

QUALIFICATIONS WALES ACT 2015

EXPLANATORY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Background

3. The Review of Qualifications for 14 to 19 year olds in Wales was commissioned by the Welsh Ministers in 2011 and was chaired by Huw Evans, former principal of Llandrillo College. Tasked with identifying how the Welsh Government could ensure that Wales has qualifications that are understood and valued and meet the needs of our young people and the Welsh economy, it reported to Ministers in November 2012. The Review of Qualifications emphasised the importance of ensuring that the qualifications taken by learners in Wales are recognised and valued world-wide.
4. The Welsh Ministers accepted the 42 recommendations contained within the report. In relation to the qualification system in Wales the report concluded that “a single body should be established to regulate, approve and assure the quality of all qualifications (below degree level) available in Wales, bringing in a new and stronger approach to regulation” and that “regulatory decisions would be separate from government”.
5. The report also envisaged that Qualifications Wales should become an awarding organisation for Wales, developing and awarding “most qualifications for 14 to 16-year-olds and most general qualifications for 16 to 19-year-olds”.
6. This Act gives effect to the first part of the recommendation in that it establishes a regulatory body for qualifications at arms’ length from the Welsh Ministers, and removes the Welsh Ministers’ current regulatory functions relating to qualifications. It does not give Qualifications Wales powers to be an awarding body. Further legislation would be required to achieve this.
7. A consultation paper setting out the Welsh Government’s policy was published on 1 October 2013 and a summary of the responses received to the consultation was published in June 2014. Responses to the consultation expressed strong endorsement of the proposals to set up a new regulatory body and this Act brings into effect those proposals.