

ERW's response to the follow up actions that arose from the 8th March meeting.

- The Committee would welcome a note on the issue of the content of one of the questions on an English paper, regarding the pros and cons of fair trade and the impact this had on results really suffered.

Below you will find a response from Ian Altman, our Strategic Lead for Secondary Support, who marked the exam paper in question:

“Essentially 60 of the 80 marks were linked to Fairtrade.

The reading section /40 required no prior knowledge of the topic although it could be argued that those pupils from more affluent homes may have understood some of the inference better. The paper is untiered so the challenge for WJEC is to find texts with the readability for G grade pupils and the challenge for A* pupils.

The first writing task /20 was to write a letter to your school regarding their decision to use Fairtrade goods in the school canteen. The reading texts provided some of the information that pupils could tap into to support their answers. However, I did feel that those pupils from homes where there would be discussions around Fairtrade v Value for money, ethical v commercial etc. would be in a beneficial position. The evidence is, at best, anecdotal though but it may have meant that pupils from deprived backgrounds may have been disadvantaged on this writing task. I encountered a number of incomplete and ‘not attempted’ answers here but this was partly down to stamina/timing”

I am reasonably confident that the nature of the topic was a barrier to pupils writing extended, cohesive responses in some cases and that some of these pupils would have been those from disadvantaged homes, eFSM etc.

- Please provide examples of where input of challenge advisers has changed the way a school uses it's PDG allocation or when the consortia had had to consider recovering PDG which had been inappropriately spent.

Our Leader of Learning for PDG is relatively new in post and a large part of his work moving forward will be to meet with Challenge Advisers and discuss the use of PDG grant in their schools in a detailed manner, and to work alongside them to plan for effective expenditure that can demonstrate impact. In their initial research, no schools have had their PDG grant money clawed back, but there are instances where expenditure has been changed – one school initially planned to pay for free bus passes for eFSM pupils but then withdrew that element of the spending plan after no clear impact could be demonstrated from this use of the funding.