

Meeting with Third Sector

10 January 2018

11.30 to 12.30

Conference Rooms C & D, Ty Hywel

Attendees:

Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams AM (CSfE), Minister for Welsh Language & Lifelong Learning, Eluned Morgan AM (MWL&LL), Head of ALN Transformation, Charlie Thomas (CT), Capital Programme Director, Jo Lerner (JL) & EPS Government Business, Brian Herbert (BH) – Welsh Government

Anna Nicholl – WCVA (AN), Kathryn Robson – Adult Learning Wales (KR), Paul Glaze – CWVYS (PG), Martin Pollard – WCIA (MP), Catrin James – Urdd Gobaith Cymru (CJ), Phillip Manghan – Interfaith Council for Wales (PM), Caroline Rawson – SNAP Cymru (CR), Elin Maher – Mentrau Iaith Cymru (EM), Catherine Lewis – Children in Wales (CL), Ben Lloyd – Oxfam Cymru (BL)

Apologies: Judith Stone – WCVA, Rebecca Flavey – Business in the Community Group, Ann Woods – WACVC, Clair Brick – Siawns Teg, Uzo Iwobi – BAME, Tara-Jane Sutcliffe – Una Exchange' Bethan Webb – Welsh Government

CSfE – Welcomed Third Sector colleagues to the meeting and brief introductions were made. The first agenda item was the Third Sector paper on Prosperity for All and in particular 'Ambitious and Learning'.

CJ – Of interest was the timeline for the introduction of the new curriculum. What does the education sector need to do to bring in external expertise? There was potentially the need to discuss with the voluntary sector in its entirety for the benefit of young people.

CSfE – The development of the new curriculum is an open and inclusive process. The Stakeholder Groups have diverse membership and are not restricted. The Welsh Government would welcome any advice on additional members of those groups. In particular, the Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE) groups were designed to reach out to a wide variety of stakeholders.

CJ – The Sector does receive e-mails and updates on the development of the AoLE, but is not sure when they can engage in dialogue nor whether that should be at a national, consortia or school level. The challenge for the sector is to be prepared to enrich pupil's experiences and to reflect that as the new curriculum is developed and rolled-out.

CSfE – Work is currently taking place at a national level. Third sector organisations should consider signing up to blogs and the Welsh Government can share 'What

Matters Statements' with the Third Sector through existing channels such as the WCVA. There is a Coherence Group that will bring all the various work strands together and once that has happened, the plan is to have wider dialogue with children and young people, working with the Children's Commissioner. We are not at the point of consultation just yet but as we nearer the rollout of the new curriculum it will be at that time that dialogue with consortia and individual schools will take place. I can see a significant role for the Third Sector at a local level, particularly around Health & Wellbeing, but also in terms of coding, spiritual work, the respect agenda etc.

PM – Thanked the Minister for those helpful comments. Perhaps when we are at the point of beginning dialogue with curriculum groups, which could be co-ordinated through the WCVA for circulation amongst members and similarly with publications and engagement with the sectors involvement with individual schools.

Action – WCVA to co-ordinate Third Sector engagement with curriculum groups, circulating new curriculum related publications and engagement with schools.

CSfE – Schools will need to have professional feedback as the curriculum is developed, not to dictate what they implement but to work with their broader community. School accountability will be different under the new arrangements and more sophisticated. As the new broader curriculum is developed wider community collaboration will be required, including with the Third Sector.

BL – There are issues around the availability of resources, particularly in relation to Global Citizenship, which have shrunk in recent years.

CSfE – There is the opportunity to host resources through the Hwb platform which is used by schools throughout Wales. The resources must be bilingual and quality assured by the Welsh Government digital team before being made available electronically.

BL – There are new resources that could be helpful for the Welsh Baccalaureate, for example.

CSfE – Third Sector colleagues should approach Welsh Government policy leads with a view to having these digital resources made available through Hwb.

Action – WCVA to support the Third Sector to engage with policy leads on hosting digital content on Hwb.

PG – The Third Sector meets with the Education Workforce Council (EWC) regularly, particularly to raise the profile of the work undertaken with regard to informal and non-formal learning. With the development of the National Leadership Academy there will similarly be a need to promote the work of the Third Sector as the new body is established.

CSfE – The National Leadership Academy is very much a work in progress as, for example, the Chief Executive and Board members have not yet been appointed. There are still considerations around its remit and whether it will be for established or aspiring heads or indeed both. Once established it would seem perfectly reasonable for the Third Sector to engage with the National Leadership Academy, indeed members may wish to consider applying for Board membership when those are advertised in the next few months. The next item on the agenda is the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Bill.

Action – Third Sector to consider applying to be members of the National Leadership Academy’s Board.

CL – The Third Sector Additional Needs Alliance (TSANA) has worked closely with Welsh Government colleagues as the Bill has been developed. In particular, thanks to Charlie Thomas and her Team for the hard work and good engagement with the TSANA as the Bill has progressed.

The sections in the Bill on the UNCRC were welcome, however, there were still some concerns. The template that had been developed for the Individual Development Plan (IDP) was also welcome, however data management systems should be developed as should IDP entry and exit arrangements. There would be a need to develop training for the workforce, particularly in terms of disability and equality training, and Children in Wales would like to work with SNAP Cymru and Welsh Government on developing those training resources.

Concerns were raised around the different funding models operating across Wales and Children in Wales would prefer a Wales-wide framework possibly based around the North Wales model. Parental preferences should be continued to be considered under the new Bill and included in the code of practice as that is developed. Pleased with the inclusion of an Early Years ALN officer, but clarity on the role would be required. Perhaps lessons could be learned from the previous Early Years Support Programme.

There were concerns over the loss of funding for transition despite the duty being replicated under the new Bill, and that funding to local authorities for Specialist Placements was not ring-fenced.

There was disappointment that Work Based Learning, Apprenticeships and Internships were not covered by the Bill and that parents do not have access to advocacy under the Bill nor was it strengthened so that young people could ask for advocates. There are also concerns about the attainment gap between those with ALN and those without and how that is addressed

Children in Wales would welcome continuing to work with the Welsh Government as the Code of Practice is developed and the Bill is implemented.

CR – There is evidence that discrimination casework is increasing, with over 300 cases in the past year. There are duties under the Equalities Act that mean there is a training and development need that requires addressing for head teachers. There is a perceived lack of resources and concerns on how budgets might be delegated in the future to address these needs, with perhaps an emphasis on specialist placements. The Amber/Green Families First Pilot in Merthyr Tydfil might be a model to look at as it is clear that more training is required. Information and advice should be made available at the earliest opportunity.

CSfE – The ALN Bill implementation plans are crucial as it is changing practice on the ground that will make the difference. ALN is critical to the success of the National Mission and raising school, standards. There are a huge range of problems encountered by learners from those with not so complex issues to severe needs. It is important that Welsh Government continues to have dialogue with the sector, families and young people. I am pleased that you have recognised the work that Charlie and her Team have engaged with you in taking this work forward so far.

The timeline will need to be managed as we are committed to getting the implementation of this legislation right so that it delivers improvements for learners. It is not our intention to have a national funding model but instead a framework for local accountability. The Welsh Government is working with the WLGA and consortia to look at regional delivery models for ALN going forward. It is clear that regional school improvement models have made a huge difference and we would look to replicate that in the delivery of ALN provision. This is particularly relevant in terms of specialist placements where local authorities need to work together to build capacity in Wales to reduce the numbers of young people being sent a long way from home to get the provision that meets their complex needs. Social Services have an important role, it is not only the remit of education that comes into play when learners have complex needs.

CL – Multi-agency working will be important in that context.

CT – The transition expert groups will be looking at harnessing the learning that needs to be incorporated into the code.

CL – Could I be involved in that work?

CT – Will make sure that you receive an invitation to participate in that work.

Action – Welsh Government to invite Children in Wales to participate in the transition expert group.

CSfE – In terms of apprenticeships there are contractual relationships in place with providers and Welsh Government will look to use those levers in that context. You have raised many points which I hope we have addressed, but if there are any which we have not covered we will be happy to pick those up in writing after the meeting.

As time is now running short we need to move onto the Welsh Language and Education Workforce paper.

EM – Development of the Welsh Language skills of the workforce could be brought together through Welsh Regional Strategic Plans. In the next few weeks the 22 local authority plans will be scrutinised and that would provide an opportunity to ensure that workforce planning is taken into account, including in non-maintained sectors. There is a need to increase capacity, particularly in areas where the Welsh language is not so widely spoken. In terms of careers, it might be helpful to think strategically about how we can bring more of the Welsh Language workforce through the education system, and to encourage them to consider a career through the Welsh language later in their lives. Resources and information could be put on Hwb, and perhaps we could commission some work to create an education pack.

The big challenge is in the learning through play settings such as breakfast and after schools clubs, where there are capacity issues around making the offer through the Welsh language and where the skills and qualifications of the workforce is challenge in some areas. There might be opportunities through apprenticeships to address some of this, but there are issues for the Welsh medium play workforce at a national and local level. There has been some work undertaken with businesses, which perhaps is a model that could be replicated.

MWL&LL – The Welsh Government has set out an ambitious aim to have 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. It is important to increase the numbers of those who use Welsh not just in schools but in the home and the wider community as well. In terms of workforce there is a challenge in primary schools, with the situation better in secondary schools. There is an opportunity to look at the 21st Century Schools programme and utilising schools as community hubs for the provision of Welsh and indeed at local authority plans.

CSfE – We should also consider the role of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, which has recently expanded its remit to Further Education and that might provide an opportunity for it to assist in some of the workforce issues identified, particularly for Early Years, the Foundation Phase and after school clubs. The Minister made her apologies and requested that the Minister for Welsh Language & Lifelong Learning chair the remainder of the meeting as she had another engagement.

MWL&LL – It was important that work was taken forward at local level, but also through the national strategy and the Welsh Language Commissioner had a role to play here as well. The training of the early years workforce would be essential in helping us to achieve the ambition of increasing the numbers of Welsh Speakers. Finally, was there any other business?

MP – Thanked the Minister for the information in the Departments Written report regarding the International Education Programme (IEP). However, when was the Welsh Government intending to go to an open call for expressions of interest for 2018-19.

BH – It was hoped that the IEP would be out for expressions of interest shortly, with that likely to be concluded in time for work to commence in the next academic year, from September 2018.