

# Children, Young People and Education Committee

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Meeting Venue:

**Committee Room 1 – Senedd**

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Meeting date:

**Wednesday, 14 January 2015**

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Meeting time:

**09.15**

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Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales



For further information please contact:

**Marc Wyn Jones**

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

[SeneddCYPE@assembly.wales](mailto:SeneddCYPE@assembly.wales)

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## Agenda

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### **1 Introductions, apologies and substitutions**

### **2 Qualifications Wales Bill – Evidence session 2 (09.30 – 10.30) (Pages 1 – 18)**

WJEC

CYPE(4)-01-15 – Paper 1

Gareth Pierce, Chief Executive

### **3 Qualifications Wales Bill – Evidence session 3 (10.30 – 11.30) (Pages 19 – 22)**

NAHT and ASCL

CYPE(4)-01-15 – Paper 2

CYPE(4)-01-15 – Paper 3

**Robin Hughes, Secretary - ASCL Cymru**

**Chris Howard, Acting Director - NAHT**

## **4 Papers to note**

**Inquiry into Educational Outcomes for Children from Low Income Households – Additional information from the Minister following the meeting on 3 December (Pages 23 – 25)**

CYPE(4)-01-15 – Paper to note 4

**Letter from the Minister for Health and Social Services – Response to Committee report on CAMHS (Page 26)**

CYPE(4)-01-15 – Paper to note 5

**Qualifications Wales Bill – Additional information from the Minister following the meeting on 11 December (Pages 27 – 28)**

CYPE(4)-01-15 – Paper to note 6

**Letter from the Minister for Education and Skills – Progress report to the Committee report: Inquiry into Attendance and Behaviour (Pages 29 – 34)**

CYPE(4)-01-15 – Paper to note 7

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# National Assembly for Wales

## Children, Young People and Education Committee

### CYPE(4)–01–15 – Paper 1

## Qualifications Wales Bill

### Evidence from: WJEC

#### Introduction

The provisions of the Qualifications Wales Bill are generally welcomed by WJEC.

In particular, it is important (as indicated at section 6 of the Explanatory Memorandum) that the Bill “provides for the establishment of Qualifications Wales as an independent regulator for Wales”. Whilst recognising that the limitations referred to at section 49 of the Explanatory Memorandum have emerged during recent years, the lack of independence of the current regulatory arrangements has been a matter of concern since the functions of the former ACCAC were absorbed into the Welsh Government.

WJEC is one of the significant number of consultees referred to at section 19 of the Explanatory Memorandum who “expressed concern about combining the dual functions of regulating and awarding in one body”. We therefore agree with the prudence displayed in the proposed legislation, i.e. that “awarding functions are not included in this Bill” (section 20 of Explanatory Memorandum).

To the extent that WJEC has concerns about aspects of the Bill, these tend to relate to:

- some concepts and processes which could be better defined or communicated
- potential for conflict of interest
- potential to increase the costs which awarding bodies have to pass on to users of services
- uncertainty regarding the future of some important current grants.

#### Section 3: Principal aims of Qualifications Wales

The principal aims as set out at sections 3 (1) (a) and (b) seem appropriate, but it might be reasonable to add to the considerations at section 3 (2) so that the list includes one which relates explicitly to meeting the needs of learners.

#### Section 5: Duty to set general recognition criteria

It is essential that criteria for recognition are set and published, but in section 5 (2) any “different provision for different descriptions of awarding body” should be on the basis of different qualifications that different awarding bodies may choose to offer, otherwise there becomes a potential difficulty in terms of fair and equal treatment of different awarding bodies.

#### Section 8: General recognition of an awarding body

The provision at section 8 (3) for recognising an awarding body even if it does not meet all of the general recognition criteria would need to be exercised carefully in the context of section 8 (4) in order to treat all awarding bodies fairly and equally.

#### Section 9: Qualification specific recognition of an awarding body

Similar considerations as indicated above for general criteria also apply to the provision of section 9 (3).

## **Section 10: Power to make rules about applications for recognition**

Published rules relating to applications for recognition are essential, but it should be noted that a fee payable in respect of an application will, if sizable, be likely to have an impact on the charges which an awarding body makes on the users of its services.

## **Section 12: Recognition: interpretation**

The clarification provided at section 12 (3) [and at section 52 (4)] is helpful in that the “award of a qualification in Wales” is defined as “its award to persons assessed in respect of the qualification wholly or mainly in Wales”. In practice, for an individual learner, the assessment in respect of a qualification is usually located wholly or mainly at the geographical location of the organisation recognised by the awarding body as the “centre” (school / college / learning provider) through which that learner is entered for the qualification, and hence this provides a means of articulating this definition operationally. It is important that this definition proves to be sufficiently robust to prevent inappropriate entries for a qualification being made on behalf of individuals who should not really be eligible for the “award of a qualification in Wales”. It is also possible of course that some qualifications approved by Qualifications Wales will be of interest to learners outside Wales in jurisdictions where the qualification is acceptable from a regulatory perspective.

## **Section 13: Duty to prepare list of priority qualifications**

Whilst the operational objectives of section 14 (4) may well be relevant for some qualifications, care is needed in introducing the notion that “ensuring and maintaining public confidence in the qualification” is a greater priority for some qualifications than for others. Learners and stakeholders have the right to expect that confidence can be placed in all qualifications that are recognised by Qualifications Wales. Consideration should therefore be given to defining a priority qualification directly in terms of objective 14 (4) (a) rather than making distinctions based on the wider notion of confidence.

## **Sections 15-17: Restricted priority qualifications, with or without section 15 arrangements**

Although the Explanatory Memorandum (section 83) refers to the possibility of taking the system “from being supply-led, to demand-led” it should be noted that the focus of these sections is on providing a means of limiting the variety available on the supply side for what are classed as priority qualifications. This policy intent is already manifest in the Welsh Government’s current approach to reform of some GCSEs, and it would seem that the provisions of sections 15-17 do provide a more transparent means of achieving the goal of limiting the available supply. The provision at section 15 (2) for “payments to be made by Qualifications Wales in respect of its development” can be particularly important in the context of a qualification for which the level of take-up in Wales is likely to be too low to make it viable for an awarding body. Such non-viability could also relate to the delivery of assessment series, and it is presumed that the general provision to make grants (section 45) would permit Qualifications Wales to support the supply side in such cases.

## **Section 22: Conditions of approval**

Whilst it is prudent to allow for the possibility of changes to the conditions subsequent to a qualification being approved, this provision at section 22 (2) should be used sparingly. Also, for matters relating to timing in connection with the notice referred to at section 22 (5), account should be taken of the potential impact on learners who may already be pursuing studies relevant to the qualification. Wording similar to that at section 25 (6) (a) and section 27 (9) may be appropriate.

## **Section 24: Rules about applications for approval**

As for section 10, published rules relating to applications for recognition are essential, but it should be noted that a fee payable in respect of an application will, if sizable, be likely to have an impact on the charges which an awarding body makes on the users of its services.

## **Section 29: Restriction on funding and provision of certain courses**

The introduction at section 29 (3) of the phrase “Welsh version of the qualification” is not particularly helpful and seems to be unnecessary in the context of earlier sections being based on “qualifications approved by Qualifications Wales” as a more appropriate descriptor.

## **Section 40: Provision of services etc by Qualifications Wales**

The provision by Qualifications Wales on a commercial basis of consultancy and other services in connection with any of its functions or any other matter related to qualifications introduces significant potential for a conflict of interest. This is particularly so in situations where the scope of consultancy and other services has any possible interface with qualifications which are subsequently submitted for approval by Qualifications Wales. If the provisions of section 40 (1) are to be retained at all, there needs to be a clear reference to ensuring that the scope of such work is tested against potential current or future conflicts of interest.

## **Section 41: Review and research**

Section 41 (1) (b) seems to provide the basis for Qualifications Wales to engage with awarding organisations, including proactively, on matters relating to the awarding of qualifications. This provision is therefore fundamental in relation to setting and maintaining standards of awards for the qualifications approved by Qualifications Wales.

## **Section 45: Grants**

The general provision to make grants is important and it should be noted that a current grant (made by the Welsh Government and previously by ACCAC) is that which makes a contribution to supporting the additional costs incurred by an awarding organisation in meeting the bilingual requirements of assessment in Wales. The absence of such a grant would have an impact on the charges which an awarding body makes on the users of its services. In order to safeguard the interests of stakeholders, consideration should be given to identifying this area of grant making explicitly within the bill.

## National Assembly for Wales

### Children, Young People and Education Committee

#### CYPE(4)–01–15 – Paper 2

#### Qualifications Wales Bill

#### Evidence from: NAHT

- 1 The National Association of Headteachers represents over 29,000 headteachers, deputy and assistant heads, business managers and other senior staff of maintained and independent schools within and beyond the UK. Our members work in colleges, secondary schools, primary schools, nurseries and special schools.
- 2 We thank the Minister for listening to our representations and thus welcome the intention to establish Qualifications Wales and the transfer of responsibility for regulation and quality assurance of qualifications awarded in Wales from the Welsh Government to this new body.
- 3 We also welcome the decision to establish this body as a regulator of qualifications in the first instance and not as both regulator and awarder of qualifications. We think this is essential if public confidence is to be maintained within and beyond Wales.
- 4 We remain concerned that the new body will not be independent of Government. Welsh Ministers have the power of appointment, the power of authoring remit letters and the power to identify those priority qualifications that require a pre-determined response by the regulator.
- 5 The National Assembly will have a scrutiny role through its consideration of the Annual Report but unless there is a clear role for the Assembly in determining an overall impact on the quality of the qualifications system and its outcomes, there can be no real independence. What happens when the new body presents its Annual Report to the National Assembly and the remit or priorities of the Welsh Government are found wanting?
- 6 Qualifications Wales will inherit a monopoly arrangement where the WJEC is the single provider of high-status and high-risk qualifications. It will need to reassure stakeholders that there are robust measures in place to ensure that monopoly provider arrangements continue to deliver innovation, responsiveness and reliability.
- 7 Our members fear that Qualifications Wales will encourage monopoly arrangements in certain key areas of provision that are deemed strategically important by Welsh Ministers. Along with the dangers that are inherent in all monopoly arrangements, it makes the qualification system vulnerable to political turbulence. Are Ministers really in the best position to determine which examination best suits the many needs of an individual pupil or group of them?
- 8 Qualifications Wales will be tasked with ‘promoting public confidence in qualifications and in the Welsh qualifications system’. This is very welcome. It remains to be seen how this might be measured, but the aim must be to secure a public perception that made-in-Wales qualifications are valid, reliable and

comparable with other well-regarded qualifications available elsewhere in the UK and beyond.

- 9 Qualifications Wales will engage in research. In considering the Annual Report, the National Assembly should have the power to determine right and proper areas for research and to commission such independently of Government if need be.

**National Assembly for Wales**  
**Children, Young People and Education Committee**  
**CYPE(4)–01–15 – Paper 3**  
**Qualifications Wales Bill**  
**Evidence from: ASCL**

- 1 The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) represents over 18,000 heads, principals, deputies, vice-principals, assistant heads, business managers and other senior staff of maintained and independent schools and colleges throughout the UK. ASCL Cymru represents school leaders in more than 90 per cent of the secondary schools in Wales.
- 2 ASCL Cymru welcomes the intention to establish Qualifications Wales and the transfer of responsibility for regulation and quality assurance of qualifications awarded in Wales from the Welsh Government to this new body.
- 3 We also welcome the decision to establish this body as a regulator of qualifications in the first instance and not as both regulator and awarder of qualifications.
- 4 It isn't clear how joining the functions of regulation and awarding in a single body would benefit learners, teachers and other stakeholders nor lead to greater public confidence in a Welsh qualifications system.
- 5 Early discussions with Philip Blaker, Chief Executive of Qualifications Wales, about how the new organisation may approach outstanding concerns have been encouraging.
- 6 It is regrettable that the proposal to establish this body was made in November 2012 but that this body will only be established for September 2015. New made-in-Wales GCSEs and A/AS levels and a revised and more rigorous Welsh Baccalaureate have been developed over this period. These new qualifications will be taught in classrooms from September 2015 without having had the oversight of a properly constituted and well-run independent regulator.
- 7 It is unclear how the independence of this new body will be maintained under the arrangements described in the Bill. Welsh Ministers have the power of appointment, the power of authoring remit letters and the power to identify those priority qualifications that require a pre-determined response by the regulator. Moreover, what happens when the new body presents its Annual Report to the National Assembly, and what if the report is found wanting?
- 8 It is fair that proper arrangements are made for those civil servants currently delivering the functions of regulation in the transfer of these functions to the new body. However, the recent history of qualification regulation in Wales does not inspire the confidence that there is sufficient expertise and/or capacity among the current personnel to deliver the robust and high-quality service that should be expected.
- 9 Qualifications Wales will inherit a monopoly arrangement where the WJEC is the single provider of high-status, high-volume and therefore high-risk qualifications,

including new GCSE English and GCSEs in Mathematics. It will need to be effective and vigilant from the very first day of its existence.

- 10 Qualifications Wales will need to reassure stakeholders that there are robust measures in place to ensure that monopoly provider arrangements continue to deliver innovation, responsiveness and a reliable service.
- 11 The Bill allows for Ministers together with Qualifications Wales to produce a list of 'priority qualifications' and within these a further category of 'restricted qualifications'. Qualifications Wales will be able to restrict the number of forms of a restricted qualifications to as few as one. This will only apply to maintained schools. An example is given in explanatory notes: "To take GCSE English for example, this means that a pupil in a maintained school would only be able to take the single Qualifications Wales approved version". Given the troubled history of awarding GCSE English in Wales, it is essential that there is transparency about what is in place to ensure the safety of the awarding.
- 12 It is clear that there is an expectation that Qualifications Wales will encourage more and not less monopoly arrangements in certain key areas of provision that are deemed strategically important by Welsh Ministers. Along with the dangers that are inherent in all monopoly arrangements, it makes the qualification system vulnerable to political turbulence.
- 13 Qualifications Wales will be tasked with 'promoting public confidence in qualifications and in the Welsh qualifications system'. This is very welcome. It remains to be seen how this might be measured, but the aim must be to secure a public perception that made-in-Wales qualifications are valid, reliable and comparable with other well-regarded qualifications available elsewhere in the UK and beyond.
- 14 Qualifications Wales will engage in research. One of the pressures that affect qualifications and how they perform in a school-setting is their use as a measure in school accountability. It would be worthwhile looking at how that pressure can be managed.
- 15 Over time, it should be hoped that Qualifications Wales establishes itself as an authoritative source of independent analysis and commentary on the performance of qualifications and assessment in our system. This might be an opportunity to resolve the standards dilemma: when more of our young people pass the exam, is it because they are getting better teaching or are they cleverer than their predecessors or is it because the exam is getting easier?

05 January 2015

Huw Lewis AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref SF/HL/4098/14

Ann Jones, AM  
Chair,  
Children, Young People & Education Committee  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

16 December 2014

Dear Ann,

**Children, Young People and Education Committee Enquiry into the Educational Outcomes of Children from Low Income Families.**

I write in response to your enquiries following my appearance before the Committee on 3 December. You requested further information on the following 3 topics:

A note on the staff vacancy rates in each regional consortium;

A breakdown of the School Challenge Cymru funding allocation between the regional consortia and schools.

OECD: A comparison of European countries that have rapidly shifted to achieve the 500 score in each of the three domains of PISA.

**Staff vacancy rates in each regional consortium**

Regional education consortia are moving away from a traditional advisory service model. In future, school improvement will centre on teacher to teacher and head teacher to head teacher support, facilitated by consortia. However, there has to be a transition and we are in that transition period now.

Consortia have been downsizing their full time advisory staff and gradually replacing them with a more flexible arrangement of experienced teachers and head teachers who might offer 1 or 2 days per week. I appreciate that transition is not easy and that some requests arrive at relatively short notice to provide support to other schools. Our intention is to have a system that is more resilient, where stronger schools build up additional capacity over time and are able to offer support to other schools when needed.

The good news is that head teachers are already commenting favourably on the move towards the new model and can see that significant benefits will emerge over the coming years. I received this feedback first hand at my recent visits to the regional consortia.

### **A breakdown of the School Challenge Cymru funding**

All of our Pathways to Success Schools have received an initial allocation of funding. These were agreed following a period of consideration and close scrutiny of each school's plan by the Schools Challenge Cymru Champions and my officials. The allocations are based on each school's individual needs and will support the implementation of a bespoke package of improvement activity.

As Schools Challenge Cymru Advisers (SCCA) work with their schools, additional needs will inevitably emerge or be identified and these will require further action. To manage this, and to ensure that the Challenge maintains pace, the allocation of funding must be dynamic within the overall envelope. Funding levels, including SCCA time, stand at just over £11.5m.

In addition to the funding being made available to schools directly for improvement activity, each education consortium has been allocated Schools Challenge Cymru funding to build capacity at a regional level and to drive collaboration. This activity includes investing in Improvement Hubs, developing school to school partnerships and continuing professional development for leaders and practitioners and is designed to ensure that Schools Challenge Cymru will have a positive impact on the wider education system, leading to an emphasis on school-led self improvement. Funding levels currently stand at around £3.7m.

Given the need for fluidity, final funding allocations for year 1 of the programme for each of the Pathways to Success Schools will be published at the end of the summer term in 2015.

### **A comparison of European Countries that have rapidly shifted to achieve the 500 score in each of the three domains of PISA**

It is generally recognised that the top performing education systems in the world attain a point score of over 500 in PISA. At Cabinet on 15 September, it was agreed that our ambition should be to achieve scores of 500 in each of reading, mathematics and science in the PISA tests sat in 2021. At the same time, we will significantly reduce the percentage of learners only achieving PISA proficiency level 2 or below. In the 2012 PISA tests, 23 countries achieved over 500 in the main domain compared with 17 countries getting over 500 points in the main domain area in 2009. Top performing countries in the OECD continue to do better and strive for improvement; Wales should be doing the same.

The Wales average for mathematics in 2012 was 468 and is our weakest performance domain in PISA. To achieve the 500 score in mathematics would mean that a gap of 32 points would need to be bridged, a very challenging target. To achieve the 500 score in reading and science is still challenging although not of the same magnitude, with Wales scoring 480 and 491 respectively in PISA 2012.

It is possible to make significant improvements in points scores between PISA cycles – the Czech Republic achieved a 15 point increase in reading between 2009 and 2012, Latvia achieved a 9 point increase in mathematics in this time and Germany has seen sustained improved performance in PISA since 2003.

In working towards the 500 score ambition, a number of interventions are being put in place. These aim to ensure that Wales will improve teaching and learning for all pupils through a dynamic curriculum that enables young people to apply learnt knowledge and develop the skills to allow them to solve problems in the real world. These are the sorts of skills that the PISA study tests.

DfES has put in place a delivery plan to prepare and support the school network in readiness for the implementation of the new GCSEs in English/Welsh, Mathematics and Mathematics-Numeracy. The content of the new GCSEs requires a major shift in teaching methods to ensure learners are able to demonstrate PISA-type skills.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Huw Lewis', written in black ink.

**Huw Lewis AC / AM**

Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills

## Agenda Item 4.2

Mark Drakeford AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MB/MD/5225/14

Ann Jones AM  
Chair  
Children, Young People and Education Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

5 December 2014

Dear Ann,

I am writing to thank you, and all Committee members, for your inquiry and report into specialist child and adolescent mental health services in Wales. I am especially pleased that in gathering its evidence, the Committee sought directly the views of young people, parents and carers.

I echo the Committee's sentiments that this is an important moment for CAMHS in Wales. This is why I have called for a fundamental review of services to ensure they meet the future needs of children and young people. I am delighted that Professor Dame Sue Bailey has already agreed to undertake a role supporting clinical change and development.

I commend the Committee's decision to allow time for this redesign work to embed and deliver, before considering any recommendations from the inquiry. Your report and the evidence presented to the Committee will be a significant contribution towards shaping the transformation of services. I will update the committee on progress near the end of 2015.

Best wishes,

Mark

Mark Drakeford AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services

Huw Lewis AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our  
ref:LFHL131214

Ann Jones AM  
Chair  
Children, Young People and Education  
Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

18 December 2014

Dear Ann,

### **Children, Young People and Education Committee – Stage 1 Scrutiny of the Qualifications Wales Bill**

Following my attendance at the Children, Young People and Education Committee on 11 December, I agreed to provide some further information detailing the process by which the WJEC was selected to deliver the Welsh Baccalaureate in response to the following question.

#### **Why new legislation was needed in this area if the Minister had previously taken a decision to select a single provider for a particular qualification.**

When the original development of the Welsh Baccalaureate was proposed in 2001, the Welsh Government issued an invitation for expressions of interest to develop the specification, under powers to take forward work to promote the education of the people of Wales and incur expenditure that were set out at the time in sections 40 and 85 of the Government of Wales Act 1998. This work was not directly connected with the regulatory functions of the regulatory body for qualifications in Wales at the time which was ACCAC – the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales. Only WJEC expressed an interest and subsequently worked with the Welsh Government to develop and deliver the specification.

For the revised Welsh Baccalaureate which will be taught in schools from September 2015, the Welsh Government has worked only with WJEC. The Review of Qualifications had recommended that development of a revised Welsh Baccalaureate “should build on the widely respected strengths of the current model and on the work already invested by providers.” (Recommendation 9) and that “Detailed development, delivery and support of the Welsh Baccalaureate should remain the responsibility of WJEC in the short term ...”

(recommendation 12) before transferring to Qualifications Wales when it is fully established. Involving other awarding bodies at this stage would have created potential instabilities for learners, learning providers and the awarding bodies themselves while the qualifications system in Wales was, itself, under development. If Qualifications Wales wishes to restrict the qualification when it is next reviewed, it will need to do so in an open, fair and transparent way, in accordance with its published scheme.

In developing legislation for a new statutory body, Qualifications Wales, there has been a desire to clearly and transparently set out the functions of the body. The ability to restrict the number of forms of a qualification (including to only one form) and to commission, through a competitive process, an awarding body to develop such a restricted qualification will enable Qualifications Wales to deliver its principal aims and to meet the needs of learners in Wales.

I trust that this information is helpful to Committee Members.

Yours sincerely

Handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Best Regards" followed by a stylized signature that appears to be "Huw".

**Huw Lewis AC / AM**

Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills

Huw Lewis AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ann Jones, AM  
Chair, Children and Young People's Committee  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

18 December 2014

Dear Ann,

**Progress report to the Children, Young People and Education Committee Report:  
Inquiry into Attendance and Behaviour, August 2013**

A year has passed since I wrote to you providing my formal response to the committee's inquiry into Attendance and Behaviour. I consider this a timely opportunity to update you on progress towards the accepted recommendations in the report.

In September 2013 new regulations relating to mandatory training for governors and clerks to governing bodies came into force. This mandatory training includes a module on 'understanding data' which in turn, includes information on understanding attendance data and the importance of monitoring pupil attendance and absences.

Additionally, in February 2014 the Welsh Government published the National Model for Regional Working. The National Model recognises the role of consortia in supporting and challenging local authorities for the purposes of 'school improvement'. This challenge and support role extends to school improvement linked to learner wellbeing, such as behaviour and attendance. However, responsibility for delivering the Educational Welfare Service, including EOTAS provision, will remain with the local authority.

I have provided £800,000 to consortia to secure improvements in school attendance over two years. The grant enabled consortia to work with their authorities and schools to develop and embed effective practices which can secure longer-term improvements in school attendance. The grant concludes this month and will be evaluated in 2015. Elements of best practice identified by the evaluation process will be considered for dissemination as a case studies via the Learning Wales website.

Regarding the recommended evaluation of bullying and non-attendance to determine possible correlations, my officials have discussed with Estyn the possibility of the inspectorate undertaking this work as part of its annual remit. However, Estyn confirmed the data is not available in the form required to allow for a correlation to be demonstrated.

Although the Welsh Government recommends schools monitor and record incidents of bullying it is not a statutory requirement.

I have remitted Estyn to review attendance at a primary school level. As part of this review Estyn will be carrying out case studies on a selection of individual schools. If bullying has been an issue and the school has undertaken specific strategies to tackle this, improvements may be reflected in their attendance data. Once I have received the review report, my officials will consider how the work might inform potential future monitoring of bullying and non-attendance rates.

Work towards the remaining recommendations made in the report continues. This includes a review of the Inclusion and Pupil Support guidance; and an amended guidance document is due to be published for public consultation in spring 2015. The revised guidance will re-emphasise the importance of early intervention with children and families and place a greater emphasis on the importance of behaviour management techniques.

The emphasis on behaviour management continues in the work being undertaken in respect of the behaviour management module in the Masters in Educational Practice Programme. The refreshed Behaviour Management Learning Pack is due to be launched during spring term 2015. My officials are also working with Professor David Reynolds, who specialises in educational effectiveness, to review the resources currently available via the Behaviour and Attendance Improvement area of the Learning Wales website. This review will help to ensure that practitioners have access to the latest research and exemplar case studies focussed on behaviour management.

Please see the attached Annex for updates on the remaining recommendations from the committee's report.

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Huw Lewis in black ink, consisting of two lines: "Bert Regards" and "Huw".

**Huw Lewis AC / AM**  
**Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau**  
**Minister for Education and Skills**  
Minister for Education and Skills

Recommendation	Update
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>Further to the revised Behaving and Attending Action Plan 2011, the Committee recommends that the Welsh Government develops an overarching national attendance and behaviour strategy which takes forward existing good practice and against which progress is regularly monitored.</p>	<p>Rejected</p>
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>The Committee recommends that an increased emphasis be placed on evidence-based behaviour management training within initial teacher training. Evidence-based pupil behaviour modules should also form a core element of continuous professional development. The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government works with key stakeholders (including regional consortia) to undertake an audit of need within the existing teaching workforce and to develop action plans to deal with any skills gaps.</p>	<p>The refreshed Behaviour Management Learning Pack for the Masters in Educational Practice Programme is due to be launched during spring term 2015. My officials are also working with Professor David Reynolds, who specialises in educational effectiveness, to review the resources currently available via the Behaviour and Attendance Improvement Area of the Learning Wales website. This review will help to ensure that practitioners have access to the latest research and exemplar case studies focussed on behaviour management.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>The Committee recommends that all governors should be provided with training on effective approaches to improve pupil attendance and address problem behaviour. They should also be trained on their roles in</p>	<p>In September 2013 new regulations relating to mandatory training for governors and clerks to governing bodies came into force. This mandatory training includes a module on 'understanding data' which in turn, includes information on understanding attendance data and the importance of monitoring pupil attendance and absences.</p>

<p>this regard and how to understand and utilise school level data to challenge and support their schools to achieve improvement.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>The Committee recommends that regional consortia should have a more clearly defined role in respect of improving pupil attendance and behaviour. The Welsh Government should further explore the benefits of this approach with specific reference to the other recommendations in this report.</p> <p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government should work with the necessary partners to explore the feasibility of placing the responsibility for strategic development, oversight of delivery and funding for education welfare and behaviour support services at a regional level.</p>	<p>In February 2014 the Welsh Government published the National Model for Regional Working. The National Model recognises the role of consortia in supporting and challenging local authorities for the purposes of ‘school improvement’. This challenge and support role extends to school improvement linked to learner wellbeing, such as behaviour and attendance. However, responsibility for delivering the Educational Welfare Service, including EOTAS provision, remains with the local authority.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6</p> <p>The Welsh Government should ensure that schools, local authorities and regional consortia place an emphasis on early intervention with individual children and families.</p>	<p>Work to refresh the Inclusion and Pupil Support guidance is underway; an amended guidance document is due to be published for public consultation in spring 2015. The revised guidance will re-emphasise the importance of early intervention with children and families and place a greater emphasis on the importance of behaviour management techniques.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7</p>	<p>Work to take forward two key initiatives which will support the Educational Welfare Service in</p>

<p>The Welsh Government should ensure that evidence-based approaches to improving attendance and addressing problem behaviour are in place and implemented in all Welsh schools. The potential for a strengthened role for regional consortia in respect of mainstreaming good practice should be explored.</p>	<p>Wales continues. I anticipate publishing an induction pack for new starters to the EWS; to publish National Occupational Standards for all Educational Welfare Officers in early 2015.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government explores how to utilise any correlation between rates of bullying and non-attendance in schools.</p>	<p>Although the Welsh Government recommends that schools monitor and record incidents of bullying, it is not a statutory requirement. At present, data is not available in a form that would allow for a correlation between bullying and non-attendance rates to be demonstrated.</p> <p>I have remitted Estyn to review attendance at a primary school level which will involve them in carrying out case studies on a selection of schools. If a school has undertaken specific strategies relating to anti-bullying an improvement may be reflected in their attendance statistics. Once I have received the report, my officials will consider how the work might inform potential future monitoring of bullying and non-attendance rates.</p> <p>Additionally, I have established the All-Wales Anti-Bullying Leadership Group which will provide a strategic perspective on bullying in schools and the wider community, and its links to hate crime.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9</p> <p>The Welsh Government should ensure that there is a clear focus on maintaining and improving attendance rates during the transition between primary and secondary school. The potential for a strengthened role for regional consortia should be explored in this respect.</p>	<p>As described in the update provided for Recommendations 4 and 6, the National Model recognises the role of consortia in supporting and challenging local authorities for the purposes of 'school improvement'. This challenge and support role extends to school improvement linked to learner wellbeing, such as behaviour and attendance. However, responsibility for delivering the Educational Welfare Service, including EOTAS provision, remains with the local authority.</p> <p>Work to refresh the Inclusion and Pupil Support guidance is underway; and an amended guidance document is due to be published for public consultation in spring 2015. The revised guidance will re-emphasise the importance of early intervention with children and families and place a greater emphasis on the importance of behaviour management techniques.</p>

<p>Recommendation 10</p> <p>The Welsh Government should review the evidence of how effective the use of ‘first day responses’ to pupil absences are with a view to issuing strengthened guidance in this regard.</p>	<p>Data on first-day responses is not routinely collected by the Welsh Government and although first-day responses are promoted in the All-Wales Attendance Framework, information on which schools use first-day responses is fragmented. The revised Inclusion and Pupil Support guidance will ensure that emphasis is placed on best practice for first-day responses.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11</p> <p>Based on the evidence we received, the Committee strongly recommends that the Minister evaluates alternative, more positive strategies to fixed penalty notes before introducing regulations and makes publically available the evidence base for the implementation of fixed penalty notices, should that decision be taken forward.</p>	<p>Rejected</p>
<p>Recommendation 12</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government should work with regional consortia and other key stakeholders to explore the feasibility and benefits of developing and commissioning Educated Otherwise than at School (EOTAS) provision on a regional basis and potentially on an all Wales basis.</p>	<p>The National Model sets out the role and responsibilities of regional consortia. Although the consortia will have a role in supporting and challenging local authorities in respect of school improvement; the delivering of Educational Welfare Services, including EOTAS provision remains with the local authority.</p>