

Background

MyBnk is the UK's leading direct deliverer of financial education and enterprise experiences for young people.

Our charity has reached 75,000 11 to 25 year olds in over 450 schools and youth groups with a range of 100 minute to all-day sessions covering topics such as saving, borrowing, pensions, budgeting and university finance.

We also give young people access to interest-free loans to set-up their own enterprise in their local community and have created the first ever online and in-school youth-led banking scheme - run by young people for young people, allowing them to save and develop positive habits around money.

Young people are at the heart of everything we do and we take a holistic approach to education, catering for audio, visual and kinesthetic learners. Our team is made up of teachers, youth workers and people who have worked in the financial sector.

We use real life case studies, colourful resources, games and videos drawn from their age group and popular culture, enabling young people to explore and form their own opinions. Our team is made up of teachers, youth workers and people who have worked in the financial sector - most of who are in their twenties and share their university experiences with pupils.

Programmes are created in-house by teachers, former finance sector workers, youth workers and young people via a Youth Advisory Panel. Our Education Officers are rigorously trained in core subject knowledge and classroom techniques over two weeks, are assessed by young people and teachers after every session and sit exams every six months. In 2012/13, 97% of young people and 100% of teachers rated our trainers three to four out of four for [effectiveness](#).

MyBnk has a growing [national](#) and [international](#) demand for our expertise, this has led to us training educators in Europe and Africa and consulting others in Asia, South America and beyond. There is also a growing demand from [housing associations and local authorities](#) for our services.

Earlier this year MyBnk trained staff members of West Wales and Merthyr Tydfil Credit Union's to deliver our financial education workshops to schools, reaching hundreds of young people. A pilot project is now underway.

We also recently won a [Centre for Social Justice Award](#) for Preventing Poverty, were named [Charity of the Year](#) by Children & Young People Now magazine and provide the financial literacy element of the government's [National Citizens Service](#) and face-to-face side of the [Money Advice Service](#).

MyBnk welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this study.

Our observations are in the context of us delivering financial and enterprise education to young people.

Summary response

We support the main recommendations in the draft Bill. We offer substantial general comments in the context of the existing system of financial education in Wales and our experience in England and internationally which we believe are relevant to effective provision of financial education.

MyBnk have limited our response to those questions 1-10 and 22, those concerned primarily with

young people MyBnk's area of focus and expertise. We do not offer any comment on the remaining questions.

General Comments

The Financial Education and Inclusion (Wales) Bill (the Bill) seeks to 'to 'increase prosperity in Wales by improving financial education and literacy of our citizens.' Regarding schools, the key recommendation is to change the status of financial education to statutory and support that change by requiring regular independent assessment of provision. *We endorse the Bill.*

MyBnk note, as is highlighted in the explanatory passages in the Bill, that Wales has been a leader relative to other OECD countries and UK nations in articulating and implementing a financial capability strategy, including for school-age students. In 2009 the Welsh Government introduced a Financial Inclusion Strategy; priorities were reviewed in 2011 for the following three year period. Financial Education is established in schools as part of PSHE and Maths, The Financial Inclusion Delivery Group supports implementation. Detailed non-binding guidance as to what to cover has been issued and links are provided to lesson plans and organisations that can support implementation. Until August 2013 the Welsh Financial Education Unit (WFEU) directly supported the delivery of financial education into schools including training teachers. In our view, and acknowledged in the Bill, guidance has been and is relevant and comprehensive.

Changing the status of financial education from the basic to the national curriculum, hence, making it a statutory requirement, will, in our view:

- Raise awareness of the need to provide financial education in schools.
- Compel schools to incorporate financial education within the crowded curriculum.
- Allow for consistent content to evaluate effectiveness, to structure training, and to estimate funding requirements.

We believe this Bill will support, but in no way ensure, effective provision.

The Bill primarily addresses gaps in provision and attempts to solve this through compulsion. Given the longstanding, comprehensive framework in Wales it, would appear that schools and teachers are not willing or able to prioritise financial education and/ or the provision is not effective enough. A study into these motivations would be most welcome and revealing in identifying the blockers to good financial education in the classroom.

Estyn's Money Matters report of 2011 reported financial education had improved, but was not sufficient to allow learners to make sound financial decisions when they are older. The report cites the following factors (paraphrased) as impacting effective provision:

- Many secondary schools have multiple responsible people; when a specific person is responsible there tends to be better results.
- Lack of planning across curriculum.
- Lack of curriculum time a big issue.
- Despite the provision of training by WFEU, not all teachers had the knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver financial education, and not all were aware of the support available.

- Only a small number of schools were evaluating outcomes and where they are, it is not consistent and is rarely used to inform developments.
- There is little evidence of learner input as to how to structure provision.
- There is little evidence of cross school cooperation.

More generally, we note the recent OECD report into Welsh education. Recommendations to improve scores in mathematics, science and reading included encouraging professional development, raising the status of teachers and building on the existing assessment framework by making it more coherent.

MyBnk is passionate that many of the concerns listed above are crucial for the effective provision of financial education. We strongly support the need for consistent and coherent evaluation of outcomes to drive effective provision. In the context of the very limited available time in the curriculum, we do not believe that measuring hours of provision is always that useful. Indeed we are surprised as to the high number of hours cited presently devoted to financial education.

Our experience is that it is not only necessary to provide the skills, knowledge and confidence to young people, but to so in a receptive and relevant manner. This view is consistent with the responses we made to consultations introducing financial education into the English curriculum.

Young people are at the heart of everything we do – they inform and help develop our programmes. We are independent and unbiased. MyBnk uses concepts of behavioural economics – MINDSPACE – as adopted by the UK Cabinet Office and developed in the Behavioural Economics Department of the London School of Economics. We specifically use the acronym SUPER (Specific, Unique, Participatory, Effective and Relevant) in developing our programmes and in selecting and training our instructors.

MyBnk's instructors undergo a month of training and are regularly tested on core financial knowledge relevant to young people. Every session is assessed by the young people and the facilitator (for schools the teacher) and the results consolidated and published in our annual Impact Report. We have a Training and Quality department that observes trainers in action and a programme of on-going support and education. Our programmes build upon one another so that knowledge and skills are enforced. The programmes are 'real' i.e. participatory, use real money for the enterprise programmes, and are student-led e.g. our school banks, and supports learning together, by doing. In short we insist on crucial aspects of good and effective teaching.

We concur that financial education should be compulsory, coherently integrated and developed across subject areas, trained by those with expertise, informed by young people, supported by special events and/or outside bodies, led by a responsible senior member of staff and with outcomes assessed. However, our experience is not all schools will achieve such an integrated approach. Shorter-term stand-alone interventions such as MyBnk's Money Twist programmes for schools at key transitional moments and combined with other workshops, including enterprise, can be very effective.

Responses to Specific Consultation Questions

1. We agree that financial education should become a statutory part of the curriculum. MyBnk engages with young people from the age of 11 or Key Stage 3 but we support financial education for those as young as Key Stage 1.

2. The purpose of financial education in schools in our view should be to prepare young people for the challenges they face at and beyond school.
3. MyBnk identifies three main areas of relevance of money and finance to school learning:
 - In support of academic attainment by providing real life applications to e.g. mathematical problems.
 - In making learning 'real' e.g. through entrepreneurial activities that will require young people to plan and practice using practical mathematical tools e.g. probability, calculating costs and revenues, margins and profits and through encouraging independent thought and team collaboration, skills of relevance to the real world of work and beyond.
 - In preparing young people to gain the skills and confidence to make sound financial choices for themselves and to make entrepreneurial decisions throughout their lives.
4. We concur with the view that schools should have flexibility as to how they follow guidance and utilise outside expertise and providers.
5. MyBnk concurs with the view that financial education should be compulsory within schools.
6. We believe that financial education should ideally be cross-curricular and that requirements may be included for individual subjects such as Maths, English and Geography. MyBnk would emphasise the need for one academic year to build on another and for key concepts to be repeated and enhanced e.g. the importance of budgeting and the tools to do so. We do not agree with the view that there is no place for stand-alone financial education. Further we do not agree that hours of delivery should be used as a measure of effectiveness.
7. MyBnk agrees with the view that the Welsh Government should be required to consult formally with relevant stakeholders and experts and believe this to be the existing process for the Department for Education and Skills.
8. Consultancy should be offered out to all but will include students, teachers, head teachers, professional bodies, educational and financial charities, employers and the financial service industry. Proposals should be made in the light of the domestic need and sector and international best practice.
9. MyBnk believes that it is vital that the provision of financial education should be assessed consistently and coherently along with other subjects on the curriculum. We note that effective assessment of provision is a potential short-fall in England where financial education becomes compulsory from September 2014. A universal kite mark system of providers would be a good barometer of competency and help teachers decide which outside expertise can help their schools.

10. Estyn, as the Welsh school inspectorate, appears best placed to review progress of financial education in schools. Alternatively, The Money Advice Service would also be well placed to provide the framework for either this or a kite mark system for outside providers.

22. MyBnk concurs with the view that the role of corporate parent implies a duty to provide support for young people entering independent living following a period under local authority care. MyBnk's Money Works programme is a four part programme aimed at young adults entering independent living to confront their money worries. It includes sessions on living independently, budgeting and income, banking and benefits and borrowing and planning for the future. This group is often in need of survival money management skills and actions they can implement immediately. The programme is currently running in 13 London local authority Leaving Care Units.

For more information, please contact declan@mybnk.org or call 0207 3778770.

ENDS