

ewmpas

Colegau Cymru
Colleges Wales

Demonstrating the Social Value of Further Education Colleges in Wales

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Ariennir gan
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Demonstrating the Social Value of FE colleges in Wales

“Social value is at the heart of everything we do.”

“creating a lasting legacy, where every learner, each community, and the environment benefits from the extraordinary commitment of Welsh FE to societal well-being.”

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Exploring Social Value in the FE Sector in Wales: Executive Summary

The research focuses on exploring social value within the Further Education (FE) sector in Wales, a topic largely unexplored until now. It delves into understanding how FE institutions in Wales contribute to societal well-being beyond their traditional educational roles. By examining strategic drivers, conducting interviews, and reviewing existing literature, the study aims to shed light on the multifaceted ways in which FE institutions generate social value. Social value, as understood within the context of this research, encompasses the broader positive impacts that FE institutions have on individuals, communities, and society at large.

The research aims to illuminate the intrinsic link between FE institutions and societal well-being, highlighting the sector's role as a catalyst for positive change in Wales. Through an in-depth exploration of social value, the study seeks to provide actionable insights that can inform strategic decision-making and enhance the overall effectiveness of FE institutions in contributing to the betterment of society.

What is the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act?

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

It will make the public bodies listed in the act think more about the long term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach. This will help us to create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. To make sure we are all working towards the same vision, the act puts in place 7 well-being goals.

Well-being goals

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

Source: <https://www.gov.wales/well-being-future-generations-act-essentials-html>

Role of Further Education Institutions in Advancing Societal Well-being in Wales

FE colleges are integral to advancing societal well-being in Wales, particularly in promoting a prosperous Wales (**WBG1**). They act as anchor organisations, shaping the local and regional economy. Their focus on skill development, collaborative partnerships with businesses, and apprenticeship programs exemplifies their commitment to cultivating a skilled workforce and driving economic growth.

A resilient Wales (**WBG2**) is bolstered by the efforts of FE institutions. By equipping individuals with essential skills, embracing sustainable practices, and fostering innovation, colleges contribute to the overall strength and adaptability of Welsh society.

A healthier Wales (**WBG3**) is nurtured through the initiatives of FE colleges that prioritize physical and mental well-being. Mental health and well-being support has notably increased post-COVID. By integrating well-being into educational settings, promoting healthy behaviours, and providing robust support systems, colleges play a crucial role in fostering healthier lifestyles and communities.

FE colleges actively contribute to achieving a more equal Wales (**WBG4**). Through strategic equality plans, inclusive learning offers, and support for under-served groups, colleges promote equality of opportunity and reduce social disparities, fostering a more inclusive society.

Welsh Further Education institutions serve as dynamic hubs that contribute to a Wales of cohesive communities (**WBG5**). Through partnerships, community engagement, and inclusive practices, colleges play a transformative role in building stronger, more united communities.

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language (**WBG6**) is promoted and celebrated by FE colleges. By offering diverse cultural activities, supporting Welsh language learning, and fostering creative industries, colleges contribute to a more culturally rich and linguistically diverse Wales.

FE colleges contribute to a global responsible Wales (**WBG7**) through environmental sustainability, internationalisation efforts, and the promotion of green skills. Their initiatives aim to address environmental challenges, broaden learners' aspirations, and foster international collaboration. Through these efforts, the FE sector in Wales plays a pivotal role in shaping a globally responsible society.

Recommendations

1. Align Social Value with Legislative Changes by Strengthening External Advocacy for Social Value in FE

- Integration with CTER's Strategic Objectives: Align future social value initiatives
- Linkage to Well-being of Future Generations Act (WBFGA)
- Implementation of Social Partnerships Bill
- Adaptation to the Revised Economic Mission

2. Strengthen ColegauCymru's Leadership in inter-FE Social Value Advocacy

Including:

- Knowledge sharing via social value 'community of practice' network
- Awareness raising via Communications campaign

3. Establish a Formalised Approach to Social Value Reporting

We suggest this process would include:

- Identification of key outcomes and indicators
- Progress tracking
- Continued qualitative case studies
- Annual social value reports

Conclusion

The exploration of social value in the FE sector reveals its multifaceted contributions to societal well-being in Wales. The recommendations aim to further embed and embrace social value within the sector, focusing on legislative alignment, leadership advocacy, internal collaboration, and formalised reporting approaches. By implementing these recommendations, the FE sector can maximise its societal contributions and set a transformative precedent for education's role in driving positive change in Wales.

Introduction

Cwmpas and the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) were commissioned by ColegauCymru to undertake research that would begin to demonstrate the social value of Further Education (FE) sector in Wales.

The purpose of this research is to provide a baseline assessment of how the FE Sector, in Wales, is delivering social value.

As anchor institutions, FE colleges make a significant contribution to their local economies and communities. This research aims to develop the current understanding of the social value being delivered and will also provide recommendations on how the sector can further embed and embrace social value, in terms of its understanding of social value, how social value can be generated through the strategic drivers of the sector, the data that individual colleges and ColegauCymru are collecting and qualitative impact data that is being captured.

In 2017, ColegauCymru published a report *Demonstrating the Economic Value of FE Colleges in Wales*. The results of the study showed that FE colleges in Wales create significant positive benefits to their main stakeholder groups: learners, society, taxpayers, and the local business community. The report used a two-pronged approach that involved an investment analysis and a regional economic impact analysis, to calculate the benefits to each of these groups. However, ColegauCymru recognises that the social, economic and political landscape has shifted significantly since 2017, and that this research, exploring social value, will enable the sector to evidence its wider impact, and to articulate its benefits to learners, staff, business and local communities.

FE Colleges in Wales have long been rooted in their local communities, and proudly work with people, public services, and industry. Colleges have a deep and wide reach, through their campuses, their workforce, procurement capacity, with local communities, skills development, industry contacts, and leadership roles which made a significant impact in their local areas and beyond.

The FE Sector in Wales

Overview

FE is considered to encompass any post-compulsory education that is not Higher Education (HE). FE learners' study towards technical and vocational qualifications, such as NVQs and BTECs, as well as general qualifications, such as A levels. This FE structure is identical to the system in England and Northern Ireland and similar to that in Scotland (Audit Wales 2021).

The FE Colleges in Wales are classified as non-profit institutions serving households (NPISH), meaning that they are independent corporate bodies engaged mainly in

providing services to individuals and the community at large. As these services are delivered free of charge or at prices that are not economically significant, they stand apart from government agencies or local authorities and are not classified as business. There are currently thirteen FE colleges in Wales. The majority are registered charities; however, many aspects of their operation are subject to government regulation and are supported by public funding.

Sector funding

Welsh Government funds the majority of FE costs, through grants to colleges for delivering learning programmes to eligible students, as well as grants for adult learning and payments to contractors administering apprenticeships. The Welsh Government also funds programmes designed to help people into the labour market, including Jobs Growth Wales and interventions to help those who are further from the labour market, such as the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework for 14 to 24-year-olds. Welsh Government funding for FE is split between various funding streams, these include core funding for FE colleges and school sixth forms, which is linked to learner numbers and has remained broadly stable since 2016/17.

The Welsh Government provided additional funding in 2020-21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Between 2011/12 and 2016/17, core revenue funding for FE colleges fell by 13%, which was entirely due to reductions in funding for part-time provision. The overall real terms value of core funding for FE colleges has remained broadly static since then. As of 2020/21 the Welsh Government provides around £5 million a year to local authorities for adult community learning and around £120 million a year to work-based learning providers.

There is no single document setting out Welsh Government's detailed strategy on post-compulsory education and skills. Welsh Government's strategic approach has emerged from a range of reviews and studies and reflects financial constraints and policy developments at the UK level. It forms part of the wider context of reform in pre-16 compulsory education. Welsh Government has also sought to integrate its approach with wider policy agendas on economic development and equality under the framework of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. It is worth noting that Colegau Cymru is calling for the creation of a National VET Strategy.

The Welsh Government's broad aim is to promote and enhance academic and vocational routes into higher and further education to equip learners with the skills needed for future careers. Welsh Government also aims to co-ordinate research and innovation to enable institutions to make local, national, and international impacts.

Following the recommendations of the Hazelkorn Review in 2016, Welsh Government is creating a new, autonomous public body to administer the whole of the post-16 education and training system, including HE, FE and vocational training. The

Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) will fund, regulate and co-ordinate the sector and take on the relevant responsibilities of HEFCW and the Welsh Government. The Commission will be functionally independent, but will operate on the basis of a five-year strategic plan approved by Ministers. Strategic staff have been appointed to CETER and the Commission will take up its duties in August 2023.

In a recent publication relating to the Strategic Priorities of CTER, ColegauCymru explain:

“The establishment of the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) is a landmark piece of legislation. It marks the introduction of one of the most significant reforms to the architecture of our education system since devolution. Wales will be the first country in the UK to pioneer a single overarching regulatory, oversight and coordinating authority for tertiary education”.

“It comes at a time when the role of both further education and work-based learning to the future of our country is more important than ever.....In short, there is no path to a stronger, fairer, greener and bilingual Wales that doesn’t require a high-performing and resilient further education sector”.



The strategic duties of CTER will also act as a driver for the FE sector. The 11 strategic duties also seem to align well within the Wellbeing Goals of the WBFGA.

As well as the formation of CTER, there are a number of other strategic drivers that will influence the sector in the near

future. These drivers are also shaping the role and priorities of ColegauCymru. The ColegauCymru Draft Operational Plan, dated April 2023- December 24 highlights the following areas:

- The deterioration of public finances: Since September 2022 the state of public finances has significantly worsened, and colleges will be facing a series of difficult funding settlements between now and the end of the current Senedd term. Alongside these wider pressures on the annual funding settlement there are additional pressures from the cost of living (both on pay pressure and other direct costs such as energy and materials) and the lack of sufficient replacement funding post-ESF.
- The reform of vocational qualifications: There is considerable reform being undertaken to vocational qualifications, both in terms of reforms to sector

qualifications and also through the review of the wider vocational qualifications system.

- **Post-Covid recovery:** while there are no specific public health restrictions in place, the pandemic continues to have an impact on the FE sector. Examples of this include the lasting impact on student mental health and wellbeing, managing the transition to hybrid working and to blended learning, and managing the impact on staff recruitment.
- **Wider policy drivers:** there are a range of new policy pressures and drivers that will affect the sector. These include the Welsh Government's commitment to building an anti-racist Wales, potential legislative requirements through the Social Partnership and Procurement Bill, improving Welsh medium pathways in FE, and the commitment to a Second Chance Nation. Overlaying this is the sector's commitment to the Wellbeing of Future Generations.

Also in November 2023, the Welsh Government revised their economic mission, setting out four priorities that will shape how Wales can respond to uncertainty and exploit new opportunities. These priorities are listed below, together with how they relate to the FE sector:

- **A Just Transition and Green Prosperity:** The government aims to realize the enormous Net Zero economic opportunities and engage with businesses and people to move towards a just transition. This includes tackling the challenges of climate change and transitioning to a more sustainable, green economy.
 - The further education sector can play a crucial role in providing the necessary skills and knowledge for a green economy. This could involve developing new curricula focused on sustainable practices and technologies.
- **A Platform for Young People, Fair Work, Skills, and Success:** The government is backing young people to achieve ambitious futures in Wales by prioritizing their skills and creativity. This includes addressing the employability of young people and adults entering the job market. The further education sector is instrumental in equipping young people with the skills they need for the future. This includes not only academic skills but also vocational and technical skills that are increasingly in demand in the job market.
- **Stronger Partnerships for Stronger Regions and the Everyday Economy:** The government plans to work with regions to agree on a smaller set of priorities for growth, local jobs, and major investment. This includes new joint working to boost the case for UK investment in projects that support fair, unionized jobs in areas including Nuclear, Offshore Wind, and Tech. further education sector can form partnerships with local businesses and industries to ensure that the skills being taught align with the needs of the local economy.
- **Investing for Growth:** The government will focus on recognized strengths to boost investment and growth that prizes fair work and long-termism. This includes targeting new investment in a post-EU landscape, supporting commercialization, research and development, and entrepreneurship. The Welsh Government sees the further education sector as a critical delivery partner for the ambitions of the

new Employability Strategy¹. This involves ensuring access to the right skills at the right time and responding quickly and flexibly to labour market needs.

Role of ColegauCymru within the sector

ColegauCymru is an education charity which promotes the public benefit of further education in Wales. The organisation believes that all learners have the right to world-class education, delivered in a safe, diverse and inclusive setting and within a sector which supports the wider community, employers and the economy.

ColegauCymru convenes the Further Education Principals' Forum, which represents the interests of further education (FE) providers. The organisation works closely with Welsh Government, their agencies, and other stakeholders, to help shape the policies affecting the FE sector, their learners and staff.

Methodology

This is the first piece of research that has tried to capture and highlight the social value of the FE sector in Wales. Cwmpas and CLES have worked closely with ColegauCymru and the wider FE sector and we have used an iterative methodological approach which is outlined below.

Establishing the current strategic drivers for the FE sector

Part of the purpose of this research is to highlight the strategic drivers within the FE sector that are delivering social value on a local, regional and national level.

The researchers reviewed key strategic documents, relating to the FE sector from:

- Welsh Government, including documents relating to CTER, current legislation and policy, including the updated Economic Mission, Social Partnerships legislation and Ministerial speeches
- ColegauCymru, such as the current operation plan and previous publications
- Individual FE institutions, for example Vision and Mission Statements and strategic plans.

What is social value in the FE sector in Wales

In order to begin to understand what social value is being generated by the FE sector in Wales and how this is being influenced by strategic drivers, Cwmpas and CLES undertook:

- A wider literature review of social value
- A review of social value within a Welsh context

¹ <https://www.gov.wales/vision-further-education>

- An analysis of social value within the education sector
- An examination of social value in the FE sector in Wales, including how ColegauCymru and the FE colleges understand the term and how the term is being currently used within the sector.

Scoping interviews

Following discussions with the team from ColegauCymru, the researchers conducted scoping interviews with Principals from 3 of the FE colleges. The purpose of the interviews was to gather their views on social value and how the term is being used within the sector, to discuss the quantitative and qualitative data relating to social value that was currently available and to seek their views on the proposed methodological approach. The interviews also helped us to develop an initial social value framework, which would serve as the basis for qualitative and quantitative data collection.

Interviews were also undertaken with Welsh Government Officials, from the Skills Higher Education and Lifelong Learning (SHELL) Department to ascertain their views on the strategic drivers within the sector, their perception of the social value being delivered by the sector and to further shape the social value framework that had been developed.

Workshop

An online workshop was held with FE college Principals and/or Senior staff and staff from ColegauCymru, including the CEO and the Director of Policy and Public Affairs. The workshop allowed the research team to:

- Facilitate a wider debate relating to ‘What is social value in the FE sector?’
- Highlight the current and future strategic drivers of social value for the sector
- To discuss the qualitative and quantitative data available
- Further refine the social value framework

Social Value Framework

Following the online workshop, the researchers amended the social value framework. The framework informed the wider data collection process. A copy of the social value framework that was developed is illustrated below:

Data Point	Quantitative/Qualitative/Both	Source
Benefit Measures: Social & Economic Value		
(WG1) A prosperous Wales		
How many students, what they study	Quantitative	Data request to colleges
Qualifications achieved/educational outcomes	Quantitative	Data request to colleges
Graduate journeys - work placements during study, onward journeys to FE/HE/work	Quantitative	Data request to colleges
(WG2) A resilient Wales		
Employee data - total no. jobs, salary bands, resident location, total spend on salaries	Quantitative	Data request to colleges
Procurement data - all spending with suppliers, supplier details including category/sector/location	Quantitative	Data request to colleges
Relationships with local businesses	Both	Data request to colleges & case studies/interviews
(WG3) A healthier Wales		
Walking/cycling initiatives	Qualitative	Case studies/interviews
Local/healthy food initiatives	Qualitative	Case studies/interviews
Health and wellbeing support for staff	Qualitative	Case studies/interviews
Health and wellbeing support for students	Qualitative	Case studies/interviews
(WG4) A more equal Wales		
Demographics (protected characteristics, neighbourhoods) of students and what they study	Quantitative	Data request to colleges
Social mobility data	Quantitative	Data request to colleges
Targetted programmes for unemployed residents	Both	Data request to colleges & case studies/interviews
(WG5) A Wales of more cohesive communities		
Community use of college facilities	Qualitative	Case studies/interviews
College use of community spaces/provision delivered in the community	Both	Data request to colleges & case studies/interviews
Programmes supporting migrants and refugees	Both	Data request to colleges & case studies/interviews
(WG6) A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language		
Welsh language activity - no. students accessing programmes/modules	Quantitative	Data request to colleges & case studies/interviews
Arts/culture events hosted	Quantitative	Data request to colleges & case studies/interviews
(WG7) A globally responsible Wales		
Emissions data	Quantitative	Data request to colleges & case studies/interviews
Sustainability skills - no. students accessing programmes/modules	Quantitative	Data request to colleges & case studies/interviews
Positive environmental impact data - e.g. tree planting/biodiversity projects	Both	Data request to colleges & case studies/interviews
International partnerships - no. students accessing programmes (i.e. Turing Scheme)	Both	Data request to colleges & case studies/interviews
Cost Measures: Investment		
Total value of annual income streams, including grants and other inward investment/revenue secured	Quantitative	Welsh government to provide

Wider data collection

What followed was a data gathering exercise – firstly from publicly available online, both Welsh Government and individual college data (such as in financial reporting and accounts), enquiring with contacts within Welsh Government to get other sets of information and lastly, a data request to each college for the information that was not held centrally.

Individual interviews with the Principals and/or Senior Staff from the remaining 10 FE institution were completed. The interviewees were asked about the social value that the college was delivering against each of the 7 Wellbeing Goals. We were also able to discuss the data which each organisation held and any projects/case studies that could be used to highlight social value.

Interviews were also undertaken with staff from ColegauCymru and these included the project managers for European and International work and Health and Wellbeing.

After the interviews were completed individual quantitative data requests were sent to each of the FE colleges.

Some colleges were able to provide a wide range of data, but others found it challenging due to the relatively short timescales of the project, and the breath of information requested (particularly as this set of information and metrics has never been requested before). As such, it was challenging to gather consistent data across all colleges to enable meaningful comparison and summation. The following study into the social value of the FE sector therefore has fewer traditional economic measures and is more reliance on case study information to link to the strategic drivers and broader impact of the sector.

Analysis of the data allowed us to select sample case studies that would provide insight into the wide variety of social value activities that are being undertaken by each organisation. We also tried to ensure that each of the colleges was fairly represented within the final report.

The request for case study information also prompted a number of secondary interviews with staff that had led/being involved in the selected case studies/projects.

As well as the above, we also held regular meetings with the team from ColegauCymru, to keep them informed of progress and the reshaping of the original brief.

Social Value

What is social value?

A significant range of existing academic work has attempted to quantify 'social value', however much of the literature defines 'social value' in a broad and imprecise (IPPR Scotland, 2023). This breadth was highlighted in research by the Green Business Council (2021) which listed 24 well-established social value definitions in circulation and concluding that social value is an evolving concept and area.

In Wales the term 'social value' is often used interchangeably alongside 'social impact', and 'community benefit'. There is little consensus over whether 'social value' should be treated as separate and distinct from economic and environmental concerns, or as an all-encompassing umbrella term under which economic, environmental, and social metrics fall (Hall 2015). It is agreed however that social value is a broader understanding of value. It moves beyond using money as the main indicator of value, instead putting the emphasis on engaging people to understand the impact of decisions on their lives. Social Value UK defines social value as:

“the quantification of the relative importance that people place on the changes they experience in their lives.”

Social Value UK also adds that those changes can be social, environmental or economic. And it is important to look at both positive and negative impacts, in order to identify true social value.

As well as the variety of views in defining social value, there has also been much discussion about how social value can be quantified. Several models have been developed which seek to measure 'social value', including Social Return on Investment (SROI), Themes Outcomes and Measures (TOMS) and Socially Modified Economic Evaluation (SMEV). These are economic cost-benefit analyses which aim to quantify the value of certain 'outcomes' and 'outputs' respectively and build a picture of an organisations social value (Kelly and McNicoll 2011; NEF Consulting 2021). Academics such as Lawlor *et al.* (2008) and Kelly and McNicoll (2011) have emphasised that the problem with SROI particularly is the monetisation of the value of outcomes to produce a 'social value' return on investment which is subjective and prone to overly optimistic assessments.

Social value in Wales

In Wales there is generally agreement that social value is effectively defined through the WBFGA. The Act requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change. Although

the duties outlined in the Act only relate to public sector organisations, many private, third sector and educational establishments are using the wellbeing goals and the ways of working to inform their strategic approaches.

The WBFGA will also be strengthened by the recently enacted Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act, which will provide a framework to enhance the well-being of the people of Wales by improving public services through social partnership working, promoting fair work and socially responsible public procurement. Again, the Act relates to public bodies, but our research has shown that many FE institutions in Wales have already started to consider how the requirements of the Act will affect them and some have also begun to implement procedural changes.

To date, the emphasis on social value in Wales has been on Welsh public sector procurement. This approach has recognised that public sector procurement is one of many powerful levers that can deliver social value outcomes for the well-being of Wales, acknowledging that public bodies in Wales spend over £7 billion each year procuring a range of goods, services and works. In terms of procurement Welsh Government have used the Government Commercial College (2020) definition, as outlined in Welsh Procurement Policy Note (WPPN) 01/20:

“Social Value’ is “a broad term used to describe the social, environmental and economic impacts of actions taken by communities, organisations, governments and individuals.”

Research previously undertaken by Cwmpas (Welsh Government Social value review Summary Report, 2022) emphasised that many public sector bodies want Welsh Government to take the lead in terms of defining social value in a Welsh context and that any definition needs to be clearly linked to the WBFGA.

Social value within the Education sector

A number of researchers have started to explore what social value looks within educational institutions. In the context of universities, social value has been defined as the accumulation of value ‘generated through teaching, research, knowledge exchange and identifiable externalities’ (Kelly and McNicoll 2011). This definition is primarily limited to the classroom, with less attention given to the wider impact. To measure the wider social value of colleges it will be important to recognise a college’s ability to add value in social, economic, and environmental terms both inside and outside the classroom (IPPR Scotland, 2023).

There is very little research which focuses on social value within FE settings. However, a report ‘Baseline Assessment of Social Value for City of Glasgow College’ undertaken by IPPR Scotland was published in early 2023. The research has been extremely helpful, and the methodology used by the IPPR Scotland team was very similar to the way in which

Cwmpas and CLES have approached this wider social value review of FE in Wales. The methodological approaches of both pieces of work have of course been informed by regional policy context and it should be noted that both Welsh and Scottish Governments have focused on the Wellbeing Economy. Whilst there is no equivalent of the WBFGA in Scotland, the Scottish Government had developed a National Performance Framework (NPF), which in its current form has been heavily inspired by the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Exploring social value in the FE sector in Wales

This is the first piece of research that has explored social value in the FE sector in Wales. We have not attempted to define social value within this educational context, however our desk-based research, the review of current strategic drivers, our interviews with key sector stakeholders and attendance at the ColegauCymru conference have heled us to shape the core components of social value in FE in Wales.

It should be noted that although there are significant similarities between each of the FE institutions in Wales, there are also substantial differences; with each college adapting to local/regional circumstances and opportunities.

The term social value is rarely explicitly used by the FE sector in Wales when it is describing its vision, mission, strategic aims and impact. However, what is clear from our research is that social value is implicit in nearly all of the activities of the FE colleges and this approach could be a very beneficial tool to emphasise the wider reach of the sector.

Each of the FE institutions is acting as an anchor organisation in shaping both the current and the future local/regional economy. They are delivering skills training as well as developing new training courses to fill existing and future skills gaps. A number of the colleges have also secured Shared Prosperity Funding (SPF) to deliver additional skills and innovation programmes, with many of these focussing on skills in the green economy, digital and advanced manufacturing techniques. The sector is starting to look at local procurement spend, particularly in relation to capital projects and highlighting opportunities where local supply chains can be used or developed. innovation. FE institutions are also looking at their role in terms of town centre regeneration; for example, how new campuses in town centre locations can increase local footfall and send and develop both daytime and nighttime economies.

The sector has adopted a **'People Focused'** approach with both learners and staff at the core. Each institution considers how it can provide additional support and added value for their students. This additionally includes providing lifelong learning opportunities, as well as embedding equality, through such work as supporting the delivery of Wales' Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan through the development of local action plans in each college; led by ColegauCymru and Black Leadership Group. FE colleges are also employing locally, promoting fair work and equality of opportunities for their staff. As outlined

previously many are also considering the implications of the new Social Partnerships legislation and the way in which they are engaging with staff and Unions. Post-covid there has been a significant growth in the mental health and wellbeing support available to both learners and staff.

Collaboration was a key theme of the ColegauCymru conference² in October 2023. Each institution is delivering additional economic and social value through the work it is undertaking with businesses, public sector and other education institutions and the opportunities these partnerships are creating for students and employees of both the colleges and partner organisations. There are also areas where FE is generating social value in fields which might be considered to be ‘traditional’ for the sector, such as international partnerships and research.

Community: The majority of the colleges are supporting their local communities in a variety of different ways. These include delivering classes and activities within community settings, organising and supporting community events and for other colleges the campus is seen as a community asset, hosting sports clubs and providing meeting spaces for community groups and local charities. The term civic mission was not used during the interviews and it is a term that can sometimes be considered to be ‘add on’ activities that an institution is undertaking, whereas the activities discussed by the FE sector seemed to feel far more natural, that were rooted within their local communities.

The FE institutions are continuing to embed the Welsh language into their settings. The progress made reflects regional differences, but many are now offering courses, work opportunities and support through the medium of Welsh and for other they are developing learner and staff ability and confidence to use the Welsh language at all levels. One college Principal mentioned that there are 55 different languages spoken at the campus and therefore lingual support, particularly through the ESOL provision, goes beyond Welsh and English. Colleges are also delivering social value through their cultural activities, many of these activities come to fruition through their teaching of creative and arts based subjects, such as costume design. For others however they own and run valuable cultural assets, such as local theatres.

Sustainability and planning for net zero is another cross-cutting component being used by the FE sector to generate social value. The path to net zero is underpinning strategic plans and is being incorporated into future plans; particularly in terms of future campus development. Colleges are also including sustainability modules in a different courses, developing green skills academies, measuring their environmental footprint, reviewing and redesigning current energy system and retrofitting their estate assets.

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<https://www.colegau.cymru/image/event/ColegauCymru%20Annual%20Conference/2023/ColegauCymru%20Annual%20Conference%202023%20-%20Bilingual%20Programme.pdf>

Findings

The following chapters present an overview of the social value that is being generated by the FE sector against each of the wellbeing goals. Each chapter incorporates an analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data we were able to collect and uses short case study examples to illustrate the breadth of social value activity being undertaken against each of the goals.

WBG1 - A Prosperous Wales

Introduction

In the pursuit of a prosperous Wales, the strategic intersection of education, skills development, and collaborative initiatives takes centre stage, and we have seen this emphasised within Welsh Government’s revised Economic Mission. This chapter focusses on Wellbeing Goal 1: "A Prosperous Wales" and provides examples of how and where the FE sector in Wales is using current strategic drivers to shape the social value it is creating. The examples presented further underscore how these educational initiatives are being translated into tangible outcomes, driving economic well-being, enhancing skills, and contributing to the prosperity of individuals and communities.

Firstly, we wanted to explore the current size of the sector and the subjects that are being taught.

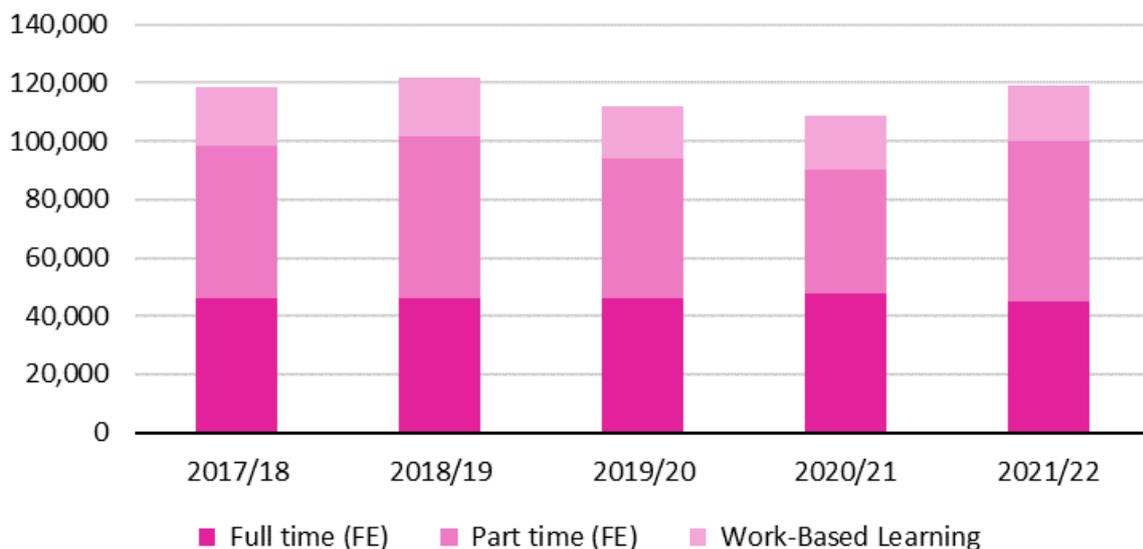
Data: Student Numbers

As of academic year 2021/22, the most recent data available, there were 119,300 unique learners at Welsh FE institutions; an increase of around 10% on the previous year.

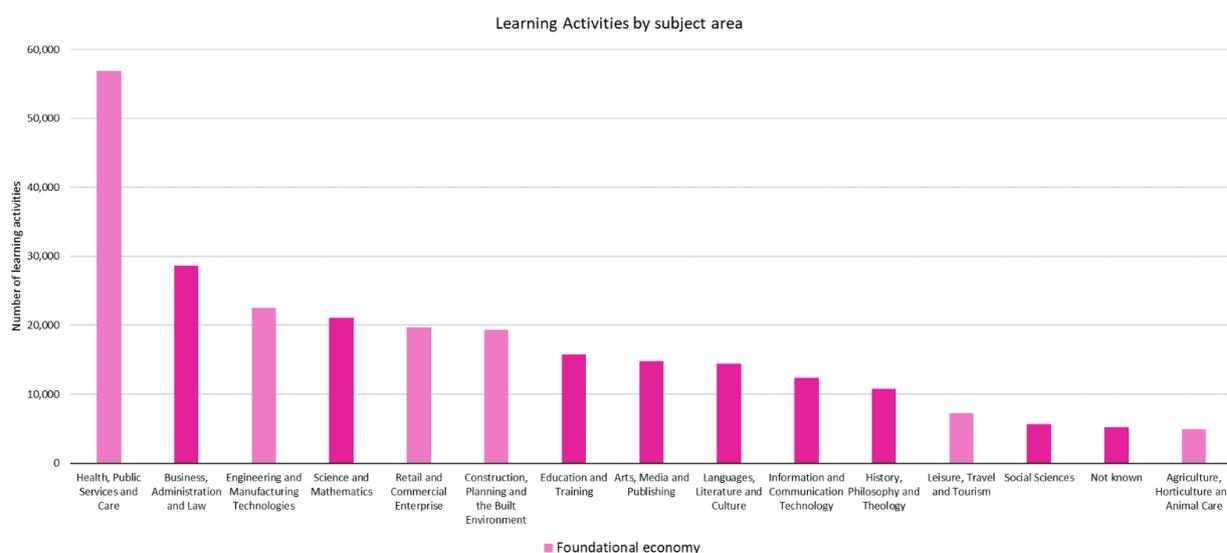
This represents the highest number of unique learners in adult learning since 2018/19 (although Education provision was disrupted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic from March 2020 onwards and impacts may still be seen in the latest available figures).

This increase was mostly driven by a recovery in the number of part-time learners at FEIs (up 28%), to numbers not seen since 2018/19. The number of full-time students dropped by -5% and the number of those in work-based learning (mostly Foundation and Level 3 apprenticeships) increased by +7%. This demonstrates a commitment to social value by developing a skilled and well-educated population.

Unique learners in further education in Wales



Data: Learning Activity by Subject Area



The graph indicates a significant emphasis on courses and skills development within health and public services and this was highlighted in the qualitative interviews that we undertook. We also see that FE colleges in Wales are providing skills and training across a variety of our foundational economy sectors.

As we delved into the data on student numbers at Welsh FE institutions, it becomes evident that education plays a pivotal role in shaping a prosperous future. However, in terms of social value our research has demonstrated that FE colleges, as anchor institutions, are generating employment opportunities and creating local wealth through a number of different avenues and these include:

- Working closely with local businesses to develop skills and training opportunities, including professional training, at all levels and developing lifelong learning pathways. This approach is also delivering skills that are required within the local economy.
- Working in collaboration with partner organisations to develop innovative projects that will form the basis of future skills and low carbon economies.
- Working strategically with other anchor organisations, such as Health Boards and Local Authorities, to deliver the skills and training that are needed within the foundational economy and enable young people to find jobs within their local communities.

Working with Local Businesses

All of the FE colleges discussed with us how they are working closely with local businesses to develop learning and skills opportunities and the example below provides an overview of the types of services that have been developed.

Busnes@LlandrilloMenai

Busnes@LlandrilloMenai (Busnes@) was initiated to make it easier for employers to navigate a previously complicated pathway to access training and apprenticeship opportunities. By creating a central “employer-based provider” the college has been able to significantly grow their services and by 2023 Busnes@ accounts for 30% of Grŵp Llandrillo Menai’s delivery. Busnes@ provides services to local organisations, including public sector organisations, across North West Wales, including:

- Professional courses
- Short courses
- Apprenticeships

Business@ also provides a range of specialist services e.g.:

- A Food Technology Centre (FTC) located on the Llangefni campus, was established in 1999 and plays a key role in transferring knowledge to the food industry in Wales and across the UK. The FTC has dedicated resources including dedicated processing halls for fresh meat, fish, dairy products and prepared foods; product development test kitchen and an analytical laboratory.
- The Centre for Infrastructure Skills and Technology (CIST) also at Grŵp Llandrillo Menai’s Llangefni campus is a high-quality Infrastructure skills training facility, with an underpinning ethos of expert partnership delivery. CIST is a platform for industry to engage with and promote innovative solutions and products, becoming the premier site of choice for product showcases in North Wales or wider.

Skills required in the Local and Regional Economy

The examples below are from West Wales and show how the three FE institutions are working together to deliver a strategic approach to skills development, based on local and regional needs.

Coleg Sir Gâr, Coleg Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire College collaboration

Pembrokeshire College, Coleg Sir Gâr, and Coleg Ceredigion are focusing on improving the learner experience and developing teaching practices. These FE institutions value support, care, and transparent leadership and they have committed to building a prosperous, healthy, and resilient Wales, which is reflected in their strategic plans.

The colleges see the value, including social value, in aligning their missions to work more closely together, which has led to the establishment of a Deed of Association. This deed provides a framework for mutual collaboration and the creation of a new college alliance. The alliance aims to deliver transformational changes in their communities and establish a platform for future collaborative developments.

The CEOs and Principals of the colleges believe that the alliance will enable them to better meet the needs of their student communities, employers, and the region as a whole, particularly in the health, construction, and energy sectors.

This initiative aligns with the wellbeing goal of 'A Prosperous Wales' as it promotes education and skills development, which are key drivers of economic prosperity. By fostering collaboration and focusing on strategic regional development, the colleges contribute to a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. This creates conditions for sustainable economic activity, thereby contributing to the prosperity of Wales.

The specific examples below also highlight how this strategic partnership has been working closely with Hywel Dda University Health Board to develop apprenticeship pathways:

Apprentice at Glangwili Hospital

This example involves an individual who gave the following account of their experience. The individual was an apprentice, in 2022, at Glangwili hospital, in Carmarthen. They always had an inclination towards medicine or care and preferred a hands-on approach to learning. This led them to pursue a health and social care qualification in college. Upon learning about the Apprenticeship Academy with Hywel Dda from their college tutor, they researched it and decided to apply. They were successful and joined the health board in September 2022.

They considered their experience to be incredible and they felt like a part of the team and were motivated by the care and passion of the staff. The support from the Apprenticeship Academy has been immense, helping them through their gateway review and progression to the next step.

One of their memorable moments was being invited to the assessment day for potential 2023 candidates. They shared their positive experiences with the nervous candidates and explained the benefits of the apprenticeship pathway. They have now moved on to train as a qualified nurse.

Apprentice at Prince Philip Hospital (PPH)

This example involves an individual who gave the following account of their experience. The individual in this case study is an apprentice at PPH. They enjoyed school and had a desire to pursue a career in caring. Despite facing a period of ill health and caring for a sick family member, they were inspired by the support they received from the NHS and decided to give back. Initially, they enrolled in an access to nursing course at college, but were drawn to the Apprenticeship Academy's pathways. They applied and were successful.

Their journey has been rewarding, though not without challenges. Balancing motherhood, family care, studying, and work was difficult at times, but the support from the Academy helped them through. One of their most memorable experiences was observing and

assisting in a surgical procedure, which allowed them to provide comfort and reassurance to the patient.

They believe the apprenticeship is a fantastic opportunity for individuals at any stage of their life or career. They are grateful to everyone at Hywel Dda for the opportunity to become a fully qualified nurse.

As well as the examples above we found that other colleges were also creating more innovative pathways into health and care careers, as outlined in the example below from the College Merthyr Tydfil:

The College Merthyr Tydfil Nursing Cadet Scheme

The College Merthyr Tydfil has joined in partnership with The Royal College of Nursing to be the first college of further education to offer the RCN Prince of Wales Nursing Cadet scheme to college learners wishing to pursue a career in nursing or other professions in the NHS. The scheme aims to inspire young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to work in health and care by giving them access to opportunities for academic study and hands-on experience in the nursing and health sector.

Combining 105 hours of guided and experiential learning with 20 hours of clinical observational placements, the scheme will allow learners studying on the Health and Care and Access courses the opportunity to engage with industry professionals and experience first-hand what it would be like to be working in the profession.

The project manager said: “There is a shortage of young people going into the care sector and professions across Wales and we really hope that this scheme will help to address this”.

Working Collaboratively

FE institutions are also working collaboratively with a variety of different partners to deliver social value. The first example below is from Pembrokeshire College, it builds on the examples outlined above and really demonstrates how the FE sector is working with partners to deliver the sector skills needed locally and developing well paid job opportunities allowing young people to stay within their local communities.

Destination Renewables

Destination Renewables is a 2-year program aimed at 16-18 year-olds studying engineering, business, construction, or A Levels. It's designed to cultivate a skilled workforce for the growing renewable energy sector and offers an EPQ qualification. It is a project spearheaded by Pembrokeshire College, EDF Renewables UK, and DP Energy, and is supported by the Skills and Talent program of the Swansea Bay City Deal. This program is a joint venture funded by the Welsh and UK Governments, along with private sector investment.

The programme involves various renewable technologies like wave, tidal, onshore and offshore wind, solar power and energy storage. It not only introduces students to the project development lifecycle in the renewable energy sector, but also highlights the diverse career paths within the industry. The initiative strategically connects students with potential future employers, showcasing to them the wide array of opportunities that currently exist in the renewable energy sector.

A number of the FE institutions in Wales have been successful in receiving monies from the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) and some of these will be explored in later chapters. The next example is from Coleg Gwent and is one of only a small number of projects that has received funding from the UK Government Levelling Up Fund:

Coleg Gwent HiVE

Blaenau Gwent County Council, in collaboration with Coleg Gwent and industry partners, has secured over £12 million from the Welsh Government's Tech Valleys programme and the UK Government Levelling Up Fund to establish a High Value Engineering (HiVE) facility. The HiVE will be situated at the former Monwel Hankinson factory site, near Ebbw Vale town centre and the Coleg Gwent Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone.

The facility will include a high-quality teaching space for up to 600 students, equipped with state-of-the-art robotics and manufacturing equipment. It aims to support the Tech Valleys Programme's objectives of creating a world-class, high technology focus for Welsh-based manufacturing companies.

The project is expected to attract cutting-edge industries such as 5G, battery technology, and research into automotive and autonomous vehicles. Coleg Gwent learners will receive relevant training and skills for jobs in the Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Sector and Digital and Enabling Technologies.

The HiVE will also be accessible to primary and secondary schools across Blaenau Gwent and the Heads of the Valley region. The facility will be open to all residents across Wales, with a focus on encouraging under-represented groups into STEM careers.

The building work is planned to be completed by July 2024, ready to welcome students, including those enrolled onto engineering courses at Coleg Gwent from Autumn 2024.

Many colleges are also providing A Level studies and below is an example from the College Merthyr Tydfil, which demonstrates how they have been working collaboratively with the Local Authority and local schools develop opportunities for learners and create social value through the provision of extracurricular activities:

Working With Schools

The College Merthyr Tydfil have successfully created a unique and innovative partnership approach with schools, the local authority, employers and their local community to raise aspirations, increase opportunities for learners and support positive progression to higher education, apprenticeships and employment. This has helped to improve learner

choice, improve the quality of education, raise aspirations and increase participation in further education. A number of key partnership initiatives have facilitated this.

The college has worked with the local authority to incorporate schools into their OLEVI Outstanding Teacher programme, with the key aim of encouraging further cross-sector collaboration and sharing of good practice. Staff from the primary, secondary and college FE sector were trained by OLEVI as facilitators and these qualified facilitators then provided the OTP for a mixed cohort of delegates across all three sectors including a Special School. This collaborative approach was a completely new and innovative concept that had not been conducted or seen before in the UK.

The college has worked collaboratively with Merthyr Tydfil schools to undertake curriculum and number planning. Key stakeholders from the college and four local secondary schools have discussed and planned transition into the college and examined curriculum pathways to ensure that the college has appropriate progression routes available from the GCSE pathways on offer at each school and that the schools are aware of the courses and opportunities on offer at the college.

The college's Assistant Principal, Curriculum, is a member of the Merthyr Tydfil NEETS Steering Group and also meets on a monthly basis with the NEETS Post-16 operational group to track learner applications and enrolments and ascertain any support that needs to be provided to ensure that these learners transition successfully into the college.

These partnerships have helped to deliver a number of key activities, a non-exhaustive list of examples include:

- 14-16 vocational pathways e.g., Careers Advice and Guidance to Year 9, 10 and 11
- Year 9, 10 and 11 Taster Days
- Sports coaching
- Use of college sports facilities
- Mentoring for year 11 and year 10 pupils
- GCSE revision sessions
- Joint educational/field trips including trips abroad
- Enterprise events
- Science enrichment activities
- NACE activities for More Able and Talented learners

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter highlights the pivotal role of Further Education (FE) institutions in advancing Wellbeing Goal 1: "A Prosperous Wales." The data on increased learner numbers and emphasis on sectors like health and public services underscore the commitment to social value by cultivating a skilled population. Collaborative initiatives, such as alliances between colleges and partnerships with local businesses, exemplify the sector's active contribution to economic well-being and community prosperity. Apprenticeship programs and innovative schemes further showcase the transformative impact of strategic partnerships in meeting local and regional skills needs. Through

education and collaborative endeavors, FE institutions play a crucial role in realizing a prosperous Wales, generating social value that positively impacts individuals, communities, and the foundational economy.

WBG2 - A Resilient Wales

This chapter examines the resilience of the FE sector in Wales and the social value parameters discussed in this section have been shaped by our research, particularly the College Principals. Resilience was one of the five values highlighted the Minister's (Jeremy Miles MS) speech in April 2022 and we recognise that the sector was praised for the way it reacted and adapted to the Covid pandemic; this response even included being part of the wider field hospital offer.

Since the pandemic we have seen a surge in interest in the strengthening of local economies, be that through the foundational economy, the role of town centre transformation, jobs closer to home initiatives as well as the new working patterns, which underscores both the potential - and the responsibility - of colleges to seek to contribute to local opportunity and prosperity as much as possible.

FE institutions in Wales play a pivotal role in equipping individuals and businesses with the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in a rapidly evolving landscape. This chapter shows how colleges, through various policies and initiatives contribute to the resilience of the workforce, businesses, the environment, and communities, ultimately shaping a more robust and adaptive society. The themes that emerged from the research for this goal included:

- FE colleges are large employers within their areas/regions, and they also employ a significant number of staff that live locally
- Many have developed sustainable procurement strategies and are beginning to use procurement as a lever to maintain wealth locally and develop local supply chains, however, there do appear to be opportunities to further develop the concept of social value, particularly within capital projects
- Receiving monies through Shared Prosperity Funding to implement projects that will develop resilient economies and employment opportunities
- A number of colleges have developed local food supply chains
- There are a wide variety of biodiversity and environmental research projects being undertaken by the sector
- Most FE colleges have embedded the WBFGA into their strategic planning activities and have begun to look at the requirements of the new Social Partnerships legislation.

By examining key measures such as employee data and procurement data³, we demonstrate the comprehensive contribution of colleges to workforce development, economic sustainability, environmental sustainability and community resilience. The

³ The most recent procurement and employment data available has been sourced through a mixture of raw data from the individual colleges (most typically financial years 22/23), but when this was not available from college financial/annual reports, occasionally from prior years such as 21/22, merged together to achieve a comprehensive account of the total investment in terms of procurement and employment.

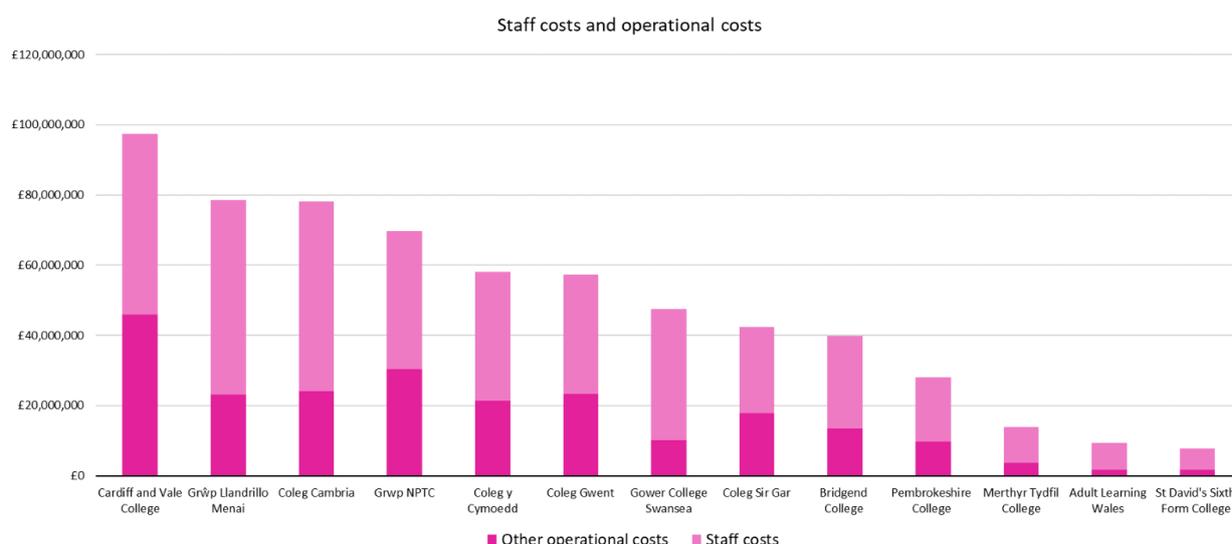
examples detailed below also link to a number of the other wellbeing goals that we are discussing in this report; most notably goals 1, 3 and 7.

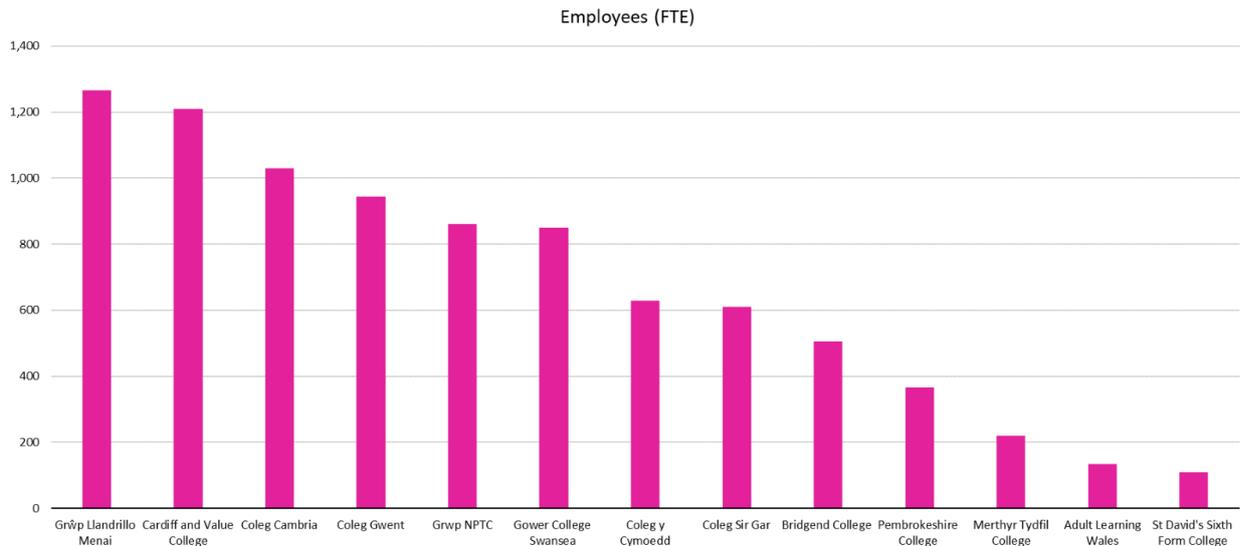
Local Employment Opportunities

In the realm of employee data, crucial metrics such as the total number of jobs, salary bands, resident location, and the overall expenditure on salaries become key indicators of the impact of educational initiatives. Simultaneously, the exploration of procurement data, including spending with suppliers and detailed supplier information, provides insights into how colleges actively engage with local businesses, contributing to economic growth and ensuring that supply chains are sustainable. The categorisation of suppliers based on locations becomes instrumental in understanding how colleges foster collaboration with businesses, reinforcing the resilience of the broader community through strategic partnerships and support.

Data: Employment

Presented in the graphs below are the staff costs relative to other operational costs, as well as the number of employees. These numbers show that there is a large investment in both people and supply chain, a large percentage of which is local. From the colleges that provided data on the 'spend amount' in Wales, they averaged 48% spent in Wales. Although this number may seem low, it is important to recognise that a large amount of the total spend figure is non-influenceable, and therefore this number is likely to be much higher for influenceable spend. Taking this figure and applying it to the aggregate spend of all colleges gives a total spend in Wales of over £60 million. As much of this employment and supply chain is local, this helps to support the local economy, and lead to economic strength and resilience which is in a better position to adapt to changes or shocks.





Sustainable Local Procurement

A focus by colleges on percentage of local spend is indicative of a willingness to commit to the local business landscape and build a resilient Wales through the use of local supply chains. Analysis of the procurement report of Gower College demonstrates this heavy commitment to local spend. As well as giving a detailed breakdown of all procurement spend, the report details the amounts that are spent locally. Not only does this deliver intel on the amount of local spend, the fact that they report this as a statistic demonstrates that they are committed to monitoring this due to its importance. The college analysed the expenditure via the purchase ledger and noted that 44% of the total spend is local, with 73% spent in Wales. The report also mentions that the College is aiming to increase the level of opportunities for local suppliers, indicating that these numbers may be even higher in the future. This is done through contacting local suppliers directly with tenders where the college is aware of a suitable local supplier. Where the college is not aware of a local supplier, the procurement officer will undertake a search to identify any possible local suppliers.

The example below, relates to the approach Coleg Cambria have adopted to local food procurement:

Infusing a contemporary spirit into Wrexham, iâl Restaurant at Coleg Cambria emerges not only as a culinary haven but as a catalyst for resilience in the community. Nestled within the college's £21m Hafod building, the restaurant anchors a vibrant 'commercial village,' fostering not just gastronomic delights but also a resilient ethos. Committed to the 'farm to fork' initiative, iâl Restaurant prioritizes local sourcing, championing Welsh producers and independent businesses, including their own Llysfasi farm, aligning seamlessly with the resilience goal for the region.

iâl aims to prepare the next generation of hospitality professionals. Through immersive, real-world experiences, students are equipped to navigate the challenges of the industry, contributing to the resilience of the local workforce. Open for lunch, dinner, and afternoon tea, iâl Restaurant serves as a hub for not just culinary delights but for fostering

resilience and wellbeing in the community. The innovative and sustainable approach of iâl Restaurant aligns with the vision of building a resilient Wales, where local businesses thrive, and future generations are prepared to face the complexities of the professional world with fortitude.

Building Resilience in the Local Economy

As mentioned in the previous chapter, FE colleges have been accessing funding through SPF to deliver a variety of different programmes and projects. Below are 3 examples of the types of projects that are being undertaken, all of which relate to building local resilience:

The Green Digital Academy is dedicated to assisting businesses in integrating new digital technologies to enhance efficiency, productivity, and carbon reduction, while also reducing costs. Through a mentorship programme, the Academy aids organisations in assessing their current status and formulating a plan to pinpoint training and funding opportunities that will facilitate carbon footprint reduction.

The Hyfforddiant Net Sero Training Gwynedd is a £500K project, will offer advanced training in decarbonisation, renewable energy, and retrofitting skills from Tŷ Gwyrddfai, Penygroes. The centre's training will empower individuals and businesses to acquire skills in the fast-paced domain of carbon reduction. The industry training includes exterior wall insulation, solar panels installation and maintenance, air and ground source heat pumps and battery storage. Tŷ Gwyrddfai, renowned as a world-leading decarbonisation center, will house this new center. The project will be executed in collaboration with Adra Housing Association.

Both of these programmes are being delivered by Coleg Llandrillo Menai.

Cook24 is a gateway to food skills project being led by Coleg Sir Gâr. It is considered that the programme can change the future of individuals and the communities in which they live. Cook24 is delivered by experienced and inspiring industry professionals working in some of the most successful and creative businesses in Wales and the aim is to offer a broad grounding in the essential cooking techniques, combined with invaluable insights into the industry, from people who have succeeded at the highest level in their own fields.

FE Colleges have also been working with local industry sector businesses to address local skills shortages:

The Work Ready program involving Pembrokeshire College is a testament to resilience in addressing skills shortages and providing employment opportunities. By delivering industry-relevant training and facilitating work experience, Work Ready ensures that individuals are not only equipped with essential skills but are also seamlessly integrated into the engineering construction industry. The program's success in offering employment to 90% of its first cohort highlights its pivotal role in enhancing workforce resilience and meeting the demands of the local job market.

Coleg Cambria and Sapphire Streams (a Nursing Care and Residential Care Home provider) have developed an invaluable relationship showcases the resilience cultivated through collaborative efforts. From training provision and onboarding apprentices to actively participating in the Health and Social Care advisory board, Sapphire Streams

contributes to shaping the future of education and employment in the healthcare sector. The establishment of work experience opportunities and volunteer programs demonstrates a commitment to fostering resilience not only in the workforce but also in the student community.

Another example from Coleg Cambria involves their collaboration with the NDT Group Ltd's, this collaboration exemplifies the symbiotic relationship between education and industry. By providing work experience opportunities to engineering apprentices, NDT Group Ltd not only supports the college's educational initiatives but also gains a prospective talented employee. This mutually beneficial partnership underscores the importance of investing in the local community and education to ensure a resilient workforce and sustained business growth.

Developing Natural Habitats

Within the WBFGA this second goal has a focus on biodiversity and ecosystems, the following are examples of how FE institutions are delivering social value through environmental projects:

Coleg Cambria has demonstrated a commitment to improving biodiversity through its environmental activities and initiatives that include tree planting, creation of wildflower meadows and other works designed to enhance the natural habitat of areas such as Northop, Deeside and Llysfasi. Some of their notable projects and achievements include planting 840 trees in the Northop woodland area, turning a number of areas into wildflower meadows, including 500 sqm of grass sites in Northop, Deeside and Llysfasi. These actions have seen the return of rare plants such as wild bee orchids for the first time in a number of years. Furthermore, Coleg Cambria gained bee friendly status in 2021. The collection of these activities has significantly enhanced the biodiversity of these areas, thus improving ecosystem stability and contributing to the global issue of carbon emission reduction.

The increased biodiversity has enhanced the visual appeal of these areas, making them more attractive places to be as well as the obvious environmental benefits. This is a clear representation of social value through the contribution to the attractiveness of the local area.

The following is an extract from a blog published by Gower College:

“At Gorseinon, students and staff have planted 350 saplings, provided free of charge by Woodland Trust, across two areas of the campus. Areas previously covered in grass and bramble will now become home to a variety of eleven tree species including oak, silver birch and rowan. As they mature, these trees will provide food and shelter for hundreds of wildlife species helping to increase biodiversity, as well as enhancing air quality across the campus, creating valuable green space and playing an essential role in tackling climate change.

The work to increase the biodiversity of the campuses will see over 3,000 native wildflower species planted at Gorseinon and Tycoch this year. That means that over 18,000 bulbs will be planted, with each variety being specifically selected with local conditions and environmental needs in mind. Additionally bird boxes,

bug hotels, homes for hedgehogs, toads and frogs, are now permanent fixtures at both campuses.”

Bridgend College has demonstrated a commitment to being a sustainable college through their inclusion of sustainability in their corporate risk register as a separate entry. This is not just a verbal commitment, however, as they have embarked on a number of sustainability projects and are planning to embark on many more. An example of such a project is college students working in partnership with the Initiative for Nature Conservation Cymru. They have been involved in the management and monitoring of Llantrisant Common since 2021, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, creating desirable habitats for butterflies and maintaining plantings of suitable flora. In addition to learners, college staff are to undertake net zero, sustainability and circular economy training. This will ensure that staff are best prepared to encourage learners to act in a sustainable and globally responsible way. Perhaps the largest impact that Bridgend College has had is the partnership with the Welsh Government in the development of Net zero e-learning modules for Wales, which are now ‘live’ on the Welsh Government ‘Hwb’. The college has also entered into a number of other partnerships which engage in projects with a further commitment to sustainability.

Leading Research

Many of the FE colleges are also involved in academic research, including those that are delivering agricultural and equine studies. This example is from The Tywi Farm Nutrients Partnerships Project. It is a collaborative initiative between farmers, researchers, and advisors to improve nutrient management and reduce environmental impacts in the Tywi catchment area in Wales. It makes full use of the research facilities that Coleg Sir Gâr have developed at the Agriculture Research Centre. The project aims to achieve the objectives of increasing farm profitability and resilience by optimising nutrient use efficiency, reducing nutrient losses to water and air by implementing best management practices, enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem services by restoring habitats and creating buffer zones and fostering knowledge exchange and innovation by engaging stakeholders and disseminating findings.

The project involves various activities such as soil and water testing, nutrient budgeting, manure storage and application, cover cropping, riparian management, and field trials. The project also provides training, workshops, demonstrations, and newsletters to share information and experiences with farming communities. The project expects to deliver multiple benefits such as improved farm performance, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, improved water quality, increased carbon sequestration, and enhanced wildlife diversity. The project also hopes to contribute to the development of policy and practice for sustainable agriculture in Wales and beyond.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the case studies and data presented underscore the multifaceted contributions of colleges in fostering resilience in Wales. From equipping businesses with essential skills and embracing sustainable practices to addressing skills shortages and providing meaningful work experiences, these initiatives align with the goal of "A Resilient Wales." As educational institutions actively engage with industries, communities, and students, they play a pivotal role in shaping a society that can adapt,

innovate, and overcome challenges. The resilience cultivated through these efforts not only benefits individuals and businesses but also contributes to the overall strength and adaptability of Welsh communities.

WBG3 - A Healthier Wales

A healthy lifestyle is extremely important for individuals, but also has a vast range of positive externalities for society. Physical health activities are a key to improving mental health, which has been rightly recognised by the further educational institutions included in this report. This section lays out the initiatives that have been undertaken with the goal of improving the health of people in Wales. Importantly, many of the initiatives included in this report encourage the understanding of healthy behaviour. This ensures that students not only undertake healthy behaviour when they are in the colleges but are encouraged to do so outside. This has wide reaching implications from a social value perspective, as it assists in building a generation of learners who live a healthy lifestyle because they understand the benefits, rather than living a healthy lifestyle because they are forced to do so within the confines of the educational setting.

There were a number of key themes that emerged from the research interviews and these included:

- A significant increase in the wellbeing support offered to students and staff.
- The adoption of a variety of different walking and cycling schemes.
- Development of a wellbeing fund to support local and regional initiatives.
- Promotion of healthy eating and sourcing local food.

Below, we examine the initiatives that have been in place to encourage participation in sport, as well as those that encourage healthy diet. Importantly, the benefits of good mental health have not been forgotten, and this plays a key part in the health and wellbeing strand of the social value framework.

Sport Wales - Winter of Wellbeing

This Sport Wales project provided the FE sector with £226k to deliver play, sporting and cultural activities for children and young people aged 0-25, addressing the social, emotional and physical impacts of the pandemic. The project was managed by ColegauCymru as Sport Wales's recognised national partner for the FE sector in Wales. An impact report has been produced, which details the outcomes of this programme. The full version of the impact report details the extent to which the program was successful, evaluating a number of metrics by which it was agreed that the success of the program would be measured. To summarise the findings of the report, this program has been a great success. There is evidence to show that there have been improvements in health outcomes of participants and also potentially generating a cultural shift towards a more healthy lifestyle. As mentioned in the introduction to this paragraph, it is the cultural shift towards a healthy lifestyle that will be most likely to deliver the long-term health outcomes that are desirable.

Sport Wales set a number of targets at the inception of this project, against which the success of the project could be measured. Presented in the table below are the metrics

that were decided upon, as well as the achievement of them compared to the target that was set. As is evident from the table, there are a number of areas in which the target has been met or exceeded. Notably, the delivery of 1052 compared to the target of 500 in the upskilling of sports learners is an extremely significant achievement.

Project strand	Target	Delivery
Upskilling of Sports learners	500*	1052*
Holiday activities at college facilities	60 days (10 campuses)	50
Upskilling of Childcare learners	500	269
Early Years Activity	9 days	6 days
Level 1 & 2 outdoor days	24 days / trips	25 days
ILS / ESOL outdoor days	48 days / trips	47days
WOW Outdoor Challenge	12 colleges 144 learners 20 volunteers	12 colleges 120 participating 20 volunteers
Purchase of GoPro cameras from project underspend	13 College Campuses	

ColegauCymru Active Wellbeing Strategy

This strategy stems from the fact that the link between physical activity and mental wellbeing is strong and well researched. This strategy aims to promote physical, mental and emotional wellbeing through increased access to physical activity since 2014. New staff roles have been created to facilitate this, and colleges have been provided with the opportunity to develop new projects as well as support existing ones. This initiative supports learners who are potentially less active or less likely to have regular outdoor activity experience. This includes learners trying an outdoor activity for the first time, many of these also having additional learning needs. The idea behind this is that a holistic approach to health and wellbeing is the best approach, encompassing both mental and physical health to deliver the best outcomes.

Cardiff and Vale College – Health & Wellbeing Committee

Cardiff and Vale College established the Health & Wellbeing Committee in June 2021, a decision that stemmed from discussions at a pre-Covid Governor Strategy event in 2019. The objective was to integrate ‘Wellbeing’ into the college’s existing strategic aims of Quality, Efficiency, and Growth. The onset of Covid accelerated the need for this, leading

to the implementation of numerous health and wellbeing measures for staff and learners to counteract the pandemic's effects. These measures also serve as a guide for the future health and wellbeing of staff and learners.

In a first for the college's Governing Body, a practicing GP was recruited as a Co-opt onto the Committee. The Committee also comprises Staff and Student Governors, as well as experts from other organisations such as the Principality, Metrobank, and Women's Aid. The Committee has seen considerable growth, and this year, it achieved a strategic aim by conducting a hybrid bi-lingual meeting (with simultaneous translation) for the first time.

The Committee addresses a broad range of subjects (as outlined in the Terms of Reference) and includes experts in the fields of ALN, Black Leadership Group, Health & Safety, HR, Welsh Curriculum, Equality & Diversity, and Sustainability. These experts regularly update the Governors in their respective areas, providing scrutiny, guidance, and support.

Bridgend walking initiatives

A group of 8 staff members developed and installed way-marked walking routes for staff and learners on Pencoed campus and a route from Bridgend campus to support physical activity and mental wellbeing. Since its installation members of staff and learners have used the routes during break times or arranged learner walks. There have also been 8 arranged Wellbeing Walks this term where students and staff have walked as a group to encourage physical activity during the working day. This will be further developed under the Be Active banner throughout the academic year. Bridgend College has held the platinum level of the Welsh Government Corporate Health Standard for several years - part of this recognition for exemplary health, wellbeing and sustainability are opportunities for outside activities including walking. The wellbeing support is an important part of the employment value proposition.

Bridgend healthy food initiatives

Bridgend College has engaged in a number of initiatives and activities to encourage their learners to eat more healthily. Within refectory areas, there is publication and signage of the EatWell Guide to promote healthy eating choices and raise awareness of a balanced diet. In addition, there are healthy options available in refectory outlets. The college also provides free breakfast for staff and students, as well as free fresh fruit for staff and students. There is also a wide availability of hydration stations to encourage people to drink more water. Evident from this is that Bridgend is giving behavioural nudges to encourage healthy eating to encourage good long-term habits. As a result, students are now more aware of the healthy options that are available to them and appear to be taking good advantage of all the free breakfast and fruit offerings, as the popularity of these schemes has increased since their inception. c

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter underscores the commitment of Further Education (FE) institutions to Wellbeing Goal 3: "A Healthier Wales." The initiatives outlined emphasise the integral link between physical activity, mental wellbeing, and the positive externalities for society. These programs, allow people to actively participate in a healthy

lifestyle, and hopefully build lifelong habits that benefit their physical and mental wellbeing.

The strategic focus on both physical and mental health aligns with a holistic approach, contributing to the long-term health outcomes desirable for society. Specific college-level initiatives, showcase comprehensive efforts to integrate wellbeing into the educational setting. These endeavors not only create immediate benefits for staff and learners but also foster a cultural shift towards healthier lifestyles, demonstrating the sector's active role in realising the vision of a healthier Wales.

WBG4 - A More Equal Wales

ColegauCymru and all of its member institutions recognise the significant role that they have in achieving a more equal Wales:

“A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic background and circumstances).”

Our research has highlighted that FE colleges are delivering social value, in relation to equality via a number of different approaches and these include:

- Formulating strategic equality plans that act as a basis for embedding a culture of equality, where everyone is treated equally.
- Developing a ‘learning offer’ for students of all academic levels and from different ethnic backgrounds, including working closely with refugees and migrants in the delivery of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision.
- Working with under-served groups and those furthest from the labour market and finding pathways to support them into/back into employment.
- Working with disengaged 14 to 16 year olds and providing them with apprenticeship opportunities.
- Implementing family learning support programmes.
- Adopting Governance structures and practices that drive equality and diversity.

We have been provided with a significant number of case studies relating to equality and examples below provide an overview of some of the innovative programmes and approaches that the FE sector is implementing in Wales.

Diverse Communities

Cardiff and Vale College provided details of the work that they are undertaking relating to Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement (FREDIE). In terms of their student cohort they explain the local context:

- They have 33,596 learners
- The Cardiff Region represents 48% Wales's population
- Generates 51% Wales's GVA
- Diverse community – high wealth and high poverty
- Half of their learners from most deprived regions in Wales
- 32% live in workless households
- 31% British Ethnic Minority Communities
- Over 50 nationalities.

They add that:

“Inclusion is central to our vision and values, embedded in our work

- *A whole college focus on the importance of inclusion*
- *We support learners and staff to understand the importance of inclusivity*
- *How we actively engage with our communities for positive impact – wider influence.*

- *How we develop our curriculum and teaching and learning to advance equality of opportunity.*
- *How we support and develop our staff and learners, celebrating and enhancing FREDIE.”*

The Vision and Values of the College are to be Inspirational, Inclusive, Influential and:

- Respond to the needs of our communities
- Bridge the social mobility gap
- Develop provision for all levels and abilities
- Raise aspirations, and provide the very best opportunities for learners to achieve their potential
- Address both the lack of skills of the local population and the increasing employment opportunities within the region
- Our challenge is to tackle poverty across the region and support prosperous communities.
- Work in innovative ways

Cardiff and Vale College has moved from 7th to 3rd in the National Centre for Diversity’s prestigious Top 100 Most Inclusive Employers Index. The achievement reflects the work being done across the College to embed Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement (FREDIE).

Also based in Cardiff is St. David’s Sixth Form College, which is a socially and ethnically diverse college that provide significant social value, in various ways, contributing to a more inclusive and equitable society. With 49% of students from deciles categorised as deprived, 20% of learners from the most deprived decile (Decile 1) and 55% of students from ethnic minorities, St. David’s promotes an inclusive learning environment where students from different backgrounds and cultures interact and learn together. Exposure to diverse perspectives enhances students’ understanding of various cultures and socioeconomic contexts, fostering tolerance, mutual respect and promoting a sense of global citizenship.

Adult Learning Wales

In this first example, we present an organisational overview of Adult Learning Wales and the work that they are doing to support our adult learners all across Wales. We know from the Ministerial speech in April 2023, the importance of access to lifelong learning opportunities:

“I want Wales to be a nation of second chances in education. A nation where it is never too late to learn. Where people have the confidence, motivation and means to re-enter education to gain the skills they need to work and thrive at any stage”.

In the pursuit of a more equal Wales, the role of adult education and community-based learning emerges as a linchpin in dismantling barriers, promoting inclusivity, and fostering social value. This chapter delves into the initiatives of Adult Learning Wales (ALW), Wales' largest adult community-based adult learning provider. ALW's strategic focus on tailored, community-based learning programs aligns seamlessly with the overarching wellbeing goal of "A More Equal Wales." This goal reflects the commitment

to address disparities, promote diversity, and ensure that educational opportunities are accessible to all, irrespective of age, background, or ability.

ALW, Wales' largest adult community based adult learning (CBAL) provider, plays a pivotal role in fostering social value through its commitment to widening participation, in addition to roles promoting active citizenship, and skills development. This case study delves into the specific actions and initiatives undertaken by ALW to achieve its social value objectives:

Diversity and Tolerance

ALW promotes diversity and tolerance, benefiting social and community life. It has demonstrated a commitment to engaging diverse demographics, with a particular focus on older learners and those from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas.

By actively reaching out to these underrepresented groups, ALW addresses social inequalities and empowers individuals who may face multiple disadvantages. Understanding the barriers that potential learners face, ALW has implemented targeted strategies to dismantle or reduce these obstacles. This includes providing flexible learning opportunities at convenient times and locations, addressing financial constraints, and embracing digital inclusion to ensure broader accessibility.

Recognizing the importance of essential skills, ALW actively contributes to areas such as ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and essential skills provision. By doing so, ALW supports economic and social integration, contributing to the overall well-being of learners and their communities.

Furthermore, ALW contributes to the learning of a number of people from ethnic minority backgrounds. The latest data for 2021/2022 shows that there were 9.4% of learners at further education institutions from ethnic minority backgrounds (excluding White minorities). This proportion had been steadily increasing since 2012/13, apart from a fall in 2020/21 (likely to be a covid-related anomaly).

ALW's success lies in its ability to design and implement tailored learning programs that resonate with the needs and aspirations of the diverse learner base. The organization recognizes that one size does not fit all and tailors its offerings to suit the requirements of learners, whether they are seeking essential skills, language proficiency, or vocational training.

ALW adopts a holistic approach to learning, recognizing that the benefits extend beyond measurable outcomes. The organisation acknowledges the transformative power of adult learning in fostering joy, wonder, and pride, contributing to overall well-being and a sense of purpose.

In conclusion, ALW's strategic focus on tailored, community-based learning programs, along with targeted efforts to mitigate barriers, positions it as a key driver of social value in Wales. By actively engaging diverse demographics, ALW not only contributes to individual development but also plays a crucial role in building a more inclusive and vibrant society.

Disability

As Wales' largest community based adult learning provider, ALW engages a number of people with disabilities into its education. This allows wider participation from often underrepresented groups.

The latest data for 2021/22 shows that 12.3% of learners at further education institutions self-identified as having "a disability". This proportion has decreased over the last three years, having previously increased steadily since 2013/14. It is therefore important that ALW is committed to allowing for an inclusive environment for all adults, including those with a disability.

Social Engagement and Integration

CBAL acts as a catalyst for social engagement and integration, fostering a sense of community and belonging. It also emphasizes the role of adult learners as role models within their families and leaders in their communities¹. ALW has strategically embedded its learning initiatives within communities, recognizing the importance of localized and community-based education. This approach not only facilitates learning but also strengthens community bonds, fostering a sense of shared purpose and collaboration.

Health and Well-being

Participating in adult learning has a significant impact on individual health and well-being. ALW's initiatives have a direct impact on economic well-being by enhancing essential skills, facilitating re-engagement with education, and enabling the acquisition of vocational skills. Social well-being is also promoted through increased employability, expanded social networks, and active citizenship.

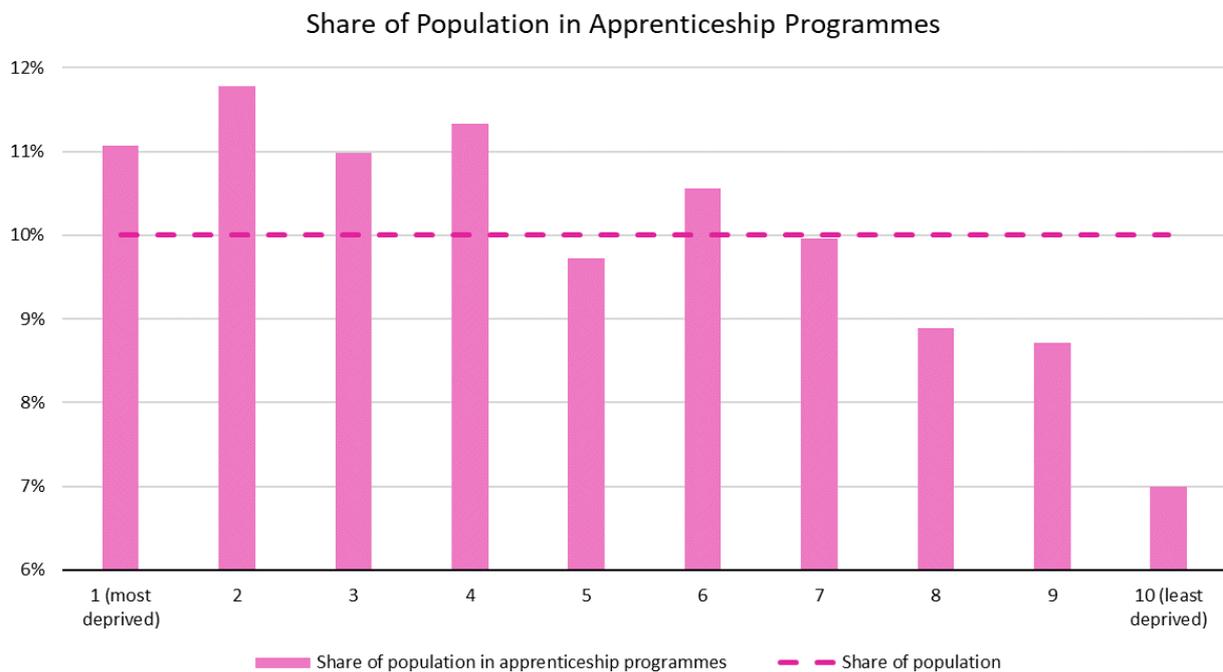
In conclusion, Adult Learning Wales stands as a powerful exemplar of how adult education, when strategically aligned with the goal of "A More Equal Wales," can be a driving force for positive social value. By addressing the unique needs of diverse learners and communities, ALW contributes not only to individual development but also to the creation of a more inclusive, vibrant, and equal society in Wales. Through tailored educational programs and community-centric strategies, ALW exemplifies the potential of adult education to break down barriers and foster a more equal and interconnected Wales.

Data: Social Mobility

As demonstrated in the Adult Learning Wales example, educational opportunities can be used as a tool to foster a more equal Wales. Enabling people from all backgrounds the opportunity to have the best educational opportunities offered to them provides an excellent basis for furthering social mobility in Wales. Below, we present some of the data around social mobility in apprenticeships. Specifically, we look into the extent to which apprenticeships cater to those living in deprived areas.

Participating in adult learning has a significant impact on social mobility. Adult learning, such as apprenticeships, can help people gain better employment opportunities, leading to higher wages and therefore a better standard of living. It reduces the skills gap,

especially among workers from disadvantaged backgrounds. These effects of adult education on social mobility can thus be used as a tool to help those in the most deprived areas to upskill and thus improve their quality of life.



Source: Unique learners in work-based learning in Wales (2023), Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019), Welsh Government / StatWales

As demonstrated by the graph above, a disproportionate share of those in apprenticeship programmes are living in deprived areas. This shows that adult education is being used in Welsh colleges to deliver the outcomes mentioned above. From a social value perspective, this delivers on idea of ‘levelling the playing field’ when it comes to ensuring people from all backgrounds can get into good quality employment.

A further example of good practice relates to Junior Apprenticeships opportunities at Cardiff and Vale College.

Junior Apprenticeships

The Junior Apprentice programme has been running at Cardiff & Vale College since 2016. It was set up as an alternative curriculum offer for year 10 and year 11 learners who were at risk of disengaging at school. It provides a range of vocational pathways in line with key Welsh Government/LSKIP priority sectors in areas such as Construction and Building Services, Automotive Engineering, Hospitality & Catering, Hair & Beauty and Digital Creative. It also offers GCSEs in Maths, Numeracy and English alongside the vocational qualifications.

Since 2016, there have been 270 learners studying on the Junior Apprentice programme, from across 23 schools from Cardiff and the Vale Local Authorities. Including EOTAS learners. The headline data from 2016-2022 shows that there was an 85% attainment rate for vocational qualifications at level 1 / 2, and total attainment for GCSE Maths, Numeracy and English being 77%, 78% and 90% respectively. From 2016-2022, 80.6% of junior apprentices progressed to post-16 courses (84% before covid and 90% for 2021/22).

The profile of Junior Apprentices from 2021-2023 is quite diverse and indicative of the programme's inclusive nature. A significant 63% of Junior Apprentices were in receipt of free school meals, demonstrating the programme's commitment to supporting learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. Furthermore, a high percentage, 97%, of Junior Apprentices had additional learning needs (ALN), receiving various forms of support such as Attendance, Educational Welfare Support, ARC, Behaviour Support, and CAHMs.

In addition, 29% of the apprentices were known to Children's Services, further highlighting the programme's role in providing opportunities for vulnerable youth. The programme's success and impact have not gone unnoticed. It has gained recognition across the UK, winning a Beacon Award for progressing learners, and its model is now being replicated in other Colleges across Wales.

For the academic year 2022/23, the programme saw 52 year 11 learners graduating in June. Of these graduates, 36 have received offers to progress onto post-16 courses at CAVC, and 14 will enter onto a traineeship at ACT. This demonstrates the programme's effectiveness in providing pathways for further education and training for its apprentices.

Equality and Anti-Racism

Cardiff and Vale College Assistant Principal, recently gave evidence on behalf of the FE sector to the Senedd Equality and Social Justice Committee, providing details of how colleges across Wales are taking a pro-active approach to anti-racism.

The evidence detailed the collaboration across colleges of a shared vision to eradicate racism in FE and to further the interests and diversity of learners, colleagues and leaders. Every FE institution in Wales has agreed their own Anti-Racism Action Plans to take this work forward locally and are collaborating across the sector to develop shared resources for learners and staff. This has led to the delivery of bespoke training and development of anti-racist action plans specific to each college.

Cardiff and Vale College Assistant Principal, Yusuf Ibrahim, gave evidence on behalf of the FE sector to the Senedd Equality and Social Justice Committee, providing details of how colleges across Wales are taking a pro-active approach to anti-racism:

“Working with Black Leadership Group (BLG) on behalf of Welsh Government, we are helping to better understand the current picture across the FE sector and specific actions that we can take together, to build a Wales that is anti-racist and help meet the ambitions of an Anti-Racist Wales by 2030.

The FE sector in Wales is showing real leadership in its journey towards anti-racism, and we have a chance to make a real impact, building on the Welsh Government's commitment to create an anti-racist Wales. We are not complacent about scale of the challenge, but there is a genuine and meaningful commitment to change and to creating environments that are inclusive and responsive to the needs of all learners.”

The following example from St. David's College provides details of some of the anti-racist initiatives that the sector is involved in. The College is working of a range of objectives including the use of student and staff engagement groups, the development of an anti-racist curriculum, professional learning focused on anti-racism for all staff within the college and the development of pastoral resources for students cocreated with staff with

lived experience. The College has established staff and student voice community groups that represent diverse groupings, but also seek to promote cohesion, understanding and communication. These are called 'A Community Together' (ACT) Groups. They established, but were not limited to, subgroups based on protected characteristics. Representatives from these subgroups formed the 'A Community Together' (ACT) Groups and meet on a regular basis. These meetings contribute to college decision making and any issues, priorities or concerns arising from the subgroups, or from other sources of the Stakeholder Experience Framework, in order to represent the views of all. One initiative identified from the 'A Community Together' Groups was our Cultural Awareness Day which provided students with an opportunity to celebrate their cultures. Over 70 cultures were represented, enabling students to taste food, wear national dress and celebrate their heritage.

Participatory Governance

FE institutions have adopted a variety of different participatory Governance structures and practices that are driving equality and diversity. Below is an example from St Davids College, relating to social partnerships:

The principle of the social partnership sits within the College's ethos and culture of shared values and a common purpose. The College being a Catholic institution putting Catholic social teaching at the heart of its activity believes in the importance of good industrial relations with workers and has used the Papal encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, and other texts as a basis for developing a way forward for social partnership. Therefore, by developing a unique codetermination model with Trade Union representatives, the role of staff representative on SLT was created and therefore our social partnership model extends to every area of college life. The model of social partnership that the College agreed to take forward is unique for the sector and is loosely based on the codetermination model that is seen in Germany. This approach to social partnership has meant that at every level, there has been trade union input into decision-making at both an operational and strategic level of the College. As there is only one organised trade union in the organisation with representation, this has meant that this model fits well with this approach. The work on college culture identifies that all senior leaders, teaching and support staff all have a common agreement on what culture they would like to see in the College, one based on servant leadership. This has meant that we have been able to easily agree on approaches to move the College forward. The approach is based upon mutual interest and trust between employee representatives and the senior leadership team. The appointment requires the support and confidence of staff, as well as trust that everyone is working together on the common purpose. It is a relatively low cost initiative and aligns with the Welsh Government's vision for Fair Work in Wales. This approach has seen significant outcomes for the College as a whole, including a reduction in staff turnover, a more responsive senior leadership team and an opportunity for continuous improvement in all areas of college life. Policy and decision-making has been better informed and communication between senior management and staff has improved.

Impact on Learners

Below are a series of case studies, from various colleges, that show the impact that FE courses have had on students. These examples really highlight the social value that is

being created by the sector and the personal impact that learning opportunities are having on individuals; particularly those from disadvantaged groups:

Example 1

V is a Ukrainian refugee who had to leave her whole life behind and move to Wrexham. The war in Ukraine was (and still is) a devastating event, with many people fleeing their homes for safety. This means that people must leave their family, friends, work and livelihood in order to survive. V's life hasn't been an easy one. She graduated from university and became an administrator. In 2014, her country was occupied by Russia and she had to start her life all over again, this time working as an administrator in a hair salon. When the war in Ukraine started last year, she was made to start a new life all over again.

Support given by ESOL tutors:

- When V started with ESOL in Sept 2022, she walked into class looking very nervous and lost. With the support of her teachers and her classmates she slowly started to develop and realise that she could learn the language and we saw bravery and courage and she attempted to speak the language, she did this with such positivity and determination. Her attendance is excellent.
- When V started her ESOL journey she couldn't communicate in English, now 15 months on she can have a conversation confidently
- ***Steps taken by learner to move forward:***
- V attended several job fairs as soon as she moved to Wrexham, she was determined to adapt into UK life by finding a job
- Her dream is to work in administration in this country, her confidence has grown and she is continuing to work hard with the support of her teachers in ESOL to achieve her goal.

Outcomes for learner

- She has gained so much confidence and has joined a choir, which is brilliant and it shows that she has settled into life in Wales. She performs with the choir singing songs in different languages including Welsh.
- V studies and learns English at home also which is very beneficial to her learning, she can now produce a high standard of written, reading and speaking skills which is a great achievement when she only started learning the language in September 2022.
- V has not only improved her English but also her career prospects. She now has a job at Wrexham University as a cook in the kitchen. Again, at first she was very nervous about this new role, however she now enjoys it, she also gets to communicate in English with her colleagues.
- She has also had the confidence to join a Salsa class with people she doesn't know and gets the opportunity to practise her English at the same time as doing something she enjoys.

Example 2

Alasdaire, who is blind booked onto the Sign Language Beginner course in April 2022 and progressed to the Sign Language Improvers in September 2022. Alasdaire was supported by his wife and his assistant on the course. Louise, the tutor, was very supportive as Alasdaire on occasion needed help with positioning his arms and hands when signing. Alasdaire successfully completed both courses.

Having successfully completed both courses Alasdaire has been able to use his signing skills when speaking with deaf customers with the assistance of his assistant. Alasdaire has found his new skill very rewarding to be able to speak with customers in their own language.

Example 3

SM, an Asylum Seeker from Iraq, arrived in the UK on 10/04/2017. He was 32 years old and had not had any education structure in Iraq. Reach assessed him on 31/07/2019, as Pre-entry lower, and noted his address as homeless. SM's housing issue was a priority for him and he was unable to attend class at the time. On 05/01/2022 Reach reassessed SM as Pre-entry upper and he started his learning, with Adult Learning Wales, in April 2022.

During 2022 SM made his tutor aware that he was homeless as a result of achieving his refugee status. He advised that his friend was moving to another city, so he could no longer stay with him. SM told his tutor that he had slept in Bellevue Park, on occasions, but was sofa surfing at friends, where possible. Despite signposting SM to several organisations in Newport, where he left countless phone messages and did not receive a response, SM had excellent attendance in class whilst he remained homeless.

Reach supported the Tutor in signposting SM by suggesting that a joint referral be made to Communities 4 Work, where help was provided with access to work advice and training. By attending the scheme, SM was then referred to the Newport City Council Housing Solutions Team. In September 2023, SM progressed to Entry level 1, and confirmed to his Tutor that he was living in his own room, within shared accommodation. SM advised that one day he would like to have his own flat but, in the meantime, he was happy to have a room to sleep in and feel safe. After 4 years of rough sleeping and sofa surfing, in Newport, SM was able to complete the 2023/2024 enrolment form with his address details. Previously this section of the form had been left blank and SM's course certificates were passed onto him in class.

Example 4

OB is a single mother, a Refugee from Indonesia, who arrived in the UK in 2015. OB has a disability with a leg length discrepancy and wears one platform shoe on the right foot. OB's 4-year-old daughter had poor social communication: did not speak or interact with others. OB's daughter attended state nursery, afternoons, but due to a late birthday was unable to move up to reception class until September 2023.

OB asked for help to go to English class. The morning class, in central Newport, was the most suitable location but the time of the class clashed with Nursery hours 12.45 - 3.15. Reach called the health visitor to seek support for the family and to request a possible

referral to ISCAN (Integrated Service for Children with Additional Needs) for speech and language therapy for OB's daughter. The nursery agreed to look into a change from afternoons to morning sessions, spaces permitting, along with wraparound care to give OB the time she needed to leave her class and collect her daughter from Nursery. OB said she would follow advice, from Reach, and join the library to loan dual language children's books in Mandarin/English. Access to the books would help her daughter to read and also help to improve her own English language skills. The support from Reach was ongoing to assist OB in accessing an ESOL class. A space in the class was put on hold, for OB, whilst waiting for an update from nursery.

Since September 2023, OB's daughter has started school. OB has been offered an ESOL class in central Newport, which she is attending. OB has arranged with her neighbor to collect her daughter from school on the days that she is attending class, as a precaution, as she is using public transport for the journey home. Reach also sent a message to OB with the bus timetable, for her area, to help her to plan for her journey, in advance.

Conclusion

In summary, the Further Education (FE) sector in Wales actively contributes to Wellbeing Goal 4: "A More Equal Wales". The examples highlighted in this chapter have shown significant strides towards a more even and inclusive economic landscape, a reduction of social disparities and a more diverse representation of people from all backgrounds. These achievements are a testament to the focus of the colleges on this important goal. These initiatives collectively demonstrate the FE sector's dedication to creating a more equal Wales by addressing disparities, fostering inclusion, and actively contributing to social value through education and community engagement.

WBG5 - A Wales of Cohesive Communities

A society marked by cohesive communities not only enhances the overall well-being of its members but also promotes resilience, inclusivity, and shared prosperity and many FE colleges across Wales have emerged as instrumental contributors to the realisation of this goal. Their unique position as hubs of education, recreation, and community engagement allows them to play a transformative role in knitting together the fabric of society. This chapter explores the significance of cohesive communities as a policy objective and highlights how Welsh FE colleges, through innovative initiatives and community partnerships, are actively delivering social value to achieve this goal. Activities working with communities include:

- Letting community groups use college facilities, such as meeting rooms and sports pitches; often for little or no cost
- Working with community groups on research/curricular activities
- Allowing ESOL students to further develop their language skills by arranging community events
- Engaging with local schools to deliver projects and undertake visits
- Providing courses and training in community buildings
- Using college facilities for business networking events
- Buying community assets, to prevent them from closure
- Volunteering with local community groups and sitting on the Boards of third sector organisations.

The following examples provide tangible evidence of the role and impact FE institutions can have on community cohesion, illustrating how education and recreational facilities can serve as catalysts for positive societal change.

The College as a Community Facility

The College Merthyr Tydfil has provided community groups with facilities to use free of charge. This has resulted in a number of positive outcomes, such as increased access to physical activity for residents of Merthyr Tydfil as well as increased access to mental health and wellbeing services. One can note that, whilst strengthening communities, this also feeds into other wellbeing goals aside from this, such as Wellbeing Goal 3 – a healthier Wales. Broadly, this example has demonstrates an increased number of people engaging with these community groups and thus strengthening the community, making it more cohesive.

The types of clubs that are taking advantage of the offer from The College Merthyr Tydfil include sports clubs such as Table Tennis, Karate and Basketball to name a few, as well as voluntary groups such as Barnardo's. Furthermore, community organising groups such as PRIDE have taken advantage of the offer. This is especially important for fostering cohesive communities as it has led to the college being involved in organising the first ever PRIDE festival for Merthyr Tydfil.

These are examples of partnerships or engagements which have been received positively by their organisers and communities:

Partnership with Table Tennis Wales

Young people have benefited hugely from the college's partnership with Table Tennis Wales. This has resulted in a weekly club being run at the college and has led to the college supporting key events such as the only Table Tennis Grand Prix in Wales, which involves participants from all over the UK.

Surveys suggest that table tennis is popular among young people, with 1,700 children and young people in the county who would like more opportunities to play, something which the college has helped hugely with.

For Table Tennis Wales, the partnership agreement with the college offers a high-quality coaching facility, available to their best young players, but also one that opens its doors to the wider community to come and try the sport. They might be young hopefuls who pitch up on a Wednesday, looking to take up the game for the first time, or adults who want to play the sport for its fitness benefits and sociability.

Hosting the Annual Merthyr Tydfil Half Marathon

The college has hosted the annual Merthyr Tydfil Half Marathon, in partnership with the running club. Every March, the college building becomes a hub for a community race event. It facilitates early registration and setup on the Saturday and serves as a gathering point for families and spectators on race day. The college collaborates with the Running Club to field a team of 10 staff members, promoting staff health and wellbeing while supporting this community event. The event, attracting over 500 participants and spectators annually, fosters community spirit and aspiration

Welsh Athletics' Starting Blocs Programme Run at the College

The Welsh Athletics Starting Blocs programme, launched in summer 2023, targets children aged 4-12. It offers a comprehensive introduction to athletics through fun, engaging sessions led by Welsh Athletics coaches. These sessions, initially successful in the summer, now continue weekly after school every Monday and Wednesday at the college. The indoor sports hall provides a safe, positive space for local children to learn essential movement skills for sports through games focused on running, jumping, and throwing fundamentals.

Bridgend College also provided an overview of the various stakeholders that had used their facilities between September 2022 and September 2023 and these are outlined in the table below:

Classroom / Conference Room / Auditorium Usage	Sports Hall
Saturday Pit Crew - Ford Health	Netball - Girls & Women's local team, Netball Wales, Welsh College
Housing Summit for CTM	Various different activities Basketball, Frizbee, indoor football
Active Wellbeing Regional forums	Little Kickers - Football for under-8-year-olds
BCBC Business Support Fayre	Children's parties
My Voice My Choice program - Leonard Cheshire	Gym / Rugby Pitch
IMI Approved Centre Network Meeting	

<p>Open University - Team Away Day Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board West Glamorgan Youth Theatre Residential Menter a Busnes - Supporting local farmers Young Enterprise Company Programme Final Student Information Event - Huw Irranca-Davies Hope Rescue Cats Protection - Customer Focus Workshop</p>	<p>Bridgend Ravens - Youth Development Ospreys - Youth Development Penybont Academy</p>
<p>Sony Theatre / Dance Studios Various Local Dance Groups, End of year shows, competitions Various Youth Theatre Groups Stagecoach Local schools annual productions BCBC Event - Battle of the Bands</p>	<p>3G Pitch Football - Mini's & Junior's, Senior's, Women's & Girls, Academy & Mental Health Awareness Groups. Children's holiday camps Children's football parties Rugby - Minis & Juniors & Seniors</p>

Involving Community within the Curriculum

Bridgend College also provided an example of a 6 week ‘Fitness Engagement Project’ that they had undertaken with their Sport Science students. The work involved a fitness assessment and the development of a personalised fitness plan using digital tools and Project Malcolm pedal powered buggies. The 1:1 personal fitness plans provided weekly advice and guidance to support participants with new ways of living.

Students had the opportunity to work with ‘Real Clients’ from both internal and external community groups. Impacts on participants included improved mental health, weight loss, and improved productivity. The project will continue after Christmas 2024. The students also have the opportunity to work with recovering cancer patients, where there is no GP referral system in place. The College considers that there is an opportunity to establish a European partnership, based on this project, to exchange ‘Best Practice’.

Shaping a Cohesive Community

The next two examples build on the social value activities outlined within the previous chapter and really demonstrate the holistic impact that the FE sector is able to deliver.

Coleg y Cymoedd¹ has been driving social value and increasing community cohesion through its ESOL courses. This has been a great initiative and supports migrants and refugees to learn English and supporting them to better integrate into their communities. The ways in which positive outcomes have been demonstrated are as follows:

Celebrating diversity: The college held an event to celebrate the progress of over 100 ESOL learners from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The event featured a speech by a Senedd Member, Mick Antoniw, in Ukraine.

Enhancing skills: The college offers ESOL courses at various levels to help learners improve their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in English. The courses are available on a full-time and part-time basis across four campuses.

Recognising achievements: The college praised the ESOL learners for their dedication, resilience and commitment during the past academic year. The learners have shown remarkable results in their studies and have overcome many challenges.

Through their Adult and Community Learning (ACL) Department Bridgend College utilise a range of community spaces to deliver our curriculum. These can range from local Schools, Community Centres and Private Establishments. During the last academic year the college enrolled over 375 learners onto a community course for ACL. The college feels that having education within the community means that they are able to establish close links with community organisations. Examples of organisations that they are working with include

- B leaf, a community garden project for learners with additional learning needs.
- The Bridge Community Hub, a local hub for members of the public that are looking to improve their employment prospects.
- Bridgend Stoke Club, the College works closely with this organisation to help its members relearn some of their key literacy and numeracy skills.
- Maesteg Library, this year Bridgend College has started using the library in Maesteg for their sessions. This has had a very positive impact on both our learners and the library as a whole.

The College is also facilitating a very popular Family Learning strand of ACL. This included the provision of English and Maths in many of the Primary and Secondary schools around Bridgend, encouraging parents and children to come to these sessions to build confidence and relationships of those involved and thus making education much more accessible to all. The College view these activities as a key part in building positive relationships around education for both the parents and children.

Saving Community Assets

The following example really highlights the social and leadership role that FE colleges are playing within our local communities. The NPTC Group of Colleges stepped in to help save the Afan Valley swimming pool following its closure in December 2014, when it was deemed to be unaffordable by its operator. Local campaigners set up a company, Afan Valley Community Leisure (AVCL), to support their efforts and raising funds. The College, working alongside volunteers and Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Services (NPTCVS), provided a critical link to further learning and education opportunities for local people, and hopes that the community will use the facility for recreational, health and educational purposes.

The Afan Valley swimming pool was reopened in 2016 and the pool has seen great success since it has been reopened. Following significant public consultation, the

community's needs have been met, with fully booked swimming lessons teaching over 400 students a week how to swim. There is a wide range of other weekly activities hosted at the pool. Perhaps most impressively, the pool management has worked with the community to provide a pathway for non-swimmers to get into competitive swimming, which has been a huge success. The pool is used frequently by clubs and societies, as well as schools, this includes use by a significant number of disabled adults and children.

There are high levels of poverty and deprivation in the valley which means many do not have access to facilities without travelling out of the valley, which for many is impossible. The facility being located in the valley is vital for skill development and community growth, and giving people volunteering and employment opportunities they otherwise wouldn't have. Afan Valley Swimming Pool integrates the villages in the valley by bringing people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities together. It provides and will develop further opportunities for people to interact with others they otherwise wouldn't have the reason to and form new friendship groups. The swimming pool also provides local employment opportunities.

The facility is thriving in a time of economic difficulty and although subsidy will always be required its success is vital to so much of valley life.

Conclusion

These case studies show the colleges are not merely educational institutions; they are dynamic entities actively shaping and contributing to the cohesion of the communities they are embedded in. Through partnerships, community engagement, and a commitment to inclusivity, these colleges serve as models for the transformative power of education and recreation in building stronger, more united communities.

WBG6 - A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh language

This section examines the extent to which Welsh colleges have demonstrated their commitment to delivering social value by furthering cultural and Welsh language ambitions of Wales. This chapter demonstrates the commitment of colleges to ensuring that Welsh culture and language is promoted. It explores the offerings of cultural activities ranging from artistic projects and performances, activities that celebrate heritage as well as more unique and niche experiences.

Furthermore, this chapter presents the data on Welsh language learning. This looks into the extent to which learners are taught in Welsh as opposed to English, and the different degrees to which Welsh is used in learning.

In terms of cultural activities our research has uncovered the following types of activities that are being facilitated by FE institutions:

- Delivery a wide variety of arts and culture learning programmes, including end of year fashion and arts shows
- Holding arts and cultural events in college theatres and performance spaces, but also taking an arts and culture offer into local communities
- Local arts, theatre and community groups are using college performances spaces and theatres
- Facilitating arts projects for local schools
- Developing future talent for arts, cultural, creative industries and television production based in Wales. This includes technical and production staff as well as actors. Participants highlighted links to Welsh language production companies
- Using their sites for TV and film production.
- Interviewees also spoke about how college facilities are used for local Urdd eisteddfods and their role when National Eisteddfods are held within their County.

Beyond the Classroom

Below are two examples of projects that have been undertaken by Coleg Y Cymoedd:

The 'Living Canvas' exhibition, held at the National Museum in Cardiff on 26th March 2023, was a resounding success. The exhibition was conceived by final year students of Coleg y Cymoedd's Costume Construction degree, who brought the portraits in the gallery to life with their costume creations.⁴

This was the second time since 2020 that the museum had invited students from the college to present their work, which was based on historical paintings from the museum's collection. The students' months of research and detailed design culminated in an exquisite showcase, with models dressed in replica costumes staging tableaux in front of their famous portrait counterparts.

⁴ <https://www.cymoedd.ac.uk/crowds-gather-at-cardiffs-national-museum-as-coleg-y-cymoedds-exhibition-the-living-canvas-is-a-hit/>

The event also included a dialogue about the students' work, a costume parade, and a 'best in show' competition judged by esteemed Costume Designer, Ray Holman. The students' work was highly praised, with spectators taking to social media to share positive reviews and a video compilation of the event garnering viral attention.

The students themselves spoke highly of the experience, with one participant, Cecilia De Menezes, describing it as her favourite project of the course so far. Another student, Victoria Herbert, expressed pride in her costume and praised the supportive atmosphere among her classmates.

The 'Best in Show' award was won by Ivy Hible, who expressed her passion for historical costume and her hopes to specialise in this area after graduation.

Coleg y Cymoedd also worked with the team behind hit TV show *His Dark Materials* to support next generation of production talent and for an exclusive exhibition aimed at giving members of the public an insight into the inner workings of the world of television.

Coleg y Cymoedd held a unique showcase at its Nantgarw campus that allowed the local community to see puppets and other creations from the popular fantasy series up close. Masterclasses were also facilitated by *His Dark Materials* producers and industry professionals, showing visitors how the creatures were made and demonstrate the skills needed to work in the sector.

The college also hosted a dedicated family workshop where children were able to build their own daemons based on the designs and processes used for the show.

The final example in this section is Theatre Hafren which is part of the NPTC Group of Colleges. The Theatre is located in Newtown in North Powys and has been in operation for 40 years. Initially presenting less than 50 performances a year, to today presenting over 160 performances, everything from Rhod Gilbert to Welsh National Opera, to local Community productions. Not only has this increased the cultural offer of the area, but this has also had a large and positive economic impact. The theatre employs local staff and also provides volunteering opportunities. Theatre Hafren has seen great success and the shows have been extremely popular, showing that the demand for an increased cultural offering certainly exists.

The second element of this Wellbeing goal is 'thriving Welsh language'. This was highlighted by the Minister Jeremy Miles MS, in a speech earlier this year:

"our learners want to learn both in Welsh and in English of course. Increasing the number of people who can learn through the medium of Welsh is a priority for us all – crucial to the success of our Cymraeg 2050 policy and to the new strategic duty in our bill to expand Welsh medium tertiary provision.

In our co-operation agreement we will fund the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to increase the proportion of apprenticeships and further education programmes that are available in Welsh.

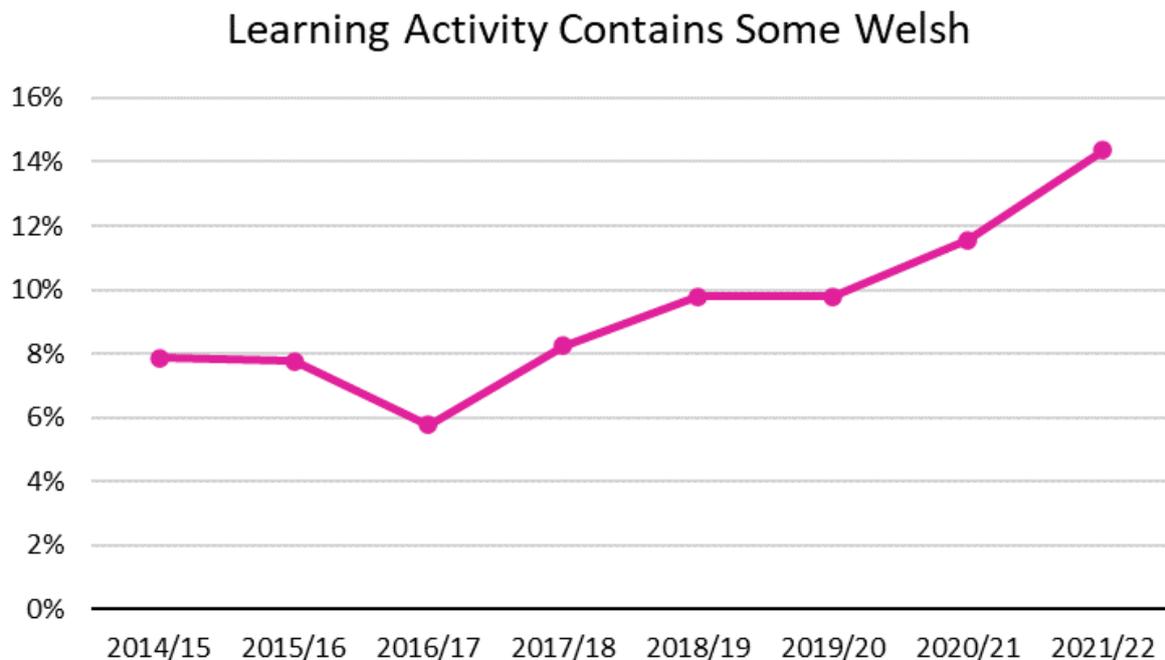
That's obviously good news but the challenge to colleagues.....is to see the goal of ensuring that more study in Welsh as a fundamental part of your mission. What goals and targets will you set yourselves and how will you meet them? Wales

needs a confident, bilingual workforce - but let's be frank, we also know that often a key obstacles to that is ensuring a confident, bilingual workforce in FE.

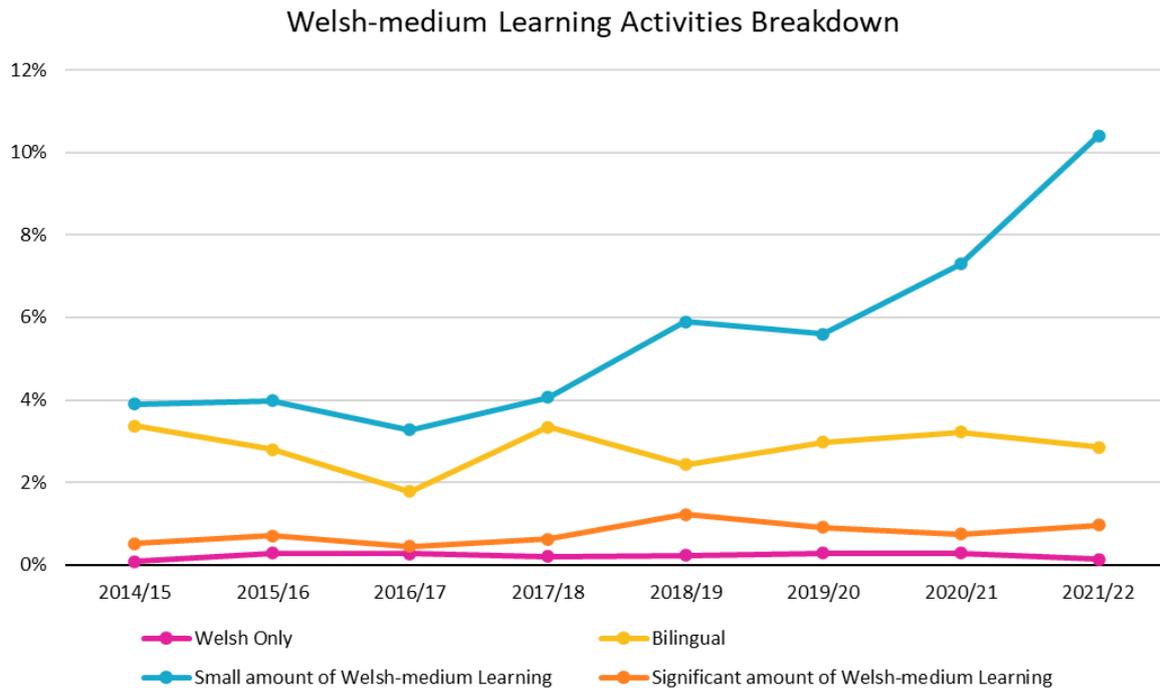
The Coleg is already supporting colleges to employ staff to deliver courses in Welsh in priority areas. But I want to work with you as a sector to identify how we can do more to ensure that the workforce is there to help us meet this ambition - so let's work together to solve this challenge creatively”.

Data: Welsh Language Learning

We have examined the language medium through which learning activities are delivered. Data from [StatsWales](#) shows that the percentage of total learning activities containing some Welsh language has increased since 2014/15. The categories that are included in this include those delivered entirely in Welsh, those that are delivered bilingually, and those that contain either a 'small' or 'significant' amount of Welsh in their delivery. The benefit of language learning is a fundamental part of creating social value.



The trend seen in the graph above is mainly driven by an increase in the number of learning activities that contain a 'small' amount of Welsh, with the other categories remaining fairly constant over the same time period, as can be seen in the graph below. Due to the nature of language learning, an increase in Welsh proficiency must begin with a smaller degree of language learning. This shows that further education institutions are doing an excellent job at appealing to learners at all levels.



As part of this research we also spoke to Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. The role of Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol is to create training and study opportunities through the medium of Welsh by working with further education colleges, universities, apprenticeship providers and employers. They aim to inspire and encourage everyone to use their Welsh skills, with the ambition of creating a bilingual workforce.

The college Principals that we spoke to highlighted the importance of the support of Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, but, also recognised how their local communities influenced the bilingual offer. As well as delivering courses and apprenticeships through the medium of Welsh, FE colleges are making efforts to grow skills and confidence in the use of the Welsh language at all levels (as seen in the graph above), activities to do this include:

- Development of Welsh language strategies
- Linking sporting and cultural events to opportunities to use the Welsh language
- Staff development opportunities
- Adult learning opportunities

The examples below have been provided by Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

Welsh in the Workplace

At Coleg Sir Gâr and Coleg Ceredigion, students have had the opportunity to have a Welsh lesson in addition to their main course, 'Welsh for the Workplace.' When the scheme was introduced, 'Public Services' and 'Health and Social Care' were the departments receiving Welsh lessons. This has now been expanded to offer Welsh lessons in various subjects, including Art, Media Studies, and Animal Care.

As part of these lessons, students have had the opportunity to study 'A Taste of Welsh Courses' available on the 'Dysgu Cymraeg' website, where specific vocabulary for each subject is presented to them. Others have studied 'Language Apprenticeship,' a series of lessons designed by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

Fortunately, this year every student has the opportunity to follow the 'Say Something in Welsh' (SSIW) program. Five minutes are reserved at the beginning of each lesson for students to follow their personal 'SSIW' plan. In each class, the linguistic abilities of the students vary, therefore a language strengthening task is provided for fluent students. The main aim of the lessons is to encourage every student to develop and increase their use of Welsh, as well as realise the importance of using the language wherever possible. The lessons have been successful in changing the mindset of many students. After attending the lessons, students have realized that they can use Welsh to the best of their personal ability with customers and clients.

Here are some comments from students who have attended the lessons over the past year:

“On the weekend, I work in a Care Home, and I've noticed that the residents are much happier when I use Welsh with them.” - Ffion, 'Health and Social Care'

“I have been using Welsh with customers in the shop where I work on weekends.” - Lowri, 'Travel and Tourism'

“I give swimming lessons to young children, and the kids feel much more confident when I use Welsh with them.” - Ieuan, 'Outdoor Adventure Studies'

“I have been using Welsh in the restaurant, and I've gotten more tips!” - Cian, 'Catering'

Below are some individual learner examples of how being taught through the medium of Welsh has impacted on their ambitions and their desire to stay in Wales.

Student Impact

Example 1

Ifan is an apprentice with A.G. Carpentry in Talgarreg and receives training through Coleg Sir Gâr. Coleg Sir Gâr identified Ifan as a first language Welsh speaker, he was paired with a tutor who is proficient in the language. Rhodri (Ifan's tutor) and Ifan naturally converse in Welsh with each other and have been doing so since the beginning of Ifan's apprenticeship. Similarly, communication between Ifan's employer, Arfon, also occurs through the medium of Welsh. This means that Ifan hears the language being used naturally with customers at work, and he can also provide a service in Welsh. The majority of the business's customers speak Welsh, and Ifan feels that customers who speak Welsh as their first language can communicate their needs more effectively than they would if they had to use their second language. The highlight of Ifan's career so far was being part of the project to renovate Y Selar restaurant in Aberaeron, and his Welsh language communication skills were crucial in this project to build a relationship with the contractors. The project was so successful that Ifan continues to receive a free pint offer when he stops by!

Example 2

Iolo began his studies in basic construction and carpentry with the NPTC Colleges Group in November 2022. After completing his course, Iolo hopes to continue with his studies either in training or in higher education. His dream is to start his own business and become self-employed. Iolo hopes to take full advantage of as much Welsh-medium education as possible so that he can serve his community in his chosen language.

Iolo says, 'I would like to stay local when starting my work to be able to keep speaking Welsh.' By speaking Welsh, he says, 'I get the best of both worlds, feeling a part of a community and having more opportunities through using the language. I feel very proud to speak Welsh.'

In addition to receiving all his education through the medium of Welsh up to his course at the College and using Welsh in the College, Iolo uses Welsh at home and socially. It was noted that the opportunity to use his Welsh in the College has facilitated the transition between school and college and made him feel at home.

Iolo is looking forward to using his bilingualism to make his customers feel the same sense of home that he felt when he heard Welsh in the College.

Example 3

My name is Nimue, and I have been attending Coleg Cambria since September 2023. I am studying A-levels in English Literature, History, Classical Civilization, and the Welsh Baccalaureate. My career aspiration is to become a historian, and I believe Welsh will be beneficial as it enhances my chances of finding employment in Wales. I am considering staying at a Welsh University and possibly working in Wales because there are more opportunities, and I can speak Welsh. Additionally, I enjoy living in a Welsh-speaking society.

Up until college, I had received the majority of my education through the Welsh medium, and over the years, I have enjoyed using the language in my education. My parents often speak English and I help to strengthen their Welsh. For me, the Welsh language is a way to show my pride in being Welsh and also to show my commitment to the generations before me, who fought to preserve the language and tried to make it flourish. I feel that by using the language, we keep our history alive. I find the Welsh language experiences at Coleg Cambria extremely valuable, I am still learning through the Welsh medium in the Baccalaureate, and I am clear that I have the right to do my work in Welsh as well.

Conclusion

WBG6 delves into the pivotal role of Welsh Further Education (FE) colleges in promoting cultural vibrancy and the flourishing Welsh language. These institutions contribute to diverse cultural activities, ranging from artistic projects and performances to collaborations fostering creative industries and television production in Wales.

The chapter also emphasises the increasing use of Welsh in learning activities, driven by FE colleges' strategies and initiatives. It is clear that the work being done in this area is having tangible impacts on students, with skills that they can use not just in careers, but

also cultural commitment, collectively emphasising FE colleges' comprehensive contributions to community well-being.

WBG7 - A Globally Responsible Wales

This chapter sets out the ways in which the wellbeing goal of 'a globally responsible Wales' is facilitated by FE institutions in Wales. There are a number of case studies that show the commitment of colleges to contribute in a meaningful way to goals such as net zero, biodiversity improvements and an international outward-looking Wales, and thus achieving strong social value outcomes.

Through the analysis of case studies and data, we demonstrate that individual colleges are embarking on projects that further the social value agenda. This is a testament to the recognition that individual action in this sphere is needed to contribute to the wider goal of being globally responsible. Furthermore, we demonstrate through data that, on an aggregate level, colleges are participating in schemes that contribute significantly to this goal.

The first part of this chapter will provide an overview of the significant amount work that is being done in terms of sustainability and the journey to net zero. The key themes of activities that emerged were:

- Development of learning/awareness raising programmes, such as the Sustainable Futures Programme, for both students and staff
- Developing new programmes, projects and partnerships to address 'Green Skills Gaps'
- Implementing environmental strategies and monitoring performance and emissions data
- Embracing renewable energy technologies such as solar, wind, heat pumps and biomass and reducing energy consumption. Some FE colleges discussed how they are reducing external energy usage, for example Pembrokeshire college stated that they had reduced external energy consumption to date by 33%
- Receiving awards and accreditation for their work, such as the Green Gown award and Level 5 Green Dragon awards
- They are also thinking to the future and trying to ensure that any new developments are built to net zero standards.

There are also links to the projects we have identified in Wellbeing Goal 2 'A Resilient Wales'.

Holistic Approach

The below is an extract from a blog published by Gower College provides an overview of the approach and the initiatives that the sector is undertaking and the practices that are being embedded:

"All our campuses have been retrofitted with energy efficient LED lighting, recycling bins are available in every area of our buildings, we harvest rainwater to irrigate our grounds, and Gorseinon has become the first campus to have solar panels installed. These and other similar investments and practices have already

allowed us to secure Green Dragon Environment Standard Level 5 accreditation, meaning we have been recognised for our continual dedicated environmental improvement on campus - but this is just the start.

Some of the most rewarding environmental and sustainability projects at Gower College Swansea are those that see students and staff working together to make real changes that will benefit our community. Earlier this year, our landscaping students created a special memorial garden at the Tycoch Campus. Thanks to the support of Keep Wales Tidy and Welsh Government, we are also seeing students progressing with a much larger long-term project to create a wellness and sensory garden, which will include native species and planting specifically selected to encourage pollinators to aid biodiversity.

Of course, creating new environmentally focused resources is only one part of our sustainability efforts. Responsibly managing and, wherever possible, reducing waste is key to our efforts to reducing our environmental impact and carbon footprint.

Balancing the need to ensure that our students have access to the latest technology, while maintaining our commitment to reducing waste, is a particular challenge. As part of our pledge to reduce the amount of waste we send to landfill, Gower College Swansea's IT team have been working in partnership with our technology suppliers to ensure that 100% of our broken and surplus IT equipment is reused or recycled. To put that into perspective, over the last two years, the team have arranged collections for almost 12 tonnes of equipment. That's the equivalent of one double decker bus worth of equipment. As a result, 85% of that technology has been refurbished and reused, with the remaining 15% being broken down for recycling. And, in the near future, staff and students will be able to recycle personal unwanted and broken IT equipment and books via the College's suppliers, free of charge.

Further environmental initiatives at the College will see us move towards our target of becoming net zero by 2030. That progression will see us end the sale of plastic water bottles across all campuses and introduce transport sharing schemes across all College sites. Students will also be able to take part in a range of environmental and sustainability events including recycling, repair and reuse workshops, beach cleans, zero waste weeks, sustainable fashion talks, and opportunities to visit a range of sustainability projects”.

Bridgend College, is also adopting as holistic approach to sustainability. The College produces a regular sustainability newsletter to keep students and staff updated about the work it is doing it terms of sustainability and encouraging them to share, discuss, think innovatively and creatively and above all take positive and genuine action to help tackle the climate and nature crises, issues around citizenship, peace, partnership and collaboration.

The latest newsletter details how the college received an ‘Inspiring Learning Spaces’ Award for the STEAM Academy built at the Pencoed Campus in 2021. This state-of-the-

art facility is recognised as an important feature in the College's 'Zero by 2030' strategy. The development also won a Green Gown Award for its 'extraordinary vision' in 2022.

“Embedding sustainability into our curriculum is crucial for preparing learners for a future characterised by global challenges, evolving workforce demands, responsible citizenship, interdisciplinary thinking, stakeholder expectations, innovation, economic benefits, and ethical considerations. It equips our learning community with the knowledge and skills needed to contribute to a more sustainable and resilient future”.

Vice Principal

In their wider sustainability policy statement the college states:

“Bridgend College is wholly committed to education for sustainability, the protection of people's health and wellbeing, its estate, the natural world and the prevention of pollution in all its forms and we will continually improve the HSE management system to support this commitment. This has the full support of the Governing Body, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Principal who is ultimately responsible for its execution and ensuring that it is a prime concern of all members of staff and students.

Going forward we will:

- *Demonstrate extraordinary leadership and develop extraordinary leaders throughout the organisation to help us our educational, health, wellbeing, safety and natural world goals*
- *Ensure that decision-making, at all levels, takes account of social, economic and environmental costs as part of a growth mindset*
- *Work tirelessly to cut carbon emissions through our Zero by 2030 Strategy*
- *Maintain the Platinum level of the Corporate Health Standard for health, wellbeing and safety*
- *Report the impacts of our ambitions to be an extraordinary organisation to the UN as part of the SDG Accord*
- *Ensure that responsibilities for ensuring world-class safety, wellbeing, health and sustainability at the college are effectively assigned, accepted and fulfilled at all levels*
- *Set specific targets for improving general health, wellbeing, mental health, safety and the natural world within our publicly available Sustainable Development Strategy*
- *Continue to embed and develop Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) within the organisation and ensure that every member of staff, at every level, is supported to help us achieve our collective goals and ambitions*
- *Ensure that we demonstrate openness and clarity in public-facing reports.”*

Working in Collaboration to Achieve Net Zero

This example from the NPTC Group of Colleges, really emphasises the importance of collaboration to achieve our ambitions net zero targets:

The NPTC Group has launched a Net Zero Academy in response to the Welsh Government's ambitious targets to achieve Net Zero by 2050. The Academy is a unique collaboration between the college, industry specialists, and trade associations, aiming to develop the necessary skills for the transition to a net zero economy.

The Academy offers enhanced training opportunities and works with employers to develop training that meets industry needs and is accessible to learners. It is overseen by a strategic Advisory Board, composed of leading experts from sectors at the forefront of net zero skills, including construction, energy, and engineering, as well as representatives from academia. The Board provides strategic direction and expertise to ensure the workforce and companies are equipped with the necessary skills. These net zero skills are fundamental to providing social value, both from a human capital and training perspective, but also, from an environmental perspective due to the nature of the skills being taught.

The Net Zero Academy website serves as a portal for learners, businesses, and other organisations to access relevant training, news, legislation, and advice. It offers support through a Business Engagement Advisor, works with employers to identify development requirements, presents options for upskilling the workforce, provides bespoke training solutions, and sources funding for training.

Internationalisation

Next, we explore the international work programme that the FE Colleges and ColegauCymru have been involved in and the social value that is being generated social value through their exploration and growth of international opportunities. Within its International Strategy ColegauCymru has outlined its vision for international activities under even broad aims, all of which have the potential to contribute to social, as well as economic value, namely to:

- Enrich and enhance teaching and learning experiences
- Raise learners' aspirations and broaden their horizons
- Inform professional practice and improve provision
- Raise the profile of international work undertaken in FE
- Share best practice, partnership working and commercial development
- Align with wider international strategies and develop purposeful partnerships
- Influence Welsh Government policy to shape the learner experience and future business development.

Each of the colleges is undertaken a number of different activities in relation internationalisation. These activities can generally be categorised as follows:

- Working with international businesses
- Developing international partnerships with overseas colleges
- Taking part in international research projects

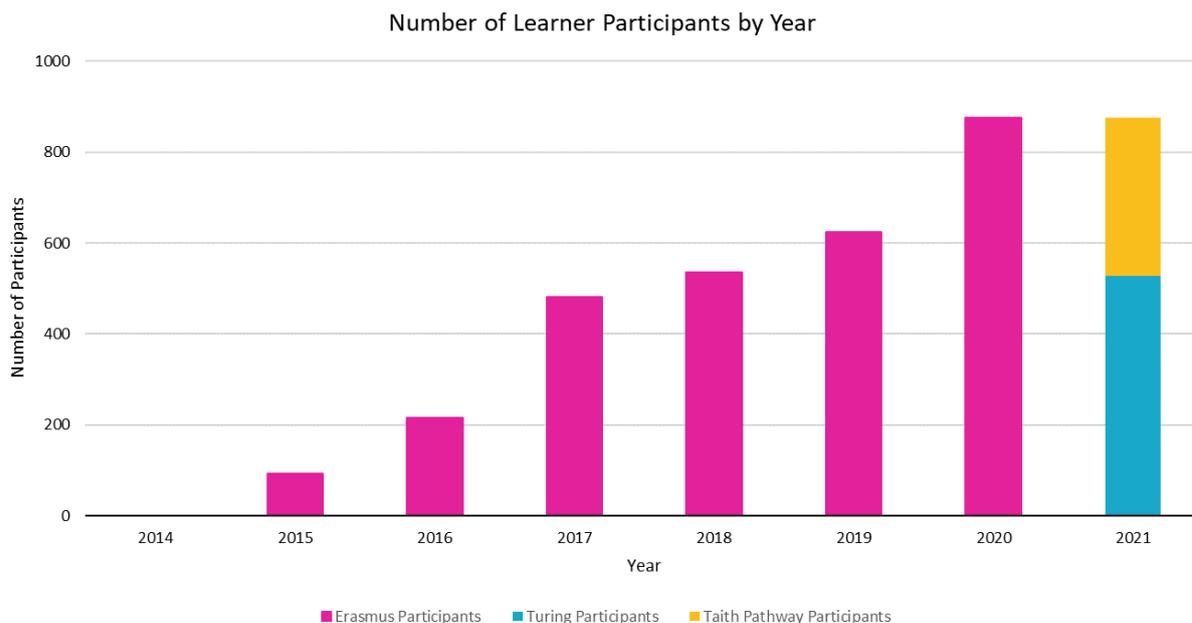
- Providing learning and development opportunities for staff and students through Taith (Welsh Government’s international learning exchange programme) and the Turing Scheme (UK Government’s international learning exchange programme) WorldSkills membership
- Attracting international student cohorts
- Reflecting on activities undertaken to share learning, inform best practice and innovate.

Data: Participation in global outreach programmes

Mapping the participation in schemes with a ‘global outlook’, such as Erasmus+, Turing and Taith Pathway schemes 2014-2021 shows that these activities have gained in popularity, showing the commitment of further educational establishments to ensuring learners have a truly global outlook, which in turn ensures that globally responsible citizens are nurtured through their education. The data shows that participation in these schemes has increased.

The wellbeing goal of a globally responsible Wales is achieved through schemes such as Erasmus+, the Turing Scheme and the Taith Pathway Projects. The Erasmus scheme continued up until 2020, when it was discontinued as part of the Brexit deal. It was then replaced by the Turing scheme and the Taith Pathway Projects – the desire to continue participation in these schemes in spite of Brexit shows a true commitment to the positive outcomes that these schemes foster. The Erasmus+ scheme offered student exchanges, school links, and work experience. The Turing Scheme provides funding for international opportunities in education and training across the world. The Taith Pathway Projects are a Welsh Government funded programme enabling people in Wales to study, train, volunteer, and work all over the world. The Taith programme aims to enable participants from Wales to go on overseas mobility exchanges, with participants also coming to study or work in Wales. These schemes promote international exchange and collaboration, enhance the skills and experiences of participants, and foster a global outlook.

As seen in the graph below, the number of learner participants in the Erasmus+ projects have increased steadily, from 0 in 2014 to 876 in 2020. This outcome is matched by huge increases in funding available. In 2014, there was no funding available for this project, however by 2020 there was €2,189,577 in funding available. Following the UK’s exit from the European Union, Erasmus+ was replaced by the Turing scheme by the UK government, with Taith Pathway projects being available for Welsh learners. Although this has only been running for a short period of time, uptake has been strong, with a total of 875 students on the two schemes in 2021, which is the latest year with full data availability).



Below is an extract from Coleg Gwent's Overseas Programme 2022-23 Annual Report, showing the breath of activity that has taken place.

The following table summarises the range and value of the international visits undertaken in 2022-23.

	Country	Campus	Subject	Funding	Learners	Staff
Erasmus+	Spain	BGLZ	Business	£39,728	20	6
	Spain	BGLZ	ICT & Business	£22,490	11	3
	Spain	BGLZ	Sport & Public Services	£36,934	17	3
	Spain	CK	Business	£37,038	19	4
	Italy	CK	Computing	£20,069	8	4
	Italy	CK	Hospitality	£21,135	10	4
	Mediterranean Cruise	CK	Performing Arts	£41,268	20	4
	Spain	CK	Public Services	£20,625	20	4
	Spain	CK	Sport	£37,185	20	4
	Italy	CK	Travel & Tourism	£21,135	10	4
	Germany	NPT	Childcare	£10,568	5	2
	Italy	NPT	Health & Social Care	£13,110	5	4
	Germany	NPT	Teaching Assistants	£8,963	4	2
Turing	Nepal	BGLZ	Sport & Public Services	£60,000	15	3
	South Korea	CK	Creative Arts	£47,272	15	4
Taith	South Korea	TLZ	Photography & Art	£47,272	15	4
	Tanzania	TLZ	A Level Sport	£37,772	15	4
	India	Usk	Animal Care	£37,772	15	4
	Turkey	BGLZ/CK	Staff Mobility	£3,100	0	4
	Thailand	TLZ/CK	Staff Mobility	£8,020	0	4
	Spain	All	Staff Mobility	£1,610	0	2
	Tanzania	All	Staff Mobility	£2,420	0	2
				£575,487	244	79

It is clear from our research and a report written by Arad Research in May 2021 (Internationalisation in the FE Sector in Wales), that ColegauCymru as the representative body for FE colleges in Wales, plays a vital role in organising international opportunities for staff and learners within the FE sector.

Impact on learners

Through past and current programmes FE learners have travelled across the world, to countries such as India, Canada, Spain, France and Vietnam. The benefits for learners are wide-ranging. Through the interviews with college Principals and attendance at the international workshop, as part of the ColegauCymru Conference, key impacts on learners include:

- Broadening the future aspirations of students
- The positive impact on learners' confidence
- Development of communication skills
- Personal growth during their international placements
- Improvements in skills and knowledge relating to their chosen courses/sector area
- Soft skills development such as problem solving and analysis
- Greater intercultural understanding

There is also a perception amongst learners that the international mobility/ work placement opportunity has increased their future job prospects, enhanced their capability of working with high responsibility tasks, and developed the prospect of working abroad in future.

It is also worth noting that ColegauCymru and the partner colleges have been trying to ensure that these opportunities are available to the widest range of learners and young people, including underrepresented groups, those with additional learning needs and protected characteristics.

Below is an example from a Childcare learner at Coleg Gwent, discussing the impact of their trip to Germany:

“It was an amazing experience and I would like to thank all those involved in making this opportunity available to me. It has boosted my confidence and self-esteem massively, and has made me realise my capabilities more fully. I loved exploring the new ideas and methods of teaching and learning I experienced during my stay and feel it has made me more open minded and accepting of change and cultural difference. I learnt not to make judgements about anything until I have experienced it for myself and to never make assumptions before finding things out for myself. I have learnt that Germany is a stunning country, its cleanliness was the first thing that I noticed straight off the plane. The people show the utmost respect for their environment and others around them. I loved every minute that I was there. Thank you so much.”

Although most of the colleges participated in the previous European programmes St. David's Sixth Form College has become involved in delivering international mobilities for staff and students since 2021, when Taith and Turing Scheme funding became available to colleges in Wales. The College recognises that international mobilities contribute to

the social value agenda by promoting cultural exchange, diversity, community engagement, skills development, global perspectives in education, networking, and showcasing Wales on the global stage. These initiatives help build a more inclusive, connected, and socially conscious society. Over the last two years, students have benefitted from a numbers of international visits, including Thailand, Barcelona and France. These visits have provided students with the opportunities to engage in cultural exchange, fostering understanding and appreciation of different perspectives and ways of life.

Staff experiences and impact

During our research interviews we were also told about the impact that international travel opportunities had on staff. Staff have used international visits to:

- Further develop curricula
- Review best practice
- Advance college management and quality assurance techniques
- Scope opportunities for future learner mobility

On returning to their home institutions, FE staff have explored how to implement their learning and this has usually involved working across a number of different departments within the FE college.

Staff mobility example

A member of staff from Gower College visited Universal College of Learning (UCOL) in New Zealand, in early 2023. The reason for choosing this institution was because the college was awarded a DFQM (Dyslexia Quality Friendly Mark). The staff member from Gower College as able to work with the team that had instigated this change and learnt about the process that UCOL had implemented to attain the accreditation and the positive effects for their learners.

During the visit she also met with an array of different departments and was able to visit all four of their campuses. She considers that the outcomes of the visit were an increase in her skills and knowledge, the development of her digital skills, and an enhanced understanding of how to create an inclusive learning environment.

Since returning she has shared her learning with the neurodiversity team and they have discussed how they could consider adopting a similar approach at Gower College. This is currently being discussed with the quality team, to see how the idea can be progressed further. The learning from the visit in has been disseminated to wider staff teams with Gower College and additional activities have involved:

- Delivering a workshop for JISC
- Promoting lesson learnt from the New Zealand visit at the JISC Connect More conference.
- A presentation for Qualifications Wales

In terms of the wider impact of the visit, the member of staff has also connected a number of departments at Gower College with the equivalent departments at UCOL and a series of successful Teams meetings connecting the Neurodiversity, Business and

Administration, Accountancy and Digital teams have already taken place. Further meetings are planned between the International and Cymru/Maori departments. She has also delivered staff digital training sessions which have included showcasing software that she learnt about at UCOL and she feels that this has not only improved her own digital capabilities, but those of other colleagues too.

She is also considering how a longer-term relationship with UCOL and other potential partners in New Zealand can be fostered and developed.

Partnerships

Interviews with ColegauCymru and the FE college Principals highlighted that many colleges are also working abroad through a range of partnership programmes and activities. Partnerships for commercial activity were highlighted by several colleges as vital to their overall international strategies, however, these commercial activities also had the potential to generate social value both for the home and partner institutions.

There are examples of collaborations and strategic partnerships with a diverse range of educational institutions. Examples of the international partnership activities discussed included:

- Development of overseas subsidiaries and joint ventures
- Delivering full time academic programmes
- Recruiting learners to do A levels or ESOL courses in Wales
- Research partnerships
- TVET training (e.g. aviation skills in India)
- Home stays, international social programmes and tutoring through summer schools

There was a perception that international partnership had generated social value through:

- Working collaboratively
- Sharing resources
- Enhancing collective knowledge and skills
- Enriching the educational landscape of the institutions/organisations involved.

Below is an example of a partnership project that Coleg Y Cymoedd has been involved in, which clearly links both sections of this Wellbeing Goal:

Coleg y Cymoedd, has collaborated with a Welsh manufacturer and a number of international organisations to investigate how human activity is affecting wildlife across the world.

The global acoustic monitoring project to study wildlife using sounds from nature has seen Coleg y Cymoedd team up with semi-conductor manufacturer, Newport Wafer Fab, and Welsh TV and film professional, William Todd-Jones, alongside a network of creative and environmental partners; Wild Connect, Natural Resources Wales and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). The relationship with Namibia came as a result of project partner and environmentalist William Todd-Jones' longstanding involvement with wildlife charities in Africa.

The project focuses on comparing levels of biodiversity, in this case the variety of wildlife, in both Wales and Africa, by monitoring the sounds of animals and ecosystems in the regions using specialist remote sound recorders called 'Biophones'. Wild Connect, an environmental consultancy, saw a need to develop a robust audio monitoring device – a Biophone – that both professional and amateur conservationists could use to record and analyse sounds from nature. The result is a device that is valuable to science in the area of eco-acoustics and a tool that can help re-engage the public with the natural world. Within the wild, animals use sounds for a number of reasons, from communication and navigation to hunting and territorial defence. Analysing these sounds can provide ecologists and conservationists with rich data about the environment and animal populations, helping them understand where certain species live, how many there are and what they are doing. This can help to reveal behavioural and population changes as well highlight the impact of human activity on local wildlife.

As part of the pilot project, staff and learners from across Coleg Cymoedd's Engineering and Creative departments joined forces with Wild Connect, Newport Wafer Fab, CSA Catapult, and GX-Group to create 35 Biophones. The devices have been placed around Wales and Namibia, allowing the monitoring and analysis of pan-Wales data, together with wildlife agencies gathering the data from the Namibian deployment.

Both sets of recordings will be analysed to provide regional environmental insights and evidence of ecosystem diversity between the two areas. The findings will help reveal how the contrasting climates, human population levels, and degrees of development in Wales and Namibia affect the surrounding natural world in the two regions.

The FE colleges in Wales are also being recognised for their international work. For example the international team from the NPTC Group of Colleges was honoured with an award from the World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics, in the Teacher Professional Development category, at the World Congress event held in Montreal, Canada.

Conclusion

WBG7 highlights the contribution of Welsh Further Education (FE) colleges to the goal of 'a globally responsible Wales.' The chapter emphasises the commitment of FE institutions to environmental sustainability, net zero goals, biodiversity improvements, and an international outlook. It showcases various initiatives, including green skills development, the adoption of renewable energy technologies and internationalization such as the Erasmus+/Turing Scheme. The social impact on learners includes broadened aspirations and enhanced skills. Staff experiences highlight professional growth resulting from international visits. Collaborative partnerships between Welsh FE colleges and international institutions are also examined, exemplified by projects contributing to ecological research and public engagement with the natural world. Overall, WBG7 underscores FE colleges' pivotal role in shaping a globally responsible Wales.

Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter will outline a number of recommendations based upon the findings of this research, suggesting how the Welsh Further Education (FE) sector can further embed and embrace social value, in terms of its understanding of the concept, how it can be generated through the strategic drivers of the sector, the data that individual colleges and ColegauCymru collect and the qualitative impact data that is being captured.

1. **Align Social Value with Legislative Changes by Strengthening External Advocacy for Social Value in FE**

Social value initiatives align with recent legislative changes for the Welsh FE sector, particularly in light of the transition to the CTER and the revised Welsh Government economic mission. For Welsh Government to recognise the social value of FE, colleges, ColegauCymru and Welsh Government must actively consider the inclusion of social value in future legislative / policy development. ColegauCymru will already proactively engage in parliamentary discussions, consultations, and legislative processes related to further education. When it does so, it should advocate for the explicit inclusion of social value considerations in current and forthcoming relevant frameworks and policies, ensuring that the commitment to societal well-being is a central aspect of the legal and regulatory landscape. This recommendation could be done via the following key considerations:

- **Integration with CTER's Strategic Objectives:** Align future social value initiatives with the strategic objectives of the newly established CTER. The CTER, as a central regulatory and coordinating authority, should explicitly incorporate social value as a key performance indicator. This integration can be achieved by linking the framework's metrics that assess the broader societal impact of FE activities with CTER's overarching goals.
- **Linkage to Well-being of Future Generations Act (WBFGA):** The WBFGA's emphasis on long-term thinking, collaboration, and well-being aligns seamlessly with the core principles of social value. This report has shown how much of the activities being undertaken by the Welsh FE sector can be linked directly to the WBFGA. As such, ColegauCymru should continue to strengthen these connections with regard to social value measurement. Ensuring that social value metrics and practices explicitly reflect the goals and aspirations outlined in the WBFGA will reinforce the sector's commitment to contributing to the well-being of current and future generations.
- **Implementation of Social Partnerships Bill:** The Social Partnerships and Public Procurement (Wales) Act provides a framework for enhancing well-being through social partnership working, fair work, and socially responsible public procurement. By encouraging members to embed social value considerations in

procurement processes, the broader impact on communities, individuals, and the environment can be factored when selecting suppliers and partners.

- **Adaptation to the Revised Economic Mission:** Ensure that social value initiatives are in harmony with the objectives of the revised Welsh Government economic mission. As the economic landscape evolves, the FE sector can strategically position itself by demonstrating how its activities contribute to the economic prosperity outlined in the revised mission. Showcase the sector's role in skill development, innovation, and community engagement as integral components of economic growth.

2. Strengthen ColegauCymru's Leadership in intra-FE Social Value Advocacy

Within the FE sector, ColegauCymru can play a crucial role in fostering a culture of social value among its member institutions. To achieve this, ColegauCymru should focus on internal advocacy through coordinating best practice and strengthening collaboration on social value. ColegauCymru could establish a collaborative network or facilitate a platform for FE institutions to share best practices in generating social value, where institutions can learn from each other, exchange ideas, and replicate successful initiatives. Collaborative initiatives may be encouraged, which will amplify the social value generated by the sector. This may be done in practice in various different contexts, with some ideas including:

- **Knowledge sharing via social value 'community of practice' network** - ColegauCymru facilitated workshops could serve as platforms for sharing best practices, success stories, resources and emerging trends in social value generation within the FE sector. This forum could be used to encourage collaborative initiatives and create opportunities for institutions to learn from each other, replicate successful models, build institutional capacity in understanding, measuring, and reporting social value, and by doing so collectively amplify the positive impact of their activities. Having the sessions run remotely would mean that the information is easily accessible to a diverse audience – including to other key stakeholders such as other public sector bodies, private enterprises, and third-sector organisations who wish to integrate social value metrics and practices into their strategic planning.
- **Awareness raising via Communications campaign** – ColegauCymru could coordinate and implement a targeted communication campaigns to highlight specific social value achievements and initiatives. Forging partnerships with local and national media outlets and utilising various communication channels, including social media, newsletters, and press releases the sector could reach a broad audience by emphasising the positive impact on learners, communities, and the environment, reinforcing the FE sector's commitment to societal well-being. This could be done in conjunction with the social value report (see next recommendation)

3. Establish a Formalised Approach to Social Value Reporting

This research has demonstrated that whilst there is a broad understanding of social value within the FE sector in Wales, it is not a term that is being regularly used when discussing or planning the wider impact of its current and future activities. However, despite this, the sector is delivering a wide variety of social value activity at local, regional and national levels.

At the online workshop that was held with the FE Principals we explored what social value meant to the FE sector in Wales and one of the Principals noted that:

“Social value is at the heart of everything we do.”

Our finding would seem to concur with this view. Yet, partly because of this, this piece of research has been very challenging to undertake. Each of the FE institutions, together with ColegauCymru, are undertaking taking so much activity that could be viewed as through the lens of social value. In reality, each of the colleges has sufficient information to write their own standalone social value report. As such, combing the information from 13 organisations into one representative report has been difficult.

At the same time, whilst we were inundated with qualitative information to include in our report, sourcing the quantitative data within the framework has been a challenge. Some colleges were able to provide good quality data on some measures but others weren't, so collecting comprehensive data across all FE institutions to provide meaningful comparison was challenging. This is likely due to several, often understandable reasons:

- this type of evaluation has not been conducted before, and so the colleges would have no reason to ordinarily collate this type of data. Often it is held by different individuals, and so collating it was a logistical challenge;
- The timeframe of this piece of work has compressed so colleges had a relatively short period to collate the data;
- The greater the number of institutions data is asked for, across a wide number of metrics, the greater the challenge there will be in collecting comprehensive data.

To address these challenges, if ColegauCymru wanted to repeat this piece of work in the future, we suggest a streamlined data collection and measurement process. This will make it more accessible, standardised, and reflective of the key outcomes in further education that align with societal well-being goals.

1. **Identify Key Outcomes and Indicators:** The first step involves collaboration between the colleges and ColegauCymru to identify key indicators essential for measuring the impact of further education on societal well-being. These indicators, which could be chosen from the framework that has been developed as part of this report, should be carefully selected to encapsulate diverse aspects across the Wellbeing Goals such as employability, local supply chains, community engagement etc. Once key indicators are identified, specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) should be established for each college. By focusing

on these KPIs, the industry body can facilitate a systematic approach to data collection, ensuring that each college reports on the same set of critical metrics.

2. **Progress Tracking:** This focused framework should enable the tracking of progress over time. These KPIs serve as measurable benchmarks that allow for consistent annual evaluation. This not only allows for a dynamic assessment of the impact of further education but also provides colleges with valuable insights into their own performance relative to their peers. Regular reporting and analysis will enhance accountability and encourage continuous improvement. There is a clear opportunity for each institution to look at the social value framework against all of its current activities and use the approach when planning future activities, including capital projects.
3. **Continued Qualitative Case Studies:** While quantitative data provides valuable metrics, the inclusion of qualitative case studies remains crucial. Indeed, having too heavy an emphasis on quantitative metrics would not be advised, as these qualitative case studies offer a nuanced understanding of the impact of further education on individuals and communities, providing context and depth to the quantitative findings. However, we would suggest asking colleges to choose from a set number of 'impacts' for each case study, to ensure there is more consistency when reporting on impact across colleges and as a sector as a whole. For example, if the sector is asked for examples on how it can deliver against a certain objective, it would be easy to highlight the key examples.
4. **Annual Social Value Reports:** ColegauCymru should seek to encourage colleges to develop annual social value reporting that outlines individual achievements, challenges, and future goals of the organisation with regard to social value. These reports should be accessible to the public, policymakers, and industry stakeholders, and provide a transparent account of the sector's social contributions. This can be achieved by providing guidance on the reporting framework, offering templates, and facilitating workshops or training sessions on effective social value reporting. This approach both acknowledges the diversity of activities across institutions and also empowers each college to showcase its distinctive contributions to social value, ensuring they think about social value more explicitly in terms of measurement and reporting.

This report champions the infusion of social value into the very fabric of Welsh FE sector. By aligning these initiatives with strategic drivers, forging collaboration, and adopting a formalised approach to reporting, the sector has the opportunity to elevate its societal contributions to new heights. Recognising that social value is already embedded in the ethos of FE institutions, this report calls for a coordinated effort to scale up these commendable efforts. In doing so, the FE sector not only maximises its impact locally, regionally, and nationally but also sets a transformative precedent, showcasing how education can be a driving force for positive change in Wales. The essence lies not just in meeting legislative requirements but in creating a lasting legacy, where every learner,

each community, and the environment benefits from the extraordinary commitment of Welsh FE to societal well-being.



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