

9 August 2022

Dear ,

ATISN 16498

Thank you for your request which I received on 25th July 2022. You asked for:

1. The initial and any post project proposals for the Seren Programme Wales 2015-2022
2. Who proposed the project
3. Stakeholders: names and organisations involved in the project
4. Which organisations received funding to spearhead the projects 2015-2022
5. How much funding was allocated to the organisation(s)
6. Equal Education Partners' role in the project

The information you requested is enclosed. I have answered 1,2 together as they contain common themes, likewise 3, 4 & 5 are answered together and 6 is separate. I've grouped them as follows:

1. The initial project proposal and who it was proposed by and any post project proposals for the Seren Programme Wales 2015-2022
2. Stakeholders: names and organisations involved in the project, who received funding and how much was allocated to these organisations during 2015 – 2022.
3. Equal Education Partners' role in the project

Our response

1. The initial project proposal and who it was proposed by and any post project proposals for the Seren Programme Wales 2015-2022

Seren is a collaboration between state schools, colleges, universities, Alumni, Local Authorities, Welsh Government, and third sector organisations working in partnership to support Seren students. The Seren Network was established by the Welsh Government in direct response to the need to halt the decline in the number of successful applications being made by students in Wales to attend Oxford and Cambridge Universities.

During 2013, Paul Murphy MP, the former Secretary of State for Wales, was appointed the Welsh Government's Oxbridge Ambassador and was tasked with undertaking research to understand the factors, which accounted for the decline and to put forward a series of recommendations to address the issues.

In his final report published in August 2014, the Oxbridge Ambassador recommended that 'a national network of partnership hubs should be established to ensure that schools and colleges can learn from each other and share resources to support their most academically able students'. This recommendation effectively laid the foundations for the establishment of the Seren Network.

[Oxbridge Ambassador Final Report \(gov.wales\)](#)

The Minister agreed to implement this recommendation, and officially launched the Seren Network in January 2015. The Network consisted of eleven geographical hubs. Three pilot hubs were launched in January 2015 and the remaining nine hubs were established over the course of 2015/16, with the last established in November 2016.

Now 12 hubs, each hub comprises a partnership of schools and further education colleges in a local area, working together alongside local authorities and education consortia to deliver super-curricular (stretch and challenge) as well as guidance and support for university preparation, from completion of the application form through to interview.

Here is an evaluation of the Seren programme published 05/02/2018 where you'll see programme recommendations.

[Evaluation of the Seren Network | GOV.WALES](#)

2. Stakeholders: names and organisations involved in the project, who received funding and how much was allocated to these organisations during 2015 – 2022.

Seren's immediate stakeholders are 12 regional hub coordinators. Seren provides grant funding to these coordinators via their local authority. For financial years 20/21, 21/22 and 22/23 they receive an annual total of £988,000 of grant funding.

[seren-regional-hubs-contact-details-for-schools-parents-and-carers.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

Seren also has a national events delivery contract in place since 21/22. The contract was procured via the Welsh Government's communications framework and awarded to Cazbah who in 21/22 received £1,099,570 and £1,017,194 projected for 22/23.

3. Equal Education Partners' role in the project

Equal Education are a sub-contractor of Cazbah. Their role is to support Cazbah with the content of the events they deliver, a new online portal for Seren learners, manage partnerships with Universities in Wales and develop a series of summer schools.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely

