

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i'r [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Llwybrau at addysg a hyfforddiant ôl-16](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) on the [Routes into post-16 education and training](#)

RET 12

Ymateb gan: Cymdeithas Arweinwyr Ysgolion a Cholegau (ASCL) Cymru  
Response from: Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) Cymru

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### **ASCL Cymru response to the enquiry on routes into post-16 education and training**

1. The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) is a professional association and trade union for all school and college leaders. We are proud to support and represent over 25,000 school and college leaders of primary, secondary and post-16 education from across the UK. In Wales ASCL Cymru represents over 93% of secondary school leaders.
2. Our members across the UK are responsible for the education of more than four million children and young people. We work to shape national education policy, provide advice and support to our members and deliver first-class professional development. We speak on behalf of members and act on behalf of children and young people.
3. This paper is written in response to the request for evidence on routes into post-16 education and training and is supported by anecdotal evidence from members from across Wales.
4. Please note that this evidence represents a snapshot of schools across Wales and may vary across those contexts from which feedback has not been received.
5. ASCL Cymru recognises the concerns raised by other stakeholders but members have indicated that they have made creative and effective use of available resources to support their learners. However, ASCL believes that the opportunities and resources available to provide a breadth of high-quality advice and guidance for post-16 pathways and financial support for young people who wish to engage in continued learning is limited by insufficient funding. This can present a barrier to engagement, particularly for those from the most deprived backgrounds.

#### **Quality and nature of information provided to learners within schools**

6. Members have indicated that their schools provide robust information around post-16 opportunities. This includes information about further study, vocational routes and

employment. Preparation for transition to post-16 occurs from year 9 or earlier; this includes information about careers pathways involving speakers from employers, careers fairs, trips to universities and apprenticeship fairs.

7. Similar opportunities exist at schools with sixth forms and examples of the use of Google classroom to provide advice and support on future pathways exist.

#### **Quality and nature of information provided directly to learners by Careers Wales.**

8. Members feedback suggests effective partnership working with Careers Wales. There is some variation in the quality of school-based careers advice and guidance dependant on individual Careers Advisers.
9. However, there are examples of excellent one-to-one provision offering impartial and practical support for individual learners in making the most appropriate choices.
10. Evidence indicates that, often, parents' evenings are attended by Careers Advisers which provide helpful opportunities for sharing information with parents.

#### **The extent to which further education colleges are able to engage directly with learners in schools**

11. Some schools work collaboratively with local FE colleges to provide shared provision or Junior Apprenticeship programmes for 14-16 learners. In this scenario, students are actively encouraged to submit college applications and receive support from teachers and tutors through the process.
12. Worthwhile links exist between schools and FE colleges. This includes vocational provision for 14-16 learners based within the college campus and college staff delivering assemblies in schools.

#### **Are there any conflicts of interest between sixth forms and further education colleges and is this more prevalent in some areas of Wales more than others?**

13. Where school have sixth forms offering AS/A level provision, engagement is more focused on the L2 and L3 vocational offer. Competition may exist between schools where a wider AS/A level offer exists; this may be influenced by current funding arrangements, but limited evidence is available around this issue.

**The extent to which employers are able to engage directly with learners in schools, for example at careers events.**

14. Feedback indicates that careers fairs, often supported by Careers Wales, are hosted at schools and other venues and are open to students from years 9-13. There are also examples of very good direct engagement as well as ad-hoc sessions (sector specific) with employers throughout the year.

**Who else influences learners future career choices (e.g. parents, teachers, peers), and how well are those people supported to do this.**

15. Parents are often influential in learners' choices but feedback from schools indicate that there are limited opportunities for them to receive relevant support. However, teachers are more effectively supported by more experienced colleagues or those with specific responsibility and Careers Wales.

**Whether work experience opportunities for learners of compulsory school are operational, effective and meaningful and any barriers in that regard.**

16. Generally, there is little opportunity for work experience for 14–16-year-old learners. There are some bespoke opportunities for disengaged learners. Reasons for this vary but include inadequate valid opportunities for whole cohorts, supervision issues, coordination and risk assessments.

**Is there evidence that learners are changing their choices post-18, including a drop in Higher Education enrolments, and if so why?**

17. There is some evidence to support this with more learners showing interest in degree apprenticeships.

**Are some groups of learners disadvantaged by the current system (e.g. pupils from low-income households, learners with travel needs)?**

18. There are good examples of schools who prioritise learners based on needs. These individuals receive additional support by schools and Careers Wales in making appropriate plans and choices. In some instances, learners have enhanced support e.g. transport to a college interview provided by school.

**What support is available for learners to improve access (financial or otherwise)?**

19. Feedback indicates that learners find the current EMA process cumbersome. Its largely paper-based process is very time consuming and presents difficulty for some students to complete correctly. This process would benefit from digitisation and simplification.

**How effective is the Welsh Government's approach to support participation in the full range of post-16 education and training options?**

20. Schools feel that generally Careers Wales offers value for money in their service to support schools.

**Are learners, their families and schools aware of available Wales-wide support and programmes, such as the Young Person's Guarantee?**

21. Awareness amongst schools and learners does not appear to be broadly developed.

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