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HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL FOR WALES (HEFCW)

## **REACHING HIGHER – REACHING WIDER: UNLOCKING THE GATES TO HIGHER EDUCATION**

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) has announced the allocation of £2 million to bring more people within reach of a university education.

The additional £2m will be used to establish four partnerships across Wales under the banner *Reaching Higher – Reaching Wider*. Every higher education institution in Wales will be involved in a partnership that will bring together groupings of higher and further education institutions to work closely with schools and community and voluntary groups.

The partnerships will pioneer new and exciting developments and build on current activities such as summer university programmes to give 17 and 18 year olds the confidence and extra push to see them into higher education, backed up by continuing support during the school or college year.

They will be engaging in a whole host of activities not just with GCSE students but also to raise standards and attainment at Key Stage 3 and earlier. In addition the partnerships are looking to involve students and parents to show that learning is fun and to plant the idea that going to university is a perfectly normal thing to do.

Jane Davidson, AM, Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, said, “I am delighted with these responses for the additional £2m which the Welsh Assembly Government has made available to support widening participation in higher education. Making higher education accessible to everybody in Wales who has the potential to benefit is one of the cornerstones of our vision for Wales. We need people to use their skills, knowledge, drive and creativity at full capacity to make Wales a prosperous and confident nation.”

Higher education institutions in Wales already have a consistent track record in outperforming UK averages in attracting a wide social mix of students and of working with groups and communities which are under-represented in higher education. This track record was highlighted by the recently published UK performance indicators which showed that 91% of young full time students at Welsh higher education institutions attended state schools or colleges compared to a UK average of 86% and young full time students at Welsh higher education institutions from low participation neighbourhoods was 15% compared to a UK average of 12%.

The new partnerships will build on this success by launching a variety of schemes and programmes designed to give people, particularly young people, the additional support and encouragement they need to fulfil their potential and make going on to higher education a reality. They will focus their efforts on some of the most deprived communities in Wales.

Professor Roger Williams, chair of HEFCW, said “We applaud the way in which higher and further education institutions in Wales have got their partnership proposals together in a very short time. We know there is no quick solution to removing barriers to higher education. It requires patience, determination and commitment. However, by harnessing their efforts, the new partnerships have the potential to make a significant impact throughout Wales”.

The Council will be setting up national co-ordination of the partnerships so that all can learn from each other's good practice and experience, and so that, increasingly, the partnerships become an all-Wales network contributing to social inclusion and economic upskilling. The allocations to each partnership are as follows:

<b>Partnership</b>	<b>Allocation</b>	<b>Institutions in the partnership</b>
North Wales	£450K	University of Wales, Bangor; NEWI; Coleg Harlech; Coleg Llandrillo; Coleg Meirion Dwyfor; Coleg Menai; Deeside College; Llysfasi College; Welsh College of Horticulture; Yale College (the Community University of North Wales).
West and Mid Wales	£450K	University of Wales, Aberystwyth; University of Wales, Lampeter; Trinity College Carmarthen; Coleg Ceredigion and Coleg Powys.
Swansea/ Neath Port Talbot	£300K	University of Wales Swansea; Swansea Institute of Higher Education; Swansea College; Gorseinion College; Neath Port Talbot College.
South East Wales	£650K	University of Glamorgan; University of Wales Institute, Cardiff; University of Wales College, Newport; Cardiff University; Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama; University of Wales College of Medicine; Aberdare College; Barry College; Bridgend College; Coleg Glan Hafren; Coleg Gwent; Merthyr Tydfil College; Pontypridd College; Ystrad Mynach College.
National Co-ordination/ Wales-wide activity	£150K	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2m</b>	