Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

POST-COMPULSORY EDUCATION AND TRAINING (PCET)

PRINCIPLES FOR CHANGE

SUPPORTING THE PCET STRATEGIC VISION

WHY WE NEED CHANGE

INTRODUCTION

This document provides the context for the change we are seeking and the principles for change that guide the realisation of our PCET Strategic Vision.

Our school sixth forms, colleges, universities, training and adult learning providers are crucial to meeting the challenges that Wales will face in the near future:

- Recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic
- A new relationship with the European Union
- Dramatic longer term technological, environmental, cultural and demographic change

As a government we have recognised that we can work better across our economy and society to meet these challenges. The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 requires us to rethink how our PCET sector can better improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of current and future generations through longer term thinking, integrated policy making, collaboration between providers, and improved involvement of users and citizens.

The Hazelkorn Review identified challenges particular to the PCET sector including accelerating competition from within the UK and internationally, insufficient collaboration and duplication of roles, a lack of coherent learning pathways and educational opportunities and inadequate employment opportunities.

In many cases the challenges identified by Hazelkorn remain and have been exacerbated by accelerating social change and more immediate crises, in particular:

01 **Brexit and the UK in a changing world**

02 **Climate change and COVID-19**

03 **An ageing population**

04 **Digital transformation and automation of our economy**

05 **Economic and social inequality**

This document sets out what reform of the PCET sector should seek to achieve in addressing the aforementioned challenges, both within the sector and society at large.

MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE

Brexit - representing Wales in the UK and the wider-world

A changing UK and global context requires new thinking and a re-invigorated approach to our PCET sector's place within the UK and the wider-world. We must maintain and develop our PCET providers' connections beyond Wales and the UK in both education and research.

We will continue to support our PCET sector to build resilience and preparedness throughout the EU-transition period and beyond. Strengthening and deepening international education links, with and beyond the EU, will benefit individuals, providers, communities and industry.

As well as looking outward, we must also look to our PCET sector's connections with their local communities.

Although it is essential that PCET providers are global in outlook, they must first and foremost be good stewards of their place and the people living there through strong civic engagement and being integral to the communities they serve.

Climate and COVID-19 – combating the challenges of our time

Our PCET sector will be vital to overcoming the climate crisis and the immediate COVID-19 crisis. We must rebuild from COVID-19 with a greener economy, and our PCET sector will be integral to preparing people for new jobs utilising innovative new technologies. The sector will deliver world-leading research and innovation in health, clean energy, digital transformation, social sciences and the humanities that will help Welsh society to meet these challenges.

To realise the vision laid out in this document, we will need to sustain our PCET sector through the immediate challenges presented by COVID-19.

We will take steps to mitigate the disruption to learning created by the pandemic and give everyone the best chance to find and keep high quality fulfilling work with long term prospects.

We need to provide opportunities for people to develop their skills and to acquire new ones, and also to build upon the increased use of digital learning and working.

MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE

An ageing population – towards lifelong learning for skills and well-being

As the economy and labour market continue to change, and the population of Wales is set to grow older, lifelong learning has never been more important. Our PCET system must enable people of all ages to enter and re-enter learning at all skill levels, enabling constant improvement and independent learning.

Through our education reforms, and curriculum reform specifically, we have set out our aspirations for learners aged 3-16 in the future:

- Confident
- Ambitious
- Capable
- Enterprising

We wish to take these learners through to achieve their potential beyond compulsory education. The PCET sector must provide opportunities to build on this foundation. It is essential that people are equipped with the transferable skills and knowledge to thrive in a changing labour market throughout their lives. However, the benefits of lifelong learning go beyond economic gain. Education and training develops resilient, ambitious, fulfilled individuals and active citizens, able to contribute to their local community and wider society.

Successful engagement with learning is widely accepted as a significant determinant of life outcomes including health, socio-economic position and life expectancy. Learners of all ages should be provided with opportunities to develop their capabilities and competencies via a broad range of bilingual learning pathways at all levels of learning, whether full-time or part-time, based in the classroom, online or in the workplace. Individuals should be encouraged to take responsibility for their learning throughout their lifetime. We need to enable learners to transition smoothly between vocational and non-vocational routes. We must provide sound and well-timed advice to support learners' choices reflecting their own ambitions as well as the economic and social needs of Wales.

Digital transformation and automation

We need to seamlessly integrate digital technology into educational delivery and to innovate to find inclusive, accessible and bilingual approaches to enhance learners' experiences through technology, building on the Digital 2030 framework. Education and training providers need to equip learners and staff with the higher level digital skills, capabilities and confidence they will need to succeed in everyday life and in work in a digital world. Our research and innovation ecosystem must be at the forefront of new developments in technology and digital transformation.

A truly effective post-compulsory education system must also be supported by digital, data and technology systems that are secure, compliant with legislative requirements, and make use of emerging technology.

Economic inequality - enabling economic and social justice

Wales continues to face the challenges of an unequal economy, a need for better economic opportunities outside of growing urban areas, and a lack of skills in communities hurt by deindustrialisation. A more equal PCET sector is essential to breaking down the inequalities we see in society: in particular inequalities of class, geography, race, gender and disability. We need systematic action to break down the inequalities of access, attainment and employment outcomes that we continue to see across education.

We must work towards true equality of esteem across all forms of post-compulsory education and training, and a gradual dismantling of traditional hierarchies between learners, providers and sectors.

A MORE EQUAL WALES

Lifelong learning

- We will establish a right to lifelong learning; widening access to skills and knowledge throughout lives and careers, increasing the proportion of PCET students and learners who are returning to education later in life.
- Individuals will engage with learning at different points in their lives and be offered a wide range of learning opportunities that fit around their family and work commitments.
- We will continue to innovate in funding policy to remove barriers to post-compulsory education.

Diverse and flexible

- The PCET sector will expand its offer of programmes and courses which support learners to develop their skills and capabilities to realise their aspirations, and secure, meaningful and fair work.
- We will expand part-time, postgraduate, work-based, and accredited short-course learning options to meet the increasingly diverse needs of lifelong learners wishing to gradually acquire skills and qualifications, where appropriate, throughout their lives. This will also include expanding apprenticeships, alternative and flexible routes into key public service professions, and short-term provision which develops critical business and digital skills.
- We will continue to develop and strengthen the apprenticeship programme in Wales so that it better meets the needs of the economy, employers and apprentices.
- We will encourage the flexible delivery of learning to support people in work to upskill and reskill, and for employers to develop their workforce.

Information, advice and guidance

- We will work collaboratively with schools to provide learners with the information, support and guidance they need to move seamlessly from compulsory to post-compulsory education.
- We will enable learners to build on the knowledge and skills they have acquired in the school curriculum as they progress through college, university and training.
- We will work with providers and key partners including Careers Wales, to ensure that high quality independent advice and guidance for education and career pathways is available to all.
- We will, wherever possible, simplify, clarify and make more flexible the qualification pathway options available for learners to continuously build on and adapt their skill sets in an increasingly diverse and changing economy.

Fair access and equitable progression and attainment

- Our PCET system will ensure that all who have the potential to benefit from learning and development have an opportunity to undertake it.
- We will empower the new Commission to be proactive in ensuring more equitable entry to post-compulsory education and training.
- We will closely monitor and seek to eliminate inequalities of race, gender, class, age and disability in access, progression and attainment within post-compulsory education.
- Our providers will lead the way in sharing effective practice in supporting learners from under-represented groups or with additional learning needs to access and succeed in post-compulsory education, including through pedagogical practices and leadership.

- Our PCET sector will equip people not just for work, but for a healthy and fulfilling life.
- We will improve, support and encourage the well-being and mental health of learners and staff, making Wales a leading place to work and study.

A PROSPEROUS WALES

Collaboration

- Our providers will collaborate in their mission and delivery, with each other and with employers, responding to the regional demand for employment and skills. This will ensure greater economies of scale, increase learner choice, and facilitate flexible learner pathways.
- We will build on a regional approach to collaboration through the Regional Skills Partnerships, City and Growth Deals, and the Regional Economic Frameworks to optimise opportunities to raise the capability and adaptability of the existing workforce, and grow particular occupations and sectors for the future.
- We will encourage collaboration in the sector to participate in UK-wide opportunities such as the UK Industrial Strategy and Shared Prosperity Fund to ensure a joined up approach to benefit learners and employers.
- The new Commission will review funding processes, including arrangements for delivery of the local area curriculum offers for 16-19 year olds, to support collaboration and partnership working and minimise wasteful competition.

Differentiation

- Our providers will develop their distinctive strengths, so that between them they offer diverse learning opportunities and entry-points appropriate to local, regional and national contexts.
- The Commission will ensure that performance management and monitoring of the sector recognises the different contributions of our diverse range of providers, and that regulation incentivises positive behaviours and relationships which support learners.
- The Commission will foster mission differentiation and specialisation, recognising different but not mutually exclusive strengths in research, teaching and lifelong learning right across the sector.

Research

- We will grow the scale, breadth and depth of our research and innovation base, through increased engagement between our universities, colleges and the private, public, and third sectors.
- We will ensure that our research and innovation system remains competitive through a mix of curiosity-driven research and challenge-led research and innovation.
- We will create a more dynamic and responsive-to-need research, innovation and knowledge translation environment in Wales.
- We will identify opportunities for collaboration and partnership to secure new sources of UK-wide and international funding for research in Wales.
- We will identify opportunities to build education research capacity to help further improve our education sector and the learner experience within our schools and PCET sectors.

Innovation and enterprise

- We will continue to work with PCET providers, private companies and social businesses to improve the business incubator and innovation centre support for new firms in Wales.

- We will build on current strengths in innovation and develop new areas of specialism and excellence.
- We will continue to develop an entrepreneurial culture in PCET providers, providing opportunities for students, staff and host communities.

Employability

- We will work with the compulsory education sector to enable individuals to be creative, ambitious, and confident entrants into the employment market.
- We will ensure that high-level skills, opportunities and qualifications, where appropriate, are available to all, and are portable, identifiable and aid movement across the changing economy.
- We will continue to open up opportunities for learners through links with business to make Wales a vibrant economy where learners want to be inspired, live and work.

A WALES OF VIBRANT CULTURE AND WELSH LANGUAGE

Welsh language and Welsh-medium education

- The PCET sector is critical to the achievement of the Cymraeg 2050 vision of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. We will increase the availability of Welsh-medium post-compulsory education to broaden the choice for learners to continue to study through the medium of Welsh from school to employment.
- We will identify roles within the economy where there are shortages of individuals able to undertake their role bilingually.
- We will increase the availability of Welsh-medium technical and vocational provision and support our learners to engage confidently in these.
- We will promote the use of Welsh as an academic medium including supporting research through the medium of Welsh.
- We will expand opportunities for all PCET learners, whatever their first language, to develop and broaden their understanding and engagement with the Welsh language and Welsh cultural life.

Arts and culture

- Our PCET sector will be integral to cultural and artistic life in Wales, collaborating with national institutions such as the National Library, National Museum, Cadw, the Arts Council for Wales, and more.
- We will continue to fund and support research and engagement in the arts and humanities, to expand the development of skills needed for the creative industries and arts sectors and to support individuals to engage in arts and culture throughout their lives.

A RESILIENT WALES AND A GLOBALLY RESPONSIBLE WALES

Student and learner experience

- The new Commission will put the interests of learners at the centre of everything it does and align with the purpose-led learning of the pre-16 Curriculum for Wales. The Commission will ensure that Welsh PCET providers lead the UK in learner and student engagement and representation.
- Whilst developing our ambitions for the PCET sector we will be mindful of the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and focus on meaningful actions for the benefit of children and young people.
- Practitioners and learners will benefit from high quality educational experiences informed by up to date research, appropriate learning environments, and linked to new and relevant technologies.
- Building on our school curriculum reforms, we will co-construct a new curriculum for learners aged 16-19, which aligns with the Curriculum for Wales. We will develop new methods for assessing and articulating how post-compulsory learning equips students with the knowledge, skills, purpose and competencies to succeed in life and work.
- Our teaching professionals will collaborate, be open to new ideas, and new learning and will seek to raise standards for all learners.
- We will work in collaboration with the post-16 sector and the Education Workforce Council to develop a Professional Development Framework that will aid staff within the sector to expand their skills and support their career progression.
- We will enrich the learning experiences and meet the needs and expectations of individuals with Additional Learning Needs (ALN).

Oversight and performance monitoring

- We will establish an effective, resilient, and collaborative Commission for Tertiary Education and Research, responsible for day-to-day oversight of the PCET sector and our higher and further education institutions, which will continually challenge providers to improve and develop.
- We will reform funding and performance monitoring based on longer-term agreements between the Commission and providers, ensuring that the PCET system delivers against clear performance objectives.
- The Commission will create a consistent approach to the assessment of the quality of teaching and learning across the PCET sector based on shared principles.
- The Commission, working closely with Estyn and a designated quality body for higher education and providers, will ensure a self-improving PCET system across the existing sectors through smart, effective and supportive oversight.

Strong and sustainable providers

- We will seek to utilise opportunities for collaboration to improve the efficiency and economic resilience of our PCET providers, maximising the value that we can create for learners through optimal allocation of resources.
- We will ensure the highest standards of governance and assurance in our PCET providers, and maximise public and stakeholder confidence in them.

A WALES OF COHESIVE COMMUNITIES AND A HEALTHIER WALES

Civic mission and leading place

- Our PCET providers will be socially responsible civic leaders – delivering social innovation and civic engagement at a national and community level alongside civic partners in health, education, local government and other public services.
- Our PCET sector will build future leadership capacity across civic society, and support community and educational organisations through their expertise, experience, resources and facilities.
- Our PCET sector will lead the way in our efforts to combat the climate crisis by providing the skills we need for sustainable development and to decarbonise our economy.

International

- We will ensure we further strengthen international education and organisational partnerships benefitting students, researchers, providers, economic regions and the nation as a whole.
- We will work across the full PCET sector to expand bilateral education and research relationships, marketing Wales as a destination of choice for students.
- We will provide quality international opportunities for Welsh students and learners by expanding the current outward student mobility scheme to further education students and apprentices.
- We will continue alignment between Welsh and UK qualification frameworks and the European Qualifications Framework to support progression and mobility to and from Wales.

Public sector partnership

- The new Commission will collaborate with the broadest possible range of stakeholders from the public sector, third sector, private sector, and civic society.
- We will continue to build on the strong partnerships between universities, colleges, independent providers and schools to improve leadership and governance, build capacity in key disciplines, and offer innovative progression opportunities to pupils.
- Our PCET sector will continue to provide the skills, development and support opportunities required for a thriving NHS in Wales.

Social Partnership

- We will build on the Welsh Government's proposals to introduce a legislative framework for strengthening social partnership arrangements and deliver a more equal Wales by integrating the principles of social partnership into the organisation of our PCET sector and institutions.
- Our PCET providers will lead the way in ethical and socially responsible employment and procurement.

Digital ISBN 978-1-80082-525-3

OGL © Crown Copyright 2020