

# Medr

Y Comisiwn Addysg Drydyddol ac Ymchwil  
Commission for Tertiary Education and Research

## Children, Young People and Education Committee: Medr - Annual Scrutiny session

Written submission

January 2025



Noddir gan  
**Lywodraeth Cymru**  
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## **How the last year of setting up the new Commission has gone**

The establishment of Medr, the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research, is the culmination of a long process of change. Through the development period of the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022, the sector we now fund and regulate have followed the development of a new approach in Wales for many years.

After the appointment of Professor Dame Julie Lydon in December 2022, the Minister for Education appointed Simon Pirotte OBE as the first Chief Executive Officer in June 2023. Following the subsequent appointment of seven Board Members, the Commission was established on 4 September 2023 to begin preparations for it to become operational the following year. The Chief Executive was joined by a small 'establishment team' of officials from the Welsh Government. That team, working with existing teams in scope for transfer in the Welsh Government and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), set the groundwork for a successful establishment of the new organisation.

Medr 'went live' on 1 August 2024, dissolving HEFCW and incorporating the existing staff and functions of that organisation and the Welsh Government in a new arm's-length body. Alongside the transfer of staff from HEFCW and the Welsh Government, Medr has continued to build capacity in the organisation since it became operational. There has been considerable interest in people applying to work for Medr and we have already recruited around 25 people with more recruitment activity planned in the coming months.

## **What's the internal structure of the organisation in terms of how the different parts of the tertiary education sector are overseen**

Medr is more than the combined responsibilities of HEFCW and the Welsh Government. One of the key drivers behind the creation of a single organisation with oversight for the entire tertiary sector was to create a more joined-up system, with clearer and more flexible pathways for learners.

In order to do that, and to encourage our staff to develop a tertiary mindset, we have avoided structuring our organisation according to different parts of the sector. This will ensure that there is join up across the sector and avoid the individual parts becoming siloed.

The executive team includes the Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer and Executive Director for Policy. The senior leadership team is comprised of the executive team and seven additional director-level posts, which are: Director of Research, Innovation and Skills; Director of Learner Experience; Director of Development, Investment and Performance; Director of Regulation; Director of Statistics and Analysis; Chief Financial Officer and Chief Digital Officer.

## **How the transition of Medr taking over responsibility for tertiary education and research in August went**

We are very pleased with the transition from existing responsibilities to Medr. Following the appointments of the Chair and Chief Executive, both were clear in engagements with the sector that a smooth transition was of paramount importance to our organisation, and recognised its vital importance for the sector.

Following its establishment in August 2024, Medr made £86million of scheduled payments to the sector in the month of August and a full payroll run was made on schedule for Medr staff. We are not aware of any issues or complaints arising from the transition to Medr's operational responsibilities.

## **Engagement with stakeholders on its strategic plan in response to the statement of strategic priorities from the Welsh Ministers**

The Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022 sets out that the Commission must prepare a strategic plan setting out how it intends to discharge its strategic duties, and address the Welsh Ministers' statement of priorities. It also notes that in preparing the plan, the Commission must consult such persons as it considers appropriate.

Engagement with stakeholders was key to the development of our strategic plan. In July 2024, we held engagement events in Llandudno and Cardiff, where we invited stakeholders from across the tertiary education and research sector to give their views on our strategic direction in response to the statement of priorities. These were attended by over 150 people and were used to inform the development of our draft strategic plan.

We held a public consultation on the draft plan from 23 September to 25 October. We received 101 responses to the consultation, including responses from every part of the sector. During the consultation period, we held a bespoke employer engagement session and commissioned Beaufort Research to carry out engagement with learners across the tertiary sector.

We actively involved our workforce in the development of our plan by sharing early drafts and holding briefing sessions with teams to inform the development of our aims and commitments.

The views expressed in the consultation responses, in the employer and learner engagement sessions, and by staff, were all considered carefully and reflected in the plan where possible. A final version of the plan, adapted to incorporate the feedback of stakeholders through the consultation and engagement process, was submitted to the Welsh Government in December 2024 and is currently being considered by Welsh Ministers.

## **Funding arrangements for providers and how it's anticipated that Medr will allocate funding in the future**

As mentioned earlier, a smooth transition to the new regulatory and funding arrangements under Medr has been one of our immediate priorities.

In the short term, the funding powers and arrangements utilised by Medr are the same or similar to those employed by the Welsh Government or HEFCW. Initial funding allocations – for example, the funding provided to Local Authorities – have been made using existing funding models and formulae.

In the medium and longer term, we will consult on new systems of funding that will ensure our funding is used as effectively as possible. Using our funding effectively will be a crucial part of how we achieve our ambitions and realise the benefits of a coherent tertiary education and research sector, and data will be key to this. By better understanding the difference our funding can make, we will take considered, data-informed decisions on spending.

Medr is finalising its indicative budget allocations for 2025/26 and a high-level summary will be provided to the sector on 31 January. A copy will also be provided to the Committee at the same time.

## **How does Medr expect to receive funding from Welsh Government and does it anticipate that any funding will be ringfenced**

The draft budget allocation that Medr has received from the Welsh Government has ringfenced funding for apprenticeships and for junior apprenticeships. Although this draft indicative budget may be subject to change at the final budget stage, we do not currently anticipate that any further parts of Medr's budget will be ringfenced.

As Medr continues to establish itself and consults on and implements its new systems of funding, it is possible that the budget that the Welsh Government provides to Medr may be entirely un-hypothecated.

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