

Minister for Further and Higher Education and University and College Union in Wales
representatives

Teams meeting, 10:00am, 17 October 2024

Attendees

Minister for Further and Higher Education (**MFHE**)

Jamie Insole, UCU Cymru, Senior Policy and Political Officer (**JI**)

Gareth Lloyd, UCU Cymru, Official (**GL**)

Zenny Saunders DD Learner Experience Division (**ZS**)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

MFHE – welcomed UCU and keen to establish a good working relationship.

[REDACTED] - V good relations in months since Medr established and with WG colleagues. However, that hasn't translated to the draft strategic plan. **[REDACTED]** has had further conversations; appears to be an oversight but keen for the plan to recognise value of Social Partnership (SP).

Strategic duty 11 promotes collaboration with the workforce but is absent so far from the plan. Social partnership (SP) can bring palpable benefits for the learner, as seen in Coleg Cambria.

Concerned as the final strategic plan will act as a central message to the sector. Currently has a very narrow focus. Without ref to TUs it would not distinguish them as creative partners; would like to see it amended to include TUs.

MFHE – Agreed the strategic duty is there. Points noted chime with WG views. Meeting with Medr later today and will raise the issue directly.

[REDACTED] – Secretary of Joint Trade Unions (JTU). Himself and Chair of JTUs can speak on behalf of all TUs as long as feedback given to other recognised unions.

Gave a social partnerships projects overview. Pilots successfully run in Coleg Gwent and Coleg Cambria as first phase. Less involvement overall now in the Coleg from TUs where there is meaningful social partnership. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Previously not enough collaboration between unions and employer on important decisions, this now rectified in those colleges actively working in this way.

[REDACTED]

However, university funding is an issue. [REDACTED]

MFHE – Agreed private office will arrange regular meetings (Action point).

GL - Schools side have regular social partnership group meetings. Not enough TUs in FE and HE sectors to warrant this. [REDACTED]

UCU and JTUs keen to see more school and FE/HE collaboration, with Welsh schools visiting all Welsh colleges/universities. No one currently with responsibility for bringing them together. Aspirations for learners is crucial but this needs to go beyond Seren students visiting Oxford and Cambridge. All learners in schools need to know what is available and the pathways to take to get into further and higher education courses that appeal to them, that is the answer to continuous learning and participation in education and training.

[REDACTED] – TUs have expertise in the sector and can provide the right contacts. Need to see tangible change in messaging and approach for pathways to HE. Different pathways not always being promoted to all learners. Discussions held with Careers Wales, but messages need to be clear on the ground.

Vocational courses are taught very differently. Need sufficient practitioner training and clear pathways for learners.

MFHE – Has visited USW recently, pleased to see strategic partnership working with 5 FE colleges.

Agree need more visibility of pathways; having talks with officials and comms on how to get message to young people through social media etc.

ZS - Will put officials in touch with UCU to have some first-hand experience re professional learning and learner pathways. **Action**

MFHE - Aiming to visit all institutions by spring so would like to get insight into social partnerships. Request for contacts, points to discuss, best practice.

[REDACTED] – Will send info on Social Partnerships.

MFHE – Attending Colegau Cymru conference next week. Might see GL there.

[REDACTED] – Social Partnership is a process, method of working, needs to be promoted across all F&HE.

UCU had minimal engagement from HEFCW with TUs on collaborative projects previously, possibly indicating a training need. Minister may wish to raise this with Medr.

UCU want to see tangible things that work and generate cost savings.

[REDACTED] - Coordinated online professional development for teachers demonstrating lifelong learning could help.

UCU reiterated that they want to work closely and in partnership with WG and Medr for the benefit of learners.

MFHE – thanked UCU officials for their time and private Office will be in touch re future meetings. Please get in touch if any questions.

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