

Llyr Gruffydd AM  
Chair, Finance Committee, National Assembly for Wales,  
Pierhead Street  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

23 September 2019

Dear Mr Gruffydd,

### **Welsh Government Draft Budget Proposals 2020-21**

ColegauCymru welcomes the opportunity to respond to the National Assembly for Wales' Finance Committee to inform their scrutiny of the Welsh Government's 2020-21 Draft Budget proposals. ColegauCymru is a post-compulsory education charity, representing the thirteen further education (FE) colleges and FE institutions in Wales. We promote the public benefit of post compulsory education and learning.

Wales and the UK is currently experiencing a climate of immense uncertainty, political as well as financial, making it difficult to provide detailed comment on future budgets when these may be subject to significant change. However, ColegauCymru would like to highlight the ongoing pressure on the Further Education budget in recent years as colleges seek to support learners of all types, ranging from traditional 16-19 cohort to adult learners looking to upskill or retrain.

Efforts to support learners are complicated not just by the limited amount of funding received by Further Education institutions but also by the way in which that funding is received. One-year settlements do not allow for longer-term planning. While welcome, various additional 'one-off' pots of money, that can involve fairly complicated and time-consuming bidding processes, are not always the most efficient way to deliver effective support and provision. Such funds do not provide certainty and a secure basis for planning.

Issues of particular financial concern to the Further Education sector include the ongoing matters of fair pay and pay settlements, meeting pension obligations, and ensuring that CPD



needs are addressed to support staff. The latter is particularly important in light of the new Curriculum for Wales, the Additional Learning Needs reforms, and as digital skills become ever more central. Any future Welsh Government budget needs to show clearly how it will take these issues into account.

ColegauCymru would be happy to meet the Finance Committee to discuss these issues in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Rachel Bowen  
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