

£8m extra funding to support Further Education pay

The £8m additional money will also contribute to an increase in pay for support staff in FE colleges, many of whom are on the living wage.

The announcement was made in the Senedd today, during a debate on Further Education in Wales.

Kirsty Williams the Education Secretary said:

“I am delighted that the Welsh Government has been able to provide this additional help to the FE sector for pay over the next two years. We recognise that Colleges are dealing with exceptional circumstances and this additional injection of money will allow the colleges time to budget to cover their own pay costs in future.”

The ‘exceptional circumstances’ relate to UK Government’s award of a pay rise of up to 3.5% to teachers in September. While the Welsh Government fully supports this decision, it was made without consulting the Welsh Government and without providing Wales with the funding to cover the additional costs.

Following negotiations, the UK Government was persuaded to allocate £23.5m over the next two years to address the issue but this does not include those teaching in FE which could potentially create disparity between teachers in sixth forms and teachers delivering the same course in FE Colleges. The Welsh Government has therefore stepped in to make up the difference on this occasion.

£3.2m has been allocated for the 2018-19 financial year, with £4.8m to follow in 2019-20 subject to approval of the final budget for 2019-2020. This will allow the sector 18 months to plan with its trade union partners for the next pay round.

Eluned Morgan, the Minister for Lifelong Learning, who has responsibility for FE said:

“FE plays a valuable role in our educational system and FE Colleges are crucial to our task of creating a generation of people equipped with the skills our economy needs to flourish. We are keen to ensure that those teaching in FE receive a pay rise in line with teachers in our schools. We are particularly pleased that we have also managed to find additional support to pay for the crucial support staff who work in our FE colleges.”