

**Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc  
ac Addysg**

**Children, Young People  
and Education Committee**

Lynne Neagle MS

Cabinet Secretary for Education

23 April 2024

### **Concerns about participation in higher education**

Dear Lynne,

During its meeting on 20 March 2024, the Children, Young People and Education Committee noted and discussed [a letter](#) to the then Committee chair, Jayne Bryant MS, from Universities Wales about the participation of Welsh young people in higher education.

The letter stated the following:

- The percentage of Welsh domiciled 18 year olds entering higher education in 2023/24 was 29.9%, compared to 49.5% in London, 40.2% in Northern Ireland and 38.5% in South East England.
- In the UK overall, those in IMD category Quintile 1 (the most deprived) enter at a rate of 26% whereas in Wales it's 18.9%. There is significant regional disparity too: quintile 1 young people in South Wales are more likely to access higher education than quintile 1 young people in North Wales.
- Increasing numbers of students from England choosing to study in Wales is masking participation challenges among Welsh domiciled young people.

We have also noted [a recent BBC news article](#) announcing that almost 200 jobs are being cut at Swansea University, and that both Cardiff University and Cardiff Metropolitan University were "facing financial problems and redundancies could yet be on the cards". The article quotes Professor Dylan Jones-Evans as calling for a review of the way that Welsh higher education is funded.

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The Committee would be grateful for your initial views on the above, and what action, if any, your department is taking – or you plan to take - to address the concerns set out above. We would be grateful for a response no later than 7 June.

Yours sincerely,



Buffy Williams MS,

Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.