

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Ymchwiliad i Effaith Brexit ar Addysg Uwch ac Addysg Bellach: Cylch Gorchwyl | Inquiry on the Impact of Brexit on Higher and Further Education

IB-17

Ymateb gan: Coleg Nyrsio Brenhinol Cymru  
Response from: Royal College of Nursing Wales

I am grateful for the opportunity to make a late submission to the inquiry that your Committee is currently undertaking into the impact of Brexit on Higher and Further Education. As the Royal College of Nursing Wales, we have a number of serious concerns about the possible impact that Brexit could have on the health and social care sectors in Wales, and associated sectors such as Higher Education and research. We welcome therefore all opportunities to debate and highlight these issues.

There are significant potential impacts that Brexit could have on research collaboration & funding in Wales. The impact of withdrawing EU funding from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) could have serious implications for Welsh Universities' ability to recruit and retain high calibre staff. This is also true for nursing higher education; there are currently a number of extremely well-qualified and experienced staff delivering the nursing degree at universities across Wales, and any reduction in funding or opportunities to collaborate on research projects risks losing these members of staff. This would of course have a knock-on effect on the quality of the course and teaching being offered by universities in Wales.

Similarly, clinical research is undertaken as a partnership between universities and the NHS often across many EU countries. We are concerned that Wales will lose opportunities to participate and lead this type of research if the funding and/or opportunities for collaborative research and academic exchange cease to continue. Furthermore, international collaboration and exchange increases the speed and likelihood of finding the solutions to global societal challenges, as well as adopting insight and innovation at faster rates. Through collaborative research and academic exchange, it is well evidenced that international research collaboration increases research excellence and mobility increases researcher productivity.

It is fair to say that the majority of discussions around Brexit to date have focussed on the economy, trade, agriculture and fisheries. Whilst we are not suggesting that these issues are not of paramount importance, it is vital that the focus is widened to include the full scope of possible implications of Brexit. The impacts upon health, social care and education will be significant, and they need appropriate attention now in order to prepare for the future.