

Kirsty Williams calls on Welsh universities to become Living Wage employers

In her annual remit letter to Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) she has set out her expectations from the higher education sector, including the need for universities to pay their staff the Living Wage.

Currently only one Welsh university is an accredited living wage employer. The Welsh Government has been an accredited Living Wage employer since 2015.

Kirsty Williams said:

“I am ambitious, and confident, that higher education can deliver on our national mission to open up opportunities for all our citizens, raise standards across the board and ensure an education system that is a source of national pride, innovation and confidence.

“The Welsh Government has been an accredited Living Wage employer since 2015. I would also like the Council to begin working with institutions to create a living wage sector. I expect to see rapid progress on this. It is disappointing that only one of our universities is an accredited living wage employer.

“Universities’ commitment to a civic mission requires reach beyond campus and into their host communities. This is not restricted to teaching and research and widening access. It should be demonstrated in how they value their staff and students, and be an example of a progressive and fair employer.

“I would like to see HEFCW work with institutions on these matters, such as procurement, with an emphasis on efficiency, social responsibility and impact, and student, graduate and employer opportunities.”

Last year the Education Secretary called for Welsh universities to reconnect with the communities that surround them.