

Monday 10 July 2023

Jayne Bryant MS
Chair, Children, Young People and Education Committee
Senedd

By email

Dear Jayne,

Many thanks for your recent correspondence to Professor Tim Blackman, Vice-Chancellor of The Open University. Prof Blackman has passed your letter to me to respond.

As you will recall, my colleague Ceri Wilcock, Assistant Director, Student Experience at The Open University in Wales, gave oral evidence to your committee's inquiry into mental health support in higher education, in addition to the written evidence we submitted.

We were very pleased to see the report and its recommendations, and I take this opportunity to congratulate the committee on a thorough piece of work. We were also pleased to see the Welsh Government's response last month, which accepted almost all of your recommendations.

As you know, The Open University is a distance learning provider which serves and operates in all parts of the United Kingdom. In Wales, we have over 15,500 students, including a large proportion from some of Wales' most underprivileged communities.

Because of the nature of our model and our offer, we do not currently have international students in Wales, so the particular recommendation relating to international students

which you wrote to us to highlight does not apply to us as readily as it might to other universities.

However, I would like to thank you for taking the time to highlight this important issue, including the particular challenges raised by your committee colleague Buffy Williams, and assure you that we will keep a watching brief on developments in this area, as we take forward our wider work on mental health and well-being.

I know that my external affairs colleagues are looking forward to meeting with you soon, but if I can be of any further assistance, please do feel free to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,



David Price
Interim Director, The Open University in Wales