

Vikki Howells MS

Minister for Further and Higher Education

3 April 2025

Dear Vikki,

Apprenticeship pathways inquiry

You will be aware that the Committee is currently undertaking an inquiry into Apprenticeship pathways, with the Committee in particular considering:

- Pathways between apprenticeship levels: The extent to which there are challenges in mapping out career routes through the different apprenticeship levels, such as from a junior apprenticeship to a degree apprenticeship. Whether this is more difficult in some careers/sectors than others.
- Economy: The extent to which apprenticeship pathways support the needs of Welsh businesses and contribute to filling skills gaps in the Welsh economy.
- Employers: The engagement of employers in facilitating these pathways and attracting apprentices. Is specific support needed for micro, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to engage with the apprenticeship programme.
- Information about apprenticeships: Good practice between careers services, schools, colleges and employers in terms of promoting apprenticeships and the provision of meaningful work experience.
- Equity of support and access for learners: The extent to which apprenticeship pathways are made open to all young people in Wales and any barriers facing specific demographic groups or geographical areas.



- The Welsh Government's role: How policies support apprenticeship pathways and any barriers that need addressing in that regard. The role of the Welsh Government, Regional Skills Partnerships and other stakeholders in identifying and communicating economic and skills needs to inform apprenticeship frameworks and the delivery of qualifications.

As part of this inquiry, the Committee heard oral evidence from the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning, and in written correspondence in follow up to this session requested, amongst other queries, an update on what progress has been made in developing a national strategy for vocational education and training. In a letter of 13 March 2025, the Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership confirmed this was a matter for yourself, and had requested you write to update the Committee on this.

The Committee would therefore like to take the opportunity to welcome this update, and request this please be with us by 24 April 2025, in order for the Committee to consider your response at its next meeting. Members would also be interested to note any views you may have on any other area of the terms of reference for the inquiry, as detailed above, as you see fit.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew RT Davies". The signature is written in a cursive style with some capital letters.

Andrew RT Davies MS

Chair: Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English