

23 February 2026

Buffy Williams MS
Chair
Children and Young People's Committee

Dear Chair,

I agreed to write to the Committee on a number of matters following my attendance at our annual scrutiny session on 15 January 2026.

Update on the situation with unplaced learners at Coleg Cambria

I wrote to the Committee on 7 January 2026 to provide information on the increase in participation in full time education in further education colleges in the 2025/26 academic year.

At our scrutiny session, the Committee asked for an update on the one remaining waiting list at Coleg Cambria. Through our regular engagement, we understand 47 learners on the initial waiting list were either placed or are no longer looking for a place. Coleg Cambria have signposted alternative provision to all learners on the waiting list and is no longer in contact with the remaining learners.

More information on the reasons why the proportion of learners who want to undertake an apprenticeship is disproportionate to the number of learners who end up doing one

Medr was pleased to [respond](#) to the Committee's recent report on routes into post-16 education and training. Our response highlighted our work to better understand the factors that influence both learner choice and employer capacity to offer apprenticeships and ensure apprenticeship provision is responsive to the needs of learners, employers and the wider economy.

Our response also recognised the need for improved advice and guidance to address the gap between learners' interest in apprenticeships and their participation. We highlighted that when the proportion of learners undertaking an apprenticeship between age 16 and 19 is taken into account, the gap between aspiration and participation is notably smaller. This highlights the importance of continuing to support a variety of routes into apprenticeships, recognising that learners access apprenticeships through a range of pathways.

Rydym yn croesawu 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 correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence in Welsh will be answered in Welsh, and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

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On 17 February 2026, we [published](#) the outcomes of our recent consultation on the new Apprenticeship Programme in Wales. Respondents highlighted the importance of flexibility to enable learners of all ages to access opportunities for skills development and meet skills needs; the need for improved guidance and wraparound support for learners throughout their journey; the need to enhance employer awareness and capability by providing clearer information, supporting wider employer participation (especially SMEs); and more mentoring and collaboration to improve confidence and retention.

We will continue to explore what additional support employers need to be able to offer apprenticeships, including the availability, accessibility and appropriateness of information available to them as we develop the new programme.

Information on how many of the Tata Steel employees who were supported through public skills funding went on to secure employment or progress to other positive routes on completion of their learning

It is too soon for the destinations data for this particular cohort of learners to be in our datasets. The data covers 2023/24 onwards and, given that the provision is still ongoing, it is not yet included in the Longitudinal Education Outcomes dataset. However, we will be publishing Personal Learning Account performance measures for the first time in March at which point we will be able to take a closer look at this data.

We know that these short professional development opportunities and industry-recognised qualifications support individuals to upskill or reskill, enhance their career prospects within their current role or to retrain and move into a new career pathway. We have various case studies which help demonstrate this if the Committee would find it helpful to see them.

Analysis of Further Education enrolment trends

We continue to monitor enrolment trends, and recently published data on [Progression from Year 11 to tertiary education, August 2017 to January 2025](#). The provisional proportion of learners progressing from Year 11 to tertiary education was 90% in 2024/25, unchanged from the previous three years.

We have also committed to introducing a new practice of publishing earlier provisional [data for enrolments in FE, work based learning and adult community learning](#). This publication was updated in February 2026 to include provisional full-time figures for learner numbers in 2025/26.

We will continue to monitor this closely to understand trends in learner participation and evaluate the impact of our work to promote participation in post-16 education.

I hope the Committee finds this additional information helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information or clarification.

Yours sincerely,



James Owen
Chief Executive