



undeb cenedlaethol myfyrwyr cymru

1st March 2012

FW: P-04-361 Free bus passes for students under 25 and in full time education

Dear William,

NUS Wales has been supporting FE students up and down the country to lobby and campaign for better transport. This is because over the past year we have seen FE students' financial support coming under stack from all angles. What's more, as cuts start to bite in local councils, we are seeing transport subsidies for young people slashed or removed completely and even the loss of some bus services.

All this combined puts us in a situation where students are facing increasingly insurmountable barriers to even arrive at the college gates.

The Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010 saw the CLG Local Authority budget face a phased 7.5% decrease in budgets between 2010 and 2015. Understandably, this has led to cuts in local authorities as they try to respond to such a decrease in funding. This has equated to loss of jobs, services and support across the full gambit of local authority departments.

Given the flexibility of requirements on local authorities to meet the needs of young peoples' transport costs, this has been an area we have quickly seen become one of close scrutiny as councils look to limit costs. However, we know that this could have disastrous consequences for people's education:

- Lack of access to transport

For young people in rural areas, there is already a huge issue with already limited services being cut or removed completely, limited students' access to college and activities outside



the classroom. In cities, though transport links may be more numerous, the cost can be so prohibitive so as to still leave young people's transport options very limited.

- **Lack of financial support**

With transport costs ever increasing, and pots of funding ever-diminishing, there is also a real threat of people not being able to afford services where they do remain. This may result in people opting for less safe transport options or travel routes, or having to make difficult decision about what they can afford in connection to college and what they cannot. In some circumstances, it may lead to people feeling they cannot afford to attend every day.

- **Available to all that need it**

We would like to raise the point that significant number of FE students are over the age of 25 and/or studying part time. These cohorts of students are vital to the wellbeing of society and the economy and as such should also have access to similar transport subsidies.

NUS Wales is calling for a system whereby all students can access the appropriate education that benefits them. As such, it is vital that the lack, or expense of transport is not prohibitive to this.

We look forward to working with you closely on the matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Raechel Matthey', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Raechel Matthey
NUS Wales Deputy President