

Response to recommendations made in the National Assembly for Wales Children, Young People and Education Committee Report: The Provision of Textbooks and Learning Resources for Pupils

<p>Recommendation 1. The Cabinet Secretary must publish details to clarify who is responsible for ensuring that resources are available for all pupils, whatever method of learning they prefer to use.</p>	Accept	<p>The introduction of new GCSE and A level qualifications in Wales between 2015 and 2017 raised concerns within the education sector about the provision of appropriate and timely teaching and learning resources, particularly through the medium of Welsh and bilingually.</p> <p>In response to these concerns, I initiated a '<i>Welsh and Bilingual Resources Summit</i>' in April 2017 which was attended by range of public, private and third sector organisations all of which have a part to play in securing high quality, timely and bilingual education resources.</p> <p>This summit highlighted the strategic importance of focusing on and planning for bilingual resources production early on in any reform programme. It also highlighted that this approach will be crucial for securing the necessary resources to support the new curriculum for Wales.</p> <p>Since the summit, my officials established a Bilingual Educational Resources Stakeholders Group including representatives from BBC Wales, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, CYDAG, Cwlwm Cyhoeddwyr Cymru, (Association of Welsh Publishers), National Museum of Wales, Qualifications Wales, Regional Consortia, S4C, Welsh Books Council, Welsh Government officials and WJEC, to consider ideas for a new strategic approach to securing the education resources that Wales needs, in both Welsh and English. This new pan-Wales approach will focus on securing high-quality bilingual teaching and learning resources when they are needed. The strategy will set out what contributions are</p>	None. Any additional costs will be drawn from existing programme budgets.
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		expected of the various organisations who have an important part to play.	
<p>Recommendation 2. Qualifications Wales should publish a list of core resources required for each subject, and which must be available prior to courses being commenced. These resources must include printed textbooks and teacher resources as a minimum, in addition to online and other resources.</p>		<p>This is a recommendation for Qualification Wales.</p> <p>Qualifications Wales has confirmed that it recognises the importance of the necessary resources being available before new qualifications are introduced for first teaching and is looking more broadly at the question of what resources teachers and students find useful. It will consider the implications of this work, in determining its approach to future qualifications reforms. While specifications and assessment methods may change, much of the subject content often remains the same. It is Qualifications Wales' view that in determining whether to specify additional core resources that must be available to support a new qualification (beyond specifications and sample assessments) it would need to look at what resources are available for the subject as a whole, rather than only those focused on an individual qualification. This is one reason why it will not always be necessary, or appropriate, for a new specification to be accompanied by a (new) printed text book covering the entire content for the qualification.</p> <p>Qualifications Wales is represented on the Bilingual Educational Resources Stakeholders Group and will use this group, as well as any requirements made of the awarding body, to communicate core resource requirements.</p>	None.
<p>Recommendation 3. The Cabinet Secretary should initiate a comparison with other parts of the UK to establish if there are similar</p>	Accept	Welsh Government acknowledges that it is beneficial to compare the delivery of the provision of educational resources in other countries and to this end I have already commissioned the Bilingual Educational Resources Stakeholders Group to consider the approaches in other countries.	None. Any additional costs will be drawn from existing programme budgets.

<p>problems with the provision of educational resources, and whether solutions have been found which could be used in Wales.</p>		<p>The group has concentrated on countries which deliver bilingual education, including Scotland and Northern Ireland, as well as other countries within the EU and beyond, which have a linguistic similarity to Wales, such as the Basque country.</p> <p>The findings will be considered by the Bilingual Educational Stakeholders Group when developing its proposal for a solution for Wales.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 4. The Cabinet Secretary should establish the extent to which teachers are translating resources themselves, and what those resources are. Arrangements should then be made for those resources to be translated centrally, and made available to teachers and pupils as appropriate.</p>	<p>Reject</p>	<p>Currently there are three avenues for resource creation in Wales:</p> <p>Firstly, original resources are centrally created or commissioned by organisations such as WJEC, the Welsh Government and the BBC. These resources are either provided bilingually or in Welsh only to meet a gap in provision.</p> <p>Secondly, commercially produced resources are available from specialist educational publishers. These are mainly developed in English only, e.g. qualifications textbooks. These textbooks are market driven. As the market for Welsh-medium textbooks is limited the Welsh Government provides a grant to WJEC to ensure that a Welsh version is available. I have previously stated that this method of provision is not acceptable and that is why I have asked the Bilingual Educational Stakeholders Group to look at a model for Wales that will ensure a bilingual provision rather than depending on translations.</p> <p>Finally, teachers create and adapt resources for their own use and translate resources that are available commercially in English. In many cases these resources cannot be shared on a national level due to copyright reasons as well as a need to</p>	<p>None.</p>

		<p>quality assure content and terminology. Translating resources that have been developed commercially requires the publisher's agreement as well as clearance of Intellectual Property Rights. The resource used by a teacher is dependent on his/her opinion and need and are tailored to the needs of the pupils and the lesson. A recent review by the WJEC of how resources are used in secondary schools suggested that nearly 90% of teachers provided resources they had developed themselves.</p> <p>Under the new curriculum it has been already agreed to develop a new model for ensuring that educational resources are available in both languages at the same time. This will include identifying resources to meet the requirements on a national and local level and making arrangements for the provision of those resources. The Bilingual Educational Resources Stakeholders Group will be providing me with recommendations on the way forward for the delivery of bilingual resources and I will update the committee on developments in the spring.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 5. The functions of WJEC should be extended to include responsibility for the translation and promotion of learning resources that are part of the common core of resources that should be available, or those used widely across schools</p>		<p>This recommendation is not within my remit.</p> <p>WJEC CBAC Ltd is a company limited by guarantee and is a registered independent charity. Its functions are decided upon by the Board of Directors and the Strategic Management Team.</p> <p>As one of the key stakeholders on the Bilingual Educational Resources Stakeholders Group WJEC will be central to identifying future resources needs and will use this group to propose solutions for future provision. It will also continue to be a key provider of the resources identified, be they core or supplementary resources.</p>	None.

		<p>It would be for the Board of WJEC to decide if they are in a position to extend their responsibilities and what those responsibilities will be within the future model of providing resources.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 6. The Cabinet Secretary and WJEC should ensure that bilingual resources are developed naturally as the resource is being created, and that this should form part of any contract awarded for the production of resources where a commercial publisher is used.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>Welsh Government accepts that future provision of resources which are commissioned via a tender process by WJEC and Welsh Government should be developed bilingually.</p> <p>Digital resources produced by WJEC are available bilingually and WJEC will continue this provision.</p> <p>However WJEC and Welsh Government cannot ensure that textbooks which are produced by publishers as commercial ventures, with no financial assistance by WJEC and Welsh Government, will naturally be developed bilingually. Under the Joint Council for Qualifications' <i>Code of Practice: Awarding Body/Publisher Relationships</i> WJEC is able to work with publishers to develop material that meets the needs of the awarding bodies' qualifications. Textbooks produced commercially are currently endorsed by WJEC, where they are deemed to be of appropriate quality and no legal contract exists between them and the publisher. There is no contractual obligation on the publisher to develop these textbooks bilingually.</p> <p>The new strategic approach that will be developed by the Bilingual Educational Resources Stakeholders Group will ensure creation of resources in both Welsh and English.</p>	<p>Unknown – Financial implications will be considered when future approach is being developed.</p>

<p>Recommendation 7. The Cabinet Secretary should reconsider the decision to delay publication of English language resources by up to eight weeks and ensure that resources, both Welsh and English, are published as soon as practicable.</p>	Reject	<p>I understand that there has been no decision to delay publication of English language resources. Discussions have been held between WJEC and the commercial publishers in England who are currently involved with the production of textbooks to support WJEC specifications. The aim of these discussions is to look at ways of speeding up the process of creating Welsh versions of textbooks. As a result WJEC and the publishers have agreed to pilot a 'twin-track' method where books authored in English are being translated into Welsh at the same time. In theory this will allow the publication of Welsh and English versions of textbooks either simultaneously or within eight weeks of each other. If successful, this will reduce the timescales substantially.</p> <p>In the case of a new specification (and allowing for a long enough lead-in time between the introduction of a new qualification and the first teaching of a qualification) this would mean that both English and Welsh versions could be ready at the same time for teaching.</p>	None.
<p>Recommendation 8. The Cabinet Secretary, if the trial proceeds, should provide detail on how its success or otherwise will be measured, including how the potential impact on pupils will be assessed if the English language version is delayed.</p>	Accept	<p>A small selection of revision books are currently being piloted to see if this 'twin-track' method is deemed successful and could be considered as a standard process for translating textbooks in the future under the current grant scheme arrangement. The risks and successes of the trial will be monitored by WJEC's resources team and by my officials as part of the routine grant management processes and procedures. I am content to keep the committee informed of this process.</p> <p>I have been assured that the English Language version will not be delayed and that English-medium learners will not be at a disadvantage.</p>	None.

<p>Recommendation 9. The Cabinet Secretary should ensure that Welsh Government funding for Welsh Language resources should be linked to bilingual delivery as part of any contract</p>	Accept	<p>As I have already stated, in future resources will be commissioned in both languages and will be available at the same time to support the new curriculum.</p> <p>A new infrastructure for the provision of bilingual resources is being considered by the Bilingual Educational Resources Stakeholders Group which will also consider the appropriate funding models.</p>	Unknown. Any financial implications would need to be considered once we determine our approach in 2019.
<p>Recommendation 10. The Cabinet Secretary should make it a requirement that textbooks and teacher resources are part of the core package of resources available for learners</p>	Reject	I refer to the response I provided for recommendation 2	None.
<p>Recommendation 11. The Cabinet Secretary should put plans in place to ensure that in future years curriculum focused textbooks are produced and used as the method for teaching rather than the current model of qualification focussed textbooks.</p>	Accept	<p>As part of any future developments, it is important to consider the role of textbooks, as well as other resources, in teaching and learning.</p> <p>It is worth noting that the trend of publishing textbooks that are bespoke to specific qualifications specifications and exam boards is relatively recent and is as much about marketing and sales for publishers as it is about education. Where new specifications, new topics or new styles of exam questions are introduced, replacing the whole textbook is not necessarily the most appropriate, or cost-effective approach to adapting to the change. This model tends to lead to a culture of 'teaching to the test' rather than on providing a broad education that better serves the</p>	Unknown. Any financial implications would need to be considered once we determine our approach in 2019.

		<p>long-term interests of students, a concern that was also raised by Estyn in its 2016-2017 annual report¹.</p> <p>Curriculum and qualifications are two distinct entities with learning being based around the curriculum, and qualifications being about measuring attainment against knowledge of that curriculum. If textbooks and other teaching and learning resources are considered as curriculum resources rather than qualifications resources, this will support a constructive move away from the focus on the qualification and into more of a focus on the curriculum.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 12. The Cabinet Secretary should commission research to establish the level of pupils affected by a lack of broadband, and who cannot easily access digital educational resources.</p>	<p>Accept in principle</p>	<p>The Learning in Digital Wales (LiDW) investment in schools broadband means that the vast majority of schools are in receipt of improved broadband connections. The remaining schools are generally those classed as difficult to reach. But plans are underway to ensure that the majority of the remaining schools will be completed by the end of the year.</p> <p>Officials have initiated three new work streams which, when completed, will ensure all eligible schools in Wales have access to uncontended broadband speeds which meet/exceed superfast expectations. The timescales for completion of this activity are dependant on the Public Sector Broadband Aggregation (PSBA) Core Network Change (CNC) programme and detailed timescales are currently being developed with the intention the majority of work will be completed by 31 March 2019. I am content to keep the committee informed of developments in this area of work.</p>	<p>None.</p>

¹ https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/Estyn_Annual%20Report_2018_English_Accessible.pdf

		Data is available on internet access and I have asked policy leads to keep me informed of pupils' use of the internet outside the classroom, so that no pupil is at a disadvantage.	
Recommendation 13. The Cabinet Secretary should work with Qualifications Wales to ensure they are able to support the delivery of the new curriculum and the development of the resources needed for it	Accept	<p>It is important to clarify that Qualifications Wales does not have responsibility for the curriculum or the resources that should be developed to support its implementation.</p> <p>However, as work on the new curriculum for Wales progresses, Qualifications Wales is already working closely with Pioneer Schools to consider its potential impact on future qualifications.</p> <p>Any new qualifications introduced will be made available simultaneously in Welsh and English, in plenty of time for schools to plan and for bilingual teaching and learning resources to be developed to support them.</p> <p>An infrastructure for the provision of bilingual resources to meet the needs of the reformed curriculum and its qualifications is being considered by the Bilingual Educational Resources Stakeholders Group, on which Qualifications Wales is represented.</p>	None. Any additional costs will be drawn from existing programme budgets.
Recommendation 14. The Cabinet Secretary should ensure that a lead-in time of 18-24 months is available for the production of any new resources required as a result of the	Accept in principle	<p>I agree that there needs to be an adequate lead-time to produce resources for the delivery of the curriculum and qualifications.</p> <p>Following a major programme of qualification reform and the introduction of the new GCSEs and A levels between 2015 and 2017, Qualifications Wales conducted a 'lessons learned' exercise² which was tested with schools and colleges.</p>	None.

². This report is due to be published by Qualifications Wales

<p>forthcoming curriculum reform.</p>		<p>However, a key finding from the exercise was the need to allow sufficient 'lead-in' time for teachers to prepare adequately for delivering new qualifications. It concluded that core resources should be available at least 12 months before courses are due to start. Qualifications Wales is committed to approved GCSEs and A levels being available at least one year before the start of first teaching to allow time for training to be delivered and teachers to prepare.</p> <p>With its pan-Wales, strategic approach to resource management for the future, the members of the Bilingual Educational Resources Stakeholders Group will be able to work together to secure the development of the provision of appropriate additional bilingual teaching and learning resources in a timely manner. Once I have considered the recommendations of the Group I will update the committee on the procedures that will be put in place to ensure sufficient lead time.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 15. The Cabinet Secretary should ensure that major changes in examination policy should be introduced in a more staggered way in the future. In particular, changing both GCSEs and A Levels in the same year for individual subjects should be avoided</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>As the new curriculum is being designed for 3 to16-year-olds, Qualifications Wales' focus is on the changes that may be required for Key Stage 4 qualifications. It has not yet looked at what changes may be required to post-16 qualifications, including AS and A levels. If changes to qualifications taken by 14 to 16-year-olds result in changes to post-16 qualifications, Qualifications Wales will not introduce GCSEs and A levels in the same year unless there are clear reasons and support for doing so.</p> <p>Qualifications Wales will consider the workload and change management implications of future reforms to ensure that any decisions regarding the phasing of changes to qualifications are</p>	<p>None. Any additional costs will be drawn from existing programme budgets.</p>

		informed – staggering the implementation of the GCSE and A level in the same subject where this is appropriate.	
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Kirsty Williams, AM, Cabinet Secretary for Education