

# University of South Wales Course Closure

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 16 Mehefin 2025  
Petitions Committee | 16 June 2025

Reference: SR25/11287

**Petition Number:** [P-06-1523](#)

**Petition title:** Reverse the Closure of Post Grad Counselling and Psychotherapy Courses at University of South Wales

**Text of petition:** We urge the University of South Wales to reverse its decision to close key counselling and psychotherapy courses. These programmes provide vital training and support local mental health services. Their loss will reduce access to qualified therapists and force students to train in England. USW must consult with students and stakeholders, including the Welsh Government, to find a solution that protects these essential courses.

Students on these courses provide essential support in charities, schools, and NHS services. Their absence will worsen the strain on already overstretched provisions.

With no alternative BACP Post Grad psychotherapy training in Wales, students must travel to England, increasing financial and logistical challenges. This disproportionately affects mature students and those from lower-income backgrounds, reducing diversity in the profession.

USW has not followed its own policies on consultation, failing to engage students and stakeholders prior to decisions being made.

These courses are vital for training skilled professionals and ensuring accessible mental health support. Given the rising demand for services, this decision is short-sighted and harmful.



We urge Welsh Ministers and USW to explore alternative solutions, such as restructuring programmes or securing additional funding. Protecting these courses is essential for the future of counselling and psychotherapy in Wales.

## 1. Background

On 19 February 2025, the University of South Wales (USW) announced its 'Consultation on the workforce implications of a review of our academic provision' ('the consultation'). The consultation highlighted closing a 'small number of courses' though did not provide detail about affected areas as it said "staff and students were being spoken with directly in the first instance".

Additional articles regarding the consultation were published by USW on their students news pages and the university's 'Advice Zone'. These articles further stipulated "the specific courses identified for closure is a decision which is not subject to consultation and has been approved by the Executive team at the University".

The rationale for the consultation was outlined in relation to challenges facing universities across the country and an aim to ensure the future financial sustainability of the University.

While limited detail regarding the affected areas was made public, as reported to the petitions committee in a previous brief regarding the closure of Lampeter Campus, Wales Online reported that staff and students advised that the affected courses included integrative counselling and psychotherapy.

While information in the public domain is limited, the response to the petition from the Minister for Further and Higher Education outlined:

My officials have spoken with the USW for clarification on these particular courses. The USW has confirmed that the Masters level courses in Integrative Counselling and Play Therapy were being considered for closure under the proposals but **an early decision has been made by the University to retain them**. During the consultation period, alternative delivery models were proposed that will reduce operating costs and make the courses financially viable and therefore both have been removed from the consultation process. [Bold is our emphasis]

## 2. Other Higher Education Institutions in Wales

The previous research brief regarding Lampeter Campus outlined that other higher education (HE) institutions throughout Wales are facing challenges associated with financial pressures leading to a number of institutions consulting on reductions in staff and courses.

On 28 January 2025, [Cardiff University](#) began a consultation on proposed staff and course reductions. Though [Wales Online](#), along with other media sources, have since reported that Cardiff University have proposed alternative plans. Such alternative plans regarding course reductions require further discussions with the Welsh Government and NHS bodies according to [the BBC](#). [The University and College Union \(UCU\)](#) criticised the significance of concessions made in such alternative plans. A [joint statement between Cardiff University and UCU](#) has since been published on Cardiff Universities' website indicating that Cardiff University are ruling out compulsory redundancies for all staff connected to the consultation and the wider transformation programmed for the remainder of the calendar year. In return, UCU has agreed to suspend all industrial action under their current mandate for 2025.

The BBC reported that [Bangor University](#) aims to cut about 200 jobs to make savings of £15m, it's Vice-Chancellor told staff in an email. Though on 14 May 2025, the BBC reported this had been [reduced to around 78 full-time equivalent posts](#).

On 3 April 2025, [Cardiff Metropolitan University](#) announced they will be consulting with unions and colleagues regarding their restructuring proposals which include an expectation of making between 30 and 50 further staff redundant as it attempts to cut costs.

## 3. Welsh Government Action

As stipulated above, Welsh Government action has included contacting the USW regarding the course closures which have since been removed from the consultation of which this petition is based.

A previous statement by the Minister for Further and Higher Education at [Plenary on 4 December 2024](#) noted universities as autonomous institutions, saying it would be inappropriate for Welsh Ministers to intervene on such academic matters such as course delivery and campus location.

In a further [Written Statement on 18 February 2025](#), the Minister announced additional funding to the university sector in order to support estate maintenance and digital projects. Further, the Minister asked Medr to report back on “how this funding has been maximised to make future savings to ease the current financial challenges”. In addition the Minister has asked Medr to undertake an overview of subject demand, provision, and distribution in HE in Wales.

The Minister announced at [Plenary on 19 February 2025](#) that she has invited all Vice-Chancellors in Wales to a round-table meeting for more discussions about the current challenges facing the sector. Regarding USW specifically, the Minister suggested she did not want to pre-empt and speculate on the situation when there has been no formal announcement from USW regarding the affected areas of the consultation.

On 3 April 2025, [Welsh Government](#) announced it has made the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022 (Commencement No. 5 and Transitory and Transitional Provisions) Order 2025 (‘the Order’), along with the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2025 (Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2025, following the agreement of the latter in [Plenary on 1 April 2025](#). The Order brings into force a range of duties on Medr (from 5 April 2025) which it says will help deliver a number of key reforms including the development of a learner engagement code as well as development of guidance to support providers of tertiary education in the preparation of learner protection plans.

Regarding Medr’s powers, the BBC article cited above quotes a statement by its Chief Executive Simon Pirotte outlining that Medr did not have powers to instruct a university to deliver or keep specific courses, but it could advise the government on where a subject may be ‘vulnerable’.

## 4. Welsh Parliament Action

Currently there are two further petitions relating to cuts to universities in Wales which have passed the number of signatures required to be considered by the petitions committee:

- [Enable Cardiff University to keep the Nursing degree course](#) [7,574 signatures as of 03/06/25 @ 15:00]
- [Help Cardiff University to keep their Modern Languages degree courses](#) [2,522 signatures as of 03/06/25 @ 15:00]

The Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee wrote to all HE providers, including the Vice-chancellor of USW with a request for information regarding the challenges facing the HE sector. USW's response highlighted the university's projected end of year position for this financial year will be a deficit and that USW has previously made "difficult decisions" to withdraw from Chemistry, Geography, Mathematics and Geology since 2019/20. USW suggested the conclusion of the consultation period (11 April 2025) will be followed by a "careful review" of all feedback before final decisions are made.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.