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Llywodraeth Cymru
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Consultation – summary of responses

Public Good and a Prosperous Wales

Public Good and a Prosperous Wales – Building a reformed PCET system

Date of Issue: December 2017

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Overview

Summary of responses to the Welsh Government's consultation on *Public Good and a Prosperous Wales – Building a reformed PCET system*

Action required
Further information

None. For information only.
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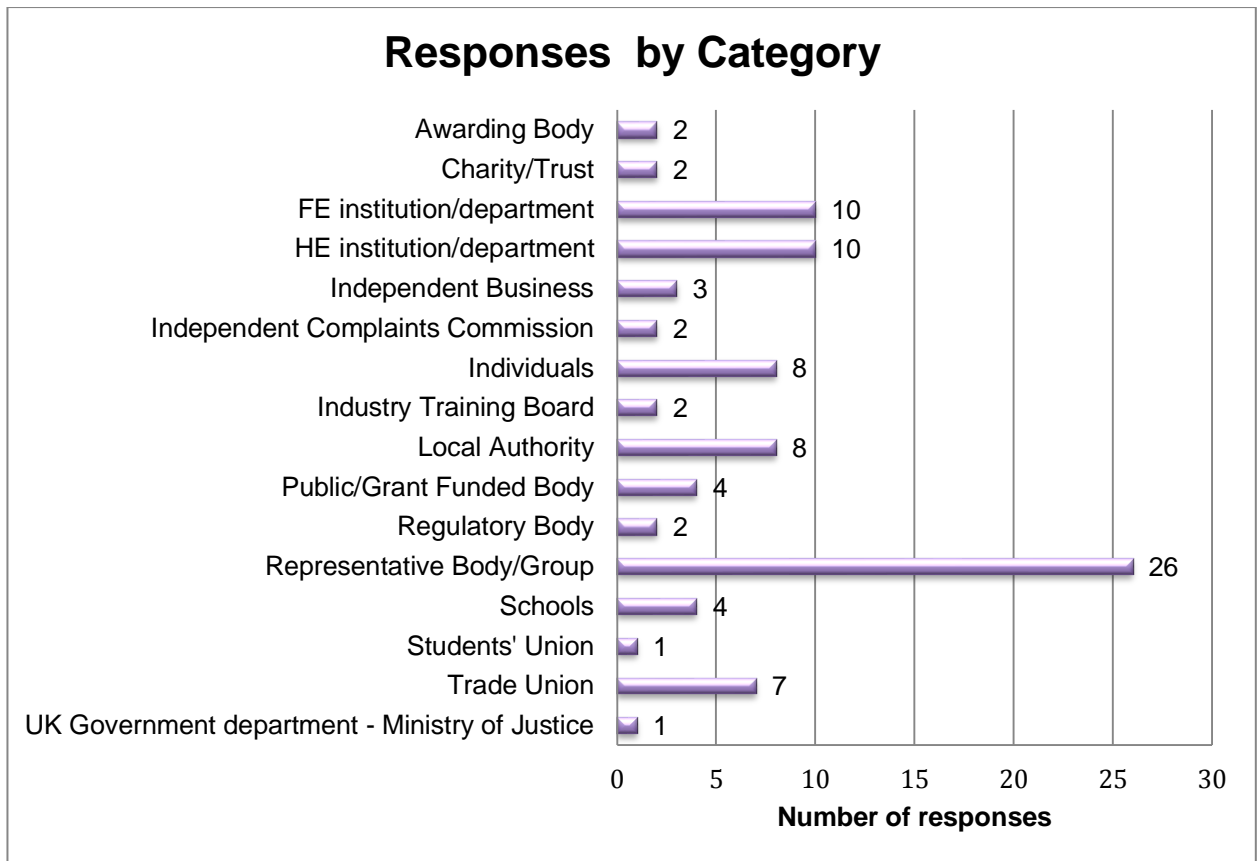
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Summary

1. The Welsh Government consulted on proposals to reform the Post Compulsory Education and Training Sector in Wales. The Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams launched the consultation on 20 June with the proposals having been developed from Professor Hazelkorn's key recommendations. This was open until 23 October and received 92 written responses.
<https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/reformed-post-compulsory-education-and-training-system>
2. The previous Welsh Government had commissioned Professor Hazelkorn to undertake a review of post-compulsory education and training (PCET) because of concerns about how the sector was governed. She found that the PCET system in Wales was not sufficiently learner focussed and did not achieve best value for money. Several organisations have a role in funding, monitoring and regulating the various elements of the sector, which includes further education (FE), higher education (HE), work-based learning (WBL) and adult community learning (ACL). It was felt this was creating complexity, confusion and potential waste. She emphasised the need for the PCET sector to avoid operating as several discreet sectors in competition with each other and advocated collaboration and partnership working between PCET providers of all types, to support learners to reach their potential and to achieve greater alignment with the needs of the labour market.
3. Her findings were contained in *Towards 2030 - A Framework for Building a World-class Post-Compulsory Education System for Wales* which can be found on the Welsh Government website via the following link:
<https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/reformed-post-compulsory-education-and-training-system>
4. **Figure 1** illustrates the responses received by group. The largest number of responses came from representative bodies/groups, jointly followed by HE and FE institutions or departments. A brief summary of the major themes and headlines within the responses is contained in this document. The more detailed analysis will form part of the next stage of policy development and thinking so the Welsh Government has not formally responded to the points raised here.

Figure 1:



5. In addition to the written consultation, Welsh Government hosted three roadshows around Wales where key stakeholders fed in their views and issues in through a workshop format. The learner voice was considered at special sessions within two Skills Cymru events. There were representatives from across the sectors at these too. Some young people under 16 also took part and offered their views in response to key questions. Summaries of the headline responses within these events are captured in **Annexes B** and **C**.
6. A specific consultation aimed at young people and protected groups was also commissioned. This consisted of 13 interactive workshops across Wales, involving almost 200 learners. Details of the findings of these events are published separately and can be accessed here: <https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/reformed-post-compulsory-education-and-training-system>. The workshops gathered information in a non standardised way, meaning statistical analysis is not appropriate, but it does offer a rich qualitative narrative with some useful insights from those directly affected.

Our Questions:

Strategic Planning & Outcome Agreements

Question 1:

Do you agree the Commission should have a role in strategic planning at national level across the PCET system?

Question 2:

Should Outcome Agreements form the basis of the Commission's strategic planning relationship with institutions and providers? If so, what steps could be taken to ensure that Outcome Agreements do not encourage short-term thinking by institutions?

Question 1:

There was a broad consensus from respondents to this question. They raised a number of issues to be taken into account when considering future strategic planning and some of those are outlined here.

- There needs to be a consistent and coordinated approach to strategic planning which should be based on sound evidence taking into account Wales' social, economic and skills needs, and the Well Being and Future Generations Act (WBFGA);
- Learners must be integral partners in creating a national strategic plan. Strategic oversight must not adversely affect the student voice.
- Recognise that not all learners will progress in a linear way and that increasingly individuals will need and want to access learning at different points in their lives should shape the work of the commission. There is a potential role for the Commission in promoting information, advice and guidance (IAG) around learner pathways.
- Need to be sure planning is strategic and not too operational; to be based on an '*enabling partnerships*' model; planning needs to be learner focussed (covering all ages), not subject focussed; no micro managing; avoid using it as a blunt instrument which does not take account of courses' subtle differences;
- The Commission could provide additional support to providers to deliver their objectives, rather than being directive, and use its unique position to promote partnership and reduce competition between further and higher education, whilst actively promoting cooperation between elements of the sector. Necessary that the Commission's strategic planning body has the right knowledge and experience of pedagogy, both academic and vocational. Crucial the autonomy of HEIs is maintained.
- National planning should be informed by regional priorities and recommendations, taking into account local differences and strengths. Be careful to avoid unintended consequences; avoid cutting across existing partnerships.
- Need for Commission to have control of funding to develop coherent & deliverable strategic plans.
- Care needs to be taken with any subject rationalisation that could undermine Universities' ability to compete nationally/internationally for students. Ensure Wales's links to the Rest of the UK (RUK) are accounted for acknowledging that Wales cannot work in isolation.

- Needs to consider alignment with skills strategies of other UK nations to allow transferability for learners and ensure consistency maintained.
- Needs a robust mechanism for consulting with business sectors (employers), students (and potential students), learner providers and Regional Learning and Skills Partnership
- The period covered by strategic plan needs to be properly considered - should use the opportunity to make planning more long term; increasingly regions of Wales are planning for economic development, including skills, on a fifteen to twenty year basis, in line with the requirements of their respective city or growth deals.
- Could be a good opportunity to create conditions for agility and responsiveness in Welsh PCET sector, so sector able to compete and can capitalise on national/global/economic and social opportunities post-Brexit.
- Need to recognise particular conditions for some sectors – e.g. HE and some FE will work cross-border; HE compete nationally and internationally.
- Some suggested that the new organisation could be bolted onto HEFCW's existing structure (recognising HEFCW's new powers through HE (Wales) Act 2015), including inserting a research committee into their ambit.

Question 2:

Generally there was a *qualified* acceptance of this proposal, dependant on the nature and detail of the agreements, which was not yet available.

- Strong feeling these could not run in conjunction with Fee and Access Plans as this would create too much of an administrative burden, though there was a view that they could potentially evolve from the plans over time.
- Any OAs would need to be flexible and proportionate, made in conjunction with institutions and the Commission, and based on outcomes that are measurable, realistic and achievable; genuinely agreed by both parties, scrutinised independently; tailored to specific institutions, taking account of their learner profile, particular identity etc.
- Agreements could also require and challenge providers to think and work beyond their own sector. These could genuinely ensure the learner was at the centre of the system. They should not be overly (if at all) reliant on recruitment and retention data, much more focus on quality of provision.
- Not all funding can be based on OAs; fee income should not, (and possibly *could not*) be tied to OAs.
- OAs could have a role as a tripartite agreement between Commission, providers and students to ensure learners are at the centre. OAs should not limit ambitions of the sector or preclude the sector from pursuing opportunities. Competition needs to be acknowledged.
- There was a view that well designed OAs can be effective, but an OA system used as a tool to change priorities quickly within PCET year on year are unlikely to be effective.
- Several respondents stated that legislation should not prescribe too closely what the nature of OAs should be as this would prevent the necessary flexibility.
- OAs need to include regional and spatial goals, e.g. for Mid Wales region. Need to ensure equality of access to provision for learners in sparsely populated areas of Wales.
- A number of respondents noted the Scottish Funding Council model of OAs, and proposed a review of this, but noting a need to consider the Welsh context.

Ways to avoid short-term thinking

- Longer- term planning focus, with planning related to training needs based on industry and effective labour market intelligence to identify skills shortages and help inform courses required.
- Support from clients and developers of large infrastructure projects to share manpower forecasts at an early stage to assist Commission's strategic planning.
- Outcomes should be based on supporting and improving learners and employability not just qualifications based.
- OAs could potentially lead to selective recruitment and short-term thinking to detriment of learners' education, impacting negatively on Welsh economy. System needs to be sufficiently agile to respond to changes.
- They could be used to create longer-term planning and if applied should span at least 3, but preferably 5 years.

Concerns about Outcome Agreements

- A number of respondents felt that more information was needed on the detail of the proposed Outcome Agreements, how they would be used and the behaviours they would drive before the option could be supported.
- Some reservations were expressed by the HE sector respondents, including some evidence suggesting that Outcome Agreements have been shown to be ineffective elsewhere.
- The schools that responded felt Outcome Agreements might not be suitable for all elements of the PCET sector.
- Concerns were expressed re any impact on institutional autonomy and academic freedom.
- OAs should not be used to achieve institutional profiling or to impose curriculum or portfolio rationalisation.
- There could be better and less resource intensive ways of managing relationships between new body and providers (no examples given of what).
- OAs could be effective in context of specific funding streams but not as a means of managing relationship between Commission and learner providers.
- If Outcome Agreements included a system of 'payment by results' this could hamper the wider educational mission of providers and be contrary to the new 'Curriculum for Wales' within pre-16 sectors.

A Single Funding Body

Question 3:

Do you agree that funding to the Commission should be dependent upon the production of a strategic plan approved by Welsh Ministers?

Question 4:

Do you agree that a provider's eligibility for funding should be conditional on producing an Outcome Agreement that reflects relevant priorities in the Strategic Plan?

Question 5:

Do you agree that the levels of funding should be dependent, in any way, upon a provider's performance against its Outcome Agreement?

Question 6:

Do you think that the Commission should be empowered to make recommendations to the institution, and/or to the Welsh Government, where an institution is at serious financial risk?

Question 7:

Do you think that where it judges that an institution has become financially non-viable, the Commission should be empowered to make appropriate recommendations to the Welsh Government? What safeguards may be required?

Question 3:

Respondents were generally supportive of Welsh Ministers being required to approve any strategic plan and funding being dependent upon it, provided it had been subject to consultation with stakeholders. Some respondents suggested content which should be in the plan.

- This proposition could be a logical starting point. Could provide accountability for public funding; would need to be agreed by stakeholders prior to WG approval. Funding should run along similar timescales to plans and be medium to long term.
- Would provide oversight on the key objectives within the remit of the Commission that reflect Wales' social and economic needs, and take into account communities in Wales and issues highlighted by other reports. A strategic plan overseen by Welsh Ministers should enable the Commission's work to be linked to the wider programme for Government.
- Strategic plan could provide clarity to stakeholders on the Commission's priorities and activities and its long term vision for PCET. A high-level vision needs to be developed by Government in association with the PCET sector and in consultation with other stakeholders to enable the Commission to form its strategic plan. It would then be appropriate for Welsh Ministers to give their approval.
- Need to ensure that the strategic plan contained specific measurable objectives and a review and evaluation mechanism. Ministers should take advice and guidance from the expertise within the Commission, during the approval process.
- A Committee within the National Assembly for Wales should be involved in the review of the plan and subsequent funding.

Question 4:

There was no real consensus from respondents on this issue. Clarification was sought by some on which type of funding was being referred to, and the exact nature of the Outcome Agreements and they were undecided as a result.

- An appropriate balance needs to be struck between providing a degree of financial certainty for providers and their students, and the need to secure meaningful progress against agreed objectives.
- Funding of registered providers could be conditional on other factors, and required deliverables, which could inform an outcome agreement process. The Commission should have the ability to fund outside of an outcome agreement process (e.g. for strategic developments or for certain types of provision).
- A mixed model of core funding and outcome-linked funding would be one way to ensure stability but also impact.
- Focus should be on relevant, high-quality education rather than bidding for money annually.
- Need to recognise the unique geographical areas that some providers cover, and loss of funding from some areas need risk assessment to consider the impact on particular groups.
- Strategic plan and any outcome agreement should be developed co-productively with a wide range of stakeholders that includes learners and employers.
- Outcomes should be linked to longer-term impacts, not be solely reliant on short-term measurable targets and achievements.

Question 5:

Whilst the majority of respondents recognised the need for providers to be accountable for their funding, they also discussed genuine concerns about too much dependence being placed on Outcome Agreements. Issues raised here were similar to those raised in question 2 about Outcome Agreements in general.

- Those who do support the approach do so in principle as long as performance measures are realistic and adjusted for the provider's local and regional context. There was also reference to consideration of the cost of training for providers, recognising some subjects were more expensive to provide, but that this should be balanced against contribution to the wider economy. Others felt Outcome Agreements should only be used for specific projects or areas of work.
- There was a strong message, particularly amongst HE sector respondents that incentives work better than penalties. The Commission must ensure that hypothecated funding streams are configured so that they recognise differentiation in mission across the different elements of PCET (HE, FE, WBL etc.) and the machinery for that funding should be left to the Commission to determine and not be so tightly defined that flexibility to support new and emerging activity is lost.
- Setting of performance measures should be developed in close consultation with providers first. Funding based on successful outcomes will not always mean that the best quality, or the most innovative provision, receives appropriate financial backing.
- If performance is linked to funding consideration needs to be given to short and longer term outcomes, with an element of core funding to ensure the stability and predictability in the system.
- Clarity would be needed on the interpretation of performance, with leeway if institutions fall short of targets due to changes to learners' circumstances, or sudden changes in regional employment that impacts providers.

- Several respondents noted the European University Association DEFINE Project report¹, which recommended that policy makers do not use performance contracts as a sole method of funding, and that they do not top slice core funding for performance contract funding, but instead use it for additional activities.

Question 6:

Consensus that action would be required in certain circumstances to safeguard public funds and protect learners – these circumstances needed to be properly defined. A few felt this was the role of WG, not the Commission. The general view was expressed that learners needed protecting but that Institutions also needed to be consulted and given a chance to recover.

- A potential way forward would be to use the existing processes contained in the Higher Education Wales Act (2015), HEFCW developed a relevant policy such as the Financial Management Code and the Statement of Intervention as there had been recent consultation with the HE sector and other stakeholders in the fine-tuning of these policy instruments, which have only just been adopted.
- More detail around the legal status of any recommendations the Commission might make is required.
- Feeling that the situation should not be allowed to become serious and that action should be taken at an earlier stage if necessary.
- There needs to be balance with institutional autonomy and consideration of implications to private training companies.
- Definition of 'institutions' needs to be clearly set out (e.g. what of LAs and their roles with Sixth Forms), along with what constitutes 'serious financial risk'.

Question 7:

Respondents from the HE sector stated that current arrangements are sufficient and fit for purpose – could be transferred across though it was noted that HE (Wales) Act 2015 does not include specifically designated providers and part time courses.

- In HE, HEIs' own institutional governance plays a prominent role in safeguarding students and wider public interests, this should be reflected in reformed regulatory system. Continuity of service for learners needed to be ensured, and consideration should be given to any impact on local area.
- Action by the Government should be seen as a measure of last resort, particularly any steps relating to any (future) ability to revoke degree awarding titles or to dissolve institutions. In any such cases, the Commission's recommendations should be accompanied by plans, written in consultation with students, on how it will protect students' entitlements.
- Need for appropriate disclosure of information so that institutions can challenge Commission's judgement. Non-viability would need definition, with sensible indicators set by experts in consultation, over a given period of time.
- Types of safeguards proposed included:
 - Due diligence checks on institutions supply chain
 - Awarding Body reports/input
 - Ensuring financial viability
 - Appropriate governance arrangements

¹ [http://www.eua.be/activities-services/projects/past-projects/governance-autonomy-and-funding/designing-strategies-for-efficient-funding-of-higher-education-in-europe-\(define\)](http://www.eua.be/activities-services/projects/past-projects/governance-autonomy-and-funding/designing-strategies-for-efficient-funding-of-higher-education-in-europe-(define))

- Using independent professional party to assess financial viability of 'riskier' providers.
- Specific sub-group of the Commission to deal with this issue and a sub-committee in Welsh Government.
- Potential involvement of Wales Audit Office.

Protecting the interests of learners in the PCET sector

Question 8:

Do you agree that the arrangements to protect learners studying at PCET providers in Wales need to be strengthened?

Question 9:

If yes, what arrangements should be put in place to support learners no longer able to continue on their course at their chosen provider because of the closure of the course, the closure of a campus or because of provider failure?

Question 10:

Should providers offering higher education courses that are designated for statutory student support in Wales be required to produce student protection plans within their Outcome Agreements?

Question 8:

- Legislation and risk needs to be proportionate and learner voice central. The learner should be at the heart of the system – most think the current HE arrangements had something to offer as the baseline – student representation on boards was widely supported. All needs to be formalised – strengthened across the sector.
- Some respondents felt there to be sufficient protection in HE and FE situations already but indicated there could be benefit in developing a consistent approach across all sectors.

Question 9:

- There was a strong view from respondents that any barrier caused by failure needs to be covered by the commission /new provider no learner should be disadvantaged in any way – whether this be travel costs or accessibility to provision.

Question 10:

- The majority of respondents agreed with the proposal but there was also a feeling that the protection should apply to all learners not just those on courses receiving student finance.
- There was no consensus around whether this should be part of an outcome agreement or not.
- The majority indicated that the most important factor was that learners need to know at the outset what the plan is. The HE model is worth developing in other contexts although there needs to be a proportionate response in terms of administration of this and there would need to be safeguards to prevent it becoming an overly burdensome task.

Supporting learners who wish to transfer between courses or providers

Question 11:

What support should be provided to learners wishing to change courses or provider?

Question 12:

What role, if any, should the new Commission have in ensuring arrangements are in place to facilitate student transfer arrangements and to promote awareness of these arrangements amongst learners?

Question 11:

- The strongest theme in response to this question was relating to providing thorough and independent advice and guidance to learners.
- Respondents were also keen to see a smooth transition for learners across the PCET sector.
- They attached importance to the sharing of data and prior learning across the sector.
- Data base of information – Commission could potentially have a brokerage function.
- Provision of advice and guidance needs strengthening.

Question 12:

- There was recognition of the complexities around awarding bodies' admissions requirements/timetabling etc.
- Commission should have oversight and include arrangements in outcome agreements.
- Commission should have a role in providing best practice guidance.

Managing Learner Complaints

Question 13:

Is there a need to introduce complaints resolution arrangements for learners in the PCET sector, who are currently unable to take their unresolved complaints to an independent body?

If yes, what complaint resolution arrangements should be put in place for learners across the PCET sector?

Question 13:

The majority of respondents agree there should be one single body that covers complaints across all provision. However, there was also recognition that different approaches may be required for different elements of provision.

- One size won't fit all, but the underlying principle of equity for treatment of learners needs to be established.
- The feedback from schools was largely that complaints should be dealt with under the governance arrangements of the school, Local Authority (LA), Welsh Government (WG) and then formal legal proceedings, in that order .
- Elements of the current complaints system are seen as unfair to learners since different arrangements are in place across PCET.
- Some consideration should be given as to whether existing arrangements could be extended and/or strengthened.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Question 14:

What models could be used by the Commission for a Quality Assurance Framework encompassing all types of provision?

Question 15:

Should quality enhancement be a key feature of the Quality Assurance Framework operated by the Commission?

Question 14:

There were a range of responses to this question. Some respondents would prefer not to change current arrangements as they felt the QA regimes were already in place and working well. Others felt that whilst a common QA regime would be desirable it would be difficult to achieve in practice since different parts of this sector are too diverse to have a common QA regime.

- There was a suggestion of a task and finish group to focus on the possibility of developing a common QA regime for PCET, looking at the approach of QAA in Scotland as well as the work of QAA and Estyn on degree apprenticeships.
- Could potentially keep distinct QA processes for the different sectors but give TERCW an oversight role setting some of the criteria. They could be involved in setting the Estyn remit in the future.
- Any model will need to be workable for schools, (if 6th forms are to be included), colleges, work based learning settings and universities. A common set of desired outcomes could be agreed.

Question 15:

Respondents were largely in favour and made the following points:

- This could be a good opportunity for engaging directly with the workforce as part of their professional learning in this process and in line with the recently revised professional standards for teachers and those working in FE and WBL.
- A framework which enabled teachers and practitioners to engage formatively with the challenges could be useful as the Commission begins its work.
- Some unions considered the focus should be more on enhancing inputs such as better professional learning for lecturers rather than measuring outputs/outcomes.

Financial and Governance Assurance

Question 16:

We welcome views on how Welsh apprenticeships should, in the future, fit within the role of the Commission. In particular, we would welcome views on what, if any, changes could be made to the Welsh apprenticeship system provided for in the 2009 Act.

Question 16:

Respondents were in favour overall but stressed the need to take account of cross-border issues.

- Suggested replacing the current procurement approach with one of registering providers.
- The Apprenticeship Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 would require amending for this to work.
- Suggested that TERCW could become an equivalent of the English Institute for Apprentices.
- Frameworks would need to be reviewed and rationalised to ensure they meet the needs of businesses and the whole PCET sector. An annual review involving key businesses from each sector could be valuable.
- Some respondents made the point that apprenticeships are actually 'work with some training' as opposed to 'education with some work experience'.
- Reference to *Remaking Apprenticeships (2015)*² was made, and a need to take it into account in this work.

Management of Performance and Risk

Question 17:

Do you consider that the proposals above for monitoring performance and achieving accountability across the PCET system are sufficient and appropriate?

Question 18:

What more might need to be done to secure the sustainable operation of the PCET system in Wales over the longer term?

Question 17:

Almost all were in favour of the proposals with a caveat from several respondents that the data should not be used to create a 'league table' of institutions.

Question 18:

The main response was the need for the system to enable long-term planning. There was a suggestion the Commission should encourage collaboration, see where there are gaps and new providers are needed but also co-ordinates provider discussions where duplication exists to resolve this.

² <https://www.cityandguilds.com/news/February-2015/remaking-apprenticeships>

Research and Innovation

Question 19:

Do you agree that there should be a committee of the Commission to be known as Research & Innovation Wales?

Question 20:

Do you agree that Research & Innovation Wales should operate as set out above to develop research and innovation capacity and capability in Wales?

Question 19:

Overall the consensus was that a committee with the proposed purpose should be created and form part of the new Commission. There was felt to be potential for this to be an effective way of Wales being represented in the rest of the UK and internationally, but whilst there were a large number of potential benefits cited there were also concerns and issues which would need further consideration. Respondents welcomed the renewed statement of commitment to institutional autonomy and the Haldane principles. There were a range of views about the status of the committee. There was a suggestion the committee should have its own identity and statutory role but not a separate governance structure or status. Others voiced concerns about the RIW operating separate governance, steering and management structures to the Commission.

Perceived benefits

- An objective over-seeing body for research and innovation would be beneficial, and help to maintain the link between research and teaching if the terms of reference and membership are appropriately inclusive.
- A single body would help to maintain an overview of complex developments elsewhere in the UK and will be able to make recommendations to the Commission on how to allocate funding across the range of priorities within its ambit. It could help obviate the risks for Wales inherent in HERA 2012.
- Separate governance will enable RIW to engage and collaborate directly with Research England and UKRI, influencing priority setting for UK research and strategy funding streams and help ensure UKRI meets the needs of Welsh stakeholders.
- The committee could help to build upon the collaborative nature of Wales ensuring that smaller research institutes receive support.
- It could create an opportunity to make greater investment in STEM research.
- Will help to develop a more dynamic and responsive to need research, innovation and knowledge translation environment in Wales.
- Closer alignment of SACW and IACW would make strategic sense, ensuring that we can maintain profoundly different underpinning structures, processes and systems.
- Will help to 'set out the stall for the proper structures, systems, skills and investment needed to strengthen and advance development of the innovation eco-system'.
- Would ensure a fairer distribution of research funding amongst HEIs across Wales, ensuring coherency.

Concerns/Issues

- RIW needs to be reconceptualised to take much more into account FE's capacity to contribute to research and innovation in the field of applied research.
- Avoid duplicating the role of UKRI in Wales but seek to work in complement it.

- Concern about the inability in Wales to cross ‘the valley of death’ and that we do not manage to turn excellent research into commercialisation, wealth and economic opportunity.
- Some respondents felt that the membership of the proposed committee needs to be broader than suggested possibly including representatives from the four economic regions of Wales; individual HEI institutions; student unions; industry reps and other involved in post 16 education. It needs to have a distinct identity and role but a separate governance structure could lead to duplication.
- There were many concerns raised about Brexit and the potential impact this will have on research funding for Wales.
- Some respondents felt research and innovation are distinct and they require profoundly different structures, environments and support from each other. Whilst they are mutually dependent it needs to be acknowledged that a degree of separation needs to be observed. Others mentioned that safeguards need to be in place against creating a binary divide between research and innovation.
- It is important to maintain the dual funding support system.
- It is important that initiatives such as Ser Cymru are continued.
- The introduction of a new funding system for PGR will introduce a tripartite funding system between the government, the provider and either private or 3rd sector organisations. The rights of the learner need to be taken into consideration in the arrangements. This will be helped if learner representation is included in the new committee.
- A lot of respondents felt that outcomes from the Reid Review need to be taken into account once they are available.
- There was mention that HEFCW already has powers to establish committees and that an effective research and innovation committee already exists. Potential that with small adjustments this could be used to meet future demands and that WG could add to its list of functions using existing legislation.

Question 20:

The overall majority agreed with the proposals set out for the operation of RIW and that these would help to meet the needs of learners and industry.

Perceived benefits

- Would help to develop a skilful workforce who will be able to compete internationally.
- Would help improve learner voice and interaction with employers and colleges to develop the correct qualifications to match the needs of industry/labour market.
- A step forward to match the Research in England.
- Suggestion that it could help initiate funding mechanisms to meet Proof of Concept/Valley of Death challenges.
- Welcome the commitment to the dual support system for research and to maintain un-hypothecated QR funding in particular.
- Take into account relevant regional strategies in line with enhanced emphasis on regional working by both WG and LAs, helping to ensure that funding is awarded according to WG priorities agreed in the strategic plan.
- Schools need to be involved as very little information relating to innovation and apprenticeship opportunities reaches schools.
- Take the opportunity to align research and innovation, although the two disciplines require different structures, skills and systems to survive.
- Widening access and improving diversity is important in the research and innovation sector.

- The new Commission has the opportunity to bring a holistic approach to HE and FE research and innovation strategy in Wales and challenge providers to adopt more strategic approaches.
- Welcome a sector-wide approach in Wales to innovation funding.

Concerns/Issues

- Worried that RIW would concentrate solely on HE research and reorganisation of existing higher education process and funding for research and innovation. Need to take FE into account as well and the contribution they can make.
- Must not forget the valuable interaction Sector Skills Bodies have across all 4 nations and their vital contribution in engaging with hard to reach students and employers.
- Recognise the role that Ser Cymru I and II have to play in providing funding for researchers in Wales.
- Future funding for research should meet clear strategic objectives and not 'general response mode' funding, which can be achieved through UK-wide mechanisms.
- Needs clear links to and potential collaboration with other sectors research i.e. Social Care Wales
- Risks as to how a single research and innovation committee may be able to support both aspects of the dual support system.
- Caution against setting targets at lower levels and replicating the current approach of directly passing down all targets to all universities thus undermining institutional and academic freedom.
- Recognition of research and innovation in the global context – not just Wales.
- Impact of Brexit and the subsequent affect on research funding for Wales.
- Need to ensure that any existing relationships that institutions have with UKRI bodies are not impeded by the new committee.
- HEIs still need to be able to contribute to UKRI priorities.
- Consideration needs to be given to other organisations such as Innovation Point.
- Could have a role in addressing the duplication of the work of the national skills observatory and the data unit Wales.
- The number of people that RIW will need to engage with will exceed the workload and responsibility capability of the committee.
- Need to align closely with UKRI – no benefit to creating a silo in Wales.
- Key issue with the new committee is the level of engagement with the end user and members of the public.
- Should support and establish joint research and innovation collaboration across FE, WBL, employers, HE institutions and within schools.
- Governance and structure. If these are separate then it will not be able to benefit from membership and experience within the Welsh sector, given the conflict of interest which could arise where the Committee was taking funding decisions.

Widening access and participation in the PCET sector

Question 21:

What actions, if any, should be undertaken to encourage greater participation in the PCET sector, particularly by individuals from disadvantaged and under-represented groups?

Question 22:

How could we ensure greater retention on and successful completion of PCET courses by these groups?

Question 21:

The majority of respondents agreed that widening access to under-represented groups was an issue and a large number of suggestions for action were made. These fell mostly into the themes of funding, removing barriers to learning, advice and guidance. Suggestions were also made about how to develop a strategic approach to widening access and participation across the whole sector.

Funding

- More funding from WG to support an identified and consistent route back into education and training for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Funding for training that enables FE and ACL routes for gaining qualifications for those whom apprenticeship/WBL routes are not appropriate.
- Increase the Pupil Development Grant for Infant, Primary and Secondary schools as this is key to increasing engagement, aspirations and outcomes.
- Means tested financial support - possibility of a single lifetime tertiary education entitlement should be seriously considered. Sustained substantial investment, helping people up the ladder not just on to it.
- More consistent funding across both academic and vocational routes for students, i.e. Special Support Grant only available to HE students at the moment.
- Fee and Access Plans are working in HE and parity could be extended to the other parts of the PCET sector. A need to look at funding for widening access and participation including monitoring of the block grant against the aims for deprivation.
- The continuation of the Education Maintenance Allowance and a commitment to maintain adequate financial contingency funds is essential.
- The changing fee regime for part-time students has made it more difficult to support students with disabilities, there is no mechanism to provide DSA for students studying less than 60 credits.
- Close analysis of the impact of the recently announced reforms for HE student support funding to see if this is improving diversity and widening access.
- Options and funding for flexible short credit courses which encourage learners into HE.
- Funding to support part-time and distance learning needs to be ring-fenced and provided long-term to encourage innovation and development in this area.

Removing Barriers to Learning

- Issues with ACL need addressing. The majority of learning to build confidence and motivation has either gone or is being provided by DWP contracted organisations. This is making progression routes very difficult for HEIs. Partnership working needs to include DWP to co-ordinate goals, progressing directly from ACL to HE is too great a leap. Adequate funding, longer than one year to allow for working collaboratively with partners.

- Consideration of the impact of essential skills testing on learners who may be anxious about returning to learning.
- Providing a range of full and part-time courses within a learner's locality would assist. Local delivery of HE provision in FE institutions, including a strategic view on part-time learning.
- Develop shared provision for 14-16 age groups to access vocational provision in FE colleges alongside their statutory provision at school – feeder stream for future vocational learning. Clear progression routes into work identified.
- Initiatives to ensure that the student voice is heard consistently and concerns fed back.
- More work with parents, support workers in college and assessment of individual learner needs.
- Stop seeking parity between academic and vocational provision. Instead champion vocational provision and develop this as a real alternative to academic routes.
- Issues identified in relation to apprenticeships need to be addressed.
- Flexible approaches to access and delivery, including Welsh and other language needs. A learner-centred approach that includes learner experience as a key feature of evaluation.
- Engaging with employers to encourage them to support their employees holding lower qualifications to progress where this would impact positively on the employer and the economic area. Close employer involvement in initiatives to reflect local demand.
- Reduced entry requirements in HE for the correct applicants to be considered.
- The reduction in part-time course provision needs to be addressed as does the cost involved. This can negatively impact older learners.
- Student partnership is essential to understand the barriers to widening access – the student is best placed to identify the barriers that are preventing them from achieving in education.
- School outreach programmes, summer university residential courses and post 16 access schemes.
- UHOVI was very successful in increasing participation. Universities should review their standard entry requirements. Some qualifications in FE are not fit for purpose and are a barrier to progressive learning.
- Closer collaboration with organisations representing under-represented groups to ensure needs are met and barriers identified.
- Greater access to childcare and community education.
- Free, informal taster sessions.
- FE colleges have targeted 16-19 year olds to the detriment of the older learner – part-time courses are important for older learners to be able to access courses. HE used to run successful outreach programmes in the community but this is only now targeted at school leavers.
- Supported work pre-16 to ensure that learners have the basic skills that they need.
- Better transport systems or support for learners to move outside of their immediate locality.
- Those with ALN should be able to access a course that can meet their needs closer to home however if this is not possible then the LA should pay for out-of-county placements.

Careers Advice and Guidance

- Quality careers advice and guidance for pupils in compulsory education as to the full range of PCET options available. Information about progression pathways in terms of institutions at which to study, subjects and language medium.
- Advice about financial implications of choices (student loans, potential future earnings)
- Concern that young people with ALN in WBL and HE may be excluded from the support and assistance that they need in order to follow the course of their choice, regardless of provider.
- Information about support available to individuals from specific groups.
- Targeted recruitment campaigns.
- Better promotion through sixth forms. Also incorporate participation into education employment skills and careers and continued use of the Early Identification Toolkit.

Strategic Approach across PCET

- Requiring schools, local authorities and other agencies such as Regional Consortia to respond and demonstrate how they are supporting the strategy put forward by the new body.
- A national strategic framework for widening access across all sectors within education, identifying target groups and specific performance indicators.
- Policies to support the development and provision of Foundation year programmes.
- Rebrand the whole sector and run national advertising and marketing campaigns including social media.
- Needs better alignment with the curriculum changes taking place across Wales. A broadening of the choices, outside of academic routes, would benefit many young people laying the foundation for future vocational learning.
- Valued role that HEFCW undertakes in supporting widening access and participation across the HE sector should be retained and built upon.
- Reaching Wider Partnerships should be incorporated and their expertise taken into account. Could be reviewed to work more smartly in regions.
- HE autonomy to identify and contextualise under-represented groups and then formulate their own plans.
- The public sector equality duty and requirement to produce a strategic equality plan could be extended to all HE and FE providers offering programmes leading to a recognised award.
- WG should develop a new framework and direction for widening access across FE and WBL. Many of the activities currently undertaken across HE could be applied and benefit other areas of the system.
- Recommendation that current legislation should be used to encourage greater participation as new or significant legislation is not required to strengthen arrangements in HE.
- Widening access and participation needs to be developed within the overarching strategy and vision for the PCET system, especially since the demise of Communities First.
- Looking at best practise across the UK, i.e. Office for Fair Access in England and Student Transition Enhancement Theme in Scotland.
- Development of a clear progression pathways framework from FE, Adult Learning and Work-based Learning to HE.
- Progression pathways into quality employment, access to the professions, women into STEM.

- Programmes, such as Seren Network to support disadvantaged AS or A2 students to enhance their UCAS applications/encourage aspiration to HE.
- Promote a variety of careers and challenge stereotypes.
- Technology and how this can help distance learners/outside the classroom learning to those who would otherwise be unable to access training.
- Spreading of existing best practise through case studies, conferences, etc.
- All post-16 education provision is planned within a coherent framework with synergy across pre and post-16 provision.

Data Analysis

- Use of transparent performance key data is key to establishing baseline positions and setting targets for progress. (HESA/HeidiPlus).

Question 22:

Many comments and suggestions were received in response to this question, ranging from strategic planning to operational ideas. They fell into these broad categories: Funding, Careers guidance and advice, Strategic approach for PCET sector as a whole, improved information and data analysis, removing barriers, actions that can be taken within the PCET sector.

Strategic approach for PCET sector

- Clear progression routes to next level of learning and the workforce.
- Inclusion of retention as a goal in any agreed Outcome Agreements.
- A more coherent PCET system, with strategic oversight by a single body, could support better linkages between different providers and encourage holistic approach so learners are encouraged to access PCET provision and fulfil their potential.
- Integrated PCET sector to establish clearer, joined up educational or training pathways for non-traditional learners.
- A strategic framework that identifies target groups, with performance indicators to capture participation, but also retention and progression through FE and HE
- Need strategy for life long learning from the Commission.
- Build better links with employers to better understand future learning needs.
- Flexibility in type, length and level of course offered with credits being transferrable between courses and institutions.
- Engagement with Schools and Colleges, to highlight value and opportunities of pursuing STEM careers.
- Ongoing support for regional partnerships would enable participants to continue to deliver collaborative projects to support widening access agenda.

Funding

- Using course funding models that incorporate incentive payments to ensure institutions keep learners on programmes.
- Greater funding for support and more hours for specialist tutors when necessary.
- Financial support packages.
- Current Fee and Access plans, and financial support of learners, particularly for living costs, helps to reduce barriers to participation.

Careers guidance and advice

- High quality, impartial careers advice and detailed induction so learners understand their course and what they are working towards.

- Effective school engagement working effectively so the most appropriate learning/career paths are selected by each individual.
- Enable learners to enter PCET at levels in the right institutions, appropriate to their requirements and abilities.
- Improved initial advice and guidance, focus on programme support, and flexible provision to allow work life balance.
- Good information available on fees, loans and the costs and timetable for repayment.

Information/data analysis

- Formal, well-resourced role for the Commission in gathering data, evidence and examples of good practice in retention both from within/outside the sector, working in partnership with providers by supporting, resourcing and enabling the adoption of innovations.
- Increased communication and better sharing of student data would give providers more accurate information on student needs to tailor support (similar to proposals in the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Bill)
- Better use of data (e.g. Learning analytics) to target where intervention/support is needed.

Removing barriers to learning

- Consideration of policies and support to enable access – e.g. child care; transportation; mental health support.
- Increase Pupil Development Grant for Infant, Primary and Secondary Schools – this increases their engagement, aspirations and outcomes within compulsory education that will continue in PCET.
- Local centres and part-time day and evening courses need to be considered
- Consideration of teacher/lecturer workloads, as this impacts the support they can give to individual students when meeting overloaded timetables and preparation and assessment time.
- Improve access to learning, training employment opportunities for older people. Need development of ‘all age’ apprenticeships and employability plans.
- Introduction of study skills sessions and resilience programmes at KS4 to address student mental health issues with regards to work, with this continued at PCET.
- Strong mentoring and personal tutor support, as well as central learner support services essential to retention.
- Strong learning community and peer-to-peer support.
- Recognition of the particular barriers that underrepresented groups face and how these can be overcome (e.g. consider recommendations, once published of the NUS UK – Poverty Commission)
- Affordability of education – course costs; materials and equipment required, especially for older learners in FE
- Need to address diversity of post-16 learners, including older people.
- Continuation of the EMA – changes to regime impacts students with disabilities as there are no mechanisms for DSA for students carrying less than 60 credits.
- Lack of confidence and self-esteem – mentoring
- Supported short courses for teachers on working with learners from disadvantaged groups or areas.

Possible Actions

- Introduction of initiatives (e.g. STEM careers promotion).
- Introduce system for peer mentoring.

- Develop aspirations by exposing learners to role models and employer experiences (work experience; internships; apprenticeships).
- Supporting enhancement of quality within teaching and learning. Sophisticated pedagogy, high-quality teachers and work based learning practitioners are key to improving the likelihood of retention.
- Enable investment in improved campus and community facilities.
- Time built into course programmes for appropriate skills to be developed within the context of the core subject of the qualification.
- Share current good practice across the whole of PCET sector (e.g. curriculum and assessment design, academic and pastoral support).
- Better support for students re-sitting.
- Improved collaboration involving schools and colleges to encourage them to continue to support learners who have left but not progressed to work or further study.
- Support individuals using social prevention programmes and other youth support services.

Measuring impact

Question 23:

How can the evidence base for widening access across the PCET sector be strengthened?

Question 24:

Should further and higher education institutions be placed under a duty to publish and provide to the Commission, data on the application, acceptance and progression rates of students, broken down by gender, ethnicity and socio-economic background?

Question 23:

Respondents demonstrated overwhelming support for the systematic collection of information and data alongside the need for sound research to support the evidence base and to determine PCET strategy.

- Improve understanding of PCET sector and ensure focus is on whole sector, enabling strategic analysis by the Commission of potential good practice whilst supporting/enabling providers to identify under-represented learners.
- Promote and obtain learner feedback (use of focus groups; surveys)
- Effective school engagement working effectively so the most appropriate learning/career paths are selected by each individual.
- Commission should conduct own research and use external expertise to gather information (e.g. understanding barriers) and review the extensive research conducted to date on widening access.
- Analyse initiatives to date to identify what works and what doesn't (e.g. if any LAs, institutions, providers support vocational routes from pre-16 stages).
- Address data gathering/sharing - better use of data and ability to track learner journeys (consider use of a unique learner number to help identify widening access learners anonymously. Some work has begun on this, e.g. Longitudinal Educational Outcomes linking data of HE to HMRC; WISERD; Reaching Wider). Possible link to National Insurance Numbers, tracking learners from age 16 through to early adulthood.
- Some of this evidence base already exists through equality duty and legislation (e.g. Future Generations Act) – focus should be on changing approaches.
- Use of methods, e.g. contextual admissions, which enable an institution to take account of factors affecting applicants prior educational attainment and make admissions decisions based on applicants potential to succeed.
- Clearer information on student loans and financial commitments which might detract some potential learners from economically disadvantaged areas.
- Provide support to learners – e.g. access to localised education to reduce travel
- Identify key metrics and introduce systematic data capture process to monitor impact, ensuring all learners and delivery methods are included (F2F; PT; distance; mature learners).
- Embedding widening access practices within providers, through staff development, training (e.g. unconscious bias) and guidance.
- Working with organisations like Chwarae Teg, Stonewall Cymru and Carers Trust Wales who each look at specific groups.
- Continue to focus on tackling inequalities; acknowledge the 'diversity of diversity' to enable targeted interventions.
- Use of thematic inspection surveys to focus on effective practice in widening access.

Question 24:

The majority of respondents agreed with the proposals and that this should be backed by strategic plans to increase access, explore obstacles and tackle barriers.

There were some caveats/suggestions:

- Institutions should be fully consulted on the type, format and timescales of data provision.
- There should be parity across the whole of PCET to allow for fair comparison.
- Concern that HE already publishes data on application, acceptance and progression rates of students via UCAS and HESA and adding in extra data collection could place a greater administrative burden on institutions.
- However, one HEI felt that UCAS already publish application and acceptance data for HE providers broken down by gender, ethnicity and socio-economic background. Progression data could easily be derived from HESA data and published on behalf of the sector with minimal additional burden.
- Important that FE collects information via the Unique Learner Number in a similar way to HE to ensure comparability with the rest of the UK.
- Better development of the Universal Learner Number (ULN) to track learner progress, combined with progression linked to National Insurance numbers.
- An automated system to make it time effective for institutions to complete.
- Much is already captured as part of the Equality Act.
- Increase utilisation of data-matching across data-sets to create better analysis and avoid asking providers to return data that has already been provided elsewhere. This may require legislation.
- Additional data duties should be in line with existing systems to avoid costly record system modifications.
- Technical limitations to providing some of the data.
- The issue with receiving data from learners who do not enrol, only apply, due to items being protected characteristics. This is especially an issue with socio-economic data.
- Data should be published centrally rather than individually by provider.
- Historical data transfer from bodies, i.e. HEFCW, Welsh Government to the new Commission including data protection notices for students.
- Data sharing between public bodies and providers to identify vulnerable learners and support them as they progress.
- HEFCW recommended that data is provided to the Commission and the Commission has statutory powers in relation to data collection.
- Data will need to be contextualised to take into account that some students are more difficult to recruit/progress
- Clear and unambiguous guidance is needed to ensure aggregation of data is valid and meaningful.
- Safeguards are required to ensure learners' confidentiality.

Suggestions for additional data

Some respondents suggested that the collection of additional data would be helpful, possibly relating to:

- Age
- Faith
- Welsh language skills/first language
- Disability
- LGBT status

- Value added data
- Partial achievement
- Those with caring responsibilities
- Care Leavers
- Ex-offenders
- Gypsy Traveller community
- ALN students
- Student 'destinations' on completion.

Those who were less supportive of the proposals cited the following reasons:

- FE and WBL already collect this data for their annual equality reports. They would not advocate another report and suggest that the type, format and timescales of data provision should be standardised instead.
- Learners are under no obligation to provide data and thus information provided by an institution may be partial.
- HESA data is already available and they would prefer if this was used in the first instance to avoid placing additional burdens on institutions.

Sixth forms

Question 25:

Do you think that the Commission should have responsibility for the planning, funding and monitoring of school sixth forms? If yes, please give reasons?

Question 26:

Do you think that the Commission should have any other role in relation to school sixth forms, for example provider registration, quality assurance and enhancement, and governance? If yes, please give reasons?

Question 27:

Do you think it might be preferable to establish the Commission without including sixth forms within its remit, but with the option of doing so at a later date?

Question 25:

There were a range of responses on this issue, largely dependent on the perspective of the stakeholder. There was a widespread recognition of the legislative and administrative challenges which their inclusion would represent.

Reasons for inclusion:

- Recognition of need for one whole PCET sector that includes Sixth Form with shared standards across sector.
- Need for strong connection between sixth forms and learning routes in HE and FE with parity of esteem between vocational and academic qualifications.
- Commission should be responsible for planning, funding and monitoring to ensure this is a genuine reform of, and plan for, PCET sector as a whole.
- Need integrated and comparable system to ensure students are able to make properly informed choices about the pathway most suitable for them.
- To keep sixth forms out maintains an artificial separation between post 16 learners, some of whom are studying identical qualifications and creates a two-tier system.
- Without sixth forms, this is not genuine PCET reform. With sixth forms included, sector can work collaboratively to improve transition from sixth form to higher education.
- Schools should have to comply with the same accountability to WG, learners, parents and employers as FEIs and WBL providers. Their inclusion may encourage schools to work in greater collaboration for the learner's best interests.
- Needs collaboration and coordination of activities to ensure collective response and to have an education system working together to support economic and social needs.
- Reduces duplication, under performance and competition.

Reasons for exclusion:

- Schools' own governing bodies know their schools and pupils. A distant body wouldn't provide same level of care and organisation.
- Should sit with Welsh Assembly.
- Need to retain the distinction between academic and vocational routes to utilise each sector's strengths. FE sector should cover vocational studies and Schools to cover A Levels.
- Sixth forms should remain within LA control, but with learners needs central to this so they can access community learning.

- Could potentially increase the layers of bureaucracy, leading to further blurred lines of accountability and potentially reduction of resources at the point of delivery.
- Commission would lack the expertise and organisational knowledge to make decisions about providers. Current arrangements should work in tandem with the Commission, who will have sufficient challenges without sixth form inclusion.
- Schools are already subject to sufficient oversight.
- Sixth forms in 11-18 schools are inextricably linked to the planning, funding, staffing and monitoring and of the 11-16 elements of the school.

Question 26:

More respondents answered positively to this question than negatively, but as for the previous question this was partly due to the perspective of the stakeholders who responded. Some advantages and disadvantages were mentioned.

- It is necessary to have parity and consistency between institutions offering same qualifications.
- Students attending sixth forms should have same protections as students studying elsewhere.
- Parity of esteem between academic and vocational qualifications can only be achieved if all sectors included in reform.
- External independent inspection of school sixth forms should remain to give unbiased opinion on quality and be detached from funding.
- Schools have enough hoops to jump through.
- Functions sought for Commission already exist and Commission's role would introduce more bureaucracy and blurred accountability.
- Perpetuating disparity if sixth forms are not included in reform.

Question 27:

There were a range of responses to this question. Many who disagreed did so because they were the respondents arguing for the 6th forms to be included at the outset.

- Sixth forms should be included from the outset, to ensure the PCET reform is appropriately designed and fit for purpose for the sector as a whole.
- Although there are difficult challenges to include sixth forms, these need to be addressed now rather than side-stepped and cannot be the reason for non-inclusion.
- Sixth forms should remain within the existing governance structures, not part of the Commission.
- Runs the risk of sixth forms never being included.
- Would miss an opportunity to align providers under the same strategy and goals
- Best way to manage risk of repeating past mistakes and to give Commission time to set up the rest of its remit before tackling sixth forms, which could swamp Commission's workload.
- A 'big bang' approach may not be feasible and longer term transition more practical and achievable.
- Widespread reform of the PCET sector brings substantial implementation risk which would be considerably increased if the remit of the Commission included sixth forms at its inception.
- Development of the role beyond current arrangements would involve significant workload and perturbation in the establishment of the new Commission – it may be preferable for this to be dealt with at later stage.

Managing the relationship between the Commission and providers.

Question 28:

Do you agree the new Commission should operate a registration system to facilitate a flexible but consistent approach to its engagement with institutions and providers across the full range of PCET activity? If so, which model, if any, do you prefer and why?

Question 28:

The majority of respondents agreed that registration was a sensible approach for bodies funded with public money. Any registration system would need to ensure all institutions met the same standards of financial stability and propriety, but that the process needed to recognise the different types of providers and organisations, and be adjusted to suit. Some general comments were received and also some on each of the suggested models.

- Whatever model is chosen or developed, there is a need to focus on strategic aims and care would need to be taken to ensure that perceptions of superior or inferior organisations does not stem from registration type.
- Importance of having a single, permanent, publicly accessible record of providers and qualifications offered, to ensure the integrity of PCET in Wales and a system which protected the reputation of the PCET sector in Wales.
- Recognition of a complex and differing system of regulation for the PCET sector as a whole, which should not be made even more complex through the process for registration.

Outcome Agreements

- Model would provide the Commission with influence at national and regional levels in determining strategic provider outcomes, but the model's success would be reliant on significant collaboration to ensure provisions matched the growth sectors.
- Model posed risks during transfer, to the whole post 16 sector.
- As mentioned in previous responses care would need to be taken to protect institutional autonomy.
- Need to ensure that short term economic drivers do not predominate.

Registration of Providers

- Registration process needed consideration to ensure it did not overburden the sector further.
- Classification of providers would need more clarity and development.
- Further information on the terms and conditions of registration was wanted.
- Need to be sensitive to differences in provider type; more work would be needed to define who providers were (e.g. should it include individual trainers and assessors?).
- Could provide a good base for accountability.
- OU flagged their fit with the model in Wales needs consideration as they work across the UK and are regulated by HEFCE.
- EWC highlighted that currently there are requirements for practitioners employed within FE and WBL to be registered with EWC but HE practitioners are not.

Regional Compacts

- Regional needs were recognised as important.
- Potential to build on existing regional partnership models.
- Difficulties with model due to social, economic, linguistic and geographical factors.

Higher Education Governance

Question 29:

We are seeking views on how extant legislation governing HECs in Wales might be modernised to place them on a more equal footing with other providers of higher education, incorporated under different constitutional arrangements and, in particular, whether:

- current prescriptions in relation to the governing documents of HECs should be removed;
- whether the requirement for Privy Council approval should be removed for certain amendments to HECs' governing documents;
- the current power for the Welsh Ministers to dissolve HECs should be retained or removed.

Question 30:

We are also seeking views on whether any reform to the process and criteria for granting degree awarding powers and university title for institutions in Wales is necessary as a result of the policy divergence between Wales and England. In particular, whether:

- the Privy Council's role in relation to the granting of DAPs and UT should be retained in Wales or whether responsibility for part or all of the process should transfer to the new post compulsory education and training body.
- any changes to the existing eligibility criteria for DAPs and UT are necessary, including the track record requirement.
- the current basis for the award of indefinite DAPs remains appropriate in light of funding and regulatory changes in Wales.
- the introduction of more flexible degree awarding powers, such as bachelor level only or limited subject, should be explored in Wales.
- powers to vary and revoke degree awarding powers and university title should be considered in Wales,
- any changes to degree awarding powers and validation arrangements would improve the effectiveness of existing partnership arrangements for the delivery of higher education by further education institutions.

Question 29:

Respondents felt this was generally an issue for HEIs but need to consider the broader HE system and relationships with FEIs; equality for all providers within PCET sector was argued to be necessary. Most agreed further examination of these issues is needed with ongoing involvement from stakeholders.

- Removing the powers listed would ensure equivalence and equity between HECs in England and Wales, and between HECs and Universities with a Royal Charter
- Without written requirements, greater problems with transparency and probity with governance of Welsh institutions.

Question 30:

Respondents recognised the context for England and Wales is different, with England's model based upon a market-driven HE sector. Changes to DAPs and UT in England are part of wider reforms to achieve this. Consideration needs to be given to English policies which cut across policy priorities in a Welsh context.

- Need to include FEIs when considering these issues.
- Need to protect Welsh HE sector, its reputation and learners, and ensure it is not disadvantaged – care should be taken to any plans to open up the market to alternative providers.
- Any considerations to introduce probationary DAPs, powers to revoke DAPs or UT need careful consideration (e.g. contingency arrangements for learners; impact of perceived value on qualifications).
- Cross border implications if Wales maintains higher quality thresholds than England, e.g. would student loan support be available for Welsh domiciled students paying higher tuition fees in England.
- Further examination is needed to address this question – change not to be made for change sake and immediate change is not needed.

Transitional arrangements – Preparing the road to implementation

Question 31:

Protecting the interests of learners and minimising disruption for providers will inform plans for the transitional period. Are there any other matters which should be taken into account?

Question 32:

To help inform our assessment of the possible impact of these proposals, can you foresee any particular impact on those with protected characteristics (within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010) and how they might be particularly affected by these proposals?

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Question 31:

Overall, responses were generally positive, although the majority requested communication of the full understanding of the changes and impacts to be made.

- Communication came out as key throughout the responses, along with the need for a strong partnership with providers. The learner experience and voice should be central to the Commission.
- There were requests for complete clarity and timescales to allow for development, scrutiny and implementation with notices of changes / publications to time. The cost of the commission must be fully considered before implementation.
- When transitioning to the commission the impact of destabilising the sector must be considered with extensive impact assessments undertaken. There needs to be contingency planning for provider failure, and maintenance of current funding arrangements as businesses could be financially affected.
- It was frequently noted that the Commission must operate in such a way as to not conflict with other UK wide legislation, and there must be no gaps in policy when incorporating functions of other bodies. It was noted that The Well Being and Future Generations Act 201X should be taken fully into consideration.
- Many respondents felt that the reform should be phased with an 'evolutionary approach', with many welcoming 'elements' of the commission to be implemented in the future.
- A number of colleges suggested the Commission should be based on Social Partnership model.
- Organisational factors were noted such as Human Resources, Skills/Expertise, Data alignment, and Location/IT.
- There was a suggestion that HEFCW could be used as a legal body during transition, and noted the fact that HEFCW already has the powers to establish an R&I committee.
- Concerns were raised around insufficient legislative time to manage the project 'properly' in light of Brexit. There was a suggestion that working with existing legislation could enable us to be delivering much sooner.

Question 32:

The majority of respondents saw no impact at this initial stage but expect this area to be considered again in more detail as part of the Technical Consultation. One respondent noted the forthcoming WG DSA consultation and how its results could be incorporated in the project.

- Most responses noted the need for thorough Impact Assessment, and good engagement with learners in these groups to acquire the learner voice.
- Clarity of learning pathways and appropriate funding could reduce barriers for learners within the protected characteristics groups.
- It was noted that the 'one size fits all' doesn't always lend itself to equality approach, and that multi agency collaboration will be required to address key equality issues.
- Noted that some providers operate outside 'normal parameters', therefore leeway needs to be 'built in' to new processes/legislation in order to support them. Providers could report statistics to address inequality to the Commission.
- There should be increased work placements, apprenticeships, internships for these groups, and lower entry points to allow them to progress.
- There should be increased increase ACL and links with the WG 30 hour childcare pledge.
- Learners covered under the ALN Bill are currently considered against the same outcomes as 'all' learners. This sometimes doesn't meet their needs. Could 'soft skills' be considered in certain instances to show 'distance travelled'?

Welsh Language

Question 33:

We would like to know your views on the effects that the establishment of the *Tertiary Education and Research Commission for Wales* would have on the Welsh language, specifically on

- i) opportunities for people to use Welsh and
- ii) on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Question 34:

Please also explain how you believe the proposed policy could be formulated or changed so as to have

- i) positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and
- ii) no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Question 33:

Responses were generally positive, noting that that the creation of a single PCET body will promote opportunities to use the Welsh Language, and treat Welsh no less favourably.

Respondents felt the Commission should:

- comply with Welsh Language Standards and Measures, that it should be a bilingual body and set specific Welsh Language targets in strategic planning.
- aim to improve Welsh pathways and progression through the system in Welsh, ensuring they are aligned with the economic needs of Wales.
- continue to work with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.
- be seen as an opportunity to promote Welsh language, if clearly communicated.

Regular reference was made to “Cymraeg 2050” and how the new PCET body will be instrumental in WG reaching their goal of a million speakers by 2050. Therefore the commission must give regard to this WG policy.

It was felt that positive effects could be increased if:

- funding continues for Welsh provision (maybe providing an uplift), and that it provides ‘good value’ and a ‘gain’ for Wales;
- the Welsh Language Tutors sabbatical scheme continues;
- Provision for translators were introduced;
- The Commission identified areas where Welsh language needs to be delivered – e.g. health care/teaching In order to support and strengthen services in Wales.

Question 34:

The majority of respondents covered this question in their first answer. Around a quarter of respondents felt they would be in a better position to comment when more developed proposals are published in the technical consultation.

The proposed policy could be changed as to have positive/no adverse effects:

- Welsh Language needs to be the central consideration – not a ‘bolt on’ in policy development.
- By encouraging employers to engage with Welsh language rather than be made to – like the ‘public sector employers standards model.’
- If specific linguistic, cultural and employment considerations are noted and there is engagement with those that have expertise to inform policy.
- If the commission introduces a Welsh language committee with student representation. 2
- If there is a clear strategic link with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and an outcomes agreement is negotiated to increase opportunity for people to use Welsh in post 16 education.
- Welsh Language statistics could be monitored by the Commission.
- If Unique Learner Numbers were fully implemented to enable more effective tracking of students through the education system in to the workplace
- If availability of Welsh courses for learners and workforce were monitored by the Commission.
- If the Commission promoted closer working across establishments/providers to provide Welsh courses where the number of students is small – in order to share materials/resources etc. and make courses viable.
- If a wide and full Impact assessment is completed.
- If the Commission considers how the Welsh language standards will operate across the PCET sector to provide a seamless experience.

Other Comments

Question 35:

We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:

Common themes from respondents were:

Learner voice:

- This needs to feature more centrally in development work going forward.

Welsh Language:

- Welsh language and culture should be embedded wherever possible within the PCET system in Wales.
- There is little reference in the document to the importance and development of Welsh language education and training provision.
- Considerations should be made for Local Authority Welsh in Education plans, the requirements of the Welsh Language Act and other relevant legislation including the Health and Well-being Act.
- Welsh for Adults has recently undergone major changes – will Welsh for adults be included in this proposal?

ACL:

- The Commission should consider that for many learners ACL routes may be the preferred route for gaining qualifications – there should be parity both in accessibility of funding for these courses and in the esteem they are held.
- The Paper lacks sufficient focus on adult and community learning (ACL) and how these relate to the Commission.
- Regarding ACL, it is not clear as to whether this included private training providers
- We whole hearted agree with ‘second chances for adults not second best’.
- Older people in the post 50 age group require support in re-training and developing new skills if they become jobless through redundancy, for example.

Name of the Commission and the Language used:

- Welsh Government should refer to the reforms as post-16 education instead of post-compulsory. The latter term has little meaning to many of NUSW members.
- The use of the word ‘tertiary’ may cause confusion within a UK context. There is a possibility that the wider public would associate this solely with **further education**.
- The new body could be named the ‘Commission for Students’. We believe this name would have more meaning than TERCW.
- We are unclear why the word ‘Commission’ has been used rather than Council. There is an implication that this supports a ‘commissioner’ with a particular responsibility and role and a legal status in their own right.
- The acronym ‘TERCW’ should be reconsidered. It should be possible to identify a name and an acronym that are more accessible to the public, are more easily recognisable by equivalent bodies across the UK. Something like “Learning Wales/Dysgu Cymru” might be considered as an alternative?

Annex A - List of consultation respondents

Adult Learning Partnership
Airbus
Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)
Anonymous Responses (11)
Bangor University
Bridgend College
Cardiff Conference of Secondary Headteachers
Cardiff Council
Cardiff Met University
Cardiff University
Cardiff University - PGCE-PCET Team
Careers Wales
Carmarthenshire County Council, Dept for Education & Children
Cardiff and Vale College (CAVC)
Ceredigion County Council
Chairs of Universities Wales
Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)
City Deal
Coleg Cymraeg Cenediaethol
Coleg Gwent
Coleg Y Cymoedd
Colegau Cymru
CYDAG
Cymdeithas Yr Iaith
David Owen
Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB)
Education Workforce Council
Energy and Utility Skills
ESTYN
The Federation for Industry Sector Skills & Standards (FISSS)
National Federation of Self Employed & Small Businesses Ltd (FSB)

Governors Wales
Growing Mid Wales Partnership
Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)
HM Prison and Probation Services (HMPPS)
Innovation Advisory Council for Wales (IACW)
Jayne Jones
JISC
Julie Barton
King Henry VIII School
Learning & Work Institute
Learned Society of Wales
Maes Y Gwendreath
NASUWT
National Education Union Cymru
NCFE
Newport City Council
NPTC Group
National Training Federation Wales (NTfW)
NUS Wales
Office of Independent Adjudicators (OIA)
Older Peoples Commissioner for Wales
Open University

Pembrokeshire College
Pembrokeshire Council
Play Wales
Pontnewydd Primary School
Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW)
QAA
Qualifications Wales
Rhondda Cynon Taff County Council
Rhondda Cynon Taff County Council - LM Silezin
Reaching Wider
Richard Ebley
Social Care Wales
Sophie Jenkins-Jones

Swansea University
The Board of - Grwp Llandrillo Menai
Transport for Wales
Trinity St David
UCAC

University and College Union (UCU)
University and College Union (UCU) - Professor Lucas
UNISON
Universities Wales
University of Wales Press
Vale of Glamorgan Council
Voice Cymru
Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)
Wrexham Glyndwr University
Y Ganolfan Dysgu Cymraeg Genedlaetho

Annex B1 - Summary of roadshow responses

The methods used in these consultation exercises were designed to allow the broadest possible range of learner and learning provider professionals to explore in detail their views about PCET in Wales and the proposed reforms. The sampling technique was purposive, and research and analysis methods were qualitative, so it would not be appropriate to generalise the findings to all learner and provider groups in Wales, nor can they be regarded as exhaustive. However, the methods used allowed the consultation to generate a rich, qualitative narrative, useful insights and valuable information, and we are very grateful for all those who participated.

LEARNER TRANSITION - KEY POINTS

- Impartial Advice and Guidance is key – Academic routes are strongly covered Vocational routes need to be treated equally and as a positive option, not a secondary one.
- Learner voice has to be at centre of TERCW.
- Needs to be seamless transition between compulsory and post compulsory - particularly in terms of the information fed across about the learner.
- TERCW needs to facilitate and broker signposting
- 6th Forms should be included to ensure quality, consistency of approach and to ensure learner choice and regional options are at the centre
- The measurement of success across PCET sector must be consistent
- KPIs are driving supply and options – recognition that this isn't always the most useful way of monitoring in terms of learner benefit.
- KPIs can change frequently and at short notice. This can be unhelpful.
- Changes could create opportunities for the digitisation of current system
- Common Application format (digital) for vocational and 6th form options to be considered to aid data flows and learner experience
- Whole career skills and re-training need to be given priority to ensure and flexible agile workforce. Funding for PT and Adult learning has been consistently cut.
- Entitlement until age 23 could be more flexible –driving wrong choices in some instances. People feel they are on the wrong courses and unable to re-start and review their decisions

QUALITY & ENHANCEMENT - KEY POINTS

- There are opportunities to create a more consistent framework for quality assurance, but it must be able to reflect sector context: one size doesn't fit all.
- Approaches and assessment should be proportionate to the size and nature of the organisation.
- Learning providers would welcome any moves to streamline processes and reduce bureaucracy. Both the Estyn and QAA approaches are

seen as quite onerous. There is scope to explore risk-based approaches to QA, and/or to consider more frequent, less intensive reviews.

- While measuring outcomes is important, the QA framework needs to measure the 'right' things, including destinations, value added and the acquisition of 'soft' skills. It needs to avoid an overly mechanistic approach to data, and ensure that any benchmarks/comparisons are meaningful and reflect institutional context. Arrangements should not be purely based on metrics.
- Learning providers should continue to have responsibility for self-assessment and self-improvement.
- Learner involvement key in both assurance and enhancement.
- A more thematic and/or geographical approach to quality reviews, which can look at how well the whole PCET system is working in an area, would be valuable. Many learning providers and other stakeholders have a limited understanding of how things work in sectors other than their own, and there may be scope to develop a culture among providers of being part of a bigger, more coherent system.
- The term 'quality enhancement' needs a clear definition that can be applied across the whole PCET system. This should provide clarity on what is being enhanced eg sector, institution, learner experience, provision etc.
- Enhancement seems to mean different things to different people and current activities are being undertaken in an inconsistent and piecemeal way. It needs to be properly integrated with quality assurance.
- The Commission should have a role in quality enhancement, though not necessarily on a statutory basis. It should:
 - Focus on key strategic themes/priorities – do a few things well rather than creating 'initiative overload';
 - Support dissemination of best practice across sector boundaries;
 - Support collaborative/regional approaches;
 - Activities should be longitudinal and sustainable; and
 - Help to co-ordinate activities across agencies such as QAA, Estyn, HEA, EWC

WELSH MEDIUM PROVISION - KEY POINTS

- Welsh-medium provision (WMP) needs to be integral to the activities of a new Commission, with planning and funding being reviewed and improved across all of the PCET sectors.
- Drivers for WMP come from particular areas of industry and learners themselves, but there is a lack of resource to help WMP delivery. Commission needs to set up WMP delivery across all sectors and learner pathways, up to and including degree level.
- An important driver for WMP is at Schools level, but this sits outside of PCET.
- Staff Welsh language skills need to be developed to deliver their subject areas in Welsh, but there is a lack of incentive to encourage this, and those that do, struggle without extra resources to produce materials and deliver bilingual sessions. Up-skilling staff needs to form part of the overall strategy.
- Staff up-skilling could be improved if, for example, WMP is built into PGCE for new staff coming into the sector.
- Need to be able to obtain better data to identify slippage between Sixth Forms and colleges.
- WMP needs to be mentioned on the face of the Bill, but it's the cultural change that needs to be addressed to stop Welsh-medium provision being seen as an 'add on'.
- Difficult to know where WMP is best placed to be supported, without seeing the role of the Commission. Recognised that if WMP funding sits within Commission, how this is 'protected' from cuts and prioritised needs to be addressed.

- Don't want to risk what's been done so far and a strong voice for the Welsh language needs to continue.
- How bodies like Coleg Cymraeg and Qualifications Wales sit and work with a new Commission needs to be addressed.

FINANCE & GOVERNANCE - KEY POINTS

- The learner must be central to all that the Commission does.
- The Commission's vision needs to be clear, with a long term view. It needs to think holistically to ensure that the sectors work better together.
- Value for money decisions need to be considered and should be a feature of what the Commission is trying to achieve.
- Short term funding for FE and WBL presents difficulties in terms of longer term financial planning and forecasting. Longer term funding agreements would give greater certainty.
- Function of Commission should reflect first principles, including: protecting interests of students, putting learner voice at the core; responding to needs of Welsh economy and labour market needs; removing unnecessary competition and extending opportunities for learners.
- Sixth Forms account for nearly 50% of all learners and should fall within the remit of the Commission.
- All PCET providers should have robust financial management and governance arrangements in place.
- It is important that there is consistency across all PCET sectors in terms of the standard of financial management and governance that providers must demonstrate.
- All sectors currently have arrangements in place for financial and governance assurance and the key strengths of these should not be lost.
- Any legislative arrangements should not be too prescriptive in terms of detail but should set broad principles that provide equivalence across all sectors. The Commission should be given autonomy to develop financial and governance assurance arrangements in consultation with PCET providers and to tailor these to the needs of different types of provider. The Commission should be given sufficient intervention powers to "give it teeth" but these should operate alongside softer sanctions that allow it to work with providers to address any issues identified.
- There is an opportunity to create a solution unique to Wales and care should be taken not to simply 'bolt on' powers to the current framework.
- The autonomy of institutions is important and needs to be preserved. Governing bodies should remain accountable across all sectors.

FUNDING & PLANNING - KEY POINTS

- The Commission will need to be flexible to handle different provisions/different certainties/different systems as it was recognised that there is no 'one size fits all' answer to planning and funding across all sectors.
- The Commission should try to develop a balanced and more joined up system/approach to funding in HE and FE to make processes simpler.
- The commission needs to ensure funding of Welsh medium provision across all sectors.
- The commission must ensure a strong relationship with the RSP and employers to understand the needs of the economy in Wales.

- A 3 year funding model, with a link to strategic plans would be beneficial and less complicated for all.

LEARNER PROTECTION - KEY POINTS

Arrangements to support learners in the event of the closure of a course, the closure of a campus or centre, or because of provider failure.

Stakeholders considered that:

- All of the different sectors currently have different learner protection arrangements, with some arrangements offering more learner protection than others.
- A system needs to be created which does not affect institution autonomy.
- Arrangements should not be too prescriptive and should retain an element of provider flexibility.
- There should be general principles of protection no matter where you are studying, with a basic principle of fairness across the whole of PCET.
- The Commission should be responsible for providing baseline guidance introducing parity across the board aligned to common principles and linked to outcome agreements.
- Learner protection plans should be held by providers with the Commission assuring these and checking that they are fit for purpose.
- Competition law requirements need to be taken into account. It was suggested that, there could be one institutional plan in a format appropriate to the provider and its structures, plus a concise learner friendly version of the plan using a common template across the PCET.
- The different needs of learners should be taken into account when a campus/course closes or a provider fails. Some learners do not have the ability to transfer easily to other courses because of transport, childcare or work commitments. Financial compensation where necessary should also be taken into account.
- While arrangements should rest with the provider, the Commission should also have the ability to intervene and be required to provide protections, e.g. in the event of provider failure.
- Need to consider what sanctions and intervention powers would be the most appropriate for the commission – financial powers may not be the most helpful.
- It is important to have an up front agreement with learners to show a cascade of measures and a consultation process, perhaps through learner voice forum.
- All communication with learners should be clear and jargon free.
- Information needs to be provided in a timely manner to learners when a course is under-subscribed and therefore unlikely to run.

Support for learners wishing to change courses or provider.

Stakeholders considered that:

- Careers advice in school needs to be strengthened. Pupils need to be aware of the options available to them and the level of commitment that they will need to give to their chosen area including financial commitment.
- Learners need to be aware of what the course entails before they sign up to study. This will help them to make an informed decision as to

whether the method/area of study is appropriate for their needs in order to reduce likelihood of wrong course choices being made.

- Information needs to be provided in a timely manner to learners so that they are aware of the days that they will need to be studying in order to organise domestic commitments
- Changes to course and module content also needs to be taken into account and changes to the delivery of study. Students need to be consulted at earliest opportunity.
- Consistent accreditation of prior learning / credit transfer important so that learners can continue their studies.

Complaints resolution arrangements for learners in the PCET sector

Stakeholders considered that:

- Different sectors within PCET have their own arrangements for complaint resolution - there is currently no common complaints procedure across the whole of PCET.
- Even if learners have recourse to an external body, it is important that the provider itself has a clear complaints policy and procedures, with defined stages.
- The range of PCET learners will have different needs and this would be a big role for the Commission to take on. The Commission would need the relevant skills/awareness of the individual sectors.
- The Commission should not investigate complaints itself but should have an oversight role and be aware of where there are problems/patterns. Thus there needs to be a basis for information sharing between the Commission and complaints investigation body/ies, in order to identify and deal with systemic problems.
- Whoever investigates complaints needs to have the authority to impose sanctions on providers and to ensure that recommendations are addressed.
- FE students are increasingly aware of the OIA role and frustrated that they don't have the same recourse (there appears to be more awareness now that HE in FE learners are covered).
- Learners making a complaint will often be distressed so they need to be supported through the process.
- For apprentices, it could be challenging to distinguish between issues relating to the provider and those relating to the employer. There are also some grey areas for HE, e.g. students studying/working abroad for a year during their degree.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION - KEY POINTS

- FE is to be included in the research funding in a collaborative way
- Specialist expertise within FE needs to be seen as added value to UKRI bids
- RIW need to help to facilitate and broker UKRI bids between institutions in Wales and not add a layer of bureaucracy
- Academic autonomy is of utmost importance RIW should not hinder - RIW needs a degree of freedom from TERCW but be accountable to TERCW

- Relationships between RIW-TERCW – HE – FE and business needs to have clarity and be strong
- RIW Board membership must be strong and adequate links to UKRI board
- Should access value to the current system and open up other funding streams – needs to be what's best for Wales economy and businesses

STRATEGY & OUTCOMES - KEY POINTS

- The Commission will need to maintain the strong and personal relationships that WG and HEFCW currently have with PCET stakeholders?
- The Commission's relationship must be open and transparent.
- The Commission's relationship with Pre16 education will be as important as the PCET sector. Learners should be provided with information about progression routes into employment/economic sectors from pre-16 education.
- The model chosen to form the relationship between Commission and Providers must recognise Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) data, and take into account input from the Regional Skills Partnership and employers.
- The history of the WBL, FE and HE systems needs to be addressed before making big changes – recognition of work to date.
- There will need to be a change in the 'culture' of the new Commission– with sectoral differences being broken down, to develop cross sectoral working.
- Staff of the Commission would need skills / knowledge to work across the PCET sector, and have an understanding of the context of the work, as this would also help to tackle silo working.
- There should be a broad PCET experience across the Board members of the Commission.
- The Commission should provide advice and guidance to learners throughout their learning on career planning, employment opportunities and key growth sectors.
- Advice needs to be independent and focused on the needs of learners as well as addressing parity of esteem. The interface with Careers Wales needs to be considered.
- The Commission should share intelligence and data across sectors.
- The Commission should share information/raise awareness/celebrate success consistently across Wales
- The strategic direction of the new Commission must not replicate the current system and should deliver change and improvements.
- The Commission's role should involve encouraging systemic collaboration between providers. Consideration should be given to the Commission underwriting risks associated with collaborative activity.
- Developing parity of esteem between different learning routes and between the different PCET sectors will be important.
- The Commission should have flexibility and autonomy to take decisions on the ground.
- The Commission should tackle issues around a consistent approach to collecting and sharing data.
- There was a lot of support for the inclusion of sixth forms within the Commission's remit.
- Concerns were also raised amongst some providers that inclusion of sixth forms might place severe resource constraints on the Commission, particularly with regard to ensuring named contacts to provide information and advice to learning providers.
- The Commission needs to be sensitive to needs of employers.

Annex B2 - List of roadshow attendees

103 attendees across the following organisations:

Aberystwyth University	Coleg y Cymoedd	NPTC Group of Colleges
Acorn	ColegauCymru	NTfW SE region
Addysg Oedolion Cymru / Adult Learning Wales	EAS	NUS Wales
Babcock Training	Education Workforce Council	OIA
Bangor University	ESTYN	Pembrokeshire College
Bridgend College	EWC	Pembrokeshire Local Authority
CACHE/NCFE	FSB Wales	PeoplePlus
Caerphilly CBC	Gower College Swansea	Powys County Council
Cambria	Grwp Llandrillo Menai	Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
Cambrian Training Company Limited	Grŵp Llandrillo Menai	Qualifications Wales
Cardiff and Vale College	GwE	Regional Learning and Skills Partnership South West and Mid Wales
Cardiff Met University	Gyrfa Cymru	Rhondda Cynon Taf
Cardiff Metropolitan University	HEFCW	Swansea University
Cardiff University	HEFCW - Higher Education Funding Council for Wales	Swansea Young Person Service - NEET Team
Careers Wales	ISA Training	The Open University in Wales
Carmarthenshire County Council	Merthyr Tydfil College	UCU
Ceredigion Council	National Education Union Cymru - ATL Section	Universities Wales
City and Council of Swansea	National Training Federation for Wales (NTfW)	University of Wales Trinity Saint David
Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol	Neath Port Talbot CBC	Welsh Government
Coleg Sir Gar	North Wales Training	Wrexham Glyndwr University

Annex C1 - Summary of Learner Voice event

The methods used in these consultation exercises were designed to allow the broadest possible range of learner and learning provider professionals to explore in detail their views about PCET in Wales and the proposed reforms. Because the sampling technique was purposive, and research and analysis methods were qualitative, it would not be appropriate to generalise the findings to all learner and provider groups in Wales, nor can they be regarded as exhaustive. However, the methods used allowed the consultation to generate a rich, qualitative narrative, useful insights and valuable information, and we are very grateful for all those who participated.

This summer, the Cabinet Secretary for Education published an initial consultation which proposes a 'made in Wales' approach to **post-compulsory education and training (PCET)** so that people can learn and acquire skills more easily throughout their careers.

As part of the wider consultation process, the SHELL Marketing and Communications Team delivered two events to provide opportunities for learners to have their voice heard on how this work is taken forward.

This report provides the feedback captured from the events to feed in to the consultation process.

Introduction

The first learner voice event was delivered at the Quay Hotel in Deganwy on 4 October 2017. This event secured 105 delegates made up of around 80 learners and 25 professionals.

The second event was held at the Motorpoint Arena in Cardiff on 12 October 2017. There were 109 delegates in attendance consisting of circa 85 learners and 24 professionals.

The events were designed to be interactive and stimulating, drawing on the use of voting key pads to gauge perceptions, audio-visual stimuli and facilitated table discussions. A host was used to guide the audience through proceedings³. The events were conducted in Welsh and English with people having the opportunity to engage in conversation in the language of their choice.

Questions and conversation topics were pre-established and developed in line with the consultation themes to support feedback into the wider process. The same content was delivered at both events with a view to capturing a stronger overall voice in relation to relevant consultation topics.

Executive summary

As part of the PCET reform consultation process, two specific events were delivered by the SHELL Marketing and Communications Team to provide opportunities for learners to have their voice heard. The events were delivered in Deganwy on 4 October 2017 and in Cardiff on 12 October 2017. A total of 214 delegates participated, which encompassed circa 165 learners. There was representation from learners across the various PCET sectors at both events.

The events were designed to be interactive and included facilitated table conversations based on pre-established themes relating to the consultation. The themes for the event were chosen on the basis of having greater direct relevance to learners so they felt able to participate fully in the process and included: (i) widening access and participation (ii) protecting the interests of learners, (iii) supporting learners to make good choices in their course/s or providers, and (iv) the Welsh language.

The points raised for each theme have been summarised within subsequent sections of this report.

One of the most raised topics across different conversation rounds was **information, advice and guidance for learners**. A need for more support in this area was expressed with many learners demonstrating that they are unaware of existing services and how to access them. Learners want to understand all of the options available to them and want assurances that the information, advice and guidance they receive is impartial and delivered in their best interests. The issue of lack of parity of esteem between academic and vocational routes was prevalent in conversations. 'Timing' was mentioned with younger learners looking for information and guidance much earlier than they receive at present. 'Individualised' was another descriptor, with learners seeking help in developing personal career pathways and tailored advice and guidance, appropriate to their needs. Learners value a central point of contact and web-based support, but emphasise that access to face-to-face support is also crucial.

Money and **fear of debt** were the most cited barriers which prevent learners accessing university. The trade-off between location and cost of transport was also raised in discussions about other forms of post-16 learning and in relation to the impact on learners of course or campus closures. Learners highlighted the importance of financial support along with early information on student finances to help with planning. Learners may struggle to continue with their course or further learning for a variety of reasons and it is important that they are able to access appropriate support in these circumstances. Overall, there were mixed views on the existing **staff support mechanisms** that are available, and it was suggested that the level and quality of support **need to be enhanced**.

In relation to the Welsh language, there was a general consensus amongst learners that it is important but **some questioned Welsh being compulsory in school**, stating that it should be a choice. Some positive comments were received about the opportunities learners' had received to study in the medium of Welsh, but the broad view is that there are **not enough opportunities to learn through Welsh**.

There was a general plea from adult learners who attended the events to recognise their needs as part of the reform process. The importance of access courses and community learning were discussed, along with a need to ensure appropriate support mechanisms to facilitate engagement and take-up, (e.g. crèche facilities and flexibility in hours and provision).

The evaluation of the events recorded that delegates felt they were extremely useful and provided an enjoyable, interactive platform to engage in discussions in a positive manner. People appreciated the diversity of learners at each event which generated a variety of interesting opinions and productive conversations. People also respected the event being delivered bilingually.

It is clear from the evaluation and final feedback that learners and other delegates highly valued being part of the consultation and want to continue to be engaged with each stage of the process. It will be important to demonstrate how the Welsh Government has listened to the feedback in the shaping and development of the reforms and the new Commission going forward.

The full version of the published report can be viewed at:

<https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/reformed-post-compulsory-education-and-training-system>

Annex C2 - List of Learner Voice event attendees

Acorn Training
ACT

Adult Community Learning Cardiff
Adult Learning Wales (*Bangor, Conwy Business Centre, Llandudno Football Club in the Community*)

Airbus

Bangor University – North & Mid
Wales Reaching Wider Partnership

Bedwas High School

Caerphill Parent Network

Cambrian Training

Cardiff University

Cardiff & Vale College

Ceredigion Community Learning
Centre

CITB Cymru

Coleg Cambria

Coleg Gwent

CollegesWales

Communities First East Cluster
(Newport)

Conwy Youth Service

Ebbw Vale Learning Action
Centre

Glyndwr University
Higher Education Funding
Council for Wales

ITEC Training Solutions

National Union of Students

NHS Wales Informatics

North Wales Training

People Plus

Prestatyn High School

Radyr Comprehensive School

Rhondda Cynon Taff County

Borough Council

Rhyl High School

Swansea University

The Bishop of Llandaff School

Tonyrefail School

Ysgol Bryn Gwalia

Ysgol Tryfan

Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern