

## Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

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Lleoliad:

Ystafell Bwyllgora 1 – y Senedd

Dyddiad:

Dydd Mercher, 7 Mai 2014

Amser:

09.15

Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales



I gael rhagor o wybodaeth, cysylltwch â:

**Marc Wyn Jones**

Clerc y Pwyllgor

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### Agenda

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Cyfarfod preifat cyn y prif gyfarfod – 09.15 – 09.30

**1 Cyflwyniad, ymddiheuriadau a dirprwyon 09.30**

**2 Craffu ar y Bil Cymwysterau Cymru cyn y broses ddeddfu – sesiwn dystiolaeth 1 (09.30 – 10.30) (Tudalennau 1 – 21)**

CBAC

CYPE(4)-12-13 – Papur 1

Gareth Pierce – Prif Weithredwr

I'w gadarnhau

**3 Craffu ar y Bil Cymwysterau Cymru cyn y broses ddeddfu – sesiwn dystiolaeth 2 (10.30 – 11.30) (Tudalennau 22 – 28)**

CYPE(4)-12-14 – Papur 2

Huw Evans – cyn Gadeirydd yr Adolygiad o Gymwysterau ar gyfer pobl ifanc 14 i 19 oed yng Nghymru

#### **4 Craffu ar y Bil Cymwysterau Cymru cyn y broses ddeddfu – sesiwn dystiolaeth 3 (11.30 – 12.30) (Tudalennau 29 – 33)**

Ffederasiwn Hyfforddiant Cenedlaethol Cymru

CYPE(4)-12-14 – Papur 3

Arwyn Watkins, Prif Swyddog Gweithredol Ffederasiwn Hyfforddiant Cenedlaethol Cymru – Cambrian Training Company Ltd

Faith O'Brien, Cadeirydd Dros Dro – ITEC Training

Jeff Protheroe, Rheolwr Gweithrediadau

#### **5 Papurau i'w nodi**

**Ymchwiliad i Wasanaethau Iechyd Meddwl Plant a'r Glasoed – Gwybodaeth ychwanegol gan Barnardo's Cymru yn dilyn y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 2 Ebrill (Tudalennau 34 – 37)**

CYPE(4)-12-14 – Papur 4 i'w nodi

**Ymchwiliad i Ganlyniadau Addysgol Plant o gartrefi incwm isel – Llythyr gan y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau (Tudalennau 38 – 41)**

CYPE(4)-12-14 – Papur 5 i'w nodi

## Eitem 2

Mae cyfyngiadau ar y ddogfen hon

# Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru

## Y Pwyllgor Plant a Phobl Ifanc

### CYPE(4)-11-13 – Papur 1

## Craffu ar y Bil Cymwysterau Cymru cyn y broses ddeddfu

### Ymateb gan : CBAC

#### Cefndir

Mae'r gwahoddiad oddi wrth y Pwyllgor yn nodi bod Llywodraeth Cymru wedi rhoi "arwydd cynnar y bydd gan y Bil Cymwysterau (Cymru) ddau brif bwrpas":

- sefydlu un corff i fod yn gyfrifol am reoleiddio a sicrhau ansawdd cymwysterau heb radd yng Nghymru gan dynnu'r cyfrifoldeb rheoleiddio cyfredol ar gyfer cymwysterau oddi wrth Weinidogion; a
- maes o law, i'r corff gael cyfrifoldeb am ddyfarnu'r rhan fwyaf o gymwysterau ar gyfer dysgwyr 14 i 16 mlwydd oed yn ogystal â Safon Uwch a Bagloriaeth Cymru.

Mae'r Pwyllgor wedi nodi bod ei waith craffu cyn deddfu yn canolbwyntio ar bedwar prif faes, a defnyddir y rhain fel pedair prif adran i'r papur hwn.

#### 1. "A yw'r weledigaeth a'r cylch gwaith arfaethedig ar gyfer Cymwysterau Cymru yn fodel sefydliadol effeithiol?"

Wrth ystyried y cylch gorchwyl a fwriedir ar gyfer Cymwysterau Cymru, mae angen rhoi sylw penodol i ystyron a pherthnasedd "rheoleiddio", "sicrhau ansawdd" a "chyfrifoldeb am ddyfarnu".

Mae eisoes batrwm ar gyfer rheoleiddio cymwysterau sydd i'w weld o fewn y rôl rheoleiddio a gyflawnir gan Lywodraeth Cymru o fewn y dull tair-gwlad sy'n bodoli ar hyn o bryd ar gyfer rheoleiddio cymwysterau cyffredinol a'r dull pedair gwlad sydd yn ei le ar gyfer agweddau ar ddarpariaeth cymwysterau galwedigaethol.

Mewn perthynas â sicrhau ansawdd, mae'n bwysig cymryd i ystyriaeth y ffaith fod cyrff dyfarnu eu hunain â threfniadau yn eu lle ar gyfer sicrhau ansawdd o ran yr holl agweddau o ddatblygu a darparu cymwysterau. Mae felly yn bwysig bod ystyriaeth yn cael ei roi i sgôp y gwaith cyflenwol y bydd Cymwysterau Cymru yn ei wneud o ran sicrhau ansawdd – gall llawer o hwnnw gael ei wneud mewn gwirionedd trwy osod meini prawf neu egwyddorion dylunio ar gyfer cymwysterau, ynghyd â'r broses o achredu cymwysterau gan ddefnyddio'r meini prawf hynny. Mae'r agweddau hyn ar sicrhau ansawdd wedi eu halinio'n dda â'r swyddogaeth rheoleiddiol ac felly dylent fod yn gydrannau effeithiol o'r model sefydliadol. Cwestiwn gwahanol yw i ba raddau y dylai Cymwysterau Cymru ymwneud â materion sicrhau ansawdd sy'n berthynol i'r darparwyr addysgu, neu a ddylai hyn barhau i fod yn fater ar gyfer y gwasanaeth arolygu annibynnol, Estyn. Ystyriaeth arall yw a fydd Cymwysterau Cymru yn ymwneud yn uniongyrchol â systemau sicrhau ansawdd y cyrff dyfarnu ar faterion megis cydrannau a asesir gan athrawon ac sy'n cyfrannu at ddyfarniad cymhwyster.

Mewn perthynas â chyfrifoldeb am ddyfarnu, mae yna gyfrifoldebau allweddol yn deillio o'r fframwaith dyfarnu y bydd angen i Gymwysterau Cymru eu hysgwyddo o'r dechrau. Mae hyn yn ymwneud yn y lle cyntaf â dyfarnu'r cymwysterau Uwch Gyfrannol (AS) newydd yng Nghymru yn ystod haf 2016, llai na 12 mis wedi sefydlu Cymwysterau Cymru. Gall felly fod yn ddefnyddiol pe byddai Prif Weithredwr y sefydliad mewn sefyllfa i gyfrannu at drafodaethau ynghylch gosod a chynnal safonau dyfarnu yn gynnar iawn wedi'r penodiad.

O fewn cyfrifoldeb am ddyfarnu, mater o bwys sylweddol yw'r angen i Gymwysterau Cymru sefydlu polisi clir o'r dechrau ynghylch gosod a chynnal safonau dyfarnu. Tra bod y dull "deilliannau cymaradwy" ("*comparable outcomes*") yn cael ei ffafrio ar hyn o bryd o fewn y fframwaith tri-rheoleiddiwr, mae angen archwilio a deall oblygiadau llawn parhau â hyn. Mae'r dull hwn ar hyn o bryd yn cael ei weithredu ar sail "deilliannau ystadegol cymaradwy" yn nhermau canrannau o'r garfan flynyddol, sydd wrth gwrs ddim o angenrheidrwydd yn gyfystyr â "safonau perfformiad cymaradwy" o flwyddyn i flwyddyn. Mae'r gwahaniaeth hwn yn arbenning o bwysig pan fo fersiwn newydd o gymhwyster yn cael ei gyflwyno i olynu fersiwn blaenorol. Mae llawer o waith i'w wneud i sefydlu methodoleg briodol ar gyfer gosod a chynnal safonau ar gyfer cymwysterau Cymru a bydd angen i hyn gael ei gefnogi gan strategaeth gyfathrebu gadarn a thryloyw er mwyn darparu'r lefel uchel o hyder sydd ei angen wrth sefydlu cymwysterau newydd o bwys uchel.

Mae gan gyrff dyfarnu eu hunain gyfrifoldebau am weithredu amrediad llawn o brosesau sy'n ymwneud â dyfarnu, sydd â rhyngwyneb â'r gwaith swmpus o ddatblygu, darparu a marcio arholiadau a chymedroli asesiadau gan athrawon. Wrth ystyried model sefydliadol effeithiol ar gyfer Cymwysterau Cymru, fe ddylai fod yn bwysig ceisio osgoi'r aneffeithlonrwydd a fyddai'n deillio o unrhyw ddyblygu ar y gwaith dyfarnu y mae gyrff dyfarnu yn ei wneud, sy'n cynnwys gwirio a chadarnhau dyfarniadau. Mewn gwirionedd, fel rheoleiddiwr a fydd yn gorfod craffu ar faterion yn ymwneud â dyfarnu, bydd yn bwysig i Gymwysterau Cymru gadw ei annibyniaeth oddi wrth y gwaith dyfarnu sy'n cael ei gyflawni gan gyrff dyfarnu.

Bydd yn bwysig i Gymwysterau Cymru sefydlu ei hun o fewn y gymuned o reoleiddwyr cymwysterau, o ystyried bod nifer o faterion technegol lle mae llawer i'w ennill trwy gyd-drafod. Yn yr un modd, mae'r prif gyrff dyfarnu yn sylweddoli bod llawer i'w ennill trwy'r rhwydwaith JCQ<sup>CIC</sup> y maen nhw bob un yn aelodau ohono. Dylai Cymwysterau Cymru ganfod y bydd ei annibyniaeth fel rheoleiddiwr yn caniatáu cael y gorau o'r cyfleoedd ehangach ar gyfer cyd-drafod.

## **2. "Pa arferion da y gellir eu mabwysiadu o wledydd eraill o ran gwahanu swyddogaethau'r rheoleiddiwr arholiadau a'r corff dyfarnu o fewn un sefydliad?"**

Nid yw polisiau o angenrheidrwydd yn trosglwyddo'n rhwydd o un wlad i'r llall, nid lleiaf oherwydd bod amgylchiadau gwledydd yn gallu bod yn wahanol iawn i'w gilydd. Hefyd, y gwir yw nad oes enghreifftiau o reoleiddiwr arholiadau a chorff dyfarnu yn bodoli o fewn yr un sefydliad sy'n berthnasol i amgylchiadau penodol Cymru, sef:

- cymwysterau cyffredinol o bwys uchel ar gyfer oedran 16 a hefyd oedran 18
- y cymwysterau hynny yn defnyddio brandiau (TGAU a TAG) sydd hyd yma wedi eu cysylltu â rheoleiddio sy'n annibynnol o gyrff dyfarnu
- bydd cymwysterau dan y brandiau hynny yn parhau i gael eu rheoleiddio'n annibynnol mewn gwlad fawr gyfagos.

Y flaenoriaeth felly yw sefydlu rheoleiddiwr annibynnol yng Nghymru sy'n abl i fynd i'r afael, mewn modd fydd yn bodloni rhanddeiliaid, â'r heriau rheoleiddiol sylweddol sy'n bodoli ym maes cymwysterau. Mae hyn yn galw am annibynniaeth oddi wrth lywodraeth (gweler hefyd adran 3.1) a hefyd oddi wrth gyrff arholi, yn ogystal ag eglurder llwyr ynghylch swyddogaethau Cymwysterau Cymru a'r cyrff dyfarnu, yn eu tro, mewn perthynas â sicrhau ansawdd ac agweddau cyflenwol y gweithrediadau dyfarnu.

Gan dybio y bydd Cymwysterau Cymru yn cael ei sefydlu yn yr hydref 2015, bydd hyn ar adeg pan fydd y rhaglen ddiwygio cymwysterau cyffredinol fwyaf erioed yng Nghymru wedi cyrraedd tua dau draean o'r ffordd tuag at ei chwblhau. Bydd y corlaniad gyntaf o'r TGAU a TAG diwygiedig, yn ogystal â'r Bagloriaeth Cymru diwygiedig, eisoes wedi eu hachredu yn ystod 2014 ar gyfer eu dysgu am y tro cyntaf o Fedi 2015, bydd yr ail gorlaniad wedi cael eu cyflwyno i Lywodraeth Cymru ar gyfer eu hachredu yn ystod haf 2015 ar gyfer eu dysgu o Fedi 2016, a bydd y prif benderfyniadau polisi wedi gorfod cael eu gwneud yn gynnar yn 2015 ar gyfer gweddill y cymwysterau cyffredinol fydd angen eu diwygio ar gyfer dysgu o 2017. Awgrym CBAC yw bod hefyd angen buan am ddarn o waith sylweddol mewn perthynas â pholisi ar gyfer cymwysterau Addysg a Hyfforddiant Galwedigaethol Cychwynnol (AHGC – IVET) cyn y bydd Cymwysterau Cymru wedi ei sefydlu.

Yn ystod y gwaith cyfredol o ddiwygio'r corlaniad cyntaf o gymwysterau (ar gyfer dysgu o 2015), dylai bod peth arfer da wedi amlygu ei hun o ran y dulliau y gall rheoleiddiwr annibynnol (Llywodraeth Cymru ar hyn o bryd) eu defnyddio wrth weithio gyda chyrff dyfarnu (CBAC yn bennaf, ond rhai eraill hefyd) ar agenda sy'n ymateb i bolisiau Cymreig. Yn ogystal â bod yn ddefnyddiol o ran profiad ar gyfer yr ail gorlaniad o ddiwygio (cymwysterau i'w dysgu o 2016), dylai hwn fod o ddefnydd i Gymwysterau Cymru wrth sefydlu ei ddull ei hun o weithio.

Un o dasgau cyntaf Cymwysterau Cymru fydd sefydlu polisiau fydd yn gosod sylfaen ar gyfer y safonau dyfarnu fydd i'w defnyddio gan gyrff dyfarnu ar gyfer y cymwysterau UG diwygiedig yng Nghymru (i'w dyfarnu am y tro cyntaf yn haf 2016) a hefyd achredu yn ystod haf 2016 y trydydd corlaniad o gymwysterau TGAU a TAG i'w diwygio (ar gyfer dysgu o 2017). Ar gyfer y ddwy dasg hon, bydd sicrhau eglurder ac annibynniaeth priod swyddogaethau Cymwysterau Cymru a'r cyrff dyfarnu yn sylfaenol bwysig.

### **3. “A fydd y berthynas rhwng Cymwysterau Cymru (a'r cyrff dyfarnu gan gynnwys CBAC yn y tymor byr) a Llywodraeth Cymru yn gweithio'n effeithiol?”**

#### **3.1 Perthynas rhwng Cymwysterau Cymru a Llywodraeth Cymru**

Does dim rheswm *a priori* pam na ddylai'r berthynas rhwng Cymwysterau Cymru a Llywodraeth Cymru weithio'n effeithiol, ond er mwyn creu hinsawdd mor ffafriol â phosibl ar gyfer y berthynas hon bydd angen eglurder o'r dechrau ynghylch priod gyfrifoldebau'r ddau.

Er enghraifft, gall fod mai Llywodraeth Cymru fydd yn cadw'r cyfrifoldeb dros bolisi cwricwlwm ar gyfer yr amrediad oedran 14-19. Gall hyn gynnwys penderfynu'r cynnwys sydd i'w ddysgu o fewn pynciau “craidd”. Dylai'r llywodraeth hefyd ddal gafael yn y swyddogaeth arweiniol o ran polisi lefel uchel ar gyfer cymwysterau, e.e. a ddylai bod cymwysterau rheoledig ar gyfer y grwp oedran 14-16 ac a ddylai fod cymhwyster o natur Bagloriaeth. Yn amlwg, gan Lywodraeth Cymru y bydd y

cyfrifoldeb dros ddarparu adnoddau ar gyfer y gyfundrefn addysg ac am fonitro perfformiad ei helfennau: felly, y llywodraeth fyddai yn penderfynu sut dylid defnyddio deilliannau cymwysterau yn briodol o fewn mesurau perfformiad.

Byddai'n naturiol i Gymwysterau Cymru, fel rheoleiddiwr, gymryd cyfrifoldeb dros adnabod cyrff dyfarnu a monitro eu gwaith, dros achredu cymwysterau yn nhermau manylebau (meysydd llafur) a deunyddiau asesu engreiffiol (mae hyn yn rhoi dylanwad sylweddol o ran sicrhau ansawdd). Bydd Cymwysterau Cymru hefyd yn cymryd y prif gyfrifoldeb dros y dull a ddefnyddir gan gyrff dyfarnu wrth osod a chynnal safonau. Ar adeg o ddiwygio cymwysterau, byddai gan Gymwysterau Cymru ran allweddol i'w chwarae o ran rheoli risgiau cyfansawdd, yn arbennig o berspectif buddiannau ymgeiswyr a rhanddeiliaid ehangach. Mae annibynniaeth y rheoleiddiwr oddi wrth y llywodraeth yn gwbl allweddol mewn perthynas a materion yn ymwneud a safonau a risgiau cyfansawdd yn y system.

Mae hefyd nifer o "feysydd llwyd" lle gall fod yn ddadleuol pa un ai Llywodraeth Cymru neu Gymwysterau Cymru ddylai fod yn arwain. Gallai'r rhain gynnwys y polisi ynghylch a ddylai cymwysterau cyffredinol fod yn llinol neu unedol, neu i ba raddau y dylai fod haenau yn bodoli o fewn cymwysterau ar gyfer y grwp oedran 14-16, natur y system raddio y dylid ei defnyddio, neu i ba raddau y dylid cynnwys elfennau wedi eu hasesu gan athrawon o fewn cynlluniau asesu ar gyfer cymwysterau 14-19. Hyd yn oed pe bai'r llywodraeth yn ystyried mai yno y dylai'r penderfyniadau gael eu gwneud ar faterion o'r fath, byddai'n ddoeth i'r llywodraeth gymryd cyngor o leiaf oddi wrth ei reoleiddiwr cymwysterau, gan fod yna agweddau "technegol" arwyddocaol yn berthynol i bob un o'r meysydd hyn.

### **3.2 Perthynas rhwng cyrff dyfarnu a Llywodraeth Cymru**

Hyd yn oed pan fydd rheoleiddiwr annibynnol ar gyfer cymwysterau yn ei le, bydd y berthynas uniongyrchol rhwng cyrff dyfarnu (gan gynnwys CBAC) a'r llywodraeth yn parhau yn bwysig. Tystiolaeth gyfredol o hyn yw cyfraniad tim cwricwlwm Llywodraeth Cymru i'r trafodaethau ynghylch diwygio TGAU, ac mae hyn yn gyfochrog â chyfraniad Adran Addysg San Steffan i'r trafodaethau cyfatebol yn Lloegr.

Hefyd, mae cyfraniadau pwysig y mae cyrff dyfarnu yn ei wneud wrth ddarparu cyfleoedd datblygiad proffesiynol i athrawon ac wrth ddatblygu a chyhoeddi adnoddau dysgu ac addysgu. Mae'r rhyngwyneb polisi ar y materion hyn yn gallu bod yn ehangach na'r hyn sydd o ddiddordeb i'r rheoleiddiwr cymwysterau, yn arbennig yn nghyd-destun y gyfundrefn addysg ddwyieithog lle mae gan CBAC ran arwyddocaol.

Felly, yn nodweddiadol, byddai cyrff dyfarnu (gan gynnwys CBAC) yn disgwyl gallu ymwneud yn bositif ac adeiladol gyda Llywodraeth Cymru yn y tymor byr ac hefyd yn y tymor canol yn dilyn sefydlu Cymwysterau Cymru.

#### **4. "Beth fydd effaith Cymwysterau Cymru ar achredu cymwysterau galwedigaethol (gan gynnwys prentisiaethau)?"**

Yng nghyd-destun yr argymhelliad gan yr Arolwg Cymwysterau y dylai Cymru ddatblygu dull o ddarparu cymwysterau galwedigaethol sy'n seiliedig ar y patrwm Ewropeaidd o AHGC (IVET) a AHGP (CVET), mae'n ymddangos y bydd y maes CVET (*addysg a hyfforddiant galwedigaethol parhaus*) yn un a fydd yn parhau i ddefnyddio cymwysterau sy'n gyffredin ar draws y DU. Felly, bydd yn bwysig bod Cymwysterau Cymru yn ennill safle iddo'i hun fel sefydliad sy'n gallu cynrychioli

perspectif a buddiannau Cymru ochr yn ochr â'r rheoleiddwyr eraill sy'n ymwneud â'r cymwysterau hyn o fewn eu gwledydd (Ofqual, SQA ac o bosib CCEA yn y dyfodol).

Fodd bynnag, mewn perthynas â'r maes AHGC/IVET (*addysg a hyfforddiant galwedigaethol gychwynnol*), barn CBAC yw bod sgop sylweddol i Gymwysterau Cymru weithio gyda chyrrff dyfarnu a rhanddeiliaid sectorau i ddatblygu darpariaeth genedlaethol o gymwysterau AHGC/IVET fyddai'n adlewyrchu'r arfer gorau Ewropeaidd o blethu'r profiad galwedigaethol AHGC/IVET gyda'r addysg gyffredinol sy'n cael ei ddarparu ar gyfer y dysgwyr hyn. Mae Bagloriaeth Cymru yn cynnig fframwaith priodol ar gyfer gwneud hyn, gan sicrhau y bydd rhaglenni dysgu AHGC/IVET yn arwain at gymwysterau o'r safon uchaf a fydd yn cynnig llwybr dilyniant sicr i raglenni dysgu AHGP/CVET sy'n fwy penodol i alwedigaeth yn ogystal â chaniatau pobl ifanc i ddewis llwybrau dilyniant mwy cyffredinol.

## 5. Casgliadau

Yng nghyd-destun profiad CBAC fel darparwr cymwysterau sy'n gweithio ar raddfa sylweddol yn nwy o'r gwledydd sydd o fewn y fframwaith tri-rheoleiddiwr cyfredol, mae'r materion canlynol ymhlith y rhai sydd angen sylw manwl wrth sefydlu Cymwysterau Cymru:

- sefydlu dulliau effeithiol ac effeithlon o gydweithio rhwng y rheoleiddiwr newydd a'r cyrrff dyfarnu hynny, gan gynnwys CBAC, sy'n ymrwmo i wasanaethau gofynion Cymru trwy ddatblygu a darparu cymwysterau cyffredinol a galwedigaethol.
- canfod sut y gall cryfderau a capasiti cyflenwol cyrrff dyfarnu a chorff rheoleiddio weithio orau gyda'i gilydd, hyd yn oed pan fo'r naill yn cael eu rheoleiddio gan y llall
- sefydlu dulliau priodol o sicrhau bod cymwysterau o ansawdd uchel yn cael eu darparu sy'n bodloni gofynion polisi Cymru, gan gynnwys rhoi sylw i anghenion y meysydd dysgu lle na fydd darpariaeth cymwysterau yn fater rhwydd os yn dibynnu ar y "farchnad" i ddarparu
- sicrhau eglurder wrth ddiffinio "cyfrifoldeb am ddyfarnu" sydd â ffocws ar y polisiau a'r gweithrediadau fydd yn sylfaen i'r drefniadaeth ar gyfer sefydlu a chynnal safonau'r cymwysterau yng Nghymru.

**Gareth Pierce**  
Prif Weithredwr, CBAC  
Ebrill 2014



# Eitem 3

## **National Assembly for Wales**

### **Children, Young People and Education Committee**

Pre Legislative scrutiny of the Qualification (Wales) Bill

Evidence from : Huw Evans

CYPE(4)-12-14 – Paper 2

### **Presentation to the children, Young People and Education Committee from ‘Qualifications Wales’**

#### **Introduction**

Recommendations from the Review of Qualifications, of which I was Chair, included the establishment of ‘Qualification Wales’; a new independent qualifications body for Wales. I was subsequently invited by the Minister to Chair an independent Advisory Board to establish ‘Qualification Wales’. This role was to operate alongside a clear communication strategy and engagement process to disseminate the qualification reform programme in Wales.

The Advisory Board, supported by the Welsh Government Transition team, have worked to a demanding timescale. This has involved advising on the nature of the organisation, its functions and its operational structure including the future relationship with the Welsh Government.

The views I express are shaped by my ongoing exposure to diverse stakeholder groups and the considered opinion and advice of the Advisory Board. To this is added the large body of qualification based evidence that has been collated over the period of review.

#### **Outlining the vision**

‘Qualification Wales’ will be the key driver for delivering an innovative, flexible and rigorous approach to qualifications in Wales. However it must be seen in parallel to the evolving qualification reforms which are presently ongoing.

The need for such a national body has been clearly articulated from the research and evidence undertaken. In order to realise the opportunities inherent in a devolved educational system, there is a need to improve:

- alignment with the needs of industry
- attainment of young people including standards of literacy and numeracy
- higher level skills for progression to higher education.

These national priorities can only be realised by creating a focus for such change, improving transparency and injecting a high level of accountability within an independent framework.

‘Qualification Wales’ will have the remit for creating a qualification system that is both valued and understood not only by the people of Wales but worldwide.

### **Does the proposed vision and remit for Qualifications Wales present an effective organisational model?**

The Review of Qualifications clearly outlined the need for Wales to take control of its qualifications and to establish a new national body, ‘Qualifications Wales’, to undertake regulatory, quality assurance and awarding functions. It also envisaged that the longer term aim would be to develop a body similar in operation to the SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority) body as a potential model for future development.

The vision required a potential merger with the WJEC, the dominant awarding body for general qualifications operational in Wales. This would have enabled both the awarding function and the regulatory function to come together in a cost effective manner, minimising the start-up costs for ‘Qualification Wales’. Early discussions revealed the clear determination of the WJEC to retain its independence and identified a philosophical divide, which allied to the potential for legal challenge, made the initial vision very difficult to achieve. This situation was reluctantly accepted by the Advisory Board in the interests of a smooth transition.

The Advisory Board are committed to a single qualifications body and feel assured that the proposed legislation will establish ‘Qualifications Wales’ with responsibility for both the regulation of awarding bodies and the quality assurance of qualifications in Wales. Practical and risk based considerations have suggested the need for an incremental approach to change whilst retaining the long term vision of a single qualifications body.

In the first instance, ‘Qualifications Wales’ will not be a fully-fledged awarding body but will take responsibility for the design, development and awarding of its own suite of qualifications by commissioning one or more awarding bodies to perform these functions on its behalf. Initially these commissioned qualifications are likely to be GCSEs, A levels and the Welsh Baccalaureate. Other qualifications will be added over time.

Most vocational qualifications will continue to be developed and delivered as they are now by a range of awarding bodies. ‘Qualifications Wales’ will introduce new gatekeeping procedures to ensure that qualifications are fit for

purpose and meet the needs of Wales. New stakeholder arrangements will be introduced based on new Advisory Groups to build in currency and relevance. It is also envisaged that qualifications that form part of the apprenticeship experience should also be integral to the regulatory/quality assurance work of 'Qualifications Wales' to provide parity and standardisation.

'Qualifications Wales' will not only become the single expert authority on qualifications in Wales developing policy, undertaking research, providing support where required but will become the main source of data on qualifications. When established, one of its key objectives will be to establish credibility and trust in the operation of qualifications in Wales. It will develop new ways of working based on transparency, engagement and on-going dialogue with key stakeholders. Where justifiable, 'Qualification Wales' will seek to prioritise Welsh medium and bilingual provision in both academic and vocational provision.

Independence is seen as integral to the future success of the organisation and the integrity of the examinations system in Wales. Its Board and Chair will be appointed via recognised public appointment procedures and will be expected to operate as a high performing expert Board. It is envisaged that the Advisory Board will continue to provide a 'steer' to March 2015 when the 'Shadow Board' becomes operational. It is also proposed that that the governance structure will include an influential and representative stakeholder group to advise the Board.

In this context, the early appointment of the CEO designate is seen as essential to provide the continuity and strategic direction required in establishing and overseeing the transitional functions necessary to establish an effective independent body. Organisationally, this will require the transfer of a significant number of staff from the Qualifications division of the Welsh Government and the establishment of the appropriate infrastructure including corporate services.

'Qualifications Wales' will be accountable to the Welsh Ministers and the National Assembly for Wales for its expenditure and the implementation of its qualifications functions.

### **What good practice can be adopted from other countries on separating the roles of exam regulator and awarding organisation within one body?**

Visits and studies have been undertaken to investigate the qualifications systems in other countries including Scotland, Republic of Ireland and Denmark. What was clear in all of these visits is that there is no one universal system that can be adopted but there were areas of good practice that Wales could draw on. Each country has evolved its own qualifications system in response to a particular

need, its history and location. The size of the country and the complexity of its economy are also influencing factors as each country attempted to tackle over complexity in the examinations system and drive rigour and standards as a clear national target.

The Scottish Qualifications Authority, SQA is a single national body for qualifications which combines two distinct roles into one. The larger part of SQA fulfils the awarding function for the qualifications taken by learners in maintained schools in Scotland and interacts directly, as a professional independent body, with the Scottish Government which provides core funding (as the Welsh Government will provide funding to ‘Qualifications Wales’).

The school-based examinations are not regulated by the regulatory or, as it is known, the ‘accreditation’ arm of SQA: that arm is concerned with the qualifications offered by other bodies. So, in the case of Scotland, its schools-based qualifications are not in fact regulated – they are simply, and effectively, designed, delivered and awarded by SQA as a national body with strong quality assurance systems. Welsh Government officials who spent some days with SQA officials last year, were impressed both by the strength of the quality assurance processes and by the extent to which SQA engaged continuously with teachers across Scotland at all stages of the qualification life cycle.

A fact-finding visit to the Republic of Ireland learned that a new single qualifications body had been established. The Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) however was focused almost entirely on vocational qualifications. The schools-based qualifications involved two other qualifications bodies – the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and the State Examinations Council (SEC).

The role of NCCA and the SEC bears some similarity to the current proposals for Qualifications Wales in that NCCA is responsible for determining the content and nature of assessment of the schools based qualifications (as Qualifications Wales will be) while SEC delivers and administers the examinations as determined by NCCA. Parallels could be drawn between the potential future relationship between Qualifications Wales and the WJEC (and possibly other awarding bodies).

Several interesting lessons have been learned from Ireland: the national sense of ownership of the single suite of qualifications on offer – with all learners across Ireland taking the same examination for each subject and the extent to which Ireland relates to European initiatives such as credit and qualifications frameworks.

All of the countries visited placed a high value on their qualifications system. There was also a high level of trust with built in quality assurance as opposed to regulatory powers. Over reliance on regulation is seen as a UK/England approach to managing complexity and variable standards within the qualifications market. Historically, Wales has been part of this process as it has been so closely aligned.

In all the countries visited there was far greater alignment to the European qualification systems and the use of the European Qualification frameworks. This approach may well provide new direction for opportunities for ‘Qualifications Wales’.

**Will the relationships between Qualifications Wales (and awarding organisations including the WJEC in the short term) and the Welsh Government work effectively?**

Clearly the Chief Executive for ‘Qualifications Wales’, the Chair and the Board, once appointed, will have a key responsibility for ensuring that relationships with the Welsh Government (and with the National Assembly) and with all awarding bodies, including the WJEC, are effective.

There are a number of mechanisms by which such relationships will be supported and these include:

- the development of effective legislation which clearly sets out the respective duties and powers of the Welsh Government and Qualifications Wales;
- the establishment of an effective sponsorship unit to manage relationships between the Welsh Government and Qualifications Wales;
- the implementation of an effective organisational structure which supports core functions;
- regular dialogue between the Welsh Ministers and Qualifications Wales;
- full and informative reporting to the National Assembly by Qualifications Wales;
- the development of dual controls of a contractual relationship between Qualifications Wales and awarding bodies to design, develop and deliver the Wales-specific suite of qualifications and of the regulatory and quality assurance controls over the awarding bodies and the qualifications awarding process;

- the development of an effective communication strategy involving all stakeholders.

### **What will be the impact of Qualifications Wales on the accreditation of vocational qualifications (including apprenticeships)?**

‘Qualifications Wales’ will have responsibility (as the Welsh Ministers currently do) for the approval of vocational qualifications in Wales – particularly where they are approved as eligible for use on publicly funded programmes of education and training.

‘Qualifications Wales’ will have responsibility for the regulation of awarding bodies offering these qualifications and for the quality assurance of the qualifications themselves – adopting a risk based approach to regulation.

It will be essential that ‘Qualifications Wales’ liaises extensively with employers and sectors to ensure that those qualifications deemed to be fit for purpose for use in Wales are confirmed to meet the needs of employers – that the skills and knowledge required are valid and current, that the assessment methodology is appropriate and that progression routes into employment are clear. The new Advisory Boards are seen as being the effective sector based interface.

Discussions are still underway about the exact nature of ‘Qualifications Wales’ future responsibilities in relation to apprenticeships but it seems sensible that ‘Qualifications Wales’ should have a responsibility for expressing a view on the appropriateness of the qualifications selected for use in apprenticeships. These qualifications must have sector credibility and develop to the same rigorous standards as any other qualifications made available for study in Wales.

### **Conclusion**

In the first instance it is expected that Qualifications Wales will be established as an independent body by summer 2015. The new body will drive the qualification system for Wales providing qualifications that are fit for purpose and delivered in an efficient manner. It will assume responsibility for the regulation and quality assurance of qualifications delivered in Wales in a non-degree context. By summer 2017, the recommendations proposed in the Review of Qualifications will, in the main, be implemented and be the responsibility of ‘Qualification Wales’.

The Body will acquire a commissioning responsibility for qualifications resulting in a redefined relationship with awarding bodies. This will enable it to

build confidence and trust in its operations and meet the needs of young people and the Welsh economy.

It will develop the functions associated with becoming the national authority on qualifications and will demonstrate innovation and high performance practices leading to robust high quality qualifications.

All the engagement undertaken to date via schools, universities, employers and other stakeholders all indicate clear support for the direction of travel and the manner in which it has been undertaken. This must continue and must include the development of a more responsive support infrastructure for the provider network including schools, colleges and work based providers.

As stated earlier, the Advisory Board members retain a clear long-term vision for 'Qualification Wales' to become the awarding body for the majority of qualifications undertaken. This it seeks to achieve in an incremental manner, building on strengths and responding effectively to the needs of young people in Wales.

I would like to take the opportunity to thanks colleagues from the Advisory Board and the Welsh Government for continued support during this period of implementation.

Huw Evans OBE

Chair of the Qualifications Wales Advisory Board



**Developing the Network to Deliver Excellence in Vocational Skills**  
Datblygu'r Rhwydwaith i Gyflawni Rhagoriaeth mewn Sgiliau Galwedigaethol

**Submission to the Children, Young People and Education Committee**

**Pre-legislative Scrutiny of the Qualification (Wales) Bill**

**Jeff Protheroe**  
**Operations Manager**  
**25 April 2014**



## Introduction

1. The National Training Federation for Wales (NTfW) is a membership organisation of over one hundred organisations involved in the delivery of learning in the workplace. It is a Wales wide representative body for all those organisations or individuals involved in the training industry. Members range from small specialist training providers to national and international organisations, as well as Local Authorities, Further Education Institutions and third sector organisations.
2. The NTfW represents the interests of learners, employers and learning providers across Wales and aims inform them about all aspects of the education and training agenda.
3. Members work across Wales in rural, urban, bi-lingual and Welsh medium settings, and have strong links with over 35,000 employers across Wales ranging from small enterprises through medium sized companies to large multi-nationals and public sector organisations.
4. The NTfW maintains close working relationships with Welsh Government Ministers, Welsh Assembly Members, the Department for Education and Skills, Careers Wales, Jobcentre Plus and Sector Skills Councils.

## Aim

5. The aim of this Submission Paper is to provide evidence to the Children, Young People and Education Committee ahead of a planned meeting which will take place at the Sennedd on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

## Background

6. Over recent months, NTfW (and its members) have been actively engaged in consultation exercises surrounding the development of qualifications for 14-19 year-olds in Wales, and the proposals to establish a new qualifications body for Wales (Qualifications Wales). The evidence in this Submission Paper is drawn from our various Consultation Responses, and is based on the broad areas of focus of the Committee's pre-legislative scrutiny.

a. **Is the proposed vision and remit for Qualifications Wales an effective organisational model?** Yes. NTfW fully embraces the vision set out for Qualifications Wales.

b. **What good practice can be adopted from other countries on separating the roles of exam regulator and awarding organisation within one body?** Unsure. NTfW does not feel qualified to make a comment on this, but we have confidence in the fact that work has been undertaken by Welsh Government officials and members of the Qualifications Wales Review Board, to identify areas of good practice from across the UK and further afield.

**c. Will the relationship between Qualifications Wales (and awarding organisations including the WJEC in the short term) and the Welsh Government work effectively?** Yes, if managed correctly.

(1) NTfW welcomes the fact that regulation will be independent of government, but that accountability will be maintained by the National Assembly for Wales (NAW). However, in our response to the Our Qualifications – Our Future consultation, we highlighted our desire to see the proposed Qualifications Wales' Annual Report to be closely linked to other key reports about the education and training sector, most notably, Estyn's Chief Inspector's Annual Report.

(2) With regards to the relationship between awarding organisations (in the short term) and the Welsh Government, NTfW would urge caution in how these relationships are managed. It is recognised that there are 5 awarding organisations that offer General Qualifications (GQs) in Wales, but over 120 offering Vocational Qualifications (VQs). NTfW would like to see the choice of awarding organisation stay with the provider, as it is felt that this not only ensures established systems, and ways of working are maintained, but it is also felt that no one awarding organisation can offer the broad spectrum of specialisms required to work across the various (employment) sectors. Furthermore, NTfW feels that there is a risk to how we ensure awarding organisations continue to invest in the development of qualifications for Wales, which are specific to Wales.

(3) In terms of building relationships with other key stakeholders, NTfW has urged Qualifications Wales to link its work with other bodies within the education and training landscape in Wales, such as the General Teaching Council for Wales (or as proposed, the Education Workforce Council) and Estyn.

**d. What will be the impact of Qualifications Wales on the accreditation of vocational qualifications (including Apprenticeships)?** This is as yet unknown, but it is hoped that it will be a positive one.

(1) NTfW would welcome (strongly) an increasing role for Qualifications Wales in the area of Apprenticeships, and would particularly welcome Qualifications Wales becoming the 'Issuing Authority' for Apprenticeship Frameworks in Wales.

(2) Within the context of WBL, particularly in the design and delivery of future Apprenticeships, a considerable amount of change is proposed, which could see a great deal of divergence between England and Wales. With this in mind, Qualifications Wales is urged to keep a close eye on developments, and ensure that any potential negative impacts are minimised.

(3) NTfW notes that part of the vision for Qualifications Wales is to 'strengthen public confidence in, and information about, qualifications in Wales.' We also note that as part of Qualifications Wales' functions and activities that it will play is role in ensuring 'fitness of purpose' for all of the qualifications it is responsible for. Increasingly, "employers are shouting about the importance of employability and life/work skills" and NTfW urges Qualifications Wales to ensure that all qualifications are scrutinised (as part of the quality assurance process) to ensure they offer the 'employability' skills required by the intended user i.e. the employer. It is felt that in order to make this a reality, Qualifications Wales needs to develop a close working relationship with the soon to be established Sector Qualifications Advisory Panels (SQAPs) to ensure that any current, or future, VQs are 'fit for purpose' in terms of meeting employer demand.

(4) In its response to the Review of Qualifications for 14-19 year olds in Wales consultation, NTfW wholeheartedly welcomed the move to initial vocational education and training (IVET) qualifications and continuing education and vocational (CVET) qualifications. However, it is felt by NTfW that there is an extremely low level of understanding of IVET / CVET qualifications amongst not only 'wider stakeholders' i.e. parents, employers etc., but more importantly (and worryingly) amongst key Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) practitioners as well. It is felt that Qualifications Wales should play an important part in explaining the qualifications system in Wales to all stakeholders, and that it should become the single source of information for all (less HE) qualifications in Wales. However, it is vitally important that any Communication Strategy has the flexibility to ensure that the messages are targeted towards the intended audience, be that practitioners, parents, (potential) learners and/or employers.

(5) Within the context of Work-based Learning (WBL) many providers work across (geographical) borders. One of the issues faced by providers with this is the lack of 'portability' of qualifications across these borders. Similarly, as most WBL work with school leavers, there are also issues of 'portability' between qualification systems i.e. there are no 'proxy qualifications' for Essential Skills Wales (ESW) qualifications. This creates the situation, where the learner feels that they are doing the same qualification twice.

## Summary

7. Due to our scope and remit, NTfW feels suitably placed to offer evidence in regards to the establishment of a single body to be responsible for the regulation and quality assurance of non-degree qualifications, which is separate from Government, but answerable to the National Assembly. Furthermore, NTfW (and its members) have been active stakeholders in all recent consultations in regards to the changing qualifications landscape in Wales. Overall, NTfW is very supportive of the proposals to establish a new

qualifications body for Wales (Qualifications Wales) However, we feel that more could, and should, be done by Qualifications Wales to ensure that VQs and Apprenticeships delivered here in Wales are 'fit for purpose,' in order that they meet the needs of the intended users, most notably employers.

### **Children, Young People and Education Committee Inquiry into CAMH services additional information**

Additional information in response to the request that we expand on our evidence that specialist CAMHS closed cases of young people who were receiving support from Barnardo's Cymru Seraf (Child Sexual Exploitation) and Taith (Sexually Harmful Behaviour) specialist services.

#### **The key issues illustrated by the following case examples are:**

- Taith have had a number of experiences of being informed by Social Services that CAMHS are not prepared to take up the case if the case is being worked with by Taith. So this information is coming from Social Service referrers and not directly from CAMH services.
- Social services are often the service commissioner of Seraf and Taith services, and the social worker can play a pivotal role in communicating information and gate-keeping the involvement, or not, of Taith and Seraf practitioners in the care and treatment planning process.
- The current practice culture and environment of specialist tier 2 CAMHS means they can not always be flexible enough to be accessible to some young people with a diagnosis of personality disorder.

#### **The services gave some examples of cases where the practice and the outcomes for the service user had been less successful:**

- Seraf service presented a case of a 17 year old whom they worked with in 2010. This was prior to the implementation phase of the care and treatment planning process introduced by the Mental Health Measure. The young person was assessed as having a personality disorder but found it difficult to engage with CAMHS and the service was ceased. The young person was informed by the CAMHS service that they had closed the case and a re referral would need to be made via the GP. The young person went to the GP and a re referral was made but the young person, again, failed to engage. The Seraf practitioner contacted CAMHS and was provided with advice and guidance by CAMHS

on support services that the young person could access in the local community. The Seraf practitioner concluded that the services CAMHS were offering were not flexible enough to meet the needs of the young person. There were no plans in place to support the young person to engage with AMHS. The young person continues to receive medication via her GP

We also have a case example from a service working with care leavers of a young person who had been admitted to a mental health unit not being given a diagnosis. The reason given was that to diagnose would be unhelpful for the young person, however the CSM was also concerned that a diagnosis was not forthcoming as the young person, who she thought might have a personality disorder, would then be eligible for a service from CAMHS. Without a diagnosis the responsibility remained primarily with social services.

Seraf and Taith services are primarily commissioned by social services, so it may be that they get caught in the organisational politics between social services and CAMHS where there are sometimes difficult discussions to be had with regard to how the presentation of emotional and mental health problems manifest and which service is best placed to address these issues.

- Taith presented a case of an adolescent boy whom they joint worked with YOT. Both services agreed that the boy required a referral to the Community tier 2 CAMH service as they were concerned about the boy's persistent emotional disconnectedness from his crimes and the impact on his victims, and suspect that he may have psychopathic traits. The CAMHS team eventually assessed the boy on the second referral and decided that he did not have a diagnosable mental health disorder. Both YOT and Taith staff as well as professionals from social services and education remain concerned and the YOT CAMHS practitioner has now made a referral to the tier 4 FACS team

With this second case the services involved which include the YOT, the police, Taith and education were disappointed that CAMHS were unable to recognise the seriousness of the case, own it and, if necessary refer it on. In the event the CAMHS team left the case with the YOT CAMHS practitioner to refer on the FACS team. It may be more difficult to have this case prioritised by the FACS team without the support of specialist community CAMHS.

**Both services also gave examples of co-working cases alongside CAMHS teams which were effective:**

**Taith case**

This example illustrates the positive impact of having a Care and Treatment planning process in place within a Tier 2 Specialist CAMH team. This example is also one where there are good working relationships in place between the CAMHS practitioners and Taith practitioners.

This is the case of a young boy who, at the point of referral to Taith, was being treated within CAMHS for ADHD. During the course of his treatment with Taith he became very depressed and there were concerns due to suicidal feelings that were being expressed.

Taith were able to offer some support with the depression and worked with the parents to instigate some strategies for keeping him safe. However as the concerns grew it was felt that the family would need more intensive support with managing the suicidal tendencies and behaviour.

Taith flagged their concerns to CAMHS who carried out an assessment of the boys mental health and put a Care and Treatment Plan in place. Strategy meetings were established, to which all stakeholders were invited and, in the words of the Taith service manager 'CAMHS took ownership of the case'. The Care and Treatment planning meetings gave agencies an opportunity to think together about the needs of this boy and his family. Taith and CAMHS were the two key players in terms of delivering service to the family at this stage. It was identified that the boy had an autistic spectrum disorder, which had been an underlying issue in his sexual offending. He was referred for a Statement of Special Educational Need and the CAMHS evidence played a key part in securing this. The boy is now placed in a specialist education unit and the family and the boy have expressed their gratitude to the joint work that CAMHS and Taith carried out in those early stages to address his, then rapidly spiralling, problems.

**Seraf case**

Seraf gave an example of a 14 year old they worked with in 2012 who was also receiving a service from CAMHS due to depression and self-harm. By this time the care and treatment planning process was being implemented. The CAMHS team worked in partnership with Seraf

advising what work they were undertaking to ensure no work was duplicated and that the young person was not overloaded. The Seraf service were not part of the Care and Treatment planning process but believe the Social Worker was linked in and had this information.

**Additional information with regard to Keith Davies question (Para 268) at 11.45 in the transcript.**

We felt that although referring to the Welsh Governments Participation Standards we did not fully respond to the Children's Human Rights element of Keith's question.

The importance of developing and designing services with service user involvement is undeniably beneficial, however, it would be welcome if CAMHS provisions, including assessment and diagnosis, were clearly linked to the role of appropriate mental health support in the protection and promotion of a child's human rights of protection, survival and development as well as participation.

Throughout our written and oral evidence we made reference to the under resourcing of CAMH services and suggest it would be an interesting question to ask if any Children's Rights Impact Assessment has been done in relation to resource decisions.

Menna Thomas  
Barnardo's Cymru  
April 2014



# Eitem 5.2

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



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref SF/HL/0112/14

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

29 April 2014

Dear Ann,

## **Inquiry into Educational Outcomes of Children from Low-Income Households**

Thank you for your letter of 3 April 2014 in relation to the above inquiry.

I will respond to the points you raise in the order they appear in your correspondence.

### *'Double disadvantage effect'*

It is the case that certain groups experience 'double disadvantage'. For example, free school meal entitlement for Gypsy, Traveller and black African children is well over three times the national average.

These pupils are eligible for support funded by the Pupil Deprivation Grant. Minority ethnic pupils are also eligible for support from the Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant (MEAG), while Gypsy and Traveller children are supported by the Grant for the Education of Gypsy and Traveller Children (GT grant). These two grants total £11.1million in 2014-15. I have ring fenced this funding to ensure it goes directly to these learner groups. Both the MEAG and the GT grants enable local authorities to reach out to some of the most disadvantaged and marginalised learners.

EU Roma children are recognised as having dual needs, English as an additional language and the support needs of being from travelling families, and as such are eligible for support funded by both the MEAG and GT grant. Asylum seekers are amongst those recognised as needing higher levels of support and they receive the highest weighting under the MEAG funding formula used to determine annual grant awards. It is possible, therefore, for some disadvantaged pupils to be supported by the PDG, the MEAG and the GT grant, reflecting their high level of need.

### *Parental engagement*

Research confirms that parents and carers have a vital role to play in supporting their child's education. I agree wholeheartedly with your conclusion that there is a pressing need for us to help schools devise and implement evidence based strategies to better engage all parents in their children's learning from the earliest possible age - in particular those in lower income groups who may be harder to reach.

With this in mind, we intend to publish specific guidance for schools on how to develop their own parental and community engagement strategies later this year. Alongside side that we will also be developing a resource pack for schools of programmes delivered by, or in partnership with, well respected community and third sector organisations, many of which focus on parental engagement. Both of these initiatives should be in place later this summer.

We are also developing a high profile media campaign aimed at parents in Wales to communicate the simple message that taking an interest counts. Beginning shortly, the campaign will use a range of communication channels to raise awareness of the message and illustrate how parents can get involved. The campaign will also develop information, suitable for a variety of communication vehicles, which can be used by schools, LAs and consortia which will ensure a consistent message across Wales. The campaign will complement existing parental campaign work currently being undertaken by my officials on literacy and numeracy.

I believe it is vitally important that we work closely with key third sector colleagues delivering in this field. With that in mind, we have commissioned Achievement for All to adapt its 3 As Schools Programme for use in Wales. This is a well evaluated programme with a strong track-record of improving outcomes for vulnerable pupils. One of its key themes is "Empowering and engaging parents in their children's learning to raise attainment".

Achievement for all Cymru will work in partnership with the recently established Wales Centre for Equity in Education as well as our four Education consortia. Their programme is being piloted in 14 schools in the central south consortium area and we are already receiving extremely positive feedback from the pilot schools

### *Education costs*

In England and Wales, in schools other than independent schools the education provided wholly or mainly during school hours is free. Schools may not charge for activities if the activity is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school.

Although schools cannot charge for school time activities, there is nothing in law to prevent a school governing body or local authority asking parents and others to make voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or to fund school activities. All requests to parents for voluntary contributions must make it clear that the contribution is voluntary; and that there is no obligation to make a contribution. The governing body or head teacher must also make it clear that children of parents who do not contribute will not be treated any differently.

A school may not charge parents for anything unless the governing body has adopted a charging policy. The policy will give details of the circumstances in which the school will charge parents and in what circumstances it may ask for voluntary contributions. The policy

should also explain any circumstances in which the school will wholly, or partially, waive the charge. This should be available from the school.

The Welsh Government's 'Guidance for Governing Bodies on Charging for School Activities' has been written to help head teachers and governing bodies to set out their policies on charges and remissions for school activities and school visits. It provides a policy view and interpretation of the relevant law from the Welsh Government. However, it is not legal advice, the guidance is non-statutory and therefore cannot be enforced, but the Welsh Government would encourage schools to have regard to the guidance when dealing with issues relating to charging and remission for school activities and school visits. The guidance can be accessed from:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/chargingforschoolactivities/?lang=en>

### *2017 Foundation Phase target*

When the current target for reducing the attainment gap at Foundation Phase was set we did not have sufficient time series data to guide possible future improvements. This was because 2012 was the first year that the Foundation Phase was fully rolled out across the country, replacing Early Years (3-5 year olds) and Key Stage 1. We took a realistic approach, therefore, regarding what was thought to be achievable at that time. The target itself should not be seen as a ceiling or constraining factor for the attainment of pupils on free school meals in the Foundation Phase.

Early in 2015 there will be a three year time series of Foundation Phase primary school teacher assessments data for children eligible for free school meals. At this point we will have an opportunity to review the current target.

### *Schools Challenge Cymru*

Schools Challenge Cymru will inject up to £20 million funding, alongside proven expertise, to bring challenge and support to around 40 secondary schools and their cluster primaries that are challenged in terms of circumstance and delivery. In developing this programme, we are drawing on the knowledge and expertise of our stakeholders, and working with experts from across the UK, to construct a coherent package of support that aligns with, and drives forward delivery of, the national model.

We are working closely with Regional Education Consortia to identify the schools that will be a part of this programme. In line with the principles of the national model, we have used a range of performance data and local intelligence to inform this process. I will announce these schools in early May and this will be followed by a period of reflection and action planning with the schools and regional Education Consortia

While the focus will be on participant schools, we expect many more schools in Wales to realise benefits as we make full use of some Wales' finest and highest performing schools to share expertise and leadership directly into the classroom and to support teachers to achieve the improvements they seek.

I recently launched a UK wide recruitment campaign to identify Schools Challenge Cymru Advisers to work with Regional Consortia and schools and drive this important agenda forward. These will be high quality people who have a proven record in transforming education for children and young people.

Building on this, on 9 April, I announced Professor Mel Ainscow (CBE) as Schools Challenge Cymru Champion. As Chief Adviser for the Greater Manchester Challenge between 2007 and 2011, and with his understanding of the Welsh education landscape, Mel will be an excellent ambassador for the programme.

The Schools Challenge Cymru programme, which is still in development, will be rolled out from September 2014.

I hope this information is helpful.

*Best Regards*

*Huw*

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