

# Agenda – Economy, Infrastructure and Skills

## Committee

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Meeting Venue:

**Committee Room 1 – Senedd**

Meeting date: Wednesday, 17 May  
2017

Meeting time: 09.00

For further information contact:

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Committee Clerk

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### Private pre-meeting (09:00–09:15)

#### 1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

#### 2 Careers Wales – Apprenticeships in Wales 2017

(09:15–10:00)

(Pages 1 – 31)

Shirley Rogers, Director of Service Delivery, Careers Wales

Leon Patnett, Head of Service Delivery, Careers Wales

Attached Documents:

Research brief

EIS(5)–12–17 (p1) Careers Wales



### **3 National Training Federation for Wales – Apprenticeships in Wales 2017**

(10:00–10:45)

(Pages 32 – 39)

Jeff Protheroe, Director of Operations, National Training Federation for Wales  
Sarah John, National Chair, National Training Federation for Wales

Attached Documents:

EIS(5)–12–17 (p2) National Training Federation for Wales

### **Break (10:45–11:00)**

### **4 Colleges Wales – Apprenticeships in Wales 2017**

(11:00–11:45)

(Pages 40 – 53)

Rachel Bowen, Director of Policy and Development, Colleges Wales  
Nicola Thornton–Scott, Assistant Principal – Skills, NPTC Group of Colleges  
David Jones, Chief Executive, Coleg Cambria

Attached Documents:

EIS(5)–12–17 (p3) Colleges Wales

### **5 Universities Wales – Apprenticeships in Wales 2017**

(11:45–12:30)

(Pages 54 – 58)

Professor Julie Lydon, Vice–Chancellor and Chief Executive, University of South Wales  
Kieron Rees, Policy Adviser, Universities Wales

Attached Documents:

EIS(5)–12–17 (p4) Universities Wales

## **6 Paper(s) to note**

### **6.1 Letter from the Welsh Language Commissioner regarding the Committee's inquiry into Apprenticeships in Wales 2017**

(Pages 59 – 60)

Attached Documents:

EIS(5)-12-17 (p5) Letter from the Welsh Language Commissioner regarding the Committee's inquiry into Apprenticeships in Wales 2017

**Private de-brief (12:30–12:40)**

# Agenda Item 2

Document is Restricted

**1. To review progress since the enterprise committee report 2012 :There are two set of data that inform a view of progress**

**Careers Wales Annual Destinations Survey – Providing a snapshot of the pupil destinations**

- The percentage of leavers entering Work-based Training (Employed status) has fallen for Year 11 since 2012, from 1.6% of the cohort to 1.3%. The percentage of Year 12 leavers entering this destination has also fallen, from 0.8% to 0.7%. However the percentage of Year 13 leavers has increased from 1.3% to 1.6%

**Careers Wales Career Check Year 10 survey – 2016:- a survey providing a snapshot of pupil vocational aspirations at Key Stage 4**

- 7% of the cohort indicated an interest in Apprenticeships as their first choice next step after year 11, compared to 43% school and 34% college
- The most popular first choice occupational area of interest for those choosing Apprenticeship as their first choice next step is “Engineering”. The next two top choices are “Building and Construction” and “Leisure Sports and Tourism”
- 74% of those interested in apprenticeships as their first choice were male
- Respondents were more likely to be interested in an apprenticeship if they weren’t expecting 5+GCSEs at grade C

**2. To scrutinise the accessibility of independent careers advice on apprenticeships and other vocational options. Particularly for young people in schools, on line or from another source**

**The accessibility of impartial Careers Information Advice and Guidance ( CIAG ) has been impacted by reductions in the Careers Wales budget since funding support adviser time. In recent years there has been a reduction in service provision to pupils in schools at transition points. In an independent survey of recipients of services there is an overwhelmingly positive response to the Careers Wales offer. ( Beaufort Research )**

- In 2011, Careers Wales undertook an impact study with 3000 young people who had taken part in a Careers-related activity during Years 10 and 11. Of those who subsequently moved into apprenticeships, 95% felt they had made the right choice for them. Of those in an apprenticeship, 97% felt that their talk with a Careers Adviser helped (with 45% stating it helped a great deal)
- In 2016/17 we supported 24,191 learners in KS4 (Year 10 and 11) through individual interviews. Careers Guidance ensures that the learner is aware of all options available to them – meaning that apprenticeships would be discussed. We also delivered 2,027 group session in KS 4 – the majority of these would have focused on Post 16 options
- Careers Wales’ strategic vision “Changing Lives”, proposes a strong digital presence that includes Skype and Telephone support, webinars, social networking and digital tools with a redesigned website central to this offer. The digital presence will be blended with traditional face-to-face support. Career Check a diagnostic assessment, enables Careers Advisers to identify those who have expressed an interest in Apprenticeships, and to offer support.  
**Opportunity Awareness Project - 2016-7 Careers Wales received additional funding for one year from Welsh Government to provide an additional focus on apprenticeships and work based learning as equal alternatives to academic study**
- Careers Wales delivered Opportunity Awareness group sessions in 235 schools ( including Special Schools and Units ) across Wales. 37,103 learners attended these sessions

- Careers Advisers attended a total of 549 parent events this year. We recorded a total of 9,682 interactions with parents of pupils from year 11, sixth form or students in full time further education. In addition, we delivered 8 Parent Workshops across Wales
- We organised 20 pop-up events, which were attended by 1,240 participants. organised outside normal office hours, these allow pupils to access information and advice about apprenticeships outside of the school environment
- We organised 24 High Impact events with 11,826 participants. These events bring numerous schools and/or employers or others in one place at the same time
- Additionally we organised a further 119 events with 11,022 participants. These included:
  - Webinars in collaboration with Airbus, Horizon Nuclear Power, and the NHS
  - An Apprenticeship Roadshow which visited 11 schools in In Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr order to raise awareness of Apprenticeships and other vocational routes
  - A Careers Festival focusing on apprenticeships at the Cardiff City Football stadium, attended by over 1,200 pupils from 29 schools across the region
  - Engineering Days in Powys, led by Apprentices from employers in the Manufacturing, Construction and Engineering industries who worked with pupils to raise awareness of apprenticeship opportunities
- Careers Wales staff developed a number of resources for in schools. These included:
  - Development of Apprenticeship group resources to target young people in KS 5 who were not planning to pursue higher education as their next step.
  - Bespoke Opportunity Awareness workshops for young people navigating their options at 16
  - 'Parent Power' presentations and information packs, developed to raise parents' awareness of all routes available to young people
  - Development of 'Influencing the Influencers' workshops for teachers and lecturers, aimed at building their capacity to raise awareness of a broader range of vocational routes

The Opportunity Awareness Project proved to be extremely effective and achieved all of its planned outcomes

### **3. Is the Careers Wales AMS fit for purpose?**

- **Firstly, we would like to clarify that AMS is a WG product that is hosted by Careers Wales on our website**
- As anticipated, this year (2016-17 business year) has seen an increase in usage of the AMS site both for the number of users and the number of session as a result of marketing and activities delivered via the Opportunity Awareness Project:  
**Apr 16 – Mar 17 (15/16) Users: 347,576 (280,948); Sessions: 732,521 (657,826)**
- In response to requests from work based learning providers, the WG AMS team commissioned Careers Wales to develop a self-service option on the AMS site. This allowed providers and employers to place opportunities, manage their vacancies, contact applicants and withdraw opportunities once filled
- During the last financial year, in line with feedback from users of the service, WG commissioned Careers Wales to develop the AMS section of the website along with the application process, to ensure it was accessible for mobile users. This has now been achieved
- There are benefits to having an online application process however the system needs to be simplified,

### **4. How can parity of esteem between vocational and academic routes be achieved**

- Careers Wales conducted various surveys in 2014-15 to find out what influenced clients' next steps after leaving education, particularly in relation to work-based learning (WBL) options. The surveys found the following:
  - Half of those who chose WBL did so because they did not want to stay in school or college, but for many of these this was for positive reasons, such as wanting to earn money whilst learning or because WBL suited their learning style
  - A number of clients perceive that staying in Full Time education is a "better" option and that this is a better route to Higher Education
  - Of those surveyed, more were likely to associate university rather than apprenticeships with providing good long term earning potential and job prospects.
  - Whilst the majority of clients had heard of WBL/apprenticeships, a significant number of respondents had not considered them an option on leaving education e.g. 43% of callers to CWC had not thought of doing a vocational route on finishing Yr11
  - There seemed to be a clear correlation between clients having sufficient information about WBL and whether or not they consider it as an option. 35.5% of callers to our centres and 45% of callers to Careers Wales Connect, stated that more information would have helped them consider vocational pathways, in particular apprenticeships and WBL, as a realistic and favourable option
  - Nobody indicated that WBL is a "negative" option i.e. for those who don't do well in school
- Vocational pathways are still struggling to acquire social status with "key influencers" on young people's choice such as parents and teachers. The lack of awareness and understanding amongst parents of vocational pathways is concerning. A recent report in The Guardian "Why don't Parents get Apprenticeships?" quoted a survey undertaken by the Association of Accounting Technicians, where 63% of parents surveyed didn't understand apprenticeships and 81% didn't realise that higher apprenticeships are on par with foundation degrees and in some cases even bachelor's degrees. A Netmum's survey in 2014 reported that 48% thought Apprenticeships were for boys, 32% said they were for the less able and only 36% realised there are Apprenticeships in the less traditional industries e.g. law
- In considering the results of our review and the work done as part of the Opportunity Awareness project, above, the following suggestions are proposed:
  - Explore the potential of setting up a multi-agency steering group, including SSCs, NTFW, CW & WG to inform and influence government policy and provide Careers Advisers with timely and accurate information on sector opportunities, career routes and WBL opportunities
  - Develop further group work and other resources for use with clients in schools, colleges and those in the labour market, with parents and with teachers/lecturers that explain and promote vocational pathways including WBL and Apprenticeships
  - Continue to develop the understanding of WBL and Apprenticeships with teachers and FE lecturers and raise their awareness of the labour market and recruitment patterns
  - Continue coordinating careers events that include WBL provision, input from employers and include parents in their audience

**5. Main barriers to taking up an apprenticeship -There is evidence that stereotyping has an impact in this context. Careers Wales Career Check Survey provides information relating to Occupational areas of interest and gender**

- Apprenticeships are more appealing to males. Overall 74% of those interested in apprenticeships as their first choice were male. This is due largely to many of the occupations most commonly accessed via WBL having a traditionally perceived male bias which is reflected in young peoples' careers interests e.g.
  - Motor Vehicle Trades (98.2% of those interested were male)
  - Engineering (94.6% of those interested were male)
  - Building & Construction (94.6% of those interested were male)

- The same situation applies to occupations with a traditional female bias, but there are less of these occupations than those with a perceived male bias e.g.
  - Childcare (100% of those interested were female)
  - Hair & Beauty (94.9% of those interested were female)
- Availability of apprenticeships is a barrier. On May 5th 2017, a prime time for labour market entrants from year 11-13 to apply for apprenticeships, there were 225 apprenticeships advertised on AMS. That's enough for 1 pupil per school in Wales.
- Many of the large high profile companies offer Apprenticeships e.g. Airbus but the availability of apprenticeships with SMEs is limited.
- A need to raise awareness of apprenticeships and progression routes by parents, employers and learners.
- Improved co-ordination between schools, employers, WBL providers and local community organisations to promote apprenticeships.
- A lack of opportunity for many young people to take up work placements which provide a 'taster' of the world of work could be a barrier preventing them considering WBL as an option.

#### **6. How accessible are apprenticeships to people of all ages and disabilities**

- Careers Wales has limited data on accessibility. We actively promote equality of opportunity and have held Opportunity Awareness events in special schools as well as mainstream ones at present many apprenticeships are conversions of existing employees which limits the number of apprenticeships available.

#### **7. How can people from lower income families be supported to take up apprenticeships**

- If Child Benefit eligibility could be changed to include apprenticeships this may encourage their take up Apprenticeships are classified as employment rather than learning or training. As a result if a young person leaves education at 16 to undertake an apprenticeship the family are ineligible for extended child benefit (CB).
- Means tested travel bursaries could help. If a young person is earning £95 a week they may have to spend £30 a week on travel without parental support. Staying in school, studying at a college that is closer, attending a traineeship where they have travel support or becoming unemployed could be more desirable for some young people in low income families

#### **8. What good practice exists and what more can be done to tackle gender stereotyping**

There have been many projects and initiatives in the past that are well documented. A more proactive approach to this issue across all influencers is needed

#### **9. How can employer engagement with apprenticeships be improved**

- Our strategic vision, "Changing Lives is putting more emphasis on helping to engage businesses to support schools and young people to have better awareness of the changing labour market and opportunities that are available. The introduction of the Education Business Exchange facility ( Employer Engagement Database) on CareersWales.com populated with employers who are willing to provide young learners with different experiences of the world of work will support this.
- Continue facilitating a greater involvement of employers in the provision of information about WBL to young people and parents e.g Opportunity Awareness
- We will continue to provide Career Check data for use on a strategic level by Regional Learning Partnerships (RLPs) to look at young people's aspirations and how this correlates with the growth sectors and demands within a region.



# Agenda Item 3

## Introduction

1. The National Training Federation for Wales (NTfW) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this hugely important inquiry.
2. The NTfW is a 'not for profit' membership organisation of over 100 organisations involved in the delivery of apprenticeships and employability skills programmes in Wales. We are a pan-Wales representative body for the network of quality assured work-based learning providers, who are contracted by the Welsh Government to deliver their apprenticeship and employability programmes. All providers who are commissioned by the Welsh Government to deliver work-based learning programmes in Wales are members of the NTfW. As such, the NTfW is seen as the authoritative organisation on apprenticeships and employability skills programmes in Wales.

## Aim

3. The aim of this Submission Paper is to provide evidence to the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee ahead of a planned meeting which will take place at the Senedd on Wednesday 17 May 2017.

## Background

### 4. Work-based learning programmes in Wales

The following table outlines the budget allocations in recent years, which covers the last Assembly term:

	Apprenticeships	Traineeships	'Adult Programmes'	Total WBL
2011/12	£72.5m	£29.6m	£8.8m	£110.9m
2012/13	£89.5m	£35.5m	£13.0m <sup>1</sup>	£138.0m
2013/14	£105.8m	£24.8m	£6.5m <sup>2</sup>	£136.6m
2014/15 <sup>3</sup>	£62.0m	£16.4m	£5.5m	£83.9m
2015/16 <sup>4</sup>	£122.4m	£44.3m	£3.3m	£170.0m
2011/16	£545.4m	£184.2m	£42.2m	£771.3m

<sup>1</sup> Includes bespoke programmes

<sup>2</sup> Includes bespoke and Work Ready (successor to Steps) Programme

<sup>3</sup> 8 month period (1 August 2014 – 31 March 2015)

<sup>4</sup> 16 month period (1 April 2015 – 31 July 2016)

### 5. Apprenticeship starts

The following table outlines the number of apprenticeship starts in recent years, which covers the last Assembly term:

Academic Year	Apprenticeship Starts	Cumulative
2011/12	17,910	17,910
2012/13	28,030	45,940
2013/14	27,485	73,425
2014/15	19,505	92,930
2015/16	23,135	116,065

## **To review progress since the 2012 report of the Enterprise and Business**

**Committee** Including looking at the role of key players: the Regional Skills Partnerships; the Wales Employment and Skills Board (WESB); and Sector Skills Councils

6. The NTfW recognises that there were 20 recommendations made following the Apprenticeships in Wales inquiry in 2012. Many of these recommendations were aimed at increasing the awareness of apprenticeships amongst employers and young people, particularly school pupils. It is the view of NTfW that little progress has been made since the 2012 inquiry to change the perception, and take up, of apprenticeships amongst these two important cohorts.
7. Although there has been little change in the perception and take up of apprenticeships in Wales since 2012, there has been a significant change to the infrastructure that underpins apprenticeship policy at both a Wales and UK wide level. In the four and a half years since the last review, there have been a number of reviews and policy changes to apprenticeships across the UK, which has had a significant impact on the apprenticeship offer to both employers and individuals.
8. The two most notable changes are the introduction of the Apprenticeships Skills Policy Plan in Wales, and the whole apprenticeship reform programme in England which is having an indirect impact on the Welsh apprenticeship programme.
9. However, in a period of significant change to the apprenticeship offer, one thing that has not changed over this time is the unified support for Wales's Apprenticeship Programme, which is still seen as the "gold standard in vocational education".
10. One area where the NTfW feels there has been no progress made since 2012, is the ability for apprenticeship providers (regardless of organisation type) to gain better access to schools, in order to allow them to engage with school children to discuss apprenticeships as a viable offer. To support this position, in May 2014 Estyn undertook a review of 'Learner support services for pupils aged 14 – 16'<sup>1</sup> and identified:

*"In a majority of schools, the information on course, career opportunities and progression routes provided to pupils is not up to-date. As a result of this and of a bias toward retaining pupils in sixth forms where they exist, pupils are not always given accurate or impartial information when choosing their options. Most careers advice and guidance for pupils and parents are provided at options events, which provide generic information, but do not involve specific conversations about individuals"*

Furthermore:

*"Schools have not considered carefully enough how they should replace the services previously carried out by Careers Wales, including making use of Careers Online, and other sources of information about further and higher education, training, apprenticeships and careers"*.

11. As a result of this thematic review, there were a number of recommendations, one of which was for the Welsh Government to:

*"R9 - update its guidance for schools on careers advice and guidance to reflect recent changes to the role of Careers Wales"*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-reports/learner-support-services-pupils-aged-14-16-may-2014>

12. The position above is further supported by the lack of pupil progression on to an apprenticeship directly from school. Careers Wales Pupil Destinations from Schools in 2016<sup>2</sup> indicates:

- Of the 31,524 pupils who left Year 11 in 2016, 13,586 (43%) continued their education at school, 14,125 (45%) continued their education at a further education college, and only 401 (1.3%) entered work-based learning with employed status.
- Of the 12,744 pupils who left Year 13 in 2016, 7,946 (62%) progressed to higher education, 2,037 (16%) continued their education either at school or college, and only 202 (1.6%) entered work-based learning with employed status.

13. The above being said, it is important that the Committee recognises some of the work that Welsh Government has done, alongside Careers Wales, NTfW members and other key stakeholders, with initiatives such as ‘Have a Go’<sup>3</sup>, ‘Opportunities Awareness’ and Skills Cymru. All of which have played a significant role in beginning to raise young peoples’ awareness of vocational learning, specifically apprenticeships.

14. One of the most positive changes to the apprenticeship offer in Wales during the period since the last inquiry, is the take up of apprenticeships at the higher levels (Level 3 and above) especially the take up of Higher Apprenticeship Frameworks (at Level 4 and above) We are now in a situation, where apprenticeships at Level 3 and above account for over 50% of provision, which is in stark contrast to where we were in 2012. This has demonstrated that the provider network can develop its provision to meet the needs of the Welsh economy, but it does take time to build capacity and capability to do so.

15. Apprenticeship start per level since 2012

The following table outlines the number of apprenticeship starts per level in recent years, which covers the last Assembly term:

Academic Year	Foundation Apprenticeship (Level 2)	Apprenticeship (Level 3)	Higher Apprenticeship (Level 4+)	Total Apprenticeship Starts
2012/13	15,255 (54%)	10,550 (38%)	2,275 (8%)	28,030
2013/14	14,000 (51%)	10,185 (37%)	3,330 (12%)	27,485
2014/15	8,430 (43%)	6,895 (35%)	4,175 (22%)	19,505
2015/16	8,410 (36%)	9,300 (39%)	5,980 (25%)	23,690

**Note:**

Verified data on 2016/17 will not be available until November 17 at the earliest. However, it is expected that the trend over recent years will continue.

16. It is clear to many, that the role of Sector Skills Councils, and Standard Setting Bodies, in Wales is a diminishing one. There are very few who now have a footprint, or indeed a presence, here in Wales. This is understandable given the demise of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) and the move, in England, away from National Occupational Standards (NOS) to apprenticeship standards aka ‘Trailblazers’, and the establishing of Sector Panels as part of the Institute of Apprenticeships.

17. As part of the Apprenticeship Skills Policy Plan, there is a clear indication that the role of Regional Skills Partnerships (RSPs) and a reconstituted Wales Employment and Skills Board (WESB) will form part of this future. This is welcomed by the NTfW, as it is

<sup>2</sup> <http://destinations.careerswales.com/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.haveagowales.co.uk/>

hugely important that the 'employer voice' is central to any apprenticeship programme. However, the NTfW has concerns around the resourcing of each of these bodies, as they will certainly need to undertake the functions that have until now been undertaken by pan-UK organisations.

18. Approximately £5.5bn is spent every year on procurement in Wales. This money is spent on small, medium and large businesses that deliver services on behalf of the government. The Welsh Government therefore has an important and powerful role in issuing conditions on how the money is spent and is able to influence on how these businesses operate. We therefore ask the Committee to consider writing to the Welsh Government to ask them to consider introducing clauses into procurement contracts that commit the successful businesses to create sustainable apprenticeship opportunities and use the NTfW as the body to direct those businesses to for guidance and support

### **To scrutinise the accessibility of independent careers advice on Apprenticeships and other vocational options**

Particularly for young people, either in school, from Careers Wales, online or from other sources

19. In too many instances schools do not adequately highlight the opportunities and benefits of apprenticeships, and in some instances they are only promoted to those young people who are perceived to be less able. This reflects a deep misunderstanding of the value and benefit of apprenticeships, particularly at the higher levels (at Level 3 and above) and that many graduates go on to become apprentices after three years of university education. These misconceptions need to be tackled in order to create an education and skills system that truly reflects the needs of learners and the Welsh economy. We ask that the Committee considers calling on the Welsh Government to issue guidance to schools on how best to highlight the benefits of apprenticeships to all school pupils.

20. We believe that the following changes are needed to the Common Area Prospectus application process<sup>4</sup> (CAP) that will go some way in achieve parity of opportunity between academic and vocational education (particularly apprenticeships):

- An enhanced, simplified and fully integrated process to ensure that it adequately reflects apprenticeship opportunities across a wider geographical area, and ones which are not restricted to local authority boundaries e.g. within recognised travel to work areas.
- The CAP should be mandated for use by schools, and Welsh Government should monitor its use to ensure consistency throughout Wales.

21. Furthermore, we would urge Welsh Government to provide a remit to Estyn to inspect the quality of impartial careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) offered to all pupils regardless of ability, to include the use of the CAP, as part of their inspection arrangements.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.careerswales.com/en/cap/>

### Is the Careers Wales' Apprenticeship Matching Service fit for purpose?

22. No. An area where NTfW feels the AMS could improve significantly is the ability to advertise apprenticeship vacancies throughout the year i.e. which employers generally recruit apprentices, but who do not currently have a 'live' vacancy. As an example, this could be large employers who annually recruit apprentices, stating that they will be recruiting and during what times etc.

### How can better parity of esteem between vocational and academic routes be achieved?

23. The NTfW has stated on many occasions, that we need to move the discussion from 'parity of esteem' to 'parity of opportunity'. To gain real parity of esteem will take a generational change. However, we have an opportunity to make an immediate change to providing opportunities. Only those people who have gone through a vocational route will be able to give it the admiration and respect it deserves. It is not until we get more people choosing a vocational route as a route to a successful career will we change that mind-set.

24. Targets have a crucial role to play in driving policy and behaviour, and we therefore believe that the Welsh Government should set a national target for the number of school pupils it wishes to see progressing directly onto an apprenticeship following Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5.

25. Changes to the role of Careers Wales have resulted in a reduction in organised work experience for young people across Wales. The NTfW believes that the Welsh Government should urgently address the declining emphasis on work experience. All schools should be provided with an opportunity for all pupils, regardless of ability, at Key Stage 4 to undertake meaningful work experience. We believe that the work-based learning sector has a role to play in this work due to the experience and employer links that already exist.

26. In addition to structured work experience, the changes to the curriculum within Wales also offer an opportunity to raise school pupils' awareness of vocational education. NTfW believes that the developments around vocational opportunities at Key Stage 4 (delivery of IVETs) should utilise the experience and employer links that already exist within the work-based learning sector, as it is strongly felt that the sector has a significant contribution to make in this area. This should allow for a smooth transition to an apprenticeship, should that be in the best interest of the learner.

### **To investigate the main barriers to taking up Apprenticeships**

#### How accessible are Apprenticeships for people with disabilities (all ages)?

27. The NTfW feels that with the advent of the new Apprenticeship Skills Policy Plan, and a move towards more 'recruitment in' of apprentices, as opposed to existing members of staff undertaking apprenticeships, the provider network will begin to work with employers to influence behaviour, with a view of addressing any unconscious bias.

28. With the support of Welsh Government, the NTfW has employed an Equality and Diversity Champion to work with the provider network and other interested stakeholders to understand the issues, identify any provider barriers, and share best practice. As a result of the work undertaken by Equality and Diversity Champion, the relationship between WBL providers and organisations such as Remploy has developed significantly.

29. Early indications following discussions with stakeholder organisations point towards a situation where the barriers are more to do with employer behaviour and access to the apprenticeship programme itself – which is not unique to this cohort of individuals.

#### How can people from the lowest income families be supported to take-up Apprenticeships?

30. It is widely accepted that individuals from the lowest income families do not have the social capital to be able to enter into the labour market easily. The NTfW believes that the most effective form of support for those young people looking to enter the labour market, is to enable them to become 'job ready' before being exposed to a period of real work experience(s) alongside which there is sufficient and appropriate 'in work' support. With this in mind, the NTfW is working with Welsh Government to develop an 'Access to Apprenticeships' programme, which will aim to prepare young people to enter the labour market via an apprenticeship.

#### What good practice exists and what more can be done to address gender stereotyping?

31. There is some good practice which exists that demonstrates that providers are working hard with employers to tackle the issue of gender-stereotyping. This can be seen by the success of many individuals throughout the Apprenticeship Awards Cymru process. There are a number of highly successful females in areas such as engineering, and conversely, males working in the hair and beauty sectors. However, and as has been identified with the issues around apprentices with disabilities, there is still a great deal of work to be done by the provider network in influencing employers to see the benefits of a diverse workforce.

32. However, and as has been identified with the issues around apprentices with disabilities, there is still a great deal of work to be done by the provider network in influencing employers to see the benefits of a diverse workforce. With this in mind, the WBL Equality and Diversity Champion is working with organisations such as Chwarae Teg and the Wales Women's Equality Network to address the issues of gender stereotyping.

### **To scrutinise the development of higher level Apprenticeships, with the support of further and higher education institutions**

#### How effective is progression between other work-based learning and Apprenticeships and between Levels 2, 3, 4 and above Apprenticeships?

33. There is no published statistics on the level of progression between apprenticeship frameworks. However, anecdotally progression between Foundation Apprenticeships (Level 2) and Apprenticeships (Level 3) is generally quite strong.

34. The main consideration here has to be that apprenticeships are fundamentally a competence based programme, and unless an individual is making constant progress in their career throughout the term of their apprenticeship, then it will be quite difficult to move throughout all of the levels. However, with the recognition that the Welsh economy is in need of higher level skills, providers are increasingly looking at ways to work with individuals and employers, to ensure that there is a 'ladder of progression' for all involved.

## How can employer engagement with Apprenticeships be improved?

35. Clearly, the apprenticeship levy is having a significant impact on raising the awareness, and interest, in apprenticeships with those employers who are in scope to pay it. The key thing here to do is to ensure that these employers are able to access the type of provision they want, and in such a way that it does not create any unnecessary burdens.

36. As with individuals trying to access the apprenticeship programme, employers too need a 'one stop shop' where they can go for all the information they need in terms of apprenticeships. The issue we have now however is with whole range of stakeholders, with the very best of intentions, talking about apprenticeships, employer looking to engage do not know where the best place to go is.

37. With the increased awareness around apprenticeships and the introduction of a number of new stakeholders, the NTfW believes that it is time for Wales to have its own 'National Apprenticeships Service' which could act as the 'one stop shop' for individuals and employers. The NTfW feels that it is in a great position to be the 'honest broker' for all apprenticeship enquiries and would be keen to work with Welsh Government and others to develop this concept.

38. In our evidence to the Committee's inquiry into the Apprenticeship levy, the NTfW wrote:

*"The Network wants to ensure that the positive messages around the success of the Apprenticeship Programme in Wales reach all employers, especially those who are impacted directly by the apprenticeship levy. We would ask the Committee to urge the Welsh Government to take a 'whole systems' approach to delivering on its apprenticeship commitment. Welsh Government should ensure that their business engagement and economic development teams actively work with the NTfW (as the expert body on apprenticeships in Wales), who can act as a 'funnel' for enquiries in regards to the availability of apprenticeship provision across Wales and other employer queries.*

*Welsh Government should be very clear with all employers (regardless of size or sector) in relation to what are the "Welsh Ministers priorities." Currently, there is a considerable amount of interest and promotion around apprenticeships – which is of course welcomed – but the headline messaging around apprenticeships is at odds with contractual requirements around age, sectors and volumes.*

*Furthermore, the Welsh Government needs to ensure that there is a strong marketing campaign for apprenticeships, to run alongside the introduction of the apprenticeship levy, to include where employers need to go to get further information.*

*Historically, the Apprenticeship Programme in Wales has received wide cross Party support, which has led to a significant investment in various budget settlements. However, as the funding for the Apprenticeship Programme in Wales has been part of budget negotiations, this has led to significant variances between financial (and operational) years, which have a de-stabilising effect on sustained provision, especially as priorities tend to change with each financial settlement."*

It is felt that the issues raised above are also valid for this inquiry, particularly in relation to raising the level of employer engagement with the Apprenticeship Programme.

## Summary

39. We believe that the following changes need to be implemented in order to achieve parity of opportunity between academic and vocational education in order to build on the success of the Apprenticeship Programme in Wales:

- Setting national targets for schools on the number of pupils progressing directly on to an apprenticeship following Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5;
- Changes in schools, to include the monitoring of impartial CIAG by Estyn; the mandatory use of CAP; capitalising on the changes to the curriculum; and the development of a universal work experience programme;
- Incorporating apprenticeship targets in public procurement.



# Agenda Item 4

## Introduction

ColegauCymru welcomes the opportunity to respond to the National Assembly for Wales' Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee inquiry into Apprenticeships in Wales 2017. ColegauCymru is a charity and limited company that represents the 14<sup>1</sup> Further Education (FE) colleges and FE institutions in Wales and exists to promote the public benefit of post compulsory education and learning.<sup>2</sup>

ColegauCymru undertakes regular research, develops policy and provides responses based on the best available evidence, utilising our network of educators and policy experts. Our policy is informed by regular exchange of ideas and experiences facilitated by the European Commission's Erasmus+ programme and through participation in the British Council's International Education Programme.

Colleges are major providers of general education provision in Wales, helping to produce some of the best learner outcomes. Colleges are the predominant providers of funded vocational and technical education in Wales, providing about 85% of the total provision.

## Response

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1. In the nearly five years since the then Enterprise and Business Committee of the National Assembly for Wales published the findings of its inquiry into apprenticeships, the picture across Wales remains mixed. Improvements have been made in some areas such as an increase in the numbers of apprenticeships while in others, such as gender segregation, there has been much less progress. Many of the recommendations have been delivered to some extent. The network of work-based learning providers has been particularly successful with the Further Education led consortia demonstrating effective employer links and excellent quality provision.
2. Across Wales, colleges work effectively to promote and develop apprenticeship opportunities, update frameworks etc. with external bodies to ensure they can offer high quality apprentice programmes. Advice to potential apprentices is still patchy with the most significant barrier being an unwillingness in the schools sector to engage with colleges and other providers to provide advice and guidance to all levels of learners. The introduction of the apprenticeship levy, together with positive press about apprenticeships, has raised expectations and demand and there is a concern that there will be insufficient funding to meet that extra demand.
3. It is important to remember that work-based learning accounts for only just over a quarter of the 224,410 learners in Further Education, Community Learning and

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<sup>1</sup> The 14 include 10 FE corporations including St David's Catholic College; the two FE institutions – Adult Learning Wales; and The College Merthyr Tydfil, Coleg Sir Gâr and Coleg Ceredigion which are part of university groupings.

<sup>2</sup> In this paper the terms 'FE college' and 'college' are used to cover FE colleges and FE institutions.

Work-based Learning recorded by StatsWales for 2015-16.<sup>3</sup> In terms of learners aged 16-19 involved in work-based learning (including traineeships and other programmes, as well as apprenticeships), in 2015-16, there were 17,520 unique learners, representing just over 30 per cent of the total number of people undertaking work-based learning (which stood at 57,100).<sup>4</sup> The wider contribution that Further Education colleges make to vocational education and skills, beyond apprenticeships, needs to be recognised.

4. Apprenticeships and vocational education will play a vital role in helping to meet the Welsh Government's target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. Welsh language issues need to be taken into consideration in future apprenticeship policy and its implementation.

#### **Regional Skills Partnerships (RSPs); the Wales Employment and Skills Board (WESB); and Sector Skills Councils**

5. The role of the Regional Skills Partnerships is important given their remit of analysing and influencing the provision of skills based on regional economic need, to support growth and key infrastructure projects in each region. The RSPs have become more prominent recently. In South East Wales, colleges report that the regional skills partnership (LSKIP) provides useful information to target apprenticeship provision at a local and regional level. Engagement between RSPs and Further Education colleges is generally positive. However, given that the recent speeches by the Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, Ken Skates AM, suggest a different Welsh Government approach to the economy, a reconsideration or expansion of the role of RSPs may be necessary. A new economic strategy more focused on regional economies and a smaller number of national, foundational economy sectors, such as healthcare and energy, will need more nuanced data and capacity. There is potential to situate some of this work in FE colleges.
6. However, some changes to RSPs already seem to be taking place with work around the North Wales Growth Deal bid suggesting that a new committee, underneath the Joint Committee of the Local Authorities leading the bid, will take the role of the existing RSP. There does not appear to have been discussion with the FE sector, or

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<sup>3</sup> This does not take into account the additional 27,899 school pupils aged 16 or over for the same time period, meaning that more than three quarters of people aged 16 or over studying at FE, at school, or as part of Community Learning, are not part of work-based learning. Source - Stats Wales, see: 'Learning programme numbers by provision type, mode and gender', available at:

<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Post-16-Education-and-Training/Further-Education-and-Work-Based-Learning/Lifelong-Learning-Wales-Record/learningprogrammes-by-provisiontype-mode-gender> ; Pupils by local authority, region and age group, available at: <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Schools-Census/Pupil-Level-Annual-School-Census/Pupils/pupils-by-localauthorityregion-agegroup> .

<sup>4</sup> Source: Stats Wales – see 'Unique learners in work-based learning provision by age group, gender and programme type', available at: <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Post-16-Education-and-Training/Further-Education-and-Work-Based-Learning/Learners/Work-Based-Learning/uniquelearnersworkbasedlearning-by-age-gender-programmetype> .

others more widely, as to whether this is desirable or brings unintended consequences.

7. The prominence of the Regional Skills Partnerships moving forward is clearly apparent and good progress has been made within the respective regions to bring all key bodies together around the apprenticeships agenda. There are opportunities for these bodies to become even more prominent post Brexit, to the point of becoming funders of apprenticeships (LEP model) avoiding unnecessary, bureaucratic procurement exercises that serve to disturb and destabilise the WBL network (made up of colleges and other WBL providers) and provide over-inflated, private sector, contracts. Such a move should be taken with much thought and consideration around the best needs for employers within the region and for the use of tax payers' funds.
8. The operation of Sector Skills Councils across Wales and their engagement in Wales is patchy. Some, such as Skills for Logistics, have closed, while in other cases, existing bodies have taken on their responsibilities. Social Care Wales (formerly Care Council for Wales) has now taken on the role of the SSC in Wales. Colleges report that where SSCs are very active, they are really effective in signposting need and engaging with providers and employers. However, in some areas SSCs do not have enough of a presence in Wales to have an impact or influence. The future of sector skills councils remains very bleak, with the trailblazer reforms in England progressing at pace. There are serious questions over what the future holds for these bodies and who will lead on the development of new, innovative Higher Level frameworks in Wales?
9. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) closed in March 2017 which further weakened cross-UK working on these issues. The Chair of WESB, Scott Waddington, was Wales Commissioner to the UKCES, providing a link between UK level discussions and Wales. Our understanding is that Welsh Government has been seeking to re-evaluate WESB over the past year or so and the first meeting for some time is due to take place in May 2017. While such Boards needs to be kept to a manageable size, it would be useful to have a representative from the Further and Higher Education sectors to hear employer views, take part in discussions around skills and employment, and feed back to key networks. This has already been taken into consideration with invites to sit on WESB being extended to ColegauCymru and Universities Wales.
10. We note the Welsh Government intention to use WESB as the vehicle to assist with ensuring that apprenticeships are flexible and responsive to the needs of industry and would be interested in further details of how WESB would fulfil this role.<sup>5</sup> The terms of reference and membership for WESB defined in April 2017 include key

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<sup>5</sup> Welsh Government, *Aligning the Apprenticeship model to the needs of the Welsh economy* (February, 2017), available at <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/170206-app-policy-plan-en-v2.pdf>.

representatives who can set strategic direction but it is not clear that this is the right group or forum to “advise on Apprenticeship framework developments with the aim of delivering a maximum of 30 high performing Apprenticeship frameworks to drive forward the Welsh economy” as stated in the Welsh Government’s recent ‘Aligning the Apprenticeship model to the needs of the Welsh economy’.<sup>6</sup> The latter aim seems much more detailed and operational than it would be possible or desirable for a Board of the existing type to undertake.

**To scrutinise the accessibility of independent careers advice on Apprenticeships and other vocational options, particularly for young people, either in school, from Careers Wales, online or from other sources?**

11. Access to apprenticeship information in general has significantly improved; this has been due to increased focus and direction of Welsh Government with the drive to increase apprenticeship delivery. Alongside this, additional vocational pathways such as ESF Upskilling S01 & S02 project have also seen increased promotion and guidance.
12. More referral and dialogue directly with providers and employers has been developed by Welsh Government acting independently and directing the employer to the potential provider.
13. Aside from this, there has been little progress. Career advice and guidance to young people in schools regarding apprenticeships is still questionable, with apprenticeships seen as the non-academic pathway and possibly for the lower achievers. This is an image and stigma that must change, schools must consider the end result, jobs, professional training and potentially Higher and Degree Apprenticeships or Access to HE. Colleges report still finding that school pupils are not receiving suitable information regarding apprenticeships. They do not understand the opportunities available and often events in schools happen too late in the year for the large schemes. More able and talented learners are still being focused towards A Levels then university instead of into a higher level. That certain vocational qualifications are equivalent to three A Levels is still under recognised. Choice should not be limited at this stage in a young person’s life and they need to be made aware of apprenticeship frameworks that may be available and more suitable.
14. The availability of careers advice in schools is diminishing. It is essential, if careers through apprenticeships are to flourish, that high quality advice and guidance is provided through schools, colleges and, at a national level, the Welsh Government. This will ensure that there is parity of esteem with the traditional A Level route.

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<sup>6</sup> Welsh Government, Aligning the Apprenticeship model, page 23; page 28.

15. Colleges are very willing to work with schools in providing advice but report facing barriers from schools in efforts to engage students. Consideration should be given to mandating schools to invite colleges in to discuss the wide variety of options available at post-16 level.
16. Careers Wales has faced a difficult time in terms of cuts to funding and the subsequent necessary restructuring over several years. Between 2010-11 and 2016-17, the advisory service saw a cut of 57 per cent to its core budget, from £42M to a projected £18M. Given the further budget shortfall Careers Wales identified in 2017, this will lead to further redundancies. By the end of 2016, it was estimated that there would only be 40 careers advisors serving Wales' secondary schools with a ratio of one to every 4,500 pupils.<sup>7</sup> A decision is needed about the future remit and funding of the Careers Service. The quality of service it is able to provide is variable which is unsurprising under the circumstances.
17. Cuts to the Careers Wales service mean support is mainly targeted towards the higher risk pupils and that support is not always of the quality needed. Initiatives such as Have a Go help but go nowhere near far enough towards offering IAG. Schools need to be mandated to offer IAG to all students, including the more able and talented. Welsh Government should also consider which agencies are best placed to offer IAG, with Careers Wales now seemingly not having capacity. The FE sector would seem to be well placed to lead on this.
18. The advice and guidance market including online, has seen the introduction and growth of some new private providers who are capitalising on the cuts and service limitations of Careers Wales. However, this type of service in many cases is not independent, with training providers entering financial contracts and/or paying for referrals. An alternative approach to consider would be to encourage schools to allow colleges and other WBL providers to engage with learners and positively promote the vocational pathway.

**Is the Careers Wales' Apprenticeship Matching Service (AMS) fit for purpose?**

19. Some colleges find the interface and search function is not very user friendly but having a dedicated site is a useful free tool. Improvements have been made but there are still issues around user friendliness and suitability. Other platforms are creating engaging apps and matching services that link individuals to courses, apprenticeships and other training opportunities. Some colleges noted that local opportunities are rarely seen on the AMS and it is also unclear if school leavers or learners in years 10 and 11 are aware of the service.

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<sup>7</sup> Western Mail, 4 March 2016, available at: <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/education/4500-pupils-every-one-careers-10987642>.

20. Whilst operationally the AMS offers a useful service to both employers and prospective apprentices, at the time of writing it currently has 209 live vacancies which is not truly representative of how many vacancies are currently available throughout Wales. Of course, there are a myriad of different entry points into an apprenticeship of which the AMS is just one. However, there is great disparity within the WBL network of colleges and providers over the use of AMS. Some providers embed the use of AMS within their offer to employers and apprentices whereas others do not use the system at all. If the AMS is to really become the 'go to place' for apprentices, employers and their parents, there should be a more robust onus, or even an incentive for providers to use the system.

### **How can better parity of esteem between vocational and academic routes be achieved?**

21. Much of this relates back to the issues raised in relation to careers advice. Too often, apprenticeships and vocational options are still not discussed as a realistic and desirable option for more able and talented learners, yet there are apprenticeships and BTEC qualifications that lead onto higher level learning, some of which reach degree level, with the added bonus of work experience. The apprentice route may not be the right approach for everyone but apprenticeships are often not presented as an appropriate option for high achieving learners. There is a need for mandated independent IAG from fit for purpose agencies within schools from Key Stage 3.
22. There is a need for more targeted marketing and 'success story' case studies to highlight opportunities. Further development of 'junior apprenticeships' to taste vocational provision at key stage 4 in partnership with schools, colleges and private training providers and raising awareness of degree level apprenticeships e.g. the Network 75 programme with the University of South Wales, would also raise awareness of the route as a genuine and valuable alternative.
23. Consideration should be given to applying UCAS points to vocational and Apprenticeships pathways supporting progress to Higher Education along with more positive marketing in relation to progression pathways and success stories where more able and talented learners have chosen apprenticeship pathways and achieved higher apprenticeship outcomes and/or progressed to high end jobs.
24. Many colleges offer qualification pathways that allow progression to university and apprenticeships. This has ensured some parity of esteem while most apprenticeship pathways have specific entry requirements at the same level of academic pathways, e.g. Engineering, Science, AAT and other technical pathways. Rebranding of apprenticeships at higher levels, such as moving towards designations like 'Mastercraftsperson', could also be helpful. Terminology matters with existing skilled people not necessarily finding the term 'apprentice' attractive. There is a need for more higher level and degree level options.

25. Esteem issues can be compounded by the financial landscape. At £3.50 per hour, the minimum wage for apprentices who are under 19 or over 19 but in the first year of their apprenticeship is lower than that for either under 18s (£4.05) or 18-20 year olds (£5.60).<sup>8</sup> This is in comparison with the revised student finance arrangements recommended by the “Diamond Review” where the top rate of maintenance grant support for undergraduates is based on the minimum wage for over 25 year olds, which is currently £7.50.<sup>9</sup>
26. As the Welsh Government seeks to implement the recommendations of the Hazelkorn Review, the future Tertiary Education Authority should be obliged to give parity of esteem to vocational and academic routes and make all decisions in line with this principle. This could greatly assist with how both areas are regarded in the longer term, with vocational routes receiving equal treatment from the new body.
27. In order to maintain low levels of unemployment and improve productivity, all routes into employment must be considered. If there is an imbalance between graduate job opportunities and graduates, we risk doing a dis-service in promoting one route into employment over another.

#### **To investigate the main barriers to taking up Apprenticeships**

28. Apprenticeships can seem daunting for small companies who might assume that it is costly to engage an apprentice. Coleg y Cymoedd’s work with Aspire in Blaenau Gwent, for example, has been very successful in providing a co-ordinated approach to shared apprenticeships in advanced manufacturing – this could be expanded to other geographical and sector areas.

#### **How accessible are Apprenticeships for people with disabilities (all ages)?**

29. This is dependent on the nature of the employment and whether reasonable adjustments can be made. Colleges report seeing more demand for support with additional learning needs with the increasing rise of self-disclosure of needs. Apprenticeships are available for all (all ages, abilities) and all facilities cater for learners with disabilities and ALN. However, providers are limited to support and deliver opportunities to those individuals that the employer decides to recruit. Not all businesses are able to cater for the wide range of learners that may be offered apprenticeship opportunities. Some pump prime funding would be useful to raise awareness and support employers to make premises more accessible to learners.

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<sup>8</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates> .

<sup>9</sup> Professor Sir Ian Diamond, The Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance Arrangements in Wales, page 41, para 9.1.5, available at <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/160927-he-review-final-report-en.pdf>

30. The 2012 National Assembly Enterprise and Business Committee report into Apprenticeships highlighted the difficulties people without access to a car faced when trying to take up apprenticeships, especially if apprenticeships involved shift work with early mornings or late finishes. This is likely to be a particular issue for people with disabilities. Research by Leonard Cheshire Disability in 2011 found that disabled people in Wales are almost twice as likely as non-disabled people to live in a low income household; 33% (130,000) of working age disabled people in Wales live in poverty — a figure higher than anywhere else in the UK; in Wales a non-disabled person is twice as likely to have a job as a disabled person and this disparity is greater in Wales than anywhere else in the UK; 23% of disabled people have had to turn down a job due to a lack of accessible transport.<sup>10</sup> Consideration needs to be given to how learners can actually get to the sites of their apprenticeships with a focus on accessible travel.

### **How can people from the lowest income families be supported to take-up Apprenticeships?**

31. Careers advice to school pupils is crucial here with an emphasis on ensuring that they understand the routes available, including higher level apprenticeships, where concern to avoid the large debt that Higher Education incurs is a factor. Traineeship programmes offer additional support for learners with chaotic home lives, who can struggle to make the step into apprenticeships, which is welcome.
32. It is essential that existing family benefits are not affected by any learner taking up an apprenticeship opportunity and that potential apprentices are made aware of this at an early stage of the recruitment process. Family tax credits / child benefits need to be maintained for those on apprenticeship programmes, specifically for those families with low income and for families where the apprenticeship does not exceed a maximum salary. There should be assistance to cover transport costs if state aid rules apply. Deprivation Contingency Funding schemes that operate across many providers are good examples of how extra support can be offered. Good practice in this area could be more widely shared across the network.

### **What good practice exists and what more can be done to address gender stereotyping?**

33. In terms of general good practice, the Shared Apprenticeships scheme is an excellent way of engaging business and in particular small and medium enterprises. There needs to be a greater focus in schools on the importance of the workplace by arranging more visits for school pupils to local business from years 7-8 in secondary schools.

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<sup>10</sup> Disability Poverty in Wales, Leonard Cheshire Disability (2011), available at: <https://www.leonardcheshire.org/sites/default/files/Disability,P20Poverty,P20in,P20Wales.pdf.pagespeed.ce.W-KmgGI75V.pdf>.



34. Regarding gender stereotyping, many good schemes exist such as women into engineering and construction and individual employers also provide different opportunities. However, some colleges report that these activities are hard to fund and may benefit from additional resources.
35. Colleges and other providers are good at recognising where male / female apprentices work in a sector normally dominated by the opposite gender – for example females in engineering and construction. The norm is for these individuals to be used as positive role models and ambassadors to promote gender balance in all sectors. In most cases these individuals will visit schools to share their experiences. There are excellent ambassadors of good practice with non-traditional or stereotypical apprentices flourishing within their sector. The current National Apprentice of the Year is a female Engineer with Ford and an excellent ambassador for women entering STEM careers. There are lots of initiatives that try to address the gender imbalances in specific sectors such as construction, engineering and hair & beauty which seem to have had little effect over the past five years. More should be done to encourage and offer opportunities for local ambassadors to speak with school children regularly about following careers in traditionally non male/female occupations. This might include offering incentives to employers to allow this type of activity to take place.
36. Despite a long track record of trying to address gender imbalance and stereotyping of particular occupations, progress in areas such as construction has been very limited. Taking apprenticeship learning programmes in construction in 2015-16 as an example: of the 4,675 foundation, apprenticeship and higher apprenticeships, 4,555 were male as compared to 120 females.<sup>11</sup> Initiatives such as the Women Building Wales pilot, a partnership between NPTC Group of Colleges, Women into Construction and Chwarae Teg should be followed up, with consideration given as to how best practice can be applied to other areas.<sup>12</sup> Feedback from Chwarae Teg on the pilot showed the importance and underestimated costs of childcare. There is a need to consider how apprenticeships in areas which show gender imbalance can be made more flexible and attractive, taking into account specific barriers such as child care (or other caring) responsibilities and financial support for study.
37. Wales is not the only country where apprenticeships tend to be gender segregated. Many of the recommendations of the late 2013 England-focussed report – “Under-representation by gender and race in Apprenticeships: Research summary” could be

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<sup>11</sup> Source: Stats Wales – see <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Post-16-Education-and-Training/Further-Education-and-Work-Based-Learning/Learners/Work-Based-Learning/learningprogrammesapprenticeships>

<sup>12</sup> See <https://www.cteg.org.uk/women-in-construction-building-wales/>.

applied to Wales.<sup>13</sup> Much of this report suggests actions or activities that are not new but perhaps need to be undertaken more consistently and effectively, for example tackling gender stereotyping in careers earlier, employer engagement and use of role models. However, there may be scope in Wales to consider providing additional funding for the recruitment and retention of non-traditional candidates using payment-by-results.

**To scrutinise the development of higher level Apprenticeships, with the support of further and higher education institutions**

38. Again there is a need to raise awareness amongst employers on a national basis about the benefits of higher level apprenticeships and the added value to the workforce. As part of this process dialogue with local colleges and universities is essential in order to match the demand and supply of employment opportunities.
39. Colleges report that levy payers in particular are unhappy at having to fund the cost of the HE element in frameworks. We have seen the development of higher level apprenticeships that do not require the HE element as the technical certificate which is proving popular in some areas such as food manufacturing, leadership and management, business administration, health and social care, childcare and play work, salon management, finance, IT. However, in particular the engineering and construction sectors require the HE qualification.
40. The WBL sector of colleges and other providers is very responsive to industry and needs to operate at a fast pace and make quick and responsive decisions. The message regarding higher and degree apprenticeships is around creating demand with employers, especially as we see the levy introduced. Employers now want a wider portfolio of options at all levels. Although some pathways are available at level 4 and 5, there are still many that are not developed. However, the development of new higher level qualifications and the university approval process can be very time consuming, which is not employer responsive. For higher level qualifications to be developed to respond to need, HE and FE need to have smarter and quicker processes. Alternatively, colleges and other WBL providers need to know timelines throughout the year where new approvals can be submitted to HEIs.
41. Potential for innovation exists in areas that have not traditionally engaged with apprenticeships, such as the NHS. England, for example, is developing an apprenticeship into nursing. Collectively Welsh Government, education and employers must think creatively about what an apprenticeship can do to support a sector to thrive.

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<sup>13</sup> See Becci Newton and Joy Williams, Under-representation by gender and race in Apprenticeships: Research summary, Institute for Employment Studies Research paper 18 (2013), available at: <https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/UnderRepresentationInApprenticeships.pdf>

**How effective is progression between other work-based learning and Apprenticeships and between Levels 2, 3, 4 and above Apprenticeships?**

42. There has been some good progress here with a plethora of Higher Apprenticeship qualifications having been developed. There is still work to be done in terms of progression from Higher Apprenticeship programmes HNC/HND into higher level education. Degree apprenticeships and the potential for HEIs to play a more active role will help this transition. The new body for all post-16 education in Wales recommended as a result of the Hazelkorn Review, has a key part to play in helping establish a transparent pathway in all sectors from entry level through to degree/masters level apprenticeships, with various entry and exit points. It is disappointing that Welsh Government seem reluctant to support provision at level 2 when there is clearly a need for learners to enter and, in some cases, exit at this level. While higher skills are desirable in many cases, there is a need to take a pragmatic and realistic approach to supporting learners at the level they currently are.
43. Progression between Levels 2 and 3 is generally good but the pool progressing immediately from 3 to 4 is lower due to various factors such as the need for experience, or time off from study after a demanding Level 3. It is also important to note that the competence element of a framework is related to the evidence that can be gathered in an apprentice's current job role. Some job roles mean the learner cannot gain the necessary evidence so succession planning can be difficult. Levy payers in particular are unhappy at having to fund the cost of the HE element in frameworks which can be a barrier for progression to Level 4.
44. The level of progression between level 2, level 3 and higher pathways varies across occupational sectors. The majority of learners following construction pathways will progress from level 2 to level 3. However, these learners do not generally progress to higher apprenticeship programmes. Within Engineering apprentices will progress to HNC and HND qualification, although this is not always following the higher apprenticeship pathway. The reason for this is that the relevant NVQ for the higher apprenticeship framework includes leadership responsibilities. Despite the sector requiring a highly skilled workforce and the need for higher qualifications, responsibilities do not immediately include leadership or supervisory, therefore making the competence element difficult to achieve and evidence.
45. In other sectors such as Management, Customer Service, Business Administration, Childcare and Health & Social Care, progression depends upon the individual roles and responsibilities and, as above, many of the progression pathways and higher qualifications require leadership and management responsibilities. On some occasions this can be overcome with additional duties or through the completion of projects. Although the latter allows the learner to complete specific units and gives exposure to high level responsibilities, it can cause additional workload for the learner and it can be difficult to find assessment opportunities.

### **How can employer engagement with Apprenticeships be improved?**

46. There is increased demand from employers and the sectors served by Further Education institutions for higher level skills and developing a more qualified and skilled workforce. This creates a number of challenges, for example:
- Developing new qualification pathways
  - Ensuring pathways are suitable for the individual and employer
  - Flexible unit selection
  - Employers / employee(s) making suitable adjustments to individual responsibilities to meet the demands of the qualification criteria.
47. Welsh language / bilingual apprenticeship opportunities must be considered from the outset and be integrated into the apprenticeship offer to employers. We are due to see a growth in the demand for bilingual skills, and as such, Welsh language apprenticeships are crucial to supporting the demand and providing equal opportunities to Welsh and English speakers post-16.
48. Most current college provision is within Welsh Government priority sectors and colleges are only able to deliver up to 10 per cent in non-priority sectors. The introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy is bringing new challenges. For example, some colleges are already seeing demand from call centre organisations and other anchor companies that are requesting high volumes of starts in response to the costs of the Apprenticeship Levy. Colleges are unable to meet this demand within the current priority constraints and this can make it difficult to respond positively to employers which may deter future engagement. Another example is administration, customer service and warehousing positions within engineering organisations. The sector is a priority sector but these individual pathways are low priority. The April 2017 guidance which states that all level 2 apprenticeships in non-priority sectors will be exempt from the 10 per cent limit where it is the learner's intention to progress to level 3 is welcome. However, it will not entirely solve the issue of employers requesting mass starts in non-priority sectors where there is not a commitment to progression to level 3 or above.
49. The introduction of the levy has meant more companies are thinking about training and development. Linking effectively with companies to ensure they have the correct information about opportunities available for taking apprentices and upskilling current workforce is key. Clarity around the apprenticeship levy and the impact in Wales was slow in coming forward which has resulted in some confusion and discontent from larger employers. There needs to be clear direction over how portability of qualifications/frameworks/standards will work for cross-border employers or for apprentices in Wales with ambition to travel further afield in their career.

50. Generally, the WBL network of colleges and other providers engages well with employers. However, there is a need for better industry and school / FE links. Many colleges work well with employers, encouraging them to speak to learners and get involved in activities. Employers are the key to improving the perception of apprenticeships and can support colleges in improving the parity of esteem between vocational and academic routes.
51. The Welsh Government's recent 'Aligning the Apprenticeship model to the needs of the Welsh economy' publication noted that the Employer Perspectives Survey suggests that there is room for Apprenticeships to develop further beyond the current 13% of employers engaged with the Apprenticeship programme, especially among smaller employers.<sup>14</sup> However, this data seems to cover the period 2011-14 so it would be useful to know if there has been progress on this figure more in more recent years.
52. It is vital to consider company size in any discussion of employer engagement with larger businesses being far more likely to have the capacity to engage than micro businesses. Care must be taken to ensure that apprenticeships work for smaller businesses and are not solely designed to meet the needs of larger companies. In 2016, 98.5 per cent of businesses in Wales were small or micro businesses and they need to be clear targets of engagement. Jobs Growth Wales offers a good entry point and the Young Recruits Programmes seemed to have an impact.<sup>15</sup> Welsh Government needs to support small businesses to be able to engage and encourage them to continue or consider taking apprentices. FE colleges are developing a good track record of working with businesses of all sizes to meet business need and develop Wales' future workforce.
53. Many companies have long serving and loyal employees that they are looking to retrain, outside the 16-19 age range which has often been the focus of apprenticeship messaging. Consideration must be given as to how best retraining and upskilling of employees of all ages can be supported, with the emphasis on the Welsh Government's commitment to creating at least 100,000 all age apprenticeships before the end of the current National Assembly term in May 2021.
54. Beyond this, it is vital to remember that apprenticeships are not the only solution to upskilling and reskilling people across Wales. Employers also need other sorts of training and skills programmes that reductions in part time funding have adversely affected in recent years. Communities and individuals could also benefit from this approach. Analysis of skills must take account of the need to retrain and reskill older workers and ensure that opportunities are available for 'learn while you earn', digital and blended learning, as well as learning opportunities which can accommodate

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<sup>14</sup> Welsh Government, *Aligning the Apprenticeship model*, page 36.

<sup>15</sup> Source: Stats Wales, see <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Business-Economy-and-Labour-Market/Businesses/Business-Structure/Headline-Data/latestbusinessstructureinwales-by-sizeband-measure> .

uncertain working patterns and multi-generational caring responsibilities. If we are genuinely going to address the skills gaps and the economic potential of areas such as the middle and upper valleys, for example, a programme of training and funding to improve the levels of adult skills is needed. The co-investment strategy has failed to provide the solution to this. Such an approach – encouraging adults to return to learning or retrain – could also help to provide positive role models for young people in these areas.

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## **'Apprenticeships in Wales 2017'**

### **A response by Universities Wales to the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee's inquiry into apprenticeships.**

#### **About Universities Wales**

- Universities Wales represents the interests of universities in Wales and is a National Council of Universities UK. Universities Wales' Governing Council consists of the Vice-Chancellors of all the universities in Wales and the Director of the Open University in Wales.
- In responding to this inquiry, we have focused on the inquiry areas that have a particular relevance to Welsh higher education and universities in Wales.

#### **Executive Summary**

- i. Across the UK, universities play a key role in the delivery of vocational education including higher level apprenticeships.
- ii. The past four years have seen a significant growth in the number of people undertaking higher level apprenticeships in Wales. However, the majority of these programmes are at level 4 with only a handful of apprenticeship frameworks in Wales being at levels 6 and 7.
- iii. In England, degree apprenticeships were launched in September 2015 and provide a three to four year programme at the end of which the apprentice will attain a degree. In 2017, there will be over 7,600 degree apprenticeships in England. Scotland launched their equivalent, Graduate Level Apprenticeships, this year.
- iv. Degree apprenticeships in Wales are currently in development with matters such as how apprenticeships will be structured and the funding model yet to be decided.
- v. Universities Wales believes that degree apprenticeships offer an effective vehicle for improving skills levels in Wales, for providing businesses in Wales with innovative forms of professional development for their staff, and a means of widening access. Universities in Wales also have a significant role to play across the broader development of higher level apprenticeships.
- vi. Through the UK-wide apprenticeship levy and, in England, the development of industry-led trailblazer groups, the nature of employer engagement has changed considerably since the 2012 committee report on apprenticeships.
- vii. Universities in England report that the development of degree apprenticeships has led to greater engagement with employers. The development of degree apprenticeships in Wales offers an opportunity to both increase employer engagement with universities and employer engagement with apprenticeship opportunities in Wales more broadly.

## Consultation Areas

### 1. **Progress since the 2012 report of the Enterprise and Business Committee: Apprenticeships in Wales**

- 1.1. The 2012 report recommended that the Welsh Government ‘target funding at higher level apprenticeships in the most appropriate sectors to ensure that the right skills are being delivered to meet the needs of a vibrant, modern Welsh economy’<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.2. Since then, there has been a significant growth in the number of individuals undertaking higher level apprenticeships. In 2015/16 there were 5,980 starts on higher level apprenticeship programmes, compared to 2,275 in 2012/13. Between 2013 and 2016, the number of individuals starting a higher level apprenticeship in Wales has increased on average by 38% every year. Similar growth has taken place elsewhere in the UK with an average growth of 49% a year in England between 2013 and 2016<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.3. In 2014/15, 16% of apprentices in Wales were taking higher-level apprenticeships, predominantly in management and/or social care<sup>3</sup>. However, it does not appear that Welsh Government statistics distinguish between levels 4, 5, 6, or 7, and as such it is not possible to identify the spread of apprentices across these levels.
- 1.4. There have been significant changes to the structure of higher level apprenticeships in England with a move from frameworks to standards, and the introduction of degree apprenticeships in 2015. Degree apprenticeships in England are delivered by universities and enable an apprentice to gain a degree, while employed, at no cost to themselves. By the end of 2017 there will be more than 7,600 degree apprentices in England. Similarly, the Scottish Government introduced Graduate Level Apprenticeships this year which also provide an apprenticeship with an honours degree.
- 1.5. Over 70 universities have been accepted onto the UK Government’s new register of apprenticeship providers<sup>4</sup>.
- 1.6. The development of degree apprenticeships in England was pump primed with £4.5m through HEFCE’s Degree Apprenticeship Development Fund.
- 1.7. This funded 18 projects spread across three common activities:
  - 1.7.1. Building infrastructure
  - 1.7.2. Curriculum design
  - 1.7.3. Employer engagement
- 1.8. Each project has a lead university, many also included further education colleges as delivery partners<sup>5</sup>.
- 1.9. In April 2017, the second phase of the Degree Apprenticeships Development Fund was confirmed with an allocation of £4 million from the Department of Education. At least 90% of this must go to universities via a competitive call to be spent on activities and innovative approaches

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<sup>1</sup>See <http://senedd.assembly.wales/documents/s11015/Apprenticeships%20in%20Wales%20Report%20-%20October%202012.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships>

<sup>3</sup> StatsWales

<sup>4</sup> See <http://roatp.apprenticeships.sfa.bis.gov.uk/download>

<sup>5</sup>For a list of funded projects and institutions, see <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/skills/apprentice/dadf/>



that will increase starts on degree apprenticeships<sup>6</sup>.

1.10. The two most popular degree apprenticeship programmes in England are the chartered manager degree apprenticeship which represents 36% of all degree apprenticeship numbers and the digital and technology solution professional which represents 33%.

1.11. Research carried out by Universities UK found that universities identified 'increased business engagement and closer links with employers' and 'social mobility, widening and diversifying participation' as the main benefits of degree apprenticeships<sup>7</sup>.

1.12. Degree apprenticeships are currently under development in Wales. In December 2016, HEFCW invited plans from institutions to develop degree level qualifications which could form part of an apprenticeship<sup>8</sup>. HEFCW identified engineering, advanced manufacturing and IT/computing as particular areas of interest.

1.13. Universities Wales recommends that the Welsh Government prioritises the development of degree apprenticeships, and does so with close engagement with universities in Wales.

1.14. Universities Wales would recommend engagement with employers in Wales to ensure 'buy-in' to the concept and to identify the demand for degree apprenticeships, including which subject areas are sought after. Where desirable, aligning degree apprenticeships in Wales with those developed in England will help foster awareness and engagement with large, cross-border employers.

## 2. How can better parity of esteem between vocational and academic routes be achieved?

2.1. Degree apprenticeships are an effective tool for improving parity of esteem between vocational and academic routes as they provide an apprentice with an equivalent qualification to those who choose to study at a university and will likely include a university in a prominent role in the design and delivery of the programme.

## 3. How can people from the lowest income families be supported to take-up apprenticeships?

3.1. The manner in which degree apprenticeships have been developed in England means they offer an attractive mix of a tuition-fee free pathway to a degree coupled with paid employment.

3.2. Research by UUK found that of the universities that are delivering degree apprenticeships, 71% are doing so with delivery partners and are 'working closely with other delivery providers, especially further education colleges'.

3.3. There has been much progress in Wales in developing universities as collaborative institutions, which leads to more efficient use of facilities and infrastructure, and ensures a focus on delivery not structures. For example, a strategic alliance was established between the University of South Wales and four further education colleges to provide higher education in further education across South East Wales. This provides structured progression routes from entry level to FE and HE, and provides access to learning opportunities locally at 23 campuses across South Wales.

3.4. As many apprenticeships are locally based, building on the collaboration already inherent in our universities across Wales could be one way of effectively reaching individuals in their communities and supporting those from the lowest income families to take-up higher level and degree apprenticeships.

<sup>6</sup> See [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/HEFCE,2014/Content/News/2017/DADF2\\_funding\\_letter.pdf](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/HEFCE,2014/Content/News/2017/DADF2_funding_letter.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2017/degree-apprenticeships-realising-opportunities.pdf>

<sup>8</sup>See

[https://www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/publications/circulars/circulars\\_2016/W16%2047HE%20Supporting%20Strategic%20Change%20Fund.pdf](https://www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/publications/circulars/circulars_2016/W16%2047HE%20Supporting%20Strategic%20Change%20Fund.pdf)

#### 4. To scrutinise the development of higher level apprenticeships, with the support of further and higher education institutions?

- 4.1. As outlined above, there has been a significant growth in starts in higher level apprenticeships in Wales with 5,980 individuals starting a higher-level apprenticeship in 2015/16.
- 4.2. There are currently 59 higher-level apprenticeship frameworks available in Wales<sup>9</sup> spanning levels 4-7. The majority of frameworks are level 4 with 42 being available. There are currently only three frameworks available at level 6 and two at level 7. Several higher level apprenticeship frameworks include qualifications delivered by universities.
- 4.3. The development of degree apprenticeships in England in 2015 has seen a significant growth in the number of people taking apprenticeships at level 6. There will be over 7,600 degree apprentices in England by the end of 2017<sup>10</sup>.
- 4.4. In Scotland, Graduate Level Apprenticeships launched this year. Initially there will be 19 courses on offer across four subject areas. Currently available courses include:
  - 4.4.1. IT Software Development (honours degree)
  - 4.4.2. IT Management for Business (honours degree)
  - 4.4.3. Engineering Design and Manufacturing (honours degree)
- 4.5. In both England and Scotland, 80% of a degree apprentice's time is spent in work and 20% in study.
- 4.6. While there has been significant growth in higher level apprenticeships in Wales, the UK-wide picture of higher level apprenticeship delivery is changing with the introduction in both England and Scotland of apprenticeships which result in the award of a degree. Although development of equivalent programmes in Wales are underway, there remain a number of areas of uncertainty including:
  - 4.6.1. Funding approach
  - 4.6.2. Structure of the qualifications
  - 4.6.3. Subject areas
  - 4.6.4. Employer demand
- 4.7. The development of degree apprenticeships in England can provide a useful learning resource in the development of equivalent programmes in Wales. For example, in England the question of who is accountable for the quality of degree apprenticeships has only recently been settled with HEFCE being accountable for all elements of apprenticeships at levels 6 and 7<sup>11</sup>. An understanding of these challenges could improve the quality and speed with which degree apprenticeships can be developed in Wales.
- 4.8. In December 2016, the College for Policing announced plans to require new police officers in England and Wales to have a degree qualification. One vehicle for delivering this is the degree apprenticeship in policing currently under development in England<sup>12</sup>. It is not apparent how these

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<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.afo.sscalliance.org/frameworks-library>

<sup>10</sup> See <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/degree-apprenticeships-realising-opportunities.aspx>

<sup>11</sup> See <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2017/Name.113266.en.html>

<sup>12</sup> See <http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Learning/Policing-Education-Qualifications-Framework/Pages/Policing-Education-Qualifications-Framework.aspx>

plans relate to either policing in Wales or the development of degree apprenticeships in Wales.

## **5. How can employer engagement with apprenticeships be improved**

- 5.1. Through the UK-wide apprenticeship levy and, in England, the development of industry-led trailblazer groups, the nature of employer engagement has changed significantly since the 2012 report.
- 5.2. Trailblazer groups in England have been responsible for the development of new apprenticeship standards and have at least 10 different employers as members in addition to any relevant professional bodies and trade associations. Any group must also include at least two employers with less than 50 employees.
- 5.3. The introduction of the apprenticeship levy in 2017 has raised the profile of apprenticeships across the UK. However, the differing apprenticeship policies across the UK has led to confusion amongst employers in Wales regarding what support they are able to access and what will be available to them subsequent to the levy's introduction.
- 5.4. The increased profile of apprenticeships in Wales as a result of the levy provides the Welsh Government with an opportunity to increase employer engagement and highlight what apprenticeship opportunities are available.
- 5.5. The development of degree apprenticeships offers another vehicle through which to improve employer engagement. Research by Universities UK regarding the implementation of the degree apprenticeships found that one of the main benefits cited by universities was 'increased business engagement and closer links with employers'. 80% of universities that responded to the survey said they had engaged with employer groups.
- 5.6. These findings echo some of the points put forward to the 2012 inquiry, which suggested employers would be keen to engage with apprenticeship programmes at higher levels including degree level.

**Universities Wales, 3 May 2017**



Comisiynydd y  
Gymraeg  
Welsh Language  
Commissioner

Mr Russell George AM  
Chair of the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
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11/04/2017

Dear Chair

I write to you regarding the Committee's 'Apprenticeships in Wales 2017' inquiry.

In correspondence with me in June 2016, the Assembly's Llywydd indicated her wish to ensure that consideration of the Welsh language in committee work is not confined only to the Culture, Welsh Language and Communication Committee. Indeed, the Llywydd indicated the intention that all committees consider Welsh language matters in the context of their remits. She also suggested that I raise any concerns in terms of achieving this aim with the relevant committee chairs.

Accordingly, I am writing to you to draw your attention to the lack of consideration given to the Welsh language in the terms of reference of your committee's current inquiry into Apprenticeships in Wales.

You invite comments on a wide range of subjects, including the accessibility of advice on vocational options, and the accessibility of the courses for specific age groups, people from the lowest income families, and people with disabilities; barriers to the take up of apprenticeships; and employer engagement with apprenticeships. The inquiry's terms of reference do not invite comments specifically related to the accessibility of apprenticeships for those who might wish to learn through the medium of Welsh.

There is very little scrutiny given to the Welsh language in previous reviews of Apprenticeship programmes in Wales. For instance, the 2012 report by the Enterprise and Business Committee [Apprenticeships in Wales](#) contained no reference to the Welsh language. Welsh-medium provision was not referred to in the National Training Federation for Wales report [The Value of Apprenticeships to Wales](#) published in September 2015. Including the Welsh language as a central part of this inquiry's terms of reference would be an opportunity to address the gaps in available evidence regarding the Welsh language within apprenticeships.

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Comisiynydd y  
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Both education and the workplace are central to the growth of the Welsh language. Our education system is the main source of new Welsh speakers. The use of the Welsh language in the workplace is a means of improving Welsh speakers' confidence in using it, of increasing the status of the language, and of normalising Welsh as an everyday language. Despite this, it is acknowledged that a significant cohort of Welsh speakers lose their Welsh language skills following the end of their statutory education. In light of this, work-based learning programmes such as apprenticeships are vital in order to ensure continuity from education into the workplace as opportunities to use the language.

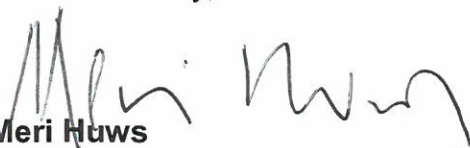
This is especially important in the context of the Welsh Government's vision of ensuring a million Welsh speakers by 2050. The Welsh Government's new Welsh language Strategy (August 2016)<sup>1</sup> that was consulted upon recently states the need to '*improve rates of progression between the different phases of education and the workplace*' including in apprenticeship programmes.

There is a commitment to ensuring 100,000 additional apprenticeships in the future. This presents an opportunity in terms of achieving the aims of the Welsh Government's new strategy for the language through increasing opportunities for the future workforce to use the Welsh language. I am concerned that in reviewing apprenticeship programmes in Wales there has been lack of consideration to the Welsh language, and that this has been a barrier to identifying strengths and weaknesses in the current provision and ensuring progress over the years to come.

I ask that you consider extending the inquiry's terms of reference in order to include the consideration of the use of Welsh in apprenticeships. The Welsh language is not implicit in other aspects of the current terms of reference. Including Welsh as a specific aspect of the terms of reference would enable to gather evidence regarding the current Welsh-medium provision, thus filling the existing gap.

I intend to share evidence I have regarding the Welsh language in apprenticeships. I'm sure others would also do so if the inquiry's terms of reference included the relevant call for evidence.

Yours sincerely,



**Meri Huws**  
Welsh Language Commissioner