

## Finance Committee

### Higher Education Funding Inquiry

Paper to note: Update note

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Date of paper

25 September 2013

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#### Related Information

National Assembly for Wales, [Consultation on Higher Education Funding](#), 8 July 2013

National Assembly for Wales, [Higher Education Funding Inquiry - HE student questionnaire](#), 8 July 2013

National Assembly for Wales, [Higher Education Funding Inquiry - Year12 and Year 13 questionnaire](#), 8 July 2013

This briefing has been produced by the Research Service for use by Finance Committee.

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Research  
Service

Committee Reference: FIN(4) 14-13

1. Aim

This paper provides an update on the progress of the committee's inquiry in to HE Funding.

2. Background

The purpose of this inquiry is to consider the funding of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Wales, the financial impact of the Welsh Government's tuition fee grant policy on HEIs and students in Wales, and whether the Welsh Government is delivering value for money in this area.

The terms of reference for this inquiry were agreed at the Finance Committee meeting on 24 April 2013. The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) also gave a private briefing to the Finance Committee on 10 July 2013 outlining how Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Wales are funded.

3. Consultation work undertaken to date

To date the following consultation activities have taken place or are planned to take place:

*A. Organisational questionnaire*

An email inviting organisations to respond to the inquiry was sent out in early July and corresponding information was placed on the Assembly website. A reminder email was sent out on 13 September 2013 and we would expect replies to arrive close to the deadline on 27 September 2013.

*B. Questionnaire for students in Higher Education Institutions*

Paper and online versions of a questionnaire have been distributed to students in years 1 and 2 at HEIs within a 100 mile radius of the Wales/England border. Various communication channels have been used by the outreach team to publicise the questionnaire including the Assembly's presence at summer shows, the Assembly's Facebook and Twitter accounts, direct contact is being made with HEIs and the third sector as well as attending open days and fresher's fairs at HEIs. The questionnaire was launched in early July and is due to close on 25 October 2013. To date 187 responses have been received and the target number of responses is 400.

*C. Questionnaire for students in years 12 and 13*

Paper and online versions of a questionnaire have been distributed to students in years 12 and 13 in Welsh schools. The same communication channels have been used to promote this questionnaire including targeting students who are on Education visits to the Senedd. The questionnaire was launched in early July and is due to close on 25 October 2013. To date 330 responses have been received and the target number of responses is 400.



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#### 4. Future work

##### *D. Results*

We will analyse and report on the findings from the organisational questionnaire and the responses to both student questionnaires for the Finance Committee's meeting on 7 November 2013.

##### *E. Web chat*

Outreach aim to recruit HE students for two web chats. One group will be made up from Welsh students studying at English HEIs and the other from Welsh students studying in Welsh HEIs. There will be a maximum of six students in each group and the sessions will be led by AMs and facilitated by Outreach and the Research Service. The aim is to conduct the web chats towards the end of November.

##### *F. Witness sessions*

i) We intend to write to the Minister for Education and Skills with some provisional questions arising from the consultation in order to receive a response by early November.

Committee agreed to consider consultation responses before deciding on witnesses. Provisionally, we have set aside time on three dates to consider evidence. However, no witnesses have been contacted.

ii) 13<sup>th</sup> November – e.g. Universities with a research focus, other universities, HEW and HEFCW

iii) 27 November – e.g. Student Loans Company / Careers Wales or other stakeholders

iv) 12 December – (probably) Minister for Education and Skills

##### *G. Final report*

Final report to be written by the end of January/ early February.