



Andrew RT Davies MS,
Chair of Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee

24 April 2025

Dear Andrew

Thank you for your letter dated 3 April outlining the scope of the ETRA Committee's inquiry into apprenticeship pathways.

I have had sight of the previous response that my colleague, Jack Sargeant the Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership, sent to you on the 13 of March asking me to reply to one of the Committee's questions, and I am pleased to offer an update as detailed below.

ETRA committee question:

What progress has been made in developing a national strategy for vocational education and training?

Progress update (April 2025):

Taking forward the recommendations of both the Review of Vocational Qualifications and the Report on Transitions into Employment remains a key priority for Welsh Government. It is important to note that there are many co-dependencies associated with delivery of the recommendations and that the strategic relationship between Welsh Government, Qualifications Wales and Medr is of significant importance in this context.

Our aim in implementing the recommendations is to align with the wider participation agenda, including in relation to the 16-19 local curricula and work with Medr, Careers Wales, the UK Government and other stakeholders on skills priorities. Working with these partners, our ambition is to create clearer and more accessible pathways for all learners, whilst supporting them to access appropriate guidance and the learning that is the best fit for them.

A focus for us in 2025 is to identify the short, medium, and long-term actions required of Welsh Government and our partners to enable collaborative delivery of the recommendations – some of which have fairly significant lead times for example the introduction of VCSE's, which will be available for first teaching from September 2027.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Action is already underway on many of the qualification-specific recommendations in the Vocational Qualifications Review, being progressed by Qualifications Wales and Medr, in partnership with Welsh Government. Examples include the expansion of sector review stakeholder group membership (recommendation 6), the scrutiny of sector review findings at Board level (recommendation 7), and the development of VCSE's (recommendation 22). Qualifications Wales has also published a [progress report](#) (Sept 2024) on their targeted approach for increasing the number of Welsh medium qualifications available to learners (recommendations 19 and 20).

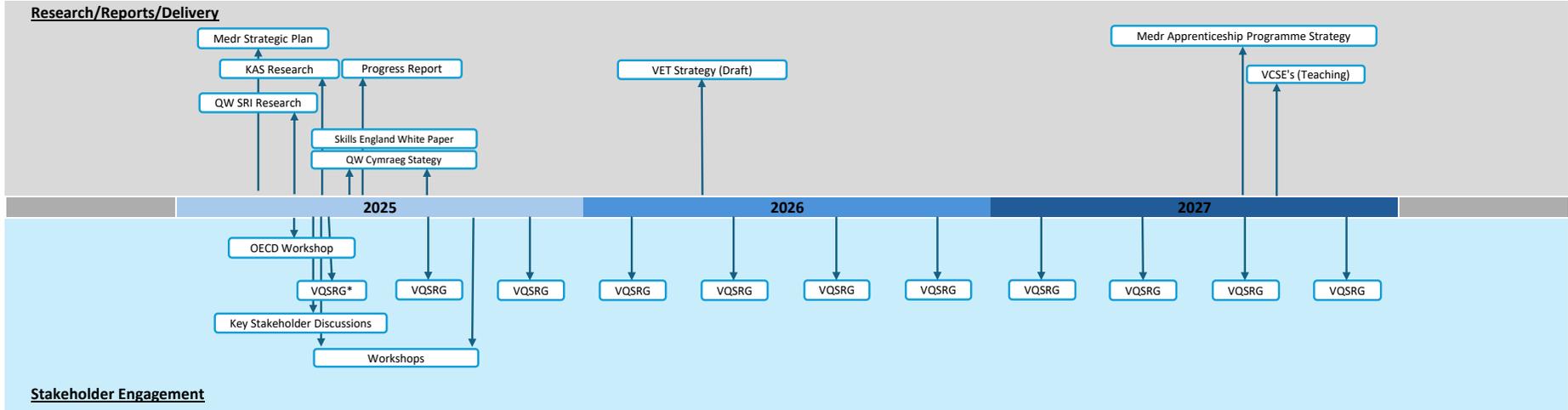
I am attaching a draft delivery plan for the implementation of the recommendations to give the Committee a sense of the scope and scale of the programme, as well as a sense of timeframe for delivery. You will see in the plan there are indicative timings for the development of a Vocational Education and Training (VET) Strategy. My officials are exploring with key partners (including Medr, Colegau Cymru, Qualifications Wales, and Universities Wales) the scope to co-produce the strategy within this indicative timeframe. Wider stakeholder engagement will follow, and it should be noted that these discussions might impact the indicative timeframe described above. I will keep the Committee informed of any changes.

As you will be aware, many of the recommendations link to the wider skills agenda, and I will continue to work closely with my Ministerial colleagues, and across Welsh Government, Wales and the UK, to align our policy aims where appropriate.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'V. Howells', with a long, sweeping underline stroke below it.

Vikki Howells AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg Bellach ac Uwch
Minister for Further and Higher Education



*Vocational Qualifications Stakeholder Reference Group