

## Consultation on the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill

Evidence submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) for Stage 1 scrutiny of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill.

### About you

Organisation: Deaf Friendly Business Solutions

### 1. The Bill's general principles

#### 1.1 Do you support the principles of the [Curriculum and Assessment \(Wales\) Bill](#)?

Yes

#### 1.2 Please outline your reasons for your answer to question 1.1

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1500 words)*

I am responding in general to support the changes but with a specific focus on the education of deaf children. Deaf myself and having been educated throughout my life in Wales, my focus is on deaf children in the future receiving the same level of education as all other children and not having their deafness commonly used as an excuse, a diversion strategy from some subjects, a reason for delayed development and of course the excuse for underachievement at GCSE and A Level compared to hearing learners.

I believe, and desperately hope that the new curriculum is bold and ambitious for ALL children, and that means changing the status quo in respect of the education of deaf children. The new curriculum provides an ambitious opportunity to right the wrongs of the past and to design an education system that can be tailored to the specific needs of deaf learners, so that deaf children can reach their full potential in school.

A key issue here is the issue of expertise and who is used to design teaching for Deaf children. Who is used to support deaf children and what is their level of expertise. If BSL is being used, and the new curriculum requires greater access to BSL, is the level of BSL suitable for the level of education, is the subject vocabulary known and understood and able to be explained. I believe, having been subjected to an inside the traditional box, style

of deaf education, that the new curriculum provides an opportunity to design a state of the art education for deaf learners.

A key part of the new curriculum is fairness, equality and learning about human rights. I hope through these ambitions that the issue of deaf education in particular has those principles at the root of what is designed for them and that deaf children also receive their rights under the various UN conventions that apply as well as effective compliance with their Human Rights regarding education. Being able to go to school is not fulfilment of these Rights, an effective education is different.

I also hope the new curriculum provides an opportunity to put in place better opportunities for language development from birth, so that deaf children do not arrive at school with delayed acquisition. It is not fair on schools and teachers and when that does happen, it becomes a ready excuse for delayed education. I hope the new curriculum sees a better focus on birth to 5 development to better support delivery of the new curriculum. This is a significant failure currently, leading to life limiting education for many deaf children.

Finally, I hope the new curriculum will provide a platform for some consistency of education provision for deaf children, rather than a post code lottery in respect of access to BSL, standards of BSL, the focus on speech rather than a focus on language, and much more. We need to develop world leading education practices for deaf children, that the opportunity the new curriculum provides.

### **1.3 Do you think there is a need for legislation to deliver what this Bill is trying to achieve?**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)*

With my focus on deaf education, then the answer is a huge yes. There is far too little accountability, checks and balances or even oversight of delivery of education to deaf children and legislation will put things on a far stronger footing.

## **2. The Bill's implementation**

### **2.1 Do you have any comments about any potential barriers to implementing the Bill? If no, go to question 3.1**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)*

The lack of knowledge, true expertise and independent thinking in respect of educating deaf children. Custom and practice, personal opinion, a lack of ambition, belief, etc are all missing at the moment, and unless that is changed then the Bill will not deliver what it could and should for deaf children.

The main barrier is the current custom and practice, personal opinion, reputations, status and use of people or organisations who do not have the skills required to actually support the Welsh Government's vision.

The BILL is the opportunity, the delivery will be the reality and if the same people/organisations are used to design delivery of the Bill, then Wales will have missed a golden opportunity.

## **2.2 Do you think the Bill takes account of these potential barriers?**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)*

As it stands, consultation and practitioner involvement is taking place, but in all the discussions I have been involved in, almost every new idea is responded with "ah, yes, BUT."

For a specialist to respond with a comment, ":yes in an ideal world that could happen," and then to go on to describe why in the non-ideal world, something cannot happen, shows a culture and a mind set that will limit the vision, ambition and modernising intent of the Bill.

Having the same people on board but changing the seating arrangement on the Titanic would not have stopped it from sinking.

Deaf children need to Welsh Government to be innovative in their approach, to employ blue sky thinking, to plan without constraint in the first instance, to want a blue print of what perfection looks like, before limitations are applied. I hope that this is a real desire for change, underpinned by ambition and desire, and expertise in organisation culture to deliver.

## **3. Unintended consequences**

### **3.1 Do you think there are there any unintended consequences arising from the Bill? If no, go to question 4.1**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)*

Deaf children have suffered unintended consequences of the traditional reliance on pure oral teaching for over a century. Unless there is acknowledgement and understanding of that now, followed by a desire to make sure it does not continue, then deaf children's rights will continue to be ignored.

## **4. Financial implications**

**4.1 Do you have any comments on the financial implications of the Bill (as set out in Part 2 of the [Explanatory Memorandum](#))? If no, go to question 5.1**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)*

To deliver the vision of the Bill to its highest possible standard, there will of course be a financial requirement, but my question is, what is the cost of not doing this and doing it right? I believe this is about investing to save.

## **5. Powers to make subordinate legislation**

**5.1 Do you have any comments on the appropriateness of the powers in the Bill for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation (as set out in Chapter 5 of Part 1 of the [Explanatory Memorandum](#)). If no, go to question 6.1.**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)*

I would support local decision making on legislation if applied through thorough scrutiny and not just Welsh Government scrutiny. Education is a matter of concern for every person in Wales, and some of us suffered. We need that pain, to be part of the scrutiny, so that similar wholly undesirable outcomes do not occur going forward.

## **6. Other considerations**

**6.1 Do you have any other points you wish to raise about this Bill?**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)*

I strongly support the ambition of the Bill and the new Curriculum, but with huge concerns over the focus on deaf children, and the involvement of people who have been involved in deaf education for years and even decades. The curriculum represents new thinking,

ambition and a strong vision for the children of Wales to be significant contributors to the future well-being of this planet. Please, please, please do everything necessary so that our deaf children can be full and engaged partners in that vision.

Deaf Lives Matter

