



Source: National Survey of Adult Basic Skills in Wales 2004 and Skills for Life Survey 2002/03 (England)

Figure 1

**2.3** This cannot be tolerated. In the interests of social justice, employers and the future of the economy, virtually the whole population should be enabled to attain Basic Skills in literacy and numeracy. Wales has been moving forward: performance up to Key Stage 3 is very encouraging – but the fall-off in performance beyond this stage is greater in Wales than in England: 23% do not gain any GCSEs above a grade D at age 16 and far fewer gain 5 GCSEs including English/Welsh, Mathematics and Science

**While results have improved over the last decade, a quarter of all 16-year olds in Wales still obtain no GCSEs above a D and 7% get no grades at all**

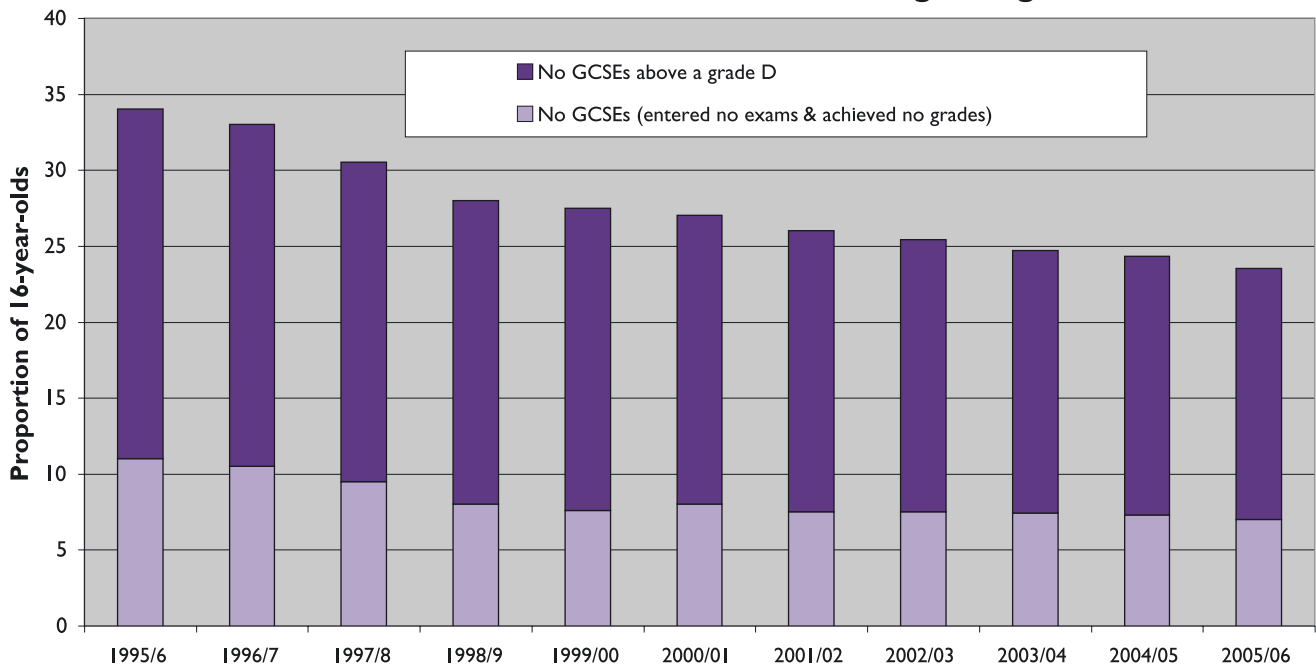


Figure 2

Source: Statistical Releases, National Assembly for Wales: updated June 2007



- **2.4** Even this scale of Basic Skills gap does not fully represent the problems which employers recounted to us. They reported a fall in levels of communication skills and numeracy in recent years and argued that GCSEs in English and Mathematics do not guarantee the skills that they need. Whilst five GCSEs can be a useful sifting tool in recruitment, they say that it is only a starting point, beyond which they use their own tests to assess communication skills, attitude and aptitude. School-leavers often do not have well-developed communication skills, such as the ability to engage with customers. The more Wales moves towards service orientated employment, the more critical these skills become.
- **2.5** Many employers and some learners conveyed another worrying message about Basic Skills: that learning at ages 14-16 may enable pupils to pass GCSEs without gaining the ability or perhaps the confidence to apply communication and numeracy skills in practice. Meanwhile school and FEI staff acknowledged a raising of entry standards by employers in even the most practical of trades, such as construction.
- **2.6** Despite the best efforts of many schools, FEIs and teachers, far too many young people aged 16 fail to meet employers' expectations. We should not be failing to make them employable, which is what employers suggest is occurring. An increased staying-on rate, combined with more opportunity to catch up on Level 2 learning and pursue vocational programmes in sixth forms and FEIs redresses some of the problem, but the future is bleak for those who lose interest or confidence in learning and lack employability skills. For example, employers in the Financial Services sector, one of the most rapidly expanding sectors in Cardiff, told us that they will not employ any young people who have Basic Skills needs.
- **2.7** The issue has two dimensions: the successful development of skills in compulsory schooling and remedial intervention. The first is about curriculum, teaching and learning and we commend the increased focus on skills in the re-development of GCSEs. It is also about the successful motivation of learning from the beginning of school, but especially post Key Stage 3: success in Basic Skills tails off after this age and becomes an increasing barrier to all other types of learning as well as a contributory factor to the NEETs<sup>15</sup> problem. Evidence from Estyn suggests that this pattern of degeneration of Basic Skills at KS3 is such that even where skills levels were acceptable at the end of primary education they may be lost or degraded within two years.
- 2.8** Achieving greater success during compulsory education will not be easy or cheap, but remedial action with older learners is even more difficult, expensive and often less successful. Resources better applied early on would reduce the need for remedial action. Although our remit does not extend to earlier years, we were acutely aware of the implications of 11 to 16 education for the whole post-16 agenda. Accordingly, in Chapter 8 we propose that this phase of education be reviewed.
- 2.9** The need for remedial action begins in the school system but continues throughout all stages of adult education. It is essential that providers identify deficiencies early and remedy them effectively. Earlier diagnostic testing, regularly repeated, would identify slippage. Combined with targeted and intensive skills development this would ensure that those learners who need help are identified and supported promptly. It would make significant inroads into the problem during compulsory education.
- 2.10** Nevertheless, the number of 16 year olds lacking Basic Skills will not be eliminated quickly and their needs must be addressed. Compulsory assessment of Basic Skills was introduced by ELWa for post-16 learners entering and leaving provision, but it was applied only within FEIs and work-based learning providers – not within school sixth forms. We therefore welcome the recent guidance to schools and resources issued to schools by Basic Skills Cymru, which will help them

<sup>15</sup> Young people not in employment, education or training

screen and assess learners entering the sixth form. However, we are concerned that the screening and assessment tool may not adequately test writing skills in the way sought by employers.

- 2.11** Employers expressed particular concern about measures of Basic Skills that rely on multiple choice questions or similar assessments, rather than application of skills in a work context. In the work place the ability to write a message or file a report on a hazard matters more than the ability to choose the correct version of “there” or “their” to insert into a sentence. We are falling seriously short of meeting employers’ expectations. As the Department reviews the delivery and assessment of Key and Basic Skills we urge a move away from some of the current multiple-choice style assessment methods towards those which more realistically measure practical skills.
- 2.12** Another key responsibility of the Department is to ensure that there are sufficiently imaginative, intensive and highly motivating approaches to Basic Skills learning and teaching, capable of engaging even the most educationally disadvantaged and disengaged learners. We received evidence that many non-specialist tutors are ill-equipped to provide Basic Skills training, but that Basic Skills tutors are some of the most marginalised of staff, in terms of their contracts and prestige. There are also staff shortages in this field. It is important to ensure that the whole teaching workforce is able to support the delivery of Basic Skills but the task is so urgent that only sharp and focused intervention through a specialist workforce will suffice.
- 2.13** It is essential that learning providers should be held accountable for the Basic Skills achievements of their learners. One way in which this might be achieved would be to designate institutional leaders as responsible officers for Basic Skills attainment levels as well as the agreement of minimum acceptable levels of achievement. Any institution falling below the agreed achievement level would be subject to appropriate intervention.
- 2.14** Some forms of adult community education designed for the most disadvantaged learners use imaginative learning and teaching methods and contexts to engage learners who have become alienated from traditional education experiences. These techniques can be expensive, but – as we have argued – not as expensive as having a Basic Skills problem that at its worst can exclude people from effective participation in mainstream society. Such methods could usefully be adopted in working with disadvantaged children in schools and FEIs, but most especially in delivering the Basic Skills agenda. We make further reference to these in Chapter 5.
- 2.15** In the workplace, we were impressed by the sensitive and tactful work of Union Learning Representatives in encouraging an admission of skills needs by employees, some of whom may have disguised literacy and numeracy problems for years. Well over a hundred innovative projects have been delivered through the work of the Union Learning Representatives and the Wales Union Learning Fund (WULF). This now links with the Employer Pledge in Wales, through which employers agree to help employees to develop their Basic Skills where needed. The initiative should continue to be supported and developed further where there is potential for it to be extended.

*Trade unions and the work they do with WULF will also be important in delivering and informing this agenda.*

Ufl – response to consultation

- 2.16** Encouraging employers to sign up to the Pledge should be integral to workforce development. The Welsh Assembly Government’s Workforce Development Programme presents an opportunity to provide this support, partly through the diagnostic assessment carried out by the Human Resource Development Advisers and through the action plans which are developed as a preliminary for Investors in People accreditation. However, Basic Skills needs are not automatically considered within the reporting framework – they should be.



- **2.17** We received evidence that the rate of take-up of the Employer Pledge has not been matched by the availability of provision for Basic Skills development. This must be remedied. It is essential that planning and funding by the Department and by providers, anticipate and make provision for an increase in demand for training.
- **2.18** Although some progress has been made in building regional strategic groups and provider partnerships for Basic Skills as signposted by ‘Words Talk, Numbers Count’, the output of such groups seems to have been limited by a lack of clarity as to function and purpose. The North Wales Strategic Group, for example, has moved towards the use of common assessment tools within some counties, but they are still different between counties. Existing partnerships have begun to share teaching resources and examples of good practice but there is a need to strengthen their role to support the development of specialisms and the identification of regional skills shortages and training needs. We call upon the Department to provide an active lead in promoting partnerships within the framework that we outline in Chapter 7.
- **2.19** Given the scale of the challenge, we welcome the incorporation of the Basic Skills Agency into the Department. The Department must seize this opportunity to drive Basic Skills more strategically and urgently and to develop a range of approaches that will deliver effective intervention across all regions. In Section 3 we discuss how best to drive the implementation of policy.

### *Recommendations for Basic Skills*

**We recommend that, in the light of the Leitch Review of Skills, the Department should:**

- R1 **adopt the Leitch targets for Level 2 Basic Skills**
- R2 **expand the Employer Pledge to cover Level 2 Basic Skills**
- R3 **review both the method and quantum of funding for Basic Skills provision with a view to achieving these targets**
- R4 **develop and implement a requirement for systematic diagnostic assessment of Basic Skills at ages 9, 11 and 14**
- R5 **develop national assessment tools that assess learners on their ability to perform life and work related skills in both written and oral communication**
- R6 **extend the recently developed assessment tools for 16 year old learners to include the assessment of writing skills**
- R7 **develop and implement a strategy to provide intensive intervention to remedy skills gaps**
- R8 **ensure that a Basic Skills intervention workforce is developed and recruited. These tutors must not be marginalised by their terms and conditions**
- R9 **designate Head teachers and FEI principals as Accountable Officers with direct responsibility for Basic Skills attainment levels incorporating a measure of value-added**

- R10 **set a threshold below which:**
- a. **schools or FEIs would be open to intervention methods, and**
  - b. **the Accountable Officer would be liable to specific scrutiny by the National Assembly**
- R11 **incorporate Basic Skills requirements, including the signing of the Employer Pledge, within the liP and Workforce Development Account processes, and**
- R12 **ensure that the resources allocated to upgrade Basic Skills across Wales are sufficient to meet the demand.**

## ***Welsh-medium, Bilingual and Welsh Language Learning***

- 2.20** In a nation committed to bilingualism, there are three broad aspects to the consideration of the Welsh language in the context of post-14 education in Wales.
- 2.21** The first is entitlement: to what should learners be entitled by way of bilingual or Welsh-medium delivery? The Welsh Language Act imposed a duty on FEIs and Local Authorities to prepare Welsh Language Schemes and gave equal rights to Welsh speakers. The Assembly's policy document, *laith Pawb*, articulates further developments and targets, yet this is another area where outcomes of an excellent policy have not yet been delivered due to patchy and incomplete implementation. In some areas demand for Welsh-medium education is still greater than the supply of places.
- 2.22** The second aspect is social and economic. In particular there is a need for a sufficient quality and range of delivery of both languages in order to sustain Welsh culture. More than a fifth of the population of Wales are bilingual. In the north west of Wales, Welsh is the majority language – Gwynedd County Council, for example, conduct their business primarily through Welsh. There is also a need to ensure that the health and care sectors, as well as the education sector, can deliver in both languages as required by the population.
- 2.23** Finally, there is the aspect of career development and achievement for significant numbers of young people. We have been specifically advised that many young people are not aware that there are many career opportunities which are available only to fluent Welsh speakers.
- 2.24** Whilst Early Years provision through the medium of Welsh is widely available and has a high take-up, there is a disappointingly high drop-off of both choices and involvement, as learners progress through the education system. Demand for and supply of Welsh-medium/bilingual provision falls as the level of learning rises: there is a decline in provision between primary and secondary, a decline in Key Stage 4 and a further decline in Further and Higher Education. This is reflected in a comparatively small range of offerings in many FEIs and in constrained choices at A level. Whilst it is unrealistic to expect all options to be available in Welsh, we should reduce this constraint.





In 2005, in Further Education, 0.3% of learning activities were delivered through the medium of Welsh and 1.4% were delivered bilingually, despite the finding that 6% of staff in FEIs were able to teach in Welsh. In Work-based Learning, the figures were even lower. Schools fared better, due largely to the existence of Welsh-medium schools: overall, 10% of courses in sixth forms were delivered through the medium of Welsh, and 7% were delivered bilingually. However, most designated Welsh-medium schools do not teach all their A level courses using Welsh.

**2.25** Providers have experienced particular difficulties in offering vocational learning through the medium of Welsh and capacity in Welsh-medium teaching has long been an issue. This may reinforce problems of low levels of confidence in vocational assessments – in some cases, where Welsh-speaking learners were offered oral work-place assessment in Welsh, they preferred to undertake the assessment through the medium of English. Whilst use of the language colloquially is much higher, learners need encouragement from Welsh speaking tutors and assessors before they will confidently undertake assessment through the medium of Welsh.

**2.26** Some existing policies seek to deal with these issues, including a secondment scheme to improve the Welsh language skills of vocational teachers. These are valuable and we propose the expansion of these schemes. To manage the best use of scarce staff skills and financial resources, we need to build well-managed networks on an area or local level, along the lines of the network of Welsh for Adults Centres.

*The education and training sector has a crucial role to play in increasing the number of people able to use the language, but Welsh speaking teachers and trainers are rare. A federation system would be able to effectively interface with a network of Welsh language centres and the Welsh-medium schools who have a good geographical spread.*

Llandrillo College – response to consultation

**2.27** There is much that the further education sector could do to improve provision through, for example, the sharing of modules to ensure that learners can study at least one element of their course in Welsh. The sharing of staff and the further development of video-conferencing, e-learning and blended learning are likely also to be useful ways forward. Some Welsh-medium schools have developed their own e-learning network, Cadwg, and the continued development of Moodle (a course management system which facilitates online learning communities) as a standard Virtual Learning Environment for Welsh is to be encouraged.

*In Ceredigion, the purchase of a compatible video-conferencing facility has enabled six local schools and the college to link effectively with each other, especially for the delivery of Welsh-medium provision.*

fforwm – July 2007

**2.28** ELWa identified six areas of vocational provision for a targeted increase in Welsh-medium and bilingual provision, drawn from the national learning and skills priorities. Over twenty learning and teaching resource projects have been completed or commissioned to fulfil these needs, yet this may only be scraping the surface of what is needed. There is much potential for developing and expanding Welsh-medium provision, but to do so is expensive as materials are produced in relatively limited numbers. The funding weighting needs to take this into account.

**2.29** There is a lack of clarity about the nature of Welsh language demanded by employers. Whilst 9% of businesses, according to the Future Skills Wales Survey in 2005, reported a need for Welsh language skills, actual demand may be higher, given that 29% of businesses indicated the importance of Welsh-language skills for customer service. Some employers require skills training through the



medium of Welsh; others simply require staff with different levels of fluency. This ranges from the need for vocationally skilled staff who are able to speak conversational Welsh, such as meeting and greeting people in a reception role to those who need to be fluent in technical terminology. Sector Skills Councils are required to identify the Welsh language needs of employers in their sector but few have been able to produce a sufficiently detailed identification of these needs.

- 2.30** To re-establish priorities for Welsh-medium, Bilingual and Welsh Language provision, we propose a programme of research into the effectiveness of comparative learning intervention strategies and the re-introduction of an expert committee to consider the outcomes of the research, to develop a strategic vision, to identify priorities for action and to monitor the implementation of policy.
- 2.31** Many Welsh-speaking young people are unaware of the range of employment opportunities which require the use of the Welsh language and which may increase their earnings potential. There needs to be a systematic approach, in particular by Careers Wales, to identifying and publicising such opportunities.

### ***Recommendations for Welsh-medium, Bilingual and Welsh Language Learning***

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R13 re-assess the funding weighting attached to Welsh-medium and bilingual provision**
- R14 extend the National Practitioners' Training Programme and Sabbaticals Scheme and provide a comprehensive training programme for Welsh for Adults tutors**
- R15 underpin Welsh-medium provision with an imaginative strategy for the use of e-learning**
- R16 commission research into the comparative impact of different strategies on the level of usage of the Welsh language by learners as they progress to further and higher levels of learning**
- R17 establish a bilingual expert group to drive forward policies that address the Bilingual/Welsh-medium agenda**
- R18 continue to support Welsh for Adults centres, and**
- R19 ensure that Careers Wales informs young people of the range of opportunities available which require the Welsh language.**

### ***English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)***

- 2.32** We cannot ignore the literacy and communication needs of the increasing numbers of non-English (or Welsh) speaking workers.
- 2.33** Provision of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses in Wales has been growing at a rate of 25% per annum. Previously the majority of provision was in South East Wales, but



there has been a shift in demand, with a particular increase in North East Wales. In Yale College, for example, ESOL provision has increased from four classes in 2001 to over 50 classes in 2006. Despite the capping of Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) funding for post-19 provision for the last three years, FEIs have diverted resources to fund this growth; it has, however, been more difficult to develop the teaching skills base than to re-prioritise funding. There are serious issues of under-capacity within some areas to meet the demand for ESOL programmes. Providers in Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and Bridgend report waiting lists of 200 or more. In some cases provision has been cobbled together and delivered by inappropriately trained practitioners.

*The influx of migrant workers requiring language support and the cap on funding and inadequate weighting given to ESOL in comparison with other related courses, means it is difficult to cover the costs of delivering ESOL provision.*

Coleg Glan Hafren – response to consultation

**2.34** Providers tell us that this area of provision is unique in its diversity of learners. In particular, migrant workers with a wide range of skills and occupations are taking ESOL courses. ESOL provision goes beyond teaching people to speak or read the language: in order to apply for naturalisation or indefinite leave to remain, non-British nationals with English language below Entry level 3 need to pass ESOL qualifications, which include Citizenship and Knowledge of Life in the UK. These workers contribute significantly to Wales's prosperity.

**2.35** The unprecedented growth in demand has resulted in a number of urgent issues relating to the quality of provision. These include:

- a severe shortage of suitably qualified teaching staff to meet the high growth in demand, particularly in those areas where growth in demand has been most significant
- a lack of clear eligibility criteria in relation to categories of learners other than EU migrant workers, such as refugees, asylum seekers and non EEA migrants
- some inadequacy of funding: learners often need significant individual support relating to cultural difficulties and personal insecurities. Best practice provision includes a high proportion of one-to-one support which is not currently covered in the weighting for ESOL provision
- a high propensity for learners to leave courses without achieving qualifications, not through failing, but through having developed sufficient confidence to converse in the language before completion of the course. This currently incurs funding penalties for providers. We were therefore interested to note the proposed introduction of ESOL for Work qualifications which are intended to offer a more flexible, job focused and less expensive choice for employers and workers.

**2.36** We also note the recent UK proposal that migrant workers should be required to demonstrate a level of language skills before entering the country. Even if this proposal is implemented it is likely that there would still be a need for upskilling beyond basic levels of competency. The impact of any such changes will need to be monitored and revisions made to policy and funding as necessary.

## **Recommendations for ESOL**

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R20      urgently address the shortages of qualified ESOL tutors**
- R21      develop support materials for ESOL, including e-learning materials**
- R22      ensure that FEIs prioritise ESOL as an essential skill**
- R23      publish eligibility and entitlement criteria for funding ESOL**
- R24      review the weighting of ESOL funding**
- R25      ensure that employers contribute appropriately to the costs of ESOL, and**
- R26      introduce ESOL for Work qualifications to meet the needs of skilled migrant workers.**



# Chapter 3: 14-19 Learning Pathways

## From Policy to Practice

**3.1** The Welsh Assembly Government's Learning Pathways 14-19 programme, launched in 2004, represents a commitment to the transformation of learning provision for all young people in Wales. The programme seeks to promote a more flexible and balanced approach to the education of 14-19 year olds, providing a wider range of experiences which will suit their diverse needs. It describes six key elements of entitlement for each learner, defined as:

- an individual learning pathway
- wider choice and flexibility
- the learning core, which should also include work focused experience and community participation
- learning coach support
- agreed personal support, and
- careers education, advice and guidance.

**3.2** The Welsh Assembly Government has set a target for 2015: by the age of twenty-five, 95% of young people should be ready for high skilled employment or higher education by 2015. As 14-19 Learning Pathways started in 2004, the expectation would be that by 2015, all 25 year olds who have grown up in Wales will have benefited from that policy.

**3.3** We firmly endorse the policy; our concern is that from the evidence presented to the Review, current practice is some way from delivering. There are a number of challenges which need to be addressed in order to ensure that 14-19 learning pathways policy is delivered effectively in practice. In this chapter we consider these challenges and recommend a way forward. In Chapter 7 we give further consideration to the structure of learning provision for this age group.

## Enhancing Choice

**3.4** The first challenge is the provision of a real choice to learners. To embed more personalised learning we need to offer each learner a choice of a wide range of subjects, pathways and modes of learning to suit as many interests, capabilities, learning styles and career opportunities as possible. Choice should apply equally to all learners, whether they are academically or practically orientated. It should include a range of learning styles and contexts from the didactic to experiential, from classroom based to work-based – but all learners must have a wider range of vocational learning opportunities.

*One of the weaknesses of secondary education in this country is that there is a significant proportion of young people whose learning needs we don't seem able to crack. An increased amount of vocationalism in the curriculum might provide a menu [of learning] for them and encourage them to eat as well. There need to be routes with continuity and progression.*

Gerson Davies, Director of Education – Pembrokeshire County Council

- 3.5** We believe that there are three broad types of vocational learning. Pre-16 the need is for *pre-vocational education*. A rich range of alternatives to more academic learning would better motivate and engage many learners – not only the less academically able. Pre-vocational education relates learning to the world of work and embeds learning in a practical approach. It need not be tied to specific careers or occupations and it should not limit options by closing any doors, but by making learning more practical, applied and relevant we could reduce the current waste of talent and the social inequity in both education and the world of work.

*There should be seamlessly linked inspiring learning pathways leading to HE or employment, with a mixture of academic and practical skills choices, not academic and vocational routes (which simply strengthens the divide between academic and vocational qualifications). A learner's age should be set against that framework in a way that raises the expectations but does not put up barriers for those who do not achieve within a set time frame.*

Llandrillo College – response to consultation

The second type of vocational learning relates to a broad occupational route, such as engineering. It combines quite specific bodies of knowledge with the practical and experiential. It can be hugely motivating and accessible, promoting creativity and confidence at all ability levels. The final definition of vocational relates to learning which is appropriate to a highly specific career, job, or sector of the economy.

- 3.6** Our concern is with all three of these definitions of vocational learning, but for many 14-19 learners the first is the most valuable. This may involve delivering the existing curriculum differently, through direct illustration and options that link directly to the world of work. It requires increased investment: vocationally orientated, practical and experiential learning is more expensive than classroom learning and we must invest to expand choice. Poorly resourced programmes that are described as vocational but which are taught in a traditional classroom mode because that is all that can be afforded, are not acceptable.
- 3.7** Vocational education currently suffers for cultural reasons. Like the Nuffield Review<sup>16</sup>, we encountered the assumption that a vocational education is for the less academically able. While this perception is widespread, the choices of learners, parents and advisors will continue to be skewed.
- 3.8** One way to counteract such deep-seated assumptions is to ensure that vocational routes lead to higher level qualifications. Another is to publicise the range of existing opportunities for progression, which are not well understood. The Welsh Assembly Government should itself lead a sustained programme of publicity and information about the merits – including the personal economics – of vocational education.

*Despite the broad conception of 14-19 pathways, according to our interviewees many teachers and even head teachers still think of it as an initiative for those who cannot succeed in GCSEs and A levels.*

Nuffield Review of 14-19 October 2006

- 3.9** Another way to influence cultural attitudes is to offer the full range of learning within a single qualifications framework. In Wales we are uniquely placed to develop this: the Welsh Baccalaureate, suitably enhanced, is an ideal vehicle (supported by the Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales). We should build on its growing reputation, while acknowledging that it is not yet the finished article. The crucial step is to build on the current design of the Welsh Bac and support its intent to become a unique philosophy of post-14 holistic personal development which unites excellence with breadth and celebrates a rich combination of academic and vocational education, knowledge and skills, technical and social competencies. This philosophy should be a template for

<sup>16</sup> Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training Annual Report 2005-06



the transformation agenda in both schools and FEIs. It would be creative and innovative and would enable Wales to become genuinely world class. We must not squander this recent but vital inheritance.

*The Welsh Baccalaureate is to be applauded. [It has the] potential to be a curriculum model to facilitate work related elements for all students post-14 and eventually to achieve parity of esteem between vocational and academic.*

Yale College – response to consultation

**3.10** We acknowledge the current commitment to include the relevant employer linked elements of the new Diplomas which have been developed in England within the Welsh Bac. We recognise the importance of not disadvantaging Welsh learners compared with those in England. We do not wish to advocate the adoption of the Diplomas as they currently exist, where there is a greater emphasis on classroom learning *about* the world of work, rather than on practical learning and real experience. This should not be acceptable: we need instead to enlarge the current vocational and practical learning choices with the Bac in a manner appropriate to Wales.

**3.11** We heard from Dr Dennis Gunning, who joined the Department from the Australian state of Victoria, of the development in recent years of the *Victorian Certificate* which may be a useful model to inform the further development of the Welsh Bac, providing it embraces *all* learners:

*The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) is a programme for students whose needs are not met by Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE). It provides a pathway to FE, apprenticeships and employment, whereas the VCE is typically a route to university. It operates at three levels, each lasting a year, with four mandatory strands: literacy/numeracy, personal development, work-related skills and general vocational skills. The programme involves delivery partnerships in the school's community with FE, adult and community education, employers and voluntary/community organisations. Students often progress from taster-type experiences in year one to specific vocational courses in year two. This helps them to make informed choices about progression. All units included in VCAL programmes are drawn from nationally accredited courses. Learner numbers have grown from a pilot of 500 learners in 2002 to 15,000 in 2007. Progression to employment, apprenticeships or further education, which was deemed to be the most appropriate measure of success rather than qualifications, was between 85% and 90% and an independent cost-benefit analysis has demonstrated that the programme achieved good economic returns on the Victorian government's £48m investment in the first four years,*

Dr Dennis Gunning (speaking in a personal capacity)

**3.12** The proposed Assembly Measure for 14-19 learners introduces an entitlement to a range of options and places a duty on local authorities to ensure such provision is met. This is a positive step but it does not define either the quality of vocational provision or the need for schools to engage with employers and provide learning in a working environment. Schools could comply with the measure by developing their own provision rather than linking into work based learning or FEI provision – both of which are likely to provide a more vocationally relevant experience. Although the measure includes a requirement to collaborate, there are no incentives to drive effective collaboration; we address this issue in Chapter 7.

**3.13** While providing motivational vocational learning for learners as young as 14 onwards, it is essential that we do not trap them in one-track routes. The funding system should allow learners to change programme or pathway and exit routes and alternative progression pathways should be developed and explicitly described.

*We are increasingly looking at pathways, at the pattern of options and where they might lead learners. We need to ensure that there is a balance between meeting the educational needs of the learner and the needs of the local labour market. We are conscious of not starting learners on a pathway that has no progression point. Within Rhondda we maintain this pathway within the learner's base school; between partner schools; with partner courses with a college or within work-based learning. The arrangements are diverse and complex.*

Head Teacher, Porth County Community School

## **Work experience and employer links**

**3.14** Currently, many learners' only opportunity for experiential learning is a one or two week period of work experience at the end of Year 11. This statutory requirement is a step in the right direction, but its effectiveness is limited. Employers were critical of schools that focus their engagement on this intensive two week period in June/July. The timing of these placements is not always ideal for employers; it is hard to do justice to the demands, needs and expectations of many of the 40,000 learners in a year group across Wales in these two weeks. We were informed that over 50% of learners rely on their parents to find them a placement. As a result, learners are either advantaged or disadvantaged according to the employment status of their parents.

**3.15** It is important to improve the structure and delivery of the work experience process and to develop a wider range of more sustained aspects of experiential learning and employer links. Most schools deliver some part of a useful agenda, but there is a need to make a wide range of opportunities far more widely and consistently available, to include:

- visits, talks and mock interviews to develop enterprise, entrepreneurship and business awareness
- support and advice for teachers delivering vocational options
- Saturday clubs, summer schools and vocationally related workshops
- assistance with project and portfolio work for individual learners
- taster activities
- careers fairs
- part-time and temporary employment, and
- experiences and activities delivered through other organisations, such as The Prince's Trust Cymru, Guides Cymru, Urdd Gobaith Cymru and Weston Spirit.

**3.16** Employers are able and many are willing to engage with schools on a number of levels, but some said they were discouraged from doing so. Their reasons included unappreciative attitudes in some schools, behavioural difficulties with learners and an increasing bureaucratic burden, particularly in relation to Health and Safety and CRB checks. They also commented that they are usually asked to provide support only for less able learners: while willing to do so, they felt it would be mutually beneficial also to work with those of higher ability.

**3.17** The experiential element of 14-19 learning needs to go beyond work experience to provide an individualised approach which incorporates both work based and vocationally related provision within a framework of progression, to equip learners better for the labour market, at 16, 19 or even beyond further and higher education. It is hampered, at present, by a fragmented and unfocused approach to employer engagement.





## ○ Resourcing experiential learning

- **3.18** Many schools are making determined attempts to provide a range of vocationally related opportunities, but these can be severely limited by the facilities available to them, including via local FEIs.

*We should be able to offer young people a range of vocational options at 14, beyond the usual subject areas of health and social care and leisure and tourism, which are superficially appealing but offer limited and low paid opportunities for future employment. What we really need is, for example, high quality engineering provision at 14.*

George Davies, Head Teacher, Sir Thomas Picton School, Haverfordwest

- 3.19** In this Pembrokeshire example, Pembroke College has the facilities but claimed that it lacked the capacity to cater for younger learners. FEI provision is far more likely to be at or near industry standard than that which schools can provide – and we received criticism of schools developing facilities that fell short. For vocational learning to flourish there needs to be better integration of the efforts of schools with the provision of appropriate experience in FEIs or training providers – which an increasing number of schools are linking into. It is vital that learners have access to centres for vocational learning that have an appropriate physical environment, are properly staffed and closely linked to local employers, ideally through the donation of equipment and time. There may be an opportunity to develop and launch a chain of such centres, supported by European Convergence funding.

*In many cases not all learners have access to vocationally relevant education and training at 14: vocational courses in schools are often limited to staff experience or even staff interests.*

Neath Port Talbot College – response to consultation

- 3.20** The development of Work Based Learning Pathways pilots which were launched in September 2007 is an important step forward. This programme is aimed at high-achieving pupils who are expected to achieve GCSE grades A\* to C. The programme is run by local partnerships of schools, FEIs, training providers and employers, in conjunction with Sector Skills Councils. Learners follow the National Curriculum and continue to study Mathematics, English, Welsh, ICT and Science, but for up to two days a week they also work towards a vocational qualification at level 2. They will complete up to fifty days of work experience and undertake a variety of practical situations at college and within the workplace. One example is the Engineering model developed in conjunction with SEMTA:

*This work based learning pathway for 14-16 year olds involves schools and colleges as providers, with employers providing the work based experience. The pathway links mandatory subjects at GCSE level with some specific NVQ units, GCSE Engineering and general employability skills. SEMTA have worked with the University of Glamorgan to develop the programme and are keen to ensure that learners are able to progress through the education system, whether to a modern apprenticeship, or further education, including A levels or the Welsh Baccalaureate. Whilst the pathway will provide an ideal route to a higher level career in engineering or manufacturing, it will also provide a good grounding for learners to follow an alternative, for example in business studies or related areas.*

We propose that this programme is evaluated swiftly and, drawing on lessons learned, fully implemented across Wales.

- 3.21** Many schools have only recently introduced vocational options into the curriculum. Schools can play an important role in extending experience of the world of work and in developing some employability and work related skills, but the delivery of more specialist skills is always likely to



require more specialist equipment, facilities, learning materials and expertise. Learners expressed concerns about teachers who lacked appropriate qualifications or experience, but who were none the less the sole or main source of guidance and instruction. It is essential that an expanded range of vocational opportunities gains credence and is not undermined by poor quality. We therefore recommend that where schools and in particular school sixth forms choose to offer vocational learning in named occupational areas they should be subject to a rigorous, albeit low-bureaucracy, process of validation.

## Apprenticeships 16-19

**3.22** Arguably, the most vocational pathway for young people is an apprenticeship. Apprentices have employed status and are, for the most part, based in the workplace. Although numbers in Wales have grown considerably, the number of young people entering them at 16 is low, particularly when compared with England. Of nearly 21,000 Modern Apprentices in Wales in 2006, fewer than five thousand were learners in the 14-19 age group. There are a number of reasons for this, including:

- a low level of awareness amongst young people and their advisers
- the absence of a clear application process
- limited availability of apprenticeships in some areas and in some employment sectors, and
- concerns that the apprenticeship may restrict opportunities for progression.

**3.23** Many learners are entirely unaware of the existence of, or benefits of apprenticeships. In order to meet the commitment in *One Wales* to substantially increase the number of apprenticeships in Wales, we need to develop a better brand so that young people and adults recognise the value of this pathway.

**3.24** We also need to drive up the numbers of young people selecting an apprenticeship as the progression route of choice. This will require both additional funding and a reallocation of some funding from general FE provision to apprenticeships. We believe that the current budget of around £60 million should be increased by at least 50% over the next four years.

**3.25** We welcome the report<sup>17</sup> commissioned by the Department on the potential development of a pan-Wales clearing house for Modern Apprenticeships so that learners can make informed choices from the full range of apprenticeships. As well as providing a clearer choice and application process, it would also make it possible to track and monitor the numbers of young people applying for and being accepted into apprenticeships.

**3.26** In promoting a national choice of apprenticeships, the Department may also have to consider whether and how best to offer financial support to learners aged 16-19 who wish to move to gain access to apprenticeships in another region of Wales.

**3.27** We were impressed with the development in England of pre-apprenticeship screening tests which enabled young people to assess their aptitude for particular types of employment. Especially when combined with pre-vocational programmes such as the Work Based Learning Pathway, learners in Wales would benefit from using this assessment to make better-informed choices.

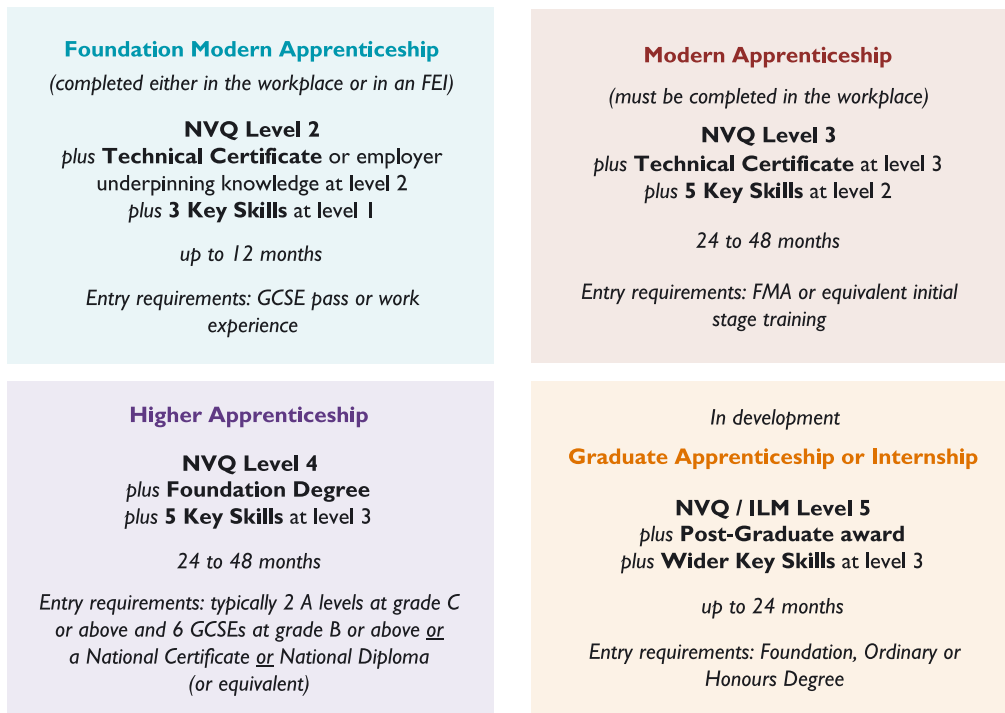
17 Modern Apprenticeship Clearing House Think Piece – Brian Ellis Consultancy and Associates – January 2007



“One problem is that if a young person is a good candidate for an apprenticeship, we are battling with the schools, as they will push them into ‘A’ level provision and University entry. We tell [the learners] that they will get an education with us, that they will get paid, and that they won’t have student debts, but neither the schools nor parents seem to view engineering apprenticeships as an alternative career path.”

John Frodsham – Systems Engineer – UPM Shotton Paper

**3.28** Employers require apprentices with high levels of ability. It is essential to develop and promote progression routes if we are both to attract these learners and to fulfil their individual entitlement. Learners should be able to progress as far in an apprenticeship as if they remained in full time education. We were encouraged by the apprenticeship framework developed by SEMTA in conjunction with Airbus UK. This currently includes a Higher Apprenticeship to NVQ level 4 and will soon have added a Graduate Apprenticeship to Level 5. The model is set out in figure 3 below:



**Figure 3**

**3.29** This model meets employers’ needs for higher level skills and provides learners with a highly vocational alternative to university entry. Learners receive a salary and have their course fees paid while following a Higher Apprenticeship programme, rather than incurring a large student debt. For appropriate candidates it is a fast route to gaining experience, qualifications, a management track record and, with some firms, international exchange opportunities. This could be highly attractive for many young people.

**3.30** If Wales is to develop its workforce in line with the Leitch recommendations of 40% at level 4 or above by 2020, Higher Apprenticeships are a valid, employer-led route by which to do so. However, although the costs of Higher Apprenticeships to providers and to employers are significantly higher than for Modern Apprenticeships, they are currently funded at the same rate. We propose that the Department review this area of funding and that Sector Skills Councils need to work closely with Employers, Further and Higher Education to ensure that these progression routes are available.

## Key Skills

- 3.31** Both employers and learners expressed concerns about Key Skills. Where they were being delivered as part of the Welsh Bac or alongside work-based qualifications, the key skills were often not integrated into the vocational provision. We heard very little evidence of contextualised key skills development as opposed to box-ticking assessment exercises which acknowledged existing skills without developing them. Learners were most satisfied when key skills were seamlessly integrated with their vocational learning.
- 3.32** Whilst this type of integration has long been recommended as best practice, it is inconsistent across Wales. Moreover, FEIs expressed concern that whilst the Welsh Bac requires the *embedding* of Key Skills in the curriculum through portfolio assessment, revisions to the National Planning and Funding System now included a requirement to show evidence of *separate* contact hours for key skills, in order to claim funding.

*“[Under] the new NPFS funding system, colleges will be required to show evidence of time in learning for key skills... The whole notion of a ‘framework’ is an integrated package of training for the learner. Key skills [are] integrated into the NVQ and do not stand alone. To make this cost-effective, colleges would have to bring learners into college; the very thing that employers do not want. This is the whole point of it being ‘work-based’”*

FE College providing Work-based Learning

- 3.33** We can understand such an expression of frustration, although we would not wish to discourage the provision of *additional* learning opportunities for young people to develop their key skills. The Department should review this and any other similar disjuncture between policy and funding.

## Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)

- 3.34** In Chapter 2 we considered the need to improve the level of basic numeracy skills of large numbers of young people. This is fundamental, but it is insufficient for many roles in employment. Employers depend increasingly upon data to plan and monitor performance, to communicate within and between organisations and to underpin technical processes and accountability systems. Many employers require a combination of ICT skills with the ability to manipulate and make judgments on the validity of data.

*Businesses must become more effective in the application of technology in order for the Welsh economy to prosper. This will require excellent IT professional and user skills, and skills for improvement of business managers who need to understand how to realise the potential of IT.*

e-Skills UK – response to consultation

*Our sector is heavily legislated against in terms of building regulations and HSE. Candidates must have good functional mathematical abilities appropriate to the sector.*

Summit Skills – response to consultation

- 3.35** Conventional mathematics teaching is not the only route to such competence and may be anathema to many who need such skills. Mathematics is central to the STEM disciplines, but this wider issue of ‘numerical literacy’ is of growing significance and is best approached by developing number-based analytical skills across the curriculum<sup>18</sup>. While welcoming the development of a skills-based GCSE curriculum, we believe that this should be an important consideration within the review of 11 to 16 education which we propose in Chapter 8.

<sup>18</sup> Kent, P., Bakker, A., Hoyle, C. and Noss, R. (2005). “Techno-mathematical literacies in the Workplace”. *Mathematics, Statistics and OR Connections*, 5 (1) February 2005



**3.36** Many value added parts of the economy are driven by the STEM disciplines. Employers left us in no doubt about their concern that the decline in these subjects at school, FE and HE was a threat to the development of the economy that had to be reversed. It should also be reversed in the interests of personal choice, opportunity and earning potential. There has been a recent increase in success at GCSE in Science and Mathematics, but this is still well below the levels of the 1990s.

*Businesses are far more worried about the low numbers studying chemistry, physics and maths than they are about the grade inflation debate. We are facing a growing skills shortage in these areas that has serious implications for the future health of our economy. Numbers studying physics are little more than flat-lining at a time when they need to rise sharply. Both maths and chemistry have rallied from their low points in recent years, but neither is seeing the interest they enjoyed less than a decade ago, and the economy needs far more young people with these skills.*

Richard Lambert, CBI, August 2007

**3.37** Employers in the engineering sector expressed regret that learners who applied for engineering positions had rarely been exposed to hands-on practical work in school. They felt that curricula which previously included the opportunity to work on metalwork and joinery projects had now switched to Design and Technology provision, with more focus on design than on the opportunity to develop hands-on craft skills.

*More and more we see applicants, who have studied Design and Technology at school, have been directed towards presentation skills with their understanding of the subject matter and hand skills being reduced in the priority ranking. In the interviews we encourage the applicant to speak about practical experiences such as working with their parents on such things as repairing the family car. The increase in (car) technology has reduced the opportunities for this type of experience.*

Alun Jones – Engineering Manager – Kelloggs

**3.38** We need to strengthen specialist STEM teaching, inspire learners with aptitude to excel and overcome the barriers to more practical learning. Employment data suggests that we are facing a growth in demand for higher level skills. The key consideration is whether there will be sufficient people with STEM skills in Wales to meet the needs of a growth economy.

**3.39** We are aware of a number of STEM related activities and projects designed to motivate learners. Some of them have been initiated by individual employers, or by employer groups such as the Electronics Employers Forum.

*Dow Corning, a chemical operations company in the Vale of Glamorgan, has developed good links with local schools. They engage with a number of activities including National Science Week and a Maths Mentoring Programme for learners in years 7 and 8, through which they try to help learners see maths in a real world context so that they understand why it is important. The company has also just opened a new education facility, with a particular focus on bio-diversity, to better enable them to engage with a broader range of learners, from primary through to 19.*

**3.40** We are also aware of examples of Further and Higher Education Institutions engaging with schools to raise the profile of sciences and of the work of Careers Wales, in conjunction with fforwm, in developing National Engineering Week.

*The College has undertaken a number of initiatives designed to tackle the concerns raised by the national decline in the number of students enrolling onto science subjects, [demonstrating a] commitment to attracting students who are mathematics or science 'phobic' as well as those who are able and gifted in these subjects... The number of students studying mathematics and physics AS and A level has grown consistently over the last three years and applications for 2007/08 have exceeded all expectations and countered the national trends... The well established schools liaison programme was extended and developed particularly to attract students of lower abilities... a highly successful programme of taster sessions was developed... Subject lecturers in maths and sciences provided a range of stimulating activities... ensuring that each pupil participated in a meaningful lesson that would stimulate and encourage their interest.*

Gorseinon College – 'Against the Odds'

- 3.41** We were struck, however, by the lack of shape or strategy to drive this activity. Employers, FEIs and HEIs were in some cases working in almost identical ways with schools, but unaware of each other's efforts. The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) has allocated an initial £370k per annum for initiatives which involve engagement by professional bodies and societies in schools and two of HEFCW's Reconfiguration and Collaboration partnerships include provision for outreach work to promote science and mathematics in schools. Isolated examples of good practice are not enough; we feel that a more cohesive, strategic approach is necessary.
- 3.42** We propose that the Department should allocate funding to drive up participation in STEM. Some of this funding could fund bids from partnerships to:
- pool and link resources in imaginative ways
  - promote and facilitate STEM disciplines, progression and career opportunities from the age of 11, and
  - draw upon existing good practice, including employer-led science initiatives.
- 3.43** The development of STEM mentoring programmes could also enrich learning and motivate learners by enthusing, supporting and motivating them with aptitude in these disciplines from the earliest opportunity.
- 3.44** The STEM disciplines are important for three reasons:
- they lie at the heart of technologically driven change
  - many learners are deterred by the perceived difficulty of these subjects, and
  - specialist teaching skills are in short supply.

But the STEM disciplines are not unique. The recommended approach may be of value in other areas. The wider need is to consider all specialist subjects where demand among employers outstrips the natural flow of learners. We have already noted the opportunities arising from a shortage of Welsh language speakers in some areas of employment. Looking forward, globalisation must drive the demand for Modern Foreign Languages. We suggest the need for a watching brief in respect of any disciplines where learner demand may need to be stimulated and scarce teaching skills used to best effect. Excellence cannot emerge from a thin spreading of expertise.



## ○ Informed choice

- **3.45** Information, advice and guidance are a crucial element of wise decisions. However, there appears to be a shortage of comprehensive, unbiased and up-to-date advice for young people. In particular, vocational routes within 14-19 learning pathways are often considered as second tier. More mature learners making their choices at 18 have sophisticated information systems, official and more informal, about university choices; yet learners at 14 and 16 – and their parents, teachers and careers advisers – do not have a comprehensive set of information on all that is available across schools, colleges and training providers.

*Too many post-16 qualifications ... are not understood by learners, parents or employers and the current model perpetuates the academic/vocational divide: able children are encouraged to do academic and [the] less able, vocational. FE is well placed to deliver high quality vocational courses to meet skills shortages and schools have a role in vocational preparation, working in partnership with their local college.*

Association of College Management – response to consultation

*At the moment, 60% of our 16 year olds take AS and A level courses. Realistically this is much too high. If we could get vocational provision right, only 30-40% would be following this academic route.*

George Davies – Head Teacher – Sir Thomas Picton School

- 3.46** Comprehensive prospectuses which clearly specify the full range of available provision, including A levels, vocational courses and apprenticeships, must be freely available and accessible locally and regionally. This is a high priority and there must be no barriers to the distribution of such information. In time, through the development of a shared, interactive, online format, it should be possible to move towards a national prospectus. We have seen several examples of developing good practice, where institutions have worked together to produce a unified timetable and a prospectus of learning opportunities across their area. Learners are able to access courses in schools or FEIs other than their own and have a wider choice of provision as a result.

*The Caerphilly Basin schools have joined together with The College Ystrad Mynach to form a partnership. As a result, we can now offer you a far greater range of courses to follow. From September 2007 you will be able to continue your education in the sixth form of your choice and move to follow subjects in another school or college if you wish. There is a range of 40 Vocational and AS courses to choose from. Alternatively you could decide to leave school and attend the College instead.*

Caerphilly Basin Sixth Form Prospectus

- 3.47** Whilst such examples are to be commended, they do not present the full range of vocational learning opportunities, including apprenticeships, which are potentially available to learners. In the Caerphilly example (and in others we have seen), some FEI-based courses supplement those offered at the schools, with a strong emphasis on AS level provision, but the full range of vocational provision in colleges and other providers is not included. In future every learner must be fully aware of the entire range of provision and of the costs, commitments and progression routes associated with each choice.
- 3.48** Formal information in prospectuses could also usefully be supplemented by peer-developed alternative prospectuses such as are common for Universities. Existing and completing learners would be given responsibility to develop, within established guidelines, a prospectus which presented their views on the provision at each institution, down to course level. These would give prospective learners the student's view. In Chapter 7 we identify where the responsibilities for developing such a prospectus might lie.



*The opportunity infra-structure should consist of a good comprehensive mix of academic and vocational provision sitting alongside one another, but not as separate routes. This juxta-positioning of provision would give learners flexibility of choice, combination of and movement within the different types of provision and would also enhance the context for decisions made by the learner. This in turn will facilitate learner progression and the meeting of future skills and learning needs.*

Careers Wales

**3.49** Promotional opportunities go beyond the provision of pre-course information. Every year without fail A level results are issued in the slow-news season and generate columns of discussion and comment. We were impressed with the initiative taken by fforwm this year to co-ordinate a Vocational Results Day across Wales the week before A level results day. This type of initiative could help in raising the recognition and value of vocational qualifications in the public perception.

**3.50** Sadly, some teachers and head teachers still view vocational routes as an easy option for those who cannot succeed in GCSEs and A levels. They may not be aware of the extent to which employers are demanding high attainment from their employees and to which progression to further and higher levels of vocational learning are opening up. Some of the learners we spoke to had been actively discouraged from undertaking vocational qualifications in favour of staying on at sixth form to take A levels. Several of these had subsequently switched mid-course to a vocational programme, in their eyes wasting a year.

*When I told my head teacher that I wanted to study at the Further Education College rather than staying on in the sixth form, she asked me to reconsider my decision. To ensure that I did so, she left the room, locking me in behind her.*

FE College Learner

*I decided that I wanted to follow a child-care course at College. My school teachers eventually persuaded me that I ought to stay on at school and study A levels. However, I did not make good progress with these and I was unhappy with my choice. After a year, I left the sixth form and started the child-care course that I had initially chosen at the College. I feel that I wasted a year of my life.*

FE College Learner

**3.51** We were also given a number of examples of institutions preventing learners from gaining information about opportunities provided by other local providers. Such restrictions on the information available about choices must cease. We have no way of telling just how rare, or widespread, these instances are. However, even one such example is wholly unacceptable and represents an intolerable violation of young people's rights under the Children and Young Persons Act. The issue of ensuring young people have reasonable access to information is an area of work that could be carried out by the Children's Commissioner for Wales. Assuming the problem is a small one, the implications for the Commissioner's resources should not be great. If that proves to be incorrect, it is imperative that additional resources become available: neither coercion, nor misrepresentation, can be allowed to distort the advice and guidance offered to impressionable learners.



## ○ **Careers Advice 14-19**

○ **3.52** The role of Careers Advice is central to the successful implementation of 14-19 pathways. Careers advisers need to have access to the most up to date information on career opportunities and progression routes. It is the responsibility of Sector Skills Councils to provide the Careers Service with current information on careers in their sector, the qualification routes and to provide helpful contact numbers: this should ensure that information within Careers Online is up to date. But it is critical that opinion formers – parents and teachers – know about these sites too and positively encourage learners to explore them.

**3.53** There is also evidence from some learners that they are being encouraged to delay any career planning until they have completed their degree at University. This might be appropriate for many; others could miss opportunities offered by apprenticeship programmes, possibly leading to degrees and post graduate qualifications gained alongside work experience. Employers are concerned that careers in manufacturing and engineering are not portrayed objectively or knowledgeably within the school environment. One employer told us that learners at the local school had been advised not to pursue a career in the sector because ‘it’s all moving to China’.

**3.54** Ensuring that learners understand the range of options open to them is a constant and uphill communications task where government itself has a key role to play. We make recommendations on the future of Careers Wales in Chapter 8.

## **Travelling to learn**

**3.55** We asked learners across Wales to tell us about the best and worst aspects of their learning. Top of the list of worst aspects for 14-19 learners, almost without exception, was transport. They complained of unreliable, late and sometimes non-existent buses. The consequences included missed lessons, reduced Education Maintenance Allowance due to lateness and increased stress levels.

**3.56** The findings of the Employer Engagement Task Force and, separately, the CBI have indicated that travel is also problematic in relation to work experience. Learners from less well-off backgrounds are further disadvantaged if they are not funded to travel to work placements. Support for travel is inconsistently available across Wales.

**3.57** We envisage that future models of delivery of 14-19 provision will place a much greater demand on transport, with increased travel between institutions. It is essential that current policy and guidance is reviewed and a strategy developed to ensure that learners are able to access learning opportunities in the most efficient way possible.

## **Looked-after Learners**

**3.58** In Chapter 8 we consider the needs of learners who are more disadvantaged than most, but there is one group of learners which falls specifically into our terms of reference and which warrants particular consideration in the context of 14-19 provision: those who are looked-after by a local authority, whether this is in residential accommodation or by foster parents. There are many challenges and risks facing this group of vulnerable young people, nearly half of whom are in care because of abuse or neglect. The number of looked-after-children in Wales has risen at a faster rate than elsewhere in the UK – from 2,991 in 1998 to 4,784 in 2006. In the light of this, evidence on their prospects is disturbing:



- over half of young people who have been in care leave it with no formal qualifications
- only 1% of looked-after children progress to university
- 60% of 19 year old care-leavers are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- 41% of children in custody have been in care
- nearly half of looked-after children have mental disorders
- up to a third of rough sleepers have been in care, and
- looked-after children are two and a half times more likely to become teenage parents.

**3.59** The Children First programme, the Welsh Assembly Government's policy for children in greatest need, puts corporate parenting at its core. It is an excellent policy but implementation is patchy and can vary between local authorities. For example, in one local authority area none of the 16 year olds in care achieved any GCSE qualifications; in another there was 80% achievement. Variation across local authorities was also evident on 32 other indicators.

**3.60** Looked-after children can often be moved from one local authority to another. This is unsettling and disruptive for young people who may already be traumatised. They may arrive during term time when other peer group circles are established and may lack the skills needed to integrate and they have to establish new relationships with unfamiliar teaching staff. There is currently no provision for the transfer of funding between schools or local authorities to cover mid-year changes in provision.

**3.61** The circumstances in which learners are fostered have a strong impact on their engagement with learning. Many foster carers did not, themselves, progress beyond compulsory education and feel ill-equipped to offer appropriate support, guidance and encouragement to the young people in their care. They may not have a computer or books in the house – some, though not all, local authorities ensure that young people in their care have access to a computer. Funding for the young person may cease on their 18th birthday making it unviable for a foster carer to continue to support that learner. We were advised of an example where a local authority stopped funding foster care on the day of the 18th birthday, although the learner was still in full time education.

**3.62** There is a need to:

- reduce the impact on learners of discontinuity in their education
- ensure that funding follows learners who need to move between learning providers or areas
- provide guidance to foster carers on 14-19 learning, support and progression opportunities
- ensure that there are appropriate learning facilities within care settings
- prevent discontinuity in support when learners reach 18
- provide access to out-of-school activities – without appropriate support children in care can often miss out on these opportunities
- provide looked-after-learners with stability and emotional, social and educational support, without labelling them in a way which makes them feel stigmatised, and
- challenge stereotypes – for example that they are difficult and disruptive – issues which often start long before 14.

**3.63** One way of improving the confidence and aspirations of such learners is through the development of mentoring programmes where young people who have progressed to further or higher education act as mentors. There are currently several such programmes which are focused on improving access to Higher Education, in Wales and in England. We need to expand the number of mentors within vocational education.



3.64 Establishing a mentoring programme is not without its challenges. Mentors need training and an incentive to undertake the task – examples include payment and certification of the skills gained – and they may not understand the particular challenges of working with learners who need a significant amount of encouragement to engage with this new relationship. Sometimes schools have struggled to accommodate the mentoring process into their timetabling arrangements. However, evaluation of similar programmes in England has demonstrated positive outcomes for learners<sup>19</sup>.

*The National Mentoring Pilot Programme (NMPP) was a mentoring programme in which selected students from local universities worked with pupils in schools within Education Action Zones in England at Key Stages 3 and 4. The Programme ran from August 1999 until July 2004, under the direction of a team from Cardiff University. An evaluation found that:*

- pupils who had been mentored for one year achieved higher GCSE grades in English, Mathematics and Science than broadly comparable pupils who had not been mentored
- 64 per cent of mentored pupils achieved an A\*-C grade in GCSE English; compared with 29.7 per cent in the non-mentored group
- 49.1 per cent of mentored pupils achieved an A\*-C grade in GCSE Mathematics; compared with 22.9 per cent in the non-mentored group
- 64.6 per cent of mentored pupils achieved an A\*-C grade in GCSE Science; compared with 32.6 per cent in the non-mentored group.

Centre for Education and Industry (2004) *The Evaluation of the National Mentoring Pilot Programme: Final Report*.

3.65 One of the most promising features of 14-19 learning pathways is the role of the learning coach. Coaches could play a vital role in enhancing the confidence of the most vulnerable or those with low aspirations. It would seem appropriate to make funding available to these coaches to develop mentoring within schools. A number of different models are currently being developed and delivered by the Reaching Wider network, which include one-to-one, group and online mentoring. It would be valuable to draw upon existing good practice to develop a menu of approaches which could be managed in all secondary schools to support *all* vulnerable learners, not just those who are looked-after.

3.66 In reviewing good practice in the education and support of looked-after learners in the UK it became clear that the most effective models were those which combined a number of elements of support with financial backing.

*As part of its Leaving Care programme, Ealing provides a range of services to ensure that university is accessible to children in care. A specialist teacher in Post-16 education offers advice on courses, interview preparation and help with UCAS application forms at the YESS (Youth, Education and Social Services) drop in centre. Life skills including budgeting and healthy eating are also provided so that young people are prepared for all aspects of university life. At university young people are provided with financial support of up to £5,000 per annum to cover subsistence and accommodation costs. In total 9 per cent of care leavers are at university compared to a national average of 1 per cent.*

A better education for children in care – the issues – Social Exclusion Unit

19 J. Hall, 'Mentoring and Young People: a literature review', SCRE Centre, 2003

## More able and talented learners

**3.67** While much attention is focused on those who are not yet achieving minimum learning outcomes, it is as essential to the entitlement agenda that we meet the needs of those learners who in England are defined as ‘gifted and talented’ and in Wales as ‘more able and talented’.

*The 2005 White Paper, Higher Standards: Better Schools for All, set out the Government’s ambition that every pupil – gifted and talented, struggling or average – should have the right personalised support to reach the limits of their capability. For gifted and talented pupils, this means better stretch and challenge in every classroom and in every school with opportunities to further their particular talents outside school at a local and national level.*

*Gifted and talented children are those who have one or more abilities developed to a level significantly ahead of their year group (or with the potential to develop these abilities).*

*Providing for the gifted and talented pupils in our schools is a question of equity – as with all other pupils, they have a right to an education that is suited to their particular needs and abilities. They need to be presented with work that challenges, stretches and excites them on a daily basis, in an environment that celebrates excellence and is supportive of those who may, in years to come, break the boundaries of what we know and understand today.*

Department for Children, Schools and Families Website

**3.68** We encountered several examples of the implementation of this policy. One FEI in England had developed a programme where over one hundred 14-16 year olds a year from across the county attended the college on a one day a week basis. One group of these learners was able to complete units of a Foundation Degree in Motor Sport, using state-of-the-art Formula One equipment to complete tasks such as engine analysis. Learners were able to store the units they achieved and in due course to progress onto the second year of a degree programme at a University.

**3.69** We welcome the recent developments in conjunction with the National Association for Able Children in Education Cymru (NACE), which sets out guidance on the standards for the support of more able and talented learners in schools. Standards include:

- the development of a whole school action plan
- strategies to identify more able and talented learners
- improvement targets and regular reviews
- appropriate pedagogy, curriculum, pastoral care and resources
- a commitment to staff development
- specific programmes
- learner feedback mechanisms, and
- partnership work.

**3.70** However, we believe that there are opportunities to enhance provision for this important group and that aspects of the English model may be of value in Wales. In particular:

- a cross-Department focus on the needs of more able and talented learners at all levels
- funding to support the development of talent in specialised institutions, for example in the fields of music and sport
- a national register of more able and talented learners to enable the focusing of funds on the more disadvantaged learners within these high ability groups



- the development of lead teachers with responsibilities for more able and talented learners
- the inclusion of Further Education Institutions in the implementation of guidance, and
- the exploration of opportunities for more able and talented learners in provision outside their school or FEI.

## Globalisation

**3.71** In the globalised, highly competitive economy the nature of demand for skills and knowledge can change rapidly and dynamically. Our education system must equip learners with the requisite skills, abilities and understanding to work and live in this international environment. While employers expect to see far more vocational programmes their approach to the skills agenda is neither narrow nor purely technical. They have an awareness of the impact of global competition and change upon their skills needs. Fostering innovation and translating it into value added products and services is critical for individual companies and national economies.<sup>20</sup> To meet these needs the education and training system must promote creativity, innovation and internationalism and it must be periodically be re-assessed against these objectives. Wales should also seize such opportunities as World Skills in 2011.

**3.72** There are many ways of giving education a strong international dimension but they need to be developed in a concerted manner. Exemplar programmes in which learning takes place and creativity fostered in an international context have been developed by providers in Wales. These approaches must be systematically developed across Wales and incorporate new elements related to expanding enriched learning and engagement. While educational providers will deliver this, the Department alone can provide the necessary impetus, strategic framework and support. We urge it to do so. An education system that lacks a broad international strategy cannot address the impact of globalisation.

### Recommendations for 14-19 Learning Pathways

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R27** develop the Welsh Bac as a coherent philosophy of education that promotes:
- experiential, practical and vocational as well as academic elements
  - support for the development of key skills and social skills, and
  - the development and testing of employability skills
- R28** promote a strong brand image for vocational routes, including apprenticeships, through a national campaign
- R29** develop a comprehensive national online prospectus for 14-19 learners and in the meantime ensure that all learners receive an area prospectus
- R30** develop and support a mechanism to enable the Children's Commissioner to fulfil the role of an ombudsman with regard to learners' entitlement to receive comprehensive and unbiased information

20 The World's Top Innovators" – S Dutton and S Caulka in World Business Jan – Feb 2007

- R31 **develop a low-bureaucracy validation process for the delivery of post-14 vocational learning within schools to ensure that:**
- a. **the programme has been developed in conjunction with local employers**
  - b. **the programme is taught by vocational specialists with current and relevant skills and experience and**
  - c. **the facilities to be used by learners meet industry standards**
- R32 **develop a series of practical vocational learning centres for young people in conjunction with employers possibly supported by European Convergence funding**
- R33 **build upon the Work Based Learning Pathways pilots to develop an all-Wales cross-sector programme**
- R34 **ensure that the Wales Employment and Skills Board adopts the National Employer Engagement Strategy<sup>21</sup>**
- R35 **develop guidance on learner travel for 14-19 learners including the funding of travel to work experience placements and to learning provision outside their home institution**
- R36 **allocate additional funding to allow for the expansion of apprenticeships by 50% over the next four years in line with the commitments within *One Wales***
- R37 **work with HEFCW to develop a funding model for apprenticeships at Levels 4 and 5**
- R38 **proceed with the development of a national apprenticeship clearing house and develop a national record of apprentices**
- R39 **review the funding and guidance for Key Skills**
- R40 **through the Wales Employment and Skills Board require all Sector Skills Councils to develop progression routes for apprenticeships from Level 2 to Level 5 where appropriate**
- R41 **in the context of WAG's Science Policy for Wales develop and fund a national strategy for improving participation and performance in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics**
- R42 **develop a national strategy to address the education needs of looked-after learners to include the engagement of foster parents in the support of learners in their care**
- R43 **establish a task and finish group to develop models of mentoring for 14-19 learners particularly the most vulnerable**
- R44 **develop fund and implement a comprehensive strategy for more able and talented learners of all ages and from whatever background and**
- R45 **develop a comprehensive strategy for the international dimension of post-14 education.**

<sup>21</sup> as developed by the 14-19 Employer Engagement Taskforce



# Chapter 4: Employer-led Learning

## Identifying Employers' skills needs

*70% of the 2020 working age population have already left compulsory education and the flow of young people will reduce.*

Leitch Review of Skills

- 4.1** The entitlements of younger learners are of obvious importance, but in his report, Lord Leitch majored on the skills needs of those already in employment. They will be the dominant element in the workforce for many years and their skills have to match the changing requirements of the economy. Yet in Wales the funding for this large population has been at best static in recent years. This must change; funds should pay for what employers and employees need, not for what happens presently to be available in FEI prospectuses. Responsiveness is paramount.
- 4.2** Future skills are difficult to predict accurately beyond the short term. All the nations included in the international comparative study commissioned by this Review<sup>22</sup> employed some form of labour market forecasting, but most had found this to be inaccurate in the medium to long term. Professor Keating's conclusion was that decisions about the type and content of education and training programmes are best made as close to the user as possible.
- 4.3** However, short term responsiveness must operate within an understanding of longer term sectoral needs. This is one responsibility of Sector Skills Councils (SSCs). Leitch argued that they need to fulfil four roles if they are to represent the employer:
- raising employer engagement, demand and investment
  - leading the development of occupational standards and improving vocational qualifications
  - leading the collation and communication of sectoral labour market data, and
  - considering collective measures to address specific sector skill needs.
- 4.4** While there are some excellent examples of SSCs in Wales engaging with employers and training providers, they have a limited capacity to perform this function. Most SSCs have only one member of staff with responsibility for Wales and this is sometimes shared with an English region. With some exceptions, most notably SEMTA and Construction Skills (which has 52 staff in Wales), their reach is limited. SSCs stress that they operate on a pan-Wales basis and not at a local or regional level. It is therefore not surprising that many of the employers we met had not heard of their own SSC. If they are to complement the role of SSCs, employers should have other opportunities for specifying the nature and content of vocational skills training. There are a number of sub-sector groups, such as the Wales Automotive Forum, who play a valuable role in articulating specific needs. The Wales Employment and Skills Board will form a channel for employer-led intelligence on sector and cross-sector need, but needs have also to be articulated at a regional level. In Chapter 6 we describe how this might be managed through the establishment of a Regional Employer Panel.
- 4.5** Establishing sectoral and regional needs and priorities is important, but providers will only become truly demand-led through direct engagement with individual employers. The needs of employers differ even within closely defined sectors: they may be at a different stage of growth, have different employee profiles, or experience diverse skills shortages. A learning system driven by employers' present and future skills needs will be one in which providers are directly responsive to changing needs.

22 Comparative Study of Post-14 Education and Training – Prof Jack Keating – University of Melbourne  
May 2007



## The components of an Employer-led Learning System

4.6 Presently, approximately £230m of public funding is spent on post-19 learners in Wales, made up as follows:

Approximate proportion of annual spend on Post 19 Learners

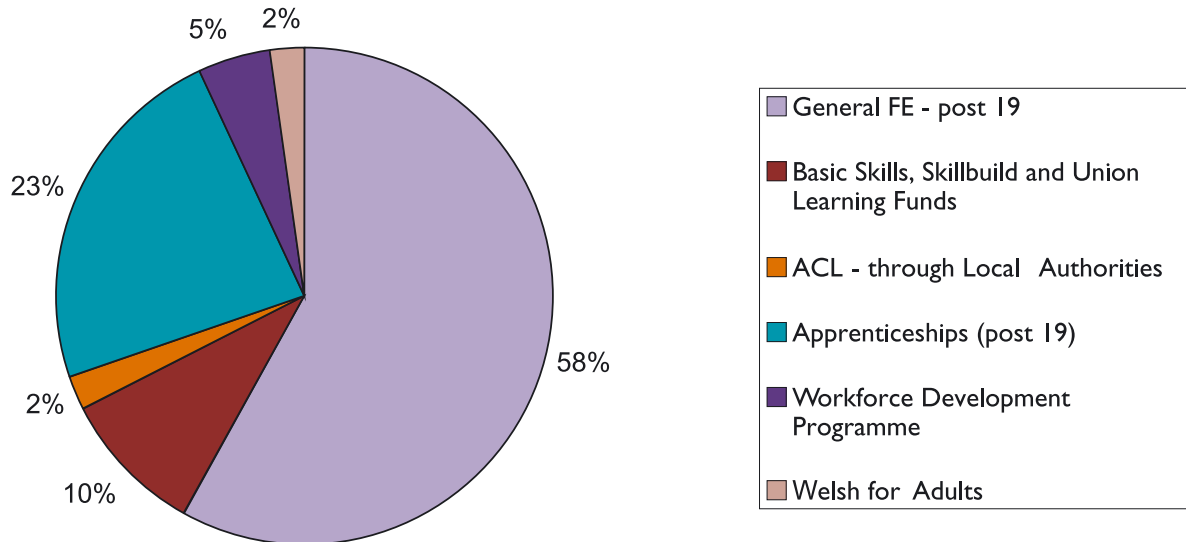


Figure 4

That pattern needs to change: the funding of post-19 learning needs to drive a realignment of provision to meet employer demand more directly. It must also promote and nurture economic growth, not only by meeting existing skills needs but also those of a future, stronger Welsh economy. In this chapter we refer mainly to ‘business’ to simplify our presentation, but the argument and proposed solutions apply equally to public services and the not-for-profit sector.

- 4.7 In some cases businesses will not themselves know how best to move forward. What is required is a bespoke approach that, working with companies, locates training within individual business development plans. This is the role of the existing **workforce development accounts**; we propose that they be expanded.
- 4.8 In other cases companies are aware of the training that would enable them to move forward but they need help to articulate their demand for skills. They may also need greater flexibility: bite size learning or the accreditation of skills developed through in-service training or non-formal learning. Inward and major indigenous investment may depend upon highly bespoke forms of training support. To meet these needs we propose a new funding mechanism: the **Employer Entitlement Fund**.
- 4.9 Employers in the UK spend approximately £125 billion each year on their own training activities. FEIs should play a larger part in delivering this full cost recovery work<sup>23</sup>. It is also important to meet the needs of the future by supporting knowledge transfer and new company formation. FEIs do undertake this work, but unlike universities they lack a funding mechanism that systematically drives these activities. We propose the creation of a new **Services to Employers Fund**.
- 4.10 As we argued in Chapter 6, apprenticeships are a well established form of training that we believe should grow. This is particularly the case in the public services where we believe there is much potential.

4.11 The realigned funding of post-19 provision that we propose would be as follows:

<sup>23</sup> 'Full Cost Recovery' is a term used to describe training which is delivered by FEIs, typically to employers, for which no direct government funding is claimed. The employer bears the full cost of the training





## Future proportion of post 19 spend

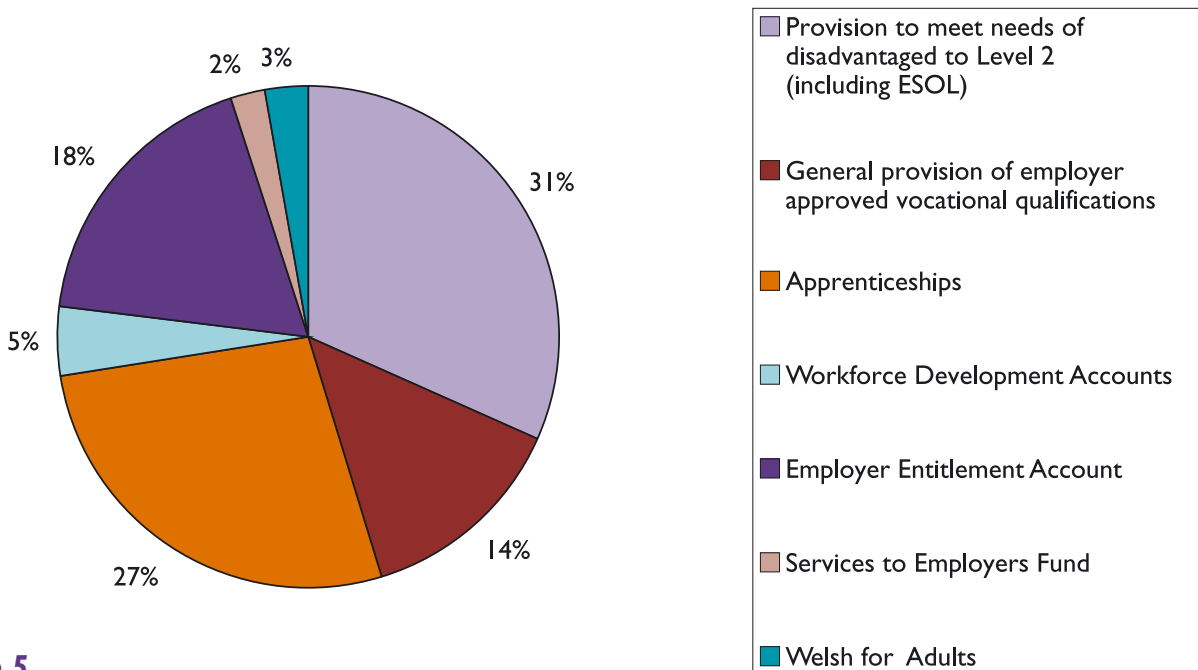


Figure 5

### Workforce Development Accounts

**4.12** In England the mechanism for funding workforce training is Train to Gain, which combines a brokerage service with the funding of training and assessment up to Level 2 (and more recently to Level 3) for those who do not already have a qualification at this level. In Wales, one funding route for such training is through workforce development accounts. Most employers who have received such funding are extremely positive about the support it has provided for growing their businesses. A wide range of training needs can be met within a company with few constraints; this flexibility is highly rated.

*The Workforce Development Accounts adviser reviewed our training requirements and drew up a fundable plan. We received £35,000 in match funding, which paid for training in company and product knowledge to support our relocation, software applications, engineering, lean manufacturing, career counselling, purchasing and manufacturing operations. All of these courses have made a real difference: without the computer training for example, the company would not have survived. This year we are applying for a similar figure for management training for the whole management team, some more computer training, sales training, fork lift truck training and possibly an MBA programme. Since moving to North Wales [from South East England] we have shown 14% growth, having not previously grown for 10 years. We have invested in machines and in people and we are becoming a learning organisation. The Workforce Development Account has been extremely helpful.*

Managing Director of IMC – Wrexham

**4.13** The workforce development account is a bespoke training grant, shaped with the company by a broker on a matched funding basis, paid in arrears on presentation of invoices. The amount available is proportionate to the size of the business and often forms part of a joint package of support provided by both DCELLS and the Department of the Economy and Transport (DE&T). Organisations will tend to be in the Knowledge Bank for Business (KB4B) inward investment category in high growth and high value-added organisations.

**4.14** The current workforce development accounts have an annual budget of under £2 million – much lower than the proportion of English funding devoted to Train to Gain. To make significant inroads

into meeting the needs of employers, this quantum needs to be expanded urgently. The CBI advises UK Governments to build on existing initiatives to increase employer engagement with, and investment in, training.

*“Some groups have claimed the voluntary approach has failed to deliver and that rights to time off or levies are required to force employers to spend more money on training. Such a strategy would increase bureaucracy without raising skills levels. A more productive strategy would be to build on schemes that have been proved to deliver increased employer commitment to skills and therefore increased training and productivity.”*

CBI – Shaping up for the Future

**4.15** An expansion of workforce development accounts, alongside the continued promotion and support for the Investors in People Standard would go some way towards enacting this advice. We therefore advocate that a further £8m per annum is transferred from the general Further Education budget (currently some £134m is spent on post-19 learners in FEIs) over a period of 5 years.

### **A new Employer Entitlement Account**

**4.16** In addition to an expansion of workforce development accounts we advocate that a further £40m per annum of the current £134m FE post-19 funding allocation is set aside to fund a new programme of Employer Entitlement Accounts. Following advice from key groups<sup>24</sup>, the Wales Employment and Skills Board would identify key economic or geographic sectors for particular support and development on an annual basis. It would also consider any cases brought by employers for the establishment of academies within those priority areas and whether and how best they should be linked to academies in England.

**4.17** The purpose of these Employer Entitlement Accounts would be to support organisations that could demonstrate a clear understanding of their training needs but require help to express their demand. Some part of the fund could also be used to fund training needs analyses for SMEs. Bids would be invited within the sectors identified by WESB, but with some flexibility for bids from SMEs outside these categories. National and regional guidelines would also be required to ensure that public money was strongly matched by the resources, in cash and kind, that different types of applicant would be expected to contribute.

**4.18** Organisations within these sectors would be invited to bid for funding to support a range of development activities ranging from full qualifications to bite sized learning. FEIs would be expected to work with employers to develop bids as appropriate. Bids would be assessed and determined at a regional level by a joint DCELLS, DE&T and employers panel. Successful employers would be allocated an amount to spend on training and development, with or without matched funding by the employer depending on circumstance. In the first instance training would be provided exclusively by FEIs (funding having been ring-fenced from the current FEI block). If, upon review, FEI provision was deemed insufficiently responsive to meet identified needs, other opportunities for provision would be considered.

**4.19** We believe that this mechanism will ensure that:

- sectoral and or geographic skills shortages are addressed
- FEIs work closely with employers to design and deliver bespoke training, and
- FEIs have the time and opportunity to re-focus much of their work with employers.

24 Including, amongst others, DE&T, the SSCs, the Federation of Small Businesses, the CBI and other employer groups



## ○ The role of FEIs in Economic Development

○ **4.20** Our belief is that FEIs should become a major driver of local and regional economic development through their role in delivering skills. Some of the employers to whom we spoke believed this to be a fanciful notion. In the words of one respondent they felt FEIs and business inhabited “parallel universes”.

○ **4.21** There are over 190,000 businesses in Wales, the majority of which are small or micro enterprises and coverage is not easy. Our discussions with employers across Wales tended to support the statement of the CBI below.

*Employers invest a considerable amount in employee development (£33.3 billion per annum across the UK)... but despite this significant investment, most employers do not view FE provision as the best way to meet their training needs.*

CBI – response to consultation

**4.22** Private training providers argued that their ability to respond quickly and responsively gave them a competitive edge compared with FEIs. Employers reinforced this view and cited examples of limited flexibility on the part of FEIs with regard to:

- the academic calendar
- teaching hours
- course scheduling
- bite sized learning as opposed to full qualification programmes
- group sizes, and
- company-specific learning.

*Employers often find provision on offer inconsistent, irrelevant and inappropriate in terms of content, method or timing of delivery to their business needs.*

Skills for Logistics – response to consultation

**4.23** Other employers reported little if any engagement with FEIs ranging from a total lack of contact to a perception that while FEI provision was adequate for some individual personal development needs, it could not address the challenges of rapidly changing business practices and technology.

*We are often sent information on different courses. When they are suitable I'll set it up here, and the College will come in and run the course in the hotel. They might do a bespoke course for us to specifically meet our needs. We have had people come back from generic courses and they have found them totally irrelevant so we now prefer to run bespoke courses.*

Sue Warnock – Business Manager, Beaufort Park Hotel

**4.24** In several cases, employers preferred to send staff abroad. There was a low level of confidence in the level of leadership and management training available in Wales; some employers preferred to send staff to management colleges in England. We also received the criticism that some FEIs fall short on innovation and that they lack competitive edge and flair.

*If FE colleges were more employer focused they would get a bigger share of the £33.3 billion UK employers spend on training each year. There is a strong case for a shift from generic programmes to more relevant courses that improve business performance and are delivered more flexibly.*

CBI Wales June 2007

**4.25** Yet FEIs have been dynamic in their development of 16-19 learning; it is not that they are inherently unresponsive. Many FEIs appear to be more competitive for pre-19 than for post-19; we need it to be the other way around. That this is possible is illustrated by some of the best examples of FEI/employer working in Wales. For example:

- Pembrokeshire College is working closely with employers to identify and meet the skills needs related to the building and operation of the Bluestone tourism development
- Llandrillo College works with approximately 1300 employers at any one time, the vast majority of which are SMEs
- Coleg Sir Gâr has won a Beacon award for engagement with employers, and
- Deeside College has won a National Training Award for Wales and the UK for their partnership with Airbus UK.

**4.26** We also found examples of the dynamic role we have in mind for FEIs within regional economies when we looked at international models; the approach taken in North Carolina is particularly inspiring:

*At 7.30am each Tuesday in New Bern, North Carolina, about 20 people sit around a table in the local Chamber of Trade. Amongst the people gathered is the President of the local Community College (the equivalent of a Principal of one of our FE Colleges). A paper is circulated with a list of companies, large and small, that have expressed some interest in relocating to North Carolina. It's a traffic-light system and the aim is, over the weeks, to move these companies from Red to Green – that is to go from an interest to a commitment to invest and build, often with their supply chains in North Carolina. The College President is a major player, he is from an economic development background, he is dispatched to engage with the companies, in-source, share a vision of skills need development over the next 3-5 years and offer, with state blessing, 3 years of subsidised training. His College effectively becomes the training arm of the companies. North Carolina is a hot-spot for inward investing companies into the USA and prides itself on being the 'State of Training'. College Presidents are increasingly appointed because they bring skill and experience in economic development. There is a state superintendent who oversees the 56 colleges in North Carolina and sets their direction. The colleges are at the very heart of economic growth and development and offer elements of specialisation depending on the skills needs of their 'patch'.*

**4.27** If Wales really is 'The Learning Country' it should at least begin to adopt such an approach to its own circumstances. To do so requires a joint strategy for DE&T and DCELLS. The determination in North Carolina to place colleges at the disposal of inward and indigenous investment has to be replicated in Wales. FEIs must be enabled, and expected, to promote far more:

- new businesses through incubation services
- growth in SMEs, and
- knowledge transfer.

They must also develop a much expanded role in the up-skilling of the existing workforce by capturing a significant slice of employers' expenditure on training. The Future Skills Wales survey of 2005 suggested that up to 64,000 Welsh workers lack the skills to perform their current jobs effectively.



**4.28** One of the examples we discovered in England is illustrative. In Warwickshire, a county with a population of half a million (one sixth of the size of Wales), one of the three FEIs has a annual turnover of £50m of which 40% – £20m – comes from full cost recovery work. The highest equivalent figure in Wales is 15% and the average in Wales is 5.5%. Warwickshire College was able to achieve this volume of business only through the appointment and development of a new category of staff, Trainer-Assessors, employed on different contracts from standard FEI lecturing staff. The trainer-assessors combine training needs analysis skills with those of account management.

*In the FE context the main focus is on the Lecturer role. UCU's agenda for a common contract of employment must be supported, but in doing so there must be a review of the terms and conditions of employment. This is because the work of lecturers has changed significantly in the past 30-years. There is now very little need for development of original material due to the access to learning material and information provided in electronic format on the Internet and elsewhere, and the support and resources provided by SSCs and awarding bodies. FE Colleges' staff roles are dominated by lecturers. This is inconsistent with what is required of teaching and learning in practice, nor the needs of employers. The Leitch agenda cannot be delivered by lecturers alone.*

*New roles must be developed that reflect the reality of learning. The scope and pace of learning must not be limited by the lecturer's contract. Neither should "training roles" be low paid. Innovative developments in training roles such as the Technical Training Officer at Deeside College provide a demand-led solution that provides attractive and rewarding employment and career opportunities. Such roles are not "lecturing on the cheap", as lecturers' salaries are paid. They are more about meeting need and recognising that skills needs have moved on. Wales needs to develop a range of common and flexible training roles that support a demand-led approach.*

*Deeside College – response to Consultation March 2007*

**4.29** For Welsh FEIs to succeed in this area of work they need an appropriate organisational culture, a dedicated field force through which to engage with employers and a tested model of delivery to employers' requirements. We are convinced that an essential element of the way forward is our proposed Services to Employers Fund. The purpose of the fund would be increase the capacity of FEIs to undertake this work on a much larger scale and to provide a financial incentive to succeed. The model we have in mind already operates in Higher Education in Wales. The Third Mission Fund provides core funding to support HEIs' interactions with business and the community: £6.1 million pa in 2007/08. The funding covers three aspects: potential and capacity building, rewarding performance in income-related activities and rewarding performance in non-income generating activities, with £1m per annum reserved to promote collaborative activity.

**4.30** A common funding approach between Higher and Further education should be only the beginning. Higher and Further education have distinctive missions but some employer needs span the two or would be best served by a combination of what both sectors have to offer. Higher Education in Wales is out-performing its opposite numbers in England in Third mission activity, but the Welsh economy needs much more support if it is to progress as is hoped. We believe the funding devoted to the Third Mission in Higher Education should be increased and that some part of the increase should be used to promote joint delivery of services to business on a flexible basis across the two sectors.

**4.31** The role of FEIs in working with employers should not be constrained by borders or by unnecessary restrictions on funding. The border with England is not a boundary which is meaningful to employers; many Welsh citizens work in England and many English citizens travel daily to work in Wales. We were concerned to hear that providers in Wales felt limited in their ability to respond to nearby employers who happened to be based in England or to develop partnership arrangements with providers in England. We see no reason to limit such activity and, to the contrary, would wish to encourage it. Indeed, with the development of Skills Academies in England, we consider it essential that Welsh FEIs and HEIs should actively work with partners in England if Wales is not to be disadvantaged.

## An Integrated Field Force

**4.32** The activities supported by the Workforce Development Fund, the Employer Entitlement Fund and the Services to Employers Fund all require field forces to work with employers. Within WAG, DE&T and DCELLS both have their own field forces. We believe in the spirit of Beecham that these should be merged into one that is jointly owned and managed by the two departments. We do not recommend a grand merger with those in Local Authorities, HEIs and FEIs, but we see a far greater degree of integration as essential. The way to achieve this is to agree and disseminate a common model or philosophy of how to assist organisational development, common training and a single customer relations management system. The latter would enable sharing of information across institutions and promote collaborative working. It could also facilitate a single gateway to all the services provided by these various bodies; the complexity of the help on offer is frequently cited as a barrier by employers.

## Apprenticeships

**4.33** In Chapter 3 we emphasised the value of apprenticeship programmes to young people. They are also a mechanism for employers to develop their own highly skilled staff and as such are a major component of state funded support to employers. In this chapter we consider some of the issues relating to apprenticeships as they impact on employers and make some recommendations.

### DEMAND AND SUPPLY

**4.34** We have received evidence from FEIs and SSCs that demand for apprenticeships outstrips supply. Skills for Logistics, for example, advise us that their sector has 400 potential apprenticeship places, for which no funding is available. In the light of sectoral priorities, identified by the Wales Employment and Skills Board (WESB), the Department will need to ensure that funding for apprenticeship programmes is targeted to address shortages of this nature.

### PUBLIC SECTOR APPRENTICESHIPS

**4.35** In view of the predominance of public services in the Welsh economy, the public sector as a whole needs to promote the development of apprenticeships at both 16-19 and post-19.

*You've got three years to start training. If you don't do it, do it. If you do do it, do it better. I make no apologies for calling loudly upon government to lead by example in... taking up the skills challenge within its own workforce.*

Digby, Lord Jones of Birmingham

The National Health Service, for example, requires staff with qualifications that span a wide range of skill levels which constantly evolve as technology changes practices. An increasing proportion of these staff might best be trained through the various levels of apprenticeship.





Pontypridd and Rhondda NHS Trust are currently developing a Modern Apprenticeship programme for Health Care Support Workers in partnership with Porth County Comprehensive School. The programme will offer career pathways to young people from the local population, at levels 2 and 3. The programme includes over 40 weeks experience on a 3-day a week basis in 6 different departments. The remaining 2 days a week are spent in school.

**4.36** The Welsh Assembly Government, as an employer, should also develop its own apprenticeships, proportionate to the scale of its workforce within the economy. We were pleased to learn in this context that WAG is currently piloting the delivery of Foundation Modern Apprenticeships, targeting those individuals who would not normally have the relevant entry level qualifications through the traditional academic route.

## SHARED APPRENTICESHIPS

**4.37** Apprenticeships in small businesses create particular challenges. Issues include the high relative cost and risk, and the range of opportunities available within any one employer. In response to this, a model of 'Shared Apprenticeships' has been developed for Construction and Engineering routes and is being piloted from September 2007. Targeted at young people who have demonstrated an ability to achieve at level 3, the programme has been designed with employer input. In one pilot the apprentices are employed by a consortium of employers, rather than by a single employer. In another, the FEI provides the training. These are positive steps to increasing the accessibility and value of apprenticeships and we propose that this model should be considered for national development.

**4.38** We also received evidence about the burden of indirect costs (employing and supporting an initially low-productivity worker) that can prevent small employers entering into apprenticeship agreements. Some countries provide financial incentives to SMEs to train apprentices; others, such as Denmark, induce larger companies to train more than they themselves need so as to meet the needs of small firms. While we do not see a large scale subsidy of SME based apprenticeships as a viable option, we do suggest that the Department examines the case for a focused approach.

## Qualifications

**4.39** For the UK, Leitch recommended that all publicly funded learning post-19 should be towards qualifications approved by employer-led SSCs. We endorse that principle. In Wales this will be delivered through a combination of SSCs and the Wales Employment and Skills Board.

**4.40** However, we identified a number of concerns amongst employers relating to qualifications. Employers running apprenticeship programmes, and NVQs in particular, expressed concern that frameworks were unwieldy and generic, giving little opportunity for customisation for specialised work. They also expressed great frustration with the time taken to develop or modify awards so as to address changing business needs.

*We do not really see the benefit of NVQs – they are very generalist and not as relevant as our own bespoke training*  
Financial Services Employer, South Wales

*I'm not a huge fan of NVQs – we would love to get rid of them and do our own thing, but then we would not get the funding.*

Manufacturing Employer, North Wales



**4.41** These concerns need to be balanced against the need for portability of qualifications, but some element of customisation seems entirely appropriate. It is already possible to have employer-specific units validated as part of awards but the current mechanisms for doing so are cumbersome and beyond the reach of any but the largest employers. We propose that employers should be enabled to customise a proportion (say up to 20%) of a National Vocational Qualification.

*Development of a Competence Framework to recognise informal learning and give employers access to bite-sized units of learning based on National Occupational Standards and the Credit and Qualifications Framework is required.*

Lantra – response to consultation

**4.42** The issue of accrediting employers and Further Education Institutions is, at the time of writing, out to consultation in England. We believe that any process of consultation in Wales should lead to the development of highly flexible, meaningful qualifications attainable through the Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning (APEL) and employer based learning. We also believe that institutions should be encouraged to meet demand for such qualifications by being fully funded for the transitional costs of APEL. We welcome the continuing development of the Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales (CQFW), but also recognise that credit frameworks often seem to offer more than they deliver. They are not widely used as a means of enabling learner mobility and there are tensions between the need for flexibility and the need to concentrate public funds on meaningful learning and qualifications. However, the CQFW could be used to promote bite sized learning for employers and validation of employer-led learning, while enabling employees to accumulate credit towards recognised qualifications. This would be especially valuable to learners who are forced or choose to be mobile throughout their adult lives, such as the armed forces, construction workers, travellers and the prison population.



## Recommendations for Employer-led Training

We recommend that the Department should:

- R46 increase investment in **Workforce Development Accounts** to £10 million within 5 years. There should be a list of preferred suppliers(including FEIs) but organisations should be free to choose the most appropriate provider
- R47 transfer £40 million per annum funding from general FE funding into a new **Employer Entitlement Account** to fund support for organisations within economic sectors or geographic areas identified by the **Wales Employment and Skills Board**.  
The Account should:
- be focused on economic/sectoral priorities identified by the **Employment and Skills Board**
  - be bid for by partnerships of employer(s) and provider(s)
  - fund both qualifications and bite sized elements of learning
  - ideally involve match funding, and
  - be spent exclusively with **Further Education Institutions** for a period of three years, at which point an evaluation should be undertaken. If FE responsiveness is found to be unsatisfactory, tenders should be offered on an open competition basis.
- R48 allocate £5 million per annum as a **Further Education Institutions' Services to Employers Fund** to operate on similar lines to the current **HEFCW Third Mission** funding and expand the **HEFCW Third Mission** funding to enable joint funding of collaborative services to employers with FEIs
- R49 ensure that there are no arbitrary barriers to FEIs and HEIs working with partner institutions in England where such cross-border working would benefit Wales
- R50 combine the **DE&T** and **DCELLS** field forces and promote greater integration across all the field forces
- R51 identify priority sectors for the development of apprenticeships in conjunction with **DE&T**
- R52 informed by the outcomes of shared apprenticeship pilots, expand the take-up of apprenticeships by **SMEs**, involving **SSCs** as appropriate
- R53 examine the case for a focused approach to financial support for **SMEs** who wish to offer apprenticeships, and
- R54 working with representatives from **Sector Skills Councils** and **Awarding Bodies**, develop a mechanism for employers to incorporate company specific units into qualifications in a timely and responsive manner.

We recommend that the **Welsh Assembly Government** should:

- R55 in conjunction with **WLGA** and **PSMW** develop a programme of public sector apprenticeships for Wales at all levels.

# Chapter 5: Adult and Community Learning and the Needs of the Most Disadvantaged

## Adult and Community Learning

- 5.1** Adult and Community Learning (ACL) is important, valuable and an embedded feature of Welsh culture and history but it is currently ill-defined. Much public expenditure on ACL subsidises courses attended by learners who could afford to pay a little more. For some this learning provides a route into work, but for many it is learning for its own sake, as a leisure and social activity. Given the scale of other demands, it may be hard to defend this type of public subsidy as a priority: that is a matter for politicians. Meanwhile, the evidence concerning adult learning is important.
- 5.2** Every additional year of learning by adults brings measurable social gain in terms of the way people live their lives and function within society. People with more education tend to be more law abiding and to enjoy better standards of health.<sup>25</sup> These are all benefits for society as a whole and they reduce the demands placed on other public services. There is a case, supported by research, that leisure education is a good investment for those with a lower level of education in terms of social gain and is worthwhile even if they do not progress to further learning.

*It is important to understand that even those who engage with learning but don't go into active employment, or who are learning in areas not relevant to their employment, contribute to their communities in other important ways, such as improved civic political engagement and better physical and mental health.*

NIACE Dysgu Cymru

- 5.3** Combining Basic Skills with leisure learning can provide a route into education for those with no previous qualifications and low level skills. Too direct an approach to addressing Basic Skills needs among adults can be counter-productive. This suggests that a different approach is required in Wales to the almost exclusively vocationally driven skills agenda of England, important though that undoubtedly is.

*Leitch is mistaken in suggesting a new programme of Basic Skills for those out of work – they would run away: we need more imaginative solutions for this group. Leitch rightly places a large emphasis on the acquisition of skills for employability, but appears to suggest that community learning does not make a substantial contribution to this.*

Yale College – response to consultation

- 5.4** Individuals may not see such learning as an investment, but it is an investment from a government perspective. Viewed as a public investment, the greatest benefit is to be obtained from focussing funding on an expansion of opportunities for the most needy: not on those who are already self-confident learners. The neediest are those adults who have achieved least in formal education. They are likely to come from the most educationally disadvantaged localities and population groups. To meet these needs requires effective targeting of expenditure and presents considerable challenges to the Welsh Assembly Government, but it fits well with the focus on Basic Skills and disadvantaged learners that we advocated above.

25 Feinstein, C. Hammond, L. Woods, J. Preston and J. Bynner 'The Contribution of Adult Learning to Health and Social Capital', Wider Benefits of Learning Research Report No. 8, 2003



*Adult and Community Learning offers more than taster learning prior to formal learning and it is important to recognise the role of informal, non-formal and non-accredited learning in providing key skills and building confidence as well as being the first steps to additional learning and skills.*

NIACE Dysgu Cymru – response to consultation

- 5.5** It would be best if there were no need for remedial approaches, but there will be for the foreseeable future. Learners with basic skills needs are often hard to reach. They require bespoke and often relatively expensive programmes and a gradual and non-threatening re-introduction to what may have been a painful experience in their lives. It requires imaginative adult and community learning to draw learners into the system. At the initial level, the subject of the learning is almost irrelevant: the biggest step is to engage with learning and the skills of learning. We therefore believe it would be socially just to focus scarce resources on areas of market failure by reducing and possibly removing the subsidy to general adult and community education.

*Year on year there is progression from the community onto mainstream courses, with many taking up opportunities they would otherwise not have accessed if they had not had access to 'small steps' to learning in their local communities.*

Coleg Morgannwg

- 5.6** Learning centres in non-educational environments can be one method of reaching out. Providing learning experiences which suit the learning styles of the individuals concerned is another. We need to fund and develop a much more imaginative approach to outreach activities by FEIs and others, in which provision is targeted at adults with Basic Skills needs and those who have no qualification at Level 2 and above.

*The provision of Basic Skills embedded within other leisure activities and held in diverse venues such as pubs has been a recent success.*

Deeside College

- 5.7** Much outreach work has to be through the medium of programmes in which there is no requirement on the learner to register for a formal course, let alone an assessed award. We recognise the accountability issues, but believe that such programmes can only be truly effective when financial arrangements allow maximum flexibility and a degree of calculated risk in seeking to engage potential learners on their own ground.

*Funding must reflect specific features of adult and community learning, including a proportion of non-accredited learning, student support costs in the community, provision at a distance from main resources and lower class numbers.*

WEA – response to consultation

- 5.8** In the case of the most disadvantaged individuals, it may only be possible and useful to tackle issues at the collective level of communities and families where concentrations of disadvantage occur. Within these disadvantaged environments there is little encouragement for the individual to learn. An increase in the number of adult learner role models is critical to creating an environment in which young people are enabled to learn. This highlights the importance of a joined-up strategic approach to community education across key departments in WAG.

We secured European funding to run 12 community workshops and subsequent training courses aimed at the BME minority communities of south Cardiff, a community from which contact centres struggle to find new recruits. The workshops give people an understanding of Contact Centre careers and the training courses given participants the call handling and customer service skills necessary to work in the industry. So far we have run 7 workshops, 6 training courses and over 76 people have completed the training course and gained a sector skills council-accredited certificate. Credits gained can then be used towards an NVQ in the workplace and several of our participants have gone on to secure long term employment.

Welsh Contact Centre Forum

A primary school in one of the top 5 deprived areas of Wales worked with local employers and the community to develop a suite of learning programmes for the parents of children at the school. These included craft courses which combined craft work with the development of Basic Skills. Building on this, some adults then went on to take site safety courses ensuing in a very high level of progression into local employment in the construction industry.

- 5.9** We have no desire to see general adult and community education wither upon the vine; we believe that comfortably well off adult learners might reasonably expect to pay more for their leisure learning. Unless substantial funding is available, we believe Wales has to give priority to the neediest learners, but such a change should be introduced in a measured way that allows adjustment to and monitoring of the impact of increased charges.

## Meeting the Needs of the Most Disadvantaged

- 5.10** In taking evidence, we were struck by the number of different but often overlapping groups facing major educational disadvantage. For some this disadvantage is of a personal kind (which might include special educational needs), for most it has a broader social dimension. Groups for whom there is a major social dimension of need include the:

- 4,431 looked-after learners
- 39,500 young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETS)
- 331,000 economically inactive adults
- unquantifiable numbers of people in work who lack essential skills, and
- young people and adults caught up in the criminal justice system.

- 5.11** What they have in common is the need for non-traditional, personalised and potentially expensive help. The earlier in their lives this help is available, the more effective it generally proves. For instance, young people in the NEET category are:

- more likely to have had a higher rate of persistent truancy during years 10 and 11 (15.4% compared with an average for the year groups of 3.3%)
- three times more likely to have been excluded from school than young people overall
- more likely to come from workless family backgrounds (one in four young people from workless households are NEET)<sup>26</sup>, and
- up to eight times more likely to have a statement of statutory Special Educational Needs.<sup>27</sup>

- 5.12** What they also have in common is the likelihood that they impose substantial costs on the public purse through a variety of services other than education. The costs to society are high. A DfES study estimated that additional resource costs associated with being NEET amounted to £97,000

<sup>26</sup> Payne, J (2000) Youth Cohort Study: Education Training and the Employment of 16-18 year olds in England the factors associated with non-participation

<sup>27</sup> Cordis Bright, Research into post 16s in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, July 2007



over a lifetime<sup>28</sup>. Taking into account the present number of NEETs in Wales, this equates to a cost to the public purse of £3.8 billion. They present precisely the challenge the Beecham Report tried to address: the need to look across the budgets of departments in the Welsh Assembly Government and in non-devolved agencies to take a joined-up approach to achieving outcomes. Both the new duties of the Children and Young People's Partnership and our organisational proposals reinforce the importance of joined-up approaches within a geographical area.

**5.13** We found, however, much disjointed working within WAG and even within DCELLS. Not only is a coherent approach to funding lacking, but people in the field are working in silos defined by those funding streams rather than working strategically and sharing best practice.

**5.14** For example, the Skillbuild programme (from 2007 incorporating Skillbuild Plus) is directed at the NEETS problem; these programmes fund private providers, FEIs and the voluntary sector to engage with young people who are extremely marginalised. Yet Skillbuild represents about 30% of a larger, but essentially historical, funding stream – Work-based Learning – that also funds apprenticeships. Arguably it does not therefore receive the focus of developmental attention that is needed. It sits alongside the similar work of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) through its JobCentre Plus programmes. While there have been links between devolved and non-devolved departments and programmes, we advocate building a more strategic approach to the resources committed to these related programmes, and joint evaluation of what works in practice.

**5.15** We welcome the fact that Skillbuild is increasingly enabling a flexible approach to how money is applied, and over what period, within a single case. This is essential because marginalised young people may require a range of additional personal support, development and confidence building activities before they can be helped to achieve qualifications or jobs. Although the funding of Skillbuild should recognise the progress achieved by an individual, we were not convinced by the emphasis now placed on gaining qualifications. These may or may not be an appropriate step towards employment and should not be emphasised simply because the funding stream comes from the education budget. The paramount objective with NEETS ought to be sustainable employment regardless of whether this requires qualifications. For this reason alone the programme should be closely aligned to that of JobCentre Plus. We would like to see programmes where combined government departments work in effect as a recruitment agency for employers, preparing staff, providing some from this vulnerable group with the guarantee of an interview, and then supporting them for the first 6 months of sustainable employment if they are successful.

**5.16** Voluntary organisations have some of the best success stories with the most difficult to reach adults: adults who have to be informally coaxed into rebuilding a relationship with the world of learning. Although similar to Skillbuild in terms of the problems involved, this work is funded through Adult and Community Learning (ACL), which also supports some such work by FEIs. Local Authorities also have a role to play and universities contribute through the Higher Education funding stream. The *Reaching Wider* policy of HEFCW has introduced some local and regional co-ordination into some parts of these activities, but the overwhelming impression conveyed to us was one of a broad range of related issues and work that are fractionalised by different funding streams, different providers and the lack of a strategic perspective.

*Voluntary and community organisations have a unique contribution to make to lifelong learning, based on their relationship with their members and users and their reach into marginalised and disadvantaged communities, but the planning and funding system has difficulty in accommodating this.*

WCVA – response to consultation

28 Estimating the Cost of Being "Not in Education, Employment or Training" at Age 16-18, Christine Godfrey, Sandra Hutton, Jonathan Bradshaw, Bob Coles, Gary Craig and Julia Johnson Social Policy Research Unit, University of York University of Hull- Department for Education and Skills -Research Report RR346

**5.17** The experience gained in Skillbuild and outreach to adults points to the need to take a joined-up approach to young people who are, or are becoming, marginalised from education regardless of age. The needs of 14 year olds, even 12 year olds, who are disengaging from school, are not so very different from those of NEETS or disengaged adults. They too require highly personalised attention with a wide range of potential help and support – and in many cases they probably need to be helped outside the school environment in the first instance. Evidence indicates that intervention strategies designed to assist young people to improve their life chances need to focus on behavioural approaches.<sup>29</sup> Experiential learning in real employment or community settings may offer greater opportunity for tackling the social, interpersonal and motivational needs of young NEETs. There would be value in incorporating this approach within area strategies to meet the identified needs of NEETs on a local or area focused basis.

**5.18** One example of the need for a coherent approach towards all the most disadvantaged groups emerged when we took evidence on mentoring schemes and we have made recommendations on this in Chapter 3 in relation to 14-19 provision. The same principles apply beyond compulsory education.

*Community development work linked to adult learning needs to be funded. The merit and the value of support and mentoring for hard to reach adult learners cannot be underestimated and is the key to engagement and retention.*

Communities First – Bridgend

**5.19** Writing of health care over thirty years ago, Tudor-Hart<sup>30</sup> argued that an Inverse Care Law was in operation: those who were most in need received less care than the less needy. There is a distinct danger that this is also the case in education. Moreover, the total expenditure on disadvantaged groups is falling short of what is needed. Certainly the size of the groups remains stubbornly high. While these decisions are for politicians, the Inverse Care Law also raises questions about the proportionality of spend on these most needy people compared with that on such undifferentiated groups as university students and adult leisure learners.

<sup>29</sup> Transition: Young Adults with Complex Needs, Social Exclusion Unit, 2005

<sup>30</sup> Tudor Hart J. The inverse care law. Lancet 1971





## **Recommendations for Adult and Community Learning and Meeting the Needs of the Disadvantaged**

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R56 refocus public funding of **Adult and Community Learning (ACL)** on those who:
- a. have not achieved **Level 2** qualifications
  - b. belong to population groups in which participation is especially low, and/or
  - c. live in areas of marked educational disadvantage
- R57 develop a fees policy and monitor its impact on general **ACL** provision
- R58 fund the expansion of non-formal learning and outreach programmes for the most disadvantaged, and
- R59 pilot a combination of **Individual Learning Accounts** and post-hoc accountability for grants to maximise flexibility in delivering to the most disadvantaged.

**We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government should:**

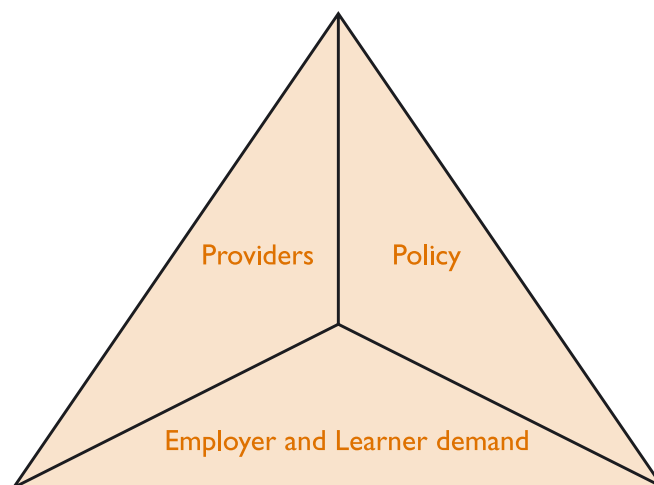
- R60 develop a strategic approach to the most disadvantaged to include the sharing of best practice across multiple agencies
- R61 take a strategic, pooled budget approach to meeting the needs of all the most disadvantaged groups – including school age children
- R62 ensure that the size of the pooled budget is commensurate with need and the longer term social costs of not addressing it, and
- R63 extend this joined-up approach to non-devolved agencies and most particularly the work of the **Department of Work and Pensions**.

# Section 3: Excellence and Efficiency: *Developing the system to deliver our agenda*

## Chapter 6: Working more effectively at a Regional Level

### *Joined-up working*

- 6.1** In this section we consider the mechanisms needed to underpin the delivery of learning in Wales. It is essential that the system is well placed to ensure the rapid and effective delivery of existing national policy, most of which we support, some of which we have suggested should be augmented. Following devolution, the first task for the Welsh Assembly Government was to develop the capacity to form policy and to support politicians. The task now is to strengthen the capacity for delivery.
- 6.2** Successful implementation depends on striking the right balance between a triangle of principal forces:
- self-motivated, autonomous action on the part of providers
  - demand signals from employers and learners, and
  - policy signals from government.



**Figure 6**

- 6.3** From our perspective, this makes the regional level critical. It is the point at which the different voices can be brought together to both articulate demand and to ensure responsiveness to policy signals. The Department requires a strong regional presence focusing on delivery and accountable to a single point of senior authority within the Department. We believe that the current DCELLS Organisational Development recommendations have not gone far enough and that a co-ordinated approach between DCELLS, DE&T and local authorities is particularly essential at regional level. Furthermore, we are concerned about the proposed split of Departmental responsibilities for post-14 education between schools in one group and Further and Higher Education in another. There needs to be a unified administrative structure for post-14 education.



## ○ **Regional Strategic Implementation Groups**

- **6.4** In our opinion this would best be enacted through the establishment of Regional Strategic Implementation Groups in the four regions, comprising five members, representing:
- ● Local Authorities (single officer representation, delegated upwards from constituent Local Authorities)
  - ● DCELLS
  - ● DE&T
  - ● Employers, and
  - ● Providers.
- 6.5** Each Regional Strategic Implementation Group should be responsible for ensuring that learning provision in the Region is so managed and delivered as to meet the needs of the regional economy and to enable every learner within that region to meet his or her potential. The Group should enact this responsibility by:
- establishing a **regional Employers' Advisory Panel** (the elected chair of which would be both the Employer member of the Board and a member of the Wales Employment and Skills Board) to develop a strategic overview of skills needs and skills gaps in the region
  - establishing a **regional Providers' Advisory panel** (the elected chair of which would be the Provider member of the Board) consisting of members of associations representing FEIs, HEIs, Schools, Work-based learning and the voluntary sector, to develop a strategic overview of provision and services to employers
  - developing a regional strategy for the implementation of the skills elements of DE&T's **workforce development strategy**
  - taking responsibility for the implementation of coherent **regional strategies for learning and training** – including leading the development and implementation of capital funding and strategies for technology infrastructure, community/social justice strategies and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
  - approving **sub-regional area plans** as they relate to 14-19 provision, post-19 provision and services to employers
  - ensuring that **funding** in the region is being **deployed effectively** to deliver national and regional strategic priorities, and
  - promoting, and where relevant leading, **multi agency strategic partnerships**.

Further responsibilities as they relate specifically to 14-19 provision are set out in the following chapter.

### **Employers' Advisory Panel**

- 6.6** The Employers' Advisory Panel should consist of a maximum of 12 members, comprising:
- representatives from each of the six key employment sectors identified by DE&T as being most significant to that region
  - a representative from the public sector (if not included in the six sectors above, this should be from the Health sector)

- a regional representative from the CBI
- a regional representative from the Federation of Small Businesses
- a representative from the social enterprise sector
- a regional representative from trades unions, and
- a further representative from a major regional employer not otherwise represented on the Panel.

**6.7** Officers attending the Panel should include a representative from DCELLS, DE&T, a Local Authority Economic Development Officer and a representative from Careers Wales. There should be an annual assessment of the effectiveness of the panel against its purpose.

**6.8** The major responsibilities of the panel should be:

- to define and advocate regional priorities for post-14 public sector skills investment
- to consider the adequacy of provision for employers and apprenticeships in the region
- to perform an ambassadorial role to help drive employer engagement and to enhance training in the region, especially in vocational and practical curriculum areas, and
- to report accordingly to the Regional Strategic Implementation Group.

**6.9** The panel would be required to endorse:

- the regional strategy for education and training
- 14-19 area plans (to confirm that they address skills priorities and entitlements), and
- an annual report on the funding, delivery and outcomes of Employer Entitlement provision in the region.

**6.10** The panel would seek to contribute to the following outcomes:

- greater alignment between public investment and employer need, with organisations in the region reporting improved outcomes
- enriched learning, with more experiences for learners to see and understand the world of work
- greater awareness amongst learners of local employment opportunities
- greater investment by employers in new technologies and processes; increased expansion and inward investment; more jobs, better sustained jobs and a higher GVA, and
- a reduction in the number of NEETs.

**6.11** The panel should be informed by clear and timely information, analysis and advice. The elected Chair of the panel would sit in an ex officio capacity on the Regional Strategic Board and on the Wales Employment and Skills Board.

### ***Providers' Advisory Panel***

**6.12** The Providers' Advisory Panel should consist of a maximum of 12 members, comprising:

- up to two regional representatives of fforwm



- a member of Higher Education Wales representing the region
- up to two regional representatives of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)
- a representative of Careers Wales
- up to two representatives of private training providers
- a representative of the voluntary training sector
- a representative of the Youth Offending Teams, and
- a Local Authority officer with responsibility for Looked After Children.

**6.13** The major responsibility of the panel would be to advise the Regional Strategic Implementation Group of regional issues impacting on the delivery of provision. These might typically include:

- staff development needs and solutions
- issues relating to learner travel
- the delivery of entitlement across the region – including regional gaps and skills shortages
- the development of vocational facilities and progression opportunities
- improved aspects of cross-regional provision, for example for Basic Skills, Welsh-medium provision, approaches to NEETs and looked-after-children
- the development of specialised, subject- or level-specific provision within the region (such as STEM provision, Foundation Degrees or skills academies)
- the identification of new and developing good practice, and
- issues relating to area inspection.

**6.14** We believe that it is essential for providers to have a specific joint forum through which to influence the development of strategy. We were surprised and disappointed to note that Further Education institutions, unlike schools, had been specifically excluded from membership of the Strategic Planning body of Children and Young People’s Partnerships. The Provider Advisory Panel, will, we hope go some way to redress this balance. In order to ensure that provision is demand- rather than supply-led, it is proposed that the Provider Advisory panel should have responsibility to make recommendations to the Regional Strategic Implementation Group rather than to specifically endorse strategy.

### *Recommendation for working more effectively at a Regional Level*

**We recommend that the Department should:**

**R64 establish, in each region:**

- a Regional Employer Advisory Panel**
- a Regional Provider Advisory Panel, and**
- a Regional Strategic Implementation Group which should consist of:**
  - **a senior officer representing constituent Local Authorities**
  - **a senior officer from DCELLS**
  - **a senior officer from DE&T**
  - **an employer representative – the Chair of the Regional Employer Panel, and**
  - **a learning provider representative – the Chair of the Regional Provider Panel.**

# Chapter 7: 14-19 Commissioning Consortia

## The present system

**7.1** As we identified in Chapter 6, we believe that 14-19 learning pathways is an excellent policy. It is the **implementation** of this policy which now challenges the Department. The present system is beset with a series of deficiencies and challenges which include:

- limited provision of vocational, practical and experiential learning
- a competitive approach to attracting and retaining learners
- fundamental cultural, structural and financial differences between Further Education Institutions and schools which have grown as FEIs have become more entrepreneurial and independent
- some very small sixth forms, operating at a level at which it is impossible to be economically efficient or to provide the full range of entitlement to learners
- inadequate and unequal resources (the level of capital funding in both schools and FEIs impacts upon the learning environment, buildings and equipment and schools have lower levels of capital funding than FEIs)
- inequitable and differential approaches to learner transport issues, to, from and between institutions
- the marginalisation of work-based learning and, in particular, private training providers, and
- gender stereotyping, especially for vocational education, given limited resources.

## Entitlement and efficiency 14-19

**7.2** Aspects of current funding and provision would be inappropriate within a static demography; in the context of steadily declining numbers of young people, they are wholly unacceptable. Given the many demands on the education and training budget outlined in this Review so far, we need to use the substantial yet limited resource for education as efficiently as possible.

**7.3** Research indicates that efficiency gains in an FEI are most evident when turnover reaches circa £15m a year: only 55% of our FEIs are operating at this level. Estyn has noted the Audit Commission's recommendation that the minimum effective size of a school sixth form is 150 learners across two year groups. Only 47% of our sixth forms are operating at this level; there are many small sixth forms and they could well become even smaller with demographic decline.

*The inevitable conclusion is that given scarce resources and within the context of restrictions in funding over the next few years, too many institutions and organisations function at a local level for a small country such as Wales with a population of 2.9m*

fforwm – response to consultation

Estyn suggested collaborative working could mitigate the problems of small institutions and learner groups. Area network plans have been developed to strengthen collaboration, but they are in their infancy and few if any presently enable learners to make informed choices across a full range of academic and vocational options.



- **7.4** A substantial increase in the breadth, delivery and quality of vocational routes cannot be delivered by any single institution and particularly not by small sixth forms working in isolation. There needs to be a significant expansion in the quantity and availability of experiential, practical and work-based learning, involving FEIs, training providers and employers. The 14-19 policy gives strong emphasis to non-formal and informal learning and the importance of engaging with non-statutory organisations, the youth service, youth organisations and the third sector. Networks must therefore be wide and inclusive – beyond the statutory sector and FEIs. Only a move towards a truly collaborative joined-up system will enable us to deliver this expanded entitlement, to be more efficient and to cope with falling rolls.

*The voluntary sector has a good record on collaborative working but believes that it is often treated as a junior partner and that funding arrangements reinforce this*

WCVA – response to consultation

- 7.5** We recognise that there is no one solution for the many and varied circumstances across Wales. Some commentators argue that tertiary systems benefit learners, promote choice and strengthen rather than weaken the performance of 11-16 schools. However, the tertiary solution is only one possibility and will not commend itself everywhere.

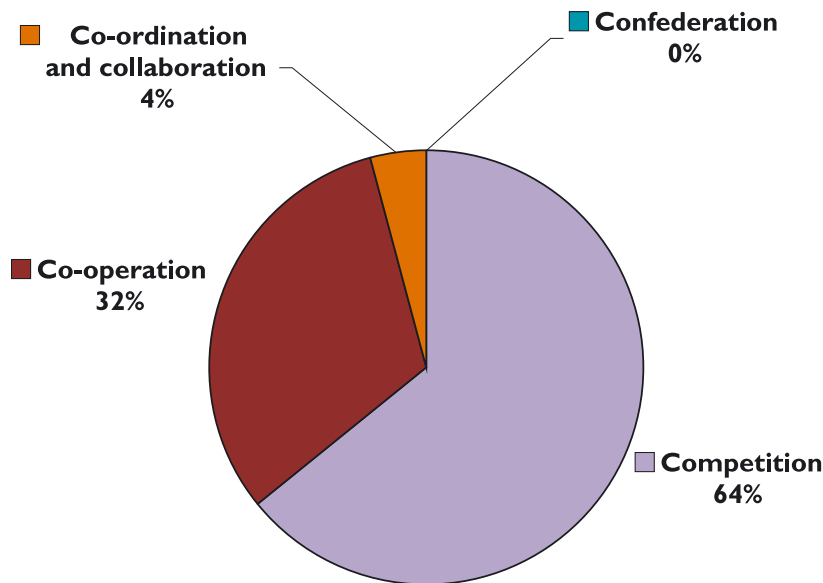
*Taken together with the emerging evidence on the benefits of scale, it suggests that a managed tertiary system offers the best prospect of both quality and equity in 14-19 provision*

Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training – Sept 2006

### Collaboration in Wales

- 7.6** Estyn, in 2006<sup>31</sup> defined four degrees of working together, ranging from Competition, through Co-operation, Co-ordination and Collaboration to Confederation. Their conclusions are illustrated below:

**Percentage of Schools in Wales and the extent to which they effectively collaborate**



**Figure 7**

31 Collaboration between schools with sixth forms and Further Education Colleges to deliver flexible high quality provision that expands choice and achieves value for money – Estyn – Crown Copyright – 2006



- 7.7** There are several examples of schools and FEIs across Wales establishing formal or informal networks for 16-19 provision across a locality. Schools and sometimes FEIs have worked together to develop and publicise a single programme of courses available with a common timetable and a single prospectus. Typically, learners choose from a combined prospectus of courses and travel between institutions to take those courses not available in their home institution. Two secondary schools in Haverfordwest, for example, have worked with the local FEI to produce a common A level timetable, and have consolidated some aspects of provision. In Caerphilly, on a larger scale, the 14-19 consortium has successfully managed to offer 40 A level options to all learners where previously some could only choose from 11. They use a model of base schools and host schools and a blocked timetable which utilises twilight sessions. This is a commendable achievement.
- 7.8** However, such partnerships are often in the early stages of development and most have focused on A levels; some exclude vocational provision from the offer, others list only a limited range of vocational courses. They are, in some cases, constrained by conflicts of interest. Whilst we welcome the expansion of choice that these networks offer, we feel that they do not go far enough and effective partnerships are still few in number.

*The Merthyr Tydfil 14-19 Network has made a good start in widening the choice of courses available to learners. However, along with most learning networks in Wales, the work in establishing a collaborative option menu is at an early stage and there is still some way to go before it is fully operational. At present there are some shortcomings in important areas, which include:*

- *the limited amount of collaboration overall, including different timetable structures in schools*
- *the constraints on learners' choice which depends mainly on whichever provider they attend*
- *too few opportunities to mix general and vocational options, and*
- *the unnecessary duplication of courses and the small size of too many sixth form classes.*

Estyn – Area Inspection Report – Merthyr Tydfil

- 7.9** The most successful and well-established model of an operational partnership we encountered, and which had influenced the Caerphilly model, was in England. It demonstrates outstanding outcomes:

*Over a five year period (2002 to 2007) the outcomes of the partnership across the City have included:*

- a rise in achievement of 5 A\*-C GCSEs from 43% to 60%
- an additional 8% of learners achieving level 2 qualifications at 17
- an increase in post-16 participation in education, training or work with training from 82% to 93%
- an increase of over 22% in the number of learners achieving level 3 at 18, and
- 20% of learners at KS4 benefiting from one day per week of work-based learning.

Wolverhampton 14-19 Partnership

## **From partnerships to consortia**

*Formalised networks or clusters appear to have some major advantages. They allow for the expansion of programme range and associated economies of scale, associated expansion in progression routes, and stronger and better coordinated links with industry. They also provide a nice counter balance to the competitive pressure between providers that stems from the positional competition within the academic routes. In particular, networks that span the transition years of upper secondary education, tertiary education and training, and employment entry would seem to have significant potential to strengthen provision and to alleviate the inherent competitive pressures between providers.*

Professor Jack Keating, May 2007



- 7.10 There is evidence<sup>32</sup> that strongly collaborative systems can deliver substantially improved results but we agree with Beecham’s conclusion that **a voluntaristic approach to collaboration will not suffice**: the barriers are too many and the delivery mechanisms too uncertain. What is needed is a more formal approach to partnerships, with shared sovereignty and the pooling of resources and decision making so as to achieve outcomes that are in the best interests of the public (primarily learners and employers). Shared sovereignty takes us beyond the present notion of partnerships/networks to the more robust concept of **managed consortia** which would fit better with the Estyn category of ‘confederation’.

*The current voluntaristic approach to partnership and collaboration is plagued by institutional self-interest. [It] cannot continue and should not be an option for the future.*

Coleg Glan Hafren – response to consultation

**7.11** To move forward quickly (and we note the difficulties that the Pathfinder projects have experienced in terms of timescale), we must have a clear, detailed and tested model. We offer such a model which we have drawn from having visited and talked with a number of consortia which demonstrate current best practice and which are delivering tangible outcomes. Our recommendation, summarised below, is that the Department should establish a cross-Wales network of systemically structured and managed consortia to:

- plan and deliver to learners a much expanded entitlement through increasing the range of options across all aspects of provision
- offer independent and disinterested advice that is not influenced by an institution’s need to maximise student numbers and income – the needs of individual learners must come above those of the institution
- provide a wider range of pedagogical and experiential approaches which are likely to engage more learners, improve participation and deliver better outcomes for individuals, institutions and Wales as a whole
- develop and offer a broader range of high quality work-related learning options which include strong links to employers
- adopt a personalised approach to learner entitlement where aspirations and potential are identified and where a commitment is made to achieving these, perhaps in the form of a promise to attain, for example, an apprenticeship or a place in a nearby HEI
- develop sophisticated personalised learning plans for all learners, captured and managed electronically
- create efficiency savings in the provision of learning experiences through increased specialisation and the consolidation of smaller class sizes across providers, and
- embed a significantly improved culture of collaboration, strategic thinking and delivery across all areas of Wales.

### **Critical success factors**

**7.12** We believe there are a number of critical success factors in the establishment of effective consortia. These include:

- the development of area plans which focus on the delivery of full learner entitlement as an essential outcome
- a funding methodology which both facilitates and requires cross-institutional working<sup>33</sup>

32 Nuffield Review Annual Reports 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06, and I. Schagen, J. Lopes, S. Rutt, C. Savory and B. Styles ‘Do post-16 structures matter? Evaluating the impact of local patterns of provision’, LSN, 2006

33 We have seen a simple yet effective method of cross-charging between institutions where funding follows the learner from the age of 14, with the home institution retaining a fixed percentage (in one case 10%) which it would retain as a contribution to overheads even if all provision was out-sourced.

- a dedicated, full time leader at a senior professional level for each consortium
- timetable alignment which retains flexibility at an institutional level
- attention to the detail of logistics so that the mechanics and responsibilities of collaboration are clearly defined in consortia documentation, including such issues as finance, insurance and transport, and
- the development, at a national level, of cross-institution ICT-based support tools to facilitate communication and the management of learners' pathways and progression<sup>34</sup>.

**7.13** We would strongly advocate an approach which minimises the duplication of effort and resources across consortia. Differences between consortia will reflect the specific needs of areas, but there is much that could usefully be developed at an all-Wales level. Examples include funding processes, health and safety guidance, learner-information management systems and processes for contracting with non-educational providers.

**7.14** Successful implementation of such a model would invigorate the 14-19 education and training system and would involve:

- the fusion of top-down targeting, policy directives and commissioning with bottom-up planning and delivery, led and owned by education and training professionals
- a consistent and coherent approach to consortia management across Wales, drawing upon tried and tested, yet customised resources which have been developed and road-tested elsewhere
- the identification and acknowledgement of win-win growth drivers for all institutions involved, and
- a scaled programme of development over time.

### **Establishing excellent consortia**

**7.15** We envisage a phased process whereby three to four pilot areas are identified initially. Central to the success of these areas will be the recruitment of consortium leaders. These leaders need to be of sufficiently high calibre and experience to carry weight with Head Teachers and Principals. We suggest that they are either serving or recently serving heads of post-14 institutions. It is essential that their leaders and their management teams have a single reporting line at DCELLS Group Director level and that they are supported by senior officials and mentored by professional(s) from outside Wales who have direct experience of setting up similar successful consortia. It may be appropriate to commission a specific consortium leadership development programme for the initial team, to be cascaded to subsequent consortium leaders across Wales. In this way, each individual consortium would move forward strategically and consistently rather than in isolation and would be able to benefit from experience of others.

**7.16** A consortium may be defined by the local employment sub-economy and is likely to span the footprint of several local authorities. The defining characteristic must be the number and size of institutions within the consortium needed to deliver an expanded entitlement efficiently. The number of consortia should be less than 22 (the number of local authorities), but probably more than four (the number of regions DCELLS envisages within Wales). Successful consortia in England tend to operate with approximately 5,000 learners in school sixth forms, with additional numbers in FEIs. In Wales, the largest local authority area has just over 3,700 learners in sixth forms – the smallest fewer than 600. A judgement has to be taken by the Welsh Assembly Government in discussion with the Welsh Local Government Association on the optimal number of consortia needed to deliver entitlement and efficiency, but our judgement is that it will be between eight and ten. We set out a possible configuration in Figure 8 on the following page.

<sup>34</sup> We reviewed such a model developed by an external company, which both enables detailed tracking of each learner's progress, across institutions, and allows staff to provide feedback on assignments and verify achievements and experiences recorded by the learner. The system can also be used to promote visits and other wider experiences and for learners to give feedback on learning



**Figure 8** Possible designation of consortia

National	Regional Strategic Group	14-19 Consortia	Local Authorities	Current FEI
DCELLS Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills	<b>R1: North Wales</b>  <i>Employer Advisory Panel</i>  <i>Provider Advisory Panel</i>	<b>C1: North West Wales</b>	Gwynedd	Harlech Menai Meirion Dwyfor
			Ynys Môn	
		<b>C2: North Central Wales</b>	Conwy	Llandrillo Llysfasi
			Denbighshire	
	<b>C3: North East Wales</b>	Flintshire	Deeside WCOH Yale	
		Wrexham		
	<b>R2: Mid Wales</b>  <i>Employer Advisory Panel</i>  <i>Provider Advisory Panel</i>	<b>C4: Mid Wales</b>	Ceredigion	Ceredigion Powys
			Powys	
	<b>R3: South West Wales</b>  <i>Employer Advisory Panel</i>  <i>Provider Advisory Panel</i>	<b>C5: South West Wales</b>	Carmarthenshire	Sir Gâr Pembrokeshire
			Pembrokeshire	
<b>C6: Swansea Bay</b>		Neath Port Talbot	Neath Port Talbot Gorseinon Swansea	
		Swansea		
<b>R4: South East Wales</b>  <i>Employer Advisory Panel</i>  <i>Provider Advisory Panel</i>	<b>C7: Valleys</b>	Blaenau Gwent	Bridgend Merthyr Morgannwg Ystrad Mynach	
		Bridgend		
		Caerphilly		
		Merthyr Tydfil		
		Rhondda Cynon Taff		
	<b>C8: Gwent East</b>	Monmouthshire	Gwent	
		Newport		
		Torfaen		
	<b>C9: Cardiff Metropolitan</b>	Cardiff	Barry Glan Hafren St David's	
Vale of Glamorgan				

**7.17** It is essential to establish win-win situations for all institutions within the consortia so that even the best-performing, largest institutions actively participate in order to improve their own performance. Similarly, the smaller sixth forms should be able to improve their participation rates and to experience greater stability even in the context of demographic downturn, through

attracting learners to the provision that they deliver best. We believe consortia are the only means by which the survival of small sixth forms can be justified: either through developing niche specialisms from which larger providers are able to purchase learning provision for their own learners, or by developing a focused pastoral specialism as a home institution for learners. Our view is that full and active participation in such consortia should be a pre-condition of funding, most importantly for very small sixth forms. In all cases, institutions would retain responsibility for their own learners' performance, progression and pastoral support, while commissioning learning provision from any provider within or even outside the consortium.

**7.18** There may not need to be exactly the same structural approach within each region; but regions and the consortia within them should offer:

- entitlement to excellent provision, with a significantly increased number of choices for all learners from 14-19 (at least the minimum specified within the emerging 14-19 legislation), with a particular emphasis on increased vocational and experiential learning opportunities
- the opportunity to achieve demonstrable improvements in key and Basic Skills
- the opportunity for learners to choose to learn through the medium of Welsh or English, and
- opportunities for progression – both lateral and to employment and/or Higher Education, (recognising that, at this level, progression may be to provision outside the area).

### **Responsibilities at each level**

**7.19** In proposing a network of consortia we have considered the responsibilities of each level of the network and make the following proposals.

#### **HOME INSTITUTION LEVEL**

**7.20** The head of the institution (sixth form, FEI or training provider) at which the learner is registered should be responsible for:

- **registering** learners
- ensuring that **learners' entitlements** are met
- receiving funding for learners from the Local Authority and/or WAG as at present and **managing the budget** according to the needs of those learners
- providing **advice and guidance** to learners before, during and after enrolment
- supporting learners in the development of their **individual learning plan**, including, as appropriate, choices from other providers within the consortia
- **purchasing learning opportunities** for learners according to their individual learning plans
- ensuring that registered learners experience high quality learning provision, regardless of the location of provision, and
- managing the **quality of the overall learning programme** for each learner.

**7.21** In purchasing a range of learning opportunities for learners from a number of external institutions, the head of an institution would retain accountability for the learners' achievements: qualification results would be credited to the home institution, no matter where the learners undertook the learning. In this way each institution would be encouraged to focus on achieving the best possible results for learners, no matter where they were learning.



- 7.22 Providing choice for learners from across a wide geographical area should not imply substantial travel by learners. No learner should need to travel far for popular or generic provision such as Care, Mathematics, English or Welsh. However, all learners within an area should have the option to select more specialised provision from outside their own institution or local authority boundary. Furthermore, the most specialised provision may be accessible only beyond the footprint of the consortium, possibly ICT-enabled, and staff may travel between delivery locations. Cumbria is illustrative of how consortia may in effect operate as several local networks, each offering the popular choices within a travel to learn area, but jointly spanning an area larger than a local authority so as to maximise both choice and efficiency in the use of scarce teaching skills.

## PROVIDER INSTITUTION LEVEL

7.23 The head of the institution or company providing learning opportunities should be responsible for:

- contributing to the Area **prospectus** and to the development of the area **timetable**
- course specific **induction** for learners
- developing and delivering **learning programmes**
- **charging** home institutions for learning provision
- managing the **quality** of learning programmes
- managing the **assessment and award processes** in conjunction with awarding bodies, and
- recruiting and developing appropriately **skilled and qualified staff** to deliver learning programmes.

## CONSORTIUM LEVEL

7.24 Each consortium leader should be responsible for:

- **engaging with providers** to develop relationships, agree secondments as necessary and build the consortium
- developing the **area development plan** for 14-19 provision in conjunction with consortium members
- developing an **aligned timetable**
- developing and managing **underpinning financial and technical agreements** for members of the consortium, in conjunction with other consortia leaders
- developing an **area prospectus**, and managing the development of an 'alternative' learner prospectus
- overseeing the implementation of an **ICT infrastructure**, using Wales-wide software, to manage learner progression and communications across the consortium
- **identifying consortia-wide opportunities for learning and progression opportunities in conjunction with employers**
- in conjunction with local authority economic development officers, **identifying employment and delivery needs** of the consortium area which are unique to that area and working with providers to **develop learning provision** which meets the needs of the area
- **manage the validation of vocational provision** within schools
- manage the development and provision of **learning coaches and careers advice**
- the development of **learner and employer engagement and feedback systems**



- developing and implementing a **learner travel plan** within the locality in conjunction with the local authority, and
- sourcing effective **professional development programmes** for teachers, lecturers and leaders.

## REGIONAL LEVEL

**7.25** At a Regional Level, in respect of 14-19 provision, the Regional Strategic Implementation Group would be responsible for:

- enacting **Children and Young People’s Partnerships’** responsibilities for the planning of 14-19 education
- undertaking **strategic decision making** – setting attainable targets for consortia and providers, mediating key decisions about demand and developing and implementing multi-agency strategies in fields such as community learning
- ensuring providers and consortia of providers respond to **regional skills needs**
- ensuring that commissioned **funding** in the region is being **deployed effectively** to deliver national and regional strategic and skill priorities
- taking responsibility and accountability for driving forward the delivery of consortia and provider **performance targets**, evaluating consortia and provider performance and initiating **intervention and remedial action** when necessary, and
- identifying where **provider reconfiguration, merger or closure** should take place and preparing the subsequent detailed case for change advice to the Minister, and
- developing a region-wide prospectus within three years.

**7.26** We were interested to learn of the experience of the Director of 14-19 provision in Cumbria, which has five 14-19 consortia, with overall leadership provided by a core team of managers reporting to the Director. The managers take lead responsibility either for a consortium area or for specific key issues such as e-learning, personalised learning, employer engagement and transport. We believe that it is essential that consortia are supported by a management structure for such key functions, whether at a consortium or regional level.

**7.27** Figure 9 below illustrates the linkages between different components of the consortia system – this would be replicated across four regions, with two or three consortia in each.





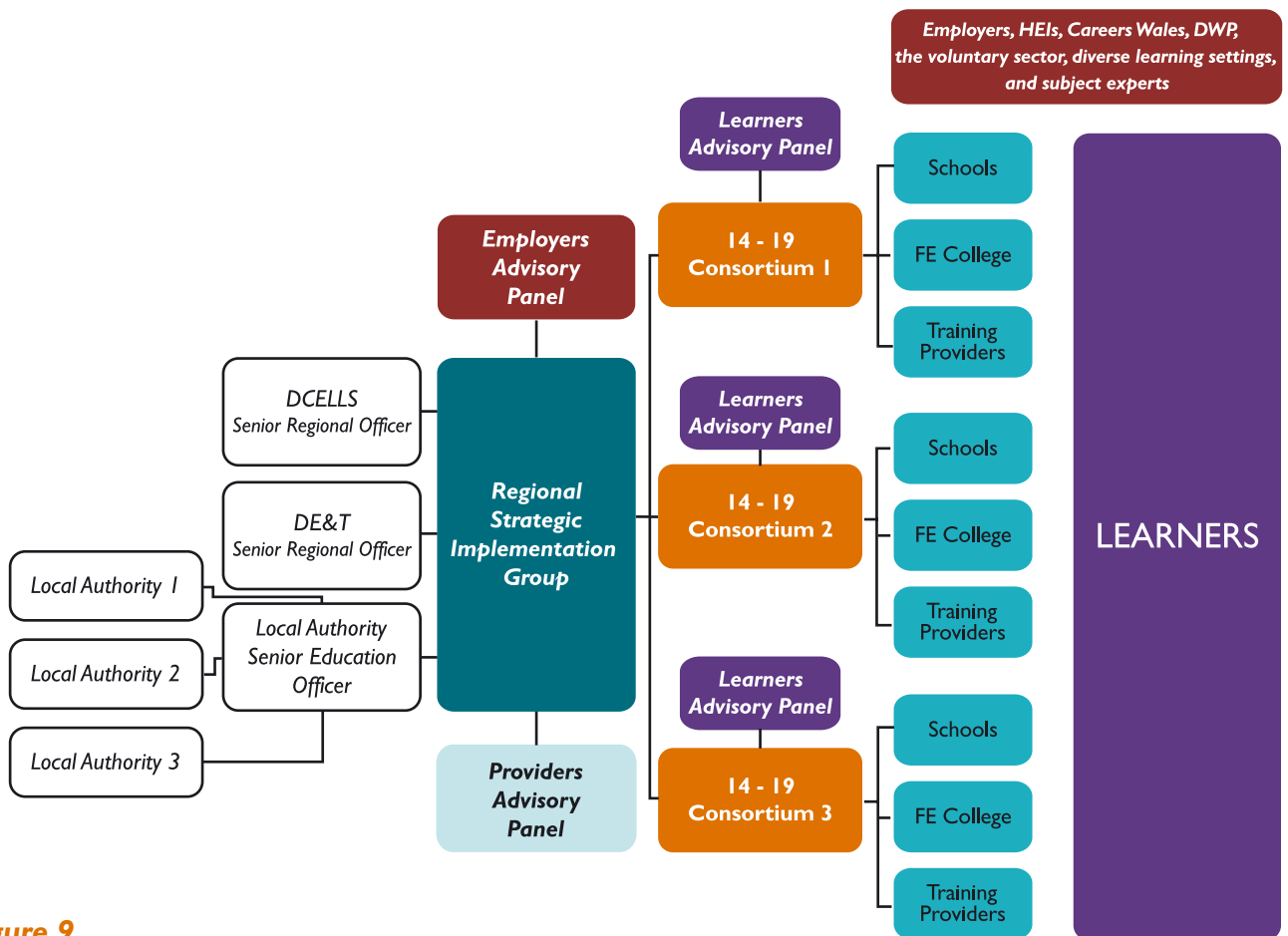


Figure 9

## NATIONAL LEVEL

7.28 Managed by DCELLS for the Welsh Assembly Government, the national responsibilities for managing 14-19 provision should include:

- the recruitment, development, management and support of **Consortium Leaders**
- the commissioning, specification and dissemination to consortia of a Wales-wide **learner management information system**, to incorporate individual learning plans, drawing on existing systems currently in use in England or elsewhere
- the **implementation of policy, including the setting and monitoring of targets** for consortia, to include:
  - learners' basic and key skills achievements across each Area, including the attainment of national targets for adult literacy and numeracy
  - a reduction by 2010 of the numbers of NEETs to 3% of the youth population, with corresponding reductions in economic inactivity
  - the promotion and take-up of learning in key national priority areas, including STEM, the Welsh Language and learning through the medium of Welsh
  - levels of learner awareness, engagement and satisfaction
  - levels of employer awareness, engagement and satisfaction
  - levels of community awareness, engagement and satisfaction
  - the quality of provision, with Management assessed at Grade 2 or above within all institutions by 2008, and for all aspects of provision by 2010

- an **Annual Review of Progress** for each consortium against key targets, and the development of Development Plans where necessary
- the **integration of the post-14 funding system**
- the **funding of consortia**
- the **determining of changes** needed to fulfil Sector Skills Agreements and the national skills strategy
- the development of criteria for the **validation of vocational provision** within schools
- the development and implementation of a **national employer engagement strategy**, and
- the development of rigorous appraisal tools such as 360 degree stakeholder appraisal.

## Cascaded Commissioning

**7.29** Our approach builds on and moves beyond Beecham by introducing a model of ‘cascaded commissioning’. Under the Children’s Act 2004 Local Authorities were designated as commissioners of all services for children, including education. This does not mean that they should be the providers of education – they currently commission schools to provide education and learning opportunities. Within our model, the commissioning is further cascaded through the consortium by the home institution which is responsible for ensuring, but not necessarily delivering, each learner’s entitlement. The home institutions may commission learning from any appropriate source – including from other consortia – but they remain wholly responsible for the learning and for the outcomes of that learning. Cascaded commissioning will significantly broaden the opportunities for learners while retaining unambiguous accountability – with home institutions.

*Commissioning is: “the process of specifying, securing and monitoring services to meet people’s needs at a strategic level. This applies to all services, whether they are provided by the local authority, NHS, other public agencies or by the private or voluntary sectors.”*

Audit Commission, 2003

**7.30** From 2010, Local Authorities will have a responsibility to deliver a Children and Young Person’s Plan which will take into account and incorporate 14-19 planning. There are several ways in which this planning could be taken forward but our approach begins with Beecham’s conclusion that local authorities need to work together or face major re-organisation within 5 years. Our recommendations build on the work of 14-19 partnerships by creating consortia which are more tightly structured than any existing partnership. However, we believe that the educational element of Children and Young People’s Plans should be developed above the level of a single local authority. We see consortia spanning local authorities and having responsibility for developing and managing the delivery of 14-19 area plans. At the regional level, a senior Local Authority representative (with responsibilities delegated upwards from all constituent authorities) should work with senior officers from DCELLS and DE&T to create the strategic framework in which the consortia operate.

**7.31** Initially, the consortia will need to be driven from the bottom up, building on the existing voluntary model of collaboration and providing a more cohesive infrastructure with clear objectives, ambition and targets. Over three to five years, however, the consortium should move towards the central commissioning and purchasing of learning, to ensure the best possible fit between learning needs and provision. Statutory opportunities now exist to support this through the Further Education and Training Act 2007. Consortia leaders will have to make clear priority decisions: on efficiency and quality, with regard to who delivers what within the consortium and how pooled



○ funding should be allocated by the consortium. The relationship between national and regional responsibilities in relation to target setting at national level, monitoring at regional level and the establishment of an infrastructure to support consortia could be developed through the DCELLS Organisational Development project.

○ **7.32** The better use of existing resources, such as staff and facilities, to improve outputs and outcomes for individuals and the economy is the most effective route to efficiency gains. In our view this can only be achieved through effective consortia rather than through institutions acting independently. While a good quality, more efficient system will release resources, it will need pump-priming. There is a need for a significant investment to ensure that areas are able to operate effectively across institutions. We therefore suggest a staggered approach to resourcing improvements, including capital, within a phased development of consortia.

○ **7.33** This development of consortia will also create a need for a new definition of area in terms of the inspection of quality by Estyn. We consider the need to re-define area inspections and to specifically assess progress in terms of collaboration in section 9.

### **Opportunities for specialisation**

**7.34** We touched above on the possibility of developing specialisms in provision, particularly in smaller sixth forms. In considering the opportunities for specialisation which are created by a consortium approach, it seems appropriate to reflect upon the development of Skills Academies in England. At the heart of this initiative is the pursuit of excellence in the delivery of skills needed by employers and by the economy.

*National Skills Academies will be employer driven world class centres of excellence delivering the skills required by each major sector of the economy.*

Department for Children, Schools and Families

**7.35** There are two senses in which such excellence is essential: in the delivery of a wide range of skills required locally or regionally and the delivery of specialist skills required by key sectors of the economy. Our proposals for a network of consortia are precisely geared to deliver excellence of the first kind, but there is also a need for consortia to engage on a pan-Wales basis to create national networks to meet a number of sectoral needs. There is already a Welsh language network in schools, CYDAG, which plans and delivers training for teachers through the medium of Welsh, and a faith based network centring on St David's college in Cardiff.

**7.36** The very essence of the skills academies which have been developed to date in England is that they represent employer choice. Employers are making decisions about where the capacity for excellence in specialist areas lies or could be developed. This must be the approach in developing a Welsh response to skills academies as recommended in *One Wales*. However, there is a need for engaged leadership by WAG. Such specialism is not only about skills in high technology sectors. Employers in the hotel and catering industry impressed upon us the need for significant development of hospitality and catering training in Wales.

*There is a lack of hospitality skills to meet the needs of the tourism industry in Wales. We would see significant benefit in having a centre of excellence in Wales.*

Manager – Hilton Hotel, Cardiff

- 7.37** Once it is clear what areas of specialist skill are most necessary within the Welsh economy, specialisation can be promoted in single institutions within local networks, across several institutions within one or more networks, or by all-Wales linkages. In many cases specialisms of this kind will need to include a Higher Education as well as a Further Education presence.

*We need strategic planning in a regional sense – to turn it around and put real decision making in place in Wales. In this school we are planning developments up to 2015, but we have been doing so in a vacuum of decision-making, advice and strategic planning. Currently there is no strategic impetus: we need to question and to share – to look at targets together and agree a way forward.*

Paul Mulraney – Head Teacher – The Alun School, Mold

### **Recommendations for Commissioning Consortia:**

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R65 invite providers and local authorities to submit joint proposals to develop consortia within areas defined by the Welsh Assembly Government**
- R66 immediately pilot three or four consortia to test elements of infrastructure including commissioning and funding**
- R67 within 3 years, ensure that the rest of Wales adopts the consortium model**
- R68 within 5 years, direct all 14-19 funding through consortia**
- R69 ensure the appointment in each consortium of a Leader to act as a catalyst for change**
- R70 create an action-learning set for consortia leaders, linked to best practice in England and internationally**
- R71 locate responsibility for managing careers guidance and learner coaching at the consortium level within the consortium leader's team**
- R72 pump-prime capital expenditure in the pilots as a first step towards a larger capital programme for schools and FEIs**
- R73 consider the case for building on institutional and consortia strengths to create academies in areas of national or sectoral need**
- R74 commission and implement an ICT-based national learner management and profiling system as an essential element of consortium architecture, and**
- R75 ensure that each consortium adopts a common system of timetabling, cross-institution protocols and a learner promise system.**



# Chapter 8: Learning Providers

## Schools

### 11-16 – TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS

*Schools have to be transformed, so that they can be more innovative and better able to respond to the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

*Education and training providers will need to question the traditional concept of the 'school'. For example, we see more and more providers of Early Years education acting as host to a wide range of agencies on one site. Schools providing for the 14-19 age range also need to co-operate increasingly with other schools, colleges, training organisations and work settings in the same locality to ensure that wider option choices are available to young people.*

*The narrow institutional interests of all concerned will have to be set aside if a genuinely collaborative and strategic approach to flexible learning pathways is to be built and thrive. Leaders and managers will need to have the vision, energy, skills and capacity to anticipate and respond to rapidly changing needs and be less protective of their current roles and status.*

Estyn – Transforming schools: a discussion paper – March 2007

- 8.1** The Estyn vision has three elements: a transformation of how things are done inside the world of learning and specifically inside schools; a decisive shift away from stand-alone schools to networks of education and training providers and a determination to place the interests of learners and Wales as a nation above those of providers wherever the latter become a barrier to needed change.
- 8.2** We fully endorse this vision. The shift to consortia is essential if we are to enlarge the range and variety of learning opportunities and vocationally oriented learning. But increasing motivation and expanding the opportunity to learn how to learn requires more than the development of new learning programmes. As Estyn emphasise, it is about transforming the nature of schools. We will not meet our goals if the basic education system falls short. Schools face a hard task: increasing and changing demands; substantial numbers of poorly motivated pupils; falling rolls and tight resources. Yet they must do even better in the future.
- 8.3** The schools which fall into our remit make provision for, typically though not exclusively, the age range of 11-18. The first three years of this are out of our remit, but we believe that many of the issues which we have encountered in consideration of post-14 education are dependent on the effectiveness of those crucial years. In taking the view that progression from the age of 14 should form a flexible yet seamless pathway, we need to acknowledge the more visible continuum that exists through the co-location of 11-14 and 14-16 provision within single institutions. Much has already been done, but the recommendations of this Review need to be considered in the light of what goes before: we are therefore recommending a further **independent review of 11-16 education**.
- 8.4** This further review should provide the agenda for the transformation process. It is not a matter of curriculum, or pedagogy, of school discipline or the approach to be taken to the least co-operative and least well behaved learners; of the organisation of timetables, the school day, or the school year. It is about all of these seen as a whole – and seen, as we argued in Chapter 3 within a unifying

philosophy for the Welsh Bac. As in other areas of life, education is being driven by new ideas and new technologies. Deeper understanding of the functioning of the brain, perception, memory, and cognitive processes has driven new theories of learning: accelerated learning, polychromatic learning, neuro-linguistic programming, self-directed learning, peer appraisal, co-learning and family learning, and the importance of emotional intelligence<sup>35</sup>. This list is by no means exhaustive, and it excludes new practices in ICT-enriched learning, timetabling and the organisation of the school day and year.

- 8.5** We are not advocating any of these developments in particular. Nor do we underestimate the amount of innovation and imagination shown by schools and individual teachers. However, we are convinced that there is a huge and exciting opportunity to be seized; one that would truly place Wales in the forefront internationally. There should be a fundamental questioning of how the best advances in learning practices can be harnessed within a coherent, overarching philosophy for the Welsh Bac, founded on a commitment to **personalising learning** to the greatest extent that is practicable. Standardised approaches to learning are no more appropriate than would be standardised patterns of health care for people with different ailments. Yet a philosophy that entitles learners to the richest, most flexible range of choices and learning experiences possible can only be delivered if teachers are empowered and up-skilled– not straitjacketed. It can only be delivered if it also drives an enabling redesign of how schools work and are organised.
- 8.6** To empower learners, the economy and our society in ways appropriate to the twenty-first century, such a philosophy also needs to be founded on a recognition of the fundamental importance of:
- fostering creativity in thinking and in practical skills
  - enterprise and exposure to entrepreneurship
  - multi-cultural understanding and awareness, and
  - confidence in embracing a fast change world well beyond Wales.

This is the remit that we believe should be grasped by an independent review of 11-16 education.

- 8.7** We do not exclude FEIs from this transformation process – nor universities. This review has necessarily focussed on broader issues and has not delved into the internal workings of teaching and learning in these institutions. The practicalities are somewhat different, but the underlying issue remains: what we now know about making learning truly effective and personalised runs counter to many of the didactic and standardised ways of teaching and learning of the past. A philosophy of personalised learning developed within the framework of the Welsh Bac should be embodied in a transformation process within FEIs and universities as well as schools.

## SCHOOL SIXTH FORMS

- 8.8** We recognise the data on spare school places and regard it as being an important task for the local authorities to look at these and rationalise. Estyn<sup>36</sup> indicate that over 23% of schools have significant numbers of surplus places and the WLGA<sup>37</sup> has predicted that the number of spare places will rise by 46,000 between 2004 and 2013. Spare capacity must be dealt with, as must the future impact of the demographic downturn, in terms of resourcing the kind of developments we envisage. We are not accountable for the reconfiguration of schools but we recognise it has to be tackled in the light of demographic change, for reasons of efficiencies and to fund developments. Our key interest however is to embed a transformed model of the home institution as a commissioner of learning and as a driver of far reaching change.

<sup>35</sup> Teaching and Learning Research Programme, 'Neuroscience and Education: issues and opportunities', 2006

<sup>36</sup> Estyn – Annual Report – 2005-06

<sup>37</sup> WLGA Website



- **8.9** The central responsibility of a sixth form, in our model, is to ensure a high quality range of learning opportunities for all its registered learners. In terms of accountability, this must become the primary responsibility of the school governors. The implication is that increasingly some schools will take a specialist role within their consortium – where they have particular expertise, or perhaps a critical mass of learners. Institutions would not be designated as specialists, except in a few instances, for example with regard to STEM subjects.

## **SUPPORTING AND ENHANCING THE ASPIRATIONS OF LEARNERS**

- 8.10** The home institution should also be responsible for developing highly personalised Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), utilising nationally developed software. The ILP should be used, for each learner, as the specification against which learning provision is commissioned and careers advice is provided. We were impressed with examples of such a model which included an over-arching statement of each learner's current ambition (with a clear understanding that this was fluid and would most likely change over time). This was supported by a commitment from the home institution to consider each learner's ambition and to seek out and provide taster opportunities, whether this is in the workplace, in higher education or in the voluntary sector. This approach is effective in recognising, encouraging and enhancing learners' progression and aspirations. The ILP should also be the basis on which schools create mentoring links for their learners, with universities, FEIs and local employers.

## **STAFF EXPERTISE**

- 8.11** Evidence has revealed widespread concern, particularly from employers but also from learners, that teachers in schools and sometimes FEIs do not always have leading-edge or even current knowledge, particularly in vocational subjects. Teachers of traditional subjects are sometimes given vocational subjects to teach which bear only a vague connection to their expertise; tourism, for example, taught by geography teachers. This is clearly an inappropriate approach. It is essential that vocational subjects are taught by vocational specialists who undergo regular professional development and intensive immersion in their specialism.
- 8.12** An important aspect of vocational and experiential learning is that learners have access to experts in their field. Opportunities for learners to engage with professional and vocational experts through talks, demonstrations and workshops are extremely valuable but we have evidence that sometimes such visits are restricted by an expectation that such experts should also be qualified or experienced teachers. We would wish to encourage a flexible approach. The commissioning model we have outlined should enable the purchasing of learning from non-qualified teachers and professionals: some learners in Rhyl, for example, are given opportunities to learn at an animal rescue centre. This is not to say that the quality of the experience is in itself unimportant; it would remain the responsibility of the home institution, which should aim to ensure an appropriate balance between pedagogy and experience.



## Recommendations for Schools

We recommend that the Department should:

- R76 immediately commission an independent and wide-ranging review of 11-16 education which would:
- further develop the Welsh Bac (see Chapter 3)
  - review the transition between primary and secondary education
  - identify how schools should address the challenges of under-achievement and poor engagement
  - identify ways of embedding practical, experiential learning throughout the curriculum, and
  - respond to Estyn's challenge to re-think the traditional concept of 'the school'.
- R77 create a standing Schools Transformation Panel charged with the task of stimulating and monitoring the transformation process, and
- R78 ensure that schools, their governors and staff are supported in adapting to consortium working.

## Further Education Institutions

- 8.13** There are 23 further education institutions in Wales. The total number of learners registered at each of these ranges from just over a thousand to 33,000 and the turnover ranges from £3m to £50m per annum.
- 8.14** There are two major aspects to our consideration of the mission and purpose of further education in Wales: the further education system as a whole and the institutions within it. ***We believe that the prime function of Further Education Institutions, which sets them apart from other providers, should be to be the lead driver of their local economy through the skills agenda.***
- 8.15** Within this prime function, FEIs need to incorporate:
- a consortium approach to 14-19 provision
  - a similar network approach to adult and community learning, and
  - a more commercial approach to services to business.
- 8.16** Further Education Institutions are highly adaptive to changing social economic and client need. In 2005/06, 65% of post-16 learners were pursuing programmes at an FE institution<sup>38</sup> that ranged from Basic Skills to degree level, academic to vocational, and from leisure to work-based learning. The role of colleges is a complex one. They meet local needs by providing apprenticeships, offering second chance learning and, in some cases, acting as the tertiary institution for the area. The environment and culture is different to that of most schools and college learners seem generally to appreciate an ambience which they regard as adult. FEIs have become increasingly efficient, operating for many years on a falling unit of resource. Their quality standards have risen commendably and they have surpassed Welsh Assembly Government targets for learner achievement and for the quality of teaching.<sup>39</sup>

38 Learning Network Analysis:2005/06 Welsh Assembly Government

39 Estyn Annual Report:2005/06



- **8.17** Incorporation in the early 1990s provided a spur to entrepreneurial management in FEIs. Removed from local authority control and facing direct responsibility for institutional success, college managers and governors met the challenge and provided Wales with a number of outstanding FEIs which are exemplars across the UK. Wales now benefits from some excellent learning centres and facilities: from the Engineering units in North Wales to some outstanding built environment workshops in the south and impressive business incubators in the west. The FE institutions in Wales win a disproportionately high percentage of UK national Beacon awards. Overall, they have had many successes and they are well supported by fforwm, their membership organisation.
- **8.18** But the hard fact is that neither Welsh post-14 education nor the Welsh economy performs well enough by international standards. Whilst there were some employers receiving a highly responsive service from FEIs, others told a different story. We need more learners achieving their potential, a more targeted drive to provide employers with the skills they need, more individuals in employment and a significant reduction in the NEETS. We need to do more with our resources at every level and we must look to schools, FEIs and universities as fundamental engines of change.
- **8.19** We have made it clear in Chapter 7 that our post-14 vision is of excellent institutions within excellent consortia. We are attracted by the logic of the FE model being adopted in Northern Ireland, where, in the context of a population of 1.7 million and ongoing consolidation of local government areas, the number of FEIs is being reduced from 16 to 6. We outlined our view that post-14 education should be delivered on an area basis, an area being a combination of local authorities with no more than 10 in total. Logic suggests that for a small country with a population of 2.9 million, there should be only one further education institution per area. Small FE units tend to add to the complexity of an already overcrowded provider landscape and they may generate undue competition; though the present pattern of learning sites and high quality specialisms – whether curriculum, Welsh language, faith-based or second chance – must not be lost with reconfiguration.
- **8.20** Our data suggest that the size of an FEI does matter. Larger units are more flexible for so many different purposes: curriculum, timetabling, employer support. This is particularly so where there is a focus on vocational learning which often needs expensive plant. Research<sup>40</sup> also indicates that efficiency savings in terms of resource overheads, administration and management could have a significant impact when an FE institution reaches a turnover of c.£15m. Members of the ERG specifically argued that critical mass is required if FEIs are to become a driver of the local economy. Single governance and management arrangements will be needed to gear up the FE institutions of the future to meet the great challenges defined by Leitch and others. This is widely recognised elsewhere: in England, recent mergers and merger talks are being viewed as essential and FEIs with a turnover of £40 to £60m are not uncommon.
- **8.21** We therefore propose a programme of reconfiguration to ensure that all FEIs are operating at a minimum size level. We advocate a two stage process which will lead to a reduction in the number of management units, but not a reduction in the number of delivery-points. Specialisms, amenities and the ethos of particular sites should be preserved, and where possible enhanced, for the benefit of learners. Re-sizing may be achieved through federation, merger, or the creation of a new college. Utilisation could be made of the opportunities for new forms of provider configuration contained in the Measures for Wales of the Further Education and Training Act 2007 (FET). We are open-minded about the involvement of Higher Education and see potential advantages in some cases. However, combined HE/FE institutions must preserve the essence of, and focus on, further education – FE must not be treated as a mere feeder for HE.

40 Tribal – Benchmarking – a self-assessment tool for DELLS – 2007

- 8.22** Within the context of reconfiguration, consideration must be given to ensuring that the educational and training provision in Cardiff meets the needs of a rapidly developing and dynamic capital city. *‘Competitive Capital’*, Cardiff’s economic strategy for 2007-2012, sets a vision of growth in new knowledge-based sectors allied to further advance in key employment sectors (such as construction and tourism). If further education is to help deliver this vision it needs an infrastructure that has capability and critical mass. *‘Competitive Capital’* highlighted capacity issues emerging in key areas of vocational training in relation to 14-19 Learning Pathways and the issue of “poor retention rates in work-based learning and some Further Education provision”.<sup>41</sup> The challenges for both Cardiff and the education/training sector are substantial. In our view, only the creation of a large metropolitan college would meet the diversity and depth of its education and skills training needs. It is an approach that may also appeal in other major population centres.
- 8.23** We are certain that for 14-19 consortia to succeed, FEIs will need to play a full and central role. Consortia are not only about schools. FEI engagement will tend to be in vocational areas; the Consortium Leader and curriculum planning group in each area should be clear on what is best offered by Further Education. In some cases FEIs may drop elements of their A level provision and expand their contribution to the consortium’s range of practical and experiential options for learners of all abilities.

### **Recommendations for Further Education Institutions:**

#### **We recommend that the Department should:**

- R79** ensure that FEIs become the recognised skills driver for an area by including this responsibility explicitly in the terms of reference of the governing body
- R80** within 2 years, reconfigure Further Education Institutions to ensure that no stand-alone institution has a turnover below £15m
- R81** within 5 years, ensure that each consortium has a single FEI by process of merger or federation of FEIs, each of which has a turnover of substantially more than £15m, and
- R82** to meet the distinctive needs of the metropolitan economy, reconfigure provision in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan by inviting tenders for the creation of a Cardiff Metropolitan College which might include Higher Education. A similar process might be appropriate elsewhere, and
- R83** ensure that Further Education Institutions are full participants in 14-19 consortia; partial engagement should not be an option.

41 Competitive Capital – Cardiff Council 2007



## ○ Foundation Degrees: FEIs and HEIs

○ **8.24** The Further and Higher Education sectors generally operate as discrete funding entities in Wales, with proportionally much less direct funding of higher education in FE Institutions than in England. To develop seamless learning pathways we must intensify the interaction between the two sectors. Currently, franchising is the most common means of delivering Higher Education within FEIs in Wales. The issues that arise from franchising illustrate differing facets of the relationship between the two sectors.

**8.25** Evidence presented by providers suggested that good partnerships are exemplified by:

- a shared mission for the delivery of higher education in further education
- progression routes for learners
- provision carrying the HE brand and offering learners membership of the university's student population
- the management of quality by the HEI (for example, the University of Glamorgan's franchise arrangements include a requirement for FE staff engaged in HE teaching to be given time for scholarship), and
- employer engagement (for example, Airbus UK provides considerable support for the delivery of the Foundation Degrees in which they are involved).

*South Wales Police have worked with the University of Glamorgan to develop an Initial Police Learning Development Programme leading to a Foundation Degree programme. Similarly, Llandrillo College is launching a Foundation Degree in Police Studies in September 2007.*

**8.26** Examples of less effective franchise arrangements are characterised by the existence of hierarchy and a cash nexus rather than partnership with a shared mission. It was indicated that in such models the HEI did not share the FEI's mission for vocational delivery and saw the FEI primarily as an undergraduate recruitment agent.

**8.27** Partnerships between FE and HE should ensure that there are ample opportunities for progression. Local progression should be promoted as far as possible, whilst acknowledging that learners may need to progress to institutions outside their own region and even internationally.

*Foundation degrees provide a useful form of economically relevant vocational learning and are therefore qualifications that colleges should provide in partnership with HE institutions, that partnership providing local planning opportunities for the institutions involved and progression opportunities for individual learners.*

Coleg Morgannwg – response to consultation

*[There is a need for] improved links between Higher and Further Education. Prospective candidates rarely have it explained that they can do a degree in building services and most think that training stops at level 3.*

Summit Skills – response to consultation

**8.28** The recent debate in England surrounding the validation of Foundation Degrees and whether FEIs should be given Foundation Degree awarding powers may have deflected consideration from the broader issues of effective partnerships and delivery mechanisms. Wales lacks policy for Foundation Degrees. It has not specified their defining elements. These would usefully include: a core element, covering generic skills and promoting the portability of the qualification; vocational skills related to the particular vocational discipline; clearly defined progression routes and a requirement for work-placements or actual employment.

**8.29** We believe new Foundation Degrees are needed in some fields, but that they should be developed through a tendering process which specifies the minimum component of generic and employment-related skills. Sector Skills Councils should be well placed to contribute to this specification. We envisage consortia of HEIs, FEIs and relevant employers bidding for funding to develop these new Foundation Degrees. The question of Foundation Degree awarding powers for FEIs should be considered within this context. We were told by FEIs that present arrangements have delivered generally good levels of collaboration, though with some exceptions. The independent research<sup>42</sup> published in March 2007 also indicated limited support for change among Welsh Higher Education and Further Education institutions. However, the current situation is not the only guide to the future. Granting awarding powers to FEIs through the use of the Assembly's new legislative competencies remains an option if a demonstrable need arises.

*Post-14 training should embrace the role of Foundation Degrees on the basis of employer need, alongside the work of SSCs. Delivery should include more time in industry, [and should provide] a progression route from the Welsh Baccalaureate.*

Energy and Utility Skills – response to consultation

## Recommendations for Foundation Degrees

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R84** working with HEFCW, establish and fund a programme of new Foundation Degrees in key areas of the economy. These should be developed and delivered by consortia of employers, HEIs and FEIs, with an employer chair, and
- R85** as appropriate, consider and consult upon the granting of Foundation Degree awarding powers to the FEI sector.

## Work-based Learning Providers

**8.30** As recognised by Lord Leitch, work-based learning makes a major and direct contribution to the UK's upskilling and competitiveness programme, objectives valued by organisations, individuals and by government. We note that *One Wales* includes a specific intention to increase apprenticeships as well as an employment target of 80% which would involve the use of work-based Employability programmes such as Skillbuild.

**8.31** Work-based learning is supported up to about 10% by European funding; a benefit now but a challenge for the future. European funding dictates a transparent tendering regime. Work-based learning is overtly competitive and unique in the Welsh education environment in being so open to the emergence of new suppliers. The openness is healthy but the competitiveness is culturally different from the collaborative ethos sought elsewhere. Schools and FEIs have found this competitive, relatively new provider group a challenge.

**8.32** Yet Government wants work-based learning to be part of the upskilling weaponry to combat the "Chindia" challenge; they want sectoral coverage, particularly for key areas of the economy. It is essential therefore that the Welsh Assembly Government reaches an agreed view, informed by both DCELLS and DE&T, of which sectors are critical to the economy and society. The new Wales

42 Study of the role of Foundation Degrees in Wales – A report to the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales – SQW – March 2007



Employment and Skills Board should set national priorities which should be cascaded to regional level. We need the active involvement of SSCs and trade associations at least in key sectors. Zealous providers and economic sectors should not be allowed to grow their provision simply because they can whilst other important areas remain under-served. Furthermore, the regional statement of needs and priorities is now established and, provided it remains as bureaucracy-free as possible, it is a useful planning tool.

- 8.33** Given its relative newness, work-based learning is still evolving. Some private sector training providers initially started up without appropriate qualifications or quality systems and lacked professional experience. This was the origin of the high levels of bureaucracy and audit which surround the sector. Many providers originally had difficulty in attaining high Estyn inspection grades. Even in the 2005-06 Annual report, the Chief Inspector noted that *“in work-based learning, standards have risen in 45% of the providers inspected, but nearly half of them are still giving cause for serious concern.”*
- 8.34** Management and leadership, in particular, have been heavily criticised. Current upward trends in standards are heartening. There can be no doubt that they have been driven by the clear link between funding and quality levels attained.
- 8.35** The variety of organisations in this sector is a notable and distinctive feature compared with the greater homogeneity of schools and FEIs. Some focus on niche sectors of the economy whilst others cover a geographical area and employ trainers and assessors in several key economic sectors. Both specialists and generalists are reported to share an intimacy and empathy with employers not generally present in post-14 education. They tend to use a field force to visit companies, sometimes over several years, to encourage them to establish a training programme in the first place. The investment in building these relationships can be considerable. This is true of some FEIs as well as private providers but we believe that a far bigger FEI investment is needed and have made recommendations accordingly.
- 8.36** A strong sense of hierarchy lurks not far below the surface amongst post-14 education: the closer providers are to universities, the higher their prestige both in their own eyes and those of parents. Work-based learning providers often find themselves at the base of this pyramid – trainers of last resort, summoned only to help with the most difficult, least engaged students. Practice more distant from the vision of Lord Leitch is hard to imagine.
- 8.37** This sense of hierarchy must be expunged from 14-18 consortia in which the learner should be central, with access to all personally relevant pathways. Work-based learning providers have some of the best access to trainers and assessors with industry standard experience, and to employers. They must unquestionably be full and equal members of 14-19 partnership Consortia and play a full role in developing the Welsh Bac.
- 8.38** Learners on work-based learning programmes valued their training highly. Indeed in ELWa’s Learner Satisfaction Survey<sup>43</sup> (2003), work-based learning received the highest post-16 learner satisfaction ratings. We were struck by the enthusiasm of apprentices who relished the combination of work experience and the opportunity in some firms to gain qualifications up to and including post graduate level. The employers too were generally very pleased with the system; their main criticisms lay in the need for more flexibility within frameworks – a matter for SSCs and the accrediting bodies. They also wanted learning which was more specific to their business and criticised the generic nature of the NVQs which form the basis for the frameworks.



- 8.39** Given its alignment with the Leitch agenda, the work-based learning sector needs to be developed so as to preserve its essential strengths while addressing its current weaknesses. We believe it is important to retain the variety of providers operating in this arena whilst advocating a stronger element of planning. We believe government could facilitate helpful links between SSCs, associations representing economic sectors and training providers. We would also encourage associations of providers or mergers, where that would reduce administrative overheads, streamline delivery and provide a more flexible and comprehensive offer to clients – which is our key objective.
- 8.40** We applaud the increasing professionalism of the National Training Federation. A strong association has a key role to play not only in advocacy with government but also in promoting wider understanding and acceptance of private providers. It, together with fforwm, should be key in addressing the bureaucracy that is unhelpfully burdening work-based learning at present.

### *Recommendations for Work-based Learning Providers*

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R86** by encouraging associations of providers, mergers and the use of lead providers, reduce the numbers of contracts to approximately 25 within three years
- R87** support the National Training Federation in developing further its focus on driving quality and leadership in the sector
- R88** support the National Training Federation in developing CPD for its members, and
- R89** ensure that private training providers are full participants in 14-19 consortia.

### *Careers Advice and Guidance*

- 8.41** Truly impartial, well informed and readily accessible careers guidance is paramount. We are especially concerned that this is not always sufficient to offset the skewed view of academic as opposed to vocational 14-19 pathways and have therefore recommended in Chapter 7 that advice, guidance and coaching be managed at the consortium level in the future.
- 8.42** Unlike the rest of the UK, Wales has, in principle, an all age Careers service in the form of Careers Wales. However, the 14-19 client group commands a disproportionately high share of current resources. The adult population also needs career planning support: for unemployed and disengaged people; for returnees to learning; for those made redundant and in the area of workforce development. The service has demonstrated a capacity for flexibility in relation to SkillBuild and this is an example of the excellent practice needed on a larger scale.
- 8.43** Evidence received suggested that present resourcing falls well short of meeting the needs of the adult population. Gradually, as the youth cohort reduces, some shift in investment will become possible. However, it will not be sufficient to support post-19 learners; new funds or savings in other aspects of the work of the Department will be needed to develop the service.





8.44 The introduction of Careers Online, to be rolled out across Wales by September 2008, will enable individuals to develop their own online profiles as well as facilitating access to detailed careers information. This should release some staff capacity for other purposes. Some additional efficiency savings – and greater standardisation – could be gained by combining the existing Careers Wales organisations. We would also urge avoidance of the kind of micro-management that arises from targets that focus on activity rather than outputs – difficult as these are to measure.

### **Recommendations for Careers advice and guidance**

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R90 **restructure Careers Wales to create a unitary organisation**
- R91 **identify the resources necessary to provide an all-age service across Wales most especially for:**
- a. **unemployed and disengaged people**
  - b. **returnees to learning**
  - c. **those made redundant, and**
  - d. **workforce development.**
- R92 **review targets for Careers Wales to ensure that they are outcome rather than activity driven.**

### **Information and Learning Technology (ILT)**

- 8.45 The Association of Learning Technology defines Learning Technology as *the broad range of communication, information and related technologies that can be used to support learning, teaching and assessment*. It can range from the provision of ICT-based learning materials, through online learning, to entire learning management systems such as that which we are recommending for implementation across Wales. It is also increasingly essential in the planning and management of systems and we have suggested that existing best practice be explored and built upon.
- 8.46 Much misunderstanding surrounds ICT-enriched learning and teaching. It is not a panacea; nor should it be about lonely learners cut off from face-to-face support. On-screen learning can provide access to a wealth of unique materials, allow for highly personalised learning and dissolve the constraints of time and geography. It can be used in a variety of ways to achieve different ends. Clumsily grafted on to traditional practices without a clear educational model and unsupported by training, however, it can be a disaster.
- 8.47 Well designed and supported ICT-enriched learning has an inherent flexibility, whether through online learning materials, synchronisation of classes, virtual learning environments, video conferencing, individual online tutorials and online peer support or discussion groups. It allows the skills of the best teachers to permeate a wide and geographically dispersed area. Learners are also increasingly in tune with the concept and technology, though there are issues of unequal access and familiarity which, unaddressed, could exacerbate rather than reduce disadvantage.

*The contribution of advanced technologies such as e-learning is significant in industries in which individuals and businesses are sparsely distributed. There is a need to widen access to IT training across the sector.*

LANTRA – response to consultation

- 8.48** That Information and Learning Technology (ILT) can provide a highly personalised approach to learning is a major strength. Learners can learn at their own pace and less-confident learners have been shown to benefit from the privacy that it offers; they can learn through mistakes without fear of embarrassment or failure. Interestingly, the provision of technical support services to support online learning has also been shown to have unexpected benefits; learners can raise learning problems which they might not voice in other circumstances.

*The m-learning programme uses the latest mobile phones to help people learn. Students use the mobile phones to keep in touch with their tutors via text messaging, Web discussion boards, instant messaging and voice. Tutors can help and counsel learners and guide them in whatever they are learning, and learners can use the mobiles to stay in touch with each other. Learners receive a PDA which runs a version of Windows, Word and Excel, as well as a keyboard to attach to the phone. They also have access to wireless learning hubs. The programme is successfully re-engaging 16-24 year olds back into learning or employment.*

Pembroke College m-learning programme

- 8.49** Developments have progressed so swiftly that many young learners are more adept and familiar with the use of technology than are their teachers. Learning providers need to be supported to progress beyond an understanding of what the technology is and how it works, to a deeper understanding of how learning can be genuinely enhanced. It was reported to us that teachers in some institutions had tried to use ILT with little success because they had been left unaided. It is essential however that these opportunities are considered primarily not for the technology itself but for the role it can play in delivering learning.

*Teaching and learning strategies have changed significantly over the last five years as the impact of e-learning has grown. This needs recognition and to be incorporated within reformed professional updating arrangements within the sector.*

Ystrad Mynach College – Consultation response

- 8.50** Changes to skills needs over the next 15 years will continue to be driven by technological change. This will have a major impact both on the skills themselves and in the way in which learning is delivered. Research by Ufi<sup>44</sup> has shown that employers are increasingly building ICT-enabled learning into their in-house training programmes to maximise the advantages of existing business ICT infrastructures. The same research also shows that employees are increasingly accepting the use of ICT-enabled learning – especially the under-40s. This positive attitude will become more prevalent among a larger segment of the workforce. Our post-14 education system needs to reflect this and to equip **all** learners to engage with these learning methods, while enabling teachers to offer appropriate support.

*Using blended learning to deliver programmes rather than just e-learning is vital if Wales is to have a competitive edge.*

Swansea College – response to consultation

- 8.51** We encountered learners who had used Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) with great enthusiasm. Usage is at an early stage and there is much potential for increasingly innovative management of information and communication between learners and their tutors. Some FEIs and many sixth forms do not yet have access to such systems and compared with their peers

44 Embedding e-learning in large organisations, HI Europe and Howard Hills Associates on behalf of Ufi Ltd. 2004



these learners appeared to be disenfranchised. Public learning providers are in danger of being left well behind large employers' in-service training departments. It is clear that there could be considerable benefits to VLEs if developed collaboratively across regions and even nationally.

*There is a need to break down barriers with other post-16 providers through developing virtual learning environments for all learners.*

Gorseinon College – response to consultation

- 8.52** We are aware that there are currently many pockets of good practice across Wales, but that these are small in scale and lack any form of central co-ordination or harnessing of the outputs of public expenditure on new product development. There are no Wales-wide projects of real scope to provide a critical mass and there is nowhere to turn to access tested methods of using ILT successfully. It is essential that the Welsh Assembly Government does not direct investment into widespread and uncoordinated development. Rather, it should draw upon existing good practice and areas of expertise to more widely disseminate models and products for the benefit of all. Hence we propose the development of a centre of excellence to advocate educationally sound models of ICT-enriched learning, provide advice, commission new materials and disseminate knowledge of existing materials and promote a standardisation of platforms – or at least a choice of compatible platforms. This centre of excellence could usefully promote expertise in the online *management* of learning as well as co-ordinating the development of learning modules and the enhancement of teaching skills. We would see it as the vehicle for launching a small number of imaginative, Wales-wide initiatives.
- 8.53** A number of e-learning and ILT policies are currently in development for the schools, further and higher education sectors. These include an ICT strategy for schools, a Higher Education e-learning strategy and a post-16 education and training strategy. The intent behind these respective strategies matches our conclusions. However, we consider it important to ensure synergy in all of these separate policy developments to develop a coherent approach across all sectors.
- 8.54** The adoption of a cross-Wales learner information management system, with modules for communication, assessment, feedback, learner evaluation and personalised profiling, as recommended in Chapter 7, could also be used to support the dissemination of ILT based learning.

## Recommendations for Information Learning Technology

We recommend that the Department should:

- R93 commission an all-Wales audit of ICT-based learning technology resources
- R94 build on the proposed ICT strategy for schools and the post-16 e-learning strategy developed by ELWa in order to advocate and encourage the development of ICT-enabled learning in schools and FEIs
- R95 building on existing practice in institutions, consider the roll-out of an all-Wales compatible virtual learning environment, and
- R96 fund the development of a centre of excellence for ICT-enabled learning to:
- develop Wales-wide principles of ICT-enabled learning
  - search and source world class materials
  - commission materials while ensuring that Wales does not develop materials of its own where better ones exist
  - develop teachers in all institutions and specifically influence the content of Initial Teacher Training with regard to ICT-enabled learning, and
  - give particular consideration to the potential for further developing e-learning in such subject areas as Mathematics and the Welsh language.

### Governance:

- 8.55** As highlighted by Estyn, the current model of governance emphasises individual provider responsibility to the detriment of partnership and collaboration<sup>45</sup>. As our goal is to move from good and excellent institutions to good and excellent networks, it is necessary to shift governance and leadership to the same paradigm. Governance will need to be accountable for both of these issues: the performance of the institution and its contribution to the network.
- 8.56** Commissioning within a consortium so as to meet learners' needs and deliver entitlement will equally demand a new approach to governance. The new system must emphasise accountability at area and consortia level and should include accountability for effective collaboration in meeting learner outcomes – most fundamentally, Basic Skills improvement across an area.
- 8.57** The role of Local Authorities within the 14-19 Consortium model becomes essentially a strategic approach to commissioning appropriate high quality learning opportunities. To our minds, that is not congruent with Local Authority members sitting on the boards of governors of individual schools or FEIs: it is likely to conflict with the need for them to take an impartial and strategic view of area provision as a whole.
- 8.58** It is critical that FEI governors are formally engaged in the process of evaluating FEI responsiveness to learner, citizen and employer need. The requirement in section 2.2 of the FET Act 2007 that governing bodies should consult learners and employers underpins this. The good practice that exists in some FEIs of ensuring governors play an important evaluative part in quality assessment and performance processes needs to be adopted generally. Governors of FEIs need to give particular emphasis to the role of FEIs as drivers of their local economy through the skills agenda.

45 Estyn Annual Report 2005-2006



- **8.59** We conclude that good governance in schools and FEIs entails accepting accountability for:
  - delivering entitlement by commissioning learning within a consortium
  - ensuring that providers do the right things in the right way, in terms of strategy, balance and priorities
  - creating a cultural context within which a strategy can be delivered
  - monitoring the performance of the institution, its responsiveness to learner, citizen and employer need and of its contribution to the consortium, and
  - ensuring financial viability and probity.
  
- 8.60** This will require a fundamental investment in training and re-training members of governing bodies, and senior managers, in light of their new roles.

### *Recommendations for Governance:*

**We recommend that the Department should:**

**R97**      **redefine the governance of schools and FEIs congruent with consortium commissioning, to include the following:**

**In terms of membership:**

**R98**      **representation and re-election should be compliant with Nolan principles and involve the use of an appointments committee**

**R99**      **all governing bodies should develop an analysis of the extent to which they represent the interests and composition of their local community**

**R100**     **consideration should be given to Local Authority Members not sitting on the boards of schools or FEIs**

**R101**     **the board of governors must include members with appropriate financial, audit and human resource management competencies, and**

**R102**     **the post of Chair of Governors of reconfigured Further Education Institutions should be remunerated, subject to normal public recruitment processes and to appraisal by the Regional Strategic Implementation Group.**

**In terms of communication with stakeholders, governors should:**

**R103**     **publish an annual report**

**R104**     **hold an annual meeting which is publicly advertised**

**R105**     **meet with staff and students at least twice a year**

**R106**     **engage with a range of local employers, and**

R107 commission a 360 degree appraisal of the institution through learners, employers and stakeholders every two years.

In terms of self-assessment:

R108 each governing body must undertake annual self-appraisal, and

R109 every third year, this must involve an independent chair.

## Reducing Bureaucracy, Increasing Effectiveness

**8.61** Having high quality management and leadership at the level of institutions and consortia is critical to success. Creating space within which they can exercise judgement and take responsibility is in turn critical to the development of good managers and leaders. Micro management and undue scrutiny of process have the opposite effect; they stifle and impede. We fully endorse the critical importance of accountability in public services but our findings give cause for concern. Deliverers see themselves as beset by demands for voluminous bodies of information. Different bodies appear to require similar data at different times and in slightly different forms in order to monitor performance in apparently uncoordinated ways. One respondent who had worked in several countries described Wales as the most overly bureaucratic and complex public system he had encountered. We cannot judge the accuracy of that assessment but regulating the ‘how’ rather than the ‘what’ was a source of frustration for very many providers. It was seen as inhibiting leadership, innovation and a measured approach to risk. It could certainly obscure accountability for outcomes.

**8.62** Work-based learning providers (including FEIs) gave more evidence than most on:

- highly bureaucratic performance management and accountability for the use of resources
- a tendency to request data on anything that might possibly be questioned at any point in the future, rather than data which deliver understanding and knowledge
- multiple and uncoordinated audit and inspection processes, some of which appear to focus on unnecessary levels of detail, and
- jam-jar approaches to funding which generate multiple tendering processes for disproportionately small amounts.

*A Work-based Learning sign-up requires the completion of 21 pages of forms, compared with a 2 page Further Education enrolment form. A College will be paid the same for both processes next year. One sign-up for an apprentice can take around six hours to complete.*

FE Colleges delivering Work-based Learning

*Funding for FEIs is strait-jacketed...and hamstrung by a plethora of initiatives, information requests and funding streams each of which operate to their own timescales and objectives. The short-term approach to funding inhibits strategic action and encourages short-term chasing of comparatively small pots of money. NPFS ring-fencing inhibits FE capacity to invest in quality or curriculum development.*

University of Glamorgan/Merthyr College – response to consultation



There have been a number of ill-conceived initiatives launched in recent years such as LCF and CIF, which have suffered from inadequate forward planning and project management. Much time and energy has been wasted, through burdensome bureaucracy and extensive delays associated with the bidding process. Approval has been granted too late, with the expectation of completion within a truncated time period to ensure the use of funding before the end of the financial year.

Coleg Glan Hafren – response to consultation

**8.63** One of the ironies of the Review was that concerns about excessive bureaucracy ran alongside problems faced by such bodies as Estyn who have found it difficult to elicit meaningful or useful data on key issues. We ourselves had to maintain a watching brief throughout the Review on policies under development because there appeared to be no central register of ongoing policy work within the Department.

*A reduction in the usefulness of data for quality assurance purposes has made it harder for leaders and managers to identify strengths and weaknesses in outcomes.*

Estyn May 2007

**8.64** To enable Estyn and the Welsh Assembly Government to perform their responsibilities effectively, there is a need for timely, transparent and accurate data, fed back through simplified reporting mechanisms.

*In one year, my College had to respond to 82 different requests for information from the Welsh Assembly Government: many of these to different contact points.*

FE College Principal

**8.65** To seize the future will mean taking well judged risks rather than being risk averse. The present weight of bureaucracy and its undue focus on process seems unlikely to foster the fleet of foot responsiveness to changing needs and demands that we deem necessary. We were struck, for example, by the evidence from FEIs, employers and higher education institutions on the difference between the weight of bureaucracy bearing upon FEIs and HEIs – and the latter feel even they are subject to unproductive scrutiny. We strongly urge the Department to conduct a 360 degree appraisal of the processes linking the centre and providers as a basis for reducing bureaucracy and facilitating engaged leadership at all levels. Work-based learning merits particular attention as it appears to be far more rule and data bound than the other interactions between providers and the Department.

### *Recommendations for reducing bureaucracy and increasing effectiveness*

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R110** commission a strategic review of the relationships between the Department, providers, employers and SSCs
- R111** conduct a review of its data collection and management information processes to streamline them
- R112** develop a central register of policies, evaluations and reviews, including those under development, to facilitate better cross-Departmental responsiveness, and
- R113** ensure that data requests and targets are based on outcomes and efficiencies.



## **Employer Engagement with Providers**

**8.66** Throughout this report we have given detailed consideration to the need to strengthen and develop employer engagement. It may be helpful at this point to summarise the forms of engagement which we envisage in the future across the learning landscape:

- the majority voice on the Wales Employment and Skills Board, where they will have the opportunity to advocate strategic priorities, monitor performance trends and influence the direction of funding
- membership of Regional Advisory Panels, where they will review the area consortia plans for their quality and responsiveness to business and endorse the work of the Regional Strategic Board, on which their Chair will have a seat
- membership of sectoral groups and Sector Skills Councils, including Academies and Networks of Excellence where appropriate, where they will determine appropriate courses and advocate level or redeployment of investment
- seats on governing bodies, where they will ensure employer interests are addressed
- an enhanced entitlement through a realignment of FE funding to promote significantly increased employer-led learning, and
- the ability to contribute to the design of courses, apprenticeships and diplomas.



## ○ Chapter 9: Quality

- 9.1 If Wales is serious about World Class education and training, it is unacceptable to have any poor educational providers, but it is insufficient to have only some excellent institutions. We need to ensure that every learner has access to good or excellent provision, no matter where they are enrolled. The processes by which quality is assured throughout post-14 education are the means of assuring that excellence. The Welsh Assembly Government has to take responsibility for any major failures but in the first instance, quality has to be owned and driven by providers themselves – in our model, primarily through consortia. Self-assessment is now a standard process throughout the sector and a careful enhancement of it could lead to developments such as the self-regulation model currently being promoted by FEIs.

### *The Inspection Framework*

- 9.2 There needs to be a shared understanding of the triggers for and the nature of intervention when standards are insufficient. We see merit in the idea that the current annual Provider Performance Review process undertaken by the Department should be streamlined with Estyn's inspections. We see no value in maintaining two separate and sometimes overlapping systems and believe that the development of a single streamlined quality process by Estyn would both minimise the bureaucratic overhead and increase the coherence of the system. The process of merging the two processes will enable a common approach to be adopted across FEIs, schools and private training providers.
- 9.3 While we believe that reduced bureaucracy in the quality assurance process is important, it is essential that we drive up quality. In the first instance, the newly integrated Estyn process should be conducted annually, with a view to reducing the frequency over time.
- 9.4 In developing a new unified quality assurance framework, Estyn will also need to reflect the priorities that we have outlined in this Review. With the development of 14-19 consortia, it is essential that standards and quality are inspected at the consortium level to supplement (but not overlap with) institution-level inspection. We are referring not simply to standards of teaching in the classroom or measures of attainment, but also to the need to provide holistic development for each learner. The consortium inspection process should measure whether each consortium has developed the most appropriate curriculum, aligned timetabling, individual learning plans and learner transport to deliver every learner's individual entitlement. The current area inspections are a useful building block for this process. Institutions will have two main aspects to their role: that of the home institution and that of the provider institution. The framework should be able to accommodate this distinction fairly easily.

### *The Learner and Employer Voice*

- 9.5 The inclusion in the Further Education and Training Act of a requirement upon FEIs to consult employers and learners is an important step towards systematising accountability and responsiveness to citizen and employer need. There needs to be a much greater emphasis on the involvement of both learners and employers in assessing the quality of both processes and outcomes. Significant progress needs to be made if the learner voice is to be heard at every level throughout institutions and at consortium level through learner panels. Estyn assessment of provider responsiveness will need to ensure that such consultations are rigorous and systematically utilise quantitative as well as opinion data.

*We call for enhanced student participation in the Estyn Inspection process...to demonstrate a firm commitment to increase further education students ownership [of] their education.*

National Union of Students – Response to Consultation

**9.6** The Employer Panel of the Regional Strategic Board is one mechanism through which to harness the employer voice. We were impressed with the development and piloting in England of the New Standard for employer responsiveness. It provides an objective national framework to assess and accredit organisations for their responsiveness to employers; excellence in delivering training, commitment to continuous improvement and specialisation around industry sectors. We advocate its use in Wales.

### **The link between quality and funding**

**9.7** The link between quality and funding has been and remains a powerful lever to ensure standards. This should continue. We endorse the move to require all institutions to achieve Grade 2 across all provision by 2010, as a pre-requisite for funding. However, we believe that all institutions should achieve a Grade 2 in Management and Governance earlier than that, by 2009 as the effectiveness of management and leadership is paramount in driving other aspects of excellence. For funding to be so closely linked to quality, two points follow:

- the Department must develop a strategy for action and a readiness to act if standards are too low
- in order to prevent that occurrence, there must be a focus on institutional development.

**9.8** We see several types of institutional development as being fundamental. The three key paradigm shifts that emerge as they relate to providers are:

- for FEIs to develop more employer-facing work
- for schools to develop commissioning roles, and
- for private training providers to continue to professionalise.

### **Development of the provider workforce**

**9.9** Our proposals imply a major programme of staff development across the sector. We are demanding a great deal. The need, for example, to teach learners about working life in a range of occupationally-specific courses demands that teachers' own skills, knowledge and understanding are of a high standard and up to date.

**9.10** To deliver our programme of reform across the sector, Wales needs teachers, lecturers and tutors who can:

- develop personalised learning programmes for individual learners
- deliver learning in flexible ways, to meet the needs of learners with different learning styles and aspirations, with a particular emphasis on increasing the experiential elements of learning
- develop personalised learning programmes for individual learners
- adapt to working in a collaborative, cross-consortia environment, perhaps with larger groups of learners from different institutions
- maintain, where applicable, their non-teaching expertise so that they are able to deliver work-related learning to current industry standards



- develop in learners a whole range of inter-personal skills which may not be specifically embedded or assessed within current subject specialisms
- develop expertise in the management and support of ICT-enhanced learning
- recognise and respond to Basic Skills deficiencies and provide additional support or at least referral for those in need of assistance

**9.11** We do not assume that all staff will be able to perform all of these roles. It is important therefore to consider the skills mix, to build on existing skills and to consider the development of new roles. We have, for example, underlined the considerable difference between the I4-I9 agenda and the FE role in developing the adult workforce. The latter will require staff with far more sector-specific knowledge and awareness, as well as a distinctly commercial approach if full cost recovery work is to be increased to the extent that we believe is essential.

*There is a need to recognise the need for a cadre of learning support workers for the learning and skills sector. This group of para-professionals will allow the needs of learners to be met and support qualified lecturers in their work. Whilst the practice of integrating such support is well embedded in the schools sector, there is significant room for progress in FE.*

UCET Cymru – response to consultation

## Leadership and management

**9.12** There is also a powerful need to redefine leadership and workforce skills. Estyn<sup>46</sup> states that “*there is an increased polarisation between those providers who have effective leaders and managers and those that do not... Too many leaders and managers continue to plan in isolation, responding only to strategic drivers which benefit them.*”

**9.13** Leadership within a consortium context will require the creation of new roles, supported by a systematic approach to training principals, head teachers and local authority staff to empower them as future leaders who are able to put area needs ahead of those of individual institutions. Commissioning and the management of supply chains are specific skills for which training will be needed. However, collaboration is also a skill; it is not something that springs into life just because it is desired. Evidence to the panel from a number of sources including the University and Colleges Union (UCU) as well as Estyn focused upon the need to ensure that managers and teachers develop the skills and competencies necessary to work collaboratively and in partnerships. Such training will be required across the board, at the level of FEI and school governors as well as at all levels of staff.

**9.14** In England, Foster<sup>47</sup> argued for a revitalisation of FE workforce reform and of leadership development programmes. He recommended the development of a National Strategy. A similar approach is required in Wales if practitioners, managers and leaders are to develop the level of skills required to enable them to engage effectively with cross-institutional learning delivery and collaborative strategic planning. In Wales, there is a leadership development programme in place for schools, but not, as yet, for FEIs or work-based learning providers. In giving evidence, UCU stressed the need for a coherent approach to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) which linked across all post-16 provision schools, FEIs and work-based providers. We concur. The necessary skills and joint training are unlikely to be developed if there is not even a consistent approach to CPD across the system.

<sup>46</sup> Leadership and strategic management in the further education, work-based learning and adult community-based learning sectors (May 2007)

<sup>47</sup> Sir Andrew Foster: Realising the Potential – A review of the future role of further education colleges – DfES 2005

## Benchmarking

**9.15** It is critical that the Welsh Assembly Government leads the development of appropriate benchmarking of performance and of learning outcomes. Information should be made available to citizens to assure them that local provision is delivering learning outcomes at a standard which compares favourably with appropriate all-Wales, UK and international measures. Benchmarking tools should be adopted to set challenging targets which are then adhered to. We were disappointed to note a reduction in *Vision into Action* of targets which were set in *The Learning Country*. Benchmarking should be meaningful and supportive to institutions. We accept that this is difficult to achieve in practice: some of the easiest comparisons to make are often some of the least helpful – but leaders and managers of institutions and consortia must have ways of measuring their own performance by looking to comparators within and beyond Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government, within the transformation and improvement agenda, should enable and require fforwm and the National Training Federation (NTF) to develop benchmarking clubs linking institutions, networks and consortia in and beyond Wales so as to drive performance.

### Recommendations for Quality:

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R114** ensure that Estyn's future approach to inspection is structured so as to drive forward the transformation and improvement agenda
- R115** work with Estyn to develop, for implementation in 2009, a single streamlined framework for inspection to be managed by Estyn, initially on an annual basis and to incorporate the Provider Performance Review process
- R116** require that all providers achieve the minimum standard of **Grade 2 in Management and Governance** by 2009 as the first step towards achieving the minimum standard of **Grade 2** across all provision by 2010
- R117** develop a detailed set of measures, to be applied in the event of failure to achieve **Grade 2 in Management and Governance**, which might include the escalation of a withdrawal of funding but which will also address the needs of learners and employers
- R118** move towards a lighter touch approach to the audit of quality and performance, taking into account factors such as track record, evidence of good systems, stakeholder engagement and benchmarking. This might include a process of provider self-regulation
- R119** ensure that a revised inspection framework monitors standards and quality on a consortium basis, including measures of effective collaboration, to assure learners and employers that local provision is performing at the appropriate standard
- R120** ensure that employers are more effectively engaged and represented in quality assurance processes through a 360 degree appraisal process at least every two years and through adoption or adaptation of the **New Standard** for employer responsiveness



R121 **require that learner panels are convened at course, institution, consortia, area and national level, and**

R122 **ensure the development of a sophisticated and appropriate approach to benchmarking at national, consortia and institution level.**

**In terms of staff development:**

R123 **in conjunction with Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK), consider the training needs of new entrant teaching staff in post-14 education, giving consideration to the need to recruit flexibly those with current and high levels of vocational expertise**

R124 **establish a minimum entitlement to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teaching/lecturing staff in schools and FEIs which should be not less than 10 days per year and which should include the opportunity for staff teaching on work-related programmes to have a period of immersion in the appropriate work environment**

R125 **in conjunction with Public Service Management Wales (PSMW) and drawing on the experience of the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) focus on the training and development needs of senior staff in FEIs and work-based learning providers, building where possible on the successful programmes for Headteachers in schools**

R126 **develop and implement joint training for governors and senior staff in FEIs, schools and work-based learning providers, in the skills required to work effectively in commissioning consortia, and**

R127 **develop courses and toolkits to help support and train Learner Representatives.**

# Chapter 10: Funding

**10.1** The major programme of educational reform that we propose has significant financial implications. It is for Ministers and the Department to determine how our recommendations are implemented and funded, but in this chapter we consider the existing budget(s) for post-14 provision and make some suggestions about priorities. The education budget can transform lives – and the economy – and we believe that the Department needs to undertake a review of priorities and the efficiency with which existing resources are used. It concerns us, for example, that not enough of the resource is focused on the most disadvantaged. We also consider that there are too many funding streams, that the funding process is too complex and that funding blocks can too readily become policy silos. The dependence on European funding raises concerns for the future.

## *The efficacy of the current funding system*

**10.2** In assessing the current funding system, we have used five key principles. The system should:

- be fair and equitable
- facilitate choice by learners and employers
- be transparent and as light on complexity and bureaucracy as possible
- facilitate innovation and high performance in terms of outcomes
- facilitate accountability.

**10.3** The current system falls short on more than one of these criteria. Most significantly, it does not facilitate choice by learners (it rewards schools for holding on to learners who might achieve better elsewhere) nor by employers (for example, it does not incentivise FEIs to develop and deliver services to business). As a consequence, the funding system does not facilitate the highest performance in terms of outcomes. In terms of bureaucracy, there is a multiplicity of funding streams and a tendency towards ‘jam-jar’ funding.

**10.4** No public funding system is ever sufficiently well resourced. It is informative, however, to draw comparisons with levels of funding in our UK neighbours. The population of Wales is currently 5.84% of that in England: this is the benchmark we have used when comparing funding. Because of the integration of 14-16 funding into whole school budgets, it is difficult to draw direct comparisons for this age group, but comparing post-16 *programme* funding in England and Wales since 2001/02, we can see a period of convergence up to 2004/05 followed by a downward trend with less being spent per head of population in Wales than in England.





## The relationship between Programme Funding and Population in Wales and England

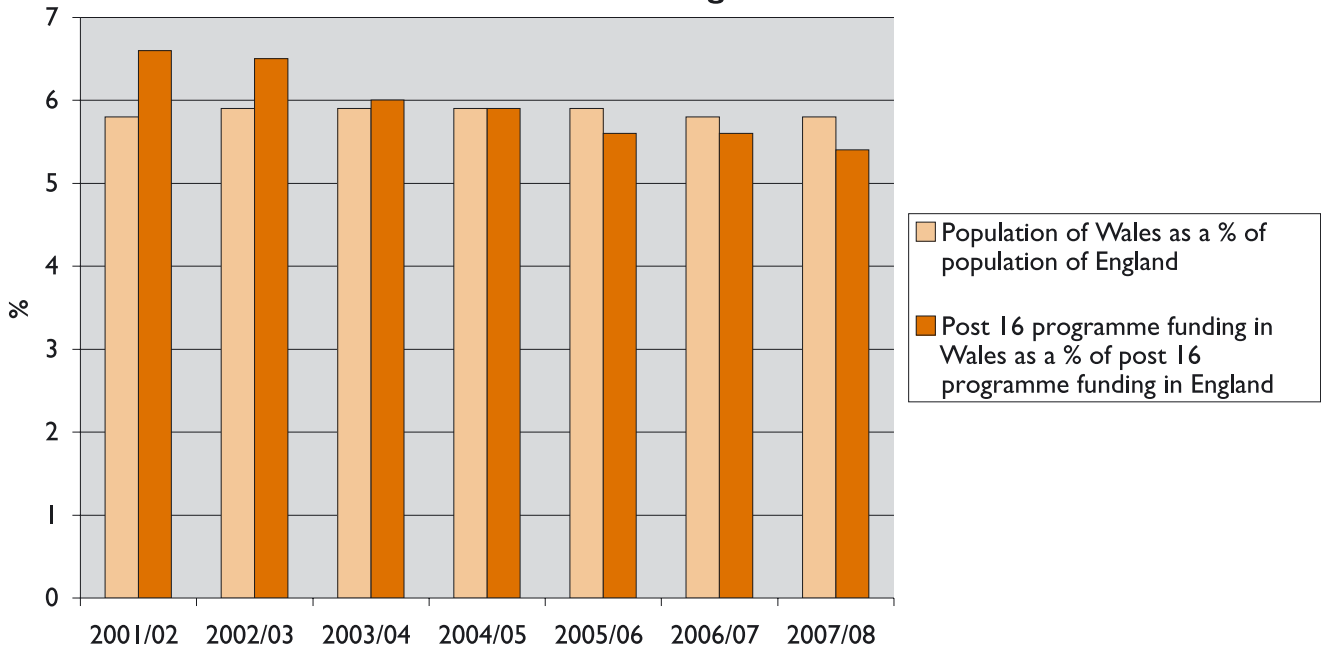


Figure 10

**10.5** The picture with regard to capital funding is more concerning still. Whereas capital expenditure for the post-16 educational estate in England is growing at an increasing rate, for example from £500m this year to £750m in 2009/10, no such growth is planned for Wales. In 2007/08 post-16 capital expenditure in Wales was £14.15m – less than 3% of that in England. The stated aim in England is to make the FE estate world class, with 21<sup>st</sup> century facilities available to all learners. In comparison, in Wales, there is a backlog of maintenance for the sector of £92m and it would cost in the region of a further £200m to upgrade the high proportion of accommodation categorised as poor. We are in serious danger of allowing the estate to fall into decay.

### Comparison of post-16 capital expenditure per head of population - 2007/08

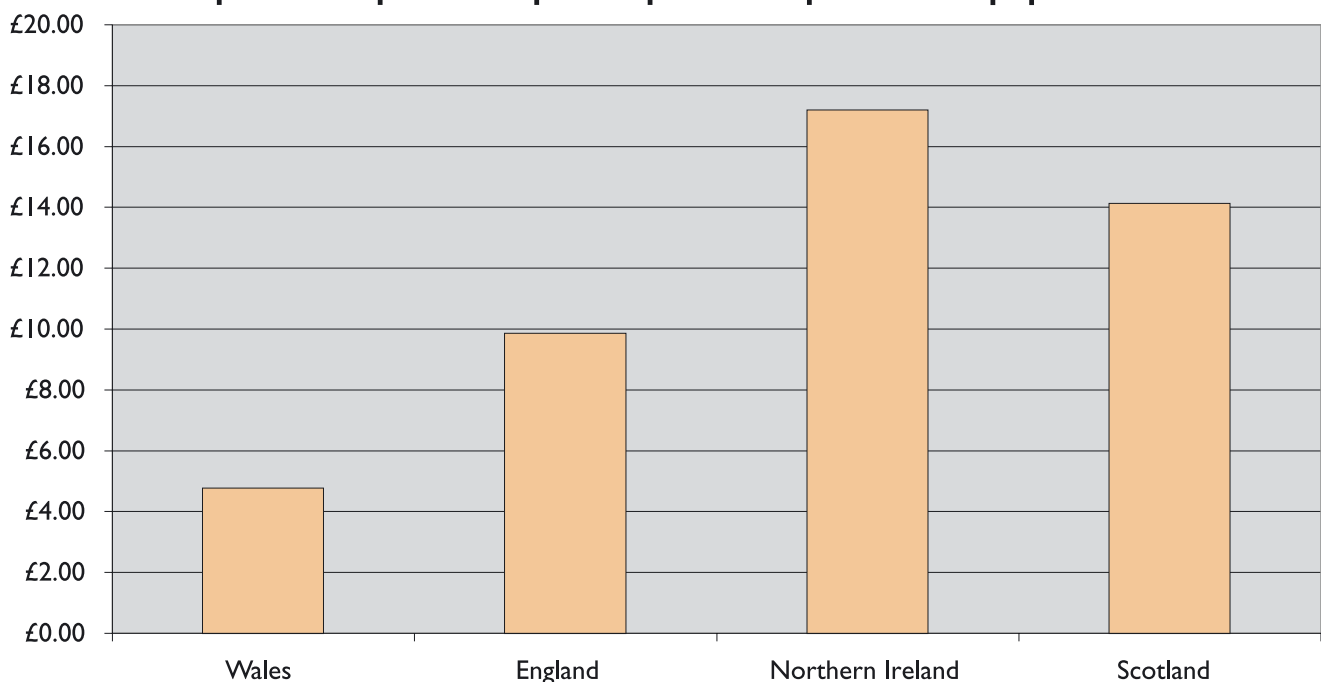


Figure 11

**10.6** The quantum of public funding must be increased – we cannot substantially disadvantage post-14 learners compared with those elsewhere in the UK – but we must also look at other sources of income. We believe it is essential that the Department, working with providers, should develop a systematic approach to:

- fees policies
- match funding from employers
- European Convergence funding, and
- an improvement in FEIs' income generation so as to increase the critical mass of the system.

**10.7** As we have consistently argued, the necessary increase in public funding can only be justified by a wholehearted and relentless pursuit of efficiency and a re-prioritisation of existing expenditure patterns.

### **Proposed Funding Changes**

**10.8** To enable the Department to implement the radical changes we are proposing, we suggest the following changes to the funding system.

- A subject-weighted transfer price scheme should be adopted as has already been implemented in England. This pre-supposes an all-Wales alignment of 14-16 funding. This could be achieved in one of two ways. At the appropriate point in the development of 14-19 consortia, *either* local authorities should calculate the element for 14-16 provision and should transfer this funding to the consortium *or* this element of funding should be retained by WAG for direct funding of consortia. In either case we believe 14-16 provision should be funded by consortia in the same way as 16-19 provision.
- Work-based learning is an arbitrary funding category. The Department should de-classify Skillbuild and Apprenticeship programmes as work-based learning programmes. Skillbuild should be funded as part of the overall programme of 14-19 provision for the most disadvantaged learners (where appropriate) and as part of the adult learning programme, with enhanced flexibility and post hoc accountability.
- Two thirds of post-19 education and training funding should be directed to funding the Welsh response to Leitch (see our recommendations in Chapter 4). This will entail a substantially reconfigured budget consisting of:
  - expanded Apprenticeship programmes
  - expanded Workforce Development Accounts
  - a new Employer Entitlement account
  - a new Services to Employers Fund to drive business development in FEIs, and
  - the expansion of Foundation Degrees on a consortium basis.
- The remaining one third of funding for post-19, and that for Adult and Community learning should be subject to a more flexible system of accountability, including elements of post-hoc accountability as in Skillbuild. This approach would link to Individual Learning Accounts; existing systems should be streamlined as far as possible. All funding within this section of the budget should be targeted towards disadvantaged learners. We believe leisure and other adult provision should operate within realistic fee-paying structures, allowing public subsidy to be more clearly focused on the most educationally disadvantaged.



- **10.9** Capital funding is already insufficient and the vocational and practical learning we propose are more capital intensive than most classroom learning. There is therefore an urgent need for more capital funding, but we accept it will have to be expanded incrementally. We recommended earlier in the report that the first tranche of additional capital funding should be dedicated to the early pilot 14-19 consortia, and thereafter to other consortia as they develop. Plans for the deployment of capital should be an integral part of area consortium planning and should be assessed regionally against the national strategy.
- **10.10** There is a need, as we have indicated, to review the whole education budget in terms of its priorities. One objective would be to promote the social justice agenda by focussing adequate resources on those with greatest educational need. Another would be to prioritise those activities most likely to achieve critical outcomes. Some of the priorities we have underlined are comparatively more expensive and would alter the balance between the volume of learning activities and unit cost. We believe this is acceptable providing the funding outcome was seen to be strong on priorities, effectiveness and efficiency.

### **Recommendations for Funding:<sup>48</sup>**

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R128    develop with local authorities a single funding mechanism for 14-16 to facilitate consortium funding**
- R129    fund all 14-19 learning through consortia via a single funding mechanism within five years**
- R130    integrate the funding of apprenticeships fully with the National Planning and Funding System and ensure planning for apprenticeships gives balanced cover across areas and regions**
- R131    focus increased capital funding on strategic national and regional priorities, including the first 14-19 consortia, and**
- R132    undertake a fundamental review of the entire budget to drive the priorities, effective outcomes and efficiency that would underpin the case for increased funding of post-14 education and training.**

<sup>48</sup> These recommendations should be considered in conjunction with other recommendations on funding contained within earlier chapters of the report.

# Chapter 11: National Governance

- 11.1** We have consistently argued that Wales has a strong set of policies for post-14 education and that we must now focus on effective delivery and implementation. Delivery can only happen on the ground and it has to take us in new directions. Providers have to be given the freedom and encouragement to be bold, imaginative and innovative. They have also to be responsive to learner and employer demand and to deliver against ambitious outcome and efficiency targets. We described this triangle of principal forces in Chapter 6 when underlining the importance of the regions.
- 11.2** The role of central government is, following Beecham, that of **engaged leadership**. This should be at the heart of a re-modelled machinery of government appropriate to a small country such as Wales. Close and flexible working relationships are possible in a small country; much of the arms length bureaucracy inherited from the UK model could be swept away. This is central to our proposals for the role of regions; they could foster close and productive interaction. However, small countries can slip into a cosiness that limits ambition; the lack of critical mass can also mean intense pressure on limited budgets.
- 11.3** Joined-up government is critical to our vision. Central government (the WAG) must be a key player in taking this forward. We are clear that better communication and voluntary collaboration do not go far enough. Shared objectives, pooled budgets and joint accountability are essential. This is true at the level of central government, both within WAG and in its dealings with non-devolved departments such as DWP. We have argued that it is fundamentally important in the whole chain of delivery and have therefore recommended highly developed consortia. To deliver such collaboration at the local level requires a clearer relationship between central government and delivery bodies and we have identified the role of the region as paramount.
- 11.4** A strong relationship must not be one that stifles local initiative and management. Engaged leadership is the antithesis of micro-management. The crucial role for the centre is to strike the right balance between providing strategic leadership, driving pooled sovereignty at local level and simplifying models of joint accountability and performance management which allow local leaders and managers the room to perform.
- 11.5** The Beecham Report set change in motion but we echo its view that there is still some way to go on the key roles that only WAG can perform:
- linking the work of devolved and non-devolved departments
  - determining a cross-departmental approach to strategic policies
  - setting cross-departmental outcome targets
  - promoting appropriate cross-departmental pooling of effort and resources, and
  - managing performance on a cross-departmental basis.
- 11.6** Given such a context we are clear that the key roles of the Department are to:
- establish outcome-focussed departmental strategies
  - set priorities
  - determine the allocation of funding
  - drive efficiency and performance, and
  - create productive links between all aspects of delivery from centre to localities.



- **11.7** In acting as the custodian of goals and performance, the Welsh Assembly Government must itself be held to account in ways that ensure success. Beecham argued that for government to be effective it is critical that the National Assembly for Wales adopts an appropriate scrutiny process. We agree. The Assembly's role must be cross-departmental, outcome orientated and underpinned by appropriate benchmarks – national, UK wide and international. Such a process could focus in the first instance on an annual report against key outcomes.
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### ***Recommendations for National Governance***

**We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government should:**

**R133 ensure that strategic cross-departmental goals and outcome targets inform post-14 educational policies.**

**We recommend that the National Assembly for Wales should:**

**R134 adopt a cross-departmental approach to scrutiny on a thematic, issues and client group basis**

**R135 ensure that its scrutiny processes are outcome orientated and reflect the Beecham view of proportionality as well as our understanding of mission and purpose, and**

**R136 undertake an annual report of progress against key outcomes and commission a review of the implementation of the recommendations of this review in five years time.**

# Annex I: Full List of Recommendations

## Recommendations for Basic Skills

We recommend that, in the light of the Leitch Review of Skills, the Department should:

- R1 adopt the Leitch targets for Level 2 Basic Skills
- R2 expand the Employer Pledge to cover Level 2 Basic Skills
- R3 review both the method and quantum of funding for Basic Skills provision with a view to achieving these targets
- R4 develop and implement a requirement for systematic diagnostic assessment of Basic Skills at ages 9, 11 and 14
- R5 develop national assessment tools that assess learners on their ability to perform life and work related skills in both written and oral communication
- R6 extend the recently developed assessment tools for 16 year old learners to include the assessment of writing skills
- R7 develop and implement a strategy to provide intensive intervention to remedy skills gaps
- R8 ensure that a Basic Skills intervention workforce is developed and recruited. These tutors must not be marginalised by their terms and conditions
- R9 designate Head teachers and FEI principals as Accountable Officers with direct responsibility for Basic Skills attainment levels incorporating a measure of value-added
- R10 set a threshold below which:
  - a. schools or FEIs would be open to intervention methods, and
  - b. the Accountable Officer would be liable to specific scrutiny by the National Assembly
- R11 incorporate Basic Skills requirements, including the signing of the Employer Pledge, within the liP and Workforce Development Account processes, and
- R12 ensure that the resources allocated to upgrade Basic Skills across Wales are sufficient to meet the demand.



## **Recommendations for Welsh-medium, Bilingual and Welsh Language Learning**

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R13 re-assess the funding weighting attached to **Welsh-medium** and **bilingual** provision
- R14 extend the **National Practitioners' Training Programme** and **Sabbaticals Scheme** and provide a comprehensive training programme for **Welsh for Adults** tutors
- R15 underpin **Welsh-medium** provision with an imaginative strategy for the use of e-learning
- R16 commission research into the comparative impact of different strategies on the level of usage of the **Welsh** language by learners as they progress to further and higher levels of learning
- R17 establish a **bilingual expert group** to drive forward policies that address the **Bilingual/Welsh-medium** agenda
- R18 continue to support **Welsh for Adults** centres, and
- R19 ensure that **Careers Wales** informs young people of the range of opportunities available which require the **Welsh** language.

## **Recommendations for ESOL**

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R20 urgently address the shortages of qualified **ESOL** tutors
- R21 develop support materials for **ESOL**, including e-learning materials
- R22 ensure that **FEIs** prioritise **ESOL** as an essential skill
- R23 publish eligibility and entitlement criteria for funding **ESOL**
- R24 review the weighting of **ESOL** funding
- R25 ensure that employers contribute appropriately to the costs of **ESOL**, and
- R26 introduce **ESOL for Work** qualifications to meet the needs of skilled migrant workers.



## Recommendations for 14-19 Learning Pathways

We recommend that the Department should:

- R27 develop the **Welsh Bac** as a coherent philosophy of education that promotes:
- experiential, practical and vocational as well as academic elements
  - support for the development of key skills and social skills, and
  - the development and testing of employability skills
- R28 promote a strong brand image for vocational routes, including apprenticeships, through a national campaign
- R29 develop a comprehensive national online prospectus for 14-19 learners and in the meantime ensure that all learners receive an area prospectus
- R30 develop and support a mechanism to enable the **Children's Commissioner** to fulfil the role of an ombudsman with regard to learners' entitlement to receive comprehensive and unbiased information
- R31 develop a low-bureaucracy validation process for the delivery of post-14 vocational learning within schools, to ensure that:
- the programme has been developed in conjunction with local employers
  - the programme is taught by vocational specialists with current and relevant skills and experience, and
  - the facilities to be used by learners meet industry standards
- R32 develop a series of practical vocational learning centres for young people, in conjunction with employers, possibly supported by **European Convergence** funding
- R33 build upon the **Work Based Learning Pathways** pilots to develop an all-Wales, cross-sector programme
- R34 ensure that the **Wales Employment and Skills Board** adopts the **National Employer Engagement Strategy**<sup>49</sup>
- R35 develop guidance on learner travel for 14-19 learners, including the funding of travel to work experience placements and to learning provision outside their home institution
- R36 allocate additional funding to allow for the expansion of apprenticeships by 50% over the next four years in line with the commitments within *One Wales*
- R37 work with **HEFCW** to develop a funding model for apprenticeships at Levels 4 and 5
- R38 proceed with the development of a national apprenticeship clearing house and develop a national record of apprentices

49 As developed by the 14-19 Employer Engagement Task Force



- R39 review the funding and guidance for Key Skills
- R40 through the Wales Employment and Skills Board, require all Sector Skills Councils to develop progression routes for apprenticeships from Level 2 to Level 5 where appropriate
- R41 in the context of WAG's Science Policy for Wales develop and fund a national strategy for improving participation and performance in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
- R42 develop a national strategy to address the education needs of looked-after learners, to include the engagement of foster parents in the support of learners in their care
- R43 establish a task and finish group to develop models of mentoring for 14-19 learners, particularly the most vulnerable
- R44 develop, fund and implement a comprehensive strategy for more able and talented learners of all ages and from whatever background, and
- R45 develop a comprehensive strategy for the international dimension of post-14 education.

### *Recommendations for Employer-led Training*

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R46 increase investment in Workforce Development Accounts to £10 million within 5 years. There should be a list of preferred suppliers (including FEIs) but organisations should be free to choose the most appropriate provider
- R47 transfer £40 million per annum funding from general FE funding into a new Employer Entitlement Account to fund support for organisations within economic sectors or geographic areas identified by the Wales Employment and Skills Board. The Account should:
  - a. be focused on economic/sectoral priorities identified by the Employment and Skills Board
  - b. be bid for by partnerships of employer(s) and provider(s)
  - c. fund both qualifications and bite sized elements of learning
  - d. ideally involve match funding, and
  - e. be spent exclusively with Further Education Institutions for a period of three years, at which point an evaluation should be undertaken. If FE responsiveness is found to be unsatisfactory, tenders should be offered on an open competition basis.

- R48 allocate £5 million per annum as a Further Education Institutions' Services to Employers Fund to operate on similar lines to the current HEFCW Third Mission funding and expand the HEFCW Third Mission funding to enable joint funding of collaborative services to employers with FEIs
- R49 ensure that there are no arbitrary barriers to FEIs and HEIs working with partner institutions in England where such cross-border working would benefit Wales
- R50 combine the DE&T and DCELLS field forces and promote greater integration across all the field forces
- R51 identify priority sectors for the development of apprenticeships in conjunction with DE&T
- R52 informed by the outcomes of shared apprenticeship pilots, expand the take-up of apprenticeships by SMEs, involving SSCs as appropriate
- R53 examine the case for a focused approach to financial support for SMEs who wish to offer apprenticeships, and
- R54 working with representatives from Sector Skills Councils and Awarding Bodies, develop a mechanism for employers to incorporate company specific units into qualifications in a timely and responsive manner.

**We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government should:**

- R55 in conjunction with WLGA and PSMW develop a programme of public sector apprenticeships for Wales at all levels.

### ***Recommendations for Adult and Community Learning and Meeting the Needs of the Disadvantaged***

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R56 refocus public funding of Adult and Community Learning (ACL) on those who:
  - a. have not achieved Level 2 qualifications
  - b. belong to population groups in which participation is especially low, and/or
  - c. live in areas of marked educational disadvantage
- R57 develop a fees policy and monitor its impact on general ACL provision
- R58 fund the expansion of non-formal learning and outreach programmes for the most disadvantaged, and
- R59 pilot a combination of Individual Learning Accounts and post-hoc accountability for grants to maximise flexibility in delivering to the most disadvantaged.



**We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government should:**

- R60 **develop a strategic approach to the most disadvantaged to include the sharing of best practice across multiple agencies**
- R61 **take a strategic, pooled budget approach to meeting the needs of all the most disadvantaged groups – including school age children**
- R62 **ensure that the size of the pooled budget is commensurate with need and the longer term social costs of not addressing it, and**
- R63 **extend this joined-up approach to non-devolved agencies and most particularly the work of the Department of Work and Pensions.**

### ***Recommendation for working more effectively at a Regional Level***

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R64 **establish, in each region:**
  - a) **a Regional Employer Advisory Panel**
  - b) **a Regional Provider Advisory Panel, and**
  - c) **a Regional Strategic Implementation Group which should consist of:**
    - **a senior officer representing constituent Local Authorities**
    - **a senior officer from DCELLS**
    - **a senior officer from DE&T**
    - **an employer representative – the Chair of the Regional Employer Panel, and**
    - **a learning provider representative – the Chair of the Regional Provider Panel.**

### ***Recommendations for Commissioning Consortia:***

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R65 **invite providers and local authorities to submit joint proposals to develop consortia within areas defined by the Welsh Assembly Government**
- R66 **immediately pilot three or four consortia to test elements of infrastructure including commissioning and funding**
- R67 **within 3 years, ensure that the rest of Wales adopts the consortium model**
- R68 **within 5 years, direct all 14-19 funding through consortia**
- R69 **ensure the appointment in each consortium of a Leader to act as a catalyst for change**

- R70 create an action-learning set for consortia leaders, linked to best practice in England and internationally
- R71 locate responsibility for managing careers guidance and learner coaching at the consortium level within the consortium leader's team
- R72 pump-prime capital expenditure in the pilots as a first step towards a larger capital programme for schools and FEIs
- R73 consider the case for building on institutional and consortia strengths to create academies in areas of national or sectoral need
- R74 commission and implement an ICT-based national learner management and profiling system as an essential element of consortium architecture, and
- R75 ensure that each consortium adopts a common system of timetabling, cross-institution protocols and a learner promise system.

### *Recommendations for Schools*

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R76 immediately commission an independent and wide-ranging review of 11-16 education which would:
  - a. further develop the Welsh Bac (see Chapter 3)
  - b. review the transition between primary and secondary education
  - c. identify how schools should address the challenges of under-achievement and poor engagement
  - d. identify ways of embedding practical, experiential learning throughout the curriculum, and
  - e. respond to Estyn's challenge to re-think the traditional concept of 'the school'.
- R77 create a standing Schools Transformation Panel charged with the task of stimulating and monitoring the transformation process, and
- R78 ensure that schools, their governors and staff are supported in adapting to consortium working.



### ***Recommendations for Further Education Institutions:***

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R79 ensure that FEIs become the recognised skills driver for an area by including this responsibility explicitly in the terms of reference of the governing body
- R80 within 2 years, reconfigure Further Education Institutions to ensure that no stand-alone institution has a turnover below £15m
- R81 within 5 years, ensure that each consortium has a single FEI by process of merger or federation of FEIs, each of which has a turnover of substantially more than £15m, and
- R82 to meet the distinctive needs of the metropolitan economy, reconfigure provision in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan by inviting tenders for the creation of a Cardiff Metropolitan College which might include Higher Education. A similar process might be appropriate elsewhere, and
- R83 ensure that Further Education Institutions are full participants in 14-19 consortia; partial engagement should not be an option.

### ***Recommendations for Foundation Degrees***

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R84 working with HEFCW, establish and fund a programme of new Foundation Degrees in key areas of the economy. These should be developed and delivered by consortia of employers, HEIs and FEIs, with an employer chair, and
- R85 as appropriate, consider and consult upon the granting of Foundation Degree awarding powers to the FEI sector.

## ***Recommendations for Work-based Learning Providers***

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R86** by encouraging associations of providers, mergers and the use of lead providers, reduce the numbers of contracts to approximately 25 within three years
- R87** support the National Training Federation in developing further its focus on driving quality and leadership in the sector
- R88** support the National Training Federation in developing CPD for its members, and
- R89** ensure that private training providers are full participants in 14-19 consortia.

## ***Recommendations for Careers advice and guidance***

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R90** restructure Careers Wales to create a unitary organisation
- R91** identify the resources necessary to provide an all-age service across Wales most especially for:
  - a.** unemployed and disengaged people
  - b.** returnees to learning
  - c.** those made redundant
  - d.** workforce development, and
- R92** review targets for Careers Wales to ensure that they are outcome rather than activity driven.





## ***Recommendations for Information Learning Technology***

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R93      **commission an all-Wales audit of ICT-based learning technology resources**
- R94      **build on the proposed ICT strategy for schools and the post-16 e-learning strategy developed by ELWa in order to advocate and encourage the development of ICT-enabled learning in schools and FEIs**
- R95      **building on existing practice in institutions, consider the roll-out of an all-Wales compatible virtual learning environment, and**
- R96      **fund the development of a centre of excellence for ICT-enabled learning to:**
- a.      **develop Wales-wide principles of ICT-enabled learning**
  - b.      **search and source world class materials**
  - c.      **commission materials while ensuring that Wales does not develop materials of its own where better ones exist**
  - d.      **develop teachers in all institutions and specifically influence the content of Initial Teacher Training with regard to ICT-enabled learning, and**
  - e.      **give particular consideration to the potential for further developing e-learning in such subject areas as Mathematics and the Welsh language.**

## ***Recommendations for Governance:***

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R97      **redefine the governance of schools and FEIs congruent with consortium commissioning, to include the following:**

**In terms of membership:**

- R98      **representation and re-election should be compliant with Nolan principles and involve the use of an appointments committee**
- R99      **all governing bodies should develop an analysis of the extent to which they represent the interests and composition of their local community**
- R100     **consideration should be given to Local Authority Members not sitting on the boards of schools or FEIs**
- R101     **the board of governors must include members with appropriate financial, audit and human resource management competencies, and**
- R102     **the post of Chair of Governors of reconfigured Further Education Institutions should be remunerated, subject to normal public recruitment processes and to appraisal by the Regional Strategic Implementation Group.**

**In terms of communication with stakeholders, governors should:**

- RI03 publish an annual report**
- RI04 hold an annual meeting which is publicly advertised**
- RI05 meet with staff and students at least twice a year**
- RI06 engage with a range of local employers, and**
- RI07 commission a 360 degree appraisal of the institution through learners, employers and stakeholders every two years.**

**In terms of self-assessment:**

- RI08 each governing body must undertake annual self-appraisal**
- RI09 every third year, this must involve an independent chair.**

### ***Recommendations for reducing bureaucracy and increasing effectiveness***

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- RI10 commission a strategic review of the relationships between the Department, providers, employers and SSCs**
- RI11 conduct a review of its data collection and management information processes to streamline them**
- RI12 develop a central register of policies, evaluations and reviews, including those under development, to facilitate better cross-Departmental responsiveness, and**
- RI13 ensure that data requests and targets are based on outcomes and efficiencies.**



## Recommendations for Quality:

We recommend that the Department should:

- RI14 ensure that Estyn's future approach to inspection is structured so as to drive forward the transformation and improvement agenda
- RI15 work with Estyn to develop, for implementation in 2009, a single streamlined framework for inspection to be managed by Estyn, initially on an annual basis and to incorporate the Provider Performance Review process
- RI16 require that all providers achieve the minimum standard of Grade 2 in Management and Governance by 2009 as the first step towards achieving the minimum standard of Grade 2 across all provision by 2010
- RI17 develop a detailed set of measures, to be applied in the event of failure to achieve Grade 2 in Management and Governance, which might include the escalation of a withdrawal of funding but which will also address the needs of learners and employers
- RI18 move towards a lighter touch approach to the audit of quality and performance, taking into account factors such as track record, evidence of good systems, stakeholder engagement and benchmarking. This might include a process of provider self-accreditation
- RI19 ensure that a revised inspection framework monitors standards and quality on a consortium basis, including measures of effective collaboration, to assure learners and employers that local provision is performing at the appropriate standard
- RI20 ensure that employers are more effectively engaged and represented in quality assurance processes through a 360 degree appraisal process at least every two years and through adoption or adaptation of the New Standard for employer responsiveness
- RI21 require that learner panels are convened at course, institution, consortia, area and national level, and
- RI22 ensure the development of a sophisticated and appropriate approach to benchmarking at national, consortia and institution level.

In terms of staff development:

- RI23 in conjunction with Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK), consider the training needs of new entrant teaching staff in post-14 education, giving consideration to the need to recruit flexibly those with current and high levels of vocational expertise

- R124 **establish a minimum entitlement to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teaching/lecturing staff in schools and FEIs which should be not less than 10 days per year and which should include the opportunity for staff teaching on work-related programmes to have a period of immersion in the appropriate work environment**
- R125 **in conjunction with Public Service Management Wales (PSMW) and drawing on the experience of the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) focus on the training and development needs of senior staff in FEIs and work-based learning providers, building where possible on the successful programmes for Headteachers in schools**
- R126 **develop and implement joint training for governors and senior staff in FEIs, schools and work-based learning providers, in the skills required to work effectively in commissioning consortia, and**
- R127 **develop courses and toolkits to help support and train Learner Representatives.**

### **Recommendations for Funding:<sup>50</sup>**

**We recommend that the Department should:**

- R128 **develop with local authorities a single funding mechanism for 14-16 to facilitate consortium funding**
- R129 **fund all 14-19 learning through consortia via a single funding mechanism within five years**
- R130 **integrate the funding of apprenticeships fully with the National Planning and Funding System and ensure planning for apprenticeships gives balanced cover across areas and regions**
- R131 **focus increased capital funding on strategic national and regional priorities, including the first 14-19 consortia, and**
- R132 **undertake a fundamental review of the entire budget to drive the priorities, effective outcomes and efficiency that would underpin the case for increased funding of post-14 education and training.**

50 These recommendations should be considered in conjunction with other recommendations on funding contained within earlier chapters of the report



## **Recommendations for National Governance**

**We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government should:**

**R133 ensure that strategic cross-departmental goals and outcome targets inform post-14 educational policies.**

**We recommend that the National Assembly for Wales should:**

**R134 adopt a cross-departmental approach to scrutiny on a thematic, issues and client group basis**

**R135 ensure that its scrutiny processes are outcome orientated and reflect the Beecham view of proportionality as well as our understanding of mission and purpose, and**

**R136 undertake an annual report of progress against key outcomes and commission a review of the implementation of the recommendations of this review in five years time.**

## Annex 2: Terms of Reference for the Review

### Review Title:

*The Independent Review of the Mission and Purpose of Further Education in Wales in the context of The Learning Country: Vision into Action.*

### Context and rationale:

In line with the commitment made in the 'The Learning Country-Vision into Action', the Welsh Assembly Government is establishing an independent review to evaluate the strategic mission and role of the Further Education sector in the delivery of education, lifelong learning and skills in Wales.

*The Learning Country-Vision into Action* proposed the need for a thoroughgoing policy review of the mission, and purpose of the sector in Wales. It identified the need to give consideration to the extent which colleges should specialise, the diverse nature of the sector, the focus on employability skills and the need for increased responsiveness to learners.

The review will be holistic and incorporate an analysis not just of Further Education Institutions, but an evaluation of the wider role of the sector in relation to developments in 14-19 education and training, higher education, the Leitch Review on skills, workplace and adult learning.

### Remit:

Within this context the review will consider the extent to which the mission and business objectives of further education providers is clear in purpose, focused and appropriate for the environment in which they operate. Specifically the review will focus on the following:

1. the functions currently exercised by publicly funded bodies in respect of further education and training
2. the efficacy and cost effectiveness of these functions
3. what functions and priorities should be exercised in the future and the priority placed on them
4. the mechanisms for how these functions should be discharged, and
5. the development of the workforce.

In considering these areas the following will need to be investigated:

6. comparative European and international analysis, particularly relating to strategies surrounding the delivery of skills
7. the funding methodology for establishing effective collaboration in education and training
8. the present and future role of the sector in the delivery of economic skills and workforce development, including opportunities for specialisation at national and regional level and the role of the Sector Skills Councils
9. the training and professional development of the workforce, including the case for setting up a workforce professional body



- 10. the present and future contribution of the sector to tackling disadvantage, economic inactivity and widening participation including adult and community learning
- 11. the role of the sector in delivery of higher education, including the establishment of schools/ further and higher education consortia
- 12. methods of ensuring that the experience and views of learners in the sector contribute to the assessment of quality and continued improvement
- 13. the support mechanisms for ensuring learner support and progression for looked after learners
- 14. governance, self regulation and management of FEIs
- 15. strategies for ensuring managerial and teaching competencies are relevant to need
- 16. the role and function of careers support, advice and guidance within the sector, and
- 17. the role and contribution of the sector to the development and delivery of Welsh medium and bilingual learning opportunities and Welsh language skills.

The Review will need to be mindful of the key principles of equality of opportunity; support for the Assembly's policies on race equality, disability and promoting bilingualism; sustainable development; and social justice.



## Annex 3: Glossary of Acronyms used in the Report

ACL	Adult and Community Learning
APEL	Accreditation of Previous Experiential Learning
ASCL	Association of College Lecturers
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CEL	Centre for Excellence in Leadership
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CQFW	The Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
DCELLS or the Dept.	The Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills
DE&T	The Department for the Economy and Transport
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EEA	European Economic Area
ELWa	The Assembly Sponsored Public Body responsible for planning and funding post-16 education and training from 2001 to 2005.
ERG	The external reference group which was established to advise the panel
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
EU	European Union
FEI	Further Education Institution (in some instances, for clarity, the word college is used to refer to an FEI)
FTE	Full Time Equivalence
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GVA	Gross Value Added
HEFCW	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HND	Higher National Diploma
ICT	Information and communications technology
IiP	Investors in People
ILP	Individual Learning Plan
LLUK	Lifelong Learning UK
NEETs	Young people under the age of 25 who are not in education, employment or training.
NPFS	The National Planning and Funding System
NTF	National Training Federation
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
PDA	Personal Digital Assistant
PSMW	Public Sector Management Wales
SEMTA	The Sector Skills Council for Science, Engineering, Manufacturing Technologies
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SSC	Sector Skills Council
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government
WESB	Wales Employment and Skills Board
WLGA	Welsh Local Government Association
WULF	Wales Union Learning Fund



## ○ Annex 4: External Reference Group (ERG) Members

Name	Organisation	Title
Jane Colthup	Skills for Business Network	National Manager Wales
Dr Haydn Edwards	Coleg Menai	Principal
Huw Evans	Coleg Llandrillo	Principal
David Eynon	Caerphilly 14-19 Development	Head of Unit
Rob Humphreys	NIACE Dysgu Cymru	Director
Derek Lloyd	Pembrokeshire College	Chairman of the Board of Governors
Martin Mansfield	Amicus	Regional Officer
Wyn Pritchard	CITB-Construction Skills	Wales Manager
Michelle Sayers	Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK)	National Manager Wales
Darren Thomas	National Union of Students (NUS) Wales	Further Education Officer on the Executive Committee
Lynn Tomkins	Semta (the Sector Skills Council for Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies)	UK Skills Policy & SSAs Director
Amanda Wilkinson	Higher Education Wales (HEW)	Director

### Temporary Co-opted Members:

Cerys Furlong	NIACE Dysgu Cymru	Development Officer
Bill Peaper	Semta	National Manager Wales
Joanne Thomas	Skills for Business Network	National Manager Wales

### Notes:

- Cerys Furlong attended the last two ERG meetings in place of Rob Humphreys
- Jane Colthup (Skills for Logistics) was replaced by Joanne Thomas (ProSkills) for the final ERG meeting as the new Manager of the Skills for Business Network
- Bill Peaper attended the last two ERG meetings instead of Lynn Tomkins