

Office of the Equalities and Social Justice Committee
Senedd
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

10 February 2026

Dear Members of the Equalities and Social Justice Committee,

Re: Welsh Colleges new approach to Recognising Prior Learning

I am writing to highlight the innovative developments taking place in Welsh Further Education Colleges regarding the recognition of prior learning, especially for learners with additional learning needs (ALN). This was recently highlighted in the [European Lifelong Learning Magazine](#). Wales is pioneering a fresh, learner focussed approach that prioritises independent living skills and personal growth over the traditional qualifications. Despite significant challenges, including high levels of poverty and a substantial population of individuals with disabilities, the new framework places learners at the heart of further education and aims to equip them for autonomous, fulfilling lives.

Recent changes, driven by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (ALNET) Act, have encouraged Welsh colleges to shift from a qualifications centred system towards a more individualistic curriculum. This curriculum now emphasises skills that matter in everyday life, such as community participation, health and wellbeing, independent living, and employability. Colleges are using baseline assessments to understand individual learner needs and aspirations, building tailored pathways that genuinely support each student's journey.

The approach is being accredited by the RARPA (Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement) framework, which replaces traditional accreditation with a focus on measuring real progress and achievement. While there is still work to be done to achieve consistency throughout all colleges, significant strides have been made, and Wales is now recognised as a leader in inclusive education practices. Staff training in inclusive teaching skills is ongoing, with a commitment to stretch and challenge all



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learners, ensuring that their potential is realised and not limited by repetitive or basic tasks.

For example, small projects such as the Neuro Tech course at Coleg Cambria providing personalised learning environments for young people with autism. These efforts highlight the importance of tailoring education to individual needs and aspirations, rather than relying solely on diagnosis or standardised pathways.

To highlight some of these positive changes, I would like to extend an invitation to the Committee to visit your local Further Education college and witness these practices firsthand and the impact it has on the learners and their communities. We believe that seeing our curriculum and inclusive teaching strategies in action will offer valuable insights into the potential for further progress across Wales. Your engagement and support will be crucial as we continue to strive for educational excellence and equality for all learners.

In the next Senedd term we are asking the next Welsh Government, working with Medr, to ensure that colleges receive sufficient funding to support learners with ALN. Maintaining staffing levels in colleges is critical to manage the increased workload as a result of statutory duties under ALNET. Projections from college ALN leads indicate additional costs exceeding £3million for 2025/26. Without sustained investment, the quality and sustainability of inclusive provision are at risk

Please let us know a convenient date if you would like to visit to your local further education college, and we look forward to welcoming you as a group, or as individual members, to one of our colleges to discuss these developments further.

Kindest regards,



Rachel Cable
Director of Policy and Public Affairs
Colegau Cymru

