

Enterprise and Learning Committee
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**Transforming Education and Training Provision in Wales:
Progress towards making learning improvements**

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Part 1: Transformation Progress

1. In response to the Transformation Policy, schools, local authorities, further education institutions (FEIs), together with higher education institutions (HEIs) and Work-Based Learning providers began working together as Learning Partnerships. Their focus was to plan improvements to learning delivery through collaboration to remove unnecessary duplication of learning programmes and release more funds to support teaching and learning. All Learning Partnerships have submitted change plans to the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) and seventy five percent of these have been approved for implementation. A summary of individual progress is provided at **Annex 1**.
2. Some of these plans are elements of wider, radical and far-reaching local area change programmes, linking post-16 developments to major school reorganisation plans, and sometimes to local higher education provision. Others are mergers of FEIs, which are critical to improving the regional delivery of further education, to strengthen the links with employers and improve the employability of learners. Many plans seek to introduce more quality Work-Based Learning provision pathways to ensure that the training supply meets increasing demand.
3. A few FEIs and some local authorities are making much slower progress in planning collaborative approaches to delivering learning and overcoming the challenges inherent in working across sectors.
4. Where major reconfiguration of schools or mergers of FEIs are proposed, progress is dependent on legal requirements for developing and submitting plans to DCELLS. In turn DCELLS is bound by due process and regulations, to ensure that change proposals are affordable, that they will lead to significant learner improvement and take account of the demand for Welsh-medium and faith-based learning settings. Therefore, large scale plans take time to implement.
5. However, fifteen local authorities are taking forward non-legally binding collaborative arrangements between schools and FEIs to deliver post-16 learning. These arrangements are reasonably straightforward to implement, if stakeholders are really committed to the collaborative approach. At least half of these school/FEI collaborations are failing to make sufficient progress with the major barrier reported as the reluctance of one or more 11-18 schools to enter into full collaboration with FEIs, even

when the evidence indicates that this would lead to better outcomes for learners.

6. In summary, the vested self-interest of some 11-18 schools and the unwarranted perception that FEIs provide a lower quality provision and unsuitable pastoral care for young people is a major impediment to the transformation of post-16 learning.
7. To date, DCELLS has not taken a prescriptive or directional stance in implementing transformational change, but requested local authorities and learning providers to review provision and implement plans to secure improvements for learners.
8. There have consequently been no formal interventions to compel change and ensure that learning providers make the necessary improvements for learners. However, interventions and financial penalties may be necessary if learning providers do not act to improve standards and learner attainment. What is clear is the fact that many schools and some FEIs will struggle to accommodate the likely overall reduction in funding for 2011-12 and beyond.

Part 2: Acceleration of the transformation of all learning systems

9. The Assembly Government is taking steps to accelerate transformation changes and support learning providers and provider managers in delivering learner improvements:

The Front-Line Resources Review

10. The Assembly Government published its report from the first phase of the review of education costs, now called the Front Line Resources Review (FLRR), on 18 May 2010, which is exploring different opportunities to deliver a cost shift from support functions to front line service delivery. This is not simply to find efficiencies, but to deliver the best possible education service by trimming some of the unnecessary bureaucratic burdens in the system.
11. DCELLS recognises that the FLRR will only be successful if all of the organisations involved in the delivery of education play their part in the change, working together to refine and implement a shared vision. This will lead to more efficient ways of working.
12. Running in parallel with the FLRR programme, an independent Task and Finish Group has been established to consider the structure of delivery of education in Wales. The Group is looking at whether education services are best delivered locally,

regionally or in some other organisational structure. It is due to report in mid-March 2011.

Higher Education Review

13. The Higher Education Review was established to conduct a review of higher education (HE) governance in Wales.
14. *For Our Future*¹, the new strategy for HE in Wales, sets a clear direction of travel that demands significant changes to the nature of delivery, engagement with regional and local communities and relationships with other providers. It sets a framework for ensuring excellence, competitiveness and responsiveness which will enable the HE sector in Wales to meet the needs of a modern knowledge-based globally competitive economy and inclusive society.
15. The Review is considering the key issue of whether existing forms of national and institutional governance match the needs, expectations and future requirements of HE in Wales. Further it will identify any changes required, and is considering:
 - the role that HE governance should have in meeting the challenges and delivering the actions required to ensure Wales' HE system is fully responsive to learner need, nationally robust and internationally competitive;
 - the effectiveness of current accountability mechanisms between government and the universities in terms of the delivery of national strategies; and
 - any changes to national and institutional governance required to meet these responsibilities.
16. The Review is expected to publish its report in March 2011.

Further Education Governance Review

17. The Further Education Governance Review was commissioned in response to Welsh Assembly Government Policy including *One Wales* which set out its intention to *maximise the economic, social and cultural impact of colleges and universities on learners and on the wider community*'. It also makes a commitment to *'equip people with the skills they need, at all levels, to enable them to make the best possible contribution to the economy and their communities, and to fulfil their individual potential'*.

¹ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/forourfuture/?lang=en>

18. The Review was established to consider whether the current arrangements, as set out in the Instrument and Articles of Government, are still relevant for the challenges and expectations that face the further education sector and the wider economy, to meet employer, individual and community needs. It will also take account of the Assembly Government's commitment to support the Social Enterprise Agenda in Wales.
19. The Review is expected to publish its report in March 2011.

Additional Learning Needs

20. The Assembly Government established a Task and Finish Group in May 2010 to investigate provision for those with Additional Learning Needs (ALN). The Group was also asked to make recommendations in response to increasing and unsustainable funding pressures and related concerns expressed by post-16 providers of education and training for young people with ALN, learners with ALN and parents of these young people.
21. The thrust of the Task and Finish Group's recommendations, all of which were approved in November 2010, is towards greater consistency of approach across Wales; regional collaboration; and more attention to value for money in the commissioning process so that the benefits of increased funding can be maximised. For young people whose post-school options may currently be limited to a residential college facility far from home, local choice may be available if planning is significantly improved.
22. Assembly Government officers are currently working to establish a Development and Implementation Group to take forward the Task and Finish Group recommendations to:
 - Establish a joint protocol between all partners involved in transition planning;
 - Take steps to ensure transition planning, together with assessments and decisions relating to post-school placements at specialist colleges, take place earlier;
 - Propose and consult on legislative changes affecting the focus and responsibility for funding;
 - Develop a local authorities consortium approach to contracting which takes an 'invest to save' approach;
 - Establish closer working between local authorities to analyse increased incidence of SEN, its distribution and management;
 - Develop and issue guidance on consortium working and planning/ commissioning of ALN provision;
 - Develop FEI, special schools and specialist consortia colleges on a 'hub and spoke' basis with a view to sharing expertise;

- Establish alternative means of distributing supplementary funding to FEIs via mainstream funding allocations; and
- Ensure that local authorities engage with existing Community Equipment Scheme partnerships alongside schools, FEIs and specialist schools and colleges.

Part 3: Shaping the Network of Learning Providers

Work-Based Learning Network

23. The tender for Work-Based Learning provision, for the period 1 August 2011 to 2014, has been completed. Tenderers will be informed of the outcome of the tender evaluation and any programme commission to deliver learning on 7 March 2011.
24. Existing Work-Based Learning providers have come together as consortia in response to the Welsh Assembly Government's post-16 transformation agenda. Bids received demonstrate a movement away from small contractors to large consortia to better supply training based on demand.

Securing Collaboration: Education (Wales) Measure

25. The proposed Education (Wales) Measure was introduced in December 2010 and seeks to provide powers and duties to make collaboration commonplace in the education system, improve school governance, and simplify the planning of school places in Wales.
26. The proposed Measure makes provision to:
 - drive collaboration between local authorities, governing bodies of maintained schools and FEIs;
 - give local authorities a power to establish a federation of schools;
 - train school governors and improve clerking of governing bodies; and
 - prevent schools in the future from changing category so as to become foundation schools and prevent new foundation schools being established.
27. The proposed Measure complements and supports the work currently being undertaken within DCELLS on the FLRR. It will help to embed collaborative models of service planning and delivery and support the delivery of performance improvement recommendations made in the Enterprise and Learning Committee's 2009 report on the role of school governors.

Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) Regional Strategies

28. HEFCW has received regional strategies from all three regions which shows that progress has been made in establishing dialogue between HE providers in the regions.
29. Proposals for redistribution of provision between HE providers are to be received soon. Meanwhile, proposals for the investment of top-sliced funding (to support new provision designed to improve the HE offer within the regions) are in the process of being analysed. HEFCW intend that this funding will be made available alongside their normal recurrent grant, with announcements to be made in March.
30. In response to *For Our Future*, HEFCW's corporate plan established a performance measure in which at least 75% of Welsh HE institutions are to have an annual income in excess of the UK median, with no institution to be in the lower quartile by 2012/2013. This objective will help drive forward reconfiguration of the HE sector in Wales. They also issued a statement on the future shape of the sector in December 2010, which offered a more explicit indication of the scale of reconfiguration they see as necessary; that is moving to no more than six HEIs.
31. HEFCW continues to give consideration to the way in which they can deploy funding levers to incentivise movement towards targets and to tackle the issue of comparative size of the sector.

Consortia Working

32. The Assembly Government has worked closely with local authorities to adopt a regional consortia approach, in response to the FLRR. All local authorities have made a commitment to working through a consortia approach initially focussing on school improvement services.
33. The four regional consortia are required to share services and ensure best practice is identified and disseminated through Professional Learning Communities.
34. The Professional Learning Communities are made up of groups of schools and teachers coming together to promote methods of collective enquiry which may lead to better outcomes and more effective teaching methods. If local authorities do not participate they will incur financial penalties.

35. To date, the Assembly Government has worked with all local authorities and over 1,600 schools. By the end of Summer 2011 all schools will be expected to be running Professional Learning Communities with a clear focus on the three national priorities of improving literacy and numeracy levels and reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment.

Part 4: Policy Developments aligned with Transformation

The Learning and Skills Measure

36. There has been a significant increase in the number of learners following vocational courses at KS4. The latest statistics from the Welsh Examinations Database show that the percentage of learners who sat both general and vocational qualifications has increased from 28% in 2008 to 42% in 2010. This has helped to ensure that young people receive a broad and balanced curriculum offer.
37. The revised national Learning Coach training programme will be rolled-out from April 2011. The revised programme is a unit based programme, which is located on the Credit Qualification Framework for Wales (CQFW). The new unit-based programme will provide greater flexibility, in terms of Continuing Professional Development (CPD), at reduced costs. The long term goal remains to embed learning coaching training within Initial Teacher Training.
38. DCELLS has established a 14-19 Sustainability Working Group to consider how funding can be best utilised to support 14-19 Learning Pathways Programmes in the future. The Group comprises representatives from the 14-19 Networks and DCELLS officials. The Group will submit recommendations to the Minister summer 2011.
39. Statutory Guidance on learner support services and the Learning Pathway Document will be published in February 2011.
40. The Assembly Government has recently completed a consultation on draft Local Curriculum in Higher Education Institutions (Wales) Regulations, which will bring under the scope of the Measure Higher Education Institutions providing education to 16-18 year olds.
41. The 14-19 grant has been targeted towards increasing Welsh-medium and bilingual vocational provision (£1.6m in 2010-11 and it is proposed that the same level of funding be provided for 2011-12). All Welsh-medium schools are expected to meet the

full KS4 vocational course requirements of five courses offered through the medium of Welsh by the required date of 2012.

Welsh Language

42. In order to further increase Welsh-medium and bilingual provision in the post-16 sector, DCELLS are supporting a total of eight further education colleges to each employ a Bilingual Champion, for a period of 3-years. This will create a supportive structure for the development of Welsh-medium and bilingual provision. The Champions will be tasked with increasing the number of courses available and the capacity to deliver through the medium of Welsh or bilingually. The priority is to create progression pathways from pre-16 to post-16.
43. In addition, Sgiliaith² will provide all FEIs across Wales with support and assistance to progress with their individual Welsh-medium and bilingual development strategies. Colleges are at different stages in their development of the Welsh-medium and bilingual agenda and Sgiliaith will be responsible for sharing and embedding best practice across the sector.

Work-Based Learning Programme

44. The successor programme to Skill Build (Traineeships) will come into effect from August 2011. The guidance provided will encourage providers to forge links with the local community projects and voluntary organisations. This will enhance the learner experience, as well as establishing good employer relationships to strengthen Work-Based placements for young people.
45. The Welsh Assembly Government will introduce from the spring of 2011, the 'Real Conversation'. This aims to support young people into employment by bringing employers, young people and practitioners together to discuss ways in which work experience and employment opportunities, for those aged 14-18, can be improved.
46. By doing this, the Welsh Assembly Government will:
 - promote the benefits and value of work experience to young people, employers, schools and colleges;
 - provide information on provision and programmes available to young people and employers, e.g. apprenticeships, graduate opportunities; and

² <http://www.sgiliaith.ac.uk/index.php?lang=EN;navId=33>

- create a forum for young people to voice their expectations and concerns about work, and for businesses to give feedback about their experience in recruiting young people.
47. This will provide a response to the business challenge to recruit a workforce with appropriate skills and attitudes and make sure that young people are able to make informed career choices.
48. The Real Conversation is not a one off event. The plan is to implement actions arising from the first event and these will shape a programme of similar conversations between employers and young people throughout the year. The conversation will continue online using web-based forums and social media channels.
49. Skill Build Adult programme (Steps to Employment) will also begin in August 2011. The new programme aims to offer three distinct learning strands:
- Engagement: this strand will engage those furthest from the job market or those who are vocationally unfocussed, to offer job tasters or address barriers to employment or learning, including basic and employability skills.
 - Level 1: this aims to engage those learners who are already vocationally focussed and will offer work placements and learning to Level 1. It will also continue to address barriers and allow those who successfully passed through the engagement strand to progress.
 - Bridge to Employment: this strand will allow those learners who are unable to progress to Level 2 learning or employment via Apprenticeships or other means, to continue to be engaged in learning. Entry to Bridge to Employment will only be available to those who have successfully completed learning at Level 1, through the strand detailed above.

Homelessness

50. The Assembly Government's Housing Directorate has introduced new grant conditions for the Supporting People programme which includes funding for work with vulnerable young tenants to increase opportunities available to access skills training and employment. Where service providers receive Supporting People funding, they must ensure that occupants have opportunities to extend their skills, interests and friendships.
51. In order to achieve this it is proposed that Service providers:
- Support access to training and employment opportunities
 - Support self-esteem improvement
 - Support access opportunities for adult education

- Liaise with schools in respect of children
 - Provide opportunities to access mutual support
 - Support access to volunteering opportunities
 - Support access to leisure and hobbies
 - Support the establishment of personal relationships and friendships
 - Support parenting and looking after children programmes
52. Liaison with other agencies and professions is also expected.
53. Five social enterprises have been established by groups of young people with homelessness problems, through the Homelessness Grant programme. This includes a farming enterprise, a clothes shop and a café, giving work experience and skills training for vulnerable young people.
54. The Assembly Government is funding development work in Denbighshire to join up homelessness services with training and employment opportunities. This is led by the local authority but involves partnership working with the local college, Job Centre Plus and Careers Wales.
55. Cymorth Cymru, the representative body for homelessness organisations, is exploring opportunities for supported housing providers to link support provision to the UK Government's Welfare to Work programmes.
56. There are also a range of financial support schemes available to young people, including young people who are homeless or living independently, to enable them to make informed choices about the training and learning and options available for them. An example of this is the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), linked to satisfactory attendance and paid fortnightly to eligible learners attending learning centres in Wales. DCELLS is currently investigating the potential and feasibility of introducing the EMA (Wales) Scheme into Work Based Learning for young unemployed people, from 2012.

The Petitions Committee

57. The Petitions Committee has carried out an inquiry into Work-Based Learning provision for vulnerable young people. The Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning submitted written evidence to the Petitions Committee and also attended and presented this evidence at the Petitions Committee meeting on 2 November 2010.
58. The Petitions Committee published its final report, which contained 25 recommendations, on 9 December 2010.

59. A Plenary Committee debate on the Petitions Committee inquiry was held on 16 February 2011. The Plenary Committee accepted the report and the Minister's response to the Petitions Committee inquiry³. The motion was accepted.

Sector Skills Councils (SSC)

60. The demands of employers for a responsive skills system is a priority consideration and a series of pilot projects have been established by the SSCs. These aim to address areas of capacity development within the training provider network in Wales as well as delivering new forms of training to employers. There are 13 pilots in total which will run through 2011 and include:

Creative Industries

- Creative Apprenticeships (Creative & Cultural Skills) - 48 apprentices have been placed with businesses in this sector and started their learning at the beginning of this year. Specific providers involved include: Gower College; Coleg Morgannwy; Triangle and Bridgewater; Coleg Menai; and Bridgend College.
- Creative & Digital Media Apprenticeships (Skillset) - 11 apprentices have been placed with employers in South Wales with a further 5 likely in North Wales. Coleg Glan Hafren and Llandrillo College are delivering these apprenticeships.

Advanced Materials and Manufacturing

- Project led by the Sector Skills Council for Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies (SEMTA) that is developing a sector-led skills delivery network based around clusters of communities of interest able to collaboratively deliver new and innovative skills development programmes. The Welsh Electronics Forum, Welsh Automotive Forum and Aerospace Wales are involved on the project board.

Life Sciences

- Cogent - Implementing Gold Standard with pilot groups of employers in Wales. Employers engaged in the project include Chevron, Murco, Petroplus, Dragon Liquid Natural gas and South Hook Natural Gas in the petrochemical industry with arrangements being made to involve Norgine Pharmaceuticals, Penn Pharmaceuticals and a group of employers under the auspices of Medi Wales. In total 20 employers will be assisted by this project.

³ <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-guide-docs-pub/bus-business-documents/bus-business-documents-doc-laid.htm?act=dis&id=209648&ds=2/2011>

Energy & Environment

- Delivering Low Carbon Skills - led by Construction Skills. The project will deliver wind turbine maintenance & operation, solid wall insulation, energy advisors in domestic and commercial sectors and building services engineering, supporting the development of the training supply side to respond to the challenges of moving towards a low carbon economy for Wales. In total 160 employers will be assisted by this project.
 - SSC run employer events in the early stages of their projects to explain the project being delivered and to gain sign up from employers. These events are advertised to employers in the footprints of the SSCs involved in each project.
61. The Wales Employment and Skills Board (WESB) is also independently assessing SSC performance in Wales, from an employer perspective.

Cross-Border Working

62. The Assembly Government encourages cross-border cooperation where this will benefit learners and avoid unnecessary duplication. In order to meet the wider choice requirements of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure most schools and colleges will have to co-operate. For some the nearest school or college will be located in a neighbouring local education authority and, where this is the case it might be better for the school or college to enter into co-operative arrangements with those in a neighbouring authority area rather than those within their own, in order to reduce the travelling time for learners.
63. There are some good examples of partnership working across sectors, county boundaries and using modern technologies and peripatetic tutors, for example, to deliver Welsh-medium and bilingual courses.
64. The Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) Levels 2 and 3 Certificates in Early Years Care and Education are popular courses for post-16 learners. However, in the following two examples, small class sizes and geographic distances were a problem along with the shortage of suitably qualified Welsh-medium staff. These two counties overcame these issues in innovative ways:
- In Rhondda Cynon Taf, the four Welsh-medium secondary schools have employed a peripatetic tutor and are working in partnership with Cam wrth Gam (training arm of Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin) to jointly deliver the CACHE Level 2 vocational course.

- In Ceredigion, Ysgol Uwchradd Tregaron operates as the lead provider on CACHE Level 3 for Ysgol Gyfun Llanbedr Pont Steffan and Ysgol Penweddig, and in addition Ysgol Bro Ddyfi (Powys) which has also joined the partnership. Lessons are delivered using the video conferencing facilities at each of the schools.

Post-16 Funding

65. On 4 February 2011, the Children, Education and Lifelong Learning Minister made an announcement to introduce more stability within the sector by providing three year post-16 funding allocations for the first time, in line with *One Wales* commitments.
66. This will allow institutions to plan more strategically through these financially challenging times. In doing this the National Planning and Funding System will be set aside and a post-16 funding review will be conducted during this three year period.
67. In 2011/2012 further education institutions in Wales will see an overall reduction in their funding of 1.39 per cent. Local Authorities, who have responsibility for funding school sixth forms, will see a reduction in their funding of 1.5 per cent.
68. However, in future years post-16 funding is set to increase. Indicative figures for 2012/2013 show that post-16 funding for local authorities and FEIs will increase by 2.5 per cent. In 2013/2014 it will increase by a further 1 per cent.

Workforce Development and Training

69. The Assembly Government is currently taking stock of current training provision. Initial Teacher Training, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and the benefits of the unitisation of training. Areas for consideration include:
 - Ensuring that teachers have appropriate levels of literacy and numeracy as part of their accreditation.
 - Revising Initial Teacher Training so that it becomes a two-year Master's course, with more classroom practice.

Part 5: Next Steps

The All-Age Transformation Programme Board

70. To date, the transformation of post-16-education and training has focussed on stakeholders reviewing learning systems and outcomes and a directive to plan collectively and implement

improvements. This means that more of the funding available should be directed to teaching and learning and learner support; should support the engagement of disadvantaged young people; increase relevant learner choice; reduce unnecessary duplication of provision, and encourage higher quality learning and teaching.

71. The policy is enhanced and supported by *For Our Future* and by the HEFCW statement which requires the HE sector to reduce the number of HEIs in Wales to no more than six across three regions (no more than two per region). The HEFCW operational plan indicates that this significant restructure should be completed by July 2013. Similar support is provided by the Work-Based Learning tender arrangements which will lead to an improved collaborative network of providers, better able to meet learning demand.
72. Meanwhile, the transformation of pre-16 learning is being taken forward by a number of policy initiatives. This includes building high quality pre-school provision for children and families, through Flying Start, Cymorth and Integrated Children Centres, which is aligned to the new Families First programme. This leads on to the play-led Foundation Phase; and a subsequent learning offer for young people that must balance skill acquisition with subject specific knowledge and understanding. From the age of 14 all young people will have access to a wider range of learning opportunities, including more vocational provision and learning coaches to support young people achieve their ambitions. The overarching School Effectiveness Framework is designed to bring together these existing programmes of action directed at school improvement, through establishing Professional Learning Communities.
73. A more recent decision has been taken to focus the work of DCELLS on transforming of the full range of provision, from the youngest children through to adults, and to involve estates, delivery (including ICT), curriculum and pedagogy. In this way DCELLS seeks to get the right provision in the right places at the right cost.
74. To ensure that DCELLS officials and stakeholders focus on priorities for change over a specified geographic area, and that change is appropriately synchronised and managed, an All-Age Transformation Programme Board (the Board) has been set up. The Board is chaired by the Director General for DCELLS and is tasked with developing and promoting a shared vision for sustainable transformational change, through a focus on clear short, medium and longer term goals. The Board will oversee agreement on a framework for coordinating policy and delivery

for all publically funded. The aim is to make efficiency savings, improve sustainability and improve learner outcomes.

75. The Board will be supported by a newly established Transformation Programme Division to make certain that a systematic approach is taken towards benefits realisation and progress towards securing sustainable improvements is rigorously monitored. This will hold stakeholders accountable for delivering learning improvements; indicate requirements for further investment and resource redirection. It will also support the planning and implementation of further transformational change if the expected learner benefits do not materialise.