

Agenda – Children, Young People, and Education Committee

Meeting Venue:	For further information contact:
Hybrid – Committee room 4 Tŷ Hywel and video conference via Zoom	Naomi Stocks Committee Clerk
Meeting date: 25 May 2022	0300 200 6565
Meeting time: 09.15	SeneddChildren@senedd.wales

Private pre-meeting

(09.00 – 09.15)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(09.15)

2 Papers to note

(09.15)

2.1 Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Bill

(Pages 1 – 4)

Attached Documents:

Letter from Head of Wales at the Equality and Human Rights Commission –
CYPE(6)-12-22 – Paper to note 1

2.2 Peer on peer sexual harassment among learners

(Pages 5 – 6)

Attached Documents:

Letter from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education
Committee to the Rt Hon Nadine Dorries MP, Secretary of State for Digital,
Culture, Media and Sport – CYPE(6)-12-22 – Paper to note 2

2.3 Peer on peer sexual harassment among learners

(Pages 7 – 8)



Attached Documents:

Letter from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education
Committee to Coleg Cambria students – CYPE(6)–12–22 – Paper to note 3

2.4 Forward work programme

(Page 9)

Attached Documents:

Letter from the Deputy Minister for Climate Change – CYPE(6)–12–22 – Paper
to note 4

2.5 Forward work programme

(Pages 10 – 11)

Attached Documents:

Letter from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education
Committee to the Minister for Education and Welsh Language – CYPE(6)–12–
22 – Paper to note 5

3 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the remainder of the meeting and for item 1 at the meeting on 16 June

(09.15)

4 Qualifications Wales – update on priorities [part 2]

(09.15 – 10.00)

(Pages 12 – 25)

Attached Documents:

Research brief from the meeting on the 27 April 2022

CYPE(6)–12–22 – Private paper 1

CYPE(6)–12–22 – Private paper 2

PowerPoint presentation

Break

(10.00 – 10.10)

5 Pupil absence – Briefing session

(10.10 – 11.10)

(Pages 26 – 38)

Meilyr Rowlands

Attached Documents:

Research Brief

6 Pupil absence – consideration of the evidence

(11.10 – 11.20)

7 Implementation of key education reforms – consideration of approach

(11.20 – 11.50)

(Pages 39 – 46)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(6)-12-22 – Private paper 3 – Scoping paper

Agenda Item 2.1

CYPE(6)-12-22 - Paper to note 1



Jayne Bryant MS,
Chair,
Children, Young People and
Education Committee
Welsh Parliament,
Cardiff Bay,
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CF99 1SN

By email

Thursday 12 May 2022

Dear Ms Bryant,

Subject: Stage 2 of the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Bill

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (the Commission) has powers to advise Welsh Government on the equality and human rights implications of laws and proposed laws and to publish information or provide advice, including to Parliament, on any matter related to equality, diversity and human rights.

Our [strategic plan for 2022-2025](#) sets out six priority areas which we will focus our work on, including equality for children and young people and equality in a changing workplace. We know too many young people face discrimination and barriers to opportunities from prejudice or lack of proper support in education and unequal access to work.

The Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Bill which will create a single body to deal with

Bydd y Comisiwn yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg.

The Commission welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English.

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the strategic planning and funding across the whole of the tertiary education sector and research and innovation sector in relation to Wales.

We have [welcomed](#) the inclusion of ‘promoting equality of opportunity’ and ‘encouraging participation’ as two of the nine strategic duties of the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER).

We believe there are further opportunities within the legislation to clearly set out ways that equality can be embedded and strengthened within the structure and governance of the CTER.

Definition of ‘under-represented groups’ – we would recommend including the term ‘protected characteristics’¹ as set out by the Equality Act 2010 within the legislation definition. There are a number of protected characteristics where [evidence](#) shows there are still significant barriers in access to education as well as discrimination in employment.

Annual report – we would recommend reporting on equality of opportunity is included within the list of what the CTER will be required to report on at the end of each financial year. This will further ensure accountability to the CTER. We would suggest it includes measuring the progress of higher education providers in preventing and tackling racial harassment. This was a recommendation of our [inquiry into racial harassment at universities](#)² across Wales, England and Scotland.

Committees – there will be three statutory committees – research and innovation committee, the quality committee and staff member appointments committee. We would recommend that equality is explicitly embedded within the sections of the legislation relating to these

¹ The following characteristics are protected characteristics— age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation. (Equality Act 2010) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/4>

² Tackling racial harassment: universities challenged (2019 EHRC) <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/tackling-racial-harassment-universities-challenged>

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committees. This will ensure equality of opportunity is at the centre of all activities of the CTER including in terms of research and teaching.

Regulatory frameworks – in our [inquiry on tackling racial harassment at universities](#) we recommended the Welsh Government review the regulatory framework and court hearing structures to determine how best to increase protection from harassment for students in university. The Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) draft legislation provides an opportunity to address this. The legislation should ensure the CTER is able to assess whether higher education providers have taken sufficient steps to tackle harassment and to impose conditions of funding or registration where they have not (such as withholding or requiring repayment of funding).

Access and opportunity plans – We remain concerned about the decision to omit access and opportunity plans. We understand that access and opportunity plans were initially proposed as a replacement for fee and access plans which were seen as an important lever for widening access and ensuring equality of opportunity. We therefore recommend further consideration and that robust alternative arrangements are included and implemented to provide clear requirements and accountabilities on widening access including holding providers to account.

We have discussed these recommendations with the Welsh Government, who have undertaken to consider how they can be implemented. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these improvements further as the Bill passes through the legislative process. For more information, please contact wales@equalityhumanrights.com

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Comisiwn
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Yours sincerely,

Rev Ruth Coombs

Head of Wales

Wales | Cymru

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Agenda Item 2.2

CYPE(6)-12-22 - Paper to note 2

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

**Children, Young People
and Education Committee**

Rt Hon Nadine Dorries MP
Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

19 May 2022

Online Safety Bill

Dear Ms Dorries,

Senedd Cymru's Children, Young People and Education Committee, of which I am Chair, is currently undertaking an inquiry into peer on peer sexual harassment among learners. I would like to highlight some of our findings to you and ask for your views as to whether and how the Online Safety Bill may address these.

The inquiry draws on the findings of Estyn's review (published in December 2021); the testimonials on the Everyone's Invited website; and the considerable research on gender, sexual harassment and sexual violence between children and young people carried out by Professor EJ Renold and others. The inquiry's terms of reference include "the impact of online content and influences on young people's attitudes, and the wider context of online safety and potential legislation at Westminster".

Throughout the inquiry we have heard consistently that many children and young people access inappropriate sexual content online on a range of online platforms. We have been told that this content can have a negative impact on their understanding of what constitutes a healthy and consensual sexual relationship. It can also expose children and young people to online hate and abuse. And – of course – social media, gaming and social networking websites and platforms can, in themselves, be a mechanism for harassment and image-based abuse.

On 27 April 2022, a group of college students attended a meeting of our Committee to present a video that they had produced and to discuss the findings of our consultation with children and young people with members of the Committee. The students raised a number of concerns about peer on peer sexual harassment. I would like to highlight the following:

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- Social media and social networking websites have made sharing explicit and inappropriate images more common among young people.
- The companies responsible for social media platforms, websites containing pornographic material, gaming platforms and social networking websites have a duty of care to protect children and young people from inappropriate content. Largely, we have heard concerns that they are not discharging that duty of care effectively.
- It is often not clear enough for children and parents when particular platforms, services or websites have minimum age limits. Where age limits are in place and are clear, they are not enforced effectively.

With that in mind, I would be grateful if you could respond to this letter to set out how, if at all, the Online Safety Bill addresses the students' concerns.

I would also be grateful if you would could support this Committee's work by arranging for your officials to provide us with a short, technical briefing in private session on the implications of the Online Safety Bill for children and young people in Wales.

If you would like clarification of any of the above points, or have any other questions, please contact the Committee's clerks (SeneddChildren@Senedd.Wales). Otherwise I look forward to hearing from you.

I have copied this correspondence to the students themselves, their lecturers, and to the relevant Welsh Ministers.

Yours sincerely,



Jayne Bryant MS

Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

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We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Agenda Item 2.3

CYPE(6)-12-22 - Paper to note 3

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

**Children, Young People
and Education Committee**



12 May 2022

Thank you

Dear Ebonie, Glenn, Jake, and Sophie,

On behalf of the Children, Young People and Education Committee, I would like to thank you for your contribution to our inquiry into peer on peer sexual harassment among learners. My fellow Committee members and I are immensely grateful for all the work you put in to supporting us with our inquiry, and the time you dedicated to travelling to and from Cardiff to share your views in person.

We were particularly impressed with the quality of the video that you made for us, how clearly you set out your views to us on this sensitive and complex issue, and how confidently and convincingly you discussed potential solutions with us.

We have taken your views and recommendations seriously. They shaped the questions that we asked the Welsh Ministers when we took evidence from them on Wednesday 4 May (you can watch that evidence session back on Senedd.tv if you weren't able to watch it live). They also fed into a letter that we will send to the UK Government about a new law that will make changes to how online content is regulated. They will also be included in our final Committee report.

As the Clerk confirmed during the Committee meeting, you will all receive an embargoed copy of the Committee's final report 24 hours before we publish it. We hope the report will lead to improvements in how the Welsh Government, schools and others protect children from sexual harassment.

We are also planning on releasing a video report to share our findings with children and young people. We will share that with you before it is published too.

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In the meantime, thank you again for your invaluable contribution to our inquiry. I hope that you found the work interesting. I also hope that you enjoyed meeting the Committee, your tour of the Senedd, and meeting some other Senedd Members over the course of your day in Cardiff.

I wish you all the very best of luck for your studies and beyond. If you would ever like to get involved in our work in future, or would like to get in touch for any other reason, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Jayne Bryant MS

Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Agenda Item 2.4

CYPE(6)-12-22 - Paper to note 4

Lee Waters AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Deputy Minister for Climate Change

Ein cyf/Our ref



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Jayne Bryant MS
Chair, Children, Young People, and Education Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
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18 May 2022

SeneddChildren@senedd.wales

Dear Jayne,

Thank you for your correspondence of 31 March regarding an update on the review of the Learner Travel Measure (Wales) 2008.

I am pleased to inform you that I published the findings of the 2021 review on the 31st March. The report, and a youth and community version, can be found on the Welsh Government website at the following address.

[Learner Travel \(Wales\) Measure \(2008\) review 2021 | GOV.WALES](#)

As set out in my Written Statement to Members of the Senedd last week, we will now proceed to take forward further work against the topics identified in the report with stakeholders to support any proposed changes to ensure that they are fair, proportionate, and affordable. I am keen to look at how Learner travel is developed in parallel with our bus reform plans as school travel is so closely linked with wider bus provision. It is my intention to consult on the outcome of this next stage of work later this year.

I would welcome the views and evidence of the Committee to help inform this work.

Yours sincerely

Lee Waters AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Deputy Minister for Climate Change

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
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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 2.5

CYPE(6)-12-22 - Paper to note 5

Jeremy Miles AS/MS
Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg
Minister for Education and Welsh Language



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Welsh Government

Jayne Bryant MS
Chair,
Children, Young People & Education
Committee, Senedd Cymru
SeneddChildren@senedd.wales

17 May 2022

Dear Jayne,

Thank you for your letter of 31 March in relation to Elective Home Education (EHE).

In September 2021, I agreed to progress the current arrangements in principle, as a proportionate measure, in line with the commitment of the previous Government. Since then work has progressed on all fronts including the new statutory guidance, a wider package of support and the database regulations.

In October 2021, a summary and analysis of the responses to the second consultation (the database regulations) was published on the Welsh Government website.

Having reviewed the work previously undertaken on the EHE proposals, my officials sought further evidence last autumn in support of the proposals from both internal and external sources. One element of this work remains outstanding, relating to the benchmarking of the data sharing process between agencies.

The unforeseen delay in receiving this evidence may result in the proposals being brought before the Senedd in September rather than June as was intended. However, it is not expected to impact on the timescale for the implementation of the proposals in April 2023.

My officials continue to work closely with our stakeholders on developing the wider package of support to EHE families that will increase educational opportunities for EHE children, enhance their learning and encourage greater access to universal services. Working groups have been convened to this effect. I am also due to meet representatives of families of home educated children on 18 May, to hear at first hand the issues they face in providing effective home education and how we can support them in their choice.

Officials have also met with Careers Wales to identify how, as part of the wider package of support, the designated EHE coordinator role can provide a consistent service offer to EHE young people across Wales and help tackle the aspiration gap.

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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.

In April 2022, an Educational Professional Adviser joined Welsh Government on secondment from Monmouthshire County Council, with a remit to support the continued development and implementation of the proposals.

I hope that this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Miles', with a stylized, cursive flourish at the end.

Jeremy Miles AS/MS
Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg
Minister for Education and Welsh Language

Agenda Item 4

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

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13 May 2022

Dear Head of Centre

Summer 2022 exams

As the exam season will begin next week, I am writing to thank you for all your hard work preparing learners in Wales for exams and assessments this year. We understand that you and your colleagues have been busy dealing with the continued disruption caused by COVID-19 and our priority continues to be a fair system for learners. It is heartening to see so many learners aiming for GCSE, AS and A level qualifications, and we will be publishing provisional entry numbers for this summer's exams on 20 May 2022.

Delivering the exam series

This is the first summer series since 2019 and it is a busy time for exam officers as well as learners. We appreciate that schools and colleges have had to manage many issues and challenges during recent months. As a reminder, it is important to make sure you have contingency plans in place to make sure that exams run smoothly whatever the challenges. Key to this is ensuring papers are always stored securely. Our Strategic Engagement Team has been providing updates and training and is on hand to support exam officers prepare.

Awarding in summer 2022

As previously [announced](#), in recognition of the disruption to teaching for learners sitting GCSEs, AS, A levels and the Skills Challenge Certificate (SCC) qualifications, the assessment requirements for this summer have been adapted. The adaptations have been put in place to support learners and to recognise lost teaching and learning time.

With the return of exams, WJEC will award grades to learners this summer. As outcomes during the pandemic have been different to the pre-pandemic period, it has been decided that a slightly different approach will be implemented this year. As [announced](#) previously, results this year will be broadly midway between 2021 and 2019. This means that at a national level, we expect results to be higher than in 2019 and lower than in 2021.

It is a priority that the grades learners achieve support progression to the next stage of their education or employment. We are working with WJEC to agree procedures for awarding grades this year that build on usual practice and provide a safety net for learners. We continue to work with other regulators across the UK so that the grading process is as consistent as possible and fair for learners.

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Keeping you informed

I hope your learners have found the content in our shared reassurance campaign [Lefel Nesa/Power Up](#) helpful. Partnering with Welsh Government, WJEC, Careers Wales and e-sgol the campaign has provided reassurance, resources and additional support for learners.

As part of the campaign, we will celebrate Wales' first **Pob Lwc Day** next **Monday 16 May** to wish Pob Lwc to all learners taking exams and assessments this year. You will see a range of Pob Lwc messages shared on the day across all the campaign partner channels and we hope your school or college will join in to wish Pob Lwc to learners across the country.

Preparing for future exam series

We understand that the pandemic continues to have a substantial impact on teaching and learning. We have considered the need for learners to continue to be supported and appreciate that centres need to know if any assessment changes will continue to be in place. To support your planning for the autumn term, I can confirm that **advance information** will be provided for made-for-Wales GCSE, AS and A level qualifications in the 2022/2023 academic year. Any previous GCSE, AS and A level adaptations will no longer apply. Advance information gives an indication of topics, themes, texts or other content that learners can expect in their exams. Its main aim is to support learners' exam preparation. WJEC will release advance information for the November 2022 series before the end of this term. Advance information for the January 2023 series will be released in the autumn and for Summer 2023 in the spring term. We also anticipate that advance information may be appropriate for some made-for-Wales vocational qualifications. Advance information is not possible for the SCC, so many of the current adaptations will continue into next year. WJEC will release information about this shortly. These measures are for the benefit of learners and signal our journey back to pre-pandemic assessment arrangements.

Have your say!

As part of our monitoring of the summer series, we are running an online questionnaire to give learners, teachers and lecturers the chance to give feedback about the exams. The questionnaire opens on the 16 May and is available to complete until 4 July. We would be grateful if you can help us promote awareness of our questionnaire among your colleagues and learners. We will share the link with you next week.

Results release

We would like to remind schools and colleges that results are confidential until the official results days (18 August for AS and A level and 25 August for GCSE) and must not be shared with any person or organisation outside of your school or college. I hope you find this update helpful, please let me know if you require further information.

Yours sincerely



Philip Blaker
Chief Executive



11 May 2022

Dear Colleagues

UK Government announcement on the defunding of level 3 qualifications in England

The UK Government's Department for Education (DfE) has today [published a list of qualifications](#) that overlap with waves 1 and 2 of T levels and will be defunded in England from August 2024.

I recognise that you will be concerned about the potential impact of these policy and funding changes on the availability of some level 3 qualifications in Wales, and I would like to reassure you of the steps that we have taken and will continue to take to ensure that an appropriate range of qualifications is available to Welsh learners.

Today's DfE announcement relates to level 3 qualifications that will be defunded in England only. This defunding of qualifications in England does not mean that they will cease to be available in Wales. Qualifications Wales has been working extensively with awarding bodies to identify the likely impact of the changes and to ensure that a suitable range of qualifications continues to be available in Wales.

Our work over recent years has done much to mitigate the risks posed by the changes to qualifications policy happening in England. You will be aware, for instance of our series of sector reviews of qualifications. Four reviews have been completed: Health and Social Care, including Childcare (HSC); Construction and the Built Environment (CBE); Digital Technology (DT) and Engineering, Advanced Manufacturing and Energy (EAME). Our fifth review of Travel, Tourism, Hospitality and Catering will be published in early 2023 but we are already holding discussions with awarding bodies about the future qualifications offer in this area.

We are also undertaking a series of lighter-touch phase 2 sector reviews which focus on whether there is likely to be a suitable range of qualifications, including Welsh-medium qualifications, available in future. The first phase 2 review (Sport and Public Services) was

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published last September, and we intend to publish our second review (Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care) later this year. Further reviews are planned for Business Administration and Retail (2022), Art, Creative and Media (2022) and Hair and Beauty (2023).

Where we have commissioned new qualifications for Wales (in HSC and CBE) the risk posed by the changes in England has been removed – we are self-sufficient in these sectors moving forwards. However, this is not the case for every sector. The DT and EAME reviews did not propose the commissioning of new qualifications specifically for use in FE colleges and apprenticeships – neither is it expected that the phase 2 sector reviews will lead to significant commissioning activity. Rather, over the past three years, we have been managing the risks brought about by changes to qualifications policy in England by engaging with awarding bodies currently awarding substantial numbers of vocational qualifications in post-16 education in Wales.

We have had regular discussions with the large awarding bodies such as Pearson, City and Guilds, WJEC, NCFE, VTCT, EAL and Highfield, as well as specific discussions with awarding bodies as part of phase 2 sector reviews. Further meetings are scheduled with a range of other awarding bodies who offer vocational qualifications in Wales. All of these discussions have been reassuringly positive and awarding bodies have confirmed their desire to remain active in Wales. For example, as a result of our discussions, Pearson have extended the designation start dates of a range of their level 3 BTEC qualifications to August 2026 with certifications until August 2028 (meaning that at least four more cohorts can take those qualifications) to provide medium-term certainty for learners and providers in Wales. We are also working closely with City & Guilds to extend a range of their level 3 qualifications.

We are confident about the steps we are taking. In most sectors there are alternative qualifications available that are not being defunded in England but, where valued qualifications are being defunded, we will continue to work with awarding bodies to extend the end dates of those qualifications to ensure that gaps do not emerge in the post-16 qualification offer in Wales.

We will then continue to work together with awarding bodies and centres to ensure that a sustainable, modern and bilingual qualifications offer is secured for learners in Wales in the longer term. Where necessary, we will consider using one or more of our regulatory tools to secure the availability of some vocational qualifications. These tools may include adopting qualifications used elsewhere in the international market, adapting existing qualifications to meet the needs of Wales or, where necessary, commissioning new qualifications to fill any gaps. In this work we will bring together centres and awarding bodies to ensure that fit for purpose qualifications continue to be available in Wales.

We recognise that announcements such as that being made today in England can be alarming but we hope that this letter provides you with reassurance that Qualifications Wales will ensure that learners in Wales are not disadvantaged by policy changes in England. If you would like

to discuss any of the information in this letter, our Qualifications Policy and Reform team would be more than happy to meet with you to discuss any particular concerns. You can contact them at enquiries@qualificationswales.org.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Philip Blaker', is enclosed in a light blue rectangular box.

Philip Blaker

Chief Executive

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Agenda Item 5

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

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