

Gwybodaeth Ychwanegol at y Cyfarfod Llawn Information Further to Plenary

Cyhoeddir ymatebion yn yr iaith y'u darparwyd, gyda chyfieithiad Saesneg o ymatebion yn y Gymraeg.

Responses are published in the language in which they are provided, with a translation into English of responses provided in Welsh.

Gwybodaeth ychwanegol at OAQ(4)0080(ESK) a gyhoeddwyd gan Leighton Andrews, y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau, ar 31 Ionawr 2012 Information further to OAQ(4)0080(ESK) issued by Leighton Andrews, the Minister for Education and Skills, on 31 January 2012

At/To Mark Isherwood:

Further to your Assembly Question (11 January) on what educational provision is in place for people supporting the blind and partially sighted to live independently, I agreed to explore what funding was available for two particular projects—Vision Support's partnership with the University of Wales, Newport providing a specialist qualification for people working with children who have vision impairment and related issues; and Beyond Vision's project with Neath Port Talbot College to establish an employment and learning centre for blind and partially sighted people.

I should begin by clarifying that the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) allocates the funding provided by the Welsh Government by means of student numbers and not particular courses of study. It is then for the institutions themselves, as autonomous bodies, to determine which courses they will offer, and to allocate their funding accordingly.

In addition to this core funding, the Welsh Government has also provided HEFCW with £7.64m this year to support the setting up of new Foundation Degrees. Unfortunately, as the Foundation Degree course at the University of Wales, Newport is already established, it would not have been eligible for this funding.

However, I understand from my officials that there is another programme currently running to support new Foundation Degrees, called 'Higher Skills Wales Foundation Degree Programme'. It is funded through ESF/WEFO and is led by the University of Glamorgan on behalf of the higher education sector. The funding is managed by Mary-Kate Pryce who can be contacted on mpryce@glam.ac.uk. RNIB and Vision Support, together with potential providers, may wish to explore this funding opportunity for any new Foundation Degrees planned.

With regard to Beyond Vision's partnership with Neath Port Talbot College, my officials have met previously with the College and the RNIB to discuss their proposal. I understand that the College was advised to submit an outline business case in support of this potential project, but I gather that nothing has been submitted to date. You may wish to enquire as to Beyond Vision's progress with this.

I hope this clarifies the situation.