

DIARY CASE



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PREAMBLE

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Meeting date/time | [REDACTED] |
| Who is the Minister meeting? | [REDACTED] [REDACTED] |
| Who requested the meeting? | [REDACTED] |
| Primary purpose | [REDACTED] |
| Is there an agreed agenda? | [REDACTED] [REDACTED] |
| Which officials are supporting the Minister? | [REDACTED] [REDACTED] |
| Where is the meeting? | [REDACTED] [REDACTED] |
| Other practical considerations | |

DIARY CASE BRIEFING

Purpose

The Chair of Universities Wales requested a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Education for a discussion about the financial position within the higher education sector.

Agenda items for discussion are:

1. Current Financial Position of Welsh Higher Education Institutions and the steps institutions are taking to manage it.
2. An update on Universities UK position

Current position and issues to note

Universities in Wales, and across the UK, are currently facing financial challenges. These challenges include, but are not exclusive to:

- The current inflationary pressures on all pay and non-pay costs, particularly in relation to the annual staff pay negotiations.
- Current high energy costs due to the nature of most of the sector's estate. All institutions have included either increased inflationary rates for utilities and / or expenditure contingencies in their most recent forecasts to HEFCW, in recognition of the uncertainty in this area.
- Reducing numbers of international students.

Several universities, including **Cardiff, Swansea, Cardiff Metropolitan, the University of South Wales and Aberystwyth** have recently launched voluntary redundancy schemes.

The Welsh Government has allocated just over £197m to HEFCW in 2024-25 to fund higher education. Due to ongoing financial challenges, this is a reduction from previous years.

As a direct response to the inflationary pressures experienced by higher education providers, the Welsh Government has raised the fee limit for full-time higher education courses in Wales to £9250. These changes are introduced for the 2024/25 academic year to enable providers to increase fees and reduce the financial pressures on them as soon as possible. We continue to work with the sector to facilitate implementation. The increased tuition fee cap will be the same as that already charged by higher education providers in England to all students, including those from Wales.

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