

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 August 2012 12:59
To: - Media Relations; - CRC
Subject: statement from Welsh Government

Apologies if this has already been round;
http://rhondda.typepad.com/leighton_andrews/2012/08/welsh-education-minister-concerns-on-methodology-were-raised-with-ofqual-.html

Welsh Education Minister – concerns on methodology were raised with Ofqual

The Welsh Government has issued the following statement:

Leighton Andrews, the Welsh Government Education and Skills Minister, this morning visited Cynffig Comprehensive School to celebrate GCSE and Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification results with pupils and staff.

Following concerns raised by the profession from across the UK this morning, relating to Ofqual and English Language results in particular, the Minister has sought to clarify the position in Wales.

Education and Skills Minister, Leighton Andrews said:

“We care about high standards in Wales. We have not approved the new combined GCSE English now taken in many schools in England, which has a reduced coverage of aspects of English Language as set out in the programme of study for English at Key Stage 4. We believe it is important that learners follow the fuller programme of language learning that is covered by GCSE English Language. What is clear now is that we are no longer comparing like with like when looking at results in Wales and England.

“We had concerns about the methodology being used by Ofqual in relation to English Language GCSE, and my officials raised these with Ofqual two weeks ago. There will be further meetings with Ofqual on this in the autumn.

“In relation to English Language, a majority of WJEC English GCSE candidates are based in England, so there was no option but to agree a compromise with Ofqual in relation to the WJEC English Language GCSE sat on both sides of the border.

“Last month the Northern Ireland Education Minister and I met and then wrote to Michael Gove because of our concerns at his unilateral statements and actions on GCSEs and A Levels. It is clear that we now need to consider whether our own system can be in hock to “Gove-it-alone” policies.

“These issues will be considered in relation to our current review of qualifications. We have already reviewed the work of the WJEC and I will give further consideration this autumn as to whether the WJEC should continue in its present form, or whether we should move in the direction of Scotland or Northern Ireland.”

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 August 2012 17:55
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Tweets

See Leighton Andrews's tweet below.

Part of the conversation to be had...

[REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 August 2012 17:47
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Tweets

Greg Hurst @GregHurstTimes
Twitter is slightly, er, sceptical about Michael Gove's statement that GCSE results have gone down 'entirely free' from political pressure

Fiona Millar @schooltruth
@GregHurstTimes Er, does anyone take this man seriously now?

Leighton Andrews @LeightonAndrews
@schooltruth @GregHurstTimes I'm afraid if Michael Gove says 'jump', the head of Ofqual says 'how high?'. Politically discredited regulation

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 23, 2012 09:49 PM
To: - CRC
Subject: Leighton Andrews story

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-19360253>

Leighton Andrews' 'how high' tweet was not a one-off. It is quite shocking - highly inappropriate from a fellow regulator, hypocritical to accuse us of being political, and of course untrue. Am still not sure whether we should ignore - treat with the contempt it deserves - or respond. One option might be for Glenys to write to the PermSec of the Welsh Gvt, rather than a public protest. I suggest we consider next week.

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 August 2012 09:45
To: - CRC
Cc: - Media Relations
Subject: Couple of enquiries

Importance: High

[REDACTED]

Comments by the Welsh Minister – said his officials raised concerns about our methodology on English Language GCSE. I had a brief conversation with Glenys about this, but did not get opportunity / need to draft a line or answer questions. (See below for comments in full):

“The approach to the awarding of GCSEs and A levels was agreed with the regulator in Wales. We meet regularly with our regulatory colleagues and will continue to discuss with them the regulation of qualifications and maintenance of standards where there are shared interests that cross the border.”

HAS ANYONE SPOKEN TO THE WELSH REGULATORS ABOUT THESE COMMENTS:

Education and Skills Minister, Leighton Andrews said,

“We care about high standards in Wales. We have not approved the new combined GCSE English now taken in many schools in England, which has a reduced coverage of aspects of English Language as set out in the programme of study for English at Key Stage 4. We believe it is important that learners follow the fuller programme of language learning that is covered by GCSE English Language. What is clear now is that we are no longer comparing like with like when looking at results in Wales and England.

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[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 August 2012 09:53
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: GCSE results etc

[REDACTED]

I am aware from the media coverage of yesterday that Leighton Andrews wants to look into the GCSE results and the English in particular. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 August 2012 10:56
To: - CRC
Cc: - Media Relations
Subject: Welsh Government orders English language grade review
Importance: High

GCSEs: Welsh minister orders English language grade review

The Welsh government is launching a review into performance in English language in this year's GCSEs.

Education Minister Leighton Andrews wants to know why results fell.

GCSE top grades across the board in Wales, England and Northern Ireland have dropped this year for the first time since replacing O-levels and CSEs.

Mr Andrews has accused UK Education Secretary Michael Gove of pressurising exam boards to mark more harshly, which Mr Gove strenuously denies.

David Reynolds, a professor of education at Southampton University and a senior adviser to the Welsh government, said it was "slightly weird" that passes at O-level and A-level had both declined overall and at their A and A* grades at the same time.

He said: "It's difficult to avoid the assumption that there's an orchestrated campaign going on somewhere, and the issue is where is that being orchestrated from.

"Is it public opinion, is it the right-wing press or a Tory minister of education? We don't know but there's clearly something going on.

"The rumours are that the results for those who sat English language early, in January, were very good.

"What happened is that things were toughened up later. We genuinely don't know.

'Serious questions'

A Welsh government spokesperson said the exam results released on Thursday "raised a number of serious questions about performance in English language GCSEs".

"We will be evaluating all the available evidence about what has happened, and why.

"This review will obviously include a thorough investigation into the issues of moderation and grade boundary changes."

A Department for Education spokesman said it was "down to the Welsh and Northern Irish administrations to decide how to run their education systems - and down to us to do what is best for English students".