

EB 29

National Assembly for Wales

Children and Young People Committee

Education (Wales) Bill : Stage 1

Response from : SNAP Cymru

SNAP Cymru is an independent organisation, unique to Wales offering a range of services to families, professionals, children and young people. The organisation was established regionally in 1986 and became a Wales national charity in 1996. All services offered are impartial and objective and free at the point of delivery to families and young people. SNAP Cymru offers a constructive professional partnership, working with other local and national agencies in Wales. Areas of activity include SEN and disability related information, advice and training, Parent Partnership Service, Pupil Participation and Advocacy, Disagreement Resolution and Representation in relation to School Exclusion, Admissions, SEN and Discrimination Appeals and Tribunals. The services are managed and delivered by skilled experienced staff supporting regionally based, local staff and volunteer teams across Wales.

SNAP Cymru holds the SQM (Education Advice), Investors in People (Bronze) and Investors in Volunteering awards. The organization was recognized for its services and volunteering with the Queens Diamond Jubilee Award for Voluntary Services (2012).

SNAP Cymru welcomes the Education Bill to further develop workforce planning and achieve consistency of quality and practice across the sectors involved in education in Wales. We look forward to a continuing open dialogue on specific detailed proposals over the coming months as the government moves towards securing appropriate legislative change.

1. The general principles of the Education (Wales) Bill and the need for legislation in the following areas—

Education Workforce Council - Registration and regulation of teachers and the wider workforce;

- SNAP Cymru welcomes the extension of registration to a wider group of practitioners working within the education field. A single code of practice will support consistency for all.

- We welcome a wide involvement in the development of the Code of Practice and ask ministers to ensure that this is robust and that it has legal status like the current code of practice for SEN
- The education systems and processes must become more child friendly and must involve families if equality, entitlement and choice are to be a reality in Wales
- Reform of the registration and approval of independent schools in respect of special educational needs;
  - This clarification is welcomed. Families and young people as well as multi-agency practitioners and professionals need to understand the process to assist in decisions regarding placements. The delays currently experienced can be very detrimental to young people waiting for decisions about placements.
  - SNAP Cymru urges ministers to include the registration of the workforce in independent schools. Families expect this and children and young people deserve a well-qualified and well regulated workforce.
  - Registration will improve safeguarding for children and vulnerable adults and this should include the independent sector
- Post-16 assessment of educational and training needs and specialist Further Education;
  - SNAP Cymru supports the proposal as set out which will be more effective in the planning and meeting of needs of young people during transition. This change is urgently needed as presently there is little equality for young people with disabilities and additional needs.
  - We would expect to see measures within the bill to improve current assessments and transitional arrangements. We would expect this legislation to be transparent and decrease the disappointment and feelings of failure currently experienced by many young people trying to navigate the current system and achieve timely and appropriate placements
  - Earlier planning, talking and listening to young people to develop and secure appropriate provision and transitional pathways is required
  - SNAP Cymru hopes that Welsh Government ensures that the wider reforms of the SEN framework, together with this bill actually achieves the desired aspirational outcomes
  - Ministers need to be aware that there are more young people needing additional support at 16+ than those with statements. Many children with ALN will move through formal education with limited support but their requirements will change and intensify as they transition towards adulthood. These young people are identifiable before 14+

- and some will already be out of education
  - SNAP Cymru believes that assessment and planning is required for all young people who need support to make a successful transition. This will include groups such as those who are NEET, those who are predicted to leave school without 5 A-C grades, those children who exhibit a-social behaviours who may or may not have an identified Additional Need or disability.
  - This transitional assessment should be compulsory and should consider not only academic areas but also social and emotional wellbeing to ensure a successful transition to adulthood.
  - The current system of Statementing does not offer consistency and we hope that this bill will place responsibility for outcomes on those professionals charged with their care and education in all learning establishments.
  - The bill must establish the rights of all young people to receive appropriate learning support and detail those responsible
  - SNAP Cymru welcomes the right to appeal to SENTW and the appeal process must be open to all young people
  - Ministers need to ensure that young people have access to independent information, support and advocacy and that all practitioners involved with young people have a responsibility to seek resolution at the earliest possible time, avoiding the need for tribunal as much as possible
  - SNAP Cymru believes that statutory reform will improve young people's understanding and ability to participate in planning through the use of IDPs and Person Centered Planning from early years
- School term dates;
    - SNAP Cymru welcomes the proposal to harmonise school term dates
    - We recognise that this will narrow the window in relation to costs for holidays but will benefit families in not having to decide which child is out of school where children attend schools across county borders and will enable regional planning to be more effective
  - The appointment of HM Chief Inspector and HM Inspectors of education and training in Wales under section 19 of the Education Act 2005,
    - SNAP Cymru concurs with the proposals

2. Any potential barriers to the implementation of these provisions and whether the Bill takes account of them.

- SNAP Cymru believes that the independence, transparency and accountability of the Workforce Council will be crucial to its success

3. The financial implications of the Bill (as set out in Part 2 of the Explanatory Memorandum, the 'Regulatory Impact Assessment', which estimates the costs and benefits of implementation of the Bill), and

- SNAP Cymru understands that there is no additional money to enact these reforms and believes that the expectations on every part of the education and wider learning environment to play their part and accept their full responsibilities for the majority of children and young people with additional needs who will not be covered by the more detailed provisions of this bill
- Government has the responsibility for any incentivising that is put in place to ensure that all needs are met within our systems
- Impact is about more than finances and the school effectiveness programmes must extend to early years and post 16 to ensure that a generation of children and young people benefit from their entitlement to achieve their full potential as set out in the UNCRC.