

Mr Tom Jackson
Clerk of the Finance Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

16 September 2011

Dear Mr Jackson

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) is a charity that exists to promote adult learning. NIACE Dysgu Cymru conducts work in Wales under the umbrella of NIACE, supported by an elected Management Group.

We welcome the opportunity to submit evidence to help inform the scrutiny of the Welsh Government's 2012-13 draft budget proposals.

NIACE Dysgu Cymru recognises the challenges of the budget round. We also appreciate that the proposed reduction in funding for *Education and Skills* is less than the overall reduction in resources available to the Welsh Government in 2012-13. Nevertheless, we do feel that more should be done to exploit the wider benefits of adult learning across all Welsh Government departments – within the context of the *Making the Connections* agenda.

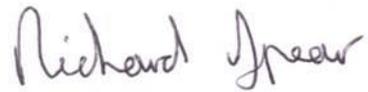
There is a significant body of evidence to demonstrate that investment in adult learning can:

- Improve health and well-being;
- Contribute to a resilient and productive economy;
- Help manage a changing demographic profile;
- Improve social mobility, social justice and equity;
- Promote strong and healthy families; and
- Develop active citizenship and empowered, cohesive communities.

These outcomes contribute directly to the objectives of the Welsh Government across a range of departments. Supporting evidence relating to these points is set out at **Annex A** to this letter. We would ask that committees are mindful of this evidence in scrutinising the draft budget. In particular, we highlight the potential for investment in adult learning to make significant savings in other areas, by preventing or minimising the need for more costly, future interventions.

I hope this evidence is of help. We would be happy to provide further information to any of the committees of the National Assembly for Wales.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Richard Spear". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'S'.

Richard Spear
Director for Wales