

Rebecca Evans MS

Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning

25 February 2025

Dear Rebecca,

Follow up to meeting of 12 February 2025

Thank you for your time and the evidence you gave to Committee on 12 February as part of our inquiry into **Apprenticeship Pathways**.

Due to time constraints and that the Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership was unable to attend, there are some areas the Committee wants to follow up on.

These questions may fall outside of your remit or in the area of another Ministerial portfolio so I am happy to receive a response from the Minister you feel is best suited to reply. Therefore, we have copied in the Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership, the Cabinet Secretary for Education, and the Minister for Further and Higher Education.

Please could you set out the Government's response to the following questions.

The Vocational Qualifications for Wales Steering Group's Report recommended the Welsh Government develops a national strategy for vocational education and training which should form part of a wider post-compulsory education and training strategy. The Welsh Government accepted this recommendation and said that a short, action-focused policy statement on post-16 education will be developed:

- What progress has been made in developing this policy statement?

Role of advice and information, and work experience for learners to understand their options:



- Are you content with the advice and information that learners are provided with regarding apprenticeship opportunities, in particular the service provided by Careers Wales?
- How aware are you that there has been a drop off in meaningful work experience in schools since Careers Wales stopped performing a central co-ordinating role in 2015? To what extent could this be a barrier to learners understanding their options as far as apprenticeships and work-based learning goes?

Apprenticeship pathways and the ability to map out clear progression routes from lower level to higher level apprenticeships and vertical integration:

- To what extent are you aware that learners are being put off from pursuing an apprenticeship or from continuing to the next level due to difficulties in mapping out clear pathways? Are the opportunities available for learners to progress through the levels if they wish to?
- How can there be more flexibility within the system to allow apprenticeship pathways to respond quicker to the changing needs of fast paced and emerging sectors?

Role of employers and supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to engage with the apprenticeship programme:

- There are a number of obstacles that smaller businesses face regarding the apprenticeship programme, such as limited administrative capacity and a lack of awareness about the benefits of apprentices. Who should be addressing these challenges and how?
- What more can be done to encourage employers, in particular smaller businesses, to engage with the apprenticeship programme and provide apprenticeships?

Role of the Welsh Government:

- A number of reports have been published in recent years with recommendations to the Welsh Government, and other key stakeholders, regarding apprenticeships. How confident are you that these interlinked recommendations are being taken forward and who is monitoring them?
- During the meeting you committed to writing to the Committee on the progress of, and funding for, the implementation of recommendations made in Sharron Lusher's **Review of Vocational Qualifications in Wales** and Hefin David's **Transitions to Employment report**.

Thank you again for your time in Committee. I would be grateful if you could reply to the above points by Friday 14 March.

A copy of this letter is being sent to the Children, Young People and Education Committee in relation to its inquiry into Routes into post-16 education and training.

Kind regards,

Andrew RT Davies

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Chair: Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English