

## **Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL Cymru's) Response to the Proposed Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure Committee**

**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.

### **i. Is there a need for legislation to re-organise 14-19 provision?**

ATL Cymru believes there is a need for a legislative framework to promote clarity and consistency in the delivery of 14-19 education. This legislative framework will enable pupils across Wales to have equal access to a range of learning options and opportunities.

### **ii. Does the proposed Measure achieve the policy objectives or could changes be made without legislating?**

ATL Cymru believes that the proposed measure will achieve the policy objectives which could not be achieved without legislation.

ATL Cymru welcomes and endorses the amendments made to the measure. ATL Cymru particularly welcomes the amendment which will enable Local Education Authorities to organise learning provision within cluster arrangements to take account of local provision and geography. ATL Cymru agrees that cluster arrangements can provide an effective structure for organising the local curriculum and welcomes the amendment which will allow this to happen. ATL Cymru believes that the current clustering arrangements among LEAs, shown for example in the services provided by Cynnal and Esis, could and should provide a strategic and geographical model that is both democratically accountable but also of sufficient size to provide expertise.

ATL Cymru also welcomes the amendment which seeks to clarify which institution is responsible for which pupil, thus ensuring a duty of care for learners. It is essential that this amendment ensures that stakeholders responsible for working with the new arrangements are fully aware of who is responsible for

individual pupil's pastoral care and discipline, which institution's uniform policy pupils need to abide by, etc, to ensure that the duty of care is not compromised.

**iii. What are the views of stakeholders who will have to work with the new arrangements?**

ATL Cymru members are extremely concerned that the measure does not take account of the differences in the terms and conditions between school teachers and college lecturers which will pose major barriers to collaboration. While pay parity has largely been achieved, terms and conditions are still very divergent. This issue must be addressed before larger scale cooperation can take place. It is crucial that issues surrounding terms and conditions are addressed by WAG, *fforwm* and lecturers' unions. Teachers' unions will also be keen to ensure that future cooperation is not to the detriment of their members' terms and conditions of service.

Many ATL Cymru members are currently experiencing difficulties with current collaborative arrangements between schools and FE institutions. Many schools already plan their timetables around link courses with FE colleges and this causes problems because FE colleges have different term times than schools (i.e. they start later than schools). Many teachers are frustrated as they feel like the poor relation compared to FE institutions as they *perceive* that FE institutions receive more funding, are dictating school timetables, and leaving schools to be responsible for the welfare of students while they themselves are shut.

ATL Cymru members also express concern that the current collaborative arrangements reduces the amount of time they have to deliver the core curriculum, which is being squeezed so that a wider range of learning options can be offered across authorities. The WAG needs to ensure that schools and FE colleges are resourced adequately to enable them to deliver suitable learning options for all students. Inadequate funding impacts on the number and types of courses that can be offered. If there are not a sufficient number of students taking up a particular course then it cannot be run for budgetary reasons.

**iv. What might be the barriers to delivering the policy agenda and does the proposed measure take account of them?**

ATL Cymru welcomes amendments to the measure which clarify the definition of co-operation regarding the delivery of the local curriculum entitlements. Unfortunately, the measure does not take account of the barriers funding poses to the co-operation of organisations. The current arrangements encourage competition rather than cooperation. With significant representation in both FE colleges and secondary schools, ATL Cymru is uniquely placed to see how this competitive funding mechanism is destructive of good will in both schools and colleges. It can create a climate of suspicion. While funding, which translates into resources and, crucially, jobs is organised as hitherto institutions are bound to

compete for students.<sup>1</sup> The revelation in the Webb Report of chronic under-funding of FE in Wales has only served to increase anxiety within the schools sector which is again under-funded in relation to the rest of the UK. There needs to be a significant and incontrovertible increase in the quantum of education funding for both schools and colleges. This increase could then be used to guarantee present funding levels for institutions, relieving some of the competitive pressures and the 'extra' allocation could be allocated by the clustering arrangements to develop and deliver the broadest possible high quality, sustainable options menu for learners.

An additional barrier could perhaps be the support of stakeholders who would have to work with the new arrangements. It is important that any possible contentious issues, for example, disparity in the terms and conditions between teachers and lecturers are addressed. It is essential that stakeholders are fully engaged in this process if their commitment to working with the new arrangements is to be secured.

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<sup>1</sup> See the National Audit Office (England) *Partnering for Success: Preparing to Deliver the 14 -19 reforms in England* on the risks posed by the dysfunction of government policy based on the rhetoric of collaboration and a funding system that in practice is based on competition. [http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao\\_reports/07-08/070899.pdf](http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao_reports/07-08/070899.pdf)