

Jane Davidson AM
Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

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Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

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Mike Isherwood AM
National Assembly for Wales
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6 August 2003

Dear Mark,

Following my statement on 15th July announcing the new Individual Learning Account Wales (ILA Wales) programme opening to individuals, you asked whether ILA Wales has implemented a robust risk map and whether total quality control measures have been put in place. I agreed to respond to you on both issues in writing.

Throughout the policy development of ILA Wales, risk assessment has been at the forefront. A comprehensive Risk Register and Issues Log were established from the outset and monitored and updated at every Policy Steering Group meeting - this will continue for the foreseeable future.

The key to the success of ILA Wales is in the provider base. The National Council has developed a provider base of 115 providers who have undergone a comprehensive selection process. The Council has considered areas such as financial viability, track record in learning, health and safety and quality of learning and has obtained independent legal counsel on every aspect of the learning provider application, registration and operational process. To further reduce the risk of learning provider abuse, a learning provider manager has been appointed and will be responsible for monitoring activity.

The IT system that has been designed specifically for ILA Wales, uses security favoured by most major financial institutions and has been rigorously tested by an independent IT consultant. He has found it to be robust and secure.

Officials have considered the National Council's assertion that it is ready to launch ILA Wales and have looked in detail at the processes the Council has

put in place to manage the scheme. The Assembly's Compliance Officer has been consulted and, on behalf of the Principal Finance Officer, has confirmed he is satisfied that the Council has identified and taken the necessary action to properly assess and eliminate or reduce risk in the successor programme.

Turning to your question of quality control measures, I can confirm that the majority of learning being offered through ILA Wales has been accredited by an external awarding body and therefore offers a degree of quality assurance. Those courses which are non-accredited have had to provide details of mode of delivery, learning hours and expected outcomes for example, and have been considered in detail by the Council's Wales Credit Framework team before being accepted to attract ILA Wales support.

The delivery of the ILA Wales programme itself will be monitored by the relevant sponsorship division in the Assembly. The evaluation that is in place is crucial in determining both the quality of the programme and the learning delivered. It will provide guidance on the on-going development of the programme and make recommendations for improvements to ensure that ILA Wales can break down those barriers to learning that are faced by our target client group.

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