

Equity and Excellence: Further and higher education national mission report

<p>Delivered the 'Diamond Dividend' to our higher education sector, increasing funding to and through HEFCW by 80% since 2016.</p>	<p>Invested £15.5m in new Personal Learning Accounts, fully funding more than 2,000 individuals to gain higher-level skills in key economic and employment sectors.</p>		<p>More than 16,000 learners from years 8-13 supported through our two new Seren Programmes, at the heart of Wales' first ever More Able and Talented Strategy.</p>		<p>Funded, developed and expanded an innovative national schools-undergraduate mentoring scheme, supporting take-up of subjects such as physics and languages and developing students' communication and teaching skills.</p>		<p>In 2019, we invested an extra £8.4m in Ser Cymru to support international academic and industrial partnerships focused on research excellence.</p>	<p>We have introduced a Master's bursary for STEMM, supporting students to come home to Wales, or to progress at our universities. We are investing in developing and recruiting our own talent.</p>
<p>Through direct funding and strategic partnerships, we have supported the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol in making significant progress in post-16 bilingual education and training. This includes a focus on college provision in priority areas such as Health & Social Care, Childcare and Public Services.</p>		<p>We have invested in the re-establishment of research and innovation funding delivering on a recommendation of both the Diamond and Reid Reviews. This supports universities and researchers to work with industry and business.</p>		<p>We have widened access to international opportunities for students, researchers and institutions. This includes Wales' first ever national outward mobility scheme, national agreements with partners such as Vietnam and partnerships with universities such as Yale and MIT.</p>				
<p>In the last two years, alone we have invested over £55.7m to support mental health and wellbeing in colleges and universities.</p>		<p>Our higher education sector, including all universities, HEFCW and Student Finance Wales now pay the Real Living Wage, meeting staff costs of living right across the country. This is unique in the UK.</p>	<p>We have delivered a progressive and equitable student support system that is unique in Europe for financing full and part time undergraduates and postgraduates with living costs grants and loans.</p>		<p>Wales outperforms other UK nations in successful graduate start-ups and our Youth Entrepreneurship Programme will help create 900 new businesses by the end of the year.</p>	<p>Thanks to our Seren Programme, there has been a 55% increase in state school admissions from Wales to Oxford, and a 33% increase in admissions to Cambridge.</p>		<p>We lead the way on universities' civic mission – with the sector acting as stewards of community and country. The new unique national Civic Mission Network and Civic Mission Framework brings together projects, activities and ambitions.</p>
	<p>Working with the FE sector, we have introduced the first ever made in Wales Professional Standards for FE Teachers and WBL practitioners.</p>		<p>Since the 2015/16 academic year, thanks to our student finance reform, there has been a 51% increase in first year, full-time postgraduates from Wales and a 20% increase in first year, part-time postgraduates from Wales.</p>	<p>The existing Ser Cymru research groups are making significant impacts in their areas of research and innovation endeavour, for example, Swansea, Aberystwyth and Bangor Universities are making impacts in compound semiconductor developments, environmental remote monitoring and nuclear.</p>	<p>We are investing £20m in our innovative degree apprenticeship programme – supporting over 200 employers and 600 learners.</p>	<p>We have recognised and supported the role that FE and HE institutions have to play in helping Wales to recover from the effects of the pandemic. From designing and manufacturing PPE, to supporting the NHS and wider community; helping furloughed workers through online resources to providing free mental health support for medical and healthcare workers, they have proved to be essential.</p>		