

The National Behaviour and Attendance Review (NBAR): Summary and Prospective Outlook

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ABSTRACT

This paper covers three themes. First, it provides a summary and context of the National Behaviour and Attendance Review (NBAR) in Wales. Second, it considers the Welsh Assembly Government's response published in *Behaving and Attending*. Third, the article projects forward to consider key areas where further practical outcomes and research activity seem likely over the next few years, including new developments already influenced by the NBAR Report.

Background

In March 2006, the then Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills in Wales made a commitment to undertake a National Review of Behaviour and Attendance (NBAR) to support existing activity and to shape and develop the future approach to these challenging issues. The Review was undertaken in accordance with the Welsh Assembly Government's (WAG) vision for the future development of policy and provision for children and young people in Wales as set out in the *Learning Country: Vision into Action* (WAG, 2006a). At the same time, the Review team were conscious of the ever-changing, societal demography within Wales; not least the disproportionate number of pupils from low income families when compared with much of the rest of the United Kingdom

(UK), the growth of a multi-ethnic culture and the rise in single parent families. In particular, WAG were concerned about the disproportionate number of pupils missing school in Wales when compared with the rest of the UK (Reid, 2004) as outlined in the Attendance Task and Finish Group Report (National Assembly for Wales, 2003).

The NBAR Steering Group was formed to take forward the Review, to establish a true picture of the situation in Wales, to consider good practice in tackling attendance and behavioural issues and to produce clear recommendations to WAG. The Steering Group was comprised of representatives of key stakeholder groups across Wales, supported by colleagues from Estyn, voluntary bodies and the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

Specifically, the NBAR Group were given four specific tasks by the minister. These were:

1. to explore ways in which parents, children and young people and the community as a whole can be more effectively supported and engaged in the promotion of positive behaviour and attendance in school;
2. to identify effective practice in promoting positive behaviour and attendance and ways in which this practice could be embedded and disseminated in schools and local authorities (LAs) across Wales;
3. to identify the effective use of multi-agency partnerships in tackling issues of poor attendance and behaviour in schools in Wales, including consideration of regional models;
4. to identify potential new legislation, in the form of National Assembly for Wales measures, for which legislative competence orders should be sought under the Government of Wales Act 2006, that would assist in promoting positive behaviour and improving school attendance, including specific consideration of the provision of education for excluded pupils.

Previous topic-focused papers based on the specific findings obtained for the NBAR team on school attendance, exclusion, behaviour and training have been produced (Reid, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c; 2010b, 2010c). However, no detailed summary of the study exists, nor any contextual or follow-up analysis. It is these latter tasks which this paper attempts to resolve.

Context

Prior to 1997, managing school attendance in the United Kingdom was the sole responsibility of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in England, although, in practice, some processes and legal systems differed between Scotland and England. Since devolution, responsibility for school attendance and pupil's behaviour has resided with each of the four UK-wide administrations. These are the Department for Education (DfE) (renamed, May 2010) in England, the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED), the Northern Irish Department for Education (NIDE) and, in Wales, the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS). Since devolution, each of the four administrations has begun to develop different policy directions over the management of behaviour and attendance in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales and these developments have been described in detail elsewhere (Reid, 2010a).

Some of the key reports and research in England have included the work undertaken by the National Foundation for Education Research (Halsey et al., 2004; Kinder et al., 1998a, 1998b; NFER, 2003), Morris and Rutt (2004), Malcolm et al. (2003), Dalziel and Henthorne (2005), Croll and Moses (2005), the National Audit Office Report (NAO, 2005), the New Philanthropy Capital Reports (NPC, 2005a, 2005b) as well as the production of the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) materials (Hallam et al., 2006; Hallam, 2007).

Amongst the key strategic developments in England were the development of the Excellence in Cities (EiC), Education Action Zones (EAZ), Connexions and Sure Start initiatives (Reid, 2002a, 2002b; 2010a), the Elton (1989) and Steer Reports (2005).

In Scotland, key policy documents included Better Behaviour-Better Learning (SEED, 2001), Being Positive About Pupil Participation (SEED, 2006a), Reaching Out to Families (SEED, 2007a), Restorative Practices in Three Scottish Councils (SEED, 2007b), Behaviour in Scottish Schools (SEED, 2006b), Engaged and Involved: Attendance in Scottish Schools (SEED, 2006c) and, a key document, Ambitious Excellent Schools and Curriculum for Excellence (SEED, 2004). These were supplemented by the Additional Support for Learning, Education (Scotland) Act 2003 (SEED, 2003) and the Behaviour and Attendance Guidance Document (SEED, 2006d).

Recent research in Scotland has included the work of Malcolm et al. (1996) which found a clear link between school attendance and attainment at all levels of the Scottish educational system, the work of McAra (2004), which reported a clear link between truancy, school exclusions and substance misuse and the findings of Munn and Johnstone (1992) on school differences in rates of attendance. Smith (2004), in an important study, found that more girls than boys were now missing school although boys were more than six times more likely to commit significant crimes whilst out of school. Finally, McCluskey et al. (2008) presented the evidence on whether restorative practices make a difference to pupils' behaviour and can lead to significant behavioural improvements.

Research in Northern Ireland and Wales lagged behind Scotland and England both in terms of behaviour and attendance prior to the NBAR Report. In Northern Ireland, there has been one major report on improving school attendance (Northern Ireland Audit Office, 2004) although the Northern Irish Education and Training Inspectorate Annual Reports (2002; 2003) recommended that schools should 'reconsider the relevance of the curriculum, the nature and quality of the pupil-teacher relationship and the appropriateness of teaching methods' when tackling attendance issues. It should be noted, however, that different school structures are in place in Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK (e.g. grammar and secondary modern schools).

In Wales, there have been significant guidance circulars on such issues as attendance, behaviour, bullying and exclusions (WAG, 1999, 2003b, 2003c, 2004a, 2004b, 2005a, 2005b) with relevant supporting statistical information (WAG, 2007a). There has been little funded research into behaviour and attendance; a gap which NBAR tried to redress (Cole, 2007).

Methodology and approach

The NBAR Report Group gathered evidence for two years between 2006 and 2008 (NBAR, 2008a, 2008b). In 2008–9, an Implementation-Response Strategy Group established by the Welsh Assembly Government met to consider how best to prioritize and strategically implement the NBAR recommendations. They produced a follow-up Report entitled *Behaving and Attending* (WAG, 2009). Since then, the Welsh Assembly Government has created an NBAR Policy Group which has been meeting

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since April 2009 and is continuing to do so. It is likely that this Group will produce an updated strategic document in late 2010 or early 2011.

In September 2008, the NBAR Interim Report was produced (NBAR, 2008a). This focused upon the ideas and evidence generated during the first six months of the Review. The Interim Report was, to a large extent, generated from the ideas of four working groups established early in the life of the review. These groups of invited and nominated professionals and stakeholders (including colleagues from health, social services and the voluntary sector) met at venues throughout and across Wales. The first group considered issues affecting the behaviour and attendance of all children and young people in school. The second group focused on children and young people who cause low-level disruption. The third group considered children and young people at risk of exclusion. The final group concentrated on children who were being educated outside school settings because they had histories of disruptive behaviour, non-attendance or both.

Between July 2007 and March 2008, the evidence for stage two of the work was collected and analysed from a wide variety of sources. These included:

- a) convening two focus groups on school attendance. The first met to examine the use of school attendance codes in Wales. The second group considered a wide range of attendance issues including evidence obtained from the National Review of the Education Welfare Service in Wales (Reid et al., 2007; 2008), the prosecution of parents or carers in attendance cases, and the utility of truancy sweeps;
- b) convening a special two-day seminar with senior education officials from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland in September 2007;
- c) commissioning and analysing UK Government reports and guidance on behaviour and attendance from a leading practitioner (Cole, 2007);
- d) receiving presentations and holding discussions with key Welsh Assembly Government officials on such issues as the Children and Young People's Partnership Framework for Local Authorities, Learning Pathways for 14–19 year-olds, the Pedagogy Initiative and approaches to reduce the number of children and young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), amongst several others (WAG, 2005c; 2006a; 2007b; 2008a, 2008b, 2008c) including School Crime Beat (WACHPO/ADEW, 2007) School-Based Counselling Services (WAG, 2008d), the School Effectiveness Framework (WAG, 2008e), Transition (WAG, 2005c) and Pupils'Voices (FUNKY DRAGON, 2007);

- e) establishing five key sub-groups. These examined: behaviour including exclusion and unofficial exclusions, out-of-school provision and the alternative curriculum; school attendance; parents; training and development; and, participation including multi-agency collaboration;
- f) convening specialist practitioner working groups in north and south Wales to consider: the challenges facing the teaching profession on behaviour and attendance; the role of professional training and development; the use of physical intervention and restraint; violence in schools; and finally, the future role of the Welsh Assembly Government and local authorities in providing support to the profession;
- g) gathering specific research evidence including innovatory and unique data on:
 - i. the views and opinions of children and young people about behaviour and attendance. This evidence was gathered from selected primary and secondary-aged pupils and included those either in out-of-school units, or from certain specific deprivation or at risk categories (e.g. travellers' children). Two sets of these findings have recently been published (Reid et al., 2010a, 2010b);
 - ii. sending out a questionnaire to parents using the Children in Wales database, to 536 individuals as well as to statutory agencies, private and voluntary bodies on parenting and parenting skills;
 - iii. collecting specific evidence on a range of core issues. These included: meeting the needs of pupils who have additional learning needs (ALN), looked after pupils, the curriculum, the role of pupil referral units (PRUs), emotional health and well-being, school councils, the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales, multi-agency working, the learning coaches initiative, personal and social education, early interaction, transition arrangements, and rights-based approaches to improving behaviour;
 - iv. commissioning a rapid-review study conducted by the People and Work Unit (2008) on effective interventions for improving school attendance and behaviour.

Key findings

The NBAR Group determined that the majority of schools in Wales are orderly and well managed. It is difficult to be precise because comparing schools over a twenty-, thirty- or forty-year period is neither a precise or

exact science. Each era has its concerns. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, it was the 'skinhead' and 'bovver boot' generation which caused 'offence' to society. Now, it is the rise of disaffected gangs and the knife and 'hoodie' culture which causes public concern.

The NBAR Report (2008b) found that there is widespread good practice in managing pupils' behaviour and attendance in most schools and local authorities with a large number of innovative initiatives in place. Despite this, managing behaviour (in all its various forms) and attendance, both in and out of school, are becoming increasingly complex issues which require prioritization by the Welsh Assembly Government.

The NBAR Group did however, have some specific concerns. These included: first, the position on behaviour and attendance is not helped by the significant number of pupils at primary or secondary school whose literacy and numeracy levels are well below the average attainment targets for their chronological age. All the available evidence suggests that pupils with low levels of literacy or numeracy have a greater tendency to evolve into pupils who develop behavioural and/or attendance problems during either the primary or secondary phase. Earlier identification and support for pupils with literacy and/or numeracy difficulties at the primary phase might help prevent some pupils from becoming non-attendees or developing behavioural problems. Such a policy would also eventually help to raise standards. WAG should consider how these earlier curricular interventions could be managed, possibly through either group or one-to-one approaches and how best these should be funded and organized.

Second, NBAR found that large numbers of existing professionals in Wales have received little or no training for their roles in managing attendance or behaviour. This includes senior staff in schools, middle managers, classroom teachers and classroom assistants, education welfare officers, learning school mentors, as well as members of the voluntary sector, health, social services and other local authority staff. This situation is in marked contrast to the position in England (Reid, 2010b, 2010c). Most notably, many parents and/or carers also appear to need extra help and support either to understand or manage their own children's behaviour.

Third, it was clear that whilst there has been adequate guidance on managing exclusions from WAG, in practice, the implementation processes have varied considerably between schools and Local Authorities. Significant school variations in the policy and practice of managing actual and potential exclusions also exist. Variations, too, abound over the use of 'managed moves'. Some of these decisions are made solely for pragmatic or

expedient reasons. It was also apparent that a number of unofficial exclusions are taking place, entirely contrary to WAG guidelines. Some of these arrangements involve 'unofficial' arrangements being put in place which are being 'condoned' by schools, local authorities and sometimes, parents alike (C.C.O., 2007).

Fourth, and in addition, it became clear that there were a number of pupils who were out-of-school for a variety of reasons, whose educational provision is not being properly monitored and who are not receiving an appropriate education. Evidence presented to NBAR from key professionals and LAs seems to suggest that the number of pupils designated as NEETS (not in education, employment or training) has previously been underestimated; a position subsequently confirmed by WAG in May 2010 (WAG, 2010a; ONS, 2010).

Fifth, although some excellent alternative curriculum and out-of-school provision exists, this too, tends to vary from authority to authority. In some parts of Wales, there are presently too few, if any, places available. The position on out-of-school provision in Wales needs further reflection, possibly a future review, as the role of pupil referred units (PROs) varies so considerably in type, style and practice, whilst in some LAs virtually no alternative curriculum placements are available.

Sixth, the evidence obtained from pupils' and young people's views (Reid et al., 2010a, b) suggests that these could be utilized to greater effect in helping our understanding of behaviour and attendance. Increasing numbers of children and young people could also be much better involved in influencing their learning environment, possibly by the better utilization of school councils (Estyn, 2008). This should be an important part of the Welsh Assembly Government's School Effectiveness Framework (WAG, 2008e).

Seventh, NBAR considered that better inter-agency and multi-agency cooperation would be significantly beneficial to raising professional standards within Wales. However, evidence of existing good practice in this field was limited.

Eighth, the NBAR Group were conscious of the changing nature of behaviour and attendance over time. For example, a majority of non-attenders are now girls, a major change from thirty or forty years ago when nine out of ten truants were boys (Reid, 1985). More pupils from primary schools now miss school time or truant. Approximately 35 per cent of truants and school absentees begin their histories of non-attendance at some point during their primary phase and unauthorized rates at both Key

Stages 2 and 3 are starting to rise in some parts of Wales. NBAR was concerned at the perceived rise in the number of pupils with social and emotional needs and other additional support or learning needs. Cases of unauthorized absence were proving a stubbornly difficult phenomenon to reduce. Equally, considerable school and LA variations in rates of attendance and school exclusions (fixed and permanent) exist (see NBAR Report 2008b: 25–37).

Ninth, the Review Group were concerned about the number of children whose histories of poor behaviour starts before Key Stage 3 at primary school; a discouraging sign for the future. It became obvious that far too many interventions with pupils who exhibit behaviour and/or attendance problems occur much too late, often after a situation has reached the persistent or crisis stage, frequently when interventions have little chance of long-term success. At present, WAG invests too many resources at the post-14 years' stage. NBAR believed that WAG's changing policy emphasis onto the Flying Start and Foundation Phase Initiatives (NAW, 2003) were sensible if early interventions were to succeed.

Core recommendations

The NBAR Report made eighteen core recommendations. These were:

1. The Welsh Assembly Government should, through implementing the revised curriculum and assessment arrangements from September 2008 in schools in Wales, provide a clear lead that no child (within the mainstream ability range) should leave primary school without the functional ability to read and write.
2. The Welsh Assembly Government should prioritize early intervention strategies on work with attendance-related and behavioural-related problems amongst children and young people.
3. The Welsh Assembly Government should promote an understanding across Wales that violence against staff will not be tolerated.
4. The Welsh Assembly Government should ensure that all schools and local authorities rigorously adhere to Circular 1/2004 on 'Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units' with particular regard to tackling unofficial (illegal) exclusions
5. The Welsh Assembly Government should introduce legislation on new exclusion regulations across Wales.

- a) for fixed-term exclusions of under 10 days:
 - schools should be required to immediately provide the fixed-term excluded pupil with a learning programme, which maintains curriculum continuity for the individual.
 - b) for fixed-term exclusions of more than 10 days:
 - in order to maintain curriculum continuity schools should be required to provide adequate learning, undertake marking and provide feedback on work completed.
 - schools should have a duty to convene a meeting within ten days in order to determine the young person's needs, to plan to meet them and to act together in an inter-agency approach to attempt to prevent permanent exclusion.
 - c) For permanent exclusions:
 - Local authorities should be required to make twenty-five hours of appropriate or equivalent learning available (at KS4) to commence within ten school days of the permanent exclusion and to convene a meeting of all key professionals and agencies involved in the pupil's life within the ten day period.
6. The Welsh Assembly Government should consider:
- Giving parents and pupils the opportunity to access an advocacy support service similar to that provided to those with SEN in the event of permanent exclusion or where there is a threat of permanent exclusion.
 - Putting into place an additional national point of appeal following the independent appeal panel. The national panel will be overseen by the Welsh Assembly Government and this should include head teacher representatives to test whether this brings greater objectivity in a more neutral setting.
7. The Welsh Assembly Government should introduce guidance on the use of managed moves and transfers as an alternative to exclusion. This protocol should include guidance on:
- a) the removal of pupils from school sites;
 - b) pupils' rights;
 - c) promoting positive behaviour and early intervention;
 - d) the role of the headteacher;
 - e) re-inclusion following the move;
 - f) funding arrangements for managed moves;
 - g) the wishes of the young person and those of parents.
8. The Welsh Assembly Government should actively follow-up schools

who are excluding pupils at a rate which is significantly higher than average. This situation should also be closely monitored by individual local authorities.

9. All local authorities in Wales should establish a behavioural support team and/or collaborate with neighbouring local authorities' behavioural support teams.
10. The Welsh Assembly Government should ensure that school attendance and behavioural strategies are at the centre of its school effectiveness framework especially at the school level.
11. The Welsh Assembly Government should commission studies which examine:
 - the extent and number of pupils who are out-of-school and not enrolled on any school roll throughout Wales (including those that are in PRUs, home tutored and home educated);
 - the link between low levels of numeracy and literacy and unidentified additional educational needs and poor behaviour, the number of exclusions, incidences of bullying and pupils' non-attendance;
 - the consequences of transition with the perceived increase in school exclusions, poor behaviour and non-attendance;
 - how PRUs are funded, the purpose of PRUs and their strategies for the management of pupils, securing their attendance and changing their behaviour and how they enable pupils to achieve and reach their full potential.
12. All local authorities in Wales should designate an officer responsible for inclusion who should be appropriately experienced. Some authorities may wish to collaborate with neighbouring local authorities on this matter. The inclusion officer would be the central point of contact for tracking all exclusion queries and practice. This post should be at senior level in order to drive multi-agency approaches and to be able to liaise with parents, head teachers, governors and other involved parties.
13. The Welsh Assembly Government should clarify and strengthen its guidance for schools on physical intervention and the use of restraint.
14. All secondary schools in Wales should have a named senior manager designated as lead professional to deal with behaviour, attendance and participation with parents and carers. In terms of participation, this manager should play a key role in induction meetings, parents' evenings and other after-school and out-of-school events and be given sufficient dedicated time to conduct these functions.
15. The Welsh Assembly Government should prioritize and increase

- funding significantly for training programmes on behaviour and attendance not only for school-based staff but for all those professionals and local authority staff engaged in promoting positive behaviour and improving attendance, more especially the education welfare/education social work staff.
16. The Welsh Assembly Government should develop an Action Plan which will implement and monitor the recommendations in this Report and to draft overarching policies on behaviour and attendance throughout Wales on:
 - an immediate;
 - a short-term;
 - a long-term basis.
 17. The action plan agenda should include further engagement with children and young people on behaviour and attendance to encourage and continue the dialogue started through the NBAR process.
 18. The Local Children's Safeguarding Board in each local authority should have a standing item on school behaviour and attendance.

A further eighty-plus supporting recommendations were made in support of the core ideas. These can be found in the NBAR (2008b) document, pp. 141–53.

Follow up activity

WAG accepted the entire NBAR Report and all its recommendations on a cross-party basis. The Report's findings are now, therefore, part of WAG's official policies on behaviour and attendance.

WAG decided to implement Recommendation 16 with immediate effect. An Implementation Group was therefore, established between September 2008–September 2009. This led to the production of the Report entitled *Behaving and Attending* (WAG, 2009). This was WAG's official response to the NBAR Report.

A) Behaving and Attending

Behaving and Attending prioritized the WAG priorities on managing behaviour and attendance in Wales over the coming years. It broke down its response into eight key areas. These were on: attendance; behaviour;

children and young people's rights; early intervention; literacy; multi- and inter-agency working; school effectiveness; and, training and development.

Summarizing, the key predictive actions were as follows:

To:

- produce an All-Wales Attendance Framework which would include revising current attendance codes and producing guidance on monitoring and analysing absences with links to related initiatives such as the Forced Marriage Action Plan;
- produce guidance on Behaviour in Schools: Safe and Effective Intervention which would cover physical intervention, new powers to search for weapons and new legislation on discipline;
- carry out a review on provision of Education Otherwise Than at School (EOTAS), including Pupil Referral Units;
- establish Behaviour and Attendance web pages linked to the School Effectiveness Framework (SEF) and Pedagogy web pages;
- establish an all-Wales Behaviour Support Team Network;
- produce guidance on the effective use of managed moves;
- conduct evidence-gathering of local authority practices and their effectiveness on key areas to inform the future approach and targeting of resources. A report will be produced collating these results and proposing the way forward;
- work with Estyn to review inspection arrangements in the light of the recommendations as part of Estyn developments;
- ensure that the development of an overarching Professional Development Framework for teaching staff adequately covers the knowledge and skills on aspects of promoting positive behaviour and attendance;
- establish pilots and other research projects to inform taking forward a number of the core recommendations;
- involve children and young people in all aspects of the work, including developing and implementing approaches, evaluating their effectiveness and reviewing them in light of findings;
- focus on literacy as a key priority by drawing together the different strands of work going on across DCELLS, ensuring they reflect current thinking and best practice and that they remain effective and aligned to other policies.

The findings over the lack of training received by teachers in Wales on management and attendance were so powerful that WAG produced a special document in the appendix to cover all these issues. This was entitled: Responding Through Training and Development – Response to the National Behaviour and Attendance Review (NBAR) (WAG, 2009: 38–48). The response covers the wide range of training needs required by

staff at initial teacher training (ITT), induction, early professional development (EPD), and continuing professional development (CPD) levels, as well as for members of the education welfare service. These latter aspects have been analysed in detail in two previous papers (Reid, 2010b, 2010c).

B) Further research

Following the publication of the NBAR Reports (2008a, 2008b) and *Behaving and Attending* (WAG, 2009), the WAG announced the creation of four major pilot projects and four areas where further research was required. These were:

1) Pilot Projects

The four areas where pilot projects have started in 2010 are on:

- a) early assessment and identification of vulnerable children and suitable support to address their needs;
- b) multi-agency working, to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and their families;
- c) improving the links between Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and other Education Otherwise Than at School (EOTAS) provision and mainstream schools; and
- d) the development of a lead professional for behaviour and attendance in each school.

The intention behind these projects is to evaluate and develop models for future good practice.

2) Research Projects

The four key areas identified in need of further research were on: the role of and utility of nurture groups; restorative justice practice in Wales; multi-agency working around children and young people and their families; and, on parental engagement. Presently, a lack of funding is delaying the bidding process for these contracts.

C) Prospective Actions

Between 2010 and 2012, WAG is committed to conducting a wide range of actions. These are presented in Figure 1 which indicate the priorities in

each of the eight aforementioned targeted areas. These actions are largely self-explanatory although some will require much new work to be undertaken. Equally, some of the actions will require strong management by key Departmental officials within DCELLS. Some of the tasks will also not be easy given for example, the diverse practice and utilization of managed moves by LAs and schools across Wales and the fact that some LAs will need to collaborate to implement some of the measures, partly because of their small size or topography.

Apart from the actions outlined in Figure 1, the NBAR work is now stretching across the boundaries of all the various departments which comprise the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) in Wales. For example, findings and recommendations made in the NBAR Report (2008b) are influencing the work of the pedagogy, school effectiveness, children and young people's rights, additional learning needs and in-service training sections and reviews, as well as the ongoing work on school disaffection and social inclusion.

Figure 1 The NBAR ACTION PLAN

Action
Attendance
The Assembly Government will, in partnership with the Education Welfare Service (EWS), produce an All Wales Attendance Framework
The Assembly Government will revise and develop in consultation with stakeholders the current attendance codes and recording practices
Behaviour
The Assembly Government will assess current restorative justice projects in Wales to inform future work in this area
The Assembly Government will publish guidance for schools entitled 'Behaviour in Schools: Safe and Effective Intervention'
The Assembly Government will assess and follow up with local authorities information collected by the Children's Commissioner for Wales on unlawful exclusions
The Assembly Government will carry out a review on provision of Education Otherwise than at School (EOTAS), including the role of pupil referral units
The Assembly Government will commission guidance for schools on the effective use of managed moves

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The Assembly Government will establish and support a Behaviour Support Team Network
The Assembly Government will produced All Wales Guidance for Pastoral Support Programmes
Children and Young People’s Rights
The Assembly Government will produce a guide to the new model of delivering advocacy services for Children and Young People’s Partnerships
The Assembly Government will explore the possibility of developing a national Independent Appeal Panel to replace those currently run by local authorities
The Assembly Government’s response to the NBAR Review will continue the dialogue with children and young people started during the Review
The Assembly Government will continue to promote best practice in anti-bullying approaches
The Assembly Government will further develop the role and resources for school councils
Early Intervention
The Assembly Government will produce and distribute Early Intervention training module for Foundation Phase staff
The Assembly Government will assess current Nurture Group work in Wales to inform future work in this area
The Assembly Government will establish a pilot to trial different approaches to early assessment and identification of vulnerable children
Action
The Assembly Government will commission an Inquiry into Disengagement as set out in the One Wales commitment
The Assembly Government will include guidance on children and young people’s behaviour and attendance in the ongoing Review of the Parenting Action Plan
Literacy
The Assembly Government will focus on literacy as a key priority by drawing together the different strands of work going on across the department, ensuring they reflect current thinking and best practice and that they remain effective and aligned to other policies
Multi and Interagency Working
The Assembly Government will trial approaches to multi-agency working between health, social services and education to improve mainstream reintegration for vulnerable children

The Assembly Government will continue to roll-out the School-based Counselling Strategy
The Assembly Government will collect data on local authorities current practices through a questionnaire to inform future policy and targeting of resources
The Assembly Government will write to all Local Children's Safeguarding Board (LCSB) Chair's highlighting the link between poor behaviour and attendance and safeguarding concerns
The Assembly Government will set up web pages on improving school behaviour and attendance
The Assembly Government will assess the current approaches for multi-agency working for vulnerable children
The Assembly Government will scope the current issues for elective home education
The Assembly Government will appoint a Project manager to develop and coordinate the Action Plan and consider expanding staff resources for the implementation of the plan
The Assembly Government will assess and evaluate partnership projects between parents and schools
The Assembly Government will consider and follow-up as appropriate the recommendations from the Review of the Common Assessment Framework
The Assembly Government will pilot models to improve the links between Pupil Referral Units and the other EOTAS provision, and mainstream schools
The Assembly Government will consider the relevant recommendations at the next review of Children and Young People's Plans
Action
School Effectiveness
The Assembly Government will adapt and translate the Social Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials for primary and secondary schools in Wales
The Assembly Government will consult with Estyn on the change to inspection arrangements in light of the NBAR recommendations
The Assembly Government will commission reports on transition arrangements
The Assembly Government will refine the School Evaluation Profile of the School Effectiveness Framework to increase focus on behaviour and attendance aspects

The National Behaviour and Attendance Review (NBAR)

The Assembly Government will explore the possibility of a lead professional for behaviour and attendance through the expansion of the pilot for the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) co-ordinator role
The Assembly Government will update the Governors' Guide to the Law
The Assembly Government will write to all schools setting out the key aims of the Action Plan and highlighting specific recommendations
Training and Development
The Assembly Government has produced a paper in response to the NBAR training recommendations (Annex B) and will take this forward to feed in to the training agenda for Wales which is currently under review
The Assembly Government will identify and recommend an appropriate training structure for the Education Welfare Service (EWS)
The Assembly Government will make available 'taster sessions' to local authority representatives on training options for behaviour management
The Assembly Government will continue to support teachers through the Teacher Support helpline and coaching service
The Assembly Government will distribute a behaviour management handbook to current secondary Initial Teacher Training (ITT) students, Induction and Early Professional Development (EPD) teachers
The Assembly Government will build aspects of children and young people's rights into the review of the professional development framework for teachers

In particular, the NBAR themes were a core part of the launch of the new Police Support Model for Secondary Schools in May 2010. This has resulted in one third of all police resources in Wales being channelled into the Police-Community Support Model which integrates School Community Police Officers and Neighbourhood Policing teams (DCELLS/ South Wales Police, 2010).

Despite the significant benefits already accrued from the NBAR Report, and the strong move towards implementing the ideas and recommendations contained in the Report, the future seems uncertain. Although the Minister announced plans to spend one million pounds on training staff on behaviour and attendance needs in April 2009, these tasks have not yet begun as the after-effects of the credit crunch have taken hold. With the change of UK Government in May 2010, and the review of future public sector finances, further delays and/or cuts may be envisaged, although no major or longstanding decisions have been made.

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Much of the inter-departmental work in DCELLS is taking place, although some key staff changes have slowed progress. It is likely that DCELLS will re-prioritize the NBAR Implementation Plan and recommendations after the results of the 2010 Spending Review have been completed. Nevertheless, it is disappointing that, for example, a cross-Departmental all-Wales literacy strategy has not already been implemented or that specialist training programmes have not yet been planned or commissioned.

A further disappointment was the DCELLS decision to summarily bring to an end the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) on special educational needs. This Group was given the remit responsibility for oversight of the NBAR Group's work as well as for planning for Wales's first Legislative Competence Order in education on special educational needs. The NBAR chair was a member of the Group and Chaired the Behaviour and Attendance Sub-Group. The MAG Group was comprised of prominent professionals from health, education, social services and included key DCELLS Departmental Heads, leading academics and Estyn. This Group achieved much between 2005 and 2009. The decision to disband it has meant there is no longer any formal reporting procedure or oversight of the NBAR follow up work and this may be contributing to the slower than anticipated progress currently being made by DCELLS in implementing key recommendations.

Some further progress is ongoing. A new handbook for schools, primary school teachers, LAs and ITT institutions and professional support staff on managing behaviour and attendance in Wales, has been produced (WAG, 2010b), and the reviews of new draft attendance codes and regulations have been completed with a view to implementing them in September 2010.

Conclusion

The National Behaviour and Attendance Review produced a major Report for Welsh education which has provided a policy boost for WAG on behaviour and attendance. It has significantly raised the profile of Wales in this field and has enabled it to catch up quickly with other international partners (Reid, 2010a). The NBAR agenda and legacy will influence policy, planning, thinking and practice on behaviour and attendance in Wales for many years to come, and, in the near future, provide a boost for educational research in this field.

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