

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and
Education Committee

Blaenoriaethau ar gyfer y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg |
Priorities for the Children, Young People and Education Committee

CYPE 69

Ymateb gan : Undeb Prifysgolion a Cholegau (Cymru)

Response from : University and College Union (Wales)

The University and College Union (UCU Wales) represents more than 7,000 academics, lecturers, trainers, instructors, researchers, managers, administrators, computer staff, librarians, and postgraduates in universities, colleges, adult education and training organisations across Wales.

UCU Wales is a politically autonomous but integral part of UCU, the largest post-school union in the world: a force for educators and education that employers and government cannot ignore.

UCU was formed on the 1st June 2006 by the amalgamation of two strong partners – the Association of University Teachers (AUT) and the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) – who shared a long history of defending and advancing educators’ employment and professional interests.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the CYPEC priorities for the Fifth Assembly.

Question 1 – Within the remit set out above: what do you consider to be the priorities or issues that the Children, Young People and Education Committee should consider during the Fifth Assembly?

1. The infrastructure underpinning the recommendation of both the Hazelkorn review and the Diamond review.

2. The role of further and higher education in the design and

implementation of the new curriculum.

3. The role of the Education Workforce Council in promoting professionalism in teaching and lecturing.

Question 2 – From the list of priorities or issues you have identified, what do you consider to be the key areas that should be considered during the next 12 months (please identify up to three areas or issues)? Please outline why these should be considered as key priorities.

1. In light of any decisions made as a result of publication of both the Hazelkorn Review and the forthcoming Diamond Review, we would welcome scrutiny of the infrastructure that will need to be in place to support them. In the best interests of the young people of Wales, it is crucial that education providers of the future are supported by adequate and reliable funding, robust organisation and management, and a stable and motivated workforce.

2. The role of further and higher education, in the design and implementation of the New Curriculum needs to be considered. If we wish to change the curriculum in Wales, it needs to include the wider education community, not just schools. There are many young people of compulsory school age who already benefit from alternative provision; however we need to move towards this becoming the norm, not just provision for “problem”/lower ability pupils. Currently the emphasis of the New Curriculum is on schools, with alternative providers seen as additional. There is much expertise within both sectors, which would be of benefit to young people. Without the full partnership of all sectors, we risk losing a golden opportunity to create Donaldson’s vision of a curriculum that engages all young people.

3. We would welcome a review of the way that the members of the Education Workforce Council are selected. Currently the members are either appointed by the Minister or selected by the Minister from a list of stakeholder nominees. This has resulted in the current situation in which not a single member of the Council is representative of Further

Education lecturers. We are concerned that decisions made regarding the professional conduct of lecturers will be made by a group that has no up to date experience of classroom practice at a post 16 level. There are subtle but important difference in the roles and relationships between pupils and teachers, and students and lecturers. We would welcome the reintroduction of elected peers to the EWC, as was the case with the former GTCW and also fitness to practice panels that are the majority peers from the same registration category

When considering policy, administration and expenditure on the education and well-being of young people, we would welcome scrutiny of processes that risk disempowering practicing teachers and lecturers. As stated in Professor Donaldson's report:

“The extent of legislative control and associated accountability...have inhibited professionalism, agility and responsiveness...” P10

The Post 16 Education Sector in Wales has much to offer in the way of expertise, resources and solutions to the successful development of education policy that we, as a country, aspire to. As a trade union and professional association, UCU Wales would welcome the opportunity to assist the Children, Young People and Education Committee during the Fifth Assembly term, in order to promote the professional status of lecturers and improve the quality of student experience.