

Additional information from Cardiff University following the evidence session on 12 June 2025

- Prof. Larner referred to [our recent rise](#) in the Complete University Guide rankings 2026. Prof. Larner also alluded to “one of the key international league tables” which was under embargo This was [the QS World Rankings](#), which has now been published.
- [Senate composition](#)
- Moodys Report: To be sent on shortly.
- List of meetings referred to by Wendy Larner:

Fri 17 Jan 2025	Wendy Larner and higher education officials within Welsh Government.
Wed 22 Jan 2025	Wendy Larner and Steve Riley met with higher education and health officials within Welsh Government
Wed 22 Jan 2025	Wendy Larner met with Medr.
Mon 27 Jan 2025	Steve Riley met with HEIW.
Mon 27 Jan 2025	Wendy Larner met with Jeremy Miles MS, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care.

- [Octopus Ventures report](#)
- [A press release sent on 18/06/25](#) announcing investment in Draig Therapeutics, a major spin-out from Cardiff University in life sciences.
- Follow-up news coverage relating to mental health. As a result, I also wanted to include an external audit of Occupational Health and Safety, ISO 45003

- The Chairs of Universities Wales letter sent to the then Cabinet Secretary

20 June 2025

External audit

Cardiff University invests in external certification to the following [ISO standards](#) as part of the commitment to safety, health, environmental and wellbeing management:

- ISO 14001 : 2015 - [Environmental management systems](#)
- ISO 45001 : 2018 - [Occupational health and safety management systems](#)
- ISO 45003 : 2021 - [Occupational health and safety management — Psychological health and safety at work](#)

ISO 45003 is a relatively new ISO standard. Cardiff achieved recognition against this standard in 2022 and believes it is the first higher education institution in the UK to achieve compliance with the requirements of the then new international standard for psychological health and safety in the workplace, which was developed by the British Standards Institute (BSI) after consultation with the British Psychological Society.

During June 2025, following routine annual external audit against all three of these management standards, the external auditors confirmed that Cardiff would be recommended for continued certification. The audit also identified 5 minor non-conformances and a few opportunities for improvement which the institution welcomes in the spirit of continual improvement. The formal audit report is yet to be received as the external audit company need to complete their internal processes to assess the recommendation and confirm certification before the report can be issued.

Sickness absence, OH and EAP data

Sickness absence

Data based on the 12 months preceding 30th April 2025

The proportion of absence days caused by stress has decreased from 19.2% (7,972 out of 41,612) last year (twelve months preceding 30th April 2024) to 18.7% (7,753.5 out of 41,510 total days lost) this year.

The introduction of coding distinguishing personal and work-related stress at the beginning of last year reveals that during the last 12 months 58.9% stress cases are personal (265 cases) and 41.1% are work-related (185 cases).

Occupational Health

Data from January to April 2025 has been reviewed and compared to the same period in 2024.

The data shows mental health appointments have remained consistent (169 MH appointments in 2024 vs 163 MH appointments in 2025).

Further breakdown of the data shows work-related stress also remains consistent (47 appointments in 2024 vs 48 appointments in 2025) as has work-related depression (2024 = 4 vs

2025 = 6), whereas Stress (non-work-related) (34 appointments in 2024 vs 26 appointments in 2025) and Work-Related Anxiety (13 appointments in 2024 vs 7 appointments in 2025) have all slightly decreased.

Employee Assistance Programme

Data based on figures from January 1st to March 31st

The average wait time, year-to-date, from first contact to first counselling session – when people’s needs are explored in more depth – was 5.33 days. For context, the average wait for a first session of a talking therapy in the NHS is currently around eight weeks.

The average time from the first to the second counselling session was 11.52 days.

Overall, clinical outcomes continue to be very positive. Collectively, they show a distinct decline in the severity of presentation by end of service which suggests most people feel a lot better after using the service than they did before.

The vast majority of CU clients contact Vivup whilst still in work. The level is higher than the Vivup average seen across all of its clients.

More of our staff access the clinically validated self-care materials than is the norm across Vivup’s entire client base.

Overall service demand is fairly consistent – with an average of around 100 contacts per month YTD. There was an increase in demand in March in comparison with February, as there was with Vivup’s other clients. Any assessment of demand includes *all* support options – e.g., for clinically validated self-care materials, for the Your Care wellbeing self-monitoring system, or for one of the many counselling options Vivup provides. We promote Vivup frequently in order to increase usage of the service.

The most significant presenting issues YTD are as follows: Anxiety (32%), Stress (28%), Work Related Stress (10%) and Depression/Low Mood (8%).



25 April, 2023

Dear Minister,

Thank you for your invitation to our first meeting in person at Ty Hywel at 10 am on 3 May which we look forward to very much. We trust it will be a very constructive and open sharing of views and issues for the HE sector from everyone's perspective.

As both Chairs and Trustees of substantial charitable enterprises, with wide ranging backgrounds (brief biogs are attached for your information), we fully recognise the fiduciary duties and obligations which attach to our roles and the need to discharge them as best we can to ensure the security and long term sustainability of the institutions which we proudly serve. And it is the long term with which we are primarily concerned, not forgetting the short or medium term challenges which need to be viewed in the context of the key underlying issues which go right to the beating heart and wellbeing of the future of higher education in our country.

To that end, we welcome the opportunity to meet with you at a critical moment for the HE sector in Wales and the UK generally - noting that in England discussions are already well advanced on the challenges faced and how they might best be addressed. We are at a 'tipping point' where, if we do not, as Chairs and Trustees, discharge our responsibilities and address certain issues in a timely and responsible manner, then very serious and difficult choices may need to be made. Working closely with yourself and your colleagues in Welsh Government, it is our fervent hope and wish that, together, we can engage and work towards a meaningful and enduring platform upon which to build a more secure future recognising the central role Universities play in our economic recovery.

To facilitate and focus our discussion on 3 May, it might be helpful therefore to highlight what appear to us to be some of these critical issues.

- the likely continuation of current-fee levels for the foreseeable future, against the rising cost base of our institutions;
- heavy dependence on international students in our funding models, and the use of such volatile revenues to cross-subsidise other core activities, notably research;
- the increasingly competitive university environment, both within the UK and globally;
- research and innovation funding, which is lagging well behind other jurisdictions and impacts on our competitiveness and our ability to support the WG innovation agenda;
- staff workload and pressures - not only as a function of the cost of living increases but of the impact on staff/student ratios as student numbers grow to mitigate the decrease in real terms of tuition fees
- the impact of cost pressures on the overall student experience/satisfaction as reflected in continuation and completion rates and their health and mental wellbeing;
- our ability to extend our universities' roles in respect of social inclusion, widening access, the journey towards net zero, the promotion of 'place' and our wider contribution to the Future Generation of Wales Act.

There will doubtless be other areas which we can usefully discuss. Your insight and guidance on how we might best approach such matters will be most welcome. We look forward very much to meeting you on 3 May.

With our very good wishes,

Chairs of Universities Wales.