

**1. NASUWT agreed to provide any available information on whether an equivalent to the Baker clause in England would help address the issue of access to schools in Wales.**

The Baker Clause in England allows FE colleges and training providers access to every learner in years 8 to 13 to discuss non-academic routes. Our members report to us that the variance in access, provision and experiences across the country is likely due to the natural variation between populous areas compared to rural (as discussed in the session). FE establishments do engage with schools – either via timetabled sessions or attendance at Yr.11 parents or careers evenings. The extent that this occurs will vary according to local demography, relationships between establishments, staffing and availability.

The Baker Clause also states that schools need to impartially promote the full range of FE / training qualifications and apprenticeships. As mentioned in the session, schools with 6<sup>th</sup> forms will predominantly promote their own subjects over FE establishments so as to retain learners and therefore retain the associated finance that will help ensure the future of the school in these times of shrinking budgets – *but this is only when the courses offered are identical* (for example, if the learner wants to follow an A Level Maths course, and both the FE provider and the school offer this course, then the school will naturally advocate their own course over the FE course.) We have no evidence that schools promote their own subjects over FE courses they do not also offer, and so more research would be required on such a scenario.

In any case, it is important to note that the EPI report<sup>1</sup> notes that Post-16 participation is generally high across all four nations as well as that a much larger share of young people studied in colleges in Wales (53%) whilst there was a lower level of 16-17 year olds in school sixth form provision (35%) in 2022. It is therefore fair to claim that FE access concerns do not appear in the data.

**2. Since 2015, Careers Wales has no longer managed a work experience placing service meaning these arrangements, including any safeguarding assessments, have to be done by the school. Have you noticed a decrease in the work experience opportunities for learners in schools since then? What impact has this had on learners when deciding on their options after year 11?**

The range of work experience opportunities varies across the country, with rural areas having limited placement options as well as a narrower range of experiences than populous,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/UK-Nations-post-16-Report-1-FINAL.pdf>

industrialised areas. Whilst this narrows the range experiences available, it does not necessarily decrease the amount of opportunities.

With workplace arrangements made by the school, the usual arrangement is that a teacher with a TLR for such duties will be responsible for the vetting of places, the subsequent safeguarding and risk assessments, and all associated paperwork. This workload is on top of the daily teaching load, and can result in schools having a portfolio of tried and tested workplaces that they use every year. The aforementioned workload in vetting new placements may mean that schools rely upon these regulars rather than proactively seek new placements over time. Some learners ask for work placements further afield and this can cause logistical problems for the parent school in terms of overseeing the location and the vetting, and may be a logistical step too far for the individual responsible. Having Careers Wales oversee the administration had a positive impact on schools and learners.

**3. To what extent is there capacity within schools for staff to liaise with further education colleges and employers? Both in terms of work experience, and careers advice and guidance.**

There is capacity within school staff to liaise with FE and employers, and it readily occurs so that careers advice and guidance is provided in specific events such as parents' evenings, options evenings and so on.

**4. What are your views on whether there should be re-centralisation of work experience planning services? Do you think that such a service should be run by a central body such as Careers Wales, as it was previously?**

See the response to Q2. Having Careers Wales oversee the administration had a positive impact on schools and learners, as their overreach and greater resources provided a wider range of options and experiences than perhaps individual schools could provide on their own. Conversely, it is possible that a centralised service would not be fully aware of local offers and experiences, and so perhaps a hybrid arrangement between schools and a central body might better serve all learners.

Our members inform us that proper support from a career advisor, on a one to one basis is crucial for children with any ALN. This would lead to learning the wishes of the young person, and supporting the correct pathway into employment and to work experience planning. It is fair to ask if schools have capacity to do this.