

Children and Young People Committee

CYP(4)-04-12 Paper 8

Learning and Skills Measure 2009

Additional information from Construction Skills

Welsh medium provision

1. Are young people who wish to study vocational courses through the medium of Welsh in further education colleges, usually able to do so? If not, for which types of courses, or in which areas, is Welsh medium provision most scarce?

Some bi-lingual provision and informal Welsh medium provision is undertaken in Construction at FE. By informal provision we mean that the lecturers' and students are naturally 1st language Welsh speakers so much of the practical instruction in the workshops will naturally be in Welsh.

There has been examples of good practice over the years in some colleges such as Coleg Menai, Meirion Dwyfor, Llandrillo and Sir Gar with regards to provision for 14-16 students studying Foundation Craft subjects. ConstructionSkills has ensured that comparable teaching material has been made available for Foundation Craft multiskilling courses and BTEC 1st Construction Courses.

Barriers to the growth of bi-lingual provision are demand and take up by students which is possibly as much of an issue in colleges which have the staff to deliver the courses, whereby in areas where fewer students speak Welsh there are also issues of staff ability should the demand increase.

Other barriers to progress exist with regards to the availability of Bi-lingual EV's and assessment materials made available by Awarding Bodies. ConstuctionSkills are currently completing the updating of the NOS (National Occupation Standards) for the main craft occupations. On completion of this work the QCF units will also be translated and placed on the RITS system. This will enable AO and AB's to develop assessment systems in both Welsh and English.

supplementary questions

Is there any recent improvement in the number of vocational courses run through the medium of Welsh particularly by further education colleges?

Limited growth mainly due to the issues outlined below. Recent work by ConstructionSkills would indicate that whilst the availability of bi-lingual provision and assessment needs to be developed as outlined above there is unlikely to be a rapid growth in demand due to the 'conservative' nature of the industry and those who enter it. However significant and useful growth can be probably be achieved through the teaching and assessment of Essential Skills bi-lingually in a Construction context. This work is being undertake/considered we believe by some more innovative colleges.

Careers Advice

2. How can employers and sector skills councils help to ensure that young people receive careers advice that includes up to date labour market information on all their options?

ConstructionSkills has developed a Careers, Recruitment and Lifelong Learning Strategy and Welsh employers will sit on the newly formed UK Recruitment and Lifelong learning groups. A key part of this strategy is the newly revamped b-constructive web site www.bconstructive.co.uk which has been translated for a launch by mid February 2012.

This web site will provide information about craft careers and apprenticeships and the opportunity to apply online for an apprenticeship. Some LMI exists on the bconstructive web site.

The main ConstructionSkills web site also provides LMI and the information for employers and the opportunity to provide information about apprenticeship places. Stronger links need to be made between these web sites and that additional LMI is easily available to careers advisers and young people.

The main emphasis from our view point is that LMI assists to meet the Skills demands and needs of employers and that this is done professionally and collaboratively.

This will be particularly true during the forthcoming review of vocational qualifications being led by Jeff Cuthbert, appendix A below notes comments by the Minister with regards to ConstructionSkills role within this review. (Comments relate to the launch of ConstructionSkills CSN LMI report on the 23rd January)

Appendix A (quote by Jeff Cuthbert AM)

I wish to forward my support to Construction Skills at the launch event for their Construction Skills Network report today and give my apologies for not being able to attend in person today.

Having the right intelligence on the demand for skills is critical to informing how we work with businesses to support their training needs. It is fundamental to our planning process and in giving the insight as to where industries like Construction are going and what their future needs and priorities look like.

The Construction Skills Network Model has always delivered this breadth of knowledge by linking planned capital projects with the impact on recruitment needs. It's true that in recent years the reports haven't been easy reading and the ongoing outlook still remains fragile. However, I remain committed to understanding how we utilise intelligence from the Model in advising on our approach to planning for skills and in maximising the employment opportunities that do present themselves.

We also need to be mindful of where the industry is going. Construction Skills has rightfully highlighted the low carbon agenda as a major driver for change. It will be important to have the real-time information of how these changes are impacting on the industry and the resulting effect on skills and training needs. I understand the CSN Model looks at these scenarios and believe it to be an important one for Wales. It is also important that Wales gives leadership to this agenda and is capable of exporting skills rather than just relying on creating employment opportunities within our borders.

Bridging the relationship to the education and training sector – or the supply side – is another critical success factor if we are to make the changes to the mix of training on offer to businesses. Training providers need to have access to up to date information on future challenges for the sector if they are to change the training offer available to businesses and new recruits. This is very much about shaping demand and I welcome the role Construction Skills can play in supporting this work.

I am also interested in how labour market information can support the ongoing development of qualifications for the sector. As part of my review of vocational qualifications I will be looking at this specific issue and would ask those industry representatives with a view on this debate to pass these via the Sector Skills Councils.

Finally, I would like to thank all those from within the industry who contribute to the Construction Skills Network Observatory in Wales on a regular basis. As Construction Skills

would agree, your input to the process is invaluable in making sure outputs contained within the Reports truly reflect how the industry is progressing.

Work-based learning

3. The focus of the Measure is on school and college based provision. Should the Measure be amended to include work-based learning?

Yes work based learning is an essential component in post 16 learning and should be included in the measure. Work based learning is the main route way to enter the Construction Industry

supplementary question

Do you think that more emphasis should be given to work-based learning opportunities when young people are making their choices at age 16? If yes, how should this be done for example by the schools or CareersWales?

Yes but only balanced with the availability of places, innovative apprenticeship and wbl models can offer additional places, broaden experience and encourage sole traders to employ a person possibly for the first time for even if this is only for part of the working week or year.