

Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith /  
Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee  
Blaenoriaethau ar gyfer y Chweched Senedd / Priorities for the Sixth Senedd  
PR34

Ymateb gan ColegauCymru / Evidence from ColegauCymru



ColegauCymru is pleased to respond to the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee's consultation on priorities for the Sixth Senedd. ColegauCymru is a postcompulsory education charity; we promote the public benefit of post-compulsory education and learning. We also convene the further education (FE) Principals' Forum, which represents Further Education colleges and FE institutions (FEIs) in Wales. ColegauCymru also undertakes research, policy development and provides practical support to FE colleges in Wales, including on work-based learning (WBL) which is a key part of FE college activity.

We note the Minister for Climate Change's letter of 30 July 2021, setting out the Welsh Government's priorities in relation to climate change, environment and infrastructure. While it is pleasing to see a mention of skills in relation to the Optimised Retrofit Programme (ORP) in housing, it is concerning that this is the only mention of skills in the letter. Skills, adult learning and the need to build a resilient and versatile workforce will be key to addressing the challenges of climate change and the environment in the years ahead.

In contrast, the Future Generations Commissioner's *A Fit for the Future Programme for Government* has a more consistent focus on skills across a variety of areas (see [www.futuregenerations.wales/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/FGC-A-Fit-for-the-FutureProgramme-for-Government.pdf](http://www.futuregenerations.wales/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/FGC-A-Fit-for-the-FutureProgramme-for-Government.pdf)). These range from apprenticeships to employability programmes, entry level jobs in a National Nature Service and the urgent need for skills to support ORP, all the time emphasising the need to focus on the quality of roles and fair work, alongside equality, diversity and the need to increase representation from currently underrepresented groups.



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The recent Welsh Government investment of £2M to further education colleges to provide training for jobs in the green economy via the Personal Learning Accounts programme, which supports people in lower-income jobs to retrain and move into longer term, skilled jobs with higher earnings, is welcome. This is a positive example of encouraging people to transition into green industries with higher earnings.

ColegauCymru would like to see the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure

Committee hold a short inquiry in the first six months into 'greening skills and the economy'. This should consider not just 'obvious' green industries but the skills needed to make existing jobs and industries greener as well as the issue of demand stimulation from employers. Following the Future Generations Commissioner's work, any inquiry should also explore how to diversify the green workforce. The Further Education sector is well-placed to increase its contribution to greening the Wales economy and workforce, having an established base of provision and plans for expansion. The role of adult learning, including adult community learning, will be an important part of any such inquiry.

Such an inquiry could help provide the Welsh Government with more detailed recommendations and a more informed pathway to achieving the ambitions for addressing climate change set out in its Programme for Government. Some joint sessions with the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee may be valuable.

Over the longer-term, the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee might like to explore some of the issues identified in the short inquiry in more depth. This might also include how to successfully encourage more children and young people to think about careers in environmental and green industries and make these areas more appealing options. A key focus should be on the ways young people wish to work in the future so that careers can be designed in an attractive way, rather than simply trying to fit young people into existing work patterns. Joint sessions with the Children, Young People and Education Committee may be beneficial.

We look forward to working with you over the course of the next Senedd.

Yours sincerely,

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