



Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL Cymru's) Response to the structure of education task and finish group

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers represents over 160,000 education professionals across the four constituent parts of the United Kingdom. It draws its membership from teachers and lecturers, leaders and support staff in maintained and independent schools, and Further Education Colleges. As well as campaigning vigorously to protect and enhance members' pay and conditions ATL also believes that the education profession has a key role in developing education strategy and policy. ATL Cymru represents over 6,500 education professionals in colleges and schools across the whole of Wales.

ATL believes that in many cases the transfer of education services from local authority to a more regionally based approach represented by a consortia represents a sensible, workable and sustainable progression. It offers the opportunity to deliver cost effectiveness in regards to the administration of education services in Wales but also, if properly managed the potential to make significant improvements in many of those services.

We believe that the current structure of local government in Wales is too burdensome and not cost effective. The 22 LAs in Wales need to work together to share provision and reduce overhead costs. We agreed with the Minister's comments on a BBC interview (14th August 2010) that a debate needs to begin on the role of LAs in education in Wales, and we welcome this Task and Finish Group as a contribution to that ongoing debate. ATL has long called for the reduction in the number of Local Authorities. While we accept that full scale reorganisation is unacceptable at present we believe the current number of administrative bodies for education in Wales operating autonomously is unacceptable. We believe that more collaborative working and shared services are necessary. Clusterings would be ideal and ensure that more money goes to the front line rather than back office functions. This builds on the Beecham agenda for joined up government and would result in better quality services, greater efficiency, and financial savings. We believe that strategic planning on the part of Local Authorities could ensure that job losses result from natural wastage and that each of the 22 takes on functions for others in its cluster.

On the twin premises of altering the balance of expenditure (at present 44% goes directly to learning and teaching. By adding other service delivery, including non-education such as professional support, etc this figures adds up to 68% with the remaining 32% representing support costs to back office functions) in favour of putting resources in schools and colleges (recognising, however, the need for some supra-school based support services), and of avoidance of reduplication, it is difficult to see much objection in principle to regional operation, though it may be desirable to distinguish between management at the regional level and delivery at the local level. This last caveat is important as it ensures that the close working relationships between LAs and schools is not lost. As will be seen from our table in the appendix this mantra of regional management and local delivery is key to a more effective and efficient use of resources.

Critical in any process of reform is the issue of governance. We have been pleased to welcome the Assembly taking powers over governance in a recent LCO and the proposed Education Measure currently before the Assembly. We are not convinced that the transfer of several education services to the consortia level is undemocratic and believe that democratic accountability can be maintained through the presence of elected members on consortia governance structures. We believe that if the WAG's collaboration agenda is to be progressed then supra-institutional governance is key. To deliver on that agenda governance arrangements will need to take account on the needs of an area rather than that of particular institutions. FE colleges will need to be included in such arrangements. LAs commonly have scrutiny arrangements, which would need to be applied to a putative regional structure also.

As a modern democratic union ATL has surveyed its membership and formed its policy accordingly. We would like to share the views of teachers, leaders and other practitioners with the Task and Finish Group. Below is a selection of comments. The appendix contains further details and comments.

School Improvement

School Improvement and the monitoring of improvement needs to be overseen and monitored at a national level by the WAG and DCELLS. School improvement plans need to be managed at a regional level on a consortia basis with the delivery to be at a local level.

Members report that LAs now lack the capacity and resources to cover all areas of the curriculum. This results in regional distortions and inequities. Pooling of resources to provide curriculum services regionally will enable subject specialisms and thus a much better outcome for learners.

The management of CPD provision should be done at a national level by the joint work of the GTCW and the WAG. The WAG needs to ensure that there is adequate funding available for CPD provision. It would be appropriate for schools to be given the funding to deliver inset provision from internal (LA) and external sources, dependent on the topic and available expertise. Schools are best placed to realise the needs and gaps of their staff.

Members have also commented on the delivery of:

- Learning, behaviour and attendance support
- Disciplinary and grievance policy, competency and all negotiated policies
- SEN provision
- School governor support
- School management support

It was felt that the majority of these services would be best delivered on a regional or LA basis with a national lead on disciplinary and the setting of standards coming from the WAG.

Access

Members believe that schools needs to follow national standards for admissions, access, schools organization, surplus places and inclusion that should be set by the WAG . The management of admissions should be done at a regional level with delivery at a local level.

Members felt that:

- Youth services would be best delivered at a regional level
- Music services would also be best delivered at a local level and
- Sport should be managed at a regional level and delivered at a local level

Educating excluded pupils

Members felt that pupil referral units and education psychology services would be best managed at a regional level and delivered at a local level. It is imperative that these services are offered at an affordable rate.

School administration and support

Members suggested that many services that are currently delivered at a LA level, such as payroll, HR, procurement, transport, etc would be best managed and delivered on a regional basis. In many cases this would enable the development of proper expertise and deliver cost savings.

The current grant culture in Wales needs to be dismantled. The WAG should be aiming to develop a national funding formula. There is also a need for consistent financial reporting to be established to ensure that decisions from regional funding authorities are transparent and open to challenges.

There is a clear need for a national lead by the WAG in regards to the issue of support staff. Please find comments in the table below.

Appendix

As a democratic, member lead union ATL has surveyed its membership. Members have identified many services they believe could be best delivered at different levels. Quoting members themselves in the comments column, the following table represents what members believe should be delivered on a:

- National (N)
- Regional consortia (R)
- Local Authority (LA) and
- School level (services that could be devolved to providers, including schools or clusters of schools) (S).

Function	N	R	L	S	Comments
School improvement	X	X	X		The management of this service needs to be undertaken at a regional level but the delivery should be on a local level. This should be monitored and overseen at a national level.
Educational development plans	X		X		The management and delivery need to be done at a local level. As this is a statutory requirement it should be overseen at a national level.
Curriculum advice (including 14-19)	X	X			LAs lack capacity to cover all curriculum areas Curriculum advice should be available to schools, but support staff should be in place or at regional level for economy of scale.
CPD Provision and Inset provision	X	X	X	X	Management of CPD provision should be done at a national level. School should be given the funds to deliver inset and CPD from internal and external sources- depending on the topic and available expertise.
					Members bemoan the

					lack of current provision and would like to see training to improve pedagogy as a right and necessity as part of revised performance management arrangements.
School improvement and monitoring of improvement		X	X		Monitoring can be done at the local level but LAs are too small for cross-fertilisation of ideas. LA's could support this as a critical friend.
Learning, behavior and attendance support	X	X	X		The management of this should be done on a regional level and delivery at a local level. The WAG should set rules for LAs and schools to work towards. Schools should have support staff trained to deal with these elements in addition to normal staffing levels.
Disciplinary and grievance policy, Competency and all negotiated policies	X	X	X	X	There is a part for each level to play here: national standards need to be set, the regional level provide quality control and proper implementation , the local give accurate advice and support, the

					school to adhere to these policies and procedures. We support the efforts of Governors Wales to establish a nationally agreed set of policies in this area. We would wish to see Governing Bodies required to adopt these.
SEN provision		X	X		The management of this should be done at a regional level and the delivery at a local level. The two should work together to deliver this - funding to follow pupils.
School governor support		X			The management and delivery need to be done on a regional consortia basis. LAs are too small to have the range of expertise.
School management support		X	X		The management should be on a regional level and the delivery at a LA level.
Access					
Schools admissions	X	X	X		Schools need to follow national guidance set by the WAG. The management of admissions needs to be done at a

					regional level and the delivery should be at a local level.
Access to schools (including ensuring that they are DDA compliant)	X	X	X		Schools need to follow national guidance from the WAG on this. The management should be done on a regional level. Delivery should be done at a local level.
School organisation and Surplus places	X	X	X		Schools need to follow national guidance on this from the WAG. Financial considerations mean there needs to be LA involvement - but a regional strategic overview is appropriate.
Inclusion	X		X	X	This should be a national policy implemented by schools under LA advice.
Youth services		X			The neglect from which non-statutory youth services commonly suffer suggests a need for regional management; financial implications mean a role for LAs

Music services			X		A regional approach is probably too big to provide an effective service, and e.g. to foster county orchestras/choirs/ensembles.
Sport		X	X		
Educating excluded pupils					
Pupil referral units		X	X		Ideally these should be near to pupils' home, but it is more important that the provision is available on an affordable scale
Education psychology services		X	X		Regionally managed and locally delivered
School Administration and support					For all these issues the LA should deal with, if they are too small to cope then the issues would be best to be tackled at a regional level.
Payroll		X			
HR		X			There are frequent instances where HR advice to schools has been factually wrong and inconsistent. Placing these services on a regional footing would enable the development of proper expertise.
Legal services, inc Health and		X			

Safety advice					
Audit	X				
Investigations		X			
Procurement	X	X			Massive economy of scale here. But National systems could be linked to an efficient administration and delivery system.
Maintenance		X	X		The management of this should be done at a regional level and the delivery at a local level.
Catering		X	X	X	School delivery possible for larger institutions and could possibly help schools generate funds. Where this is not possible it should be managed at a regional level and delivered at a LA level.
ICT services		X	X	X	Services should be delivered locally or on a school/ clustering basis. Services should be procured at a regional level.
Student finance	X	X			
Transport		X	X		Management should be at a regional level and delivery at local level as detailed knowledge of

					local circumstances is required.
Services: cleaning, grounds maintenance		X	X	X	Larger institutions may be able to manage independently (cf. catering); Regions or LAs will need to co-ordinate arrangements (in-house or contracted-out) for smaller schools.
Grant and budget allocation	X	X	X		The grant culture needs to be dismantled: its very existence is an implicit acknowledgement of inadequate funding, leading to a need to ring-fence.
Lifelong learning	X	X	X		There needs to be a national lead here.
Property services		X			Clear lines of management need to be established to ensure that services meet educational need.
Support staff	X		X		There is a clear need (not least in the wake of the Single Stat Status debacle) for a national career structure (pay, conditions, CPD) for all non-teaching staff: WAG must take a lead on this.

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