

Agenda – Children, Young People and Education Committee

Meeting Venue:

Hybrid – Committee room 2 Senedd
and video conference via Zoom

Meeting date: 17 September 2025

Meeting time: 09.00

For further information contact:

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Hybrid

Private meeting

09.00 – 09.30

1 Teacher recruitment and retention – presentation of engagement findings

09.00 – 09.30

(Pages 1 – 45)

Attached Documents:

Engagement Findings

Public meeting

09.30 – 11.00

2 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

09.30

3 Teacher recruitment and retention – evidence session 10

09.30 – 11.00

(Pages 46 – 91)

Lynne Neagle MS, Cabinet Secretary for Education

Christopher Warner, Deputy Director, School Practitioner Division, Welsh Government

Awen Penri, Strategic Education Workforce Plan Lead, Welsh Government



Attached Documents:

Research brief

Teaching in Finland

Paper – Welsh Government

4 Papers to note

11.00

4.1 P-06-1317 Recognise Teaching Assistants as an important asset to schools by raising wage

(Page 92)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chair of the Petitions Committee from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

4.2 P-06-1499 Stop the use of term 'Universal Provision' as a reason to deny ALN

(Pages 93 – 94)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chair of the Petitions Committee from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

4.3 Learner Travel

(Pages 95 – 99)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport & North Wales from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

4.4 Learner Travel

(Pages 100 – 101)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee from the Cabinet Secretary for Transport & North Wales

4.5 Teacher recruitment and retention

(Pages 102 – 103)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee from The Open University

4.6 Information from Stakeholders

(Pages 104 – 106)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee and the Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip

4.7 Pre appointment hearing for the Chair of the Qualifications Wales Strategic Board

(Page 107)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee from the Cabinet Secretary for Education

4.8 Information from Stakeholders

(Pages 108 – 109)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

4.9 Pre appointment hearing for the Chair of the Qualifications Wales Strategic Board

(Page 110)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee from the Chair of Qualifications Wales

4.10 Information from Stakeholders

(Pages 111 – 117)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

4.11 Welsh Government Draft Budget 2026–27

(Pages 118 – 130)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and the Minister for Further and Higher Education from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

4.12 Welsh Government Draft Budget 2026–27

(Pages 131 – 136)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, Minister for Children and Social Care and the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

4.13 Reviewing Committee Effectiveness in the Sixth

(Pages 137 – 139)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee from the Chair of the Chairs Forum

4.14 Inter–Institutional Relations Agreement

(Pages 140 – 141)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip

4.15 Teacher recruitment and retention

(Pages 142 – 143)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee from the Education Workforce Council

4.16 Forward work programme

(Pages 144 – 153)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Education from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

4.17 Issues facing the Higher Education Sector

(Pages 154 – 161)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee from the President and Vice-Chancellor of Cardiff University

5 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of this meeting and for the whole meeting on 25 September, 2 and 8 October

11.00

Break

11.00 – 11.10

6 Routes into post-16 education and training – consideration of the draft report

11.20 – 12.20

(Pages 162 – 326)

Attached Documents:

Covering paper

Draft Report

7 Reviewing Committee Effectiveness in the Sixth Senedd – consideration of the letter from the Llywydd

12.20 – 12.30

(Page 327)

Attached Documents:

Letter from Chair's Forum

8 Teacher recruitment and retention – consideration of the evidence

11.10 – 11.20

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Agenda Item 3

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

Document is Restricted

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

Document is Restricted



Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Evidence paper for the Children, Young People and Education Committee

11/09/2025

Summary

This paper provides written evidence to the Senedd's Children, Young People and Education Committee to inform the inquiry into teacher recruitment and retention.

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1. Strategic Education Workforce Plan

In January, I set out my intention to develop a Strategic Education Workforce Plan in partnership with local authorities / governors as employers, union partners and school staff, parents / carers, and learners. The strategic plan will ensure we are focusing clearly on delivery and improvement for our education workforce.

Work to develop the Strategic Education Workforce Plan is progressing. The plan will set out our vision for supporting the school workforce in four key areas:

- Supporting our workforce to deliver quality teaching and learning to improve outcomes for learners
- Addressing workload issues
- Responding to new challenges for the school workforce and ensuring access to support through a specialist workforce
- Ensuring that teaching, leadership and supporting teaching remains an attractive career pathway.

The well-being of staff will be a key consideration across all four areas.

The details of the plan will continue to be developed with the profession, local authorities/governing bodies as the employers, the education workforce unions and our key partners over the coming months. I will also be taking account of the Children, Young People and Education Committee's inquiry into Teacher Recruitment and Retention, and my aim is to publish the plan during the spring term.

2. Recruitment

Routes into teaching

The Welsh Government considers high quality ITE that is fully engaged with the wider education sector an important factor to attracting graduates and ensuring a supply of new teachers into the teaching profession. The reformation of the ITE system in Wales was implemented following the [Teaching Tomorrows' Teachers](#) report. This reform was supported by other interconnected and interdependent reforms including new profession standards, our new curriculum, and changes to student finance.

The [Criteria for the accreditation of ITE programmes in Wales](#) (the 'criteria') set out a model whereby both schools and HEIs have their equal part to play in offering the balance of theoretical and practical input to ensure a high-quality experience for our future teachers. These partnerships extend to schools being an equal partner in the initial development and ongoing quality assurance of their ITE programmes, staff training, and recruitment strategies and activities. Promising teacher preparation (ITE) practices highlighted under the OECD's [Flying Start report](#) highlighted our approach to recognise schools as an important partner in the design and delivery of initial teacher education programmes and the creation and use of research as a strength.

It is important to note the reformed and increased role of schools in Wales' ITE system. The ITE Partnership arrangements between schools and universities support a system that is self-improving with the profession working for its own improvement and for others. Schools within Wales ITE Partnerships are responsible for, and are a vital component of, ensuring ITE student teacher recruitment nationally.

There are currently 5 providers delivering ITE through the more traditional undergraduate and postgraduate full-time routes:

- Bangor University
- Swansea University
- University of Wales Trinity St David
- Cardiff Metropolitan University
- University of South Wales

In addition, as part of the ITE reforms the Welsh Government procured and continues to support the pan-Wales alternative ITE routes. The Open University (OU) won the contract and developed the [Salaried PGCE](#) and the Part-time PGCE. These PGCE's are intended to support graduates wishing to enter the teaching profession who would not otherwise be able to via traditional full-time PGCE (such as career changers, parents/adult-carers, those from low-income households/backgrounds, and those living in rural areas unable to access a regional university). Both PGCEs have been available since AY2020/21 and analysis undertaken by the OU on their student teachers indicates that they are a unique cohort, representing additional student teachers studying to become a teacher that would not have otherwise been able to do so.

The secondary subjects available have been expanded several times in recognition of evidenced demand from applicants and schools and the priorities of Welsh Government. From September 2025 all priority subjects and English, English with Media Studies and Primary can be studied via the Part-time PGCE or Salaried PGCE. Student finance is available to student teachers studying the Part-time PGCE and we have committed to supporting the student teachers and their employing schools on the Salaried PGCE via grant funding for a further three academic years (2024/25 to 2026/27). This includes the cost of their PGCE, and a level of salary contribution provided to support their employing schools.

Changes to the grant funding available to schools (the Salary Contribution Grant) since the initial implementation of the Alternative ITE routes are as follows:

In 2022 my predecessor, via the Welsh in Education workforce plan, raised the Salary Contribution Grant for Welsh medium Secondary schools (or for English medium schools with Welsh subject student teachers). This was doubled and is now 100% of Band 1 of the Unqualified Teachers pay scale.

I also recently agreed that from September 2025 that all maintained Primary schools could also access the Salary Contribution Grant at 50%, and that Secondary schools within a transitional language category (along with other operational requirements) could access the Salary Contribution Grant at 100% for supporting Welsh medium student teachers. English medium Secondary schools continue to access the Salary Contribution Grant at 50%. This is intended to support schools and local authorities' workforce planning under their WESPs and the introduction of the Welsh language and Education Act (Wales) 2025.

Two brand new programmes have been recently accredited and are being piloted:

- Cardiff Met's ITE for school-based employees (intended to provide a route for unqualified teachers already working in schools)
- Bangor's Primary PGCE with a Neurodiversity specialism.

We remain committed, that all student teachers, regardless of ITE route taken, are entitled to, and receive high quality ITE that prepares them to enter the teaching workforce. All ITE programmes in Wales that award qualified teacher status (QTS) are held to the same high standards via our [evidence informed regulatory framework](#) (see also Welsh Journal of Education: [Furlong, 2016](#), and [Furlong, 2020](#)). This protects against a two-tier workforce and ensures properly prepared, high-quality teachers in Wales' schools.

Initial teacher education recruitment

Initial teacher education recruitment into the primary sector continues to be buoyant. However recruitment into secondary remains challenging, with strong competition from other sectors for graduates with STEM specialities, compounded by even smaller numbers with Welsh language capability.

We are aware that other UK nations and Ireland are encountering similar issues attracting sufficient STEM graduates to enrol for secondary initial teacher education.

The committee has already heard evidence from the Education Workforce Council highlighting some of the recruitment challenges into secondary ITE. Our recent publication [Initial teacher education: August 2022 to July 2024 \(headline results\)](#) shows that the number of entrants to secondary school ITE courses in Wales was 56% lower than the allocations in 2023/24. This is clearly a major concern.

Initial teacher education incentives

We offer a range of incentives to attract applicants into ITE in Wales. These schemes are targeted at those areas and subjects where recruitment is most challenging; priority subjects, the Welsh-medium sector and attracting more entrants from ethnic minorities. Eligible individuals can avail themselves of each of the incentive schemes. In academic year 2024/25, a total amount of £25,000 is available to those that meet the requirements of all three schemes:

- [Priority Subject Incentive scheme](#) (£15,000)
- [Iaith Athrawon Yfory scheme](#) (£5,000)
- [Minority Ethnic Incentive scheme](#) (£5,000)

National marketing and advocacy activity to support ITE recruitment.

Our national teacher recruitment campaign Teaching Wales/Addysgu Cymru focuses on attracting applications into secondary education within priority subject areas where there is a shortage of teachers, increasing the numbers who can teach in Welsh, and improving the representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic teachers.

Teaching Wales/Addysgu Cymru has an annual budget of around £250k. The approach we have taken is a targeted rather than a blanket approach. This decision has been taken after research and insight undertaken to understand the motivations and barriers to becoming a teacher in Wales.

Based on the identification of motivations and barriers we have re-aligned our campaign to target the following audience segments, selecting the channels that are most likely to reach them:

- Learners/undergraduates studying priority subjects
- Priority subject graduates, potential career changers
- Teaching Assistants

Within the first two groups we are targeting Welsh and English speakers with different messages. This is a result of the insight showing that within these groups, a significant number of Welsh speakers, have different motivations and

barriers to consider teaching as a career. This has been reinforced in the creative testing.

Teaching Wales/Addysgu Cymru features real teachers in Wales. The latest burst of activity was held during July and August. There will be additional bursts of activity in October and in the New Year running to the end of March 2026.

Activity includes a wide range of communication techniques including targeted social media (Facebook, TikTok, LinkedIn, X), online advertising, radio, TV catch-up, PR, outdoor advertising, UCAS mailers and attendance at key events. We have undertaken TV advertising in the past on S4C, targeting Welsh speakers. We have not undertaken mass media advertising (national TV, cinema advertising) as it is not the most effective way of connecting with our target audiences. National TV or cinema advertising would be a blanket approach that doesn't align with our strategic targeting. Our audiences are mainly under 40 and tend not to watch traditional television. Evidence demonstrates targeted digital channels provide better engagement and value when reaching these groups. The campaign would need a very significant increase in budget if we adopted mass marketing techniques.

It's important to keep the campaign relevant, authentic and engaging. In the autumn we will be recruiting Teach Tomorrow Today ambassadors - inspiring teachers who will become the faces of our campaign. Their stories, faces and advocacy will be at the heart of our campaign storytelling across multiple touchpoints: including on Teaching Wales' social channels, in advertising, through earned media coverage (publicity gained without requiring advertising spend). From April 2023 – June 2025, the Teaching Wales Addysgu Cymru campaign activity has delivered over 234,000 users to the Educators Wales website and generated 11,199 click-throughs to the ITE Partnership's websites.

Schools can be powerful tools in the recruitment of teachers, including former pupils. We are working on producing content for schools to share with their Alumni. We are also exploring how we can work closer with local authorities to help with local labour market trends, engage them in our campaign work and tailor our campaign activity to work on a local basis.

We work closely with Education Workforce Council (EWC) to integrate the national campaign with their advocacy service. The Educators Wales recruitment, advocacy, and support service (led by the EWC and funded by Welsh Government) was launched in September 2021 and has engaged with over 27,000 individuals (correct as of January 2024) interested in a career in education. The advocacy service offers a single point of information to individuals on all aspects of teaching as a career as well as a free recruitment and information service to individuals seeking progression opportunities as educators. This includes comprehensive support including application and CV writing, and interview skills workshops. As well as working closely with Teaching Wales the service seeks out opportunities and partnership working, such as supporting ITE Partnerships with innovative ideas to implement activity in their own recruitment strategies and plans, such as on campus promotion of ITE.

Educators Wales also deliver information sessions on careers within education in Wales in schools and school careers fairs alongside larger scale events such as the Eisteddfod.

In addition to the above, the ITE Partnerships are required under their accreditation guidelines to have their own recruitment strategies in place. Welsh Government communications team work closely with EWC and HEIs' marketing teams to ensure synergy, value for money and aligned messaging across all Welsh Government, EWC and ITE Partnerships promotional activity in the ITE recruitment space.

We also work closely with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and Educators Wales on increasing the number of Welsh speakers interested in teaching as a profession. The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol has several schemes aimed at increasing the number of Welsh speakers training to become teachers. Over the summer the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and Educators Wales have specific Welsh language focused activities at several key Welsh language summer events such as Eisteddfod yr Urdd, the Royal Welsh Show and the Eisteddfod Genedlaethol.

Ensuring that teaching remains an attractive option for graduates in an ever changing and flexible jobs market is essential. An independent annual omnibus survey that we commission shows that graduates who speak Welsh are more likely to consider teaching as a career.

Subject specialism

I recognise the vital importance of having this specialism in our schools to enable learners' progression, and the Curriculum for Wales expects learners to be able to increasingly specialise as they move forward with their learning.

The ITE priority subjects and/or phases are determined annually using School Workforce Census Data (SWAC) and Higher Education Statistical Authority (HESA) Data. They represent the subject or phase where there are immediate issues in both ITE recruitment and within the workforce nationally (including the Welsh-medium workforce). Identification of these subjects and/or phases enables the Welsh Government to provide targeted incentivisation to graduates in these areas to consider entering ITE, and thereafter the teaching workforce, via the Priority Subject Incentive (PSI) scheme. It should be noted that this is not a statistical exercise alone and that contextual factors must be used in determining the final list of priority subjects.

For a number of years STEM subjects and languages (including Welsh) have been a priority. In many instances recruitment into ITE has been insufficient as the pipeline of students, from A-level Welsh for example, has been small and is further compounded by smaller numbers studying their undergraduate degree through the medium of Welsh. In addition, STEM graduates particularly have a wide range of competitive career options available to them. The current priority subjects are:

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Design & Technology

- Information Technology
- Mathematics
- Modern Foreign Languages
- Physics
- Welsh

We are also taking action to help build specialist capacity within the existing teaching workforce. In the 2024-25 financial year, the Welsh Government provided nearly £163,000 to the Institute of Physics to deliver the Stimulating Physics and Whole School Inclusion and Equity networks. The Stimulating Physics Network provides targeted coaching to early career and non-specialist practitioners to design inspiring and engaging physics lessons and improve their understanding of physics qualifications and career pathways. Our Global Futures Programme for international languages is also focused on building the skills, knowledge, and experiences practitioners need to plan and deliver effective international languages provision.

We have recently awarded over £1.8m to a collaborative Learned Societies bid, led by Institute of Physics (IOP), under the [Curriculum for Wales Grant Support Programme](#).

The purpose of the project is to address the issues arising from a shortage of physics and chemistry practitioners in Wales by enhancing science teaching and learning outcomes in primary and secondary schools. The project focuses on:

- Enhancing practitioner's pedagogical and subject knowledge
- Building confidence and expertise
- Mentoring current and potential future practitioners

The project will support practitioners and technicians through; specialised mentoring for practitioners and technicians; science teaching resources and online learning modules; the creation of network to foster peer support; and evidence-based professional development, coaching and mentoring, such as the IOP's Stimulating Physics Network, the Royal Society of Chemistry's Teach Chemistry activities and the Thinking Doing Talking Science Primary professional learning programme. These programmes will focus on supporting early career and out-of-field practitioners and promoting equitable science capital in schools through an Inclusion and Equity Network.

We are also taking action to help support specialist capacity within the existing teaching workforce. Our Global Futures Programme for international languages Welsh Government works with a range of partners to build the skills, knowledge, and experiences practitioners need to plan and deliver effective international languages provision. The existing Global Futures strategic plan has been extended for a further year, to 2026, to ensure continuation of the strategic direction for international languages while allowing the changes that are taking place in the Welsh education system to become established. We have established a sub-group of Global Futures partners, including Cardiff Met University and school improvement partners, to review the strategic plan to ensure it has robust actions to support our practitioners. The revised plan will reflect a range of evidence

including from the recent Estyn thematic review on international languages. This work is ongoing, and I expect advice at the end of the year on the next steps of the programme.

This work is developing alongside ongoing work to upskill practitioners and engage learners in interactive language lessons through:

- our E-sgol languages programme which is an interactive on-line programme designed to boost primary practitioners' confidence to deliver and engage learners in interactive language lessons.
- the Literature Fires the Imagination project which will design two professional learning programmes which cover a range of languages and bi-lingual materials to be hosted on Hwb for all primary and secondary schools
- the Cardiff University mentoring programme which has been extended for a further three years and is aimed at changing learner attitudes and engagement to boost the take up of modern foreign languages at secondary school.

In terms of the data the average number of applications for posts advertised have decreased for most subjects between AY2020/21 and AY2023/24, with the average number of applications for Welsh as a subject seeing an increase. The average number of applications for priority subject posts, as identified above, are consistently below the average number of applications for all secondary posts (5.2). Chemistry (1.8 applications per post), Information Technology (2.0), Biology (2.9), Design and Technology (3.0) and Welsh (3.2) received the lowest number of applications per post in AY2023/24. This compares to Physical Education (8.3), History (8.0) and English (5.0) which consistently receive a greater number of applications per post on average.

Table 1: Average applications per advertised post for priority subjects and selected other subjects, AY2020/21 to AY2023/24

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Biology	4.5	4.3	3.5	2.9
Chemistry	6.4	3.6	2.8	1.8
Design & Technology	6.2	2.8	3.4	3.0
English	8.7	6.5	5.0	5.0
History	24.4	8.8	9.7	8.0
Information Technology	3.6	2.6	2.2	2.0
Mathematics	4.7	4.6	3.5	4.6
Modern Foreign Languages	7.8	4.5	3.5	4.3
Physical Education	14.3	10.3	6.9	8.3
Physics	3.7	2.4	2.3	3.6
Welsh	2.6	2.3	1.8	3.2
<i>Primary Schools</i>	<i>19.3</i>	<i>14.1</i>	<i>12.3</i>	<i>15.2</i>
<i>Secondary Schools</i>	<i>7.3</i>	<i>5.5</i>	<i>4.6</i>	<i>5.2</i>
All Posts	12	9.1	7.8	10.0

Source: School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC)

It should be noted that these are national subject priorities identified utilising national level data sets. There may be different recruitment concerns at a local authority or school specific level.

Welsh-medium teachers and proficiency in Welsh in both Welsh-medium and English-medium schools

Our ambition for a million Welsh speakers by 2050 demands far-reaching changes and actions to be taken. Our new curriculum puts the Welsh language at the heart of learning in Wales but if we are to create a nation where people speak and use the language as part of their everyday lives, increasing the number of learners in Welsh-medium schools is vital. For us to do that we need a strong and skilled workforce.

The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 sets out a requirement for Welsh Ministers to prepare a National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh that sets out how we will promote and facilitate the use of Welsh. The National Framework must set out the steps the Welsh Ministers will take to ensure that training, professional development and support is available for education practitioners in Wales for the purposes of improving ability in Welsh. It must also:

- (a) include an assessment of the number of education practitioners needed in each local authority in order to meet any target, and
- (b) set out the steps the Welsh Ministers will take, based on that assessment, for the purposes of ensuring that the number of education practitioners working in Wales meets the need.

We published the [Welsh in Education Workforce Plan](#) in May 2022. The plan included a range of actions for Welsh Government to take in partnership with stakeholders to address four key aims:

- Increasing the number of Welsh and Welsh-medium teachers
- Increasing the number of Welsh-medium teaching assistants
- Developing the Welsh language skills of all practitioners
- Increasing leadership capacity in the Welsh-medium sector and developing the leadership of Welsh in all schools.

In November 2024, we published an update to the data analysis and WESP analysis documents that sit alongside the Welsh in education workforce plan with the latest data on the workforce (see [Welsh in education workforce plan](#))

In light of the requirements of the 2025 Act and the development of the Strategic Education Workforce Plan, we will be working closely with stakeholders to consider what further actions can be taken.

We will need to review the existing targets, as set out in Cymraeg 2050, to take account of changing demographics alongside the local authority plans for

increasing Welsh-medium education in their areas. The current targets and progress is as follows:

Table 2: Cymraeg 2050 targets and progress

Number of primary teachers who teach through the medium of Welsh			
2024/25 baseline 2,678	2031 target 3,900	Gap to target 1,222	Approx additional no. of teachers per year 274
Number of secondary teachers who teach Welsh as a subject or subjects through the medium of Welsh			
2024/25 baseline 2,458	2031 target 4,100	Gap to target 1,642	Approx additional no. of teachers per year 235

Source: School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC)

The key challenge remains around the recruitment of secondary teachers for Welsh-medium schools and this has been the focus of the number of actions we have taken since 2022. These actions include:

- Continuing to provide opportunities through the Cynllun Pontio for teachers who have been away from the profession to return to teaching; for primary teachers to cross over to the secondary sector, and for teachers from the English-medium sector to cross over to the Welsh-medium sector. A further 19 have started this September in key subject areas such as Welsh, maths and science.
- Supporting schools to develop innovative ways to solve some of their recruitment challenges through the Welsh-medium workforce capacity development grant (approximately £800k per academic year).
- Funding the Open University to expand its employment-based teaching pathway, to include design and technology and computer science from September 2023; these are subjects where there are a shortage of teachers, and this route enables aspiring teachers to train in their communities and to be paid while training. The courses are available in both English and Welsh, however, for Welsh-medium schools the employment costs are fully funded by Welsh Government.
- Funding for the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to establish Cadw Cyswllt (keeping connected) which promotes opportunities for students in England to return to Wales to prepare to teach.
- Funding for the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to provide mentoring sessions to approximately 50 individuals as part of the Addysgu'r Dyfodol (future teaching) programme. The programme provides 3 online mentoring sessions to undergraduate students and the opportunity to undertake 2 work experience days in a school (primary/secondary, Welsh-medium or bilingual) to encourage them to go into teaching. A tracking system has been put in place to understand the impact of the programme.
- Establishing the Welsh in education Teacher Retention Bursary. £5,000 will be available to teachers who have achieved Qualified Teacher Status since August 2020, and who have completed three years of teaching Welsh, or

three years of teaching through the medium of Welsh, in the secondary phase. This bursary will initially be available until Autumn 2028 and will provide us with data on whether the introduction of a bursary encourages teachers to enter and stay in the profession.

Alongside actions to support an increase in the number of secondary Welsh-medium teachers we have also been continuing to implement actions to support all practitioners to develop their Welsh language skills to be able to teach and use the language in all our schools.

We have developed guidance for local authorities to analyse workforce data in terms of practitioners' ability to teach through the medium of Welsh and the Welsh language skills of practitioners in the English medium sector. This will enable local authorities to report consistently on their workforce and training development needs as part of their Welsh in Education Strategic Plans.

The National Centre for Learning Welsh is now taking a co-ordinated role in planning the delivery of Welsh language professional learning for the education workforce.

A full scoping exercise has been undertaken, working with all local authorities to understand the Welsh language skills development needs at a local level. Based on the scoping, the Centre has now developed a plan for new delivery models to be piloted, including school-based support, residential courses, tutor-led online courses and professional learning resources. The full offer for the 2025/26 academic year was recently launched at the Senedd and information is available on the Centre's website.

From September 2025 the Centre will also be managing the intensive courses available through the Sabbatical Scheme alongside other courses being developed for the education workforce. The Centre has also been working with ITE providers to provide resources to support students to develop their Welsh language skills while they are training. These have now been shared with all providers and will be incorporated into courses since September 2024.

Recruitment in schools

Staffing challenges faced by schools are highly contextual and national level concerns (such as the level of ITE recruitment into primary, STEM subjects and Welsh-medium) may not be applicable at a local level. The responsibility for the employment of teachers in schools lies with local authorities and governing bodies as the employing bodies. They are responsible for ensuring that sufficient, suitable staff are employed or engaged to work at their school/s in order to provide education appropriate for the ages, aptitudes, abilities and needs of their learners.

The School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC) does collect information on the teaching of subjects in schools and the number of hours taught across a two-

week timetable. Further information can be found in the [School Workforce Census Results](#) publication and on the [StatsWales](#) website.

Information from the SWAC shows the full-time equivalent (FTE) number of teachers in academic year (AY) 2024/25 has decreased by 5.9% since AY2021/22.

Table 3: Full-time equivalent (FTE) number of teachers by sector, AY2021/22 to AY2024/25

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Nursery and Primary schools	11,950	11,770	11,245	10,835
Middle Schools	1,245	1,470	1,605	1,685
Secondary Schools	10,425	10,280	9,965	9,680
Special Schools	825	860	875	910
Pupil Referral Units (PRU)	255	260	300	305
Total	24,700	24,640	23,995	23,410

Source: School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC)

The pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) has increased in all school sectors apart from special schools in AY2024/25.

Table 4: Pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) by sector, AY2021/22 to AY2024/25

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Nursery	10.9	10.5	11.4	11.5
Primary	21.0	20.9	21.3	21.4
Middle	17.4	17.2	17.2	17.6
Secondary	16.8	16.6	17.0	17.5
Special	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.5
Total	18.5	18.4	18.6	18.9

Source: Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC)

The patterns seen in both the teacher numbers and pupil-teacher ratios may be partly due to the Welsh Government funding provided to schools under the Recruit, Recover and Raise Standards (RRRS) plan to recruit extra staff to support pupils during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Welsh Government provided the RRRS funding to schools during the pandemic and the recovery period up to financial year (FY) 2023-24, though the amount distributed decreased since the initial funding in provided in the first 2 years (2020-21 and 2021-22).

The average number of applications received per advertised post in AY2023/24 was 10.0, up from 7.8 in AY2022/23. However, this continues to be lower than the average number of applications of 12.0 in AY2020/21. This pattern is reflected in all sectors with advertised posts in primary schools receiving 15.2 applications on average in AY2023/24 compared to 5.2 for posts in secondary schools.

Table 5: Average applications per advertised post by sector, AY2020/21 to AY2023/24

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Primary Schools	19.3	14.1	12.3	15.2
Secondary Schools	7.3	5.5	4.6	5.2
All Schools	12.0	9.1	7.8	10.0

Source: School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC)

3. Factors affecting retention

Early career support and professional learning

There is growing recognition that supporting teachers' professional learning from the beginning to the end of their career is critical to fostering high-quality teaching.

Ensuring all practitioners have access to guaranteed career-long professional learning is integral to our vision for education in Wales to ensure that practitioners are supported to develop throughout their careers and remain within the profession.

We revised the arrangements and support available for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in 2022. All NQTs are now supported during their first year of teaching with a funded mentor and a professional learning programme to provide the support they need as they embark on their careers. I will be asking Dysgu, the new professional learning and leadership support body to review the professional learning programme for NQTs to ensure that it aligns with my priorities and provides a clear continuation of support from ITE as they progress through their first few years of teaching as part of an early career programme.

We also fund a National Masters in Education (MA) for up to 200 individuals per year. I have also committed to funding the National Doctorate in Education (EdD) which has been available since January 2025. Together these provide an accredited academic pathway for our practitioners.

We continue to provide a total of 6 INSET days and the professional learning grant, worth £13.5m per annum, to support schools to enable practitioners to engage with professional learning.

Dysgu, the new national professional learning and leadership support body will play a key role moving forward in supporting the development of our practitioners. From September 2025 it will bring together professional learning across the country. This approach aims to create a unified system delivering consistent support that improves learning outcomes.

During its first transitional year, the organisation will take on responsibility for national programmes in areas such as literacy, numeracy and well-being, alongside support for leaders. It will also assume responsibilities previously managed by National Academy for Educational Leadership and the regional consortia, including supporting teaching assistants.

This reorganisation represents a significant shift toward a more streamlined, consistent approach to professional development in Welsh education, ultimately aiming to better support educators and improve outcomes for learners across Wales.

Teacher Professional Identity

In March, I welcomed the publication of the OECDs report 'Constructing scenarios for the future of teaching in Wales.' This was part of a global new professionalism research study, to inform our ambitions for the future of teaching in Wales. In conjunction with wider research, OECD findings will inform the Strategic Education Workforce Plan, and in particular our work to raise the profile of teaching as a career, support teacher and teaching assistant retention in schools and settings and positively impact on the experiences of learners as a direct result.

The Curriculum for Wales also presents an opportunity to change perceptions and raise the profile of teaching. This fundamental change not just to what we teach, but how we teach and the understanding of why we teach it, offers a new opportunity to inspire the next generation of teachers to join the profession. The ways of working that underpin the curriculum – teacher creativity, agency, and leadership at all levels – also have the potential to encourage more into the profession. We will continue to showcase what practitioners in Wales are achieving and how they are supporting their learners to reach their potential through the Curriculum for Wales.

Teachers' Pay

For teachers' pay and conditions in Wales there is an agreed annual process in place involving social partners and recommendations from the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body (IWPRB). All IWPRB remits have asked them to have particular regard to supporting recruitment and retention of sufficient quality and quantity of teachers and leaders, whilst reflecting the challenges of sustainable public sector finances. We continue to address any issues and concerns through our social partnership network with a view to making the teaching profession in Wales an attractive environment which will encourage and support recruitment into the profession.

By taking a social partnership approach, we support the teaching profession by ensuring their pay, terms and conditions are designed to best suit the profession here in Wales and currently provide higher salaries and allowances for both new and more experienced teachers than in England.

The agreed annual process has also allowed us to introduce some key changes requested by the profession to further improve the teachers' pay system over the last 5 years. Positive changes have included the reintroduction of pay portability and removal of performance-based pay progression. In 2024, we also removed the strict pro-rata principle for TLR allowances making these allowances more accessible and much fairer for part time teachers. This year, I have removed the application process to move from the main to upper pay scale whilst we work with partners to develop a single pay scale for classroom teachers. I have also committed to moving ALN co-ordinators to the leadership group pay scale and we are working with partners to achieve this as quickly as possible.

These changes implement some recommendations from the IWPRBs Strategic Review into Teachers' Pay and Conditions which was published via a written statement on 9th April 2024 as well as recommendations from the IWRPB's fifth report. The second part of the 6th remit is ongoing, and we will shortly remit the IWPRB to begin work on their 7th report as part of the annual process for Teachers Pay. We are continuing to work with partners deliver the most pressing recommendations from the IWPRB strategic review, subject to funding considerations and working through implementation requirements.

We continue to take opportunities to develop a more distinct national system here in Wales that not only improves and enhances the system but is also fairer and more transparent for all teachers.

Teacher Wellbeing

Recognising the inextricable link between workload and well-being, we continue to fund Education Support to provide additional well-being support for schools in addition to that provided by employers. Education Support, a charity with decades of expertise in supporting the education workforce with their mental health and well-being, provides a wide range of services including free advice and support for schools across Wales and bespoke mental health and wellbeing support via their well-received School Wellbeing Service, with continued support as needed. Alongside this Education Support provides webinars and masterclasses for all education workforce staff in Wales, which is supported by resources and information on the Education Support website, many of which are available in Welsh.

Education Support's Professional Supervision programme, aimed at school leaders, has been found to have particularly positive results around wellbeing and supporting leaders to remain in their roles and is a key part of the programme of work for this year. I have had an informative and insightful meeting with the Chief Executive of Education Support and I continue to receive positive feedback from school leaders on the services they provide.

In March 2021 we published the [Framework on embedding a whole school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing](#). The framework is statutory for all maintained schools and local authorities and is aimed at the needs of school-age learners and the workforce which supports their learning. It seeks to create a supportive environment where young people are encouraged to fulfil their personal and academic potential, where they thrive, learn and emotionally develop, supported by teachers who operate in a culture that equally values their own well-being.

Teacher Workload

Workload is a key factor which adds pressure to teachers and leaders, impacts their well-being and is one of the reasons cited for leaving the profession. As part of the Programme for Government commitment to reduce bureaucracy for school leaders, taking a social partnership approach, we have been working with stakeholders, education unions and employers to identify key areas of workload

that can be changed or removed from schools to reduce workload, eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy, reduce burden and create space for teachers to teach.

The independently chaired Strategic Workload Coordination Group (SWCG) commenced early last year, with membership drawn from key stakeholders and representatives across the education system. It has been underpinned by three working groups focussing on finance; reporting and engagement; and policy development and implementation. The working groups have been independently chaired by education unions and school improvement partners and all have action plans, deliverables and targets. The SWCG and working groups ended on 30 June 2025 and the Chair of the SWCG has written to me about the achievements of the groups' work and where it would be helpful to focus further work. Action to reduce workload will continue under the Strategic Education Workforce Plan.

We will continue to work collaboratively and at pace to deliver changes. This includes direct action by Welsh Government as we implement our workload impact assessment. This aims to help us consider and assess the potential workload impact of any new or revised Welsh Government policy or guidance on the workload of education staff.

By taking this action and continuing to work in partnership, we want to make a real impact at school level, reduce burden and create space for teachers to teach.

4. School leaders

Following an extensive review of the qualification for headship, the new national programme for developing our future headteachers, leading to the award of the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), began delivery in January 2025.

We need to better understand the future demand for headteachers. Following the first round of applications for the NPQH we worked with EWC to share data with each local authority on the 700 individuals who currently hold the NPQH but are not working as headteachers. We will be working with local authorities over the next few months to develop succession planning models.

Dysgu will now take forward the work of reviewing all the existing leadership programmes for middle and senior leaders and work with local authorities to develop a range of provision that meets the needs of our future leaders in a range of areas.

5. Diversity of the workforce

I am committed to diversifying the teaching profession, not just in terms of ethnicity but of socio-economic backgrounds and life experience. I want Wales' learners to be taught by excellent teachers of all ages, career paths, backgrounds, and ethnicities.

As at January 2025:

- 340 teachers (1.3%) were of Black, Asian, Mixed or Other ethnicity compared to 15% of pupils
- 18,655 teachers (74.3%) were female. Females accounted for 66.6% of teachers in leadership.

The Alternative ITE routes attract and enrol student teachers that could not have accessed the profession otherwise. They are a unique cohort providing additional teachers to the profession with diverse backgrounds and life experiences.

The Salaried PGCE, our employment-based teacher training route is intended to widen access to those that cannot access the profession through full-time ITE programmes and has the additional benefit of enabling schools to grow their own teachers from their existing school workforce and wider community.

The [Initial Teacher Education Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Recruitment Plan](#) published by the Welsh Government in 2021 outlines a strategy to increase the representation of ethnic minority groups in the teaching workforce across Wales. The plan aims to boost recruitment of ethnic minority candidates into ITE programmes, addressing the current under-representation. The aim is to lead to more diverse cohorts of trainee teachers, enriching peer learning and perspectives within the ITE environment.

All ITE partnerships have developed and published specific recruitment strategies to attract ethnic minority students. These plans are tailored to address local and national barriers and are supported by community engagement.

The Ethnic Minority ITE incentive scheme was a commitment made under the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan and awards £5,000 to eligible student teachers.

6. Impact on delivering educational reforms

I have set out my priorities for improving educational standards – improving attendance and delivering sustained improvement in educational attainment in literacy and numeracy so that every learner can fulfil their potential, across all ability groups and whatever challenges face them. Curriculum and ALN reform remain central.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of ALN and curriculum have identified increased workload pressures as a result of these reforms. The actions we are taking to reduce workload, as outlined above, will allow us to continue to consider how to support practitioners to deliver our reforms and priorities. I have also agreed the additional 6th INSET day for the 2025/26 academic year, and have commissioned research to better understand the use of INSET days by schools to inform our future plans. The workforce remains supportive and committed to the aspirations of the new curriculum and supporting learners with additional learning needs.

The workforce is key to the successful implementation of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act. I have set out above the current actions we are taking.

7. Impact on learners

The success of our education system and ensuring the best outcomes for our learners is reliant on a high-quality workforce, and it is essential that we provide the best support and conditions for them.

Learners are at the heart of all the actions that we are already taking to support recruitment and retention outlined in this paper.

In addition, this year, we are supporting the following which all contribute to ensuring that schools have sufficiently skilled workforce to support our learners:

- £44 million of National Support to schools. These programmes provide nationally consistent professional learning and support to professionals in areas including: maths, literacy, science and computer science, international languages, and Relationships and Sexuality Education.
- Through our curriculum design professional learning, we're providing national support for schools on the key issues of progression, assessment, and curriculum design, that includes intensive, targeted, and nationally available collaborative support along with practical tools and templates for professionals. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with 100% of participants finding the programme clear and relevant as well as benefiting from working collaboratively with other schools. This is giving all teachers access to the tools to build an excellent curriculum with high expectations of their learners.
- To take the pressure off teaching staff and to improve attendance as part of the 2025-26 budget, I was pleased to have secured £9.5m of funding for Family Engagement Officers - £3m more than in 2024-25. This is one element of over £11m in support for Community Focussed Schools approaches in 2025/26.
- In March we published [Multi Agency engagement guidance](#) to help schools to work with other sectors and services and support them and other agencies to develop more effective partnership working. This is the final piece in our suite of Community Focused Schools guidance.
- Our Pupil Development Grant has a key part to play in achieving Welsh Government's ambition of high standards and aspirations for all. The Pupil Development Grant provides schools with extra funding to help tackle the impacts of poverty on attainment for pupils from low-income households. A budget of around £128m has been allocated in 2025-26 with funding allocated via the equity strand of the Local Authority Education Grant.

8. Impact on teachers and wider workforce

Teaching assistants are a vital and valued part of our education workforce, and we want to make sure they have the recognition and support they deserve.

Supply teachers are also an essential part of the workforce and, along with partners, I remain committed to supporting them and to ensuring that their contribution is better recognised and rewarded.

As we further develop the Strategic Education Workforce Plan, we will continue to work with our social partners and stakeholders to:

- agree how we will take forward my commitment to improve pay and conditions for our support staff, who play a crucial role in our schools, and
- develop our proposals for covering teacher absence, which is a complex area due to the variety of different approaches used by local authorities to source supply staff.

Agenda Item 4.1

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau

Petitions Committee

Buffy Williams MS,
Chair,
Children, Young People and Education Committee

10 July 2025

Dear Buffy,

Petition P-06-1317 Recognise Teaching Assistants as an important asset to schools by raising wage

The Petitions Committee met on 30 June and considered the above petition, submitted by Caroline Hugill.

In discussing the petition, the Committee noted the ongoing work to develop a strategic education workforce plan. It was therefore agreed to highlight the petition to the Children, Young People and Education Committee for awareness, and to close the petition.

The full details of the Committee's consideration of the petition, including the correspondence and the actions agreed by the Committee can be found here: [P-06-1317 Recognise Teaching Assistants as an important asset to schools by raising wage](#)

I would be grateful if you could send any response by e-mail to the clerking team at petitions@senedd.wales.

Yours sincerely



Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Senedd Cymru

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Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

14 July 2025

Re. Petition P-06-1499 Stop the use of term 'Universal Provision' as a reason to deny ALN

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for **your letter dated 24 June** bringing the above petition to our attention.

As you note in your letter, we are currently undertaking **a Senedd-long inquiry** into the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales and the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 ("the ALN Act"). The petition raises a concern that we have heard frequently throughout our inquiry: that some schools and local authorities are not recognising that children have ALN because they believe that their learning needs can be met via so-called 'universal provision'. These concerns have been raised in the context of the significant reduction (44%) in the numbers of children who are formally identified as having Special Educational Needs/ALN since the introduction of the ALN Act.¹

We currently have no plans to consider the petitioner's specific request to prevent the use of the term 'universal provision'. However, in our July 2024 interim report we recommended that the Welsh Government define what 'universal provision' means in practice to better understand the point at which routine differentiation tips into Additional Learning Provision.² The Welsh Government accepted this recommendation, and has confirmed that this issue would be considered as part of a review due to report during summer 2025.³ We will therefore be considering this issue, and the implementation of the ALN Act more broadly, as part of our work on this inquiry in the autumn 2025/spring 2026. This petition will form part of the evidence feeding into that work.

¹ Welsh Parliament, '**Implementation of education reforms: In Brief**', 14 October 2024

² Welsh Parliament, '**Implementation of education reforms: Interim report**', July 2024, paragraphs 64-66

³ Welsh Government, '**The Implementation of education reforms: Response to the CYPE Committee interim report (July 2024)**', 11 September 2024, page 4

More details about the inquiry can be found on our [inquiry web page](#), which contains a link to our open consultation, to which the petitioner can respond. We also issue periodic email updates to individuals and stakeholders who have expressed an interest in our work. If the petitioner would like to receive these updates please ask them to contact us to request to be added to our mailing list.

Yours sincerely,



Buffy Williams MS

Chair

Children, Young People and Education Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

**Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc
ac Addysg**

**Children, Young People and
Education Committee**

Ken Skates MS

Cabinet Secretary for Transport & North Wales

Cc. Lynne Neagle MS

Cabinet Secretary for Education

14 July 2025

Consultation on Learner Travel Operational Guidance 2025

Dear Ken,

We are currently undertaking an [inquiry into routes into post-16 education and training](#). Transport has been one of the most regularly cited barriers to participation across the evidence we have received.

We note that you [launched a public consultation](#) on the revised Learner Travel Operational Guidance on 11 June 2025. We do not believe that the Welsh Government is proposing significant changes to the guidance as it relates to post-16 learner travel. We would therefore like to take this opportunity to share with you a summary of the evidence we have received about transport for learners seeking to continue their education and training after Year 11 (see annex A).

We hope that this evidence will highlight to you the very significant transport barriers that many learners face across Wales, and the extent to which these barriers shape what they choose to do after Year 11.

We hope to publish our final report during the autumn term. Given the wealth of evidence that we have received on the topic, learner travel is likely to feature predominantly in that report. We recognise that the Welsh Government is currently taking action that will affect the travel available to learners after they finish compulsory schooling, such as the pilot of £1 cap on single bus fares for young people, and the introduction of the Bus Services (Wales) Bill. Our discussions about transport as a barrier to post-16 education and training have taken into account that wider context.

If you would like any more information about any of the issues raised in this letter and annex please don't hesitate to contact the Committee clerks.

Yours sincerely,



Buffy Williams MS

Chair

Children, Young People and Education Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



Annex A: Evidence gathering about learner travel as a barrier to participation in post-16 education and training during our 'Routes into post-16 education and training' inquiry

We have heard frequent concerns about the impact of transport for learners on post-16 participation. Careers Wales told us that the cost and reliability of transport is an issue for learners across Wales.¹ Colegau Cymru stressed to us that transport is "probably the biggest single financial challenge and practical challenge that a lot of learners face".² They drew on Welsh Government data, which has found that 41% of 16 to 24 years olds identified transport as being the number one barrier to getting a new course, training or a job.³ Others, including Estyn, reported that transport can drive learners' post-16 decisions, particularly in rural areas.⁴ The NASUWT set out clearly the choices facing many learners:

"So, to move to an FE college or similar provision will invariably involve further distance to travel, a longer distance to travel, and a change in the dynamics of getting to that place, staying in that place and so on and so forth ... It can be a barrier to some pupils who are making a decision based on certain factors, if the decision they have is, 'Well, I can stay in my local school 3 miles away, or I can travel every day on the 6 o'clock bus in the morning to the FE college 20 miles away; I know what choice I'm going to make.'"⁵

Concerns from stakeholders related to both the cost and availability of transport. On cost, some stakeholders noted the variation across local authorities and across colleges in the level of financial

¹ Children, Young People and Education Committee, **6 February 2025, Record of Proceedings**, paragraph 264; **Written evidence: RET 37 Individual**

² Children, Young People and Education Committee, **26 March 2025, Record of Proceedings**, paragraph 195

³ **Written evidence: RET 34 Colegau Cymru**

⁴ Children, Young People and Education Committee, **29 January 2025, Record of Proceedings**, paragraph 201 (Parents' Voice in Wales); **Written evidence: RET 45 NPTC Group of Colleges**; Children, Young People and Education Committee, **5 March 2025, Record of Proceedings**, paragraph 235 (Estyn); **Written evidence: RET 17 Careers Wales**; **Written evidence: RET 14 Welsh Government Association (WLGA) and Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW)**; **Written evidence: RET 10 Grŵp Llandrillo Menai**; **Written evidence: RET 05 The National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)**

⁵ Children, Young People and Education Committee, **29 January 2025, Record of Proceedings**, paragraph 35

assistance they provide to learners.⁶ Estyn reported “heightened concern” among college leaders in relation to recent and proposed changes to learner transport arrangements within certain local authorities.⁷ Others stressed the impact of the cost of transport on learners from low-income families in particular.⁸

Some stakeholders were optimistic about the impact of the £1 bus fare cap for young people on improving the affordability of travel.⁹ Others, however, stressed that the availability of travel is also a major concern, particularly for apprentices who need to travel where employers are based, and learners whose vocational courses extend beyond office hours.¹⁰ Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol told us:

“As one who comes from a very small village in rural Carmarthenshire, Llanboidy, where a bus goes once a week to the nearest town, leaving at 10 a.m. and returning at 2 p.m., that isn't practical in terms of enabling a pupil to access any provision. So, it impacts schools and colleges alike in some areas. So, it's important to look at both issues.”

They, and others, pointed out that the £1 bus fares would not help learners who need to travel by train, in areas where “those bus operators just don't exit”, or if you're travelling on trains “that have been cancelled and have to swap three, four or five times”.¹¹

We also heard that some groups of learners are disproportionately affected by travel challenges. CYDAG explained that whereas colleges are typically located close to transport hubs, Welsh-medium 6th forms can be difficult to access. They explained this can pose practical and financial barriers for some learners wanting to continue their studies through the medium of Welsh.¹² Others shared

⁶ Children, Young People and Education Committee, **5 March 2025, Record of Proceedings**, paragraph 235 (Estyn); **Written evidence: RET 34 Colegau Cymru**; **Written evidence: RET 32 Welsh Language Commissioner**; **Written evidence: RET 45 NPTC Group of Colleges**

⁷ **Written evidence: RET 24 Estyn**

⁸ **Written evidence: RET 10 Grŵp Llandrillo Menai**; **Written evidence: RET 31 Gower College Swansea**

⁹ Children, Young People and Education Committee, **26 March 2025, Record of Proceedings**, paragraph 95 (WLGA)

¹⁰ Children, Young People and Education Committee, **13 March 2025, Record of Proceedings**, paragraph 194 (Cambrian Training); **Written evidence: RET 23 Horticultural Trades Association**

¹¹ Children, Young People and Education Committee, **26 March 2025, Record of Proceedings**, paragraph 199 (ColegauCymru); Children, Young People and Education Committee, **13 March 2025, Record of Proceedings**, paragraphs 90-91 (Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol); Children, Young People and Education Committee, **6 February 2025, Record of Proceedings**, paragraph 422 (National Training Federation for Wales); Children, Young People and Education Committee, **13 March 2025, Record of Proceedings**, paragraph 198 (Educ8 Training Group)

¹² Children, Young People and Education Committee, **13 March 2025, Record of Proceedings**, paragraph 87



similar views.¹³ Careers Wales told us that learners with ALN sometimes can't attend their desired post-16 provision because sometimes "the availability isn't there".¹⁴

Most of the solutions to the transport challenges facing learners that we heard centred around providing free transport for learners. The Welsh Language Commissioner, the Children's Commissioner, ColegauCymru and others called for a nationally funded travel entitlement for young people aged 16-18 in education or work-based training courses.¹⁵

¹³ **Written evidence: RET 18 Children's Commissioner for Wales; Written evidence: RET 32 Welsh Language Commissioner**

¹⁴ Children, Young People and Education Committee, **6 February 2025, Record of Proceedings**, paragraph 265

¹⁵ **Written evidence: RET 32 Welsh Language Commissioner; Written evidence: RET 18 Children's Commissioner for Wales**; Children, Young People and Education Committee, **26 March 2025, Record of Proceedings**, paragraph 207 (ColegauCymru); **Written evidence: RET 10 Grŵp Llandrillo Menai**

Agenda Item 4.4

Ken Skates AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Drafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru
Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: KS/PO/384/2025

Buffy Williams MS
Chair Children, Young People and Education Committee

SeneddChildren@senedd.wales

05 August 2025

Dear Buffy,

Thank you for your letter of 14 July providing an update on the Children, Young People and Education Committee's inquiry into routes into post-16 education and training. I really appreciate the early sight of the summary of evidence received by the Committee, outlining the transport challenges facing young people wishing to continue their education beyond the age of 16.

Please be assured that, alongside the Minister for Further and Higher Education and the Cabinet Secretary for Education, I am committed to reducing the barriers for our young people to be able to access post-16 education provision.

I recognise that access to reliable and affordable transport can have a transformative impact, not only on educational attainment but also on the broader social, economic and wellbeing outcomes for young people. Ensuring that access to and affordability of transport does not act as a deterrent to participation in post-16 learning aligns with our shared commitment to fostering social mobility and inclusive growth. I anticipate the pilot £1 fare scheme for young people across Wales will contribute to reducing some of these costs. As the Committee are aware, we expect the Bus Bill to provide us with the opportunity to review levels of service to places of learning, whilst retaining Local Authorities' power and responsibility to assess the learner travel needs in their area and arranging transport for eligible learners.

Following the Learner Travel Summit I hosted in May this year, we are developing a workstreams focussing on post-16 transport provision. I will ensure that the Committee's final report and recommendations are considered by the workstream.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Thank you again for your proactive work to highlight these challenges and for your constructive approach. I look forward to receiving the final report and our continued collaboration to ensure that all young people in Wales can access the education and opportunities they deserve.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Skates', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Ken Skates AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Drafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru
Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales

Agenda Item 4.5



The Open
University
Y Brifysgol
Agored

Buffy Williams MS
Chair of the Children, Young People and
Education Committee
Senedd

By email

Date: Wednesday 16 July 2025

Dear Chair,

Thank you for the invitation to give oral evidence to the Children, Young People and Education Committee's inquiry into teacher recruitment and retention this morning.

In response to a question from your committee colleague Natasha Asghar MS, I undertook to write to the committee with a more detailed response about withdrawal rates from The Open University in Wales' PGCE programme.

Cohort	# withdrew	% withdrew	# offered deferral	# returned
2022	28	18.2%	3	2
2023	50	28.1%	5	3
2024	13	9.2%	5	TBC
2022-2024	91	19.2%	13	TBC

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg ac ni fydd gohebu gyda ni yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi. | We welcome correspondence in Welsh and in English and corresponding with us in Welsh will not lead to delay.

Ymgorfforir y Brifysgol Agored drwy Siarter Frenhinol (RC 000391), sef elusen eithriedig yng Nghymru a Lloegr ac elusen gofrestredig yn yr Alban (SC 038302). Awdurdoddir a rheoleiddir y Brifysgol Agored gan yr Awdurdod Ymddygiad Ariannol mewn perthynas â'i gweithgaredd eilradd o froceru credyd. | The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302). The Open University is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in relation to its secondary activity of credit activity.

The most frequently cited reason for withdrawal is personal circumstances, which indicates that the withdrawing student has not shared full information about their reason for withdrawing.

We are currently working to improve our process for recording this data, with a view to capturing more precise information and ensuring that students are offered the appropriate support.

Other reasons cited included health and wellbeing issues; difficulty balancing studies with work or family commitments; financial issues; and realising that they do not wish to pursue a career in teaching. This reflects the oral evidence I gave this morning.

The highest number of withdrawals occurred in our primary part-time cohorts, which is unsurprising given this is the largest group within each cohort. For the same reason, a majority of withdrawals were from women students.

A majority of withdrawing students were over the age of 30, reflecting possible challenges with family commitments and other personal circumstances. Retention among ethnic minority students remains strong.

I trust that this information satisfies Ms Asghar's question, but if I or any of my colleague can be of any further assistance to the committee, please do not hesitate to let me know.

I look forward to the publication of the inquiry report in due course and thank you again for the opportunity to inform the committee's work.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "S Stewart".

Dr Sarah Stewart
Director of the PGCE Programme, The Open University in Wales

Agenda Item 4.6

Jane Hutt AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y
Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JH/PO/358/25

Jenny Rathbone MS
Equality and Social Justice Committee

Buffy Williams MS
Children, Young People and Education Committee

17 July 2025

Dear Jenny and Buffy,

Thank you for your letter of 4 July drawing my attention to the Children's Legal Centre Wales briefing regarding the potential authorisation of Taser 10, for use by police forces in England and Wales.

I thank you for taking the time to write to me and below you will find my response to the five questions you posed:

- 1. What is the Welsh Government's position on the use of Tasers on children by police forces in Wales? What representations has the Welsh Government made to UK Ministers and police forces in Wales on their use on children?*

The Welsh Government does not wish to see the use of tasers on children, by police forces in Wales.

Our vision is for an evidence-based, trauma-informed criminal justice system in Wales, to prevent crime happening in the first place. We are committed to the fair and equal provision of devolved services so everyone in the criminal justice system has the support they need to live successful, crime-free lives.

This approach is exemplified by the Youth Justice Blueprint, which we developed jointly with the Ministry of Justice, Policing in Wales, the Youth Justice Board and third-sector partners. It recognises the commitment to the delivery of children's rights in Wales and the whole-system approach takes account of the relevant articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in the design of youth justice services for Wales. It sets out the ambition for a rights-based and trauma-informed system, which will support services to deliver positive outcomes for children.

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Pack Page 104

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The Wales Youth Justice Advisory Panel (WYJAP), jointly convened and co-chaired by the Welsh Government and the Youth Justice Board provides advice and scrutiny to the Welsh Government regarding policy implementation to prevent offending and reoffending by children and young people in Wales. A key area of strategic focus for WYJAP is partnership working with policing and the relationship between youth justice and child centred policing.

The use of tasers, the police and justice powers and procedures related to them are matters reserved to the UK Government. The Welsh Government is therefore not able to legislate and prohibit the use of such equipment. Policing, the use of force in custody, and the use of tasers and other such equipment is entirely the responsibility of the UK Government.

Welsh Government works in partnership with Policing in Wales and as such, I asked for their thoughts regarding the use of taser 10, and taser use on children in Wales.

Policing in Wales have provided the below information:

- At present, the taser 10 approach has not yet been approved or rolled out by Policing in Wales.
- The use of tasers is monitored nationally and is independently scrutinised on a quarterly basis which looks at stop search and use of force (and will include use of taser on children and young people).
- The use of taser incidents involving children (aged 11-17) is generally rare.

2. What involvement has the Welsh Government had in formulating UK Government policy on the use of Tasers on children? How has the Welsh Government ensured that the rights of children and the devolved context are taken into account by the UK Government?

As stated above, policing is reserved to the UK Government, therefore the Welsh Government have not been involved in formulating UK Government policy on the use of tasers on children.

3. How will the Welsh Government ensure that the impact on children is properly assessed by the UK Government?

I am aware that the Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson DBE MP, Minister of State for Policing and Crime Prevention, received a written question in April 2025, querying whether a Child Rights Impact Assessment would be conducted before the potential authorisation of Taser 10 for use by police forces in England and Wales.

Dame Diana's response assured that the UK Government decisions on whether to approve Taser for police use were informed by robust, independent technical and medical testing and assessments alongside an equality impact assessment which sets out any implications for those with protected characteristics, including age.

I will be writing to Dame Diana, to express my concerns regarding the use of tasers on children. I will also seek assurances regarding the compatibility of this policy position with the UN Convention on Rights of a Child, coupled with requesting further information and assurances regarding how the UK Government intend to assess the impact on children.

4. *Will the Welsh Government or UK Government conduct and publish a Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) on the policy and commit to doing so for all future changes to police enforcement technology that relate to children in Wales.*

As stated above, policing is reserved to the UK Government, and it would therefore be a decision for the UK Government to make. I will raise this issue with Dame Diana within my letter and can share the response with the Committee.


5. *How will the Welsh Government work with colleagues in the UK Government to improve data transparency and reporting around the use of Tasers and other police enforcement technologies particularly the need for disaggregated data for Wales?*

It is important that Welsh Government receives the justice data it needs to carry out effective policy and delivery work in the areas of the justice system we have responsibility for, and to continue our policy development work on full devolution (including policing) and the future of the justice system in Wales.

Likewise, as highlighted in the Thomas Commission it is crucial to ensure there is sufficient accessible information in the public domain about how the justice system is working in Wales. People should be able to easily understand how the justice system is working where they live.

I hope this information is useful. We will continue to engage with the UK Government on their reserved responsibilities relating to this issue and would be happy to share any updates or assurances we may receive, in due course.

Yours sincerely



Jane Hutt AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip

Agenda Item 4.7

Lynne Neagle AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

To: Buffy Williams MS,
Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

Email: SeneddChildren@senedd.wales

17 July 2025

Dear Buffy,

Thank you for your pre-appointment hearing report which was published on 10th July. The report helpfully summarises the Committee's findings following your pre-appointment scrutiny of my preferred candidate for the role of Chair of Qualifications Wales.

I was pleased that the Committee were able to endorse the candidate, Paul Bevan, providing me valuable reassurance as I make my final decision. I intend to follow the endorsement of the Committee and offer him the opportunity to fulfil the important role of Chair of Qualifications Wales.

Your report highlights the planned extension of the current Chair's end date to 31st December. I should clarify that David Jones's second term of office will now end on 30 September 2025, as originally planned, and that I have communicated this to him.

The new Chair will be appointed from 1st October for a three-year term. Qualifications Wales has also been notified to enable them to plan their induction for the new Chair, to help ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Neagle AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Agenda Item 4.8

**Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl
Ifanc ac Addysg**

**Children, Young People
and Education
Committee**

Sarah Murphy MS

Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

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18 July 2025

Perinatal mental health support

Dear Sarah,

At our meeting on 16 July, we considered two letters from the perinatal mental health sector. One was endorsed by 15 organisations in the sector, and the other from the Parent Infant Network Cymru and Parent-Infant Foundation.

They both highlight “serious concerns” about proposals to disband the Perinatal Clinical Implementation Network, and the National Clinical Lead role, and replace it with a Community of Practice / Peer Group. They outline the potential impacts of these changes, not just on specialist perinatal mental health services, but on the wider system that supports families during this critical period. As well as raising concerns about the proposal itself, they also highlight concerns about the lack of consultation on the proposals.

More widely, while there is acknowledgement of positive developments in perinatal mental health in particular since the establishment of the network, there are concerns that there are still “significant challenges”. These include inequity of service provision across Wales and a lack of support for dads and partners. They also highlight that the Mother and Baby Unit in Chester which will have two ring-fenced beds for Welsh women has not yet opened.

We share these significant concerns. Ensuring families can access effective and timely perinatal mental health support close to home can be critical at a time of great change, and in some instances it will be lifesaving.

We are very aware of the substantial work that our predecessor Committee did on these issues . In particular, we would like to highlight the recommendation they made to establish a clinical led managed clinical network. It is therefore disappointing to hear the plans to disband the Network.

1. We note that this is currently a "proposal". Please can you confirm the status of these proposals, and whether consideration is being given to retain the Network and Clinical Lead Role?
2. What are the reasons for the proposal, and what other options have been explored?
3. Can you also explain why there has not been wider consultation and engagement on the proposals themselves, and clarify whether this will be rectified?
4. If the Network is disbanded, how does the Welsh Government intend to ensure that the inequities which are currently present in the system are reduced and ultimately removed?
5. We would also appreciate an update on when the Mother and Baby Unit in Chester will be open to Welsh families, along with confirmation of the long term status of Uned Gobaith? Finally, when the recommendations from the one year review of Uned Gobaith will be implemented.

Due to the importance of this issue, we would appreciate a response by 10 September in time for us to consider it at our next available meeting in September.

Yours sincerely,



Buffy Williams MS

Chair

Children, Young People and Education Committee

Cc: Peter Fox MS, Chair, Health and Social Care Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Agenda Item 4.9



21 July 2025

Buffy Williams MS
Chair – CYPE Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1SN.

Dear Buffy

Chair of Qualifications Wales

As you will be aware, I will now be standing down as Chair of Qualifications Wales on 30 September 2025. Unfortunately, and disappointingly, this means that I will not be able to face the scrutiny of CYPE Committee this December, on the work of QW in 2024-25.

I would like to thank you and all the members and officials of the CYPEC during my period as Chair of QW since 2019, for the professional and courteous way that I have been treated alongside QW colleagues.

I wish you all the very best in your future work.

Best wishes.

Yours sincerely.

David B Jones (Chair of Qualifications Wales)

**Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl
Ifanc ac Addysg**

**Children, Young People
and Education
Committee**

Jeremy Miles MS

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care

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17 July 2025

Paediatric continence support

Dear Jeremy,

I recently met with the charity Cerebra who raised concerns about paediatric continence support. They subsequently wrote providing more detail about these concerns, which we considered at our meeting on 3 July. A copy of the letter is enclosed.

While our inquiry into disabled children and young people's experiences of education and childcare did not specifically look at the issue of continence support, we did hear some distressing personal experiences of children and young people not receiving the appropriate support. Therefore, Cerebra's report chimed with the anecdotal evidence we heard. In particular the impact a lack of appropriate continence support can have on children accessing education and on their physical and mental wellbeing. Having appropriate continence support is a very basic and fundamental need to support children and young people to be able to live a full and happy life.

We would therefore welcome your views on the issues raised by Cerebra, especially their concerns about the current Welsh Government circular "WHC/2022/004 Guidance for the care of children and young people with continence problems". As you can see they raise a number of issues around the guidance. These issues include concerns that the 2021 guidance which the circular is based upon misunderstands the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998. This misunderstanding has resulted in the guidance stating that continence products shouldn't be provided to children under 5 or that providing night time continence products could be considered discriminatory. They also highlight concerns that the guidance restricts the number of pads provided on the NHS to four a day.

We would welcome an update on what steps, if any, the Welsh Government plans to take to address the issues raised by Cerebra.

We would appreciate a response by 11 September.

Yours sincerely,



Buffy Williams MS

Chair

Children, Young People and Education Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



Buffy Williams M.S.
Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee
SeneddChildren@Senedd.Wales

23rd June 2025

Dear Buffy

Continence care support services for disabled children in Wales

Thank you for meeting with us on 22 May 2025. As requested, we are writing to highlight the issues raised at our meeting.

[Cerebra](#) is a Wales-based charity which operates throughout the UK nations and supports families of children with brain conditions. Our [Legal Rights Service](#) has received regular reports from families concerning difficulties in accessing fit-for-purpose continence care support services for their disabled children – and, in particular, in accessing appropriate continence containment products.

In 2023, we commissioned a research project to investigate families' concerns about continence provision, which was led by [Luke Clements](#), Cerebra Professor of Law and Social Justice at the School of Law, Leeds University and culminated in a [report](#) published in February 2025.

Summary of the report's findings

The report¹ highlights the barriers families face in trying to access continence provision, including rigid restrictions on the number and type of products, poor quality and ill-fitting products and a lack of proper assessment and support.

The report describes the devastating physical, psychological and social impact of inadequate and discriminatory 'one size fits all' continence provision. It concludes that the harm being caused to disabled children who live with bladder and bowel difficulties amounts to a violation of their fundamental human rights – in terms of their right to education, to dignity, to inclusion and to freedom from degrading treatment.

The research² highlights, in particular, the traumatic school experiences of disabled children with bowel and bladder conditions: children desperate to be included but acutely self-conscious because of the rudimentary design of their highly obvious (often oversized) and poor quality containment products and

¹ Clements L, Aiello A and Fullard, L Inaccessible, unacceptable and unaccountable: the provision of paediatric continence supplies in England, Wales and Scotland (Cerebra 2025).

² Ibid, paras 7.41 – 7.51.

having to manage the devastating shame they experience, in terms of leakages, of smelling, of being bullied – and of being robbed of fundamentally important and unrecoverable childhood experiences.

Disabled children and their families are one of the most disadvantaged groups in the UK. Many parents also referred to the severe financial hardship they experience in having to pay for sufficient and suitable containment products and for the costs incurred as a result of the poor quality (and/or quantity) of products – of constantly having to wash clothing, bedding, carpets, furniture – and indeed repeatedly having to throw away bedding, clothing and much else.³

The report explains how the guidance currently in force in Wales is unfortunately contributing to the situation by failing to uphold equalities and human rights legislation.

Problems with the guidance in force in Wales

The current [Welsh Government Circular WHC/2022/004](#), *Guidance for the care of children and young people with continence problems*⁴ confirms that the Welsh Government has [adopted guidance produced in 2021](#) by the charity Bladder and Bowel UK (BBUK) as the official guidance in Wales (which we refer to below as the ‘2021 Guidance’).

Unfortunately, the Welsh Circular cited above contains an assertion that is self-evidently wrong, and the 2021 Guidance demonstrates a profound misunderstanding of the Welsh Government’s obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998, as explained below.

(i) Misunderstanding of the Equality Act 2010

The 2021 Guidance is underpinned by a straightforward misunderstanding of the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. It strongly, and repeatedly, suggests that unlawful discrimination occurs when a disabled child is treated more favourably than a child who is not disabled - for example, at page 13:

- to ‘offer products for night time wetting to CYP [Children and Young People] who have a special need or disability could be considered discriminatory, as CYP who do not have additional needs are not provided with containment products for bedwetting’;

and at page 17

- ‘to provide containment products for night time wetting in children who are toilet trained in the day could be considered to be discriminatory and in breach

³ Ibid paras 7.52 – 7.55.

⁴ Please see paragraphs 3 and 11.

of the Equality Act 2010, as containment products are not provided for night time wetting to CYP who do not have additional needs’.

This demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of the Government’s equal treatment obligations. The Equality Act 2010 section 13(3) makes it absolutely clear that treating a disabled person more favourably than someone who is not disabled does not, in itself, constitute unlawful discrimination.

(ii) Blanket ban on provision of products to children under 5

The 2021 Guidance also states that no continence containment products can be provided to children under the age of five. In the absence of compelling reasons to justify this difference of treatment on grounds of age (and disability) such a policy constitutes discrimination contrary to Article 14 (in combination with Article 8) of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Disabled children are more likely to suffer from bladder and bowel difficulties than their non-disabled peers: many are incapable of achieving full continence and many will take considerably longer to achieve full continence than children who are not disabled. The research data suggests that from the age of 3 years onwards, the cohort of children who are bladder and bowel incontinent will contain an increasingly significant proportion of disabled children.

It follows that a rigid policy of restricting support to all children aged five and above is likely to have a disproportionate and adverse impact on disabled children.

Given the evidence of the profound (and persistent) harms experienced by disabled children who are bladder and/or bowel incontinent⁵ and the impact on their families⁶ it is difficult to (a) see how such a rigid policy can be justified and (b) understand why public bodies are unable to make reasonable adjustments to their policies by acknowledging the materially different challenges faced by disabled children.

(iii) Maximum limit of 4 pads per day

The 2021 Guidance imposes a maximum daily limit of four pads per person. It provides no research-based evidence that justifies this restriction. The survey responses set out in the report demonstrate the profound harm and indignities experienced by disabled children and their families due to the four pad per day limit. From a lay person’s perspective, it is difficult to believe that such a limitation will be appropriate for all young people: people of very different sizes, constitutions, disabilities and illnesses.

⁵ Ibid paras 2.03 – 2.06 and Appendices 3 and 4.

⁶ Ibid paras 7.52 - 7.60.

Indeed, Department of Health guidance issued in 2000 (in England) stated⁷ that '[p]ads should be provided in quantities appropriate' to the individual's continence needs and that arbitrary ceilings should not be imposed, stating that:

A few patients, such as those with copious diarrhoea, a bladder or bowel fistula and some people with learning difficulties have needs well above the average and will need large quantities of pads to provide adequate containment. It is not acceptable for people with faecal incontinence to be supplied with so few pads that they have to reuse the same pad after they have become soiled, as serious skin complications can develop.

And, in 2017, Welsh Government Circular [WHC/2017/044](#) *Guidance for the care of children and young people with continence problems*⁸ accepted that to impose a maximum of four pads per 24 hours was '*inconsistent with public law principles and a breach of children's' dignity*'; that it does '*not take into account the need for a full assessment*' and did not meet (among other things) its standard concerning '*dignified care*'.

Unfortunately the current Welsh Government Circular [WHC/2022/004](#) *Guidance for the care of children and young people with continence problems*, wrongly states in paragraph 7 that the 2021 guidance contains the statement '*The number of products issued per 24 hours would normally not exceed four, but provision should meet assessed need.*' Unfortunately, this is incorrect. In fact, the 2021 guidance (please see page 6) simply imposes a maximum of four products a day: and this assertion is repeated on page 15 (first paragraph) and page 16 (second bullet point).

Unfortunately, this misalignment between the Circular and the Guidance has resulted in the Welsh Government inadvertently moving away from the rights respecting position of the 2017 Circular.

What we believe needs to be done

In January 2025, just before the publication of our report, BBUK issued a new version of its guidance. Unfortunately, the issues referred to above have not been fully addressed and we believe that the guidance requires further revision in order to ensure compliance with equalities and human rights legislation. Fortunately, we have engaged in discussions with BBUK, who have been very receptive to our concerns and are aiming to produce a revised version of the Guidance by the end of the summer.

In light of this, we would suggest that when it becomes available the Welsh Government should consider endorsing the forthcoming version of the BBUK guidance, providing of course that it is satisfied that it is compliant with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998. Alternatively,

⁷ Ibid para 4.02.

⁸ [WHC/2017/044](#)

if in due course the guidance remains unsatisfactory, we would welcome a commitment from the Welsh Government to develop its own fit-for-purpose guidance.

Our report contains compelling testimony from families describing the barriers they face in getting adequate continence provision. We have attached an account from a parent in Wales which we hope will help to convey the profound impact that inadequate and discriminatory provision is having on disabled children and their families (please see Appendix 1) as well as an audio recording of the transcript. As a children's rights respecting nation, we hope that the Welsh Government will seize this opportunity to resolve the shortcomings of the current guidance and set a clear example for the rest of the UK.

Yours sincerely

J. Camburn-Rahmani

Jess Camburn-Rahmani
CEO

Agenda Item 4.11

**Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc
ac Addysg**

**Children, Young People
and Education Committee**

Lynne Neagle MS
Cabinet Secretary for Education

Vikki Howells MS
Minister for Further and Higher Education

23 July 2025

Welsh Government Draft Budget 2026-27

Dear Lynne and Vikki,

As in previous years, we would like written information to support our scrutiny of the Welsh Government's Draft Budget 2026-27. The annex to this letter sets out in detail the information that we would like to receive.

I would be grateful to receive the written information no later than two weeks prior to your appearance before Committee, the date of which will be arranged in due course.

Given the shared interest across committees in some of the areas listed in the annex to this letter, I have copied in the chairs of the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee and the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Buffy Williams MS
Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

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Annex A: Request to the Cabinet Secretary for Education, and Minister for Further and Higher Education regarding the CYPE Committee's Draft Budget scrutiny 2026-27

Cross-cutting areas

Transparency of budget presentation

As in previous years, we request a clear, transparent explanation of changes to the overall Education and MEG in 2026-27, from 2025-26, including both a comparison with the actual budget in addition to any revised baseline which is used. We would also appreciate a summary of the key changes between 2025-26 and 2026-27.

If a revised baseline is used, we request a breakdown of amounts which have been removed from or added to the 2025-26 budget and an explanation in each case of why it is deemed appropriate to use the revised baseline rather than the actual budget set in 2025-26 for comparisons.

For significant changes to budget lines, we request an explanation of whether money is being taken from/returned to central reserves or allocated from/to other budget lines either within or outside the MEG.

Detail of Budget Expenditure Line (BEL) allocations and explanation of changes

We request a breakdown of the 2026-27 Education MEG by Action, and Budget Expenditure Line (BEL), with Final Budget 2025-26 allocations, First Supplementary Budget 2025-26 allocations, forecast 2025-26 outturns, and 2024-25 final outturns all included. If indicative budgets are being set beyond 2026-27, we request details of those as well. In the past, we have requested commentary on each of the Actions within the Education MEG. Prior to last year, this was provided in an annex. We note that last year a separate commentary was not provided and the information was provided in the main body of the paper, along with a budget table at Annex A and a list of changes at Annex B. We found that approach to be satisfactory and would be content with the same this year. However, if there are any Actions that are not covered by the issues requested, we would appreciate an explanation of what those Actions fund.

To confirm, we would still like an analysis and explanation of significant changes to Actions and BELs since the First Supplementary Budget 2025-26 (June 2025).

If the Welsh Government uses a revised baseline budget for comparative purposes, we request that the actual 2025-26 First Supplementary Budget allocations are also presented alongside 2026-27

draft budget allocations as well as an explanation of the reasons for the re-calculation of the baseline (as mentioned earlier).

Education priorities and other strategic priorities

Information on how the Education MEG aligns with, and is prioritised according to, the Welsh Government's relevant priorities and key objectives, including:

- An updated assessment from the Cabinet Secretary on the extent to which she believes the Education MEG contains the resources necessary to deliver Welsh Government priorities and key objectives.
- Information on any ongoing negotiations with the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language to maximise the level of resources available for education, including funding for schools' core budgets through the Local Government Settlement.
- Details of how allocations to and within the Education MEG align with the Programme for Government.
- In light of the [Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language's announcement on 1 July](#) that the 2026-27 budget will simply increase departmental budgets by inflation, rather than reflecting new policies and priorities, how the Cabinet Secretary for Education has been able to take account of emerging and escalating issues since the 2025-26 budget was set.
- Whether, and if so how, the Cabinet Secretary intends to target resources at addressing any cross-cutting themes or priorities across the MEG as a whole.

Children's rights and other cross-cutting considerations

In line with assessing whether 'due regard' has been given to article 4 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Welsh Government's duties under the Rights of the Child and Young Persons (Wales) Measure, we request:

- The overall Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) for this draft Education MEG for 2026-27, which sets out how children's rights are put into effect in these budget allocations, with reference to specific articles in the UNCRC as relevant.
- If a specific CRIA has not been undertaken, the reasons for this.
- A copy of any alternative integrated impact assessment as well as assurances that this assessment demonstrates that the duty of "due regard" to the UNCRC has been exercised.

- Details and/or examples of any changes made to initial allocations within the Education MEG following considerations of children’s rights, equalities, sustainability, the Welsh language, or the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 as a result of impact assessments, or where these assessments have had a direct influence on the setting of budgets.

Costs of legislation

- Details of allocations within the 2026-27 budget intended for the implementation of primary legislation passed in the past two Senedd terms, including the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025, the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022, the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021, and the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.
- Information on the financial impact of any relevant UK Parliament legislation, for example the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill.
- Financial implications in 2026-27 of any relevant subordinate legislation.

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

- Information on any remaining provision in the Education MEG in 2025-26 and 2026-27 for dealing with and recovering from the impact of the pandemic, for example the status of the former “Recruit, Recover, Raise Standards (RRRS)” funding that was amalgamated into the Local Authority Education Grant from 2024-25..

Impact of cost of living pressures on delivery of education services

- An update on the implications of cost of living pressures and energy prices on the operational delivery of education institutions – across early years, schools, colleges, universities and training providers.

Budget monitoring and the current financial context

- Information on the processes in place for monitoring budgets within the Education MEG throughout the year, identifying potential deficits and surpluses, and taking remedial action or allocating additional funds to cover any shortfalls.
- Details of any changes to the 2025-26 Education MEG that are already anticipated in the Second Supplementary Budget.

Specific areas

Funding for school budgets

- An explanation of whether and how the Welsh Government has prioritised funding for schools in the 2026-27 Draft Budget (in both the Housing and Local Government MEG and the Education MEG).
- How the review of the school funding formula (published February 2025) and proposed School Funding, Budget Statements and Outturn Statements (Wales) Regulations 2026 have been taken into account in the Welsh Government's approach to providing funding intended for schools in 2026-27.
- The Cabinet Secretary's perspective on the level of school budget reserves, in the context of the 31 March 2025 data due to be published in late October 2025.

Funding for school improvement and raising standards

- An explanation of how the Draft Budget 2026-27 supports school improvement and raising standards of education, and how it reflects changes taking place under the School Improvement Partnership Programme.
- Details of the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG) in 2026-27, including a breakdown of its four strands.
- Details of how much LAEG was paid to each local authority in 2025-26, including a breakdown by the four strands.
- An updated assessment undertaken on the impact of the amalgamation of individual grants into the LAEG in 2024-25 and how the Welsh Government is assuring itself that there has not been any dilution of previously ring-fenced activities and interventions.
- Information on budget allocations to support efforts to improve standards of literacy and numeracy and any assessment that has been made of their efficacy and value for money.
- Funding for the Curriculum for Wales grant support programme and details of numbers and values of grants awarded.
- Any other funding to support the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales.

The cost of living and reducing the impact of deprivation on educational outcomes

- Information on how resources within the Education MEG are being used to meet the Welsh Government's long-term commitment to reduce the impact of deprivation on

educational outcomes – including from the “Tackling barriers to attainment” BEL or from the LAEG.

- Information on budget provision for the School Essentials Grant and expenditure in 2025-26, including the number of pupils supported, and projected in 2026-27.
- Information on how resources within the Education MEG are being used to support learners in post-16 education with the impact of cost of living pressures, and to address the impact of deprivation on outcomes (including, for example, through additional hardship funding for providers, or through existing student support funding such as the Education Maintenance Allowance).
- Any remaining budget provision for the roll out of universal free school meals in primary schools in 2025-26 and whether any budget is needed for this in 2026-27. Whether any further consideration has been given to extending eligibility in secondary schools, especially given the decision in England to extend free school meals to all pupils in households receiving universal credit. If not, how the Welsh Government plans to use any Barnett consequential arising from the decision in England.
- A breakdown of any grant funding provided to local authorities in 2025-26 for the universal provision of free school meals in primary schools.
- Any other funding within the Education MEG for initiatives to tackle the cost of living and the deprivation/attainment negative correlation, for example school holiday enrichment/summer of fun/food and fun projects, including an updated explanation of how these projects and funding streams relate to each other

Education workforce

- Details of budget allocations to finance Initial Teacher Education (ITE), including funding and initiatives targeted at addressing shortages in particular subjects or areas, and any assessment that has been made of their efficacy and value for money.
- Details of budget allocations to support professional learning for current teachers, including in light of the ongoing implementation of education reforms.
- Information on funding provided by the Welsh Government to the Education Workforce Council.
- Information on funding to establish and fund the new national professional learning and leadership body. How this compares to the funding for the National Academy for Educational Leadership and whether funding for the new body directly replaces this.

- Details of any budget provision for meeting the costs of the teachers' pay award for academic year 2025/26 including a breakdown between the 2025-26 and 2026-27 financial years and the respective mechanisms used (whether direct grant or incorporated into the local government settlement).
- Information on any funding to support policy regarding the supply teaching workforce.

Emotional and mental health of children and young people

- Budget provision from the Education MEG in 2026-27 for the whole-school/system approach to emotional and mental health.
- Details of funding from the Health and Social Care MEG to complement work in schools on this area.
- Information on any budget provision to support the emotional and mental health of young people in post-16 education.
- Budget provision for the action plan and wider response to tackle peer on peer sexual harassment among learners.

Behaviour and violence

- Budget provision from the Education MEG for addressing problems arising from behaviour and violence in schools and colleges (including for example actions arising from the round table on violence and safety and the national behaviour summit – both held in May).

Pupil absence

- Information on any specific budget provision to address rates of pupil absence or an identification of which budget lines support such work more generally (including for example Family Engagement Officers and Community Focused Schools).

Sport and physical activity

- Information on how the Education MEG supports the provision of sport and physical activity for children and young people, whether inside or outside school, and how this relates to any initiatives or funding in the Health and Social Care MEG such as for Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales.
- How capital funding through the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme is supporting sport and physical activity among children and young people.

- Details of funding to support the education of Minority Ethnic and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners in 2026-27 and how this is being distributed as part of the LAEG.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

- An updated summary of the position of funding for supporting learners with their ALN, both from the ALN BEL and the Reform strand of the LAEG.
- The implications of the review that has been carried out and what this has shown about the required levels of ALN funding.
- An updated assessment of whether the ALN reforms are proving to be cost-neutral.
- Information on how funding for ALN provision featured in the review of the school funding formula and how it is being considered as part of the proposed School Funding, Budget Statements and Outturn Statements (Wales) Regulations 2026.
- The latest position on funding for the training of educational psychologists in Wales and any grant funding arrangement with higher education institutions, for example Cardiff University.

Estyn

- Details of Estyn's core budget allocation for 2026-27 and which MEG/BEL this is located in.
- The outcome of work undertaken with Estyn to manage the impact of not being able to provide any additional funding this time last year (other than inflationary uplifts) to support the new inspection cycle (mentioned in last year's paper).

Qualifications

- Details of funding allocated to Qualifications Wales in 2026-27 and an updated assessment of whether it has enough funding to fulfil its remit and any reform work expected of it.

Welsh in education

- Details of allocations in the Education MEG to support the Welsh Government's policies for Welsh in education, and the education sector's role in meeting the Cymraeg 2050 target of one million Welsh speakers.

- How allocations in the Education MEG relate to other budgets supporting the Welsh language, for example the Welsh Language Action in the Central Services and Administration MEG.
- Where funding for implementing the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 is located in the Welsh Government's budget and how much is allocated..
- Information on funding allocated for enhancing the Welsh in education workforce.

Seren programme

- Details of budget provision to support the Seren programme and the Widening Participation Project.

Early years education and childcare

- Whether the funding in the LAEG to support alignment of funding rates in nursery education in non-maintained settings, and childcare within the Childcare Offer, is continuing in 2026-27. Narrative on any impact on aims to 'align' rates on the decision from April 2025 to increase the hourly rate for childcare providers from delivering the Childcare Offer from £5.00 to £6.40 an hour from the Health and Social Care MEG (and Welsh Government's commitment to review this rate annually from now on.)
- Details of any other funding from the Education MEG to support the non-maintained sector's delivery of early childhood / nursery education and the Curriculum for Wales, and how this relates to funding for the responsibilities of the Minister for Children and Social Care in relation to early years and childcare.

Youth work

- Details of how the 2026-27 Education MEG supports statutory and voluntary youth services and budget provision for meeting the Programme for Government commitments in respect of strengthening youth services.
- How this Draft Budget 2026-27 reflects the findings and work of the [Youth work funding review](#).
- Details of how the 2026-27 Education MEG supports the Youth Work Strategy for Wales, the work of the Implementation Board and work to establish a national body for youth work in Wales as set out in the [Written Statement: A national body and statutory framework for youth work \(27 June 2025\)](#).

Offender learning

- Information on budget provision in 2026-27 and any changes to how this will be spent compared to previous years.

Funding for Medr

- Total funding for Medr in 2026-27 and the Welsh Government's expectations on how Medr will allocate this (more detailed points listed below)

Further education, sixth forms and adult community learning

- How much of Medr's total allocation in 2026-27 is intended for sixth forms and further education colleges, and any specific uses of this funding.
- Details of 2025-26 funding allocated to Medr for individual sixth forms (or local authorities) and colleges, and what this funding is to support.
- Details of any hypothecated funding to further education institutions or sixth forms beyond their usual core grants.
- The allocation for Adult Community Learning.
- The complete 2024-25 and 2025-26 programme values used in the calculation of FE and sixth form funding.
- Details on how financial support increases have impacted the draft budget (specifically the increase of the Welsh Government Learning Grant (FE) and the increased thresholds for eligibility for EMA)

Higher education, and post-16 student financial support

- How much of Medr's total allocation in 2026-27 is intended for higher education, and any specific uses of this funding.
- Details on how the draft budget supports and reflects the financial positions of Welsh higher education institutions
- Details on how increases to student support for eligible part-time and full-time undergraduate students in Wales, as well as support for postgraduate masters and postgraduate doctoral study, have influenced the draft budget.
- Details on whether decisions to raise the tuition fee limit for undergraduate studies has influenced allocations to Medr

- Details of the Medr allocation, including details of any hypothecated funding, or funding which is intended for specific activities including mental health and student well-being.
- Details of any 2026-27 allocation intended for the delivery of degree apprenticeships and if it is intended to be used to recruit new apprentices or to teach out existing apprentices.
- Details of any capital funding to be made available to Medr, including any conditions to be placed on it by the Welsh Government.
- Details of any contingencies / reserves / non-allocated funds within any of the 2026-27 tertiary education related BELs, including the BELs within the post-16 Learner Support Action; details of how the funds are / can be deployed; and details of any deployment of them during 2025-26.

Other post-16 education provision

- Information on the Welsh Government's expectations on how Medr will use its total allocation to fund other post-16 education provision.
- Details of funding for the International Learning Exchange Programme (Taith) including its extension to March 2028.
- Details of budget provision for the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, either from the Education MEG or the Welsh Language BEL of the Central Services and Administration MEG.

Young Person's Guarantee

- Details of budget provision from the Education MEG which contributes to the Young Person's Guarantee and how this relates to funding from the Economy, Energy and Planning MEG.

Capital funding for school and college infrastructure

- Information on budget provision for the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme and progress of the programme to date, including expenditure and numbers of projects completed/approved to date under Band B.
- A projection of when Band B is likely to be completed by and an update on the next phase of the programme consisting of local authorities' 9-year investment plans.
- An updated assessment of the implications of the cost of living, for example energy prices and construction costs, for the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme, including any impact on the progress and costs of projects.

- The financial implications from the Welsh Government's carbon net zero policies and how this affects the Education MEG in 2026-27.
- Provision within the Education MEG – and clarification of whether capital or revenue – for school and college repairs and maintenance, in both 2025-26 and 2026-27, and confirmation of whether this is part of the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme.

Capital funding for childcare

- Confirmation of the status of the Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme, which was originally due to end Spring 2025 but received further funding in 2025-26, and whether there are any allocations to extend this into 2026-27.
- Information on capital funding from the Education MEG for the Childcare Offer and Flying Start programme and any allocations for the purposes of the commitment to roll out Flying Start childcare to all 2 year olds.

Capital funding for the Community Focused Schools initiative

- Information on arrangements for funding aimed at increasing the community focused nature of education estates and adapting premises for community use.

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

Children, Young People and Education Committee

Senedd Cymru

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Welsh Parliament

Jeremy Miles MS
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care

Dawn Bowden MS
Minister for Children and Social Care

Sarah Murphy MS
Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

23 July 2025

Welsh Government Draft Budget 2026-27

Dear Jeremy, Dawn and Sarah,

As in previous years, we would like written information to support our scrutiny of the Welsh Government's Draft Budget 2026-27. The annex to this letter sets out in detail the information that we would like to receive.

I would be grateful to receive the written information no later than two weeks prior to your appearance before Committee, the date of which will be arranged in due course.

Given the shared interest across committees in some of the areas listed in the annex to this letter, I have copied in the chairs of the Health and Social Care Committee and the Equality and Social Justice Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Buffy Williams MS
Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Annex A: Request to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, Minister for Children and Social Care, and Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing regarding the CYPE Committee's Draft Budget scrutiny 2026-27

1. Allocations for children and young people

Allocations in the Health MEG by Action, and Budget Expenditure Line (as directly relevant to children and young people):

- Draft Budget 2026-27.
- Final Budget 2024-25 allocations.
- 2025-26 First Supplementary Budget.
- Any indicative budgets set for beyond 2026-27.
- A description of any changes to baselines used in the Draft Budget 2026-27 from the First Supplementary budget June 2025.

In light of the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language's announcement on 1 July that the 2026-27 budget will increase departmental budgets by inflation, rather than reflecting new policies and priorities, how the Cabinet Secretary and Ministers have been able to take account of emerging and escalating issues for children and young people since the 2025-26 budget was set.

2. Impact assessments

- **Combined CRIA across all portfolios:** The overall Child's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) undertaken to inform allocations in the draft Budget 2026-27.
- **CRIA for Health and Social Services MEG:** The CRIA for the Health and Social Services MEG for 2026-27.
- **Other impacts:** Details and/or examples of any changes made to allocations within the Health and Social Services MEG following considerations of equalities, sustainability, the Welsh language, and the Wellbeing of Future Generations.

A narrative update of the progress of the following, included on page 4 of your [response](#) to our report on the Draft Budget 2025-26:

Welsh Government officials are currently undertaking a review of the SIIA, the first review since its introduction in 2015-16, to ensure it remains fit for purpose and consider where improvements might be made in the future. It is anticipated the review will conclude in 2025. Welsh Treasury are leading on this review with input from the Budget Improvement and Impact Advisory Group (BIIAG).

3. Programme for Government

Allocations in the Draft Budget 2026-27 and the latest position on funding in the context of the latest [Welsh Government Annual Report](#) for:

PFG Commitment	Requested allocations and narrative detail
Advocacy services for parents whose children are at risk of coming into care.	Allocations and accompanying narrative setting out desired outputs and outcomes for 2026-27.
Fund regional residential services for children with complex needs.	Allocations and accompanying narrative setting out desired outputs and outcomes for 2026-27.
Eliminating private profit from the care of children looked after.	Allocations and accompanying narrative setting out desired outputs and outcomes for 2026-27
Specialist support for children with complex needs who may be on the edge of care.	Allocations and accompanying narrative setting out desired outputs and outcomes for 2026-27.
Fund childcare for more families where parents are in education and training or on the edge of work.	<p>Allocations and accompanying narrative setting out desired outputs and outcomes for 2026-27.</p> <p>Overall impact and allocations to support increases in the hourly rates paid to Childcare Offer providers from April 2025 of £6.40 an hour.</p> <p>How this Draft Budget reflects the Welsh Government's decision to review this rate annually from now on.</p>
<p>Phased expansion of early years provision to include all 2 year olds, with a particular emphasis on strengthening Welsh medium provision.</p> <p>(We note that in the response to our report on the Draft Budget 2025-26 you said "continued expansion beyond 2025-26 will depend on further funding being made available in future Welsh</p>	<p>Allocations and accompanying narrative setting out desired outputs and outcomes for 2026-27</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The % of 2 years old offered and taking up Flying Start childcare 12.5 hours by local authority.

Government budgets and the capacity of the sector to respond to the requirements of further expansion.”)	- Confirmation that this Draft Budget 2026-27 includes funding of FS Childcare to all 2 year olds.
Flying Start (the four entitlements).	Allocations and accompanying narrative setting out desired outputs and outcomes for 2025-26 (revenue and capital).

4. Children’s social care

Children’s Social Care workforce

Any allocations associated with additional support to local authorities to address the instability of the workforce in children’s social care, such as vacancy rates and the use of agency staff.

Sustainable Social Services Grant Scheme

The latest position on the Scheme and a breakdown of all grants relevant to children and young people if allocations have been made in this Draft Budget 2026-27.

Care Experienced Children Change Fund

The latest position on the Care Experienced Children Change Fund and whether the Fund has come to and end in the current year. .

5. Children’s health

Allocations in the Draft Budget 2026-27 and the latest position on funding for:

- Tackling NHS paediatric waiting times
- Improving children’s dental health
- Obesity strategy, including evidence of a joined-up, cross-Government approach to tackling the determinants of obesity
- Mental health services, including:
 - child and adolescent mental health services
 - urgent mental health support including NHS Wales 111 press 2 and the development of mental health hubs/sanctuary services
 - services to support perinatal mental health and parent-infant relationships
 - eating disorder services



- Suicide prevention as it relates to children and young people
- Neurodevelopmental services
- Public health as it relates to children and young people, including vaccination
- Substance misuse, including vaping among children and young people

6. Cost of living and National Insurance changes

General commentary about the impact of cost of living on:

- **Health boards:** the delivery of services to children and young people by the Health Boards in Wales and the impact of the rising costs of energy on this provision.
- **Social services:** the provision of all social service activities of Local Authorities in Wales and any associated discussions with the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government.
- **Child poverty:** details of what discussions have taken place with other relevant cabinet colleagues in respect of allocations which have a significant impact on children's health and social care, for example the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip in terms of the budget of the Children's Commissioner for Wales and broader policy issues such as child poverty.
- **National Insurance contributions:** an update to the information provided on pages 10 and 11 of your response to our report on the Draft Budget 2025-26. To include how this Draft Budget reflects changes in employer National Insurance contributions and your assessment of the impact of this on the provision of health and care services to children and young people.

7. Costs of legislation relevant to the portfolio.

- Costs of implementing to Health and Social Care (Wales) Act 2025 as relevant to children and young people.
- Financial implications or anticipated in of any subordinate legislation relevant to children and young people within the H&SC portfolio.
- Information on the financial impact of any relevant UK Parliament legislation including the Welsh Government's associated LCM on the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.

Y Gwir Anrh/Rt Hon Eluned Morgan AS/MS
Prif Weinidog Cymru/First Minister of Wales



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Our ref: FM/PO/371/25

Rt Hon. Elin Jones MS
Chair
Chairs Forum

23 July 2025

Dear Elin,

I attended the Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister on 13 December 2024, and whilst I made clear my view that Senedd Committees do great work, I also expressed concern about the volume of recommendations which are often made by Committees to the Welsh Government.

As a government, we need to be realistic about our ability to deliver Committee recommendations and of the need to consider recommendations in the context of the limited resources which are available. If the current volume continues, the government is likely to need to reject more recommendations going forward to ensure we can continue to focus on delivering for the people of Wales.

I am keen to get to a position where Committees, in carrying out their work, concentrate on fewer recommendations, with a focus on specific and clearly defined recommendations which will have the greatest impact as appropriate to the matter under consideration.

In making these observations, I do not seek to fetter the critical work of our Senedd Committees in scrutinising and holding the government to account. Targeting efforts and experience in this way however, will help us collectively to continue to deliver effectively for the people of Wales.

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Gohebiaeth.Eluned.Morgan@llyw.cymru
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I would be grateful if this could be fed back to the Chair of each Committee, who I'm sure will wish to consider prior to the expansion of the Senedd. We will also respond with further detail to your letter of 8 July seeking views as part of the Chairs' Forum review of Committee operations in the sixth Senedd.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eluned Morgan', written in a cursive style.

Eluned Morgan

Agenda Item 4.14

Jane Hutt AS/MS
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y
Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA/JH/1886/25

Mike Hedges MS
Legislation, Justice and Constitution
Committee Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
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CF99 1SN

11 August 2025

Dear Mike,

In accordance with the inter-institutional relations agreement, I am writing to notify you that a Budget Cover Transfer between UK Government, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) and Welsh Government, to support digital inclusion activity in Wales has been agreed.

The funding is made up of £185,418 (revenue) and £254,950 (capital) which will further our work aligned to the Digital Strategy for Wales, Mission Two, and the Well-being of Future Generations Act National Indicator, Status of digital inclusion.

The funding is for Financial Year 2025-2026 only.

- Welsh Government will share learnings and best practice for how the funding is used to support digital inclusion with UK Government and devolved Governments.
- Welsh Government will continue to be in open, engaged, dialogue with UK Government and devolved Governments on approaches to tackling digital exclusion and work aligned to the Minimum Digital Living Standard (MDLS).

I have also copied this letter to the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, Huw Irranca-Davies MS and the chairs of the Social Justice Committee, Health and Social Care Committee, Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee, Local Government and Housing Committee, Children, Young People and Education Committee and the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Hutt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke above the first letter 'J'.

Jane Hutt AS/MS

Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip

Agenda Item 4.15

Response to the CYPE Committee's request for additional information following the Education Workforce Council's oral evidence provided on 5 June 2025.

The Education Workforce Council (EWC) welcomes the opportunity to provide further evidence to the Committee's inquiry into teacher recruitment and retention. This submission builds on our written and oral evidence, focusing on how the teaching profession can be made more attractive to graduates.

Our perspective is informed by intelligence from a range of sources, including the unique data we hold on the Register of Education Practitioners and the regular engagement that we undertake with registrants, stakeholders, and prospective teachers. This includes the daily conversations that our Promotion of Careers team has with potential applicants to teaching from across Wales and beyond, both in-person (at events such as careers fairs) and on the telephone.

Key priorities to be addressed to make teaching more attractive to graduates

As outlined in our original submission to the Committee, the EWC advocates for a system that attracts a diverse and suitably qualified workforce, offers attractive pay and conditions, supports teachers professional growth, empowers them to thrive and encourages them to remain in the profession. Creating the conditions in which practitioners are able to deliver high quality teaching and learning and experience long-term career satisfaction, is essential to improving both recruitment and retention within the profession.

It is important to recognise that many of the barriers to recruiting the next generation of teachers often mirror those causing qualified practitioners to leave the profession. Improving teacher recruitment and retention in Wales therefore requires a holistic, system-wide approach that addresses challenges across the entire career pipeline. We would suggest that the following areas should be prioritised for action.

Improving working conditions and ensuring that pay is competitive

Teachers need to be valued and seen as such by the wider public (including graduates). This goes beyond salary (although it is of course crucial that pay is competitive with that available in other graduate professions). Targeted financial incentives, such as those for ITE students training in priority subjects, through the medium of Welsh, or from ethnic minority backgrounds, can also help support recruitment.

Reducing workload and streamlining bureaucracy, are also essential to transform both the day-to-day experience of teachers (reducing attrition and boosting morale) and to shift negative perceptions among potential entrants. Teachers must also be properly supported as life-long learners through being provided with access to high-quality professional learning. A high-quality professional learning offer is also essential to support teachers' development and progression, particularly for those who wish to remain in the classroom.

Offering greater flexibility

Reimagining teaching roles to reflect modern expectations around flexibility should also be considered to help attract a wider and more diverse range of individuals into the profession - building on ideas explored within the OECD's recent Constructing Scenarios for the Future of Teaching in Wales report. Innovations such as varied working hours, more adaptable career structures, and hybrid roles could make teaching more compatible with the expectations of today's graduates.

Developing a more diverse workforce

A more diverse teaching workforce is essential to ensure that the teaching profession better reflects the communities it serves and is relatable for all learners. Moreover, in order to tackle the broader recruitment challenges in teaching, it is essential to ensure that the profession is seen as a viable and rewarding career for people from a variety of backgrounds, helping to widen the talent pool and foster a more inclusive and representative education system.

Workforce planning and data-driven decision making:

Robust workforce planning, underpinned by accurate, timely data, is essential to anticipate and respond to changing needs. This includes understanding regional trends, subject-specific shortages, and future demand – and should inform both policy development and investment. Survey data from reputable sources, such as national workforce surveys previously undertaken by the EWC (in partnership with the Welsh Government, trade unions and other stakeholders), can also provide valuable insights into practitioner experiences and play an important role in informing effective policy development.

Learning from international best practice

Finally, we would wish to highlight that teacher recruitment and retention are global challenges. UNESCO's 2024 Global Report on Teachers highlights a worldwide shortage of practitioners, with 44 million additional primary and secondary teachers required by 2030. Welsh Government should actively consider (and continue to monitor) developments elsewhere, in relation to teacher recruitment and retention, and seek to adapt successful practice from other countries to our context.

Financial incentives

We note that the Committee has also requested additional information regarding the EWC's recent work in on the effectiveness of financial incentives designed to attract people into teaching. At the request of Welsh Government, we have undertaken extensive data analysis tracking individuals who have received Welsh Government funding to support entry into the profession (between 2014/15 and 2021/22), and their retention within the profession, using data held on our register. However, as this work was commissioned by Welsh Government the committee would need to approach them directly for any further details of this analysis.

Agenda Item 4.16

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

**Children, Young People
and Education Committee**

Lynne Neagle MS
Cabinet Secretary for Education

15 August 2025

Follow-up to 2022 reports on peer-on-peer sexual harassment and pupil absence

Dear Lynne,

On 3 July we discussed our priorities for legacy work during the final terms of the Sixth Senedd. We decided to follow-up on two areas of work that we carried out during the early years of the Senedd: peer-on-peer sexual harassment and pupil absence.

We would therefore be grateful if you could provide an update on the Welsh Government's progress in implementing the accepted recommendations from our 2022 reports on the above and related topics by responding to the queries set out in annex A and B respectively. We are flexible in how you wish to respond; if you wish, you can respond separately in respect of the two inquiries.

We have also agreed to do some further work around learner travel (which links closely to pupil absence) and the introduction of the new £1 bus fare fee for children and young people. We will be writing to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales separately on this issue, and we will copy you into this correspondence.

We appreciate the workload involved in supporting us to carry out reviews of this nature. We would therefore be grateful for your response by the end of October 2025 to help us plan and carry out our legacy work in spring 2026. If you envisage any issues with the proposed timeline, please let the Clerk know.

Yours sincerely,



Buffy Williams MS

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Chair
Children, Young People and Education Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Annex A: request for information relating to the July 2022 report 'Everybody's affected: peer on peer harassment among learners'

Please can you set out:

1. your updated perspective on the following:
 - peer-on-peer sexual harassment in schools;
 - bullying in schools;
 - inappropriate behaviour by pupils towards school staff (sexual or otherwise); and
 - any other issues that relate directly or indirectly to the behaviour of pupils towards each other or towards staff.
2. how work is progressing in implementing the accepted recommendations from Estyn's June 2023 report into peer-on-peer sexual harassment among 16 to 18 year old learners in further education (FE) colleges, and its 2021 report on the issue in secondary schools.
3. the Welsh Government's progress in implementing the following accepted, accepted in principle or partially accepted recommendations from our July 2022 report (including any significant achievements or challenges faced in implementing them, or where the recommendations have been superseded by events, policy changes or otherwise):

Recommendation 1: The Welsh Government and Estyn must adopt/continue to use the definition of sexual harassment used by Estyn in its 2021 report 'We Don't Tell our Teachers', including the specific examples of peer on peer sexual harassment Estyn used in its work with pupils.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 2: The Welsh Government must create a Young People's Advisory Board, made up of a representative sample of young people across Wales, to co-design the Welsh Government's response to peer on peer sexual harassment.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 3: The Welsh Government must carry out an awareness-raising campaign, co-designed with the Young People's Advisory Board (see Recommendation 2), targeted at learners across Wales, to improve understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 4: The Welsh Government must commission a review into peer on peer sexual harassment among primary school-aged children, drawing on the expertise and guidance of children's charities, academics and the Children's Commissioner for Wales as appropriate.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 5: The Welsh Government must update its statutory guidance to ensure that local authorities collect data from schools on sexual harassment specifically on a monthly basis, analyse that data to identify trends and patterns, and report on their findings at least annually. The data should: be collected on the basis of the definition of sexual harassment adopted by Estyn in its 2021 report; and be broken down by the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 6: Estyn must include within its inspection framework for routine school inspections, no later than January 2023, consideration of schools' approaches to keeping records of incidents of peer on peer sexual harassment specifically, how schools interrogate that data to identify trends and patterns, and the extent to which that data informs the development of school-based interventions.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 7: The Welsh Government must ensure that any reviews into peer on peer sexual harassment in Further Education and primary schools consider how effectively schools and colleges collect, categorise and analyse sexual harassment data to identify trends and develop school-/college-based interventions.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 8: The Welsh Government must ensure that pupils are taught about the underlying causes of peer on peer sexual harassment – such as unhealthy depictions of sexual relationships and behaviours across society amplified by pornography, social media, online gaming platforms and others – as part of current Personal and Social Education and future Relationships and Sexuality Education curricula.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 10: The Welsh Government must, alongside the Young People’s Advisory Board (see Recommendation 2), carry out a review into the support provided to young people who have experienced peer on peer sexual harassment, with a view to making recommendations to schools, local authorities and others as required to improve the quality and timeliness of that support.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 11: The Welsh Government must ensure that schools and colleges create a culture in which sexual harassment is unacceptable, reports of sexual harassment are taken seriously and responded to promptly and consistently.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 12: Estyn must include within its inspection framework for routine school inspections specific consideration of how schools and colleges respond to and support learners who have reported and/or experienced sexual harassment, and to address the behaviour of individuals who have perpetrated it.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 13: The Welsh Government must make ring-fenced funding available to schools for all school staff to undertake training on identifying, responding to, and reporting peer on peer sexual harassment. That funding should include provision for schools to provide cover for teachers who are taken out of class, if necessary.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 14: The Welsh Government must work alongside Estyn, relevant academics, and the Young People’s Advisory Board (see Recommendation 2) to gather and collate examples of sex and relationships education that learners consider to be effective in addressing peer on peer sexual harassment, with a view to creating a bank of resources for schools and colleges.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 15: The Welsh Government must write to local authorities and/or schools to ensure that schools have clear policies on acceptable mobile phone use by learners throughout the school day, those policies are well-communicated to learners, staff and parents, and are consistently enforced by school staff.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 17: The Welsh Government must work with local authorities to create and maintain databases of third sector organisations that provide support services for schools and colleges that could assist them in their response to peer on peer sexual harassment.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 18: As part of its wider work on raising awareness of peer on peer sexual harassment in schools, the Welsh Government, alongside the Young People's Advisory Board (see Recommendation 2), must carry out an awareness raising campaign targeted at parents and families.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 19: The Welsh Government must publish its statutory national trans guidance for schools and local authorities no later than January 2023.

Welsh Government response: Accept in principle.

Recommendation 20: The Welsh Government must amend its Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence strategy to acknowledge the impact of peer on peer sexual harassment on the safety and wellbeing of female learners.

Welsh Government response: Accept in principle.

Recommendation 21: The Welsh Government must publish the LGBTQ+ action plan no later than autumn 2022. The action plan must acknowledge the scale and impact of sexual harassment on LGBTQ+ learners.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 22: The Welsh Government must proceed with pace on its work to publish a multi-agency action plan to tackle the problem of peer on peer sexual harassment.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 23: The Welsh Government must provide the Committee with an update in September 2022, and then at 6 month intervals thereafter, on the numbers and proportions of local authorities and schools with RSE leads in place.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 24: The UK Government and the Welsh Government should ensure that there is sufficient time given to the Senedd for scrutiny of any future Legislative Consent Memoranda relating to the Online Safety Bill.

Welsh Government response: Accept in principle.

4. Any other issues you think are relevant to this issue, which we should consider as part of our follow up work.

Annex B: request for information relating to the November 2022 report 'Pupil absence'

Please can you set out:

1. The latest trends in relation to pupil absence, including persistent absence, and how these compare to when we published our report, in particular for those pupils who are:
 - in years 10 and 11;
 - from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds; or
 - those with additional learning needs.
2. Any new policy interventions that have been developed and introduced since we published our report, with details of whether they are effective or plans for evaluation.
3. How work is progressing in implementing the accepted recommendations from Estyn's January 2024 report on improving attendance in secondary schools, and how this work has accounted for Estyn's updated report in May 2025.
4. the Welsh Government's progress in implementing the following accepted, accepted in principle or partially accepted recommendations from the above report, including any significant achievements or challenges faced in implementing them, or where the recommendations have been superseded by events, policy changes or otherwise.

Recommendation 1: The Welsh Government runs a national campaign to emphasise the positive impacts of regular school attendance. Alongside this, the Welsh Government should provide support to local authorities and schools to deliver similar, local positive campaigns about school attendance. The different campaigns should reinforce messages from the other campaigns.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 2: The Welsh Government should commission an urgent study into how the cost of living crisis is impacting on pupils' ability to attend school. This should be done within two months following the Welsh Government's response to this report and made publicly available. The review should be supported by an action plan which details what work will be done to address any of the issues highlighted in the report.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 3: The Welsh Government should ensure that decisions on learner travel are driven by the individual and specific needs of children and young people. To support local authorities in taking this approach, the Welsh Government should ensure that local authorities have sufficient funding to ensure all children and young people have access to appropriate transport options to get them to school safely. The current review should look to prioritising a learner-first solution and should be radical in looking for innovative solutions.

Welsh Government response: Accept in principle.

Recommendation 4: That the Welsh Government outlines how they intend to take forward the work looking at the use of attendance data to support early interventions. In providing this detail, the Welsh Government should provide outline timeframes for the delivery of this work.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 5: That the Welsh Government monitors educational outcomes and the links with attendance rates, and publishes this data on a regular basis.

Welsh Government response: Accept in principle.

Recommendation 6: That the Welsh Government publishes more detailed data on the reasons for de-registration and for returning to schools after de-registration, alongside data on the support being provided to families. This data should be disaggregated by local authority and key demographics, such as age, gender, ethnicity, disability, and eligibility for free school meals.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

Recommendation 7: That the Welsh Government, as part of its current review of school attendance policy and guidance, agrees and sets consistent trigger levels for intervention which apply across all local authorities in Wales.

Welsh Government response: Accept.

5. Any other issues you think are relevant to this issue, which we should consider as part of our follow up work.

Buffy Williams MS
Chair, Children, Young People, and Education Committee,
Senedd Cymru,
Cardiff.
CF99 1SN

Monday 8th September 2025

Dear Buffy Williams MS,

Thank you for your letter with additional questions relating to the Committee's inquiry into issues facing the Higher Education sector. Please take the below as a joint response from me and Pat Younge, Chair of Cardiff University's Council.

Q1. "In light of the changes to the proposals, can you provide more information on the financial challenge and the targets or Key Performance Indicators you have set for the University's financial performance for each year to 2029-30. While you provided three examples during our session, we would also appreciate some specific information on the targets you have set for generating savings and any gaps as a result of the changes to the plans?"

Financial challenges for the Welsh university sector continue. This year's confirmation and clearing (the process through which we fill places at undergraduate level) was extremely competitive. UK universities, including the majority of the Russell Group, competed to secure as many undergraduate home students as possible to compensate for ongoing significant declines in postgraduate international students. At the time of writing we are experiencing a 25% decline in visa applications from postgraduate international students compared with last year, and expect this position to worsen.

Further changes to immigration have been proposed in the UK Government's immigration white paper, including a proposed 6% levy on international student fees in England. This combined with the UK Government's Home Secretary's [recent announcements on international students](#) has continued to deter international students from choosing the UK.

The decline in international student numbers is critical given that inflation indexing of home tuition fees is not yet in place and cost recovery on our research is now down to around two-thirds. Meanwhile our operating costs continue to rise, for example the impact of the National Insurance increase.



We have sought to be responsible by addressing our financial challenges early, while we still have reserves we can draw upon. We have budgeted to draw down a further £28m of our reserves this year. The balance freely available to spend in July 2024 was £41m and this is budgeted to reduce to £15m by July 2026.

At our July meeting of University Council, Council formally adopted generation of 2-3% operating surplus as our medium term financial KPI. This level of operating surplus is common across the HE sector globally and will allow us to invest for the future. This investment includes investments in our student residences estate which will cost £500m over the next ten years, as well as wider investments in our teaching and research estate, digital transformation and the student experience. In an increasingly competitive environment it is critical that we retain excellent facilities to attract both students and research income.

We have run a deficit budget for every year since 2022/23. Council recently approved our 2025/26 budget and our financial targets for the next four years. This budget moves us towards our medium term aim of an operating surplus of 2-3%. We expect to have a deficit budget until 2028/29 as it will take us time to realise the savings from the actions we have taken, and to generate new streams of income. Council was clear that the University needs to be in surplus by the end of 2028/29.

Q2. “What is the timeline for realising these savings?”

We began seeking savings in early 2024, reducing operating budgets across the university, putting in place strict staff recruitment controls, running voluntary severance programmes, pausing academic promotions and beginning a programme of estates disinvestment (most visibly the sale of McKenzie House but also properties on Park Place, Corbett Road and Maindy Road).

We were explicit at the time that this approach would not allow us to deliver on our new university strategy and would not solve the university’s overall financial challenge. The tightening of budgets year on year has negative implications for staff and student experience as we try to deliver the same amount of research and education with fewer resources and people.

Nonetheless, these efforts delivered savings that include:

- £3.9m of annual salary reduction relating to academic staff who were based in schools which were not ‘in-scope’ during the Our Academic Future process.
- £4.5m of annual salary reduction in professional services staff costs delivered through the voluntary severance programme.
- £15m out of our non-pay budget. These included cost controls to IT, maintenance, travel and external venue budgets.

In early 2025 we launched the Academic Futures consultation in order to establish our future academic footprint. This sought to achieve both financial and academic sustainability. The Our Academic Future business case delivers annual savings of £20m in gross savings (£14.1m in net) per annum by 2029/20. This comprises:

- £8.1m annual salary reduction from 83.3 FTE agreed via Voluntary Redundancy (VR) from staff based in the 'in-scope' Schools. These have already taken effect.
- £6.4m annual salary reduction from 67.9 FTE agreed via Voluntary Severance (VS) and other voluntary exits including natural turnover. These have already taken effect.

Combined this means that we have realised £14.5 million in gross savings through Academic Futures for 2026-27.

- A further £5.5m anticipated saving is projected from the 69.6 FTE further reductions planned to 2029/30. These will occur gradually between now and 2029/30.

Q3. “During the session, you also indicated that there is scope for further savings, can you provide more detail on where you envisage these savings coming from?”

The Our Academic Future process will not, and was never intended to, entirely resolve the financial challenges faced by the University. Complementary pieces of work are underway to this end; collectively, these projects will deliver a holistic transformation and return Cardiff University to a stable academic and financial footing.

Whilst Our Academic Future was a single process that examined the sustainability of our entire academic footprint, changes to our professional service will take place steadily, with different services being considered separately.

Ongoing projects will redefine our professional services to improve service provision and also reduce duplication and inefficiency. This includes bringing in standardised processes and ways of working, rather than multiple ways of achieving the same goal. This will be underpinned by digital transformation and investment.

We will further rationalise our estate, which will reduce energy and running costs and allow us to receive capital receipts where sale of buildings is deemed appropriate. For example, housing the new School of Global Humanities in a single building will allow us to save approximately £1.8 million per annum through vacating other properties.

Q4. “What plans do you have to increase income generation, and how do these factor into the long term plans for the institution?”

In addition to continuing to refresh our traditional academic portfolio in response to changing student demand, there are four significant areas of activity which will diversify our income stream and meet our strategic priorities as an institution to adapt to a changing world with changed patterns of student mobility, an ageing population, and an increasingly dynamic city region.

All of the following projects are still being shaped and we will be able to estimate the financial benefits of them as part of this work.

Transnational Education

In common with many other UK universities, including our Russell Group peers, we will offer more of our programmes outside our traditional campus in Cardiff, building on long-standing international partnerships. The most significant of the new developments is the establishment of Cardiff University Kazakhstan. This branch campus will educate 2,500 students a year at maturity. We are also examining TNE opportunities elsewhere including Singapore, where we have an existing partnership with the Singapore Institute of Management, and China where we also have strong relationships with partner universities. These will provide new opportunities for Cardiff University to deliver research and education globally, raise the international reputation of the university, Cardiff and Wales more generally, and will generate new revenue streams that can cross-subsidise our other activities.

Flexible Lifelong Learning

Our new university strategy commits us to further developing our lifelong learning offer, responding to shifting expectations and changing demographics, and also supporting the wider skills agenda of Welsh Government. Our ambition is to be 'flexible by default'. This will mean new approaches and delivery models that will offer what flexible learners want and need. For example, we envisage new flexible master's programmes, stackable micro-credentials (where learners can learn at their own pace and combine courses to achieve a larger award, e.g. a postgraduate certificate or diploma), as well as non-accredited short courses addressing employer needs. We are currently recruiting a new Director and will then establish a Programme Board to lead this work through new and expanded partnerships with industry and public sector organisations.

Commercialisation of research

Recently we announced the launch of Draig Therapeutics, a spin-out based our world-leading research into new therapies for neuropsychiatric disorders. This included a £107 million investment from investors, the most significant commercial investment into Welsh research to date. This represents our potential to scale up commercialisation of our research and innovation. To this end, we have recently established Cardiff Innovations Ltd as a wholly owned subsidiary of Cardiff University. Cardiff Innovations will offer a highly visible and effective 'front door' allowing businesses, investors and collaborators with exciting innovation opportunities to work with us – extending our globally recognised research, expertise and advanced facilities. This model will enable us to reinvest from our successes and develop commercial expertise for decades to come, supporting the next generation of researchers and innovators from across Cardiff University.

Commercialisation of estate

As noted in the Committee meeting, we are currently not well-established for hosting major conferences. Nor do we currently use our estate for wider revenue generating opportunities. We will appoint a Commercial Director on a fixed-term basis to deliver a

return on investment on our estate. Amongst other opportunities, we expect changes in use of the building currently used by the School of Music, and forthcoming investments in our Halls of Residence will see more of our facilities used by a wider range of people.

Q5. “During the session you indicated “the majority of that stress-related data refers to personal stress, not workplace stress”. The UCU told us this was “ ... just not true ...” The external audit of Occupational Health and Safety, ISO45003 said that the data shows that work related stress and work related depression have remained “consistent” across 2024 and 2025. We also note that this audit said “The vast majority of CU clients contact Vivup whilst still in work. The level is higher than the Vivup average seen across all its clients”. In light of these findings, would you wish to clarify your evidence to us and provide evidence that supports it?”

Our overarching Safety, Health, Environmental and Wellbeing (SHEW) management system provides a framework, based on continual improvement, for delivering SHEW. The management system is certified to:

- ISO 14001: 2015 - Environmental management systems
- ISO 45001: 2018 - Occupational health and safety management systems
- ISO 45003: 2021 - Occupational health and safety management - Psychological health and safety at work

Cardiff University is, as far as we are aware, the first higher education institution in the UK to be certified to all three of these management standards and as an early adopter of ISO 45003, was the first client of the external audit body to be certified to the standard. The University was recently recommended for continued certification to all three standards during the annual external surveillance audit conducted by NQA in May of this year.

The University is monitoring key data such as sickness absence, occupational health (OH) and Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) data to identify trends in mental health and specifically work-related stress to enable intervention where appropriate. During the last academic year the majority of the data has remained consistent:

- Sickness absence: This data shows that for the 12 months preceding the end of April 2025 the proportion of absence days caused by stress has decreased. In addition, the introduction of coding into the sickness absence notification form distinguishing personal and work-related stress at the beginning of last year reveals that during the last 12 months, 58.9% stress cases are personal and 41.1% are work-related. Sickness absence data is based on the category selected on the sickness absence notification form. This form is agreed by the staff member and their line manager. Part of the reason for differentiating between personal and work-related stress is that we have more opportunity to take action in relation to potential contributors to work-based stress than in relation to personal stress. Regardless of whether the stress is identified as

personal or work-related stress, there is no impact on the support colleagues can access. We take a holistic approach to supporting our staff.

- For OH: data from January to April 2025 (monthly monitoring was implemented in January in light of the Academic Futures consultation part of the Transformation programme) has been reviewed and compared to the same period in 2024. The data shows mental health appointments have remained consistent (169 appointments in 2024 vs 163 appointments in 2025). Further breakdown of the data shows work-related stress also remains consistent (47 appointments in 2024 vs 48 appointments in 2025), whereas Stress (non-work-related) (34 appointments in 2024 vs 26 appointments in 2025) slightly decreased. OH data is based on the category selected by the OH practitioner.
- The EAP data from 1 January to 31 March 2025 (as with OH data, monthly monitoring was implemented in January) shows that 28% of contacts to the EAP seeking counselling did so because of stress (non-work-related), whereas 10% of contacts seeking counselling did so because of work-related stress. In addition, the average wait time during this period, from first contact to first counselling session (when people's needs are explored in more depth) was 5.51 days and the average time from the first to the second counselling session was 11.62 days. EAP data is based on the category selected by the EAP staff.

Data provided by our EAP provider, Vivup, suggests that the majority of Cardiff University clients contacting Vivup do so whilst still in work. We encourage staff to use our mental health and wellbeing services, with a particular emphasis on early intervention. Our aim is to develop a culture where we promote the importance of mental health, and encourage staff to reach for help as soon as this is needed.

The Committee will be aware that the University and College Union (UCU) reported the University Executive Board to the Health and Safety Executive due in relation to the management of work-related stress, following a member survey they had undertaken. The HSE requested specific information in relation to what UCU highlighted. HSE have recently confirmed that they will not be taking any further action in relation to the concerns raised, providing a reminder of our ongoing responsibilities which we will of course adhere to. We take the wellbeing of our staff very seriously, and are committed to listening to their feedback and learning from their experiences, and will continue to work with our trade unions in the best interest of our staff.

Please feel free to contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Wendy Larner
President and Vice-Chancellor
Cardiff University

Appendix 1 - Outline of the tiered staff wellbeing offer

Tier 1. Self-care support options – provided by staff wellbeing team or external services

- Personal wellbeing promotion plan for structuring self-care practice
- Building better habits training session (120 mins)
- Stoic self-care workshop (90 mins)
- Keep Safe suicide prevention training (3.5 hours)
- Managing stress training (5 hours)
- Building resilience training (3.5 hours per session, 3 sessions over 3 months)
- I-act positive mental health and wellbeing training for managers and non-managerial staff (3.5 hours)
- Bespoke training sessions upon request – e.g., vicarious trauma training for researchers
- An introduction to mindfulness workshop (90 mins)*
- An introduction to sleep workshop (90 mins)*
- An introduction to mental health and wellbeing workshop (90 mins)*
- Five ways to wellbeing workshop (90mins)*
- Lunchtime wellbeing sessions (12 x 30 min sessions over 3 months) covering wellbeing habits, managing change, managing stress and anxiety, the power of self-compassion, mindfulness for mental health, cultivating a positive mindset, kindness at work, movement for mental health, positive relationships at work, the power of breath, better sleep, and setting and achieving goals
- Nutritional support sessions (varying in length and offered throughout the year) covering mental health, menopause, neurodivergence, endometriosis, diabetes and happiness, etc.
- Positive (preventative) psychology sessions to aid self-care (3 x 60-minute recordings)
- Headspace wellbeing app (free access for 12 months for up to 1000 staff members and 5000 family and friends)
- Sleepstation sleep improvement programme (free access for up to 2500 staff members for 12 months)
- Leafyard mental health and wellbeing online platform (free access for up to 12 months for 100 staff members)
- Talklife Workplace (a global online peer support platform that is free for staff to access until 2026)

*Denotes a training session that is provided on request when there is sufficient demand

Tier 2. Non-clinical support options that transcend self-care

- Individual stress risk assessments – to enable line managers to assess the stress levels of individual team members and take steps to reduce stress where possible.
- Life coaching – Life coaches act as ‘thought partners’ in the resolution of issues that might be causing difficulties in the lives of clients. They do not offer therapy or counselling, only pragmatic, objective support. We offer at least three blocks of life coaching sessions per year. The latest block enables 30 staff members to access up to 3 sessions each at no charge to them. These are fully booked.
- Health coaching – Health coaches are life coaches who have received specific training to support clients in the resolution of health issues. These are low level issues responsive to lifestyle changes. We offer at least two blocks of health coaching sessions per year. The latest block enables 25 staff members to access up to 3 sessions each at no cost to them. These are fully booked.
- Dignity and Wellbeing Contacts are a group of 100 plus staff members who volunteer to support the wellbeing needs of colleagues – e.g., through 121 consultations, or through disseminating staff wellbeing support options in their schools/colleges. The D&WBC network is overseen by the staff wellbeing team.

Tier 3. Clinical support options

- Employee Assistance Programme. The EAP service provided by Vivup offers a range of clinically validated self-care materials, a health self-assessment tool, access to a 24/7 telephone support line, and access to a range of structured counselling options (including ‘in the moment’ support) – assuming clients reach the clinical threshold for counselling. Initial access to the EAP service is usually by self-referral.
- Occupational health (OH) service provided by Insight. If a line manager is concerned about the physical or mental health of a team member – e.g., if the team member has been absent from work for some time due to ill health – they can refer their colleague to the OH service for a medical assessment and a recommended course of action. Access to the OH service is usually through line manager/HR referral.

Agenda Item 7

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

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