**Task and Finish Group on local collaborative provision at KS4 Recommendations**

**Welsh Government Response**

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| **Recommendation 1** Regulations under the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 should be brought forward as a matter of urgency to reduce the minimum number of courses required at KS4 to form a local curriculum offer to 25.  |
| **Response: Accept** Welsh Government will shortly consult on policy changes which may lead to new Regulations under the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009. |
| **Recommendation 2** Regulations under the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 should include a minimum number of 3 vocational courses required to form a local curriculum offer at KS4. The Group further recommends close monitoring of impact and that the Welsh Government remits Estyn to undertake an evaluation of the quality and relevance of local curriculum offers in a sample of schools. |
| **Response: Accept**Welsh Government will shortly consult on policy changes which may lead to new Regulations under the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009. The Welsh Government will consider remitting Estyn to review the quality and impact of sample offers at KS4. DfES officials will also consider how the policy impact can be more widely measured.  |
| **Recommendation 3** As the points scoring system contained within the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 has now served its purpose, and no longer contributes to the process of local curriculum planning in a practical sense, new Regulations should be used to withdraw this requirement at both KS4 and post-16 as soon as possible. |
| **Response: Accept** Welsh Government will shortly consult on policy changes which may lead to new Regulations under the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009. However, we welcome opportunities to remove administrative burdens on schools, particularly where there is no longer a demonstrable benefit.  |
| **Recommendation 4** A ring-fenced element of the funding for 14-19 Welsh-medium courses will need to be in place and equity of provision will need to be protected. |
| **Response: Accept** The Welsh Government recognises the often higher costs associated with Welsh Medium delivery, particularly in the vocational field. Future arrangements will continue to take this into account.  |
| **Recommendation 5** There should be a more consistent approach between LAs and across regions in how local curriculum student transport is managed and funded during the school day, including the sharing of models of good practice with the aim of reducing transport spend.**Recommendation 6** Greater use of timetabling solutions, peripatetic teachers, and evolving virtual learning environments (VLEs) should be made by schools and colleges to reduce learner travel and associated costs. |
| **Response: Accept** The Welsh Government recognises the variable approaches to learner travel across Local Authorities and regional Consortia, and agrees that more should be done to bring about efficiencies through more robust application of best practice. We also accept the need for providers to move from seeing learner travel as the first stop solution, to a position where it becomes the last resort. The advantages to learners through better use of VLEs and digital learning should not be underplayed.  |
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| **Recommendation 7** Generic vocational two-tiered (L1 and L2) IVET qualifications based within or across sectors should be developed through the Review of Qualifications stakeholder framework and in conjunction with industry and awarding organisations representatives, in order to deliver a broader options base for IVETs at KS4 and better facilitate progression to post-16 learning in a vocational context (CVETs). **Recommendation 9**  In taking forward the IVET approach at KS4, some flexibility should be included in the qualifications categorisation arrangements to ensure that appropriate qualifications that attest to generic competencies (eg basic food hygiene) can be studied by, and funded for, KS4 learners.**Response: Accept in principle** |
| We recognise the potential advantages of such approaches, particularly with regard access to vocational provision at KS4 and preparedness for learner progression onto vocational courses post-16. We suggest the proposals be tested further through stakeholder mechanisms set up to take forward the actions from the Review of Qualifications, and action in this area is scheduled inline with that work.  |
| **Recommendation 8** A broader communications strategy should be developed around 14-19 changes, including connectivity across other DfES policy developments, such as changes to vocational qualifications, so that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the synergies and interactions between current educational policy developments. **Response: Accept** |
| The Welsh Government recognises the need to communicate to stakeholders how policy developments affecting 14-19 year olds interact and support each other.  |
| **Recommendation 10** As a reflection of the evolution of school budgets since the introduction of 14-19 grants, for example the School Effectiveness Grant (SEG) or Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG), only the costs for staff training associated with the learning coach function should be supported through the 14-19 funding. Other costs associated with the learning coach function should be harmonised within wider funding streams to schools.**Recommendation 11**  Moving forward, the Welsh Government should consider transitional arrangements that would move towards the harmonisation of the 14-19 grant for KS4 provision into other regional level funding streams, taking into account the recommendations from the review of the future delivery of education services in Wales, thus also realising efficiencies around administrative costs due to economies of scale. **Recommendation 12**  For post-16 learners starting programmes of study from September 2014, the costs associated with the delivery of activities including course provision (as currently subsidised by the 14-19 grant), should be met solely through the new post-16 funding system. **Recommendation 13** Transitional arrangements to be put into place for 2014-15 to ensure the implementation of changes to 14-19 policy and programmes, whilst protecting provision for those learners already undertaking courses, with a minimum funding level of £10 million. For 2015-16 and beyond the minimum level of funding could be set at £8 million as new harmonised arrangements come into effect. **Recommendation 14** That the Welsh Government over the next 12 months works closely with regional network coordinators and consortia leads, to develop the evolving role of the regions in managing 14-19 delivery and associated funding in a more robust and consistent way, including the preparation of clear revised 14-19 guidance for stakeholders. **Response: Accept in principle** These recommendations reflect the need to update the funding and management arrangements for work on 14-19 learning pathways to reflect the greater local delegation to schools that has been put into place over recent years, and the advent of regional Consortia working. The Welsh Government accepts the need to transition existing funding arrangements over the year ahead, and the Group’s recommended minimum funding levels. We further accept the need to work with Consortia to develop the regional role in support of enhanced strategic planning and delivery in local areas.  |