

# Agenda – Children, Young People and Education Committee

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Meeting Venue:	For further information contact:
Hybrid – Committee room 4 Tŷ Hywel and video conference via Zoom	Naomi Stocks Committee Clerk
Meeting date: 14 December 2023	0300 200 6565
Meeting time: 09.15	<a href="mailto:SeneddChildren@senedd.wales">SeneddChildren@senedd.wales</a>

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## Private pre-meeting

(09.00 – 09.15)

- 1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest**  
(09.15)
- 2 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from items 3, 7, 8 and 9 of this meeting**  
(09.15)
- 3 Implementation of education reforms – consideration of the next steps**  
(09.15 – 09.30) (Pages 1 – 11)  
Attached Documents:  
Implementation of education reforms: 3rd check-in – Scoping Paper
- 4 Scrutiny of Qualifications Wales Annual Report 2022 – 2023**  
(09.30 – 10.45) (Pages 12 – 90)  
David Jones, Chair, Qualifications Wales  
Philip Blaker, Chief Executive, Qualifications Wales  
[Qualifications Wales Annual Report 2022 – 2023](#)  
Attached Documents:  
Research brief – Qualifications Wales  
Qualifications Wales Annual Report



## **Break**

(10.45 – 11.00)

## **5 Residential Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill – evidence session 3**

(11.00 – 12.00)

(Pages 91 – 102)

Mark Campion, Acting Assistant Director, Estyn [via zoom]

Attached Documents:

Research brief

## **6 Papers to note**

(12.00)

### **6.1 Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024–25**

(Pages 103 – 106)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chair of the Finance Committee from Coleg Cymraeg  
Cenedlaethol

### **6.2 Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024–25**

(Pages 107 – 117)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chair of the Finance Committee from ColegauCymru

### **6.3 Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024–25**

(Pages 118 – 123)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chair of the Finance Committee to Cardiff Metropolitan  
University

### **6.4 Services for care experienced children: exploring radical reform**

(Page 124)

Attached Documents:

Additional information from National Youth Advocacy Services NYAS Cymru

**7 Scrutiny of Qualifications Wales Annual Report 2022 – 2023 –  
consideration of the evidence**

(12.00 – 12.10)

**8 Residential Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill – consideration of the  
evidence**

(12.10 – 12.15)

**9 Welsh Government White Paper on Ending Homelessness in Wales  
– consideration of the Committee's response**

(12.15 – 12.30)

(Pages 125 – 135)

Attached Documents:

Draft response to the Welsh Government's White Paper on ending  
homelessness

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# Agenda Item 4

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

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By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

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# Agenda Item 6.1



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30 November 2023

Dear Committee,

**Ref: Call for information – the Welsh Government's Draft Budget proposals 2024-25**

Thank you very much for the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the Welsh Government's Draft Budget for 2024-25.

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol works with further education colleges, universities, apprenticeship providers and employers to create opportunities to train and study through the medium of Welsh. We inspire and encourage everyone to use their Welsh skills. The Coleg's aim is to build a Welsh and bilingual education and training system that is accessible to all and to develop bilingual workforces.

Our response to the consultation will focus on those elements in the Budget that are relevant to the Coleg's terms of reference.

## **Higher education**

The Coleg was established in 2011, and extensive Welsh-language and bilingual provision has now been developed in all major subjects delivered at Welsh universities. There are now over 7,200 students studying part of their degree courses through the medium of Welsh, which equates to 28% of all Welsh speakers at Welsh universities.

The Coleg's latest Academic Plan outlines our intentions for the next phase, with one of the main aims being to attract new audiences to Welsh and bilingual higher education, including those who are less confident using Welsh. There are 20,000 Welsh speakers studying at Welsh universities and the Coleg is currently developing plans to attract more of them to study part of their courses in Welsh. It is absolutely vital that the Coleg receives the anticipated funding to support this important work and to safeguard its existing provision.

## **Further education and apprenticeships**

In 2018, the Coleg was given responsibility for further education and apprenticeships, and we are currently implementing ambitious plans to develop the



provision for every learner in these sectors, regardless of their Welsh-language skills. There has been clear progress made in the area of learning activities with an element of Welsh in the post-16 sector since the Coleg was given the responsibility for investing in new staff, provision and resources, as shown in the table below:

Learning activities with at least one Welsh element:

Year	Further education	Workplace learning
2017/18	7.3%	10.3%
2018/19	8.7%	11.9%
2019/20	8.8%	13.0%
2020/21	14.7%	20.8%
2021/22	18.2%	25.3%

Data source: [Cymraeg 2050: a million Welsh speakers – Annual report 2022/23 \(gov.wales p.24\)](#)

It is clear from the data that momentum has now begun to develop towards increasing Welsh and bilingual provision, and that further education colleges and apprenticeship providers have so far responded well to the challenge of embedding Welsh across the sector. In order to ensure continued momentum and sustainable growth, it is vital that we see Welsh Government funding continue and increase over the coming years.

## Funding Welsh and bilingual tertiary education

### Funding Welsh-medium and bilingual further education and apprenticeships

Some 2% of the Welsh Government's further education budget is spent on further education provision and Welsh-medium and bilingual apprenticeships, while Welsh speakers represent 24% of learners. The Action Plan for Welsh-medium and bilingual Further Education and Apprenticeships by the Coleg and the Welsh Government targets *everyone* in the sector, regardless of their Welsh skills.

### Funding Welsh-medium higher education

Some 3% of the Welsh Government's higher education budget is spent on Welsh-medium and bilingual higher education provision (this does not include the Student Maintenance budget), while Welsh speakers represent 14% of students at Welsh universities.

Discussions have been held and are continuing with the Welsh Government and opposition parties about the need to invest in developing the Welsh language in the further education, apprenticeships and higher education sector to achieve the objectives of the Cymraeg 2050 Strategy. It is absolutely vital to ensure opportunities for people to continue to build and develop their Welsh language skills after leaving school, and to prepare them to work in bilingual workplaces, if the goals of having a million Welsh speakers and doubling the daily use of Welsh in our communities are to be reached.

The Government made targeted increases to the Coleg's budget during 2022-23 and 2023-24, as part of the Co-operation Agreement, specifically to increase staffing and provision in the post-16 sector, and to implement two initial teacher education projects – an extremely important agenda given the lack of people training each year to teach in the Welsh and English sector.

In December 2022, forecasts were received for further budget increases in 2024-25 [and this was confirmed in a letter from the Minister for Education and Welsh Language to the Children's Committee](#). The commitment is also consistent with the Government's commitments in its current Programme for Government, and with the Co-operation Agreement between the Government and Plaid Cymru:

**1. [Programme for Government 2021-2026](#):**

“Expand the role of and increase funding to the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and the National Centre for Learning Welsh.”

**2. [Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru Co-operation Agreement](#):**

“Expand the role of and increase funding to the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and the National Centre for Learning Welsh.”

**3. [Cymraeg 2050 Work Programme, 2021-2026](#):**

“The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and the National Centre for Learning Welsh both have important roles to play in Welsh language acquisition and learning...

15. In collaboration with the regional consortia and local authorities, expand the role of the National Centre for Learning Welsh to support the teaching of Welsh in English-medium schools and provide a language learning pathway from school to post-compulsory education.

16. Expand the role of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, and develop proposals for the Welsh-medium Education Bill to place the Coleg on a statutory footing.

**17. Provide additional funding over 5 years to the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to expand Welsh-medium provision in further education, apprenticeships and higher education.**

18. In conjunction with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, develop targets to increase linguistic progression between statutory and further education and apprenticeships.

19. Increase learning, assessment and progression through the medium of Welsh by establishing the new Tertiary Education and Research Commission, through the proposed Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Bill, with strategic duties associated with promoting Welsh-medium tertiary education.”

## **Establishing the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research**

With the establishment of the new Commission for Tertiary Education and Research, and the statutory duties it will have for promoting Welsh-language research and provision, it is vital to ensure not only that momentum keeps building, but that the expectations for the tertiary sector, in terms of Welsh-language and bilingual provision, also grow.

The Coleg was designated by the Welsh Ministers to provide advice to the Commission from 1 April 2024, and this is a key step forward. Initial discussions between Commission and Coleg officials have been positive, and we look forward to formalising the relationship between the two bodies. The duties held by the Commission will lead to increasing expectations on the sector as a whole to make meaningful progress in the development of the Welsh language and while that is welcome, it is critical that the developments are adequately funded.

### **The proposed Welsh Language Education Bill**

Another key policy development affecting the tertiary sectors was the publication of the White Paper on the Welsh Language Education Bill. The Coleg has supported the main objectives of the White Paper and we look forward to playing a full role in discussions to establish a robust legislative structure and framework to support the progress that the Government wishes to see. In the current economic climate, it is more important than ever that all options for support structures are fully considered, including the option to split or merge resources and services where they already exist. As set out in our response to the White Paper, the Coleg is very open to discussing all of these options with the Government and others.

We look forward to continuing our discussions with the Government and members of the relevant Senedd committees to ensure that this important agenda is given the priority it deserves in the Government's Draft Budget for 2024-25 and beyond.

For further information, please contact Gwenllian Griffiths, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's Chief Engagement Officer at [g.griffiths@colegcymraeg.ac.uk](mailto:g.griffiths@colegcymraeg.ac.uk).

Yours sincerely,



**Dr Ioan Matthews**  
**Chief Executive**

cc. The Senedd Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee (SeneddCulture@Senedd.Wales) and Children, Young People and Education Committee (SeneddChildren@Senedd.Wales)

Senedd Committees

A call for information – Welsh Government Draft Budget  
Proposals for 2024-25

November 2023

## About Colegau Cymru

Colegau Cymru is a post-compulsory education charity; we promote the public benefit of post-compulsory education and learning. We also convene the Further Education (FE) Principals' Forum, which represents FE colleges and FE institutions (FEIs) in Wales. Colegau Cymru also undertakes research, policy development and provides practical support to FE colleges in Wales, including on work-based learning (WBL) which is a key part of FE college activity.

Colegau Cymru welcomes the opportunity to submit its response to the Senedd's call for information – Welsh Government Draft Budget Proposals for 2024-25. This response is being shared with the following Senedd Committees – Children, Young People and Education; Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs; Equality and Social Justice; and Finance Committee. We have focused our response on questions most relevant to both FE and work-based learning.

- Further education and work-based learning are not luxury items that are simply 'nice to have' – they are both absolutely fundamental to our economic recovery and to building the fairer society we all want to build. Cutting funding for either will weaken the potential for sustainable economic growth and impact the life chances of people living in our poorest communities. The cumulative impact of any potential budget reductions to FE and apprenticeships should be understood as a whole. The time to invest in our learners, our workers, and our second-chancers is now.
- The education and social impact of the pandemic is still evident through poor levels of attendance in schools, significant mental health challenges facing many learners, and evidence of wider behavioural challenges of learners entering college. FE needs to be properly resourced to allow it to mitigate the impact of the pandemic during school education and to ensure the most vulnerable learners are not doubly disadvantaged.
- The proposed 24% cut to the apprenticeship programme will see the largest drop in work-based learning activity since devolution, with around 10,000 fewer individuals able to start an apprentice next year. This will immediately undermine support for our anchor companies and SMEs, as well as putting future inward investment opportunities at risk. Protecting the apprenticeship and part-time learning budgets are essential to ensuring employers can upskill their workforce and grow their businesses.

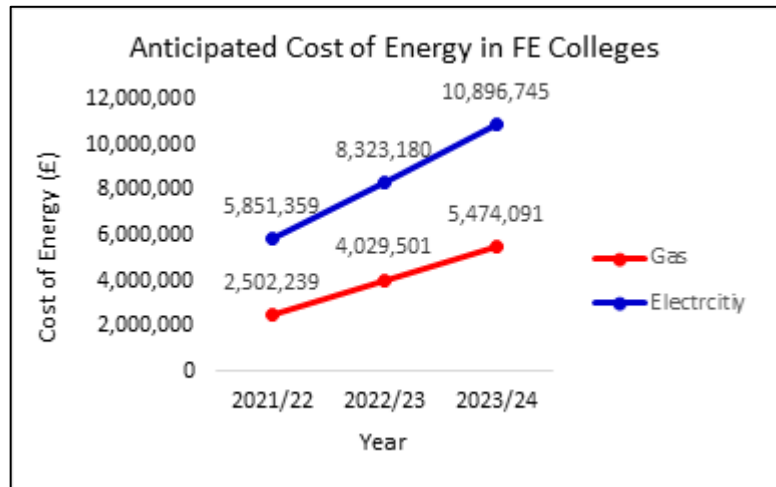
## 1. Background

The FE sector is confronted with a series of unprecedented financial and policy challenges. Over the coming years colleges will be faced with significant financial challenges, the rising cost of pay settlements to support staff with the cost of living, sharply rising costs for materials and consumables, and the impact of Brexit and the loss of EU funded projects and uncertainties

presented by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Alongside this, the sector is managing the long legacy of the pandemic, including the huge demand for health and wellbeing services and learners entering FE after years of disrupted school education.

Inflation has hit the UK hard, in fact, inflation in the UK has remained at around a 40 year high<sup>1</sup>.

The graph shows data provided by the ColegauCymru Finance Directors Group. It shows that between 2021 and 2024, the cost of electricity and gas for colleges in Wales will have risen by 53.7% and 45.7% respectively. This, in addition to the soaring prices of food and course materials, the uncertainty posed by the post-Brexit European funding arrangements, and a tightening public purse, make it vital that we recognise the breadth of financial challenges facing colleges.



With Wales looking for a pathway out of flat economic growth, a strong FE and work-based learning sector is needed more than ever. Yet to play our role in delivering the fairer, stronger and greener Wales we all want to see, colleges need the sustained financial support to ensure that learners get the high-quality education they deserve and that employers access to the skills they need to grow for the future.

Today's young people and our adult learners must not become a lost generation. They cannot be left behind. There is no route map to a better Wales that doesn't rely on a thriving, resilient and successful FE and WBL sector. Colleges are training, re-skilling, and upskilling tomorrow's plumbers, counsellors, welders, caterers, cyber security specialists, nurses, heat pump system installers, web designers, social care workers, and many more. At a time when both learners and employers need access to FE the most, the Welsh Government must prioritise investment in the sector.

2. What, in your opinion, has been the impact of the Welsh Government's 2023-2024 Budget, including funding related to the recovery of the pandemic? Have Welsh Government business support policies been effective, given the economic outlook for 2024-25?

The sector recognises the level of additional support provided to the sector to support learners through the pandemic. However, it is vital policymakers acknowledge that impact of the pandemic has not gone away and that many learners coming into post-16 education require additional and ongoing support with literacy and numeracy, support with their mental health and

well-being, and additional support to overcome the impact of prolonged period of absences. A commitment to long-term and mainstream funding to support the recovery from the pandemic is essential.

The move from financial year funding to academic year funding has been welcomed, however it was suggested that bigger pots of funding to cover various different projects over a longer time frame would potentially generate better value for money in the longer term – for example, it would be easier to hire specialist staff to run a project for a three year period, rather than a six month period.

Together with NUS Wales<sup>1</sup>, the increase in Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) payments was warmly received by the sector, however a review of eligibility thresholds is encouraged in order to support those learners who are struggling daily with the cost of living, but who may fall just outside the entitlement boundaries. Further to this, the sector is looking forward to the outcome of the full EMA review which is underway. It should not be forgotten that families and communities are still feeling the effects of the pandemic, therefore consideration should be given to those learners from the most disadvantaged backgrounds whose families may not have financially recovered from the impact of the pandemic.

### 3. How should/could the Welsh Government support the economy and business following the pandemic, Brexit and inflationary and other economic pressures? How financially prepared is your organisation for the 2024-25 financial year, how will inflation impact on your ability to deliver planned objectives, and how robust is your ability to plan for future years?

FE colleges directly support businesses more than any other form of education through programmes such as apprenticeships and Personal Learning Accounts (PLAs). It should be noted that with the end of European funding – which assisted 25,000 businesses and supported 86,000 people into employment<sup>2</sup>– and the delay in implementing its replacement, the ‘Shared Prosperity Fund’, there is likely to be far less support available to businesses through FE in 2024/25 unless current funding levels in these areas are maintained.

It is incredibly difficult for the sector to plan when so much is uncertain. Colleges generally have robust finances, however with enrolment trends flattening out some colleges have already made cuts to their budgets, and further reductions in funding will inevitably require similar action. A further issue is that a number of colleges have embarked on major construction projects – to which they have to make a financial contribution – and these plans are built on the expectation that funding is stable. Any reductions in funding could put at risk the needed modernisation of campuses across Wales, leading to a poorer experience for learners from the most disadvantaged communities.

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<sup>1</sup> [EMA: Welsh Government to increase weekly student grant](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Not a penny less – Welsh Government calls for commitment on Shared Prosperity Fund](#)

Work based learning is key to ensuring that the Welsh Government can achieve its ambition for a stronger, greener, fairer Wales. However, in 2023/24 there has been an ‘in year budget reduction’ of £17.5million to apprenticeships, with further cuts expected in 2024/25. Apprenticeships provision is ‘demand led’, and the Welsh Government’s own data shows an increase in apprenticeship starts in the first half of 2022/23, compared with the same period a year earlier. There is no lack of demand from employers for apprenticeships.

Proposals from the Welsh Government will see a 24% cut to the apprenticeship programme, which would result in 10,000 fewer starts in 2024/25. The reductions would fall disproportionately on young people (16-24), those in the lowest socio-economic groups, and women. Early analysis indicates that it would likely mean a significant reduction in the number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic apprenticeship learners. If apprenticeships are to be subject to such a significant budget reduction, it will be the key priority sectors which are impacted the most, including health and social care, construction, and engineering. It will be the most significant drop in work based learning provision since devolution and undermine our economic recovery at a time when employers, individuals and the economy need it the most.

It is critical that the FE sector has sufficient funding to be able to navigate the stormy economic waters, and support Wales’ communities and economy in its recovery. Colleges are the skills engine driving economic recovery and supporting resilience. Investing in colleges is investing in the most important natural resource which Wales has – its people. A recent report from the owner of Screwfix and B&Q, Kingfisher Plc, showed that the UK is set to lose out on £98billion of growth by 2030 due to a shortage of tradespeople<sup>3</sup>. Colleges are central to delivering these skilled tradespeople. Ultimately, the availability of skills plays a pivotal role in the prosperity of Wales’ economy and communities, and its attractiveness to investors. In order to drive inward investment, it is critical that skills are the central pillar to that plan. To highlight the inward investment case: just recently PWC has announced they are to create 1,000 new jobs in Wales by 2028<sup>4</sup> and said “The demand for those skills is only going up, and this is a great opportunity for Wales to make sure we are at the forefront of the next industrial revolution. We are creating jobs where people right here in the Cardiff office will be serving clients all over the world”; and Thales<sup>5</sup> who support 1,100 jobs in Wales gave evidence in November 2023 to the Welsh Affairs Committee where they highlighted the importance of Cyber College Cymru for skills improvement, arguing that apprenticeships form a key part of their workforce.

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<sup>3</sup> [UK to lose out on £98bn of growth by 2030 due to shortage of tradespeople \(kingfisher.com\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Cardiff: PWC to create 1,000 new tech jobs in Wales - BBC News](#)

<sup>5</sup> Aerospace, Space, Defence, Security and Transportation



4. What action should the Welsh Government take to help households cope with inflation and cost of living issues. How should the Budget address the needs of people living in urban, post-industrial and rural communities and in supporting economies within those communities?

Public transport in rural areas of Wales have been described by some colleges as unreliable and costly, which makes transport for learners to both college and places of work for apprentices, very difficult. Pembrokeshire College Principal and Chair of the Colegau Cymru Strategic Work Based Learning Group, Barry Walters, highlighted this during his evidence to the Senedd’s Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee on 28 September 2023. He spoke about an apprentice who needs to take two buses to reach their place of work, fares which total £9. Once he had purchased lunch for the day his total spend has reached £13, however with the apprenticeship wage being £5.28 per hour, he will have to work two and a half hours before he has any money to take home. Some areas have already seen many bus routes cancelled, for example the Fflecsi Bwcabws in Ceredigion, which was EU funded. With routes in smaller, rural areas being cancelled or withdrawn all together, learners have no equality of access to transport, meaning no parity between those in rural and those in urban areas.

The Financial Contingency Fund is provided to learners by the Welsh Government and is means-tested. It is there to support those who are in most financial need. The fund is allocated based on the number of full-time learners enrolled at each college, and discretion is given to colleges to use the fund as they see fit. In 2021/22, the largest sum of money across the sector was allocated to learner transport. This is echoed by Welsh Government research from March 2023, which recognised that 41% of 16 to 24 years olds identified transport as being the number one barrier for 16 to 24 year olds to getting a new course, training or a job<sup>6</sup>. For this reason, colleges are eager to see the outcome of the Learner Travel Measure review which was undertaken by the Welsh Government over the summer of 2023, and hope that careful consideration has been given to post-16 transport for both academic learners going to college, and WBL learners travelling to their places of work.

5. Are Welsh Government plans to build a greener economy clear and sufficiently ambitious? Do you think there is enough investment being targeted at tackling the climate change and nature emergency? Are there any potential skill gaps that need to be addressed to achieve these plans?

As noted by the Welsh Government in the “Stronger, Greener, Fairer Wales: Net Zero Skills Action Plan”, skills will be a key enabler as we transition to a net zero economy<sup>7</sup>, therefore investment is crucial to ensure that no one is left behind. As we adjust our economy towards the net zero goals, these existing and emerging jobs require different skills. Without a suitably trained workforce, the transition will be impossible. This includes key sectors like renewable energy,

<sup>6</sup> [Young Person’s Guarantee National Conversation: update for participants](#) – Welsh Government

<sup>7</sup> [Stronger, Greener, Fairer Wales: Net Zero Skills Action Plan](#) – Welsh Government

energy and resource efficiency, renovation of buildings, construction, environmental services and manufacturing.

The scale of the proposed cuts to both the FE and WBL budgets will severely undermine our drive towards net zero and our ability as a nation to be able to attract the kind of investment that we need for the future. Long-term we need to take a more strategic view of the skill needs for the transition to net zero and ensure that it is resourced so that people can retrain and upskill for the jobs of the future. Cuts to apprenticeships and reductions in the opportunities to access Personal Learning Accounts will only risk the progress we need to make in reaching our targets and in contributing to the global effort to tackle climate change.

Our current frame of reference for a greener economy is the Net Zero Skills Action Plan. This Plan (and the supporting strategy documents) clearly outline Welsh Government's ambitious plans. As part of the Net Zero Skills Action Plan, Welsh Government are currently consulting on the skills needs within each of the eight 'emission sectors' with a view to developing 'sector route maps'. Only once those consultations are complete, and the resultant sector route maps published, will we fully know the extent of the skills gap.

6. Is the Welsh Government's approach to preventative spending represented in resource allocations (Preventative spending = spending which focuses on preventing problems and eases future demand on services by intervening early).

Analysis of data from the OECD / World Bank (1995-2015)<sup>8</sup> identifies patterns between education and health indicators. Adults with higher educational attainment have better health and lifespans than their less educated peers. Tertiary education in particular, is critical in influencing infant mortality, life expectancy, and child vaccination. Education and wellbeing are intrinsically linked. The evidence behind the importance of education as a determinant of health is among the most compelling. Education is strongly associated with life expectancy, morbidity, health behaviours, and educational attainment plays an important role in health by shaping opportunities, employment and income<sup>9</sup>. The Chief Medical Officer for Wales' Annual Report highlights the disproportionate health effects that the cost of living crisis has had on low income people, and critically, recommends that the Welsh Government should continue investment in 'interventions that address upstream determinants', including education.

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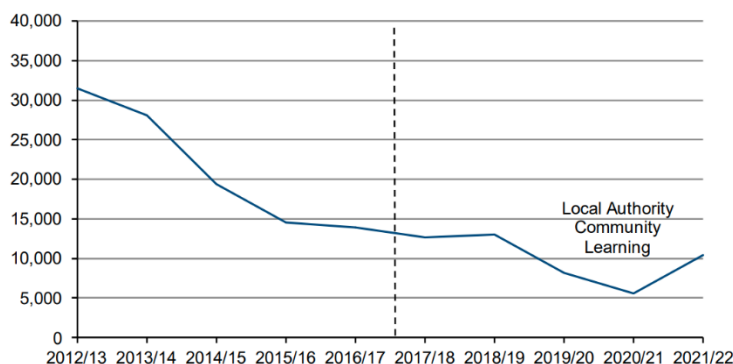
<sup>8</sup> [The influence of education on health: an empirical assessment of OECD countries for the period 1995–2015 | Archives of Public Health | Full Text \(biomedcentral.com\)](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Education: a neglected social determinant of health - The Lancet Public Health](#)

A decade ago, the budgets for part-time and adult community learning were slashed<sup>10</sup>. Since then, as recognised by Audit Wales, part time students have been particularly affected by the pandemic – especially those in adult community learning<sup>11</sup>. In 2021, Audit Wales highlighted that “Decisions on the level of provision in future will need to take account of the Welsh Government’s aspirations for lifelong learning and creating flexible learning pathways that enable individuals to acquire new skills in a way that suits their personal circumstances”<sup>12</sup>.

The long term decreased trend in adult learning can be linked to reductions in public funding<sup>13</sup>. The Minister for Education and Welsh Language has long publicly stated his commitment to adult learning – a commitment to creating a Wales where it’s ‘never too late to learn’.

Chart 2f: Learners in adult learning, 2012/13 to 2021/22 [note 1]



ColegauCymru is supportive

of this aspiration, and there is considerable research in place which demonstrates the value of adult learning in Wales, both in the community and within a college setting, and the positive difference this makes to people’s lives<sup>14</sup>. Lifelong learning supports the development of skills, improves health and wellbeing and is a catalyst for social engagement and integration. ACL is essential for those individuals who are hardest to reach, and furthest away from education and employment.

In respect of colleges delivery of skills-based programmes such as PLAs and apprenticeships, and employability programmes such as Jobs Growth Wales Plus (JGW+) this has been the case to-date. However, the college network is facing in-year and future budget reductions. If the Welsh Government is serious about preventative spending, to avoid greater issues in the future, then it must ensure that all demand (from individuals, employers, and/or the economy) is met. The skills-based training that colleges deliver is demand-led, and as such, so should Welsh Government’s funding in this area i.e. if there is demand, it must be met.

<sup>10</sup> [Criticism over cuts to adult learning budgets in Wales - BBC News](#)

<sup>11</sup> [A Picture of Higher and Further Education \(audit.wales\)](#)

<sup>12</sup> [A Picture of Higher and Further Education \(audit.wales\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> [Further Education, Work-based Learning and Adult Learning in Wales, 2021/22 \(gov.wales\)](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Adult learning briefing ENG.pdf \(colleges.wales\)](#)

7. Is there enough infrastructure investment targeted at young people? What are the key opportunities for the Welsh Government to invest in supporting an economy and public services that better deliver against the well-being goals in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act?

Investing in young people (aged 16 – 24) through the Young Persons’ Guarantee (and all its component elements) is the key opportunity, as well as assisting older individuals looking to enter or re-enter the workforce.

In addition, the Welsh Government should outline in its ‘Statement of Priorities’ for the soon to be established Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) the need to provide funding support for the existing Welsh workforce who are looking to skill, up-skill, or re-skill to maintain their place in an ever-changing workforce and economy. Colegau Cymru has set out the elements that should be included in the forthcoming Statement of Priorities<sup>15</sup>. These are:

- Put learners at the heart of decision making – at a time of significant pressure on public finances, the long-term interests of learners should be put first.
- Deliver the sustained funding to protect the curriculum and learner support – recognition is needed of the rising cost pressures on colleges, with a commitment to protect investment in the core curriculum offer and wider learner support.
- Renew the commitment to vocational education and training – including taking forward the recommendations of the Review of Vocational Qualifications<sup>16</sup>.
- Develop a new, enhanced 14-19 learning and transition pathway for all learners – which should include a review of the viability of small school sixth forms.
- Lifelong learning and progression opportunities for adults – to deliver a Wales where it is never too late to learn, a nation of ‘second chances’, a coherent and long term policy commitment, backed by sustained and secure investment is vital.

8. Is enough being done to tackle the rising costs of living and support those people living in relative income poverty?

The FE and WBL sectors in Wales generally support a higher percentage of learners from disadvantaged backgrounds compared to Higher Education (HE) and school Sixth forms, through various learning pathways such as vocational lower level provision, Adult Community Learning, and apprenticeships. Therefore, any reduction to college and work based learning budgets is likely to have a disproportionate impact on individuals from the most deprived areas of Wales. This is supported by recent figures which show that of the 98,175 learners (both full-time and part-time) enrolled at FE institutions from August 2021 to July 2022, 13% were from the most

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<sup>15</sup> [2023 11 Statement of Priorities Publication.pdf \(colleges.wales\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Review of vocational qualifications in Wales: report | GOV.WALES](#)

deprived 10% of neighbourhoods in Wales. This is compared to 8% of the 23,375 Sixth form students registered at schools in Wales<sup>17</sup>.

Further crucial support is available to college learners via the Financial Contingency Fund (FCF) which is critical for colleges to flexibly use to meet the support needs of their learners. Over 8% (3,666) of full-time FE learners aged 16-18 utilized financial contingency funding for free meal vouchers, with a further 748 learners in the 19+ age bracket, bringing the total number of learners who relied on the FCF in order to eat during the college day to almost 10% (4,414). Colleges noted that it is not only those learners from lower socio-economic backgrounds struggling with the cost of living, but now those middle earners are also facing financial hardship. As with the EMA, ColegauCymru suggests that eligibility for receiving support from the FCF is also reviewed in order to support all learners who are facing financial difficulty.

The FCF does not only provide learners with free meals during term time, but also during holidays. Data gathered by the Welsh Government from the five holidays (not including the summer holiday) during 2022/23 showed that an average of 3,322 learners benefitted from free meals. These figures emphasise the vital role colleges are playing in supporting young people, not just during the college day, but also outside of term time.

### Investing in education – for today’s and for future generations

We must avoid a situation where any funding reductions significantly undermine capacity to deliver for learners and for employers as they face the challenges of the future. There is no route map to a better Wales that doesn’t rely on a thriving, resilient and successful FE and WBL sector. The 13 FE institutions in Wales offer high quality vocational, technical and academic education to people of all ages. College lecturers have often come into teaching after a successful career in their industries, which means learners are taught to demonstrate industry-level skill levels and behaviours. Colleges’ industry standard facilities provide the high quality environment our learners deserve.

We must protect the core curriculum, and the support for our learners. This is how we future-proof Wales’ economy. If we do not invest now, we will feel the effects in a decade’s time, which will be too late for our learners.

**Amy Evans**

**Policy Officer, ColegauCymru, [Amy.Evans@colegaucymru.ac.uk](mailto:Amy.Evans@colegaucymru.ac.uk)**

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<sup>17</sup> [Number of unique learners in post-16 sectors by deprivation decile of home neighbourhood, August 2021 to July 2022](#)

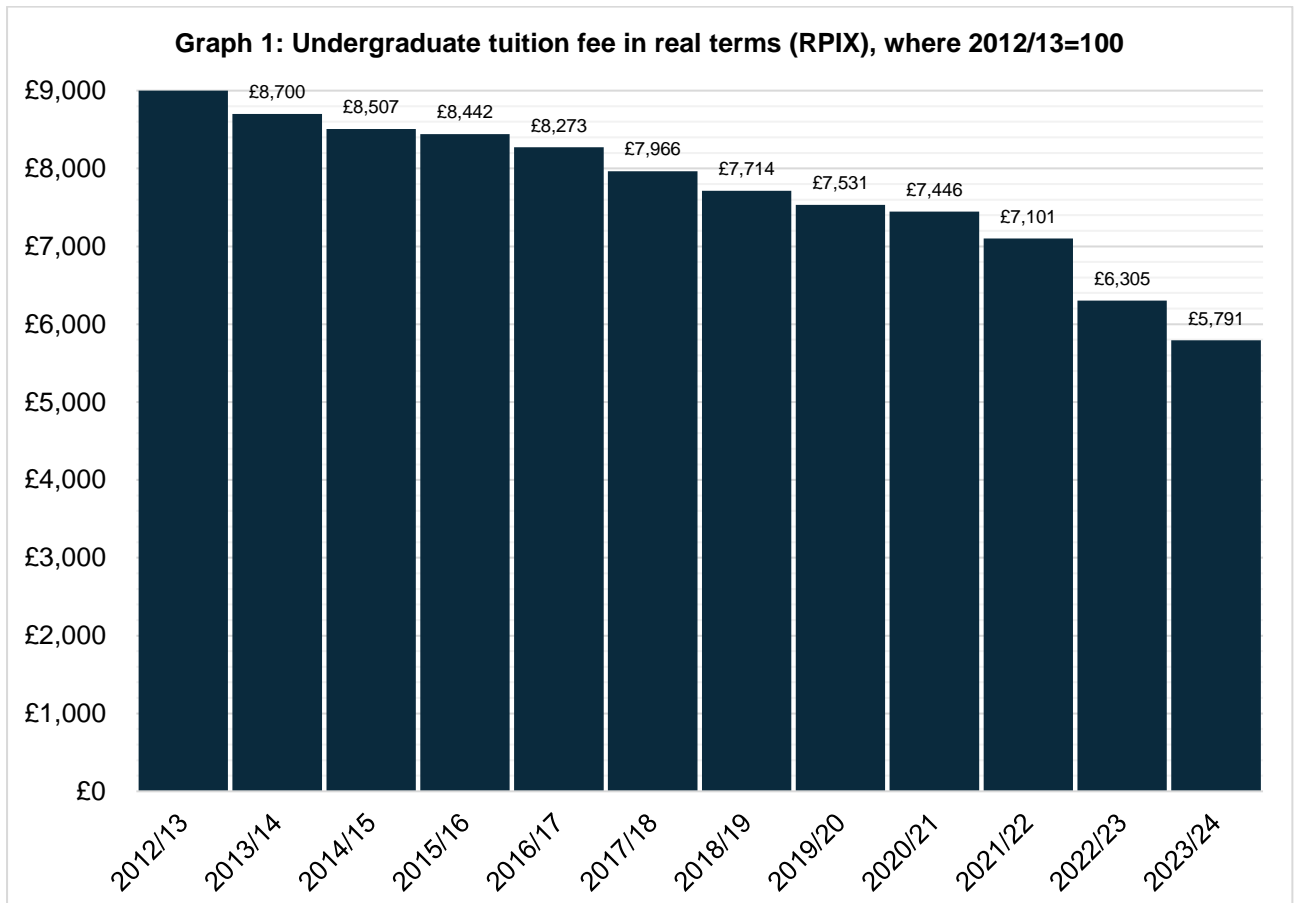


## Cardiff Metropolitan University response to the Senedd Finance Committee inquiry into the Welsh Government draft budget 2024/25

- i. In the most recent analysis, universities generated £5.3bn for the Welsh economy.<sup>1</sup> UCAS estimates that demand for UK higher education will rise until 2030 and peak at one million applicants, with international demand growing until 2050.<sup>2 3</sup> Universities UK states 95% of new jobs in Wales will be graduate level by 2035, necessitating an additional 402,825 graduates.<sup>4</sup> The ability to meet demand and fill skills gaps depends on a strong higher education sector.
- ii. The indicative budget for 2024/25 showed a proposed allocation of c. £200m for higher education, representing no increase on the final 2023/24 budget (or a cut against supplementary budgets for 2023/24).<sup>5</sup> Cardiff Metropolitan University recommends Welsh Government uses the 2024/25 budget to focus higher education funding on:
  - Higher cost subject premia for full-time undergraduates.
  - Innovation via the Research Wales Innovation Fund, taking it closer to £25m.
  - Capital, at least reinstating the £10m allocation.

### 1. Fee income

- 1.1 Applications and acceptances to universities fell in 2023, possibly reflecting cost-of-living pressures.<sup>6 7</sup> To note, Welsh Government uprated students' maintenance support in line with inflation at the start of 2023 but other governments' support is less resilient.<sup>8 9</sup>
- 1.2 The tuition fee for UK undergraduates has been £9,000 in Wales since 2012/13. Based on ONS data for RPIX, the fee was less than £6,000 in real terms at the start of this academic year.<sup>10</sup> From OBR projections for RPIX, it will fall below £5,500 by the start of 2027/28.<sup>11</sup>



- 1.3 The situation in other parts of the UK is different, with Wales the only country that does not charge £9,250 for students domiciled in another UK nation.

**Table 1: Maximum undergraduate tuition fees for 2023/24**

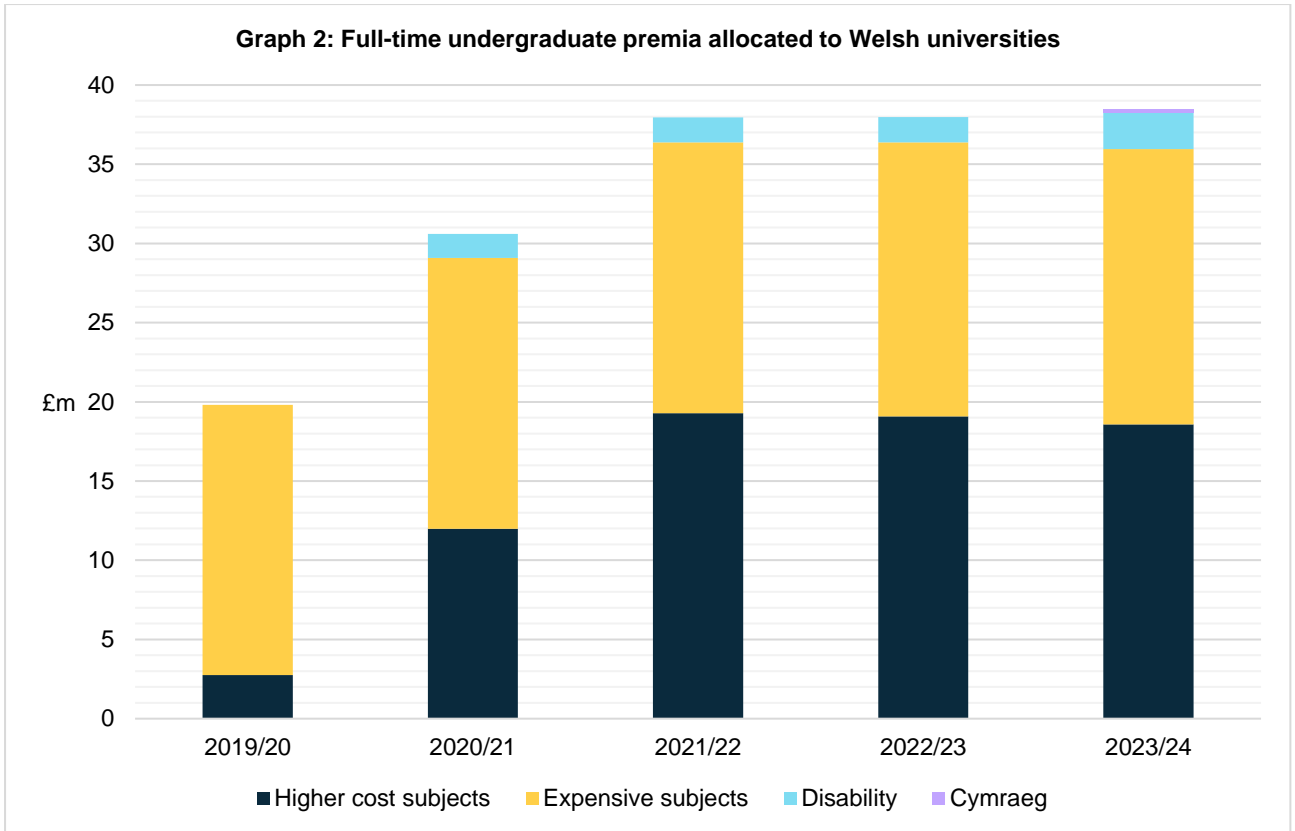
University location	Domicile			
	Wales	England	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Wales	£9,000	£9,000	£9,000	£9,000
England	£9,250	£9,250	£9,250	£9,250
Scotland	£9,250	£9,250	-	£9,250
Northern Ireland	£9,250	£9,250	£9,250	£4,710

- 1.4 If UK students from outside Wales paid £9,250, it would generate an extra c. £10m per annum for Welsh universities. This would not be funded by Welsh Government.
- 1.5 Falling fee value has been alleviated via other income, primarily the uncapped fees of postgraduate and international students. International students are increasingly vital for sector finances. In the most recent data, they were 17% of the cohort in Wales but 26.6% of the fee income.<sup>12 13</sup> *Unlike home students, international students generate a surplus.*
- 1.6 However, UK Government policies are hampering international activity. From 1 January 2024, UK Government will no longer grant visas for dependants of taught postgraduates.<sup>14</sup> This is most likely to affect Nigeria and India which, in 2021/22, accounted for 43% of international taught postgraduates in Wales.<sup>15</sup>
- 1.7 UK Government has also increased visa costs and will be raising the Immigration Healthcare Surcharge to part-fund a public sector pay-rise. The healthcare surcharge has gone from £470 to £776 a year for students, an increase of £306 (65%).<sup>16</sup> Applying for a study visa from outside the UK has risen from £363 to £490, an increase of £127 (35%).<sup>17</sup>
- 1.8 For international staff, the health surcharge has risen from £624 to at least £1,305 per annum, a substantial increase of £681 (109%). A range of their visa costs have also risen, including for dependants they may wish to bring as part of their move to the UK. Universities have typically paid these costs, and this increase will have a considerable effect.
- 1.9 To note, equality impact assessments for the changes also indicated there were likely to be negative effects across a range of protected characteristics. The visa costs were found to be likely to impact with regards to sex and disability.<sup>18</sup> The healthcare change would impact negatively based on marriage/civil partnership, race, religion and sex (with mitigation only in place for marriage/civil partnerships).<sup>19</sup>

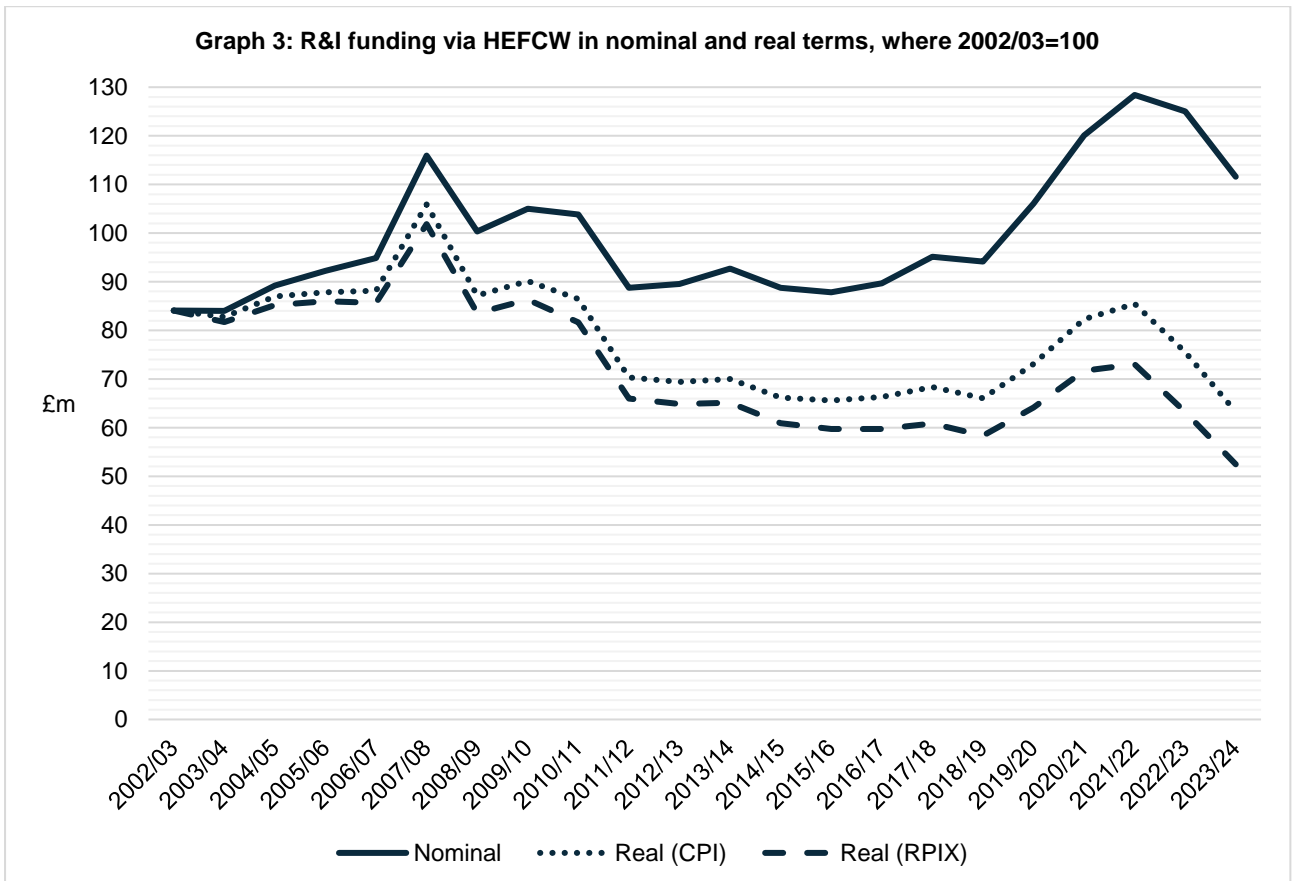
## 2. Recurrent grant

- 2.1 Raising the fee to allow for a surplus and/or immigration policy reforms are unlikely, so the grant to HEFCW (replaced by CTER from 2024/25) is increasingly important. Welsh Government gave an extra £17.2m to HEFCW for ring-fenced priorities in 2023/24.<sup>20</sup> Such funding allows investments that are harder to make whilst fee value is falling.
- 2.2 There is a need to address higher cost subjects for full-time undergraduates, for which universities receive premia. The higher cost subjects are non-clinical medicine and dentistry; science, engineering and technology; and mathematical sciences, IT and computing. These are national priorities, vital to the future success of NHS Wales, our economic productivity and the just transition to net zero.
- 2.3 It is one of four premia and, without an overall increase in the higher education budget, funding the premia properly will be difficult without cuts to other pots of funding.





2.4 The research and innovation (R&I) budget has greater salience since the loss of EU structural funds, which could cost 1,000 jobs across Welsh universities.<sup>21</sup> In real terms, the devolved R&I budget, combining both revenue and capital, is smaller than 20 years ago.



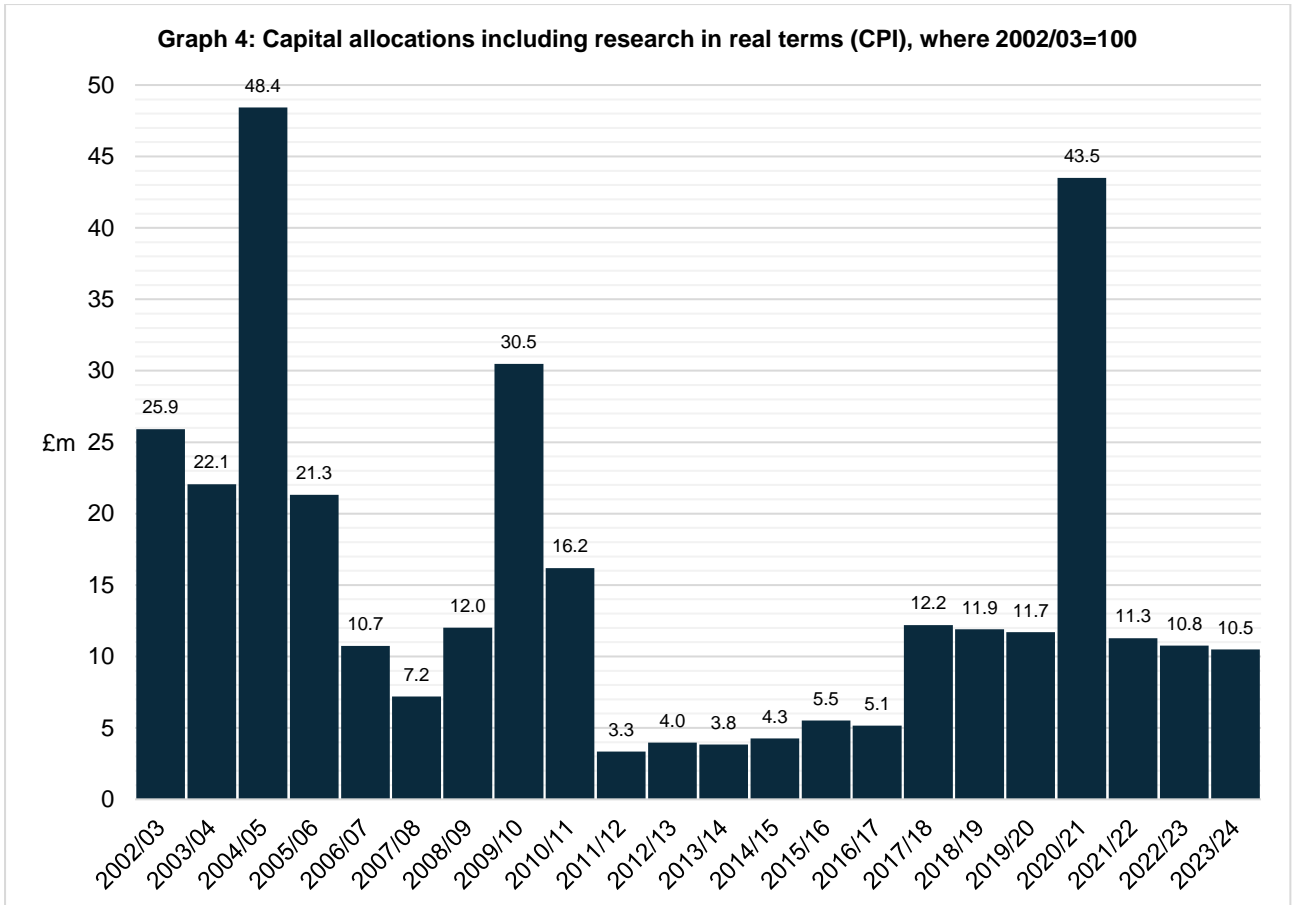
- 2.5 A priority for 2024/25 should be innovation funding. Wales has lost access to EU structural funds, which had a focus on innovation and translating research into societal benefits. Replacing the funds in full is well beyond the scope of devolved budgets, so Wales needs to transition to competitive UK sources and shore up its own innovation funding streams.
- 2.6 The only devolved funding stream with a somewhat similar purpose to structural funds is the Research Wales Innovation Fund (RWIF), created after Professor Graeme Reid’s review of government-funded R&I.<sup>22</sup> Since RWIF arrived in 2019/20, Cardiff Met has increased R&I income from non-HEFCW sources by 54%.
- 2.6 Reid advocated an innovation fund of £25m per year, but RWIF is still £15m.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the Welsh Government innovation strategy delivery plan states that CTER will expand innovation funding to further education.<sup>24</sup> This would result in a £15m fund, short of its £25m target, being spread more thinly. **Getting RWIF to £25m should be a priority for the 2024/25 budget, with future increases to allow for a greater number of eligible organisations.**
- 2.7 In all, the unfulfilled Reid recommendations are substantial. The following table uses HEFCW figures for QR, postgraduate research, RWIF and the Learned Society of Wales. The figure for Welsh Government innovation is the sum of the revenue and capital lines for “innovation” in the 2023/24 budget.<sup>25</sup> <sup>26</sup> The Sêr Cymru figure is from a Welsh Government statement (it is not a distinct line in the budget).<sup>27</sup>

**Table 2: Difference between 2023/24 allocations and Reid review recommendations**

Funding stream	2023/24 (£)	Reid (£)	Difference (£)
Quality-related research	81,677,343	71,000,000	10,677,343
Postgraduate research	6,236,883	3,750,000	2,486,883
Research Wales Innovation Fund	15,000,000	25,000,000	-10,000,000
Learned Society of Wales	275,000	1,000,000	-725,000
Sêr Cymru	5,000,000	6,000,000	-1,000,000
Future of Wales Fund	0	30,000,000	-30,000,000
Welsh Government innovation	5,519,000	10,000,000	-4,481,000
Innovation hubs	0	10,000,000	-10,000,000
Innovation competitions	0	15,000,000	-15,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>113,708,226</b>	<b>171,750,000</b>	<b>-£58,041,774</b>

### 3. Capital

- 3.1 As above, capital investment is hampered by the shrinking ability to generate surpluses. The Bank of England base rate stands at 5.25%, making it harder to invest via private debt.<sup>28</sup>
- 3.2 The primary capital funding grant has been based on student numbers and is required to support Welsh Government priorities like net zero.<sup>29</sup> The funding is £10m a year, boosted during COVID-19 with an extra £44m.<sup>30</sup>
- 3.3 A separate stream exists for research capital; half of which is from UK Government in proportion to Research Council income, with Welsh Government funding the other half in proportion to QR and other research income. The research capital fund is £8.5m in 2023/24.<sup>31</sup>



- 3.4 Total capital funding, both teaching and research, was raised after a tighter period from 2011/12 to 2016/17. The current picture is a clear improvement on the earlier 2010s, albeit generally lower than the 2000s. The 2024/25 indicative budget did not include any capital allocation for higher education, with the £10m recurrent fund potentially ending.<sup>32</sup>
- 3.5 Welsh Government has the mutual investment model, a public-private partnership to finance capital projects, but is not available to higher education institutions.<sup>33 34</sup> From 2012/13 to 2014/15, Welsh universities bid to the education department for capital funding.<sup>35</sup>
- 3.6 In recent years, capital funding has helped Cardiff Met to invest in a range of initiatives of real benefit to Wales and our student population. The Allied Clinical Health Hubs will transform learning and teaching facilities and improved programme delivery of our allied health education contracts e.g., healthcare and podiatry.
- 3.7 Cardiff Met has also invested in the student experience with new learning infrastructure and social spaces, as well as specialist facilities for new courses in architecture and policing. Capital funding has also improved agile working for staff, decarbonisation of estates and the establishment of the Cardiff School of Technologies. **Capital funding for higher education should be reinstated (ideally past £10m) rather than disappearing altogether.**

<sup>1</sup> Kelly, U. and McNicoll, I. 2021. [The economic impact of higher education in Wales](#). Cardiff: Universities Wales.  
<sup>2</sup> Kirk, C. 2023. [What does the Journey to a Million mean for international admissions?](#). Cheltenham: UCAS.  
<sup>3</sup> Hewitt, R. 2020. [Demand for Higher Education to 2035](#). Oxford: Higher Education Policy Institute.  
<sup>4</sup> Universities UK. 2023. [Jobs of the future](#). London: Universities UK.  
<sup>5</sup> Welsh Government. 2023. [Final Budget 2023 to 2024](#). Cardiff: Welsh Government.  
<sup>6</sup> Shearing, H. 2023. [Fall in students accepted into university in UK](#). London: BBC.

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- <sup>7</sup> UCAS. 2023. [All-Party Parliamentary Group for Students – Cost of Living inquiry: UCAS submission](#). Cheltenham: UCAS.
- <sup>8</sup> Miles, J. 2023. [Written Statement: Student support for higher education students in the 2023/24 academic year](#). Cardiff: Welsh Government.
- <sup>9</sup> Freeman, J. 2023. [How to beat a cost-of-living crisis: Universities' support for students](#). Oxford: Higher Education Policy Institute.
- <sup>10</sup> ONS. 2023. [Inflation and price indices](#). Newport: ONS.
- <sup>11</sup> OBR. 2023. [Inflation](#). London: OBR.
- <sup>12</sup> Higher Education Statistics Agency. 2023. [Who's studying in HE?](#). Cheltenham: Higher Education Statistics Agency.
- <sup>13</sup> Higher Education Statistics Agency. 2023. [What is the income of HE providers?](#). Cheltenham: Higher Education Statistics Agency.
- <sup>14</sup> UK Government. 2023. [Changes to student visa route will reduce net migration](#). London: UK Government.
- <sup>15</sup> Higher Education Statistics Agency. 2023. [Where do HE students come from?](#). Cheltenham: Higher Education Statistics Agency.
- <sup>16</sup> UK Government. 2023. [NHS staff receive pay rise](#). London: UK Government.
- <sup>17</sup> UK Government. 2023. [Visa fees transparency data](#). London: UK Government.
- <sup>18</sup> UK Government. 2023. [Immigration and nationality fees: equality impact assessment](#). London: UK Government.
- <sup>19</sup> UK Government. 2023. [Immigration Health Surcharge \(IHS\): equality impact assessment 2023](#). London: UK Government.
- <sup>20</sup> Miles, J. 2023. [HEFCW Remit Letter 2023-24](#). Cardiff: Welsh Government.
- <sup>21</sup> Universities Wales. 2023. [Universities sound the alarm for research, innovation and skills in Wales](#). Cardiff: Universities Wales.
- <sup>22</sup> Reid, G. 2018. [Review of Government Funded Research and Innovation in Wales](#). Cardiff: Welsh Government.
- <sup>23</sup> HEFCW. 2023. [HEFCW's Funding Allocations for Academic Year 2023/24](#). Bedwas: HEFCW.
- <sup>24</sup> Welsh Government. 2023. [Innovation strategy for Wales: delivery plan](#). Cardiff: Welsh Government.
- <sup>25</sup> HEFCW. 2023. [HEFCW's Funding Allocations for Academic Year 2023/24](#). Caerphilly: HEFCW.
- <sup>26</sup> Welsh Government. [1st Supplementary Budget 2023 to 2024](#). Cardiff: Welsh Government.
- <sup>27</sup> Welsh Government. 2023. [Sêr Cymru IV: Economy Minister announces £10 million to support scientific research in Wales](#). Cardiff: Welsh Government.
- <sup>28</sup> Bank of England. 2023. [Interest rates and Bank Rate](#). London: Bank of England.
- <sup>29</sup> HEFCW. 2023. [Capital Funding 2023-24](#). Bedwas: HEFCW.
- <sup>30</sup> HEFCW. 2021. [Additional Capital Funding 2020-21](#). Bedwas: HEFCW.
- <sup>31</sup> HEFCW. 2023. [Higher Education Research Capital \(HERC\) Funding 2023-24](#). Bedwas: HEFCW.
- <sup>32</sup> HEFCW. 2023. [HEFCW's Funding Allocations for Academic Year 2023/24](#). Cardiff: Welsh Government.
- <sup>33</sup> Welsh Government. 2022. [Mutual investment model for infrastructure investment](#). Cardiff: Welsh Government.
- <sup>34</sup> Welsh Government. 2022. [Redacted Education Strategic Partnership Agreement](#). Cardiff: Welsh Government.
- <sup>35</sup> HEFCW. 2012. [Welsh Government Department for Education and Skills Capital Funding](#). Bedwas: HEFCW.

# Agenda Item 6.4

## Gwybodaeth ychwanegol | Additional information

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Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

[Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) | [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#)

[Gwasanaethau i blant sydd wedi bod mewn gofal: archwilio diwygio radical](#) | [Services for care experienced children: exploring radical reform](#)

Ymateb gan Gwasanaeth Eiriolaeth Ieuenctid Cenedlaethol  
From National Youth Advocacy Services NYAS

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NYAS Cymru does not agree that the priority needs test should be abolished for care leavers as proposed within the White Paper Proposal on Ending Homelessness in Wales.

Although Welsh Government's proposal to abolish priority need would in part ensure equality for all homeless people, there is a real risk that care-experienced young people would be placed in vulnerable situations because of the chronic lack of affordable and suitable housing in Wales. With 1 in 3 care leavers become homeless in the first two years of leaving care, the priority need category can be an extremely beneficial status for care leavers, given their very high risks of being homeless.

**1 in 3** care leavers become homeless in the first two years of leaving care.

(All-Party Parliamentary Group for Ending Homelessness, Homelessness prevention for care leavers, prison leavers and survivors of domestic violence, 2017). – England and Wales

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