

# Cylchlythyr | Circular

## Reaching Wider Programme: Reaching Wider Partnership funding consultation

**Date:** 04 February 2022  
**Reference:** W22/02HE  
**To:** Heads of higher education institutions in Wales  
Principals of directly-funded further education colleges in  
Wales  
Reaching Wider Partnership Chairs and Managers  
**Response by:** 18 March 2022  
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This consultation circular invites views on Reaching Wider Partnership funding by HEFCW in the strategy period 2022/23 to 2024/25.

If you require this document in an alternative accessible format, please email [info@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:info@hefcw.ac.uk).



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## Introduction

1. This consultation circular invites views on Reaching Wider (RW) Partnership funding by HEFCW in the strategy period 2022/23 to 2024/25.
2. We have consulted on, and published, Reaching Wider Programme guidance for 2022/25 (see circular [W21/38HE: Reaching Wider Programme guidance](#)). This consultation refers funding for RW Partnerships for this strategy period.
3. In addition to HEFCW funding for the RW Partnerships, regulated institutions will continue to commit £1.7m in total to support the Reaching Wider Programme in the strategy period 2022/23 to 2024/25 from fee and access plan investments. Additionally, Partnerships may secure external funding to support the Reaching Wider Programme objectives and priorities and use HEFCW funding as match funding.

## Background

4. In 2021, HEFCW confirmed Reaching Wider Programme rolling annual funding for RW Partnerships and increased the Reaching Wider Partnerships' total allocation to £2m annually from £1.7m. In confirming this allocation, our Council specified that this grant funding should be seen as an investment in activities carried out by the Partnerships, for which HEFCW would expect to see clear returns and outputs.
5. In the current strategy period, to July 2022, RW Partnerships' funding was formulated to reflect the inter-relationship between RW Partnerships and their partner institutions. This resulted in the alignment of the RW Partnerships' funding formula with the fee mitigation funding formula for allocations to regulated institutions. Subsequently, regulated institutions have used fee and access plan investment to support their contribution to the RW Programme.
6. As well as reflecting the size of institutions involved in the RW Partnerships, the funding methodology to July 2022 has taken account of RW Partnerships' allocations over the period of the RW Programme since it was established in 2002/03. During this time, RW Partnership funding has moved towards greater alignment between Partnership budgets and the areas of deprivation in their region.
7. Previously, areas of deprivation were Communities First areas / clusters and only the bottom Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) quintile. From 2018/19 priority areas became the bottom two WIMD quintiles. This funding change responded to the [WISERD](#) review finding that: *'our initial analysis also showed that, in Wales, unlike England, the most disadvantaged (the bottom quintile in terms of the WIMD) are not the least likely to participate in Higher Education. Rather the least likely participants are the group immediately above them (the fourth quintile).'*

8. We continue to monitor, through our National Measures, numbers in higher education from both the bottom two quintiles and separately the bottom quintile of WIMD to ensure we continue to widen access for people living in areas of most socio-economic disadvantage in Wales.

### **Basis for Reaching Wider Partnerships funding**

9. In reviewing the RW Partnership strategy funding from 2022/2023 we propose to adhere to funding principles established for the RW Programme. These principles include:
  - i. not making significant funding changes that would destabilise the Partnerships;
  - ii. taking account of bottom two WIMD quintile full-time and part-time numbers in higher education as a proxy for socio-economic deprivation. This approach aligns with our commitment ‘to act in the spirit of’ the Equality Act’s socio-economic duty; and
  - iii. recognising the impacts of the geographic location of WIMD participants on delivery costs.
10. In the current strategy period to July 2022, the RW Partnership allocations:
  - i. totalled £1.7m;
  - ii. used full-time (and sandwich) students only (no domicile criteria);
  - iii. used the HESA 2016/17 student record;
  - iv. used HESA figures which excluded non-completions but included those students with completion status not known. Fundable students only were included;
  - v. data has been verified.
11. Allocations were as follows:

<b>RW Partnerships</b>	<b>Strategy period annual allocations</b>
South East Wales (First Campus)	885,881
South West Wales	429,622
North and Mid Wales	384,496
total (with rounding)	£1,700,000

### **RW Partnerships’ funding in the strategy period 2022/23 to 2024/25**

12. We propose that the RW Partnership allocations:
  - i. are funded with £2m allocated pro-rata to each Partnerships’ regulated institutions’ WIMD student figures, subject to a funding floor;
  - ii. are more closely aligned to the WIMD bottom two quintile populations in their partner regulated institutions and the Open University in Wales, given that this population is a key priority for widening access and the RW Programme and aligns with our socio-economic duty commitments;
  - iii. include a funding floor of £400k to recognise the impacts of the geographic location of WIMD participants on delivery costs;

- iv. use HESA 2019/20 data which are based on HEFCW fundable full- and part-time undergraduate and PGCE students in the HESA standard registration population, domiciled in the bottom two quintiles of WIMD 2019, excluding those who did not complete the year of their programme;
  - v. are based on verified HESA data.
13. Taking account of paragraph 12 above, RW Partnership allocations in 2022/23 to 2024/25, subject to satisfactory strategies, performance and reporting, would be as follows:

<b>RW Partnerships</b>	<b>Strategy period annual allocations</b>
South East Wales (First Campus)	1,079,257
South West Wales	520,743
North and Mid Wales	400,000
total (rounding)	£2,000,000

### **Consultation questions**

1. Is the allocation methodology fair and transparent? If not, please explain why.
2. Are there any unintended consequences or adverse impacts of the proposed allocation method? If so, please explain them.
3. Is there any further comment on the funding methodology you would like to make, including as it aligns, or otherwise, with our commitments to the Well-being of Future Generations Act, sustainable development principle, goals and ways of working?
4. What effect (if any), positive or adverse, will the funding have on:
  - i. opportunities for people to use the Welsh language; and
  - ii. treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?
5. How could the funding be formulated / changed so that the funding would have positive effects, or increased positive effects, on:
  - i. opportunities for people to use the Welsh language; and
  - ii. treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?
6. How could the funding be formulated / changed so that the funding would not have adverse effects, or would have decreased adverse effects, on:
  - i. opportunities for people to use the Welsh language; and
  - ii. treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

### **Further information/responses to**

14. For further information, contact Jane Johns ([jane.johns@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:jane.johns@hefcw.ac.uk)).
15. Please submit consultation responses by email to Amanda Phillips ([amanda.phillips@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:amanda.phillips@hefcw.ac.uk)). Responses should be submitted to us by **18 March 2022**. We will be unable to accept responses after this date.

### **Assessing the impact of our policies**

16. We have undertaken an impact assessment on the Reaching Wider Programme guidance. In updating the impact assessment we have included assessment of the RW funding methodology to help safeguard against discrimination and promote equality. We also considered the impact of policies on the Welsh language, and Welsh language provision within the HE sector in Wales and potential impacts towards the goals set out in the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 including our Well-Being Objectives. Contact [equality@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:equality@hefcw.ac.uk) for more information about impact assessments.