



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

Supplementary guidance: Learning Pathways 14-19

September 2013



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What is the purpose?

To provide guidance to secondary schools and special schools for evaluating Learning Pathways 14-19 when it is a line of enquiry.

For whom is it intended?

Secondary schools and special schools.

From when should the guidance be used?

From September 2010.

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1 Introduction

Learning Pathways 14-19 has six Key Elements:

- Individual Learning Pathways to meet the needs of learners;
- Wider Choice and Flexibility of programmes and ways of learning in a collaborative options menu;
- Learning Core that sets out the common knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes, values and experience;
- Learning Coach Support;
- Access to Personal Support; and
- Careers Information, Advice and Guidance.

In 2009, the Welsh Assembly Government introduced the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure (the 'Measure'). The Measure creates a right for learners aged 14 to 19 to follow a course of study from a local curriculum. It also places a duty upon local authorities, schools and further education institutions to co-operate to ensure that young people have access to a wider choice of options that is better suited to their individual needs. This wider choice is offered at key stage 4 and at post-16.

In addition to a greater choice of courses, the Measure aims to ensure that, through their Learning Pathways, young people are able to access a range of learner support services through a learning coach, personal support services, and careers advice and guidance.

2 Evaluating Learning Pathways 14-19

This guidance is organised mainly around the way that the six Key Elements relate to different key questions of the common inspection framework. It describes where you might find evidence and suggests some questions that you might use.

The main aspects of Learning Pathways 14-19 occur in Key Question 2, but it also features in other key questions.

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

1.1 Standards

Learning Pathways 14-19 is designed to raise standards by ensuring that learners follow appropriate courses that lead to the qualifications that meet their capabilities, interests and needs. Results and trends in performance, including that in the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification, are therefore relevant to Learning Pathways 14-19. It is also important to consider all the results achieved by learners, irrespective of whether they are taught in the school or in partner providers.

Questions to consider

- 1 What percentage of learners gain vocational qualifications at key stage 4 and, if appropriate, post-16? Has this percentage increased over the last three years? What proportion gains level 2 qualifications in vocational subjects at key stage 4?
- 2 If appropriate, what proportion of learners gain the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification at each level and what proportion attain Essential Skills Wales qualifications compared with national data?
- 3 What proportion of 16-year-old learners leaves full-time education without a qualification?
- 4 What proportion of 16-year-olds move into education and training and how does this compare with local and national averages?
- 5 What proportion of 16-year-olds become not engaged in education, employment or training (NEETs) and how does this compare with local and national averages?
- 6 What proportion of learners gain non-formal qualifications and participate in informal experiences?

1.2 Wellbeing

Learning Pathways 14-19 should have an impact on learners' wellbeing. If learners are following courses that meet their needs, then there should be a beneficial impact on their behaviour and attendance. In addition, learners' work in relation to all the 'aspects of learning' of the Learning Core should make a positive contribution to their wellbeing.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

2.1 Learning experiences

This quality indicator is concerned with the first three Key Elements of Learning Pathways 14-19:

- Key Element 1: an Individual Learning Pathway;
- Key Element 2: Wider Choice and Flexibility; and
- Key Element 3: The Learning Core.

You should consider the quality of the curriculum on offer and the extent to which learners are able to gain access to their entitlement as set out in the Measure. This should help you to evaluate the first two Key Elements. You need to see if learners have access to courses that cover the domains and are available at appropriate levels from entry level to level three.

You need to consider how well the school is working with partners in order to provide the full range of courses that are capable of meeting learners' interests and needs.

You also need to evaluate the school's provision for Key Element 3: The Learning Core. You should consider the provision for the 'minimum requirements' and 'enhancements' of the different aspects of the Learning Core, namely:

- skills;
- knowledge and understanding;
- attitudes and value; and
- common experiences.

Questions to consider:

- a Individual Learning Pathways and Wider Choice and Flexibility
- 1 What is the quality of the curriculum available to 14 to 16-year-old learners, including access to domains, levels, general and applied options, and progression routes?
 - 2 What is the quality of the curriculum available to 16 to 19-year-old learners, including access to domains, levels, general and applied options, and progression routes?
 - 3 What are the quality and effectiveness of the collaborative provision?
 - 4 How good is the provision for non-formal and informal learning activities?
 - 5 Where appropriate, how wide-ranging and effective is the provision for learners working through the medium of Welsh?

b Learning Core provision:

- 1 How good is the provision for the skills aspect of the Learning Core (key skills, Welsh-language skills and other work-related skills)?
- 2 How good is the provision for the knowledge and understanding aspect of the Learning Core (Wales, Europe and the World, personal, social, sustainability and health education, and careers education and guidance)?
- 3 How good is the provision for the attitudes and values aspect of the Learning Core (respect for self, others and for diversity, and responsibility for personal and social development, sustainability and health)?
- 4 How good is the provision for common experiences aspect of the Learning Core (work-focused experience, community participation, and cultural, sporting, aesthetic and creative activities)?
- 5 How good is the engagement with employers, especially in relation to providing work-focused experience?

Listening to learners

For this quality indicator, you can gain a great deal from talking to learners. Some possible questions to ask them include:

- When you made your choices, did you get full and impartial information about courses in your own school and in other places?
- Were you able to take the courses that you wanted?
- How satisfied are you with the choices you have made?
- What is your overall satisfaction with the quality of the courses you are taking? What is good about them?
- Overall, what are you less satisfied with in terms of the range and quality of courses in your school?

2.2 Teaching

You need to evaluate the extent to which the teaching in the school meets learners' needs and gains their active engagement. You should consider whether teachers show good subject knowledge and familiarity with recent developments in their field. You should also consider whether teachers involved in the delivery of vocational courses demonstrate good knowledge of, and familiarity with, the vocational setting.

Assessment also plays a role by ensuring that learners understand their achievements and progress, and that they use this understanding in planning and improving their learning.

2.3 Care, support and guidance

This quality indicator is concerned with the second three Key Elements of Learning Pathways 14-19:

- Key Element 4: Learning Coach Support;
- Key Element 5: Access to Personal Support; and
- Key Element 6: Careers Information, Advice and Guidance.

Questions to consider:

- a Learning Coach Support
 - 1 How effective are the arrangements to ensure that all learners receive their entitlement to learning coach support?
 - 2 Is the learning coach support impartial?
- b Access to Personal Support
 - 3 How effective is the support and / or access to support in order to meet the needs of individuals, especially in helping them to develop solutions to personal, social, emotional and physical problems?
- c Careers Information, Advice and Guidance
 - 4 Is there high quality impartial information, advice and guidance?

Listening to learners

For this quality indicator, you will gain a great deal from talking to learners. Some possible questions to ask them include:

- What was the quality of guidance you received before starting your courses?
- Did it cover everything you needed to know?
- Was it clear and fair, giving you good information about all the choices on offer in the locality?
- How useful was the careers advice and guidance you received?
- What is the quality of guidance and support you are getting during your courses?
- Do you know if learning coach is available? If you have received learning coach support, how successful was it?
- While you have been in school, have you had any problems, and, if so, have you had help to deal with them?
- Overall, what is good and not so good about the support and guidance in your provider?

2.4 Learning environment

Learning Pathways 14-19 should help to contribute to the development and maintenance of the school's ethos and the arrangements for promoting equality and diversity.

You should consider whether the school has suitable and sufficient learning resources and accommodation to deliver Learning Pathways 14-19. In particular, you should consider the appropriateness of learning resources and accommodation for vocational subjects and new courses.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

3.1 Leadership

You should evaluate how well the school includes Learning Pathways 14-19 in its priorities and strategic direction. In particular, you need to consider how well the school looks at Learning Pathways 14-19 from the learners' point of view rather than simply looking at how it affects the school itself. This means that the school should look at how it can contribute to expanding learner's choice, whether this is through its own provision or provision from elsewhere.

Questions to consider

- 1 Does the school have a clear vision for Learning Pathways 14-19? Are there clear strategic priorities?
- 2 How well do leaders and managers work to offer the advantages of Learning Pathways 14-19 to learners?

3.2 Improving quality

You should look at how well the school evaluates current provision in the light of the Learning Pathways 14-19 requirements and how well it plans to improve provision over both the short term and the long term. Where there is some off-site provision, you should consider how well the school monitors and evaluates it. Where there is performance information on a group or consortium of schools, you need to look at what use the school makes of that information.

You should evaluate how well the school is developing a culture of collaboration with partners in order to improve staff's professional knowledge, understanding and skills.

Questions to consider

- 1 How do you monitor and evaluate collaborative provision, especially the quality of courses for the learners that are being delivered elsewhere?
- 2 Does the school use performance indicators in common with other partner providers?
- 3 To what extent does the school share in-service training and good practice with other institutions?

3.3 Partnership working

You need to consider how well the school works in partnership with other providers.

Questions to consider

- 1 How well in practice does the school work with other providers? Is there real collaboration to reduce duplication of provision, to combine non-viable classes and to specialise?
- 2 How well in practice do partnerships work?

3.4 Resource management

You should consider whether teachers are suitably qualified and deployed effectively for the courses they are delivering, particularly in vocational subjects.

You should assess how well the school uses all available resources to meet the requirements of Learning Pathways 14-19. In doing this, you should consider whether the current provision is as efficient, economic and effective as it could be. You need to consider the extent to which the school works with partners in order to increase cost-effectiveness. You should take account of class sizes and the availability of cost-effective and successful provision elsewhere. You also need to consider whether the school has explored alternative delivery arrangements in order to increase the cost-effectiveness of provision 14-19. The main question is whether the school is getting as much value for money as it should from what it provides.

If the school has a sixth form, you should consider whether it gains value for money from it. You need to judge whether the provision is cost-effective, particularly where teaching groups are small. You should investigate whether the provision of the sixth form, especially where there are small teaching groups, takes resources away from key stage 3 and key stage 4.

Questions to consider

- 1 Has the school deployed resources to ensure that every learner has access to their entitlement to the full range of general and vocational options?
- 2 Are there gaps in provision? If so, have they been filled appropriately?
- 3 Where there are small groups in the sixth form, has the school:
 - created larger teaching groups in key stage 3 and key stage 4 to support this;
 - reduced the range of general and vocational options in key stage 4;
 - restricted the availability of specialist teachers in key stage 3 or key stage 4?
- 4 To what extent does the school review the curriculum to ensure the best value for money?
- 5 To what extent has the school reviewed delivery models to improve the cost effectiveness of provision for 14 to 19-year-olds?
- 6 To what extent does the school share resources and/or funding with other institutions and what impact does this have?