

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: Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY Cymru)

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)

PACEY Cymru support the principles of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill which will bring the curriculum up to date, including the technology and digital skills that are essential in the current times. PACEY Cymru are pleased to see the emphasis on the child being central to the principles of the curriculum and the ethos of the Foundation Phase being used across the full curriculum.

PACEY Cymru believes that the fact that there is a focus on life, self-confidence, basic and work skills is forward thinking and future proofing the curriculum. By teaching and learning in a fun and interesting manner as stated in the Successful Futures summary, this will have a positive impact on the wellbeing of the child, staff and workforce.

It is heartening to see that the Foundation Phase (FP) pedagogy will underpin education as a whole in Wales. As we know from Professor Donaldson's research, the FP pedagogy works well and has proven to be successful in terms of child development and achievement. Putting the child at the centre and ensuing individual progression for each child, suitable for their age, ability and aptitude as a basis for all learning is welcomed by PACEY Cymru. As an organisation that supports the childcare and early year's sector we know that this way of working will not be new to the sector and that the continuation of

this approach in the new curriculum will support the transition of moving over to the new curriculum.

PACEY Cymru believes that by providing a broad and balanced teaching and learning environment, and encompassing this with the health and wellbeing of the child, will provide a better learning experience and progression opportunities, encouraging a more engaged child or young person.

Another positive of the proposed new Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill is that assessment will be an ongoing process and driven by the individual. Having a consistent assessment process could be the challenge and is very much going to depend on the level of information shared with professionals including teachers and staff of the non-maintained sector. However a continuum of learning is again forward thinking and will encourage more self-reflection from the child's perspective as well as the practitioner.

PACEY Cymru has noticed that the Impact Assessment shows that there has been consideration for the positive impact on children's rights with the curriculum being child focussed, however this doesn't appear as strongly within the Bill. PACEY Cymru would therefore suggest that these are embedded throughout the curriculum guidance and training.

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)

Yes, we feel this is needed to ensure a clear direction that will lead to a consistent approach. By having legislation in place it will ensure that children's entitlement to access the new curriculum is clearly stipulated, including those with Additional Learning Needs, and look to ensure access to a high-quality broad and balanced education. Access to supporting funding for work linked to the implementation of the new curriculum at both a national and local level may also be easier to attain if there is official legislation linked to entitlement and requirements.

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)

PACEY Cymru welcome the recognition for the development of the curriculum for the non-maintained sector by Welsh Government within the Bill, however we would like further clarity and details around the expectations relating to the settings on the following points:

- Section 15b of the Bill states that the non-maintained settings will have responsibility for publishing the summary of the curriculum
- Section 16 of the Bill states that it is the responsibility of the settings to review and revise the curriculum.

PACEY Cymru believes that the publication of the non-maintained curriculum needs to be timely, to ensure that there is sufficient time to support the sector to plan, prepare and trial the new curriculum in advance of implementation.

The design and building of a curriculum that is going to be fit for purpose for the non – maintained sector is key to the success and needs to be consistent and aligned with the wider curriculum to support a continuum of learning. We also need to ensure that the progression steps start at a younger age, for example there has been a strong emphasis on the Foundation Phase Profile (FPP) as a tool to support the sector in taking a consistent approach to the assessment of a child's development in recent years. PACEY Cymru feel that that has been an extremely important step to support consistency across settings and schools in the assessment of children's developmental progress. It is important that this consistency is not lost in the new curriculum and an appropriate resource similar to the FPP is developed to support assessments in line with the new curriculum. PACEY Cymru feel strongly that a consistent assessment tool that aligns with the curriculum is used across settings and schools, this will help to value the professionalism of all practitioners that are involved in supporting the learning and development of children, whether they are a maintained or non-maintained setting.

Sufficient training which is accessible to all settings will need to be planned and coordinated well with consistent messages being shared. PACEY Cymru feel that access to information, training and resources will be important for all practitioners in order to be prepared for delivery of the new curriculum. PACEY Cymru also believes that awareness

level training and information for the childcare sector as a whole, in keeping with the ECEC agenda will support children's transition into early education, and support settings to meet requirements within the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare. It is suggested that pre-recorded training is made available for those unable to attend day time training. PACEY Cymru would encourage Welsh Government to see the non-maintained sector as equal to the maintained sector and that this is also shown in the Professional Development section of the HWB.

PACEY Cymru understand that the transition period of implementing the curriculum into practice in both schools and non-maintained settings will need careful planning and could differ from one setting/school to another. PACEY Cymru suggests that the non-maintained sector are involved and consulted on the development of the curriculum for the non-maintained sector including any trials in order to feedback in advance of the full role out. We would welcome the opportunity to be involved.

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)

PACEY Cymru believes that the Bill does clarify the role of Welsh Government to support the non-maintained sector with curriculum development. However, as indicated earlier clarification needs to be given on the expectation of the sector in relation to publishing a summary, as well as on reviewing and revising the curriculum.

As indicated earlier PACEY Cymru feels strongly that it is important to involve the non-maintained sector in the development process and trial period in order to relay any anticipated problem areas.

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)

PACEY Cymru believe that there is a positive move to embed the Welsh language throughout the curriculum however this could lead to an increase demand for Welsh

speaking practitioners and teachers. A long term commitment from Welsh Government around funding to support the recruitment, training and retention of these professionals is needed. For childcare and early years this is an ongoing work stream within our Cwlwm work plans in partnership with the Welsh Government and the National Centre for Learning Welsh (NCLW). This would support Welsh Government's 2050 vision of achieving a million Welsh speakers.

PACEY Cymru are aware that the curriculum has been developed in its original state through the medium of English, and although we are not experts in the field we are aware that information and documents can be misinterpreted during the translation process, and for this reason would suggest careful management of the Welsh resources, ensuring they too are fit for purpose.

The emphasis on health and well-being is welcomed, however we are aware that there may be additional support and training needed to upskill the whole sector to ensure that we have a consistent approach to support the children and young people.

As indicated earlier, the time frame for the development of the curriculum for the non-maintained sector is critical to the success and transitions into maintained education.

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)

Part 2 of the Explanatory Memorandum appears to focus primarily on schools without considering the wider cost implications for childcare settings and those working to support them in the implementation of the new curriculum. This is likely to come at a significant investment in time and resources at a time when childcare settings are struggling financially and in decline. PACEY Cymru believes that the financial impact (in time more so than direct costs) needs to be clearly understood and acknowledged as this is often more hidden and harder to calculate. Added to this is the ongoing issues around local discrepancies around how Foundation Phase Nursery (FPN) provision is currently funded and commissioned with the amount received by settings varying widely across Wales. We firmly believe that the implementation of the new curriculum is a vehicle that could be used to alleviate these issues. We believe that clearer, national prescription for funding

and access to FPN provision is needed in Wales in line with funding for the Childcare Offer and Flying Start to ensure a balanced and proportionate approach. We know that non-maintained settings have been underfunded to provide the FPN and that it can often be a barrier for settings.

The funding provided to non-maintained settings to deliver education provision needs to reflect the work and level of responsibility involved. We would ask that the non-maintained settings are sustained in order to support flexibility for families and parental choice, support children's well-being and sustainability for the childcare sector.

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)

No

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)

No