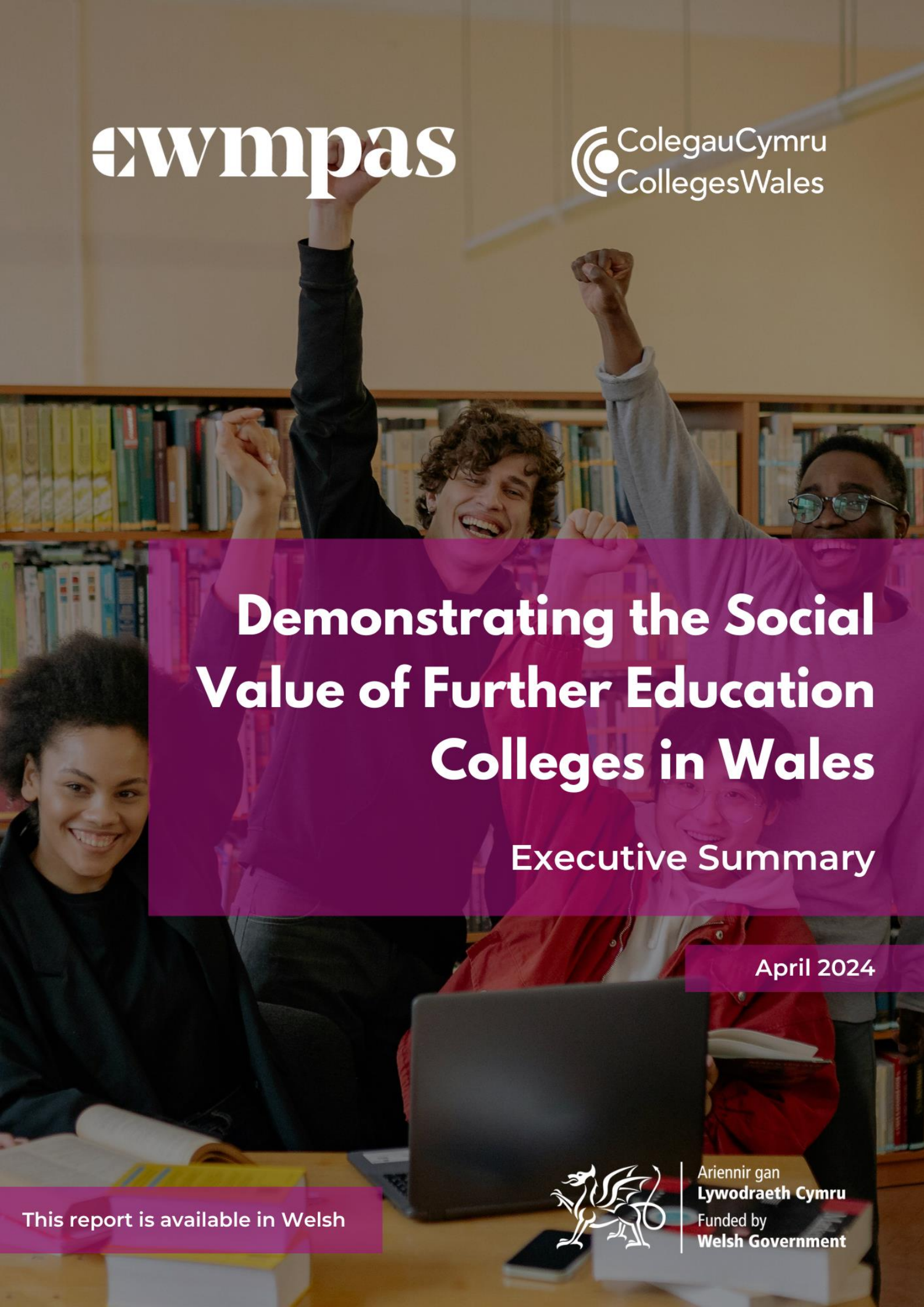




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 **Colegau Cymru**
Colleges Wales

Demonstrating the Social Value of Further Education Colleges in Wales

Executive Summary

April 2024

This report is available in Welsh



**Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru**
**Funded by
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Demonstrating the Social Value of FE colleges in Wales

“Social value is at the heart of everything we do.”

“creating a lasting legacy, where every learner, each community, and the environment benefits from the extraordinary commitment of Welsh FE to societal well-being.”

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<https://bit.ly/49x6bT7>

Exploring Social Value in the FE Sector in Wales:

Executive Summary

The research focuses on exploring social value within the Further Education (FE) sector in Wales, a topic largely unexplored until now. It delves into understanding how FE institutions in Wales contribute to societal well-being beyond their traditional educational roles. By examining strategic drivers, conducting interviews, and reviewing existing literature, the study aims to shed light on the multifaceted ways in which FE institutions generate social value. Social value, as understood within the context of this research, encompasses the broader positive impacts that FE institutions have on individuals, communities, and society at large.

The research aims to illuminate the intrinsic link between FE institutions and societal well-being, highlighting the sector's role as a catalyst for positive change in Wales. Through an in-depth exploration of social value, the study seeks to provide actionable insights that can inform strategic decision-making and enhance the overall effectiveness of FE institutions in contributing to the betterment of society.

What is the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act?

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

It will make the public bodies listed in the act think more about the long term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach. This will help us to create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. To make sure we are all working towards the same vision, the act puts in place 7 well-being goals.

Well-being goals

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

Source: <https://www.gov.wales/well-being-future-generations-act-essentials-html>

Role of Further Education Institutions in Advancing Societal Well-being in Wales

FE colleges are integral to advancing societal well-being in Wales, particularly in promoting a prosperous Wales (**WBG1**). They act as anchor organisations, shaping the local and regional economy. Their focus on skill development, collaborative partnerships with businesses, and apprenticeship programs exemplifies their commitment to cultivating a skilled workforce and driving economic growth.

A resilient Wales (**WBG2**) is bolstered by the efforts of FE institutions. By equipping individuals with essential skills, embracing sustainable practices, and fostering innovation, colleges contribute to the overall strength and adaptability of Welsh society.

A healthier Wales (**WBG3**) is nurtured through the initiatives of FE colleges that prioritize physical and mental well-being. Mental health and well-being support has notably increased post-COVID. By integrating well-being into educational settings, promoting healthy behaviours, and providing robust support systems, colleges play a crucial role in fostering healthier lifestyles and communities.

FE colleges actively contribute to achieving a more equal Wales (**WBG4**). Through strategic equality plans, inclusive learning offers, and support for under-served groups, colleges promote equality of opportunity and reduce social disparities, fostering a more inclusive society.

Welsh Further Education institutions serve as dynamic hubs that contribute to a Wales of cohesive communities (**WBG5**). Through partnerships, community engagement, and inclusive practices, colleges play a transformative role in building stronger, more united communities.

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language (**WBG6**) is promoted and celebrated by FE colleges. By offering diverse cultural activities, supporting Welsh language learning, and fostering creative industries, colleges contribute to a more culturally rich and linguistically diverse Wales.

FE colleges contribute to a global responsible Wales (**WBG7**) through environmental sustainability, internationalisation efforts, and the promotion of green skills. Their initiatives aim to address environmental challenges, broaden learners' aspirations, and foster international collaboration. Through these efforts, the FE sector in Wales plays a pivotal role in shaping a globally responsible society.

Recommendations

1. Align Social Value with Legislative Changes by Strengthening External Advocacy for Social Value in FE

- Integration with CTER's Strategic Objectives: Align future social value initiatives
- Linkage to Well-being of Future Generations Act (WBFGA)
- Implementation of Social Partnerships Bill
- Adaptation to the Revised Economic Mission

2. Strengthen ColegauCymru's Leadership in inter-FE Social Value Advocacy

Including:

- Knowledge sharing via social value 'community of practice' network
- Awareness raising via Communications campaign

3. Establish a Formalised Approach to Social Value Reporting

We suggest this process would include:

- Identification of key outcomes and indicators
- Progress tracking
- Continued qualitative case studies
- Annual social value reports

Conclusion

The exploration of social value in the FE sector reveals its multifaceted contributions to societal well-being in Wales. The recommendations aim to further embed and embrace social value within the sector, focusing on legislative alignment, leadership advocacy, internal collaboration, and formalised reporting approaches. By implementing these recommendations, the FE sector can maximise its societal contributions and set a transformative precedent for education's role in driving positive change in Wales.



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