

National Assembly for Wales
Research paper

Further Education structure in Wales

April 2013

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Research paper

Further Education structure in Wales

April 2013

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Further Education (FE) includes education and training provision mainly for people aged over 16, from basic skills and work-based training to foundation level degrees. FE programmes are mainly taught in FE colleges, work-based and adult community learning environments. This research paper focuses on FE colleges in Wales and examines the context of recent mergers and collaborations. A range of statistics are included to detail the structure of the FE environment in Wales.

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Further Education structure in Wales

1. Introduction

Further Education (FE) includes education and training provision mainly for people aged 16 and over¹, from basic skills and work-based training to foundation level degrees. FE programmes are mainly taught in FE colleges, work-based and adult community learning environments. This research paper focuses on FE colleges in Wales and examines the context of recent mergers and collaborations. A range of statistics are included to detail the structure of the FE environment in Wales.

¹ In 2010/11, 2.7% of learners in FE colleges/ institutions were aged under 16 years (see Table 2 in this briefing)

2. Background

Mergers have been a key feature of the FE sector for many years and have been brought about by changes in funding structures and the Welsh Government's Transformation agenda.

2.1. General background

The ***Further and Higher Education Act 1992***² meant that Welsh FE colleges were no longer under local authority control and became legally separate corporations. FE colleges became responsible for their own governance arrangements, finance, estates, human resource systems, curriculum portfolios and many other elements.

Initially FE colleges received funding through the Further Education Funding Council for Wales (FEFCW). Under the ***Learning and Skills Act 2000***³ the National Council for Education and Training for Wales was established, which became known as ELWa. ELWa replaced the FEFCW with the remit of planning and funding post-16 learning and aimed to develop a coherent FE structure. ELWa was merged into the Welsh Government in April 2006. The Welsh Government's Department for Education and Skills (DfES) now funds each FE college directly as well as FE colleges being able to generate their own income.

ColegauCymru / Colleges Wales is the national education charity that represents all the Further Education colleges and institutions in Wales, It is a voluntary membership organisation.

2.2. Transformation agenda

The FE sector is a key partner for delivering the Welsh Government's Transformation agenda. In 2008 the Welsh Government published *Transforming Education and Training Provision in Wales*⁴ which highlighted the need for secondary schools, further education institutes (FEIs) and higher education institutes (HEIs) to work more collaboratively and reduce inefficiencies in order to improve the provision of post 16 learning opportunities.

There is a large number of further education and work-based training providers in Wales and rationalisation would help strengthen strategic management, improve efficiency and better meet current and future demand for relevant high quality education and training delivery.⁵

To progress the Transformation agenda the Welsh Government proposed that geographic and sectoral Learning Partnerships should be established to improve institutional effectiveness and the quality of provision.

² [Further and Higher Education Act 1992](#), (Chapter 15) [accessed 8 March 2013]

³ [Learning and Skills Act 2000](#), (Chapter 30) [accessed 8 March 2013]

⁴ Welsh Government, [Transforming Education and Training Provision in Wales](#), September 2008 [accessed 8 March 2013]

⁵ Welsh Government, [Transforming Education and Training Provision in Wales](#), September 2008 [accessed 8 March 2013]

3. FE college mergers

College mergers started to happen in the mid to late 1990s as partnerships were formed with large institutions merging with smaller institutions. **Merthyr Tydfil College** made history in Wales by being the first FE to merge with a Higher Education Institute, the University of Glamorgan, in 2006.

3.1. *Proposed mergers between 2008 and 2012*

In September 2008, there were **25 Further Education Institutes (FEIs)** existed in Wales. **Six FEI merger proposals** were submitted to the Welsh Government between 2008 and 2012; these included:

- Barry College and Coleg Glan Hafren
- Gorseinon and Swansea Colleges
- Deeside and Llysfasi Colleges (with formal links with Yale College and in addition to the Welsh College of Horticulture merger)
- Coleg Meirion Dwyfor, Llandrillo College (with links to Bangor University) and Coleg Menai
- WEA South and Coleg Harlech WEA (North)⁶

Apart from WEA South and Coleg Harlech WEA (North) these merger proposals have gone ahead leaving **18 FEIs in total**. These are made up of 14 FE corporations and four designated FE institutions (Coleg Harlech WEA North, St. David's Catholic College, WEA South and YMCA Community College)⁷. FE corporations each have a governing body as prescribed by the *Further and Higher Education Act 1992*. FE institutions provide courses for part time adult learners using premises located in communities and are directed by the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* and the *Further Education and Training Act 2007*.

In November 2009 the Welsh Government published **Transformation - Y Siwrnai**⁸ as an update to the Transformation policy. This document states:

Whilst the sector has generally responded well to the Transformation Policy some colleges are not currently involved in merger arrangements, and a few appear to be proposing limited interaction with other providers.

⁶ ColegauCymru, [Our Members](#) [accessed 8 March 2013]

⁷ ColegauCymru, [Wales' Colleges](#) [accessed 8 March 2013]

⁸ Welsh Government, [Transformation – Y Siwrnai - Transforming Education and Training Provision in Wales](#), November 2009 [accessed 8 March 2013]

The structure of education services in Wales – Independent Task and Finish Group Report⁹ published by the Welsh Government in March 2011 recommended the continued rationalisation of Welsh colleges and their estates to between **eight and twelve FE corporate entities by August 2013**. ColegauCymru responded to the Independent Task and Finish Group Report stating:

Taken as a whole, the report is interesting and stimulating. It includes sound recommendations that we look forward to putting into practice. It also includes some possibly controversial recommendations that will be challenging to implement and raises some important questions.¹⁰

3.2. Further mergers expected by August 2013

The Welsh Government Minister for Education and Skills stated in July 2012 that the FE sector has responded well to the Transformation programme and that a **further three college mergers are expected by August 2013**¹¹. Since July 2012 the following mergers have been announced:

- Yale College and Deeside College will merge on 1 August 2013 to form **Coleg Cambria**¹²
- Ystrad Mynach College and Coleg Morgannwg will merge in August 2013 to form **Coleg y Cymoedd**, or College of the Valleys¹³
- **Coleg Powys and Neath Port Talbot College** will merge on 1 August 2013¹⁴

Coleg Sir Gâr¹⁵ and **Coleg Ceredigion**¹⁶ have both asked the Welsh Government for funding to support their merger business cases with the **University of Wales, Trinity Saint David**. Pembrokeshire College is also keen to engage in discussions around a dual sector (FE and HE) university to form a regional South West Wales alliance.^{17 18}

⁹ Welsh Government, [The structure of education services in Wales – Independent Task and Finish Group Report](#), March 2011 [accessed 8 March 2013]

¹⁰ ColegauCymru, News Release, [Future Proofing Further Education](#), March 2011 [accessed 8 March 2013]

¹¹ Welsh Government, [White Paper – Further and Higher Education \(Wales\) Bill](#), July 2012 [accessed 8 March 2013]

¹² Deeside College, [Coleg Cambria – the new college for North East Wales](#), 3 December 2013 [accessed 5 March 2013]

¹³ Coleg Morgannwg, College News, [New name reflects landscape of college](#), 21 February 2013 [accessed 5 March 2013]

¹⁴ Neath Port Talbot College, News/ Events, [Coleg Powys and Neath Port Talbot College announce merger plans](#), 25 September 2012 [accessed 5 March 2013]

¹⁵ Welsh Government, Decision reports, [Funding to support the merger of Coleg Sir Gâr and the University of Wales, Trinity Saint David](#), 5 November 2012 [accessed 5 March 2013]

¹⁶ Welsh Government, Decision reports, [Funding to support the merger of Coleg Ceredigion with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David](#), 7 February 2013 [accessed 5 March 2013]

¹⁷ Welsh Government, [Programme for Government – 2012 Annex – Education](#), May 2012 [accessed 5 March 2013]

¹⁸ University of Wales Trinity Saint David, [Transforming Education...Transforming Lives](#), 2012 [accessed 5 March 2013]

The WEA South and Coleg Harlech WEA (North) merger has not progressed. A written statement issued in January 2013 by the Minister for Education and Skills stated:

Coleg Harlech WEA North notified my official before Christmas of financial difficulties that have led to an overall financial position that is £900,000 worse than anticipated. (...) Whilst the issue is being investigated the proposed merger with the WEA South will still be progressed, but its success will of course be influenced by the outcomes of the financial investigations.¹⁹

¹⁹ Welsh Government, Leighton Andrews (Minister for Education and Skills), [Coleg Harlech WEA North Financial Position](#), Cabinet Written Statement, 30 January 2013 [accessed 6 March 2013]

3.3. *Current situation*

As at **8 March 2013** the following **18 FEIs** were in existence:

3.3.1. *FE corporations*

- **Bridgend College**
- **Cardiff and Vale College** (Barry College merged with Coleg Glan Hafren in August 2011)
- **Coleg Ceredigion**
- **Coleg Gwent** (Created from five colleges - Usk, Newport, Cross Keys, Ebbw Vale and Pontypool colleges)
- **Coleg Morgannwg** (Includes Pontypridd and Rhondda Colleges (1995) and Aberdare College (2003))
- **Coleg Powys**
- **Coleg Sir Gâr**
- **Deeside College** (Merged with Coleg Llysfasi (August 2010) and the Welsh College of Horticulture (August 2009))
- **Gower College Swansea** (Swansea College merged with Gorseinon College in August 2010)
- **Grŵp Llandrillo Menai** (Coleg Llandrillo merged with Coleg Meirion Dwyfor (2010) and Coleg Menai in April 2012)
- **Neath Port Talbot College** (Created from the merger of Afan College and Neath College in 1999)
- **Pembrokeshire College**
- **Yale College**
- **Ystrad Mynach College**

3.3.2. *FE institutions*

- **Coleg Harlech WEA North**
- **St. David's Catholic College**
- **WEA South**
- **YMCA Community College**

3.3.3. *Other*

- **Merthyr Tydfil College** ceased to be a FEI when it merged with the University of Glamorgan in May 2006.

4. FE college characteristics

The tables below display a range of data showing the number of learners, age of learners, number of learning activities by learning aim and subject area and the number of staff by FEI.

4.1. Latest data available – 2011/12

The latest data available for the total number of learners in FEIs is for the academic year 2011/12. The Welsh Government's first release [Further Education, Work-based Learning and Community Learning in Wales, 2011/12](#) states:

The figures in this release show a decline in overall learner numbers between 2010/11 and 2011/12 (...) Total numbers at FE institution fell by 3.8 per cent, with full-time learner numbers changing little (0.8 per cent fall) and part-time learner numbers at FEIs 5.1 per cent lower.²⁰

The latest data available at an individual FEI level is for 2010/11 and all the following tables are based on this data. 2011/12 data at individual FEI level is due to be published in May 2013.

4.2. Number of learners

Table 1 provides data on the current 18 existing FEIs from 2006/07 to 2010/11 taking into account mergers that have happened before March 2013. Merthyr Tydfil College is included in the table as FE learning activities still take place in this college although it technically ceased to be an FEI in 2006.

Table 1 shows that:

- A total of 195,900 learners were studying at Welsh FEIs in 2010/11.
- Between 2006/07 and 2010/11 the number of learners at Welsh FEIs fell by 22 per cent.
- After the mergers, Grŵp Llandrillo Menai had the highest number of learners in 2010/11, 29,430. St David's Catholic College (with 1,535 learners) and Merthyr Tydfil College (with 635 learners) have the lowest numbers of learners.
- The largest decrease in learner numbers between 2006/07 and 2010/11 was experienced by Deeside College, 41.5%, followed by Coleg Ceredigion which saw a fall of 40.5% in the same period.
- The YMCA Community College saw a rise of 29.4% in the number of learners between 2006/07 and 2010/11.

²⁰ Welsh Government, [First Release – Further Education, Work-based Learning and Community Learning in Wales, 2011/12](#), 26 March 2013 [accessed 15 April 2013]

Looking at the Welsh population there has been:

- An overall fall in the number of 16 to 19 years olds between 2007 and 2011 (4.5%).
- In contrast the number of people aged over 20 in Wales has increased by 16.5% in the same period.
- The number of learners in Welsh FEIs aged 16, 18 and 19 fell between 2007 and 2011, however the decline in learner numbers appears to be more pronounced in the 25 and over age groups.
- This is explored in more detail in section 4.5.

Table 1: Number of learners by Further Education Institute (FEI); 2006/07 to 2010/11

Further Education Institute	Number of learners		Percentage change
	2006/07	2010/11	2006/07 to 2010/11
Bridgend College	11,530	9,540	-17.3
Cardiff and Vale College	22,395	18,510	-17.3
Coleg Ceredigion	3,815	2,270	-40.5
Coleg Gwent	31,590	24,495	-22.5
Coleg Harlech WEA (North)	4,800	4,825	0.5
Coleg Morgannwg	12,100	9,175	-24.2
Coleg Powys	6,500	4,785	-26.4
Coleg Sir Gar	10,435	7,815	-25.1
Deeside College	30,270	17,705	-41.5
Gower College Swansea	22,455	15,995	-28.8
Grŵp Llandrillo Menai	32,675	29,430	-9.9
Merthyr Tydfil College	615	635	3.3
Neath Port Talbot College	15,110	10,960	-27.5
Pembrokeshire College	10,610	7,765	-26.8
St David's Catholic College	1,295	1,535	18.5
WEA South	6,525	7,230	10.8
Yale College	14,925	11,230	-24.8
YMCA Community College	3,415	4,420	29.4
Ystrad Mynach College	10,225	7,575	-25.9
Total	251,280	195,900	-22.0

Source: Research Service calculations from [StatsWales Number of learners by provider and mode of study](#) [accessed 5 March 2013]

Notes:

Totals may not sum due to rounding

Data for the academic year 2011/12 is due to be published in May 2013.

4.3. Age of learners – all age bands

Table 2 below shows the age of learners by each FEI. This reveals that after the mergers:

- Learners aged 20 to 64 make up over three fifths (63.5%) of all learners in FE colleges.
- St David’s Catholic College has the highest proportion of learners aged 19 or under, 99.7%.
- Coleg Ceredigion has the highest proportion of learners aged under 16, 25.6%.
- The YMCA Community College has the highest proportion of learners aged 20 to 64, 80.0%.
- Coleg Harlech WEA (North) has the highest percentage of learners aged 65 or over, 17.4%.

Table 2: Percentage of learners in each age band by FEI; 2010/11

Further Education Institute	Percentage of learners				
	Aged under 16	Aged 16 to 19	Aged 20 to 64	Aged 65 and over	Age unknown
Bridgend College	0.3	28.8	67.9	2.8	0.3
Cardiff and Vale College	6.5	29.8	62.7	0.5	0.6
Coleg Ceredigion	25.6	27.1	46.3	0.9	0.0
Coleg Gwent	0.8	27.9	65.0	6.1	0.1
Coleg Harlech WEA (North)	0.3	3.9	77.7	17.4	0.6
Coleg Morgannwg	2.7	30.1	61.3	5.9	0.0
Coleg Powys	0.3	27.2	64.8	7.3	0.3
Coleg Sir Gar	0.4	41.0	53.7	4.8	0.1
Deeside College	3.0	25.4	68.8	2.5	0.1
Gower College Swansea	0.3	31.9	65.5	1.9	0.4
Grŵp Llandrillo Menai	3.6	26.7	64.3	4.5	1.0
Merthyr Tydfil College	0.0	77.8	22.2	0.0	0.0
Neath Port Talbot College	0.8	38.1	55.7	5.1	0.3
Pembrokeshire College	1.7	32.8	61.0	4.4	0.0
St David's Catholic College	0.0	99.7	0.3	0.0	0.0
WEA (South)	0.8	5.6	78.4	15.1	0.1
Yale College	6.2	36.6	55.0	2.0	0.3
YMCA Community College	0.8	18.9	80.0	0.5	0.0
Ystrad Mynach College	4.7	27.7	61.7	5.8	0.0
Total	2.7	29.0	63.5	4.5	0.4

Source: Research Service calculations from [StatsWales Number of learners by provider and age group](#) [accessed 6 March 2013]

Notes:

Totals may not sum due to rounding

Data for the academic year 2011/12 is due to be published in May 2013.

4.4. Age of learners – aged 16 to 19

Table 3 below shows the breakdown of learners by individual age bands 16 to 19. This reveals that:

- St David’s Catholic College has the highest proportion of learners aged 16 and age 17, 48.2% and 38.4% respectively.
- Merthyr Tydfil College has the largest proportion of learners aged 18, 12.7%.
- YMCA Community College and Coleg Morgannwg have the highest proportion of learners aged 19, 6.7% and 5.4% respectively.

Table 3: Percentage of learners aged 16 to 19 by FEI; 2010/11

Further Education Institute	Percentage of learners						
	Aged under 16	Aged 16	Aged 17	Aged 18	Aged 19	Aged 20 and over	Age unknown
Bridgend College	0.3	8.6	8.9	7.1	4.2	70.6	0.3
Cardiff and Vale College	6.5	8.8	8.7	7.5	4.8	63.2	0.6
Coleg Ceredigion	25.6	8.8	7.9	5.9	4.4	47.1	0.0
Coleg Gwent	0.8	9.3	9.0	6.0	3.7	71.1	0.1
Coleg Harlech WEA (North)	0.3	0.6	0.7	1.2	1.3	95.1	0.6
Coleg Morgannwg	2.7	7.3	9.0	8.4	5.4	67.1	0.0
Coleg Powys	0.3	10.3	7.4	5.4	4.0	72.1	0.3
Coleg Sir Gar	0.4	12.8	12.9	10.0	5.3	58.5	0.1
Deeside College	3.0	6.7	7.1	6.7	4.9	71.3	0.1
Gower College Swansea	0.3	11.4	10.3	6.3	3.8	67.4	0.4
Grŵp Llandrillo Menai	3.6	8.8	8.1	5.8	4.0	68.7	1.0
Merthyr Tydfil College	0.0	30.2	30.2	12.7	4.8	22.2	0.0
Neath Port Talbot College	0.8	13.1	13.3	7.5	4.2	60.8	0.3
Pembrokeshire College	1.7	9.7	10.0	7.8	5.3	65.4	0.0
St David’s Catholic College	0.0	48.2	38.4	11.1	2.0	0.3	0.0
WEA (South)	0.8	0.8	0.9	2.1	1.9	93.6	0.1
Yale College	6.2	12.8	12.1	7.2	4.5	57.0	0.3
YMCA Community College	0.8	1.9	4.6	5.7	6.7	80.4	0.0
Ystrad Mynach College	4.7	8.1	9.0	6.7	4.0	67.5	0.0
Total	2.7	9.2	9.0	6.5	4.2	67.9	0.4

Source: Research Service calculations from [StatsWales Number of learners by provider and age group](#) [accessed 6 March 2013]

Notes:

Totals may not sum due to rounding

Data for the academic year 2011/12 is due to be published in May 2013.

4.5. Age profile of learners and population

Table 4 shows the percentage change between 2007 and 2011 for the number of learners at Welsh FEIs and the Welsh population, by age group. This shows that the number of learners aged 16, 18 and 19 fell in this period as did the population of those aged under 16, 16, 17 and 18. However there was a percentage fall of 41.7% in learners aged 65+, 37.2% fall in learners aged 50-64 and a 27.9% fall in learners aged 25-49 despite the age groups 50+ all seeing an increase in their population numbers.

Table 4: Percentage change in learners and population by age group; 2007 to 2011

<i>Percentage change between 2007 and 2011</i>		
Age group	Learners at FEIs (a)	Population (b)
Aged under 16	4.6	-0.9
16	-6.1	-8.0
17	2.2	-0.4
18	-3.2	-0.6
19	-6.6	4.5
20-24	-10.1	7.1
25-49	-27.9	-0.2
50-64	-37.2	2.8
65+	-41.7	6.9
Total	-22.0	1.9

Source: Research Service calculations from (a) [StatsWales Number of learners by provider and age group](#) and (b) [StatsWales National-level population estimates for Wales by age and year](#) [accessed 18 March 2013]

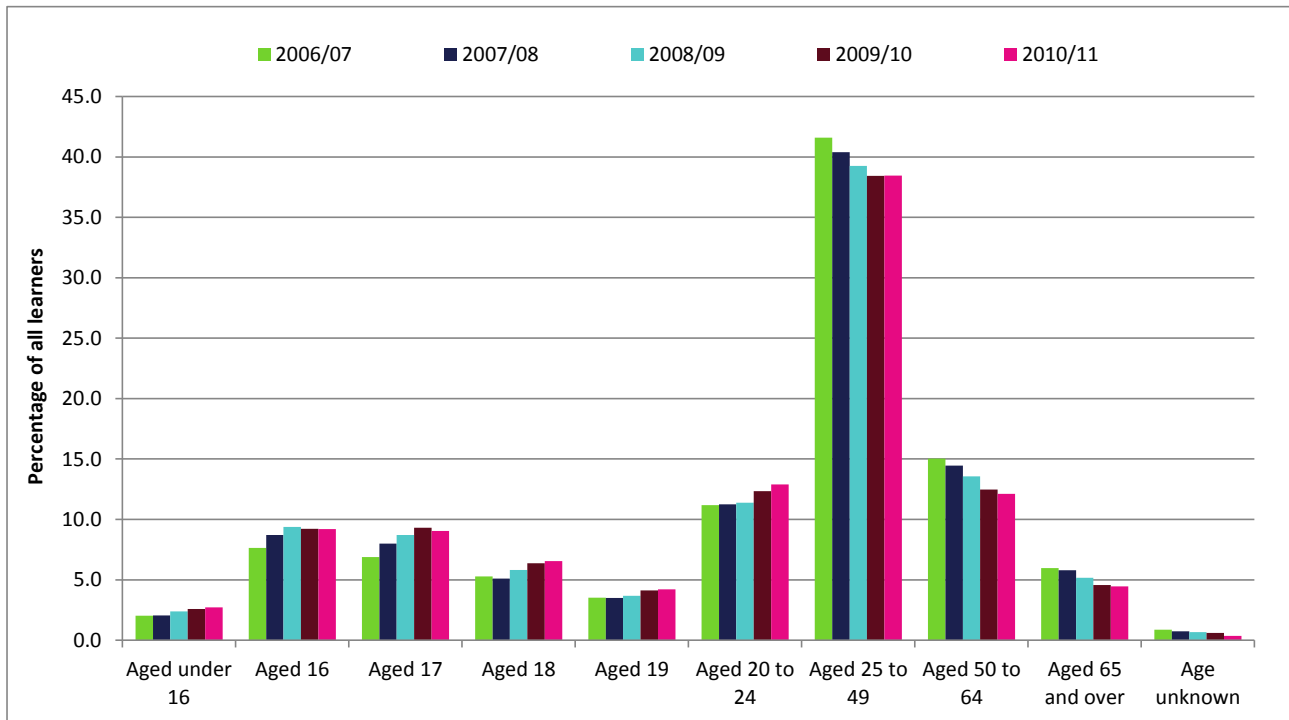
Notes:

Totals may not sum due to rounding

Data for the academic year 2011/12 is due to be published in May 2013.

In terms of the percentage of all learners, Figure 1 shows learners aged 24 and under increased their percentage share of all learners whereas learners aged over 25 saw their share of all learners decrease between 2006/07 and 2010/11.

Figure 1: Age profile of learners at Welsh FEIs; 2006/07 to 2010/11



Source: Research Service calculations from [StatsWales Number of learners by provider and age group](#) [accessed 6 March 2013]

Notes:

Totals may not sum due to rounding

Data for the academic year 2011/12 is due to be published in May 2013

4.6. Full time, part time and work-based learning

Table 5 below shows that over two thirds (67.8%) of learners at FE colleges study on a part time basis.

Table 5: Percentage of learners by mode of study and FEI; 2010/11

Further Education Institute	Percentage of learners		
	Mode of study		
	Full-time	Part-time	Work-based learning
Bridgend College	22.1	74.0	4.0
Cardiff and Vale College	27.1	61.3	11.6
Coleg Ceredigion	28.4	66.5	5.1
Coleg Gwent	26.5	71.3	2.2
Coleg Harlech WEA (North)	2.2	97.8	0.0
Coleg Morgannwg	27.1	69.3	3.5
Coleg Powys	21.9	73.9	4.2
Coleg Sir Gar	33.5	55.9	10.6
Deeside College	18.4	64.2	17.3
Gower College Swansea	28.2	64.0	7.8
Grŵp Llandrillo Menai	24.0	64.3	11.7
Merthyr Tydfil College	0.0	0.0	100.0
Neath Port Talbot College	30.2	62.0	7.8
Pembrokeshire College	20.2	67.0	12.7
St David's Catholic College	97.7	2.3	0.0
WEA (South)	0.4	99.6	0.0
Yale College	26.2	62.6	11.2
YMCA Community College	0.0	100.0	0.0
Ystrad Mynach College	23.0	69.2	7.7
Total	23.7	67.8	8.5

Source: Research Service calculations from [StatsWales Number of learners by provider and mode of study](#) [accessed 6 March 2013]

Notes:

Totals may not sum due to rounding

Data for the academic year 2011/12 is due to be published in May 2013.

4.7. Learning aims

Table 6 below shows the number of learning activities by learning aim taking place in each FEI in 2010/11. This shows that:

Of the 668,770 learning activities that took place across all FEIs in 2010/2011, 478,370 (71.5%) were other vocational activities including NVQs, first certificate/diplomas, BTECs and QCF qualifications²¹.

A further 142,865 (21.4%) learning activities were in Key Skills.

Table 6: Number of learning activities by learning aim and FEI; 2010/11

Further Education Institute	Number of learning activities					
	GCSE/ VCE	AS/ A2 level	Key Skills	Higher Education level	Other vocational learning activities (a)	All learning activities
Bridgend College	445	190	6,700	215	22,060	29,600
Cardiff and Vale College	1,405	2,080	18,715	70	42,095	64,360
Coleg Ceredigion	270	140	1,620	0	4,500	6,535
Coleg Gwent	925	3,270	14,325	0	72,020	90,535
Coleg Harlech WEA (North)	25	0	0	0	12,145	12,175
Coleg Morgannwg	445	815	10,635	0	34,135	46,035
Coleg Powys	90	0	2,340	15	16,645	19,095
Coleg Sir Gar	170	1,470	7,360	1,710	12,710	23,425
Deeside College	145	865	14,550	110	35,530	51,200
Gower College Swansea	950	6,675	8,655	205	39,295	55,795
Grŵp Llandrillo Menai	880	3,150	18,390	6,885	66,425	95,735
Merthyr Tydfil College	0	0	540	0	1,230	1,765
Neath Port Talbot College	485	3,175	9,445	390	26,090	39,585
Pembrokeshire College	335	580	5,695	0	16,750	23,360
St David's Catholic College	475	3,430	8,635	0	3,560	16,100
WEA (South)	0	0	0	0	14,645	14,645
Yale College	730	3,310	9,260	0	25,960	39,265
YMCA Community College	0	0	0	0	6,310	6,310
Ystrad Mynach College	525	490	6,000	0	26,235	33,250
Total	8,305	29,635	142,865	9,600	478,370	668,770

Source: Research Service calculations from [StatsWales Number of learning activities by provider and learning aim](#) [accessed 6 March 2013]

Notes

(a) Includes NVQ (including QCF qualifications directly replacing NVQs), National Certificate/ Diploma, First Certificate/ Diploma, BTEC/ OCN/ Access Certificate or Diploma, QCF qualifications (excluding direct NVQ equivalents) and other learning activities.

Totals may not sum due to rounding

Data for the academic year 2011/12 is due to be published in May 2013.

²¹ Qualifications and Credit Framework qualifications. For more information see: Welsh Government, [Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales](#)

4.8. Subject areas

Table 7 below shows that the largest number of learning activities in 2010/11 were undertaken in courses aimed at preparation for life and work (41.3%) followed by Information and Communications Technology (9.9%) and then Health, Public Services and Care (8.7%).

Table 7: Number of FE learning activities by subject area; 2010/11

Subject Area	Learning Activities	
	Number	Percentage
Preparation for Life and Work	276,460	41.3
Information and Communication Technology	66,490	9.9
Health, Public Services and Care	57,905	8.7
Business, Administration and Law	38,695	5.8
Arts, Media and Publishing	36,020	5.4
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	32,935	4.9
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	30,025	4.5
Languages, Literature and Culture	28,800	4.3
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	22,215	3.3
Education and Training	21,345	3.2
Science and Mathematics	19,965	3.0
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	13,920	2.1
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	10,410	1.6
History, Philosophy and Theology	6,495	1.0
Social Sciences	4,855	0.7
Unknown subject	2,245	0.3
All subject areas	668,770	100.0

Source: Research Service calculations from [StatsWales Number of learning activities by provider and subject area](#) [accessed 6 March 2013]

Totals may not sum due to rounding

Data for the academic year 2011/12 is due to be published in May 2013.

4.9. Number of staff

Table 8 below shows the number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff employed by each FEI in 2006/07 and 2010/11. This shows that:

- In 2010/11 8,810 FTE staff were employed by FEIs in Wales.
- The number of FTE staff employed by all FEIs has fallen by 2.5% between 2006/07 and 2010/11
- After the mergers Grŵp Llandrillo Menai employed the largest number of FTE staff, 1,430 and YMCA Community College the smallest number, 10.
- Coleg Harlech WEA (North) saw the largest percentage rise in the number of FTE staff employed from 100 in 2006/07 to 125 in 2010/11, a rise of 25 per cent.

Table 8: Number of FTE staff by Further Education Institute (FEI); 2006/07 to 2010/11

Further Education Institute	Number of FTE staff		Percentage change
	2006/07	2010/11	2006/07 to 2010/11
Bridgend College	585	595	1.7
Cardiff and Vale College	780	805	3.2
Coleg Ceredigion	135	125	-7.4
Coleg Gwent	970	925	-4.6
Coleg Harlech WEA (North)	100	125	25.0
Coleg Morgannwg	505	440	-12.9
Coleg Powys	270	250	-7.4
Coleg Sir Gar	590	535	-9.3
Deeside College	740	675	-8.8
Gower College Swansea	1,000	825	-17.5
Grŵp Llandrillo Menai	1,230	1,430	16.3
Neath Port Talbot College	555	665	19.8
Pembrokeshire College	440	395	-10.2
St David's Catholic College	110	110	0.0
WEA South	105	65	-38.1
Yale College	490	450	-8.2
YMCA Community College	15	10	-33.3
Ystrad Mynach College	415	390	-6.0
Total	9,035	8,810	-2.5

Source: Research Service calculations from [StatsWales Full-time equivalent staff numbers at Further Education Institutions by institution](#) [accessed 7 March 2013]

Totals may not sum due to rounding

Data for Merthyr College has not been collected for 2006/07 onwards following its merger with the University of Glamorgan in 2006.

5. FE funding

5.1. Background

Prior to 2009, Welsh Government funding allocations were based on the size and performance of each FE college and calculated through an annual and historically based Provision Development Plan. These were replaced by the National Planning and Funding System (NPFS) in 2009-10 which aimed to be learner centric and demand led²². In February 2011 the Welsh Education Minister Leighton Andrews stated that the way post-16 funding is allocated will be changing:

I have opted to move to three year budgets for Post 16 education to bring about stability in the system while we review future funding arrangements...I have decided to suspend the NPFS and allocate Post-16 funding on a flat rate basis.²³

In February 2013 the Welsh Government published an interim report²⁴ on phase one of the post 16 funding review. The report states that the Welsh Government aims to have a new planning and funding system in place for 2014/15. The report explains that the new system aims to move away from the previous NPFS demand led system and towards an **outcomes driven** system:

The intention is for the new system to relax the direct link between funding and activity and place the emphasis on the purpose and quality of the offer; and the outcome of that offer for individual learners.²⁵

The report indicates that the new system will plan and fund at a **programme level** with grant funding being reviewed on a **three year rolling basis**. There is also an intention to **monitor the outcomes** of learning more closely to measure cost effectiveness as well as making **better use of information** to inform **evidence based planning**.

The final report is due to be published in late spring 2013 which will feed into the 2014/15 allocations process.

²² Welsh Government, *National Planning and Funding System – Guide*, August 2009 [accessed 8 March 2013]

²³ Welsh Government, News release, *Minister announces changes to post-16 funding*, 4 February 2011 [accessed 8 March 2013]

²⁴ Welsh Government, *Post-16 Planning and Funding Review: Interim Report*, February 2013 [accessed 8 March 2013]

²⁵ Ibid, p2

5.2. Current funding allocations

Table 9 below shows the total funding allocation received by FEIs in 2011/12 and 2012/13. All the FEIs saw their funding allocation increase by 2.5% in this period apart from Coleg Gwent which saw its funding allocation increase by 5.2%. The Welsh Government spreadsheet contains a comment that Coleg Gwent received additional money from the local authority and Blaenau Gwent sixth forms in its mainstream allocation for 2011/12. The 2013/14 figures are not due to be released until May 2013 although a Welsh Government statement from 2011 states:

Indicative figures show in 2012/13 FE and local authority funding for Post-16 will increase by 2.5 per cent, and **will increase by a further 1 per cent in 2013/14. [my emphasis]**²⁶

Table 9: FEI total funding allocations 2011/12 and 2012/13

Further Education Institute	Total allocation (£ millions)		Percentage change
	2011/12	2012/13	2011/12 - 2012/13
Bridgend College	16.9	17.3	2.5
Cardiff & Vale College (a)	29.8	30.5	2.5
Coleg Ceredigion	4.0	4.1	2.5
Coleg Gwent	40.2	42.3	5.2
Coleg Harlech/WEA (North) (b)	2.2	2.3	2.5
Coleg Llandrillo (b)	30.2	30.9	2.5
Coleg Menai (b)	13.9	14.2	2.5
Coleg Morgannwg	16.1	16.5	2.5
Coleg Powys	8.0	8.2	2.5
Coleg Sir Gar	16.7	17.1	2.5
Deeside College	21.0	21.5	2.5
Gower College Swansea	26.3	27.0	2.5
Merthyr Tydfil College	6.6	6.8	2.5
Neath Port Talbot College	19.3	19.8	2.5
Pembrokeshire College	11.5	11.7	2.5
St David's Catholic College	5.1	5.3	2.5
WEA South	2.2	2.3	2.5
Yale College	18.1	18.6	2.5
YMCA Community College	0.9	0.9	2.5
Ystrad Mynach College	14.4	14.7	2.5
Total	303.2	311.9	2.9

Source: Welsh Government, [2012/2013 Further Education Funding Institution Allocations](#), May 2012 [accessed 8 March 2013]

Notes:

(a) Barry College merged with Coleg Glan Hafren in August 2011

(b) Coleg Llandrillo merged with Coleg Meirion Dwyfor (2010) and Coleg Menai in April 2012

The funding allocations for 2013/14 are due to be released in May 2013.

²⁶ Welsh Government, News release, [Minister announces changes to post-16 funding](#), 4 February 2011 [accessed 8 March 2013]

- In 2011/12 the total funding allocation received by FEIs was £303.2 million (excluding work-based learning).
- In 2012/13 FEIs in Wales received £311.9 million in funding from the Welsh Government (excluding work-based learning). This represents a rise of £8.7 million or 2.9 per cent in funding from 2011/12 to 2012/13.
- In 2012/13 Coleg Gwent had the highest funding allocation, £42.3 million and the YMCA Community College had the lowest allocation £0.9 million.

Welsh colleges are also able to generate their own income through the charging of fees, running full-cost courses, consultancy services, overseas students, refectories, childcare and other services. In 2008 Welsh colleges had a total annual income of £89 million ranging from £3.9 million per college to £50 million per college. The Welsh Government provided £332 million or 78.8% of total income in 2008-09.²⁷

A report by the Welsh Economy Research Unit of Cardiff Business School at Cardiff University in 2006 investigated the economic impact that FE colleges have on the economy of Wales and concluded that:

In total, adding together the economic impact of the FEIs themselves, to that of FE students, the FEIs in Wales supported an estimated output of £552.8m, and just over 11,830 FTE jobs in 2003-04. For comparison purposes the contribution of FEIs can be compared to that of higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Welsh economy.²⁸

²⁷ Welsh Government, [The structure of education services in Wales – Independent Task and Finish Group Report](#), March 2011

²⁸ Welsh Economy Research Unit, Welsh Economic Review 19.1, [The Impact of Further Education Institutions on the Economy of Wales](#), 2007 [accessed 4 September 2012]

6. Further and Higher Education (Wales) Bill – White Paper

6.1. Background

The Welsh Government's **white paper consultation** on the **Further and Higher Education (Wales) Bill**, July 2012 sets out the Welsh Government's aim to reclassify FEIs as **Non-Profit Institutions Serving Households (NPISH)**.

In October 2010 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) made a decision for the purpose of National Accounts to reclassify FEIs as part of central government and apply this retrospectively to their inception in 1993. The Welsh Government states that this reclassification will change the way financial information is collected and monitored from colleges and could impact how colleges manage their own internal affairs in the longer term.

These changes would have significant implications for colleges including:

- any surpluses generated by colleges would become Welsh Government funds;
- Colleges would be unable to retain the surplus in order to build reserves to pay for projects in the future for example capital or restructuring.

Taken together, these changes that could potentially stifle future partnership working, innovation and collaboration in the FE sector, need to be avoided. Colleges must have the ability to make their own judgements and decisions on how best to manage their own internal affairs for the benefit of learners, employers and their communities.²⁹

In their consultation document the Welsh Government proposes change to four key areas to help give colleges more responsibility to manage their own affairs:

- Greater powers for colleges to make changes to their Instrument and Articles of Government
- The ability of a college to dissolve itself
- Greater freedom of colleges to borrow funds and
- Intervention by the Welsh Government

The Welsh Government believe that these changes would help colleges be reclassified as NPISH. They also see ColegauCymru taking a leading role as well as jointly developing a Code of Governance for the FE sector with the Welsh Government.

²⁹ Welsh Government, [White Paper – Further and Higher Education \(Wales\) Bill](#), July 2012 [accessed 4 September]

6.2. Consultation responses

The white paper consultation closed on **24th September 2012** and according to the Welsh Government's summary of consultation responses³⁰ 52 responses were received to the FE section including eight from FEIs³¹. The summary states:

Many respondents felt that the White Paper struck an appropriate balance between giving colleges responsibility to manage themselves but to work within broad policy areas set by Government. Some respondents valued the recognition of the maturity of the sector and the proposed introduction of greater flexibility, allowing the FE sector to respond rapidly to local needs and to changes in the economy.³²

In response to the question on giving more powers to colleges to **change their Instruments and Articles of Government** there was a mixed response with some respondents believing this will help colleges respond to local need whereas others were concerned that this could lead to more complicated governance arrangements.

Overall respondents agreed that colleges should have the **powers to dissolve themselves** as long as appropriate safeguards are put in place. However respondents felt that there was a degree of risk in giving **greater freedom for colleges to borrow funds** and that this should ultimately be the decision of the Corporation and an external audit process should be put in place to monitor this.

In response to the proposal to **reclassify colleges to NPISH status** some respondents noted that this could lead to a privatisation of the FE sector and stressed that colleges should be predominantly focussed on their learners and communities. Respondents were in favour of a **clear set of guidelines for monitoring** FEIs and circumstances where **Welsh Government intervention** would be justified.

ColegauCymru's consultation response states:

ColegauCymru welcomes the key role envisaged for it on the White Paper in 'leading the sector and ensuring a sense of shared responsibility across all colleges' (...)The ColegauCymru Board embraces this challenge and will wish to work closely with the Welsh Government in drawing up a code of governance and a code of practice covering the relationship between FE colleges and the WG.³³

³⁰ Welsh Government, [White Paper – summary of responses - Further and Higher Education \(Wales\) Bill](#), March 2013 [accessed 8 March 2013]

³¹ Including Cardiff and Vale College, Coleg Gwent, Pembrokeshire College, Coleg Morgannwg and Deeside College. Several respondents also remained anonymous.

³² Welsh Government, [White Paper – summary of responses - Further and Higher Education \(Wales\) Bill](#), p9, March 2013 [accessed 8 March 2013]

³³ ColegauCymru, [Response to White Paper: Further and Higher Education \(Wales\) Bill](#), September 2012 [accessed 8 March 2013]

However ColegauCymru acknowledge that:

... the final decision on whether to classify FE colleges as NPISH or as central government public sector entities lies with the ONS, not the Welsh Government.

On 6 March 2013 the Welsh Education Minister issued a written statement with the publication of the white paper summary responses which states:

With regard to higher education I have asked my officials to undertake further analysis and development of the White Paper proposals. I will bring forward provisions relating to higher education reform through legislation later in this Assembly term. (...)The Further Education provisions and HMRC Data Sharing will go forward as legislation to be introduced in the spring of 2013. ³⁴

³⁴ Welsh Government, Leighton Andrews (Minister for Education and Skills), [Welsh Government Summary of Responses to the White Paper – Further and Higher Education \(Wales\) Bill 2013](#), Cabinet Written Statement, 6 March 2013 [accessed 15 March 2013]

7. Map showing the location of FEIs in Wales

The map below shows the location of FE college campuses in Wales in March 2013.

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