**Post-16 Planning and Funding Framework**

Learning Programmes

**Background**

1. In May 2013, the Welsh Government published its final report on the post-16 planning and funding review. This report described how the new framework would operate, and concluded that, in future, more emphasis would be placed on planning and monitoring.
2. The main aim of the new framework is to relax the direct link between funding and learning activity and to place an emphasis on the quality of the learning offer in terms of the outcome for individual learners.
3. Programmes rather than qualifications are at the core of the new planning and funding framework; with each programme having a defined purpose and outcome, against which it will be monitored.
4. The aim of the new framework is to simplify funding by attaching a single funding value to a programme and embedding, into that, factors for retention and attainment, based on historical patterns of delivery. Programme values will also incorporate Subject Area Weights (SAWs) to reflect the relative costs of delivery in different sector subject areas.
5. Each full programme will be given a single funding value that will be used to plan and monitor the use of funding. These funding values will be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect changes to delivery models or programme requirements and to encourage efficient models of delivery.

**What is a programme?**

1. A programme-based approach is based on a package of learning with a purpose and outcome for progression to employment or further or higher education.
2. Each full-time programme is designed with the same structure in mind, but will have its own specification dependent on type and level of programme. Each programme typically consists of four components, namely: a core, main qualification(s), community learner industry focus (CLIF) and work experience.

**The core**

1. The core of a programme provides the essential skills development, as well as support and enrichment activities, which will help learners achieve their main qualification and progress into employment or higher education.
2. The core element is based on the core of the current Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ). For those learners who are not following the WBQ, it will include (as a minimum) three Essential Skills Wales (ESW) Qualifications and an element of tutorial time. ESW qualifications (including wider key skills) are defined for each programme and level and may be at a different level to the main qualification(s).

**Main qualifications(s)**

1. Each programme includes a maximum of four main qualifications.
2. In most vocational programmes, the main qualification would normally be an approved diploma or extended diploma but there is flexibility to combine up to four smaller qualifications. This does not include any qualifications which are part of the core or the CLIF.
3. The choice to use a combination of smaller qualifications is likely to be made at the lower levels and particularly with younger learners, who are uncertain about their career intentions.
4. General education programmes may include up to four A2 levels and vocational areas may offer different option combinations.

**Community, learner, industry focus (CLIF)**

1. The CLIF component allows providers to tailor the programme content to meet specific needs of the community, learner or specific industry. This could include a GCSE resit or additional support for Welsh Language learning; or it could be an industry specific requirement such as a mandatory Health and Safety Certificate.
2. Within this component of the programme, the learning need not be accredited. Providers can tailor the support required for the individual learner in order to meet the desired outcome of attaining the core and main qualification components of the programme.

**Work-related experience (WRE)**

1. This component allows for any additional work experience necessary for the programme, over and above the 30 hours set out in the Welsh Baccalaureate core.
2. This time will only be required for some programmes, either to meet the qualification specification for assessed work experience, or the skills requirements to progress.

**The programmes directory**

1. The programmes directory lists the full-time programmes which will be eligible for funding in 2014/15 and sets out the requirements for each eligible programme.
2. The current version of the programmes directory includes a summary of the core, CLIF and WRE elements of each programme, together with statement setting out the purpose and outcome for each programme and examples of the main qualifications for each eligible programme.
3. The directory also explains the typology and hierarchy of programmes and sets out the programme code for each eligible programme, which will be used for all aspects of planning, funding and reporting.
4. The list of eligible programmes and their component parts will be subject to change and the directory will be updated regularly to allow for changes to programme details, additions and deletions of programmes.
5. The latest version of the programmes directory is available to view at:

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/learningproviders/post-16-planning->and-funding/programmes-directory-overview/?lang=en

**Recording of Local Authority Programmes (further examples at Annex 1)**

1. In order for the new programme approach to be successful a new field has been added to PLASC and LLWR returns. Guidance has been shared with Local Authorities, Headteachers and Colleges via the planning and funding guidance:

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/learningproviders/post-16-planning-and-funding/guide-to-the-framework/?lang=en>

and published planning guidance:

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/learningproviders/post-16-planning-and-funding/planning-and-funding-arrangements-2015-2016/?lang=en>

1. It should be noted that the programme code should reflect the programme of study that the learner is undertaking at the eighth week. This follows feedback from both sectors that a learner can often be undecided in that first eight week period and change the size of content of their desired learning outcome.
2. A typical sixth form learner will be undertaking a general education programme consisting of a number of AS or A2 qualifications. In these circumstances the programme will be easily identifiable as one of the following:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Lead Code** | **Full Time Gen Ed Programme** |
| 0012A03B | 2 AS (not valid for 2015/16) |
| 0013A03B | 3 AS |
| 0013C03B | 2 AS with WBQ |
| 0014A03B | 4+ AS |
| 0014C03B | 3 AS with WBQ |
| 0015C03B | 4+ AS with WBQ |
| 0022A03B | 2 A2 |
| 0023A03B | 3 A2 |
| 0023C03B | 2 A2 with WBQ |
| 0024A03B | 4+ A2 |
| 0024C03B | 3 A2 with WBQ |
| 0025C03B | 4+ A2 with WBQ |

1. Where a learner is not undertaking a typical A level programme the following guidance should be adhered to:

**a. Clarity on GCSE Programmes**

1. GCSE Programmes have been retained in order to support learners who did not reach their desired outcomes. Such learners may require to either do a number of resists or undertake further Level 2 learning before progressing on to a vocational programme, employment or Level 3 learning.
2. A 3 GCSE Programme will continue to be available for learners from 2015 although it will be closely monitored. The programme is designed to help learners achieve their Level 2 threshold and DfES will further consider the requirements of the programme to ensure it helps learners better prepare for further study or employment.
3. Both 4 and 5 GCSE Programmes will remain but again they will be reviewed and monitored over the coming year in terms of take up and success.
4. GCSE Equivalent Programmes are for learners who are not ready to progress onto a Level 3 Programme and may also be vocationally unfocussed and have not achieved the Level 2 threshold. They may therefore require additional learning or to undertake taster courses in a number of vocational areas prior to choosing their programme of learning:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Lead Code** | **Full Time Gen Ed Programme** |
| 0003A02B | 3 GCSEs |
| 0004A02B | 4 GCSEs |
| 0005A02B | 5+ GCSEs |
| 0006A02B | 5 GCSEs equivalent |

31**.** Learners who are resitting GCSE exams but not attending any additional teaching should be recorded against the unfunded programme code. (as set out in paragraph 39 below).

**b. Removal of 2 AS and 2 AS Equivalent Programme**

1. From 2015/16 the 2 AS Programme and the 2 AS Equivalent Programme will be removed from the Programme Directory. It was considered that the programme was too small to warrant a full time course, learner numbers were very low and the programme offered limited learner progression. The 2 AS plus WBQ and the 2 AS Equivalent plus WBQ will continue to be available to learners.
2. If a learner is undertaking one of these programmes the non funded programme code should be used (as set out in paragraph 39 below).

**c. Equivalent Qualifications**

1. Equivalent qualifications are regulated qualifications which are comparable on level, size and content of qualification to A Levels and GCSEs. Care should be taken to ensure such programmes are recorded accurately. Examples include:

| **Qualification** | **Equivalent to:** |
| --- | --- |
| Level 3 BTEC/ National Diploma Level 3/ BTEC /Extended Diploma | 3 GCE A Levels |
| Level 3 BTEC/ National Certificate Level 3 / BTEC Diploma | 2 GCE A Levels |
| Level 3 BTEC Certificate | 1 GCE AS Level. |
| Level 3 BTEC/ National Award Level 3/ BTEC Subsidiary Diploma | 1 GCE A Level |
| Level 2 BTEC First Diploma /  Level 2 BTEC Diploma | 4 GCSEs (A\*-C) |
| Level 2 BTEC First Certificate Level 2/ BTEC Extended Certificate | 2 GCSEs (A\*-C) |
| Level 2 BTEC Certificate | 1 GCSE (A\*-C) |

**d. How to record AS / AS Equivalence delivery**

1. Where a learner is undertaking either a Level 3 BTEC National Diploma/ Certificate or combining BTEC qualifications along with general AS qualifications they should be recorded as undertaking the appropriate AS Equivalent programme.
2. Where learners are also combining some resits with their new studies these should be undertaken within the Community Learner Industry Focus (CLIF) element of the Learning Programme.

**e. Mixing of Vocational or General Education Qualifications**

1. Where a learner is mixing both general and vocational qualifications it should be recorded as a general education programme where the general qualification forms at least 50% of the main activity.
2. Where the learner is undertaking predominately vocational learning, the learner should be recorded against the most appropriate vocational programme. It must be ensured that all aspects of the vocational programme are followed, any additional general education qualifications should be included as part of the CLIF element of the learning programme.

**f. Combined AS and A2 Programmes**

1. Where a learner is undertaking a mix of AS and A2 qualifications the following should be adhered to for recording purposes:

* Where the AS qualification is a resit of a course undertaken the previous year then the AS qualification should be undertaken as part of the CLIF element of an A2 programme and should therefore only be recorded as undertaking the appropriate A2 programme.
* If a learner is undertaking a new AS qualification (in a new subject area) along with A2 qualifications, these learners should be recorded as undertaking an A2 equivalent programme:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Lead Code** | **Full Time Gen Ed Programme** |
| 0012B03B | 2 AS equivalent (not valid for 2015/16) |
| 0013B03B | 3 AS equivalent |
| 0013D03B | 2 AS equivalent with WBQ |
| 0014B03B | 4+ AS equivalent |
| 0014D03B | 3 AS equivalent with WBQ |
| 0015D03B | 4+ AS equivalent with WBQ |
| 0022B03B | 2 A2 equivalent |
| 0023B03B | 3 A2 equivalent |
| 0023D03B | 2 A2 equivalent with WBQ |
| 0024B03B | 4+ A2 equivalent |
| 0024D03B | 3 A2 equivalent with WBQ |
| 0025D03B | 4+ A2 equivalent with WBQ |

1. If a learner is not undertaking a coherent programme of learning the unfunded programme code should be used:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Lead Code** | **Full Time Gen Ed Programme** |
| 9999999B | Not Funded |

1. For questions about learning programmes that are not answered by the above guidance, please email Post16PlanningandFunding@wales.gsi.gov.uk

**Recording of Guided Contact Hours (GCH)**

1. The previous funding methodology relied heavily on guided contact hours at the activity level to derive the allocation to each Local Authority.
2. The programmes approach relaxes the importance of the GCH, as funding is not derived directly from this field. Instead each school is asked to complete GCH at the programme level. This should be the planned timetabled hours for each programme making the audit of this field simpler as it does not need to be tacked back to individual class registers.
3. We will use data on guided contact hours to monitor activity levels and review funding values for individual programmes. It is intended that this will be done on an annual basis as part of the year-end monitoring arrangements.

**Monitoring and reporting**

1. One of the key aims of the new framework is to better understand the return the Welsh Government gets from its investment in the post-16 sector in Wales. The new framework aims to make better use of real-time information to influence planning and funding decisions.
2. Information will be collected from providers at three intervals during the delivery year: in October, in February and at year-end (July). This information will be used to monitor how providers are performing against their final delivery plans and to monitor programme delivery. The information collected in October and February will be high level ‘headcount’ information while the end of year data will include the detail of all delivery that has been undertaken in the academic year.
3. The high level information will be provided via spreadsheet returns and will be collated to develop programme delivery reports which highlight national and local enrolment trends. These reports will be shared with LAs and will be used to inform planning discussions.

**Post-16 collection**

1. Year-end monitoring will require the submission of a full post-16 PLASC collection. The year end data will reflect all delivery undertaken in the academic year from August to July and will also be used to monitor programme delivery.
2. Programmes will be monitored to understand how effective the learning offer is against defined purpose and outcomes. This process will highlight programmes which are underperforming and, potentially, identify areas where there is a shortage or demand for provision.
3. Programme content and delivery methods will also be monitored to provide assurance that programme delivery requirements are being met and to ensure that funding values are correct. DfES will use information from providers’ year-end PLASC and LLWR returns to monitor programme delivery. The information will be used to:

* check that programme delivery requirements are being met
* provide assurance that programme funding values are appropriate
* monitor, review and explore the potential for more efficient models of delivery at a programme level
* compare programme outputs and outcomes at a provider and at the sector level.

**Monitoring adjustments**

1. It should be noted that these monitoring arrangements are not being implemented with the motive of penalising providers. Rather, they are designed to support providers’ planning processes and to allow for a greater understanding of what is being delivered and why.
2. The year-end monitoring exercise will be used to inform programme design and funding values, and also be used to encourage best practice and sharing of curriculum standards. Only in circumstances of continued poor performance is monitoring information likely to have a direct impact on providers’ allocations.
3. Using the information in the framework to monitor delivery in this way will improve accountability, and provide crucial evidence to influence change when required. It will also provide the Welsh Government with the information to understand what it gets in return for public investment in learning.

**Further information**

1. Any queries or comments on this guidance should be directed to [Post16PlanningandFunding@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Post16PlanningandFunding@wales.gsi.gov.uk)