

Cylchlythyr | Circular

The impact of the guidance on student charters, and on good practice in funding of effective, democratic student unions, and student representation

Date: 29 January 2014
Reference: W14/04HE
To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales
Principals of directly-funded further education colleges in Wales
Response by: No response required, but changes to the guidance need to be implemented for 2014/15
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This circular provides the outcomes of our survey of the funding guidance on student charters, and on good practice in funding of effective, democratic student unions, and student representation. It also provides some details on revisions to the guidance on guidance on student charters, and that on good practice in funding of effective, democratic student unions, and student representation, in response to the outcomes of the survey.

If you require this document in an alternative accessible format, please telephone us on (029) 2068 2225 or email info@hefcw.ac.uk.



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Introduction

1. This circular provides the outcomes of the survey carried out in circular [W13/27HE: Monitoring the impact of the guidance on student charters, and on good practice in funding of effective, democratic student unions, and student representation](#).
2. It also provides some details on revisions to the guidance on student charters, and that on good practice in funding of effective, democratic student unions, and student representation, in response to the outcomes of the survey.

Background

3. HEFCW's [2012-13 remit letter](#) from the Welsh Government asked us to assess the impact of [circular W11/31HE: Guidance on the development of student charters](#), and our [2013-14 remit letter](#) asked us to report on the impact of [W12/09HE: Guidance on good practice in funding of effective, democratic student unions, and student representation](#).
4. Because institutions continually seek to enhance the student experience in a range of areas, they undertake a range of other actions, which are likely to have also had an impact. We therefore recognised that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to disaggregate changes arising, and attribute some solely to the Student Charter and the good practice in funding of effective, democratic student unions, and student representation. We therefore wrote to institutions and student unions to ask them jointly to address a series of questions about the impact of the guidance in the context of changes in each of the areas detailed, detailed in [circular W13/27HE: Monitoring the impact of the guidance on student charters, and on good practice in funding of effective, democratic student unions, and student representation](#).
5. In addition, NUS Wales surveyed Student Unions, and provided Student Unions with support to understand what was meant by 'impact'. This provided contextual information from the Student Union perspective.
6. HEFCW has established a task and finish group to advise on this and other related remit letter tasks. The group includes HEFCW officers, NUS Wales president, a part-time student, the Chair of the Higher Education Wales (HEW) Pro-Vice Chancellors' Learning and Teaching Advisory Group, the Chair of the Welsh Clerks/Secretaries group, an NUS Wales staff member, Higher Education Academy Wales officer, a HEW officer and a staff member from Colegau Cymru.

Survey outcomes

7. A number of the responses indicated that it would be helpful to disseminate the outcomes of the monitoring in order to share good practice. A summary of the responses to the HEFCW survey is therefore provided at **Annex A**, and the outcomes of the NUS Wales survey are provided at **Annex B**.
8. As a result of the monitoring we identified some amendments to the guidance on the development of student charters, and that on good practice in funding of effective, democratic student unions, and student representation. Both sets of guidance include the clarification that we expect institutions and their student unions to continue to monitor the impact of both documents annually, as part of the process of updating the student charter and relationship agreement.
9. **The revised guidance on the development of student charters is published as circular [W14/05HE](#), and the changes are as follows (para references relate to circular W11/31HE, with new para references provided as appropriate):**
 - Para 1 – amended to reflect the revision of the document, and to provide information on where the details of the changes made are to be found;
 - Para 2 and 3 – merged to form new para 2, removing reference to the need to do this by 1 August 2012;
 - Para 9 (new para 8) – amended to reflect the outcomes of [circular W11/18HE Consultation on amendments to the Institutional Review: Wales](#);
 - Para 10 (new para 9) – amended to reflect that institutions should have a Charter in place;
 - Para 17 (new para 16) - amended to reflect that both the incoming and outgoing officers should be involved in reviewing Charter, with responsibility for sign off resting with the incoming officers, and to note that both partners are expected to promote awareness of this document among all their stakeholders;
 - Para 19 (new para 18) – additional bullet to note that the charter should include signposting to where students may find information on opportunities for them to study overseas;
 - New para 20 to clarify that we expect institutions and their student unions to continue to monitor the impact of the guidance annually, as part of the process of updating the student charter.
 - Para 21-22 deleted as refers to actions which are completed.
 - Para 23 (new para 21) amended to reflect the fact that the development of the Charters is complete;
 - Para 24 and 25 (new para 22) – amended to reflect current impact assessment processes.
10. **The revised guidance on good practice in funding of effective, democratic student unions, and student representation is published as circular [W14/06HE](#). The changes are as follows (para numbers**

refer to circular W12/09HE, with new para numbers provided as appropriate):

- Para 1 – updated to reflect the revision of the document, and to provide information on where the details of the changes made are to be found. Some content from para 1 moved into new para 2;
- Para 3 (new para 4) – removed reference to date by which action is to be implemented;
- Para 6 – removed, as there are no changes to the outcomes of the original consultation;
- Para 7 – removed, as Have your Say has become part of Wise Wales;
- Para 8 (new para 7) – refreshed to take account of developments with Wise Wales, including the development of the Student Partnership Statement;
- Para 14 bullet 3 (new para 13 bullet 3) – link for the Nolan principles has been refreshed as the previous one had broken;
- New para 19 – new paragraph to clarify that both partners are expected to promote awareness of this document among all their stakeholders;
- Para 20 (new para 20) – amended to reflect that both the incoming and outgoing officers should be involved in reviewing the relationship agreement, with responsibility for sign off resting with the incoming officers;
- New para 21 – to clarify that we expect institutions and their student unions to continue to monitor the impact of the guidance annually, as part of the process of reviewing the relationship agreement;
- Para 24 (new para 25) – amended to include expectation 6, that student unions be empowered to produce an annual student statement, to form the basis of dialogue with the institution, report to students, and inform the development of the student submission for the institutional review;
- Para 27 and 28 – deleted as refers to steps which have already taken place;
- Annex A – removed, as there are no changes;
- Annex B – removed, as there are no changes;
- Annex C – removed, as out of date;
- New Annex A – included to reflect developments in partnership with Wise Wales (see para 8 (new para 7)).

Further information / responses to

11. For further information, contact Cliona O'Neill (tel 029 2068 2283; email cliona.oneill@hefcw.ac.uk) or Steve Williams (tel 029 2068 2285; email steven.williams@hefcw.ac.uk).

The impact of student charters and good practice in funding of effective, democratic student unions, and student representation

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report details responses received by HEFCW in response to circular [W13/27HE: Monitoring the impact of the guidance on student charters, and on good practice in funding of effective, democratic student unions, and student representation](#).
- 1.2 Because institutions continually seek to enhance the student experience in a range of areas, we were mindful that they would undertake a range of other actions (eg National Student Survey action planning, action plans in response to module and course evaluation, responses to reports of external examiners, regular review of institutional policies, etc) which were likely to have also had an impact.
- 1.3 As a consequence, we recognised that it might be difficult, if not impossible, to disaggregate changes arising, to attribute some solely to the Student Charter and the good practice in funding of effective, democratic student unions, and student representation.
- 1.4 We therefore asked questions about the impact of the guidance in the context of changes in each of the areas detailed. These questions were set out in [Annex A](#) and [Annex B](#) of the circular and were agreed by HEFCW's Student Engagement task and finish group.
- 1.5 Responses were received jointly from the following institutions and their student unions:

Aberystwyth University, Bangor University, Bridgend College, Cardiff Metropolitan University, Cardiff University, Glyndŵr University, Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, the Open University: Wales, Swansea University; University of South Wales and University of Wales, Trinity St David.

2. Student Charters

- 2.1 Circular [W11/31HE: Guidance on the development of student charters](#) sets out a range of features which should be included in the Student Charter as recommended by the UK Student Charter Group. In addition institutions were asked to include the following Welsh-specific elements.
 - A high level statement on the institution's responsibilities under the Welsh Language Act and as set out in their Welsh Language Schemes;
 - Signposting to where students may find information on opportunities to study through the medium of Welsh (e.g. on course web pages);
 - A high level statement on the institution's engagement with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, including a link to the Coleg's website;
 - A high level statement on the institution's provision of information on the cost of study, including signposting to full information (e.g. on course pages).

2.2 Changes to the student experience in the areas covered by the Student Charter, both academic and non-academic

Institutions noted that changes to the student experience had occurred notably in reference to the inclusion of student representatives on committees and the governing body. Institutions have noted that increased engagement with the student population had been as a result of increased feedback from students and this change had been reflected in uplifts in specific aspects of National Student Survey (NSS) scores. Institutions which had already made these changes to the student experience had noted that the Charter codified what had already been done on student experience and provided a clear and concise focus for what to achieve. In addition the following impacts were noted:

- A Pro-Vice Chancellor (PVC) had been appointed with student experience as a specific remit ;
- New student union (SU) sabbatical posts had been created to specifically enhance the student experience or bring greater higher education (HE) representation in further education (FE) SUs;
- There was a greater awareness within institutions of student expectations relating to assessment and feedback and a number of institutions specifically noted there had been an increase in student satisfaction in this area of the NSS;
- Student representative structures had been revised to ensure that the student voice was represented on committees;
- Institutions had developed new processes to ensure that there was clear access to information which would impact on students;
- Student consultation structures had been developed to facilitate greater student feedback on modules and processes eg students had been consulted on the requirements for personal tutors and on the development of the curriculum;
- Additional student services had been introduced to increase skills; to focus on employer engagement; to provide greater engagement with postgraduate students; to facilitate volunteering and to ensure students' safety and well-being;
- There was greater SU contact across all campuses as well as with partner institutions' SUs;
- Institutions had increased investment in learning and teaching.

2.3 Changes to the staff experience (academic staff, support staff, and others as appropriate)

Institutions have identified that there is a greater awareness amongst staff regarding student engagement and this has been as a result of staff involvement in the development of the student charter, increased staff-student engagement on committees and the introduction of Student-Led Teaching Awards and Student-Led Teaching Fellowships. However it was noted that there was no measure for staff experience so it was difficult to assess changes to the staff experience. In addition the following impacts were noted:

- There was a greater focus on professional development with workshops designed to [embed the UK Professional Standards Framework \(UKPSF\)](#); more career pathways emerging through learning and teaching; and research being conducted by staff and students into pedagogic research;
- Inclusion of staff in reviews of student services;
- Staff-student officers working with academic staff to embed the student partnership work across the whole institution;
- Training had been provided for staff to improve pastoral support for students;
- Learning and teaching best practice has been disseminated internally;
- New staff positions had been created to support services to students;
- Staff in Colleges have been given access to professional development in partner institutions and opportunities to develop Welsh language have increased;
- There was greater engagement with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (Coleg) from students, academic staff and senior management;
- The charter reflected the clear expectations about the direct involvement of students in staff management.

2.4 Changes to institutional processes/policies, including changes to how the partnership between the students and the institution informs these

Institutions have noted that the Charter set a benchmark for student partnership and allowed for engagement on a full partnership basis. This partnership has been demonstrated by the inclusion of student representatives in institutional reviews on processes and policies as well as regular meetings between institutions' management and student representatives. For some institutions a cultural expectation that students were involved in these processes had already existed and the Charter had been updated to reflect existing practices. In addition the following impacts were noted:

- New positions have been created in SUs and amongst senior management in institutions to enhance the student experience;
- The Charter has provided greater prominence to Welsh language responsibilities;
- There was stronger student involvement in quality assurance and enhancement processes;
- Structures have been developed to allow the greater student and staff engagement;
- A code of practice for course representative systems had been developed between staff and students;
- Institutional policies regarding exam timetables, academic marking and library opening times have been amended as a result of this increased partnership;

- The introduction of staff-student conferences on NSS results to assess results and disseminate the information;
- Fee plans had been changed to reflect support provided to underrepresented student groups.

2.5 Whether student opinion/perception of the institution has changed, and in which ways

Institutions advised that it was difficult to measure how this had changed but it was noted that the Charter was evidence of a greater commitment to partnership and more clear to students how they could engage. The improvement in NSS results were offered as indication for this in specific cases. Possible reasons for these changes were noted:

- There was greater engagement between staff and students;
- There was greater student representation on committees;
- Surveys had been introduced at subject level and across different year groups;
- Students were engaging as active partners in a number of different activities and there had been a greater emphasis on student feedback across institutions;
- Students and staff engaged in dialogue on the NSS results;
- Students now have a clear understanding of the expectations on both them and the institution.

2.6 Whether staff perception of the institution/student body has changed, and in which ways

It was noted by institutions that there was not the evidence base to comment on this. However, the greater engagement of staff with students, the fee regime change highlighting the need for an excellent student experience and the recognition of students as partners could be offered as examples to suggest that staff perception had changed. In addition the following impacts were noted:

- The student experience was regularly referred to in meetings and committees;
- There was an enhanced expectation of academic staff regarding academic and pastoral support;
- There were clearer practices in place which communicated to the staff student views and the impact of NSS data;
- Students' closer working relationship with staff had offered staff a better insight to student needs;
- Staff now expected high student levels of engagement because of increased student representation.

2.7 Outcomes of the review of the charter jointly by students, Student Union officers and institutional staff – do the different parties believe there has been an impact, and if so, in what ways (if not detailed in response to the questions above)

An institution noted that the Charter provided a framework in which student experience could be considered. Student awareness of the Charter was mixed across different institutions with some institutions recognising that there was a need to increase the awareness of the document across the student population. Three institutions made no changes to their charter on review and a further three made minor changes. Further impacts noted as a result of the review were:

- There had been improved information on the website;
- There was a need to amend institutional information regarding the cost of study;
- All students enrolling at an institution were provided with a bilingual student charter the size of a credit card for ease of reference;
- SU were tasked to ensure that they maintained contact with students at all campuses;
- The importance of the student experience had been recognised in the senior management with a deputy Vice-Chancellor being designated the role of director of student experience.

2.8 Should there be any changes to the HEFCW guidance?

The following suggestions were made for changes to the guidance:

- It has been difficult to balance the requirements of the Charter, which impacted on all students, with the Coleg requirements which impacted on only a small proportion of students in such a short document;
- It would be beneficial to publish examples of good practice;
- Recognise differences between HE Institutions (HEIs) and HE in FE.

3 Good practice in funding of effective, democratic student unions, and student representation

3.1 Circular [W11/46HE Guidance on good practice in funding of effective, democratic student unions, and student representation](#) provided a set of principles underpinning the funding of SUs which would be published in a Relationship Agreement between HEIs in Wales and their SUs. These principles were as outlined by the National Union for Students and two additional principles to those in place in other parts of the UK were specified:

- Student voice: the partners will work collaboratively to recognise the student voice through a range of methods, to ensure that students are partners at every level of the institution;
- Funding: the partners will consider the core and additional functions of the SU and agree appropriate funding.

3.2 Changes in the ways in which the SU represents the diverse student body

The recognition of the importance of a student representative system which represents the diverse student body had been acknowledged by all institutions which responded to the Circular along with how these representatives were involved in committees and the Governing body. In addition the following impacts were noted:

- Research by staff led to improvements in equality awareness amongst tutors and support requirements for learners with physical disabilities;
- The SU president was paid by one College, which allowed the SU to fund more positions;
- Specific portfolios were identified for school representatives;
- The SU placed postgraduate interns in schools to review personal tutoring procedures and highlighted best practice across the institution with a focus on employability;
- The representative system had resulted in the Student Council filling all their seats and being able to develop more of their policies;
- The Annual Student Statement was identified as an example of the increase of the SU taking an increasingly evidence-based approach to their representation of the student body;
- The Relationship Agreement helped address practical challenges of a diverse student body;
- The SU had been supporting students in collaborative providers abroad with representative training in Wales.

3.3 Delivering the objectives of Wise Wales through funded activities

All institutions are taking part in activities which deliver the Wise Wales objectives, with some institutional activities evidenced prior to Wise Wales. This was evidenced notably through the increase of student representation on committees and the governing body which allowed for student views to help inform institutional policies and procedures. This has also been evidenced through:

- Amendments to the time scales for assessment feedback to be submitted to students;

- Student-Led Teaching Awards and Student-Led Teaching Fellowships being introduced across institutions;
- Student involvement in quality assurance and enhancement activities eg the QAA Quality Code consultation events and the Student as Partners quality enhancement work strand;
- Student representatives becoming increasingly engaged with Wise Wales;
- Annual student statements being adopted in SUs;
- SUs identifying best learning and teaching practice and summarising this in an annual report;
- Specific strategies being developed for learners.

3.4 Changes to the partnership between the institution and the SU

Institutions have reported that partnerships with the SU have not changed as a result of the introduction of relationship agreements as these partnerships had already been established prior to the publication of the guidance. Relationships agreements did, however, give student partnership a greater profile, partnership working was more evident and the relationship agreement articulated what was expected in that partnership in a clear and transparent way. Further evidence of this was noted:

- The appointment of a PVC with a particular student experience remit in one institution had highlighted the change in the nature of the relationship between the SU and the institution;
- There were more regular meetings across institutions in Wales between sabbatical officers and senior management in institutions;
- Funding had increased for SU to appoint additional staff;
- Students had been consulted more frequently on the development of institutional strategies;
- Upcoming constitutional changes within one College would provide a greater ability for the SU to deliver its objectives.

3.5 Communication

Institutions have noted that communications between institutions and SUs had not changed as a result of the guidance documents as partnerships had already been formed but that the guidance had been useful to review relationships. This was strengthened by the increased student representation on committees and the development of committees with a student specific focus across institutions. The impacts of this were noted:

- It had highlighted areas of communication in need of enhancement and would be used by one institution as a core framing document for the institution's new Director for Students;
- The SU was able to communicate SU activities and initiatives to institution staff during staff development programmes;

- SU strategies were reported to institution's senior management and Governors;
- Social media has been used effectively by the SU to help communicate institutional messages to students and student messages to institution management and staff.

3.6 Mutual support and commitment

The relationship between institutions and SUs has developed into one of a mutually supportive and committed partnership involving sabbatical officers working closer with senior management and governors of the institution. This has been evidenced by the increasing collaborative work between the two bodies such as with the development of the student charter and the relationship agreement. Further impacts of this were noted:

- Changes have been made to the training and funding of student representation posts;
- It has been agreed that there would be an increase in student facilities in specific campuses;
- An institution and its SU have worked together to fulfil a fee plan commitment to have free clubs and societies;
- Agreements that employment opportunities would be provided within the institution for students;
- The promotion of the NSS across the institution to ensure that the views of the diverse student population were represented.

3.7 Recognition of the student voice through a range of methods, to ensure that students are partners at every level of the institution

Institutional engagement with students has developed into a full partnership and this has been recognised with student representation in committees at all levels of the institution and SU officers holding positions on institutions' councils. This has resulted in student objectives such as restrictions on teaching on Wednesday afternoon, the removal of Saturday afternoons from summer exams and the improvement of social and recreational opportunities for students being achieved. Additional methods have been identified:

- The inclusion of student representatives on course validation events and meetings on the NSS results;
- Meetings including a 'student window' which provided a focus for student discussion without the need for student representatives to be present for the whole meeting;
- Social media has been used to provide students with an opportunity to voice an opinion to the SU or institution;
- Supporting SUs to complete annual students statements to be submitted to the institution;
- The creation of student-led teaching fellowships and an employability working group.

3.8 Changes to the funding of the SU as a result of the guidance

Four institutions noted that there had been no changes to funding, of which one recognised that its SU was seeking additional funding. Seven institutions specified that there had been changes to the funding agreements. The changes noted were:

- Funding had increased as a result of the new fees regime and due to the guidance;
- Institution staff were funded to support the SU;
- Funding was provided by the institution to develop a new area in the SU building;
- The agreement had been amended to allow sufficient time for the SU and institution to review the agreement and make an informed decision.

3.9 Changes to the functions carried out by the SU as a result of the guidance

Five institutions reported that there had been changes to the functions carried out by the SU. One of the institutions which noted that there had not been changes to SU functions stated that the functions had been made more prominent as a result of the relationship agreement. Changes noted were:

- New positions had been created within the institution and the SU to enhance the services offered by the SU;
- Counselling services had moved from the SU to the student health centre;
- The SU has been able to undertake new activities in relation to developing employment opportunities for students;
- Information for student support services was more clearly available;
- There were increased opportunities for students to participate in social and recreational activities;
- Students would design surveys and prompts for focus groups.

3.10 Changes to the Relationship Agreement in its annual review

Five institutions reported that changes had been made to the agreement on review. Five institutions advised that the agreement was working well and therefore did not need any further changes. Changes noted were:

- The inclusion of specific student projects that institutions were taking part in such as the Student as Partners quality enhancement theme work strand;
- A recognition of new staff and student representative positions which impacted on the relationship between the SU and the institution in the agreement;
- Noting amendments which had been made to student focused committees;

- Greater clarification in the agreement regarding the role the SU played in the fee plan process and which student services were available within an institution;
- Ensuring that the agreements reflected the newly merged institution.

3.11 Independence

The independence of the SU from the institution has been evidenced by democratic elections to elect SU officers and the charitable status of the SU which was served by a board of trustees. This independence has been supported by the Student Charter and the Relationship Agreement. It was recognised, however, that the institutions have a responsibility to ensure that the SU adheres to legislative requirements. Further evidence of the SU's independence was noted:

- Increased participation in the elections for sabbatical officers;
- The SU hosting awards evenings and inviting senior members of institutions;
- Structural and financial audits of SUs being undertaken by NUS and institutions;
- SUs plan being developed on an annual basis in consultation with the learners, with the support of the institution.

3.12 Changes to relationship agreements

The following changes to the agreement were suggested:

- The deadlines set for the renewal of the agreement were not suited to the pattern of sabbatical officers' terms of office. New officers were not in post long enough to sufficiently review and revise the agreement;
- HEFCW should assure itself of the effectiveness of the partnership rather than requesting detailed information from institutions;
- Good practice should be shared across the sector;
- There should be recognition of the differences between HEIs and HE in FE.

Evaluating the impact of student charters and the ‘Guidance on good practice in funding of effective, democratic students’ unions, and student representation’

Summary

1. As would be expected, students’ unions in institutions in Wales vary in regards to how effective they have found student charters and the guidance on students’ unions funding to be, and what impact these documents have had on their institution.
2. All unions were positive in relation to the purpose of student charters and the SU funding guidance. Particularly, unions agree with the minimum expectations that a union should be empowered to achieve, as outlined in the SU funding guidance.
3. It did become clear that generally the SU funding guidance in its current form is under-utilised in Welsh institutions. Those unions who reported positively on the use of SU funding guidance did so in the sense that it became a useful document to make reference to, enabling them to underline specific points when negotiating with the institution.
4. However, where the funding guidance has been used in this way, it has tended to be in institutions that already have well-developed unions. It is notable that the unions that reported either not being fully aware of the guidance, or it not having a particular impact, were also unions in need of development, as demonstrated through under-resourcing evidenced through a low number of SU staff and support services including advice centres, as well as poorly developed representation structures.
5. One union specifically commented that it felt as though the guidance was aimed elsewhere, given that although the union could improve the actual processes described in the guidance were already in place.
6. The response regarding the impact of student charters was more positive, although not wholly so.
7. Positive impacts that unions reported could potentially be attributed to student charters included:
 - a. A greater focus on and reference to the student experience in the day-to-day running of institutions
 - b. Additional funding towards capital projects
 - c. An increasing demand among students for representation, sports and activities

- d. Further development of the 'student voice'
 - e. Significant improvement and investment in the student experience
 - f. More responsibility for the union in the administration of representation structures
 - g. Greater student participation in committees
 - h. Increased meetings with VCs and PVCs
 - i. An increase in the number of students' union staff members
 - j. One union in particular suggested an improvement in NSS scores may be ascribed to the impacts of the student charter.
8. Some unions felt it was still too early to fully measure the impact of their student charter and evaluate its effectiveness
 9. One response also highlighted that the demand for student representation and activities related to the student experience was increasing but emphasised the funding and support from the institution to the union was not matching this demand
 10. The responses of students' unions did show a clear consensus that they believed neither student charters nor the SU funding guidance had significantly changed or impacted students' perceptions of the institution
 11. One union did describe a change in students' perceptions of the institution but attributed this to a recent merger
 12. There were also concerns raised around the timing of student charter negotiations and who was involved in the negotiation (for example, whether outgoing or incoming officers) and how this impacted continuity
 13. Similarly, there were also some concerns raised about the extent to which the student charter is a 'live' document
 14. Where significant changes have been made to the charters at the end of the previous academic year, they were usually attributed to external pressures unrelated to the purpose of the document, for example as the result of a merger
 15. Students' unions were keen to see the SU funding guidance developed further. There was a spectrum of responses regarding how aware of the guidance institutions were, or how much emphasis they placed on it.
 16. In terms of impact – one response made it very clear that the union had felt the fee planning process to have had a far more significant and profound impact on the funding of the students' union than either the student charter or funding guidance.
 17. There was a suggestion that, to have an impact across the board the guidance and student charters would need to go further and become more formative, including an element of future-planning and commitment to development rather than a summative model of measuring impact as currently used.

18. Given the variation in awareness around student charters and the funding guidance, extra steps could be taken to ensure that incoming officers are fully aware of the documents, including what is contained in their institution's student charter and why. As well as moving to a more formative model, two possible steps forward that would additionally support this are:

- a. Ensuring that the charter is seen as a live and relevant document and referred to with frequency in dialogues between institution and union
- b. Including student charters and the funding guidance into the online officer handover toolkit being developed by the Wise Wales project.