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Response to the Children, Young People and Education Committee inquiry into Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes.

1. The University and College Union (UCU Wales) represents almost 7,000 academics, lecturers, trainers, instructors, researchers, managers, administrators, computer staff, librarians, and postgraduates in universities, colleges, adult education and training organisations across Wales.
2. UCU Wales is a politically autonomous but integral part of UCU, the largest post-school union in the world. It was formed on the 1st June 2006 by the amalgamation of two strong partners – the Association of University Teachers (AUT) and the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) – who shared a long history of defending and advancing educators' employment and professional interests.
3. We welcome the opportunity to provide evidence to the Children, Young People and Education Committee's inquiry into Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes.
4. As an Education Union and Professional Association, UCU Wales take a keen interest in any initiative aimed at providing high quality education to all, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds and welcome the associated additional funding. From our perspective, education is a complex continuum of interrelated factors, which should not be divided by artificial boundaries; we all of us learn at different speeds and at different levels, sometimes simultaneously. We all learn within a complex support network of differing values, cultures and beliefs, throughout our lives. Therefore although we welcome such initiatives, we have concerns that they are often unsupported in the communities in which the children live.
5. Research into intervention programmes, particularly those that target early years, are well documented; however the findings are mixed. There is no doubt that there are benefits in such as improved cognitive, language and social skills, however the long term effects are less well known. Research, including the

recently published Welsh Government evaluation of the Pupil Deprivation Grant¹ states that “a longer view of pupils’ progress is essential in evaluating the effectiveness of the grant.

6. Alternative research draws attention to the influence of significant others in a child’s life particularly when included in interventions, for example,

“parent-focused intervention had numerous sustained effects in terms of school attainment, higher primary school grades and vocabulary scores, more favorable attitudes towards school, and better family and social adjustment, while most effects of center-based intervention had dissipated.”²

7. The Centre for Educational Outcomes³ advocates the importance of both risk and resilience factors being passed on from parents. This highlights the need to support families, not just children, and to integrate adult and child interventions.

Key risk factors are:

- Poverty and poor housing.
- Poor parental care – inconsistency, over-control, abuse, neglect.
- Poor relationships with siblings and other children.
- Attitudes towards education.
- Health issues – illness and disability.
- Lack of parental bonding and attachment.
- Family behaviour that promotes resilient development can include:
- Parental interest and involvement in early education – this means encouraging parents to have expectations and promote “self-efficacy” – i.e., believing that you can achieve your dreams.
- Providing additional educational support through an enhanced home learning environment or supplementary schooling.

8. Taking the above into account, UCU feel strongly that there needs to be better engagement between pupil intervention programmes and the support provided for adult education. To clarify, we include further, higher and adult community learning, when talking about adult education.

9. The decline of opportunities for adults to participate in education beyond the age of 19, has, in our opinion been of great detriment to Welsh government pupil intervention programmes.

¹ <http://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2017/171213-evaluation-pupil-deprivation-grant-final-en.pdf>

² http://iaccp.org/sites/default/files/effectiveness_of_early_intervention_in_turkey_0.pdf

³ <http://www.c4eo.org.uk/home.aspx>

10. We would like to see Welsh government commit to looking at the relationship between lifelong learning and educational outcomes at school. Serious attention needs to be given to the impact that the provision of lifelong learning has, in supporting the educational success of our children and young people. Current Welsh government policy, as outlined in 'qualified for life' (2015) and Education Wales: Our National Mission (2017) focus on the promotion of 'success for all learners', but only those under the age of twenty. We believe that there would be great benefits to our children and young people, if adult education were given a more prominent profile, as it would help to support the long term continuing benefits of initiatives such as the PDG and would help to provide greater value for money, for the funding invested in them.

We would like Welsh government to evaluate the link between lifelong learning and educational outcomes in compulsory education. We cannot keep looking at education as something that happens only to children and young people in isolation from everything else. We have to look at the whole picture, which is why we need a strategic policy for the Further education sector. Educated adults will result in educated children.

11. We are hopeful that developments with the new Post-Compulsory Education and Training Commission, will begin to address the issue of equality of education for all, regardless of age and background, by focusing on more flexible pathways to learning, with opportunities to change direction that are not hindered by previous levels of qualification or mode of study; and with the expansion of adult provision at levels 4 & 5, so that we can untap the talent that is currently being held back. In doing so, we would surely help to promote the value of learning throughout our communities, which would in turn, bolster the benefits of targeted funding to improve educational outcomes.