
WASACRE Executive received a communication from Vaughan Salisbury alerting WASACRE to changes in the teacher training grants. Ceredigion SACRE has written to the Education Minister and local MPs to complain about the changes. The reason for this complaint is that Religious Education trainee teachers who enroll on the 2011-12 programme will lose their training grant of £7200. It was felt that the least that could be done was to complain about this development as it would threaten the future of training RE specialist teachers who were considering entering the teaching profession.

Further investigations following the meeting of the Executive prove that the "*Changes in teacher training incentives*" were actually announced on Tuesday 08 February 2011 detailing that support is being focussed on two main groups:-

priority incentives (£9,000 training grants) will be available for new eligible students starting courses in the 2011/12 academic year in mathematics, chemistry, physics and Welsh

other incentives (£6,000 training grants) will be available for new eligible students starting courses in the 2011/12 academic year in modern foreign languages, biology and general / combined science.

ITT incentives will not be available for other secondary subject postgraduate courses or primary postgraduate courses in the 2011/12 academic year.

Additionally, teaching grants (known as 'golden hellos in England') previously available to teachers who take up a teaching job in specified subjects following successful completion of their induction will not be continued.

Leighton Andrews said: "We have considered carefully the incentives which have been available for postgraduate initial teacher training courses in the current economic climate and jobs market.

"For 2011/12 we are concentrating support on our priorities in secondary postgraduate ITT courses mathematics, specialist sciences, modern foreign languages and Welsh. In doing so, we are continuing our approach of ensuring that:-

students deciding where to train as teachers on postgraduate courses can make that choice knowing that if they study in Wales they will have the same incentive support as those in England

we can help attract the best quality, highly committed students to train as teachers in Wales on priority courses

we can enable ITT providers in Wales to compete effectively for the most talented applicants on those courses."

Comment on the above: Both Music and Religious Education are not only losing their "shortage subject" status but their basic financial support.

The £1500 which has been available to students studying the subject through the medium of Welsh is also apparently in danger. Students already accepted for courses in September are still awaiting a decision by Leighton Andrews.

The situation in England is apparently worse but our concern is about the Wales and Welsh medium situation as it affects Religious Education. Recruitment figures are another concern which might well affect the availability of RE specialist teachers in the future. There is concern that Leighton Andrews will reduce these further for 2012-13. SACREs must be vigilant and make the necessary representations so as to protect the subject for the future.