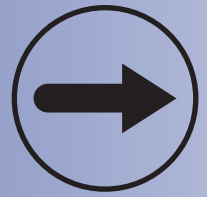


# **The Welsh Assembly Government Key Stages 2-3 Transition Grant. Summary of Responses**

DELLS Information Document No: 018-06  
Date of Issue: **July 2006**

**Information  
Document**



**Standards &  
Performance**





<b>Title of Document:</b>	The Welsh Assembly Government Key Stages 2-3 Transition Grant. Summary of Responses
<b>Audience:</b>	Chief Executives of County and County Borough Councils in Wales; Directors of Education of County and County Borough Councils in Wales; WLGA; Wales Audit Commission
<b>Overview:</b>	This document provides a summary of responses to the consultation document on the criteria for the use of the Welsh Assembly Government grant to improve transition from Key Stages 2-3, including the arrangements for the distribution of funding and approval of exemplar projects
<b>Action required:</b>	For information only
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<b>Postal Address:</b>	Performance and Improvement Division 3 Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, Welsh Assembly Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ
<b>Related Documents:</b>	<p>"Moving On ... Effective Transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3" (Estyn - January 2004)</p> <p>"Moving On ... Improving Learning - Effective Transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3" (Estyn – July 2004)</p> <p>"Bridging the Gap" (ACCAC – November 2004)</p> <p>Consultation Document: "Transition from Primary to Secondary school" (Welsh Assembly Government – November 2004)</p> <p>"Consultation on Welsh Assembly Government Key Stages 2-3 Transition Grant" (February 2006)</p>



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## **Background to the Consultation on Welsh Assembly Government Key Stages 2-3 Transition Grant**

This document draws together responses to the consultation on the proposed criteria for the use of Welsh Assembly Government grant to improve transition from Key Stages 2-3. The grant will be made available to local education authorities in 2006-07 and the following two financial years. The grant will be used to support the development of exemplar projects which have the capacity to become self sufficient and can be replicated elsewhere.

Funding of £1 million has been secured for 2006-07 and indicative provision of £2m in each of the following two financial years to assist local authorities to do this. The grant is being provided under Section 14 of the Education Act 2002, which gives powers to the National Assembly for Wales, delegated to the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills to provide financial assistance for purposes related to education and childcare. The intention is that the funding should be administered on the Assembly's behalf by LEAs under Section 17 of the Act.

The grant will be paid to local education authorities (LEAs) before the start of the September 2006 school year. Guidance on the grant criteria will accompany the formal offers for 2006-07.

## **Responses to the Consultation**

The consultation period ended on 28 April 2006 and 16 responses were received. Overall, the comments were positive with respondents largely supporting the proposed criteria for the use of the Welsh Assembly grant to improve transition from Key Stages 2-3, including the arrangements for the distribution of funding and approval of exemplar projects.

The comments will be used to inform the guidance document. The Welsh Assembly Government would like to take this opportunity to thank all respondents to this consultation exercise.



## **SUMMARY OF RESPONSES**

### **Projects Eligible for Key Stages 2-3 Transition Grant**

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

There was unanimous agreement that the focus should be on exemplar projects to develop and disseminate innovative practice to improve transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. With regard to the detail for such work, there was also support for the key development areas identified in the consultation document as core area to be addressed:

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

Respondents described the above areas as "important and crucial to continuity" and "as at the heart of transition strategies". While agreeing that priority be given to the above areas, a number of respondents indicated that they also wanted to explore additional issues identified as optional areas in the Assembly Government's consultation paper "Transition from Primary to Secondary School" - November 2004. For example it was felt that there should be opportunity to focus on personal and social development.

Overall, there was clear support for the proposal that exemplar projects be targeted at the four areas identified. However, the final guidance will also reflect the suggestion that projects might also address the optional areas identified in the Assembly Government's consultation paper "Transition from Primary to Secondary School" - November 2004, including personal and social development.

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



The majority of respondents (87.5%) agreed that projects should focus in most instances on a cluster of schools comprising of a secondary school and feeder primaries with one school taking the lead in the management and running of the project. However, there was strong support for the need for flexibility so that there was the potential for authority wide projects. For example, the following comments were registered "it is vital that LEAs have the flexibility to apply the funding to work undertaken at cluster and authority wide level", "an area wide strategic approach to the social and emotional aspects of transition is preferable" and "it is important that authority wide initiatives are included to ensure that all clusters within an LEA are made aware of good practice".

Set against this, responses from 2 local education authorities argued against the principle of local authority wide initiatives given variation in circumstances and need across an authority.

Overall there was endorsement of the proposal in question 2 that funding may be applied to both work undertaken in specific clusters and authority wide initiatives.

### **Grant Arrangements**

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

Just about all respondents (93.8%) agreed that, given the accent on promoting innovation, it was important that good practice is made widely available. One LEA suggested that the grant be spent on disseminating project outcomes should be minimal and closely monitored to ensure that schools were benefiting from sharing good practice.

However, the overall view was that dissemination was an important and legitimate use of the grant. For example comments include the following observations "The dissemination of good practice and outcomes arising from any project work is vitally important" and "dissemination of effective practice within our LEA has been seen in a number of secondary schools to have a positive influence on improving standards of achievement and the overall quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 3".

### **Administration of the Grant**

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

75% of respondents welcomed the proposal that local authority allocations be calculated with reference to the funding formula used for Activity 1 of the Better Schools Fund. The approach used was considered relevant in that Activity 1 focuses on raising standards and achievement through the use of targeted opportunities to enhance the delivery of the curriculum. The



formula used includes equal weightings for the number of pupils, child deprivation and settlement. Indicative allocations for each authority in 2006-07 on this basis were set out in the consultation document. Set against this, one authority challenged the weighting given to sparsity in the formula and one respondent argued that greater attention should be given to child deprivation.

Overall, respondents agreed that allocation of the grant using the formula currently in place for the Better Schools Fund Activity Area 1 would appear to be the fairest and most transparent way of distributing the grant.

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

Just over half of respondents (56.3%) agreed that LEAs should be able to retain 5% of their formula allocation to meet management and administration costs. One LEA observed that the management and administration costs would not vary hugely from LEA to LEA, and that larger LEAs will retain considerably more than smaller LEAs which might struggle to manage the scheme on so little. A flat rate, therefore, might be more appropriate. One LEA observed that it should range from 2-3% and one school commenting that 100% should go directly to schools.

On this basis the figure for 2006-07 will be set at 5% to reflect start up costs. However, in line with comments received and proposals for the Better Schools Fund, this figure will reduce to 4% in 2007-08.

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

Three quarters of respondents were in favour of a standard application being used to invite proposals from schools and agreed that it would help reduce the administrative burden on schools and LEAs.

The application form, as revised to accommodate comments, will form part of the guidance document on managing the grant.

### **Duration of Grant**

**Question 7. Do you foresee any problems in LEAs being able to utilise appropriately all of their allocations in 2006-07 or subsequent years?**

The majority of respondents (93.8%) did not envisage any problem in LEAs being able to utilise all of their allocations in 2006-07 or subsequent years.

It was noted that although respondents welcomed the funding, it would only permit a very small number of projects to be undertaken. It was also acknowledged that this is an area which demands a great deal of work and



much of that work involves teachers working together which could be expensive.

### **Audit Arrangements**

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

The majority of respondents, 93.8%, were satisfied that the proposed audit review arrangements were adequate.



## **Annex A**

One of the 16 respondents indicated that they preferred their responses to be kept confidential.

### **LEAs**

Flintshire LEA  
Ceredigion LEA  
Neath Port Talbot LEA  
Carmarthenshire LEA  
Vale of Glamorgan LEA  
Bridgend LEA  
Transition Consultative Group of Bridgend LEA  
Cardiff LEA  
Swansea LEA

### **Primary School**

St Julian's Junior School, Newport

### **Secondary School**

1

### **Union**

NUT Cymru

### **Others**

NCH Cymru  
ESIS (Education and School Improvement Service)  
Caerau Communities First Positive Transition Project (Bridgend CBC)  
Children's Commissioner for Wales.



## STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF RESPONSES RECEIVED FROM CONSULTATION

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

	No. of Respondents	%
Yes	16	100
No	0	0
Other	0	0

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

	No. of Respondents	%
Yes	14	87.5
No	2	12.5
Other	0	0

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

	No. of Respondents	%
Yes	15	93.8
No	1	6.2
Other	0	0

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

	No. of Respondents	%
Yes	12	75
No	2	12.5
Other	2	12.5

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

	No. of Respondents	%
Yes	9	56.3
No	5	31.2
Other	2	12.5



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

	No. of Respondents	%
Yes	12	75
No	2	12.5
Other	2	12.5

**Question 7. Do you foresee any problems in LEAs being able to utilise appropriately all of their allocations in 2006-07 or subsequent years?**

	No. of Respondents	%
Yes	0	0
No	15	93.8
Other	1	6.2

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

	No. of Respondents	%
Yes	15	93.8
No	0	0
Other	1	6.2