

Children and Young People Committee

CYP(4)-09-11 Paper 3

Inquiry into the implementation of the Learning and Skills Measure 2009

Evidence from NASUWT Cymru



**WRITTEN
EVIDENCE**

**The National Assembly for Wales
Children and Young People Committee
Inquiry into the implementation of the Learning and Skills
Measure 2009
17 November 2011**

1. The NASUWT welcomes the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Children and Young People Committee CYPC on the implementation of the Learning and Skills Measure 2009 (LSWM 2009).
2. The NASUWT is the largest teachers' union in Wales and the UK representing teachers and school leaders.

GENERAL COMMENTS

3. The NASUWT has responded to various consultations on and related to the LSWM 2009 and sees no need to rehearse here the views that have been expressed previously. Those consultation responses are a matter of public record and the NASUWT urges the members of the CYPC to review those documents to inform this inquiry.

NASUWT
The largest teachers' union in Wales and the UK
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4. The NASUWT will, therefore, concentrate on the terms of reference for this inquiry but maintains that it may be too early to make an informed assessment of effects of the LSWM 2009.
5. Further, the NASUWT notes that the Welsh Government has announced proposals to move the 14-19 Learning Pathways grant funding from funding individual local authorities to funding regional consortia in 2012-13 which, if implemented, could impact significantly on the implementation of the Measure.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

6. The NASUWT is not sure of **the effect that the implementation of the LSWM 2009 has had on young people aged 14-19 years.**
7. However, the NASUWT recognises that providing a greater variety of post-16 courses, both academic and vocational, has to be to the benefit of young people; not least, since it will encourage pupils to remain in education.
8. On the negative side, the well rehearsed concerns of the NASUWT in relation to the loss of school-based sixth form provision in parts of Wales are becoming a reality.
9. The NASUWT suggests that the CYPC should consider carefully the picture that is emerging across Wales in terms of choice of setting available to young people for post 16 study and the factors that determine the choice that is available.
10. The NASUWT points to the Neath Port Talbot Authority that moved to a tertiary system of education prior to incorporation where the choice of

setting for post-16 studies is determined by linguistic and denominational factors.

11. Again, the NASUWT is not sure **whether the implementation of the LSWM 2009 has had any effect on the numbers of young people choosing to stay on in education or training after the end of compulsory education at age 16.**
12. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the initial response of young people is to choose to stay on in education or training, post-16, but whether or not this can be attributed to the provisions of the LSWM 2009 is a matter of debate, particularly in a time of recession and lack of job opportunity.
13. In addition, the NASUWT suggests that the CYPC should look carefully at the drop-out rate of young people who initially opt to pursue post-16 studies as it has been suggested that young people find the travel associated with their chosen course of study too onerous and concern has also been expressed about the quality of some provision.
14. The NASUWT acknowledges that the LSWM has provided **young people aged 14-19 with a wider choice for academic and vocational courses** as a result of the *Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009*.
15. However, the NASUWT remains concerned that the options initially available to young people, though the local curricula, may not materialise because of a lack of take-up.
16. The NASUWT is aware that issue of viability, lack of funding and prohibitive travel arrangements has resulted in young people being denied access to courses.

17. Further, the NASUWT is aware that pupils with additional learning needs often follow entry level and level 1 courses, known as 'Enrichment' courses. These courses are planned, organised and coordinated by schools according to the needs of their pupils. Funding for these courses is determined on a quota basis and where a school exceeds their quota the school has to find the funding.
18. The NASUWT is aware that schools are concerned that the central funding that provides for the quotas for these courses may be withdrawn, as the courses are below level 2, and that this could result in extremely vulnerable young people being disadvantaged.
19. The NASUWT is concerned that where **practical problems have been addressed in order to implement the *Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009*** it has led to attempts to fractionalise and offer casual contracts to the school workforce.
20. In the last academic year, the NASUWT had to move into dispute over redundancies with several schools, and a further education institution, as a direct consequence of the implementation of LSWM 2009.
21. In the schools in question, claims were made that changes to the curriculum resulting from the implementation of the learning pathways agenda and, to some extent, the Welsh Baccalaureate, meant that schools no longer required staff to work on a full-time basis and attempts were made to dismiss staff as redundant and re-engage them on lesser contracts.
22. Naturally, the NASUWT questioned the validity of such claims and was successful in resolving some of the disputes without recourse to industrial action. However, industrial action was taken in three schools in an attempt to avoid compulsory redundancy.

23. In the further education institution, a change to the post-16 funding methodology was cited as the reason for the redundancy proposals. This claim was strenuously denied by the Welsh Government. Industrial action was followed. Compulsory redundancy was avoided but courses and jobs were lost, and hours were reduced.

24. In addition, the NASUWT is aware that school timetables have been constrained, with lessons blocked for two or three periods in order to accommodate collaborative arrangements between schools and between school and colleges.



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