# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Additional Package of Support for Learners** |
| **DATE**  | **16 December 2021** |
| **BY** | **Jeremy Miles, Minister for Education and Welsh Language** |

I am pleased to confirm today an extra £24m to provide additional support to those who have been most impacted by the pandemic.

**Support for exam years (£7.5m)**

£7.5m will be used to provide extra support for learners in exam years, with resources and additional teaching time available over the next term.

We will ensure all young people in qualifications years will be able to access practical support or advice to help them so they can look forward to the next step of their life, whether that be in education, training or employment.

Our focus is to support young people to keep learning, with time, resources and advice to help them to move forward to their next steps. We believe exams are the fairest way possible to provide qualifications, particularly in the wider UK context and the importance of our young people feeling that they are on a level playing field with their counterparts in other parts of the UK, whether that is in relation to vocational qualifications, or for future options such as university choices. Also, importantly, exams are mostly scheduled at the end of the school year which increases the time for learning and preparation. However, we cannot predict the future of the pandemic and have to keep this under regular review: schools and colleges received information on the contingency arrangements for qualifications earlier this term and there is no change to these.

There will be a range of help available over the course of next term, including teaching and learning support to help young people achieve the qualifications they need, and support with a range of progression choices. We will put networks in place to reach out to those learners who have already become disengaged - perhaps because they worry they will not progress - with a programme of bespoke support to re-engage them with education or training.

The additional funding will help schools respond to the ongoing disruption. WJEC have recently announced further adaptations to help young people prepare for exams, so these now include adaptations to course content, relaxing conditions to complete non-examination assessment, and advance information on exam topics for a number of additional subjects.

The funding will help schools support learners to develop their skills, knowledge and confidence, particularly in core qualifications such as Maths and English that are important for progression, as well as supporting those who feel anxious about exams. It will be weighted towards schools with a greater number of learners eligible for free school meals.

**Attendance (£7m)**

Over £7m will go towards supporting learners whose attendance has dropped during the pandemic. Dedicated support will be provided across Wales to support Year 11 learners who have low attendance to help them to complete their GCSEs, or to help them reach the next stage in their education or in starting a career, support will also be provided for learners in other years.

Funding will also be provided to support well-being and education for learners at Pupil Referrals Units, as well as additional training to help support children and young people who have suffered trauma or have a mental health issue.

**Support for FE and Sixth Form learners with transition to the next stage of their education or career (£9.5m)**

£9.5m will be provided to further education colleges and sixth forms to support young people with their transition into the next stage of their education or career and for activities such taster sessions into vocational careers and open days as well as a continuation of the University Ready platform in partnership with the Open University and universities in Wales.

We will work in partnership with Careers Wales to provide personalised impartial advice to young people to support them in this transition and to reassure learners and signpost them to options for educational progression regardless of qualification outcomes. All young people studying for GCSEs, AS, A levels, and vocational qualifications will have access to this practical support and advice as part of our commitment to ensuring young people can move confidently to their next steps despite the ongoing disruption.