

National Assembly for Wales
Children, Young People and Education Committee
FEI 18
Financial Education and Inclusion (Wales) Bill
Evidence from : Flintshire County Council

1. Is there a need for a Bill for these purposes? Please explain your answer.

Yes.

In our opinion, the introduction of the proposed Bill will support consistency of approach, alongside raising the profile of the importance of financial education and inclusion. The introduction of financial education as a statutory part of the basic curriculum, if appropriately underpinned by national guidance, should improve young people for the challenges and financial decisions that they will face beyond school.

Furthermore, during this present period of sustained financial austerity, it is of critical importance to ensure that all local authorities adopt proactive approaches for financial inclusion. However, this may be one of the areas of service provision, unless it is placed on a statutory footing, which potentially will be reduced or lost.

The importance of future generations becoming financially aware and 'savvy' is one of the key components of wellbeing. In addition, the positive outcomes from individuals being financially capable will support the aim of tackling poverty and deprivation, as well as contributing to local economies and reducing public expenditure upon statutory services.

2. Do you think the Bill, as drafted, delivers the stated objectives as set out in the Explanatory Memorandum? Please explain your answer.

Yes.

However, we do believe that it would be useful to explain the direct links between the Bill and the existing legislation and other strategies and programmes where financial inclusion / education is promoted, planned, and implemented.

This will reduce the potential for duplication of effort amongst organisations and promote the coordination of activities supporting the attainment of financial inclusion within complementary strategies. For example, Housing Act 2014 Wales, Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014, Communities First, Single Integrated Plan, Future Generations Bill, etc.

It is likewise essential that the financial education is taught in a cross-curricular way to link with the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) and is also considered as part of any curriculum reviews

3. Are the sections of the Bill as drafted appropriate to bring about the purposes described above? If not, what changes need to be made to the Bill?

Yes.

However, it would be beneficial for a national Code of Guidance/s to be published to accompany the Bill, providing information related to the development of a financial inclusion strategy and upon on what is to be taught within the curriculum from Key Stage 2 onwards in order to ensure a consistent approach across Wales.

In addition, there ought to be a more explicit reference within the Bill to the importance of the role fulfilled by a successful digital inclusion strategy to support and complement the aims within a financial inclusion strategy.

4. How will the Bill change what organisations do currently and what impact will such changes have, if any?

The implementation of the Bill would support a more consistent and structured approach to the positive work already being carried out in the County, both internally and externally. It would also provide a consistent framework for outcome monitoring, providing a basis for sharing good practice, lessons learned, and resources.

5. What are the potential barriers to implementing the provisions of the Bill (if any) and does the Bill take account of them?

The role of Local Authorities is being diminished by the introduction of regional consortia who now take the lead on school improvement issues. It would be more constructive if the regional consortia have the statutory duty to ensure that financial education is being taught from KS2 upwards as there are insufficient officers within LA's to undertake this role and, it is the Challenge Advisers within the consortia who are making visits to schools and reviewing key documentation.

The Bill may assist in helping Local Authorities to make the most of the resources available to us. However, any additional statutory duties placed upon Local Authorities need to be both manageable and promote achievable expectations.

6. Do you have any views on the way in which the Bill falls within the legislative competence of the National Assembly for Wales?

The proposed Bill contains proposals that link with several areas of Schedule 7 to the Government of Wales Act 2006, i.e., Economic Development, Education and Training, Housing, Social Welfare. The Bill, if implemented, would also complement the two areas of legislation recently introduced by the Welsh Government - Housing Act 2014 (Wales) and Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 (Wales).

7. What are your views on powers in the Bill for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation (i.e. statutory instruments, including regulations, orders and directions)?

This seems to be common practice when introducing new legislation as over the course of time changes occur, which can be subject to more timely amendments through the introductions of appropriate Statutory Instruments etc.

8. What are your views on the financial implications of the Bill?

Given the severity of the current financial pressures upon Local Authorities, if the Bill continues forwards, there will be a need for more detailed analysis of the potential cost of its implementation upon Local Authorities. The input and support of the WLGA would be beneficial to the undertaking of this task.

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