

National Assembly for Wales Education, Lifelong Learning & Skills Committee

Secondary Legislation: 8 March 2007

Background

1. The Committee considered the following item of subordinate legislation, to be made under Standing Order 24, on Wednesday 17 January 2007. A verbatim record was taken and can be viewed on the Committee's WebPage.

Assembly Learning Grant and Loans (Higher Education) (Wales) Regulations 2007 [ELLS-09-06]

2. The Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills provided an explanatory background paper. She also provided a copy of the draft Order, Explanatory Memorandum and Regulatory Appraisal.
3. A public consultation was undertaken on the draft Regulations between September and December 2006 and 64 stakeholders were consulted. The draft Regulations and accompanying documents were also posted on the National Assembly for Wales website. Thirteen responses were received. Responses were broadly supportive of the proposed changes.
4. The Regulations set out the student support arrangements for designated higher education courses in Wales in the 2007-08 academic year and will enable the National Assembly for Wales to make awards of grants and loans to eligible students. The Regulations revoke the 2006 Regulations and amending Regulations.
5. Most of the changes introduced by the Regulations are technical in nature. The exception is the new Tuition Fee Grant of up to £1,845 which will be available to students resident in Wales studying a higher education course at a Welsh university or college in the 2006-07 or 2007-08 academic years. The tuition fee grant will be available regardless of family income, and will be paid directly to the place of study.
6. The regulations also introduce mainly technical changes to:
 - the Childcare Grant
 - the Care Leavers Grant (removed because of alternative provision)
 - Overseas Rate of Loan/Travel Grant
 - Eligibility Criteria; and
 - in relation to Provision of National Insurance Numbers.

Discussion

7. In discussion, clarification was sought on the following issues:

Committee Service

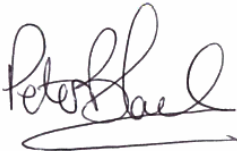
- Whether the duties placed on local authorities by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 would be comparable to the provision that had formerly been made through the Care Leavers Grant; and
- the arrangements in respect of family members of refugees.

8. In response, the Minister and officials provided the following information:

- Under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, local authorities have a duty to meet young people's needs in relation to education and training and to provide help to all care leavers who intend to go on to higher education. The Care Leavers' Grant was a near-redundant provision, because those who qualified for help under the Children (Leaving Care) Act did not then qualify for the Care Leavers' Grant.
- The rules relating to eligibility of a student who is a refugee or a person with leave to enter or remain are negotiated with the Home Office. Schedule 1 of the regulations make provision for family members of refugees.

Committee Decision

9. No amendments were proposed and the Committee recommended approval of the draft Order.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Black', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Peter Black AM
Committee Chair