

**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 36**

**Ymateb gan: Cyngor Deoniaid Iechyd**

**Response from: Council of Deans of Health**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

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**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

The Council of Deans of Health is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this consultation. The Council represents the 100 UK university faculties engaged in education and research for nursing, midwifery, and the allied health professions. Our nine member institutions in Wales work together with policy makers to help shape the education and research of the future healthcare workforce in Wales.

Providing stable and sustainable funding for healthcare disciplines

A key priority for the healthcare higher education sector is stable and sustainable funding. Nursing, midwifery, and allied health professional (AHP) courses are more expensive than typical university degrees, and universities need stability and certainty to invest for the future. The full costs of educating healthcare professionals must be met to ensure the continued sustainability and quality of healthcare education. To address this, the Welsh Government should increase the rate at which healthcare programmes are funded to meet the full costs of delivery and deliver its ambitions for the NHS in Wales.



The Covid-19 pandemic has reshaped the delivery of healthcare, with more patients accessing services remotely. The Welsh Government must consider the continually increasing use of technology in healthcare and invest in the infrastructure and equipment needed by higher education providers to provide digitally enhanced and simulated placements. This will lead to the development of a future healthcare workforce better equipped to deliver services in a digital NHS. This year, England has announced £15m of dedicated investment in simulation for healthcare faculties, and Scotland has committed to £3.8m for innovative technology. It is important that Wales follows this in order to be able to take full advantage of digital innovation in healthcare higher education for the benefit of Welsh students. To address this, the Welsh Government should pledge new funding for digital innovation and simulated placements in healthcare higher education.

#### Ensure students receive adequate financial support

Universities and prospective students need certainty about student support arrangements in the long term to allow for planning and development. Healthcare students should be able to access both the standard maintenance support package through Student Finance Wales and an NHS Bursary to cover full tuition fees and additional costs related to clinical placement expenses. This would recognise the unique nature of these courses and their importance to the future health and social care workforce. To address this, the Welsh Government should ensure healthcare students can access a standard maintenance support package via Student Finance Wales alongside an NHS bursary to cover full tuition fees and additional costs related to clinical placement expenses.

#### Expansion of post-graduate healthcare education

The expansion of master's level education and investment in postgraduate education and flexible learning pathways would create a healthcare workforce which is more highly skilled and better able to respond to future population health demands and the changing healthcare landscape. As Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) enters phase two of its Strategic Education Review, which involves reviewing future postgraduate provision, increased funding to support the development of postgraduate education infrastructure required to deliver the future healthcare workforce will be key.

#### Invest in healthcare teaching and research

Universities drive research outputs and innovation in healthcare delivery. There is a need to strengthen the academic workforce to educate future professionals,



including the clinical academic workforce. This requires adequate investment in teaching qualifications and research opportunities for the wider workforce. This would lead to an increase in the sustainability of both academic staffing and clinical academic careers. To address this, the Welsh Government should invest in the Welsh healthcare teaching and research workforce, including clinical academic careers and CPD for the existing registered workforce.

### Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships can serve to complement workforce growth and create more flexible career pathways. However, university-based programmes are the fastest and most effective way to develop the workforce at scale and pace. Investment in priority workforce areas should therefore ordinarily be channelled through university-based education.

If the Welsh Government is to introduce degree level healthcare apprenticeships, then the experiences from England can provide useful insights and learning opportunities. This has highlighted difficulties with the implementation and delivery of healthcare apprenticeships, including insufficient funding for both educators and providers, overburdensome and duplicative regulation, and small cohort numbers.

Apprenticeships should be adequately funded and an efficient system be developed and implemented.

Healthcare apprenticeships must be developed in full alignment with healthcare professional regulation. Only education providers regulated by healthcare professional regulators should be allowed to deliver and assess these programmes. Additionally, end point assessment (EPA) mechanisms must be integrated within programmes. Support must be given to education providers and employers to introduce new routes. There needs to be close collaboration between universities, employers, regulators, HEIW, the Welsh Government and other partners.

## **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

### Student mental wellbeing

The mental wellbeing of healthcare students is rightly a particular concern of universities, especially considering the pandemic. Universities continue to provide significant support for the mental wellbeing of healthcare students and academics.



Healthcare students can benefit from services provided by both universities and practice placements. HEIs provided extensive pastoral support in academic settings and in placement areas via link lecturers during an incredibly anxious period for students. It is also important to consider the health and wellbeing of students on placement away from their university. Temporary relocation for placement has been identified as a risk factor for mental ill health in students, and students must continue to be supported in this situation.

There is a need for ongoing wellbeing support, including from practice placement partners, such as access to confidential services outside of student's placement circuits. This includes increased financial support for HEIs and practice placements to ensure that students and academic staff have sustainable access to suitable wellbeing support appreciating the needs of healthcare students, as a discrete group of students. These aims are consistent with the Quadruple Aim ambitions set out in A Healthier Wales, specifically developing a motivated and sustainable health and social care workforce, as well as the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. To address this, the Welsh Government should work with universities and practice placement providers to ensure healthcare students have ongoing access to adequate mental health services tailored to their needs to support students to complete their programmes, including in practice placement settings. The Council welcomes HEIW's recommissioning review and its commitment to additional funding for student support.

#### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

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