

Policy Forum for Wales Keynote Seminar: The future of education in Wales

Timing: Morning, Thursday, 9th February 2012

Venue: Bardd Suite, Cardiff Marriott Hotel, Mill Lane, Cardiff, Wales CF10 1EZ



Agenda subject to change

8.30 - 9.00 Registration and coffee

9.00 - 9.05 **Chairman's opening remarks**

Angela Burns AM, Shadow Minister for Education, Welsh Conservatives

9.05 - 9.55 **Improving schools - infrastructure, performance bands, literacy and numeracy strategies and teacher training**

How does spending per pupil in Wales compare with other nations, and how can the Welsh Government ensure more local authority education funding goes directly to school budgets? How will the new funding arrangements for the 21st Century Schools Programme, requiring local authorities to contribute 50% of the funding, impact the drive to improve school infrastructure across Wales? Should the opening of Academies, Free Schools and other such foundation schools be prohibited in Wales? To what extent is the new system of bands of schools, based on performance, likely to improve pupil attainment in both the worst and best performing schools? What is the likely impact of the introduction of annual literacy and numeracy tests as part of the new National Literacy and Numeracy Framework? Other than tests, what other measures should be included in the new framework to raise standards in these basic skills? Should Initial Teaching Training be reformed to become a two-year Master's course, as suggested by the Education Minister, and would this impact recruitment to the profession?

Dr Brett Pugh, Head, School Standards Unit, Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Skills and Learning, Welsh Government

Dr Philip Dixon, Director, Association of Teachers and Lecturers Cymru

Phil McTague, Headteacher, Eirias High School, Colwyn Bay and Chair, Wales National Executive Committee, iNet

Darren Evans, Wales Reporter, TES

Questions and comments from the floor

9.55 - 10.20 **Raising educational standards in Wales**

Ann Keane, Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales, Estyn

Questions and comments from the floor

10.20 - 10.25 **Chairman's closing remarks**

Angela Burns AM, Shadow Minister for Education, Welsh Conservatives

10.25 - 10.45 Coffee

10.45 - 10.50 **Chairman's opening remarks**

Aled Roberts AM, Welsh Liberal Democrats Shadow Minister for Education; Welsh Liberal Democrats Spokesperson for Children and Young People; and Welsh Liberal Democrats Spokesperson for the Welsh Language

10.50 - 11.40 **The future for skills and qualifications in Wales**

Should the number of vocational and A-level options available to Welsh pupils be reduced to create a simpler system of qualifications, as proposed by the Education Minister, and if so, what should a new qualifications landscape look like? Does the Welsh Baccalaureate, designed to provide a broader curriculum post-14, deliver the skills and knowledge required by universities and employers, and if not, what changes could be made to improve the Baccalaureate? What role should apprenticeships play in the new qualifications landscape? How can the Welsh Government increase the number of SMEs providing apprenticeship opportunities for 16-19 year olds? Will plans to close many 6th forms and merge post-16 provision into colleges produce the planned financial savings, and what will be the likely impact on choice for pupils in these areas? Should the PreVENT 14-19 early intervention programme, aimed at reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training in South Wales, be widened to a national level? To what extent is the Universities Heads of the Valleys Institute (UHOVI) likely to improve skills in the South Wales Valleys region, and what should be the next steps for the Institute?

Jacqui Weatherburn, Principal, Coleg Ceredigion

Gareth Pierce, Chief Executive, WJEC

Dr Chris O'Malley, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Regional & International Development), University of Wales, Newport

Sarah Clark, Human Resources Director, Pullman Rail

Questions and comments from the floor

11.40 - 12.05 **Skills policy for the year ahead**

Jeff Cuthbert AM, Deputy Minister for Skills, Welsh Government

Questions and comments from the floor

12.05 - 12.55 **The next steps for the Welsh Higher Education system**

What will be the impact of the proposed new student funding allocation system to be introduced in 2013/14? Has the Reaching Wider widening participation programme been a success and what more can be done to improve access to university for students from the most disadvantaged communities? Are current plans for fee waivers for Welsh students sustainable in the long-term, and if not, what alternative options are there for funding Welsh universities? To what extent would the proposed merging of Welsh universities be likely to succeed in reducing operating costs and raising the ability of these universities to attract research investment? If the number of Welsh universities were reduced from ten to six, as proposed by HEFCW, what is the likely impact on the diversity of Higher Education courses available in Wales? How would a single strategic and funding body for Higher Education in Wales, as proposed in the McCormick Review, impact on institutional autonomy?

Professor Philip Gummert, Chief Executive, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)

Lieu Williams, Political Liaison Officer, UCU Wales

Professor John G Hughes, Vice-Chancellor, Bangor University and Chair, Higher Education Wales

Luke Young, President, NUS Wales

Professor Craig Mahoney, Chief Executive, Higher Education Academy

Questions and comments from the floor

12.55 - 13.00 **Chairman's and Policy Forum for Wales thanks and closing remarks**

Aled Roberts AM, Welsh Liberal Democrats Shadow Minister for Education; Welsh Liberal Democrats Spokesperson for Children and Young People; and Welsh Liberal Democrats Spokesperson for the Welsh Language

Sean Cudmore, Senior Producer, Policy Forum for Wales