

Minister for Education meeting with the Third Sector

Wednesday 5 February 2020

12:00-13:00

Conference Room B, Ty Hywel, Cardiff Bay

Attendees

Welsh Government:

Kirsty Williams AM - Minister for Education (MfE)

Dewi Knight - Specialist Policy Advisor (DK)

Joanna Valentine - Head of Assessment and Tests

Nicola Edwards - Deputy Director Childcare, Play and Early Years (NE)

Maxine Chichester – Head of AoLE Health and Well-being

Matthew Mithan – EPS Government Business Manager

Third Sector:

Anna Nicholl – WCVA

Bonnie Hall – BiTC

Mia Rees – Prince's Trust Cymru

Catrin James – CWVYS

Susie Ventris-Field – Wales Centre for International Affairs

Lynne Hill – Children in Wales

Jenifer James – Oxfam Cymru

Ginger Wiegand – EYST

Cath Lewis – Children in Wales

Elin Maher – Mentrau Iaith Cymru

Ben Lloyd – WCVA / Save the Children

Item 1 – Minutes and Actions from Last Meeting

MfE – All actions had been completed and minutes agreed by all.

Item 2 – The New Curriculum

MfE – Explained how the new curriculum would be implemented and outlined the timelines involved. Further guidance would be issued by the Welsh Government on the Relationships and Sexuality curriculum to ensure all parents and teachers were aware of what exactly would be taught. There would also be further developed guidance on Early Years settings, as well as ensuring learners in education other than at school (EOTAS) and Pupil Referral Units (PRU) were also accounted for in the new curriculum.

DK – Outlined what guidance would be forthcoming from the Government covering learners with Additional Learning Needs.

MfE – Important to ensure there was an implementation plan ready for schools and Local Education Authorities in late April.

Third Sector – Need to ensure Local Authority leaders were clear on what was expected with the new curriculum. Welcomed the process adopted for the recent consultation on the new curriculum, and very pleased to see the emphasis on qualifications to ensure learners were driven towards the right sectors. Also realised the importance of skills being integrated into the new curriculum appropriately. There was a high risk that the Third Sector would change in the future. What reassurance could the Minister give that Third Sector Organisations would receive assistance from the Welsh Government if required?

MfE – The Government would give due consideration to any request that came forward from the Third Sector, however no reassurance could be provided that any funding could be resourced solely by the Welsh Government.

Third Sector – Happy to assist the Welsh Government with the strategic direction of the new curriculum, although raised concerns over how Additional Learning Needs (ALN) would be met. There was a need to ensure that all teachers fully understand what was required to deliver ALN effectively and that the new curriculum could comply with the provisions set out in the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act.

MfE – The new curriculum had been designed to be more inclusive to address these concerns. ALN was an important factor as there currently appeared to be a lack of understanding with the current code.

Third Sector – One area the new curriculum needed to address was learners who were currently being excluded from school due to the way in which ALN was handled.

MfE – Highlighted how the Welsh Government had invested £8million in to ALN, as well as ensuring plenty of time with the roll out of the new curriculum to address this.

- **Action – Third Sector requested separate meeting with the Minister to discuss further. The Minister invited the Third Sector to formally request the meeting in writing.**

Third Sector – Learners who study through the medium of Welsh could sometimes be disadvantaged by learning materials only being available in English. Was this something that was being looked at with the implementation of the new curriculum?

MfE – Pressure needed to be applied to Qualifications Wales on this issue. It was only right that learners were assessed in the language they were taught in. Important to have availability of bilingual services to all. Need to create a structure that meant we gained control of this and ensured relevant translated materials were available. A different approach was needed and we had to use the skills available to us to achieve this.

Third Sector – There were Third Sector education organisations that were there to assist with professional learning and offer services with good intentions. Important to support schools becoming more open to what's available in the wider community.

MfE – Schools were regularly inundated with offers from the outside community. Important information was available to schools outlining good practise guidance. The Welsh Government were already looking at what could be included on Hwb to put across relevant points better.

Third Sector – There was an opportunity with the new curriculum to build and support businesses with employer engagement in schools.

MfE – Estyn were currently looking at this very issue and would be publishing a review shortly.

Item 3 – Early Years Learning

Third Sector – Early Years was a very fragmented sector with important cross cutting issues throughout the Welsh Government. The Minister had already stated there would be additional guidance for all Local Authorities, however how had the Minister's department been co-ordinating Early Years policies across Government?

MfE – It was important to ensure Early Years and the Flying Start offer were co-ordinated in terms of activity. Early Years in particular was an important theme for the Welsh Government. Work was ongoing with nine Public Service Boards to organise the work across departments. More guidance should be available soon. Continue to monitor take up of the Childcare Offer. Would also be doubling Early Years Pupil Deprivation Grant to ensure support was there at an early stage of a child's life.

NE – Explained how the Welsh Government would be looking at the growth of the Early Years sector. Needed to encourage as much uptake as possible.

Third Sector – Many Local Authorities across Wales had differing portfolio areas when it came to education and social services, which could lead to confusion.

NE – There had already been movement on this, linked to the announcement of activity around a single system for Early Childhood Education and Care. Would review the current situation and ensure the Third Sector were kept informed.

- **Action – Nicola Edwards to update WCVA regarding the way forward with ECEC and action across the early years.**

Item 4 – Access to Lifelong Learning

Third Sector – The right to lifelong learning had been embedded very well into the new curriculum. A focus on more civil learning was required.

MfE – Explained a Bill was coming forward that would look at how we could have one organisation to look at the whole sector. The aim was for everything to go into one main body and to explore what the right to lifelong learning looked like. There had been an increase in people studying part time as well at Masters level, and we had been in discussions with Adult Learning Wales to try and increase the number of people involved in learning. Important to make this a universal right.

The meeting then drew to a close.