

## **Written Response to the Enterprise and Business Committee's Report on Assisting Young People into Work by the Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology**

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I welcome this report, which highlights the importance work plays in securing positive futures for young people in Wales.

Many of the recommendations contained within it align closely with activities we are already developing and progressing - such as facilitating closer and stronger links between schools and employers, to help raise young people's awareness of skills employers value and the range of opportunities available. Therefore, I am pleased to be able to accept fully or in principle the majority of the recommendations.

Irrespective of whether their pathway has been academic or vocational, young people's transitions from education and training into work should build on employability and enterprise skills developed throughout that learning pathway. Qualified for Life, our education improvement plan for 3-19 year olds, clearly states our strategic aims to deliver an engaging curriculum which develops an independent ability to apply knowledge and skills within young people. We are also committed in Wales to developing qualifications which are nationally and internationally respected, to act as a credible passport to future learning and employment.

Successful Futures, the independent review of curriculum and assessment in Wales, is fundamental to delivering our wider vision and ambition for learning. Successful Futures underlines the importance of children and young people seeing the relevance of their learning to the world beyond the school gates and taking opportunities to forge links to that world.

Like all nations, we cannot ignore that we are part of a global race to develop skills. These skills will define our future competitiveness and support our evolution into a highly-skilled nation, raising productivity, reducing barriers into work and supporting people into employment. Through the delivery of our education improvement plan and our Skills Implementation Plans, our expectation is that all individuals completing compulsory or post-compulsory education are supported to acquire the literacy and numeracy skills needed for the world of work or to progress into further learning.

We know that youth unemployment is linked to a range of indicators associated with deprivation. Assisting young people into work is vital if we are to break intergenerational cycles of disadvantage. Our targets for reducing the number of young people disengaged from education, employment or training are set out in the Tackling Poverty Action Plan. A key response has been our development and implementation of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework. By creating and supporting a context for effective partnership working and information sharing, this framework continues to drive improved performance.

Recent statistics (15<sup>th</sup> April) from the Annual Population Survey (APS) show that in the 12 months ending 31 December 2014 8.1% of 16-18 year olds were estimated to be NEET, compared with 11.9% at the end of 2013. During the same period, 19.7% of 19-24 year olds were estimated to be NEET, against 20.4% at the year ending 31 December 2013.

While positive progress on key statistics is welcomed, there is no place for complacency and strong partnership working locally, regionally and nationally will continue to be required to ensure all young people are assisted into work.

Below, I have set out my response to each of Report's recommendations.

The Committee recommends that:

**Recommendation 1.** The Welsh Government should strengthen the teaching of work-ready skills and understanding of the labour market throughout the whole curriculum as well as through the "Careers and the World of Work" framework.

**Response: Accept**

I accept this recommendation. Professor Donaldson's review of the curriculum, 'Successful Futures', identified one of the key purposes of the curriculum in Wales should be that people develop as enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work.

While implementing the recommendations of Successful Futures is a long term ambition, we are already taking steps to increase the opportunities for young people to develop the skills and behaviours required by employers. For example, the revised Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate focusses on developing the essential and employability skills that Universities and employers want learners to have. The three Challenges and the Individual Project provide learners with purposeful learning in real-life contexts. In particular, the Enterprise and Employability Challenge provides opportunities for learners to develop enterprising skills and attributes and enhance employability. Many external organisations from the private, public and third sectors have been involved in the writing of these Challenges.

When young people engage with employers this can help them understand the value of employability skills and also to develop a fuller appreciation of the opportunities that exist in the labour market. The Numeracy Employer Engagement project operated over the last 2 years has engaged over 100 schools has highlighted how employer-interactions are particularly valuable when introduced from KS3 onward. We are in the process of procuring a provider to develop an 'Enhanced Employer Engagement' project, which will provide a model for sustainable school-employer partnerships, and a platform for the delivery of employer-linked activities relevant to a wide range of

curriculum areas. This new project will build on existing effective practice, including that gained from the Numeracy Employer Engagement project.

The newly extended and enhanced labour market information resources available to all learners across Wales via [careerswales.com](http://careerswales.com) provide high quality bilingual information in ways accessible and relevant to young people.

Estyn has found that learning outcomes of the Careers and the World of Work curriculum framework can be achieved effectively when schools embed teaching across the curriculum. This year Welsh Government will review and refresh existing guidance on school delivery of Careers and the World of Work, including roles and responsibilities of governing bodies, senior leaders, Careers and the World of Work co-ordinators, teaching staff, pastoral staff, learning coaches, lead workers and Careers Wales staff.

**Financial Implications** – None. Any additional costs will be drawn from existing programme budgets.

The Committee recommends that:

**Recommendation 2.** The Welsh Government should make fundamental changes to work experience for young people. They should review best practice on work experience; consider making it longer; do more to ensure that more employers are involved; and ensure that sufficient resources (either in Careers Wales or in schools) are in place for work experience to be properly organised.

**Response: Accept**

I accept this recommendation.

The forthcoming review of guidance to schools on the delivery of the Careers and the World of Work curriculum will be extended to incorporate consideration of best practice on work experience and the value of encouraging a more differentiated delivery models which move away from a standard 'one-size-fits-all' approach.

Qualified for Life, our education improvement plan for 3-19 year olds in Wales, sets out how we will direct Careers Wales to support the development of stronger and more sustainable partnerships between schools and employers. The Enhanced Employer Engagement Project is central to achieving this ambition. The two-year project will be used to introduce a new model for facilitating school-employer links and will be rolled out from the summer. Our aspiration is that, as a result of this project, all secondary schools are engaged in new employer partnerships by 2018 and that these partnerships are used to support a diverse mixture of activities such as: work experience placements; mock interviews; mentoring and coaching; preparation for work activities such as taster days; and short term teacher placements into industry.

Welsh Government officials are also working in partnership with Careers Wales on project applications seeking ESF funding, aimed at reducing the number of 11-16 year olds who are at risk of becoming disengaged from education or training by engaging them in employer-linked activities and experiences. The projects will raise individuals' awareness and knowledge of different economic sectors, of employers' expectations and provide information around potential careers within the local and regional labour market. They will also enable individuals to access role models and mentors.

Resources to support school delivery of the Careers and the World of Work Curriculum are provided as part of the arrangements for school revenue funding. In addition, Welsh Government is investing £500k over the next two years in the Enhanced Employer Engagement Project. The Welsh Government remit letter to Careers Wales for 2015-16 also makes clear the expectation that the organisation invest in facilitating school-employer links.

**Financial Implications** – None. Any additional costs will be drawn from existing programme budgets.

The Committee recommends that:

**Recommendation 3.** We recommend that the Deputy Minister reinstates the responsibility on Careers Wales to undertake Health and Safety vetting of work experience placements and to provide a National Work Experience Database.

**Response: Reject**

I reject this recommendation. The latest guidance from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) confirms there are no health and safety regulations that require schools, colleges, or those organising placements on their behalf, to carry out employer workplace assessments for work experience placements. Employers who are taking on students for work experience have the primary responsibility for their health and safety. Furthermore, reflecting this guidance, there is also no requirement for those organising work placements to have attained any prescribed level of occupational competence or qualification.

Responsibility for the provision of suitable work experience placements for young people rests with schools, not Careers Wales, with work experience placements often forming part of schools delivery of the Careers and the World of Work curriculum. In light of the revised HSE guidance the remit letter to Careers Wales for 2015-16 made clear that Careers Wales should plan to bring a close to the Health and Safety vetting services which have historically been provided, by September 2015.

The remit letter for Careers Wales in 2015-16 also sets out how Welsh Government no longer requires the organisation to deliver a national work experience database from September 2015. The review of guidance on Careers and the World of Work will provide an opportunity to explore with partners how work placement matching is best supported in the future.

**Financial Implications** – None.

The Committee recommends that:

**Recommendation 4.** The Welsh Government should review and evaluate the roll-out of the common application process and prospectuses to ensure that school pupils have information and access to vocational, as well as academic, courses (either through other schools or further education colleges).

**Response: Accept**

I accept this recommendation. The roll out plan for the Common Area Prospectus/Application Process (CAP) delivery into schools from September 2015 will provide school pupils with online, searchable access to baseline data for both vocational and academic courses offered by post-16 learning providers. The planned integration and streamlining of data within the Careers Wales.com website will give parity across all courses and will allow all providers to present consistent information of a similar standard and quality. This alignment of data will also improve the user experience and will support pupils to make better informed choices regarding their transition to post-16 provision.

This roll-out of CAP and the broader data integration will be reviewed and evaluated as part of their specific project management activities, as part of the broader Youth Engagement and Progression Framework strand monitoring and evaluation and through the monitoring of the delivery of the Careers Wales remit.

**Financial Implications**

£50,000 is available within the Youth Engagement and Employment Division budget for 2015-16 to support the delivery of the CAP roll out plan. CAP delivery support from Careers Wales and the planned integration and streamlining of data within the Careers Wales.com website will both be delivered from funding provided to Careers Wales to deliver their core remit.

The Committee recommends that:

**Recommendation 5.** The Welsh Government should review the outcomes of the *Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009* and evaluate the opportunities that young people have in school to choose vocational courses at age 14 and age 16, either in other schools or in further education colleges.

**Response : Reject**

I reject this recommendation. Following the recommendations from the Children and Young People Committee's Report into the Learning and Skill (Wales) Measure in May 2012, the Welsh Government established an external 14-19 Task and Finish Review Chaired by a Headteacher to consider the outcomes of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009, which included opportunities for young people to access vocational provision. The findings of the review were published in September 2013 and the Welsh Government responses and actions which relate to recommendation 5 in the Enterprise and Business Committee report have already been considered by the Minister for Education and Skills and have been actioned. Recommendations 7 and 9 of the 14-19 Task and Finish Review report are set out below for further information:

(Recommendation 7)

'Generic vocational two-tiered (L1 and L2) Initial Vocational Education and Training (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 key stage 4 (KS4) and better facilitate progression to post-16 learning in a vocational context (Continuing Vocational Education and Training - CVETs)'

(Recommendation 9)

'the introduction of the IVET approach at KS4, should include some flexibility in the qualifications categorisation arrangements to ensure that appropriate qualifications that attest to generic competencies (e.g. basic food hygiene) can be studied by, and funded for, KS4 learners.'

**Financial Implications** – None. Any additional costs will be drawn from existing programme budgets.

The Committee recommends that:

**Recommendation 6.** The Welsh Government should produce an analysis of the balance between academic and work-based learning post-16 and assess whether this balance is appropriate for the modern Welsh economy.

### **Reject**

The Welsh Government already publishes a variety of statistical information on higher and further education, work-based learning and lifelong learning in Wales which is used to inform policy and programme delivery.

A new Post-16 Planning and Funding Framework has also been introduced to underpin the allocation of post-16 funding which places an increased focus on planning provision and learning outcomes. The Framework will enable us to better understand the value from that provision by evaluating the result of this achievement, in terms of progression to a job, to higher education or further learning.

Further work on planning post-16 provision linked to local labour market needs is currently being developed following the Policy Statement on Skills and this is being supported by the introduction of three Regional Skills Partnerships who have been tasked with driving up investment in skills based on local and regional economic need. We are also developing a measure for destinations that will be used for further education institutions, sixth forms and work-based learning which will ensure transparency and consistency in published information. Baseline statistics were published in December 2014 and this analysis will be published annually in future. Our work on outcome measures will be supplemented by additional work being taken forward on the Skills Performance Measures, published in September 2014, which will provide a broader analysis of how the skills infrastructure is meeting our aspirations in terms of jobs and growth, financial sustainability, equality and equity and by benchmarking our actions against other countries internationally.

**Financial implications** – None. The existing publication of statistical information, the outcome measures for post-16 funding and work on Skills Performance Measures are already captured within the work of the organisation and will therefore require no additional resource.

The Committee recommends that:

**Recommendation 7.** Further to the new Youth Concessionary Fare scheme for 16 and 17 year olds (from September 2015), the Welsh Government should undertake a study to examine the costs and feasibility of extending this scheme to young people aged 18-24.

**Response: Accept in Principle**

Following the announcement about the discounted travel scheme for 16 and 17 year olds, officials have been working with representatives of the bus industry, young people and local authorities, and have successfully negotiated a scheme which will offer one-third discounts to 16, 17 and 18 year olds not only for their journeys to and from training and work, but for all of their journeys by local bus.

Whilst there are no plans to commission a specific study to examine the costs and feasibility of extending this scheme to young people aged 18-24, the Welsh Government continues to encourage bus operators to assess the long-term benefits of extending discounts to other age groups, including 19 to 24 year olds. However, this is a commercial decision for bus operators.

**Financial Implications**

None.

The Committee recommends that:

**Recommendation 8.** We recommend strongly that the Welsh Government should ensure that Careers Wales provides face-to-face advice and guidance for every young person who needs it.

**Response: Accept**

I accept this recommendation. Provision of a universal 'one size fits all' standard face to face guidance interview for individuals has not been part of the universal service offer from Careers Wales since April 2013. There are no plans to reinstate this level of service which was not valued by many young people. The current differentiated delivery model draws on face-to-face interactions, group work, telephone and a range of web-based information and guidance services including web-chat. The focus now is on ensuring those in greatest need of support receive the services they need.

Careers Wales works in partnership with schools to establish which young people will benefit most from more targeted face-to-face support. The Career Check tool used by students in year 10 is an important part of this process since it helps identify which young people are vocationally unfocused and who benefit most from face-to-face support.

Guidance interviews and more in depth tailored support are available to specific client groups identified in the remit letter and there is continuing use of group work with school children. The core of the delivery model remains the professional and impartial careers advisers, but looking ahead Careers Wales will be working with partners, clients and stakeholders to develop a new digital strategy to make best use of new opportunities presented by technology.

Looking ahead in 2015-16 Careers Wales will be considering the development of its website via user feedback and consultation with young clients, older clients and stakeholders. There is a much higher expectation and evidence that young people can and will self serve from the website, particularly using smartphones to access information and advice when it is most convenient in time or place for them. Capturing user feedback, evaluation of services provided by the different mechanisms of Careers Wales, including face to face guidance, plays a vital role in helping to address the careers advice needs of young people.

**Financial Implications – None.**

The Committee recommends that:

**Recommendation 9.** We recommend that the Deputy Minister's review of employer engagement is progressed as a priority and published by end July 2015. We ask the Deputy Minister to write to us with more details of the review and her timescale.

**Response: Accept in Principle**

I accept this recommendation in principle. Two actions will be central to our response. First, our approach to improving school-employer links will be underpinned by the new 'Enhanced Employer Engagement' project, the development of which has already been shaped and informed by the Wales Strategic Forum for Career Development. This project, to be delivered in partnership with Careers Wales as part of their wider remit to support school-employer links, will establish stronger and more sustainable partnerships between schools and employers. Delivery will begin in the summer with roll out to schools from September 2015. This project will build on lessons learned from the Numeracy Employer Engagement project and will help embed effective approaches and practices for school-employer engagement and to inform future policy.

Secondly, this year we will review guidance on school delivery of Careers and the World of Work curriculum framework. This activity will include considering examples of effective practice and case studies of employer engagement with schools. The terms of reference for the review will be presented to the Wales Strategic Forum for Career Development, which I Chair, at its next meeting this summer. I will, of course, keep the Committee informed regarding progress made.

**Financial Implications** – None. Any additional costs will be drawn from existing programme budgets.

The Committee recommends that:

**Recommendation 10.** The Welsh Government should work with the Department for Work and Pensions to address anomalies in the benefits system, for example the difficulty young people face in sustaining a tenancy if their housing benefit is cut as a result of taking up low-paid employment

**Response: Accept in Principle**

I accept this recommendation in principle. Welsh Government is already working closely with the Department for Work and Pensions to better align the employment and skills services that support job-seekers in Wales. I provided a statement to Plenary on 3 February 2015.

On the specific issue of housing benefit, for Local Housing Allowance purposes every claimant who is a *young individual* only qualifies for the shared accommodation rate irrespective of the accommodation they occupy. A single claimant who is under age 35 is generally regarded as a *young individual*. There are a number of exemptions including leaving care, been in homeless accommodation, has dependents etc.

When there is a shortfall in Housing Benefit, tenants may claim additional help through the discretionary housing payments scheme if they have entitlement to Housing Benefit. We have been working closely with partners to improve the 'lot' of Housing Benefit recipients (including younger claimants), and to agree protocols to improve consistency and reduce the number of repeat claims.

Local Authorities are responsible for administering the Discretionary Housing Payments Fund using guidance provided by the Department for Work and Pensions. Welsh Government Ministers have been critical of the guidance because it is too vague, resulting in inconsistencies especially for disabled claimants and those who occupy specially adapted properties.

The scheme is designed to give greater priority to:

- helping those who are making efforts to help themselves;
- supporting those who have done all they can to manage the situation they are in, and can't realistically do any more;
- Preventing negative outcomes such as homelessness which are likely to involve further hardship for the household as well as additional and avoidable costs for the council.

The new framework commenced on 6 April 2015, and includes the following changes:-

- The new rules, introduced alongside existing Department for Work and Pensions guidance, will help Local Authorities award funding in a fair and consistent way and prioritise people who are helping themselves.

- There is also a strong focus on ensuring Local Authorities assist tenants with their underlying problems which are causing hardship i.e. providing advice, referring to appropriate agencies such as Discretionary Assistance Fund, Money Advice Services and Citizens Advice Cymru etc.
- Disability income be treated equitably i.e. taken fully into account and any expenses linked to that income will offset as expenditure i.e. Motability, laundry, special diets etc.

Furthermore, there are special provisions within the Housing Benefit system for young people leaving care and also for those tenants who were able to afford their rent for 12 months prior to making a claim for Housing Benefit.

The homelessness provisions in the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 come into effect from 27<sup>th</sup> April 2015. This reform brings in new duties on Local Authorities to help prevent or find accommodation for anyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness, and will greatly benefit young people at risk. The legislation also retains the priority need status of 16 and 17 year olds, care leavers and other vulnerable young people, and for these groups there is an obligation on Local Authorities to secure them accommodation if they are homeless. Local Authorities sometimes have difficulty in finding affordable accommodation for people on low incomes, particularly young people, and this is exacerbated by the under 35 single room rate. Increasing the supply of affordable accommodation is a priority for the Welsh Government, and we will exceed our targets by 2016.

**Financial Implications – None**

The Committee recommends that:

**Recommendation 11.** The Welsh Government should fund more flexible courses that can accommodate young people who need more time to achieve the required outcomes.

**Response : Accept in Principle**

I accept this recommendation in principle. We are already meeting this requirement through the Traineeship programme. The Traineeship programme is fully flexible and not time bound, and all delivery should be tailored to meet the needs of an individual learner. Many learners on a Traineeship programme will have complex and significant barriers, and it may therefore take considerable time and support to progress the young person onto further education, employment or Training. We appreciate that improvements can always be made to the programme, and that in some cases, the delivery could be more bespoke and tailored to individual needs. We are therefore undertaking a comprehensive review of the Traineeship programme and have commissioned York Consulting to undertake the research on our behalf. A report will be produced in December 2015, and, based on the recommendations, we may implement some changes to the programme for future delivery years.

Within both Apprenticeship and Traineeship programmes, there is no maximum time requirement for delivery.

More generally, the availability of flexible provision with start dates throughout the year is recognised as an important factor in keeping young people engaged in learning. The Minister for Education and Skills' priorities letter for further education in 2015/16 highlighted this issue and urged institutions to work with Local Authorities, Careers Wales and Work Based Learning providers to time-table more start dates throughout the year. Individual institutions are doing their best to flex their term dates within the constraints of qualifications and staffing contracts, and officials will work with Colegau Cymru to identify principles and best practice for flexible provision in FE.

**Financial Implications** – Dependant upon the outcomes of the review and the financial implications of any recommendations will need to be considered once the evaluation has reported.

The Committee recommends that:

**Recommendation 12.** The Welsh Government should increase their coordination and planning of existing financial support for the third sector to minimise duplication and to prioritise support for the hardest to reach young people in accessing the jobs market.

**Response: Accept**

I accept this recommendation. Welsh Government is currently working through the Third Sector Partnership Council to develop a detailed Programme for Action which will inform joint working with the Third Sector across all Ministerial portfolios. This will provide a new means to coordinate planning and delivery with the sector in priority areas such as support for young people to access the jobs market. The Third Sector will also continue to be supported by Infrastructure bodies including Wales Council for Voluntary Action and County Voluntary Councils, which are in place across Wales. Their role is increasingly focused on ensuring the contribution of Third Sector organisations to tackling poverty is maximised.

We are currently implementing the youth engagement and progression framework to better support young people to remain engaged in education, training and employment. We recognise that a whole system approach is key to the successful implementation of the framework, whereby roles and responsibilities are more clearly defined and in which all of the agencies and providers working with young people to collaborate to deliver better outcomes for young people. The framework gives local authorities a key strategic leadership role but they need to engage closely organisations like Careers Wales and the voluntary youth work sector in developing their plans for implementation, as well as working in partnership with schools and the full range of post-16 providers to minimise duplication and maximise the resources available to fully support young people most at risk. We are currently working with the Council for Wales Voluntary Youth Services to better understand the role of the voluntary youth work sector and volunteering opportunities to support the successful implementation of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework.

**Financial Implications** – none.

The Committee recommends that:

**Recommendation 13.** The Welsh Government should increase the investment in its provision of lead workers for vulnerable young people to ensure that they have the one-to-one support that they need to help them find work.

**Response: Accept in Principle**

I accept this recommendation in principle, as most of the people and organisations providing lead worker support are not directly funded by Welsh Government.

The youth engagement and progression framework implementation plan set out the offer of a 'lead worker' to provide continuity of support and contact for the most at risk young people to remain in, or to enter education, training or employment.

The 'lead worker' function is not necessarily a new position in many cases the lead worker function is a responsibility associated with an existing job role. School and college based staff (e.g. pastoral or learning coach); local authority youth workers, Careers Wales advisers and voluntary and specialist support services can all provide lead worker support. These services are in most part not directly funded by Welsh Government.

We have recently commissioned the People and Work Unit to identify and share effective practice of lead working in different contexts. The formative evaluation of the framework will include a section on implementing the framework in a challenging financial climate.

The critical point is that this support is co-ordinated effectively. The framework advocates the establishment of an 'Engagement and Progression Co-ordinator' (EPC) function to co-ordinate support for young people (based on early identification, practitioner intelligence and available resources); and understand the impact of any support provided. Every local authority has established an EPC function. Welsh Government has provided a grant of £50,000 to each local authority to help implement the framework in 2015-16. One of the conditions of this grant is that the EPC function is maintained.

**Financial Implications – None.**

**Recommendation 14.** The Welsh Government should improve the availability and provision of pre-entry level training to better equip young people to undertake a Traineeship.

**Response : Accept in Principle**

I accept this recommendation in principle. There is a need to ensure that the Traineeship programme, meets the needs of those requiring 'pre-entry' training and we are undertaking a comprehensive review of the Traineeship Programme.

The Traineeship programme has been designed with 'pre-entry' support integral to its delivery and already provides training and support to young people who have significant needs, barriers and requirements. The Traineeship programme should support young people who require pre entry level training through its engagement strand. We recognise that the programme could be improved further, to ensure that it fully meets the needs of all learners, including these pre entry level learners. We are therefore undertaking a comprehensive review of the Traineeship programme and have commissioned York Consulting to undertake the research on our behalf. A report will be produced in December 2015, and, based on the recommendations, we may implement some changes to the programme for future delivery years.

**Financial Implications** – Dependant upon the outcomes of the review and the financial implications of any recommendations will need to be considered once the evaluation has reported.

The Committee recommends that:

**Recommendation 15.** The Welsh Government should do even more to promote information on apprenticeships more widely.

**Response: Accept**

I accept this recommendation.

The Welsh Government believes that, to ensure the long-term health of the economy, more individuals need to pursue apprentice training and more employers need to make opportunities available for those who are eager to become apprentices. We need to persuade more employers of all kinds to offer such opportunities and then to encourage more individuals to embrace this form of training, whatever their specific career aspiration.

The Promotion of Apprenticeships to individuals still at school is crucial if apprenticeships are to obtain parity of esteem with the traditional GCSE to “A” Level to Degree route in schools. We intend to further raise awareness of apprenticeships to individuals in schools by:-

- Engaging individuals via apprenticeship marketing and communications campaigns and signposting them to the Skills Gateway for individuals delivered by Careers Wales.
- Working with a number of ‘Apprenticeship Ambassadors’, made up of previous Apprenticeship Award and Skills Show winners and finalists. Based on their first-hand experiences, the Ambassadors will assist in the promotion of the positive benefits of apprenticeships to current school pupils considering their options. A series of pan-Wales roadshows took the form of the apprentices returning to their local school and presenting to Year 9 / 10 students to talk about their experience as an apprentice.
- Engaging young people through appropriate social media channels and promoting good news stories and Apprenticeship vacancies via Twitter and Facebook, signposting to the Apprenticeship Matching Service (AMS).

**Financial implications** – None. Any additional costs will be drawn from existing programme budgets.

The Committee recommends that:

**Recommendation 16.** We recommend that the Deputy Minister progresses the following reviews as a matter of urgency and ask her to provide us with greater detail about the implementation plans and timescales for these reviews and projects including:

- the review of work experience;
- the review of the structure of Careers Wales; and
- their plans for an enhanced employer engagement approach to provide accurate labour market information to young people.

**Response: Accept**

I accept this recommendation.

Our review of guidance to schools on the delivery of the Careers and the World of Work curriculum will be extended to incorporate consideration of best practice on work experience and the value of encouraging a more differentiated delivery models which move away from a standard ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach.

The structure of the service offering from Careers Wales is set following the agreement of the annual remit letter by Ministers, and is issued to the company early December each year, for the year ahead. Careers Wales’ business plan provides a response to the remit, specifying in more detail how the expectations set out in the remit letter will be delivered. The performance and demands upon Careers Wales services from clients are monitored in quarterly performance reports which feed into the regular meetings between the Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology and the Chair of the Board of Directors of Careers Wales, as well as the Chief Executive.

The service offer provided by Careers Wales is also informed by evaluations which are commissioned by Careers Wales to analyse the value and benefits of services, thus informing the company as to where improvements are being seen or should be considered. The company also seeks feedback from stakeholders and, as a member of the Wales Strategic Forum for Careers Development, keeps key stakeholders from across the public, private and third sectors informed of developments or changes to the service offering and mechanisms of delivery. The amalgamation of six previous regional careers companies into one unified all Wales service from April 2013 has already brought substantial benefits in terms of rolling out common standards of service for clients and achieving efficiencies in terms of expenditure and delivery.

In the last year Careers Wales has made substantive investments to improve and enhance the range and accessibility of labour market information available via careerswales.com. Information on different career pathways has been expanded with jobs and sector information illustrated by use of ‘snapshot’ data on average wage levels, working hours, types of work, levels of qualifications needed and level of demand in Wales.

Careers Wales has prioritised improvements in its universal offer of careers information advice and guidance, available via Careers Wales online, providing updated career tools and job information. The website also continues to host the portals for the Apprenticeship Matching Service and Jobs Growth Wales opportunities. There is also a new section highlighting the Individual Skills Gateway which provides information for all individuals, including young people aged 18 – 24, who are seeking employment.

Careers advisers use local, regional and national LMI when working with clients and partners. It is a member of the recently established Welsh Government LMI Management Group and is developing links with the new Regional Partnerships to access and share relevant labour market intelligence and information.

**Financial Implications – None.**