
Ymateb i Ymgynghoriad / Consultation Response

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Pwnc / Subject:	Consultation on the Draft Public Audit (Amendment) (Wales) Bill

Background information about Estyn

Estyn is the Office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. As a Crown body, Estyn is independent of the Welsh Government.

Estyn's principal aim is to raise the standards and quality education and training in Wales. This is primarily set out in the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and the Education Act 2005. In exercising its functions, Estyn must give regard to the:

- Quality of education and training in Wales;
- Extent to which education and training meets the needs of learners;
- Educational standards achieved by education and training providers in Wales;
- Quality of leadership and management of those education and training providers;
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners; and,
- Contribution made to the well-being of learners.

Estyn's remit includes (but is not exclusive to) nurseries and non-maintained settings, primary schools, secondary schools, independent schools, pupil referrals units, further education, adult community learning, local government education services, work-based learning, and teacher education and training.

Estyn may give advice to the Assembly on any matter connected to education and training in Wales. To achieve excellence for learners, Estyn has set three strategic objectives:

- Provide accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales;
- Inform the development of national policy by the Welsh Government;
- Build capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales.

This response is not confidential.

Question 1

Agree

Question 2

Agree.

We support a change that has been identified by the service provider as having the potential to improve efficiency and help avoid an escalation in fee rates, particularly at a time of public service budgetary constraint. Within a fee framework based on cost-recovery there needs to be appropriate scrutiny to provide assurance that the service provider is operating efficiently and effectively.

There is an expectation that the basis of fees (estimate of audit activities and rates applicable) will continue to be transparent and open to reasonable challenge.

Question 3

Agree

Board control over the level of agreement work will be important to ensure that the benefits of such work, e.g. organisational and staff development, are clearly identified and such work does not compromise core activities and statutory responsibilities.

Question 4

Agree

Question 5

Do not agree. The balance of membership appears to be appropriate but there is a case for flexibility regarding quorum requirements.

Question 6

Agree. This appears to be a pragmatic approach.

Question 7

Agree. This appears to be a pragmatic approach.

Question 8

Agree. The evidence on interest in the interim report suggest that it is an unnecessary burden and an avoidable cost on the public purse.

Question 9

Agree. This removes the obligation but provides an option for an interim report to be produced.

Question 10

Agree. Avoids duplication.

Question 11

Agree.

Question 12

Agree. It is unlikely that the current four month deadline will be exceeded in many cases and, in such cases, an explanation will be provided.

Question 13

Agree.

Question 14

Agree. Reduces complexity and should be more efficient process.

Question 15

Agree

Question 16

Agree. This arrangement provides flexibility to retain knowledge and expertise and can help to maintain stability of the board.

Question 17

Agree.

Question 18

Agree. Supports independence of the organisation.

Question 19

Agree. Appropriate to provide more flexibility.

Question 20

Agree. Appropriate to provide more flexibility.

Question 21

Agree.

Question 22

Agree

Question 23

Agree.

Question 24

No. We concur with the Finance Committee's view that this would necessitate a substantial piece of work. We suggest that the AGW continues the practice of giving a regulatory opinion, despite there being no explicit provisions in statute, and encourages all organisations in Wales that receive public funds to take part in the National Fraud Initiative.

Question 25

No financial implications are anticipated but a reduction in our annual audit fee would be highly welcomed.

Question 26

No.