

Joint Cross Party Group – Cross Party Group on Universities and Cross Party Group on Further Education and Skills

Wednesday 12 July 2023 / 12.30pm - 1.30pm (In person and online)

Minutes

Hefin David MS (Chair) welcomed all guests to the meeting.

1. AGM - Cross Party Group on Further Education and Skills

John Griffiths MS was elected as Chair.

Colleges Wales were elected as secretariat.

2. Universities Wales

Professor Maria Hinfelaar provided an update on Universities Wales' view on Hefin David MS's report.

It was noted that collaboration between FE and HE should be welcomed, and CTER presents opportunities for closer, clever working.

3. Colleges Wales

Mark Jones provided an update on behalf of Colleges Wales, and noted the commission presents new opportunities.

It was noted that Hefin David MS's reports are clear and unambiguous, and there are some areas where progress is needed, and we need to look forward and unpack.

4. Hefin David MS

Hefin David MS presented his Transitions to Higher Education report.

5. Open discussion

Professor Cara Aitcheson noted that work on degree apprenticeships has been successful, there is more work to be done on this topic, and a chance to work together.

Hefin David MS noted the good work of Cardiff MET and USW, and flagged the importance of vertical alignment.

Eliane (Qualifications Wales), noted that there would be opportunities to work closer between schools and Further Education.

Dafydd, Coleg Cymraeg, noted his optimism about the partnership between FE and HE. It was suggested schools and colleges funding is very competitive, and this is an increasing challenge.

Professor Cara Aitcheson raised the issue of tuition fees, and the challenges facing universities in terms of funding.

Hefin David MS suggested that the reliance on international students was not a long term solution.

Lisa Childs suggested the relationship between schools and colleges has changes, language is key and parity of esteem is crucial.

John Griffiths MS suggested that the conversation and dialogue should continue, and issues are not going to be solved overnight. He noted it would be good to have another discussion six months or so - Hefin to bring back to Senedd in New Year, and perhaps invite Minister.

5. Meeting close

The next meeting date TBC.