

# THE SEREN NETWORK

Supporting Wales' Brightest



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

2018 Welcome

[www.gov.wales/seren](http://www.gov.wales/seren)

 [facebook.com/serennetwork](https://facebook.com/serennetwork)

 [@Seren\\_Network](https://twitter.com/Seren_Network) #serennetwork

 [@serennetwork](https://www.instagram.com/serennetwork)

 [serennetwork.blog.gov.wales](http://serennetwork.blog.gov.wales)

## The hubs across Wales

The vision of former Secretary of State for Wales, Paul Murphy MP – now Lord Murphy of Torfaen – the Seren Network was established in 2014 to provide pupils and teachers with the support they need to ensure more students reach their academic potential and progress to the UK's top universities.

Initially comprising three regional pilot hubs, the network has expanded rapidly, with the last of the 11 hubs launched in November 2016 and the scheme now expanding widely. The network spans the length and breadth of Wales, helping around 2,000 students reach their academic potential every year.

At the beginning of each academic year, the brightest and most applied students are invited to join their region's hub, based on their outstanding GCSE results and in line with a national framework for selecting students.

The Seren Network's 11 hubs are partnerships between secondary schools and colleges, supported by local government, Welsh Government and leading universities. All Welsh state schools and colleges across Wales are represented on the programme.

Partners work together closely to develop a support programme for the brightest young minds across their region. While students are assigned to regional hubs, cross-hub collaborations also take place meaning students can also attend joint events and programmes. Hubs are led by a dedicated co-ordinator; each of whom is a highly experienced individual from a range of backgrounds.

Many Seren students have gone on to receive offers from some of the UK's best universities, as well as further afield in the US at Ivy League institutions such as Harvard and Princeton.

Going to university is now a possibility for more students than ever before with the changes to financial support for students in Wales. For more information, see page 19.

## The Seren Network hubs

- |   |   |    |                                     |
|---|---|----|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Flintshire & Wrexham  | 6  | Cardiff                             |
| 2 | Swansea   | 7  | Neath Port Talbot, Powys & Bridgend |
| 3 | Rhondda Cynon Taff & Merthyr Tydfil   | 8  | Conwy & Denbighshire                |
| 4 | Pembrokeshire & Carmarthenshire   | 9  | Anglesey & Gwynedd                  |
| 5 | EAS Consortia (Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Newport, Torfaen & Monmouthshire) | 10 | Ceredigion                          |
|   |   | 11 | Vale of Glamorgan                   |





## What to expect

There are many ways you'll benefit from being a member of the Network. Your hub co-ordinator will provide a dedicated schedule of support, which will include the following:

### Information, advice and guidance sessions, including:

- Preparatory sessions in areas like writing a personal statement, an application, or preparing for an interview or admissions test.
- Expert advice and support sessions in areas like student finance and scholarships.
- Outreach visits to leading university campuses.

### Academic sessions, including:

- Subject-specific academic 'stretch and challenge' workshops that take you beyond the A-level curriculum, in areas ranging from arts and humanities to STEM.



- Face-to-face advice and tutorials delivered by leading academic lights from top UK universities.
- Advice on specific areas of study or subject matters, such as applying for medicine or applying to a US university.

### Unique opportunities, including:

- The chance to apply for life-changing enrichment activities, such as the Seren-Jesus College summer school at Oxford University, and Yale Young Global Scholars Programme at Yale University.
- The Seren national conference, which brings together Seren students with leading academics for a packed programme taking students beyond the curriculum.
- The opportunity to build new links and friendships with other bright sparks looking to reach their academic potential at the world's leading universities.

Along with these opportunities which are open to Seren students across Wales, at a regional level, each hub has its own schedule of events for students. Please contact your hub co-ordinator for more information - contact details can be found at [gov.wales/seren](http://gov.wales/seren) or in the following pages.

## We want to hear from you

There are a number of ways for you to get involved with the Seren Network and get your voice heard.

Our social media channels are the key channels through which we communicate with you on all the latest Seren news and details of hub events. The Seren Facebook and Twitter pages regularly feature details of open days, videos of students and teachers from hub events across Wales, and links to useful articles.

We will also be developing our Instagram presence for the 2018/2019 academic year.

Follow or like our social media pages for the most up-to-date news and opportunities with the Seren Network such as the Summer School programmes.

There are many different ways for you to get involved with Seren and its communications activities. Our weekly blog features posts from current Seren students, university alumni, hub coordinators

and academics, on topics ranging from how to make your personal statement stand out, to studying in the US, to preparing for your first year at university.

We would love to hear your experiences, story or content ideas. If you'd like to be a Seren blogger, please email [seren@golleyslater.co.uk](mailto:seren@golleyslater.co.uk).

### Follow us at:

- [facebook.com/serennetwork](https://facebook.com/serennetwork)
- [@Seren\\_Network](https://twitter.com/Seren_Network) [#serennetwork](https://twitter.com/serennetwork)
- [serennetwork.blog.gov.wales](https://serennetwork.blog.gov.wales)
- [@serennetwork](https://www.instagram.com/serennetwork)

If you have any questions about your participation in the Seren Network, however big or small, please speak with your teachers or hub co-ordinator.



## Meet the hubs

Hub co-ordinators and a selection of students are profiled here:

### RCT & Merthyr



**Lucas Watts**  
Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg

Lucas studied A-levels in English literature, history and maths at Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg in Pontypridd and has received an offer to study PPE (Philosophy, Politics and Economics) at Wadham College, Oxford. He said: "The opportunity to try out a range of new subjects through Seren has been invaluable. Having originally been torn between studying English and maths, my many experiences with Seren; from shadowing students at Cambridge to spending a week at Gray's Inn with LEDLET, led me to apply to study PPE, which suits me perfectly. Had I not been a part of the Seren Network, I'm not entirely sure I'd have ever considered the course at all. Perhaps most importantly, I have met friends through Seren who, along with my RCT hub co-ordinator Stephen, have provided support and advice throughout the admissions process. Seren has led to my making a successful application to my ideal course at university and has been quite a good laugh. What more could you ask for?"



**Stephen Parry-Jones**  
RCT and Merthyr Hub Co-ordinator  
stephen.parry-jones@rctcbc.gov.uk

Stephen is a retired deputy headteacher who read history at Oxford in the 1970s. He said: "At university, a lot of my friends were from South Wales comprehensive schools, but this has become less commonplace – despite the region having many students of exceptional ability. Seren students are asked to confront their subjects in unfamiliar ways and we hope that, when they apply for university in a year or so, they'll be comfortable in even the most challenging situations. It's about getting our students to raise their aspirations in terms of their A-level grades and the universities they consider. We've seen an increase in applications to the top universities, both in the UK and abroad, and I'm very pleased that Seren is having such a positive impact on Welsh students."

### Flintshire & Wrexham



**Owen Kelly**  
Coleg Cambria

Owen studied A-levels in maths, further maths, physics and computing at Coleg Cambria in Wrexham. He has been offered a place at the University of Warwick to study Computer Science in September. He said: "Seren has been brilliant at connecting me with like-minded individuals to share our aspirations and achievements. Seren organised lots of sessions designed to stretch and challenge us, in which we completed a variety of tasks to help us expand our knowledge and better prepare ourselves for the university journey ahead. I was also lucky enough to attend residentials at both Oxford and Cambridge, organised through Seren, to give me a more in-depth look at university life and help inspire me to apply to the leading universities. Seren has been a valuable experience for me and has helped inspire me to achieve my ambitions."



**Graham Kelly**  
Flintshire & Wrexham hub coordinator  
graham.kelly@hecsl.co.uk

Graham is a Cardiff University graduate in Economics and a former lecturer. He now runs a higher education consultancy company, specialising in student progression to university. He said: "I've been working with the Flintshire & Wrexham hub for three years, helping students to gain offers to some of the UK's top universities, as well as Ivy League universities in the US. This year's Seren students will benefit from this knowledge and experience. I want to encourage them to aim high from the moment they start their sixth form journey. By offering Seren students a full programme of 'stretch and challenge' activities throughout the year, we encourage them to develop critical thinking skills and articulate their views on a wide range of topics. This will help them with their personal statements and increase their confidence when attending university interviews and when they begin their university studies."



## Meet the hubs

### Swansea



**Elli Rees**  
Gower College

Elli Rees is studying A-levels in maths, english literature, government, politics and religion at Gower College Swansea. Thanks to Seren, Elli was able to take part in the Yale Young Global Scholars programme and is also a member of the Sutton Trust Programme.

**She said:** "Seren has helped me make my dreams not only dreams but achievable aims. With the support of Seren, I am now a Yale Young Global Scholars alumna, after spending two weeks at Yale University. Without Seren and my hub co-ordinator I could never have achieved this. I'm also a member of the Sutton Trust Programme, which gives students from across the UK the opportunity to visit universities in America and realise that no university, no matter how far away or prestigious, is too idealistic to apply for. Although I don't fully know where I want to go to university yet, I am certain that I'd like to study in America, and this is all thanks to the opportunities that Seren has given me. Seren has helped me realise my love for education and given me the boost to go to America and finally start making decisions about my future. If there's one thing I can tell you all about Seren, it would be grab every opportunity it gives you because it will change your life."



**Felicity Padley**  
Swansea hub coordinator  
felicity.padley@gowercollegeswansea.ac.uk

Felicity came to Swansea in 1969 and worked at the university for 16 years. She also has experience of teaching biology, and has been director of curriculum and director of A-level studies at the Gorseinion Campus of Gower College. Felicity has been running the college's Oxbridge programme since 2012.

**She said:** "Our year starts with a launch event to welcome the new cohort of students, and throughout the year we arrange subject sessions and workshops around 14 different topic groups. We also ask past students to come in and hold mock interviews with our current students to prepare them for their university applications, and we visit Oxford and Cambridge for open days and masterclasses. I think the biggest issue is that students are surprised when they learn that they're good enough to go to a top university, and our aim is to show them they have what it takes from the beginning so they already have that confidence. It's a wonderful thing to see a young person coming onto the programme, and leaving as a young adult ready for university at the end of it."

### EAS Consortia



**Cassie de St. Croix**  
Monmouth Comprehensive.

Cassie is studying maths, physics and art at Monmouth Comprehensive.

**She said:** "Coming in to Year 12, I was set on doing a prosthetics and orthotics degree at Strathclyde University. I was then introduced to the Seren Network. Seren showed me that there were so many different pathways to take me to the same destination - a career in biomedical engineering. Through Seren I was given the opportunity to apply to a summer school in Yale, as well as the numerous Russell Group summer camps I was already applying to, never believing I'd actually get in. And yet here I am, nearly five months down the line, having completed a two-week long, intensive applied science and engineering course at one of the most prestigious Ivy League universities in America. The Seren Network has proved to me that no matter where you come from or where you want to go, there are people out there who want you to be both inspired and inspiring. Whether that's through an apprenticeship, a summer school or a day trip, Seren opens doors to leading educators worldwide, and all it takes is someone willing to dream of something bigger."



**Siân Farquharson**  
EAS hub coordinator  
sian.farquharson@sewaleseas.org.uk

Siân has worked in post-16 education for over 20 years, and is currently part of the Education Achievement Service for South East Wales.

**She said:** "There's great diversity in South East Wales, creating a rich tapestry of cultures, outlooks and aspirations among our young people. By bringing Seren learners together, we know that they will raise each other's aspirations and share ideas, ambitions and opportunities to increase the number of offers from the UK's top universities. Universities have been very responsive in their support of the South East Wales Seren programme, and we're delighted to have them on board for what we hope will be a long-term relationship which will benefit a wide range of learners in our schools and colleges."

## Meet the hubs

### Pembrokeshire & Carmarthenshire



**Tom Long**  
Sir Thomas Picton School

Tom is currently studying A-levels in chemistry, physics, maths and further maths at Sir Thomas Picton School in Pembrokeshire. He has been involved with Seren since the beginning of sixth-form and aims to do an undergraduate degree in engineering. **He said:** "Seren has opened my eyes to the world. My trips to Oxford and America have highlighted that we, as Welsh students, are competitive on a global scale. We really need to learn how to show this in our applications to university and the Seren Network helps with this. I have attended talks on applying to Oxbridge and attended admissions lectures on how best to write a personal statement. I would like to study at either Oxford or an Ivy League university in America. These aspirations have been supported by Seren."



**Julian Dessent**, Carmarthenshire & Pembrokeshire hub coordinator  
Dessentj@hwbmai.net

**He said:** "In attempting to encourage even the most able students at a sixth-form in Pembrokeshire for many years, it was always a challenge to persuade students to believe in their potential to study at prestigious institutions. The Seren Network has exceeded all expectations in creating the aspiration and self-belief to compete for places at the best universities and colleges across both Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire. I have been amazed at how quickly Seren has had an impact; not only by creating the appropriate communication skills and networks for success but also by encouraging a deeper understanding of academic subjects through masterclasses and the desire to be inquisitive. One important aspect of the work we do in our hub is to ensure students who leave us to study in England, Scotland, or even the US, can return to careers in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire worthy of their talent and dedication. Our partnership with Valero refinery at Pembroke, for example, is the beginning of what we hope will allow students to see the opportunities in our counties. This commitment is vital if our communities, language and culture are to be sustained, and hopefully Seren can play a small part in this."

### Neath Port Talbot, Powys & Bridgend



**Eve Vincent**  
NPTC

Eve Vincent studied A-levels in English literature, history, French and the Extended Project at NPTC in Neath and has been offered a place at Cambridge University to study French and Russian. **She said:** "I used to believe that I wouldn't possibly be able to secure a place at a Russell Group university, as no member of my family had ever been through Higher Education. Once I realised that my education could help me achieve my dream of becoming a Russian and French interpreter, as well as allowing me to travel the world and be able to communicate with people from different cultures, my relationship with academia changed entirely. I began to enjoy my studies and commit myself to studying. I was soon given the opportunity to join the Seren Network. Through the many trips and workshops that Seren has provided me, I've made lots of friends and we've been able to support one another in our applications to university. The support I've received from the Seren Network and the offer I've had to study French and Russian at Cambridge have given me the confidence to believe in myself and my abilities. If you commit yourself to your goal and make the most of all the opportunities given to you, you will undoubtedly succeed."



**Jayne Bevan**, Neath Port Talbot, Powys & Bridgend hub coordinator  
jayne.bevan@powys.gov.uk  
**Karen Thomas** (Neath Port Talbot contact)  
k.thomas5@npt.gov.uk  
**John Fabes** (Bridgend contact)  
john.fabes@bridgend.gov.uk

Jayne is the Strategic Programme Manager for the Transforming learning and skills programme within the One Powys Plan. She is the Seren co-ordinator for Powys, with Karen Thomas acting as the co-ordinator for Neath Port Talbot, and John Fabes as the Bridgend co-ordinator. Students should contact the relevant hub co-ordinator for their area. **Jayne said:** "This role has links with the work I do with Powys County Council, and with the multi-agency Positive Pathways Powys Team, which was set up to more effectively share expertise, knowledge and experience of the partners and to source new and greater opportunities for young people. Seren provides a fantastic structure to support our most able students across Wales. Being able to take part in workshops and activities that go far beyond the A-level curriculum has allowed them to see where their academic passions might take them. In addition, the opportunity to meet up with like-minded students from across the country has been so encouraging – creating greater confidence and increased ambition."

www.gov.wales/seren

## Meet the hubs

### Conwy & Denbighshire



**Gokul Raj Krishna**  
Ysgol Eirias

Gokul attends Ysgol Eirias where he is studying A-levels in biology, chemistry, maths and Welsh Baccalaureate. He's hoping to study Medicine at the University of Manchester in September 2018.

**He said:** "When I first moved to this country for my GCSEs, I was a naive 14-year-old with only a desire to become a doctor without the slightest idea of the challenges you had to face to get into a competitive course like Medicine. The Seren Network has been an invaluable resource that aided me highly whilst applying for a course such as Medicine. The university open day trips organised were very useful in helping me to decide the universities I wanted to apply to. The numerous medical talks held by various medical professionals and the indispensable help in drafting personal statements and preparing for interviews had helped me become a strong medicine applicant. All the help and advice I've received as a result of being part of Seren has culminated in me receiving offers from my chosen universities."



**Christine Wynne**  
Conwy & Denbighshire hub coordinator  
c.wynne@gllm.ac.uk

Christine is a former Deputy Headteacher and is now working with Conwy Education Services.

**She said:** "The Seren Network is providing students with enriching and challenging opportunities beyond those already offered in their school or college. Students are encouraged to join a programme which provides advice for choosing the right university for them as well as support and advice with the whole application process to the top universities. A series of events throughout the year are designed to stretch their high-level skills, challenge their thinking and improve their ability to present views in a confident and coherent way. Students also enjoy meeting like-minded students from across the Network and the chance to exchange ideas and aspirations. We are now looking forward to welcoming a new group of students into our hub."

### Gwynedd & Anglesey



**Guto Tegid**  
Ysgol David Hughes

Guto is a pupil at Ysgol David Hughes on Anglesey. Having achieved 12 A\* GCSE grades, Guto is keen to apply to either Oxford or Cambridge and knows that he'd like a career in politics.

**He said:** "I saw Seren as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to develop a wide range of transferable skills suitable for my future career. Without a doubt, the occupation-specific sessions, along with the general lectures that were provided, were all vital in evolving my core understanding of certain subjects and to engage with other dedicated learners. In addition, the Network has inspired me to take up work experience posts at the British Parliament in Westminster as well as the European Parliament in Brussels; both of which allowed me to engage with politics right at the very heart of government. A two-week scholarship at Yale University, attending Oxbridge open days with my hub, countless workshops and university-style seminars; these are just a few examples of the outstanding projects that the Seren Network conducts for students. Nonetheless, most importantly of all, it's the intensive, yet also welcoming, environment where hard-working students can thrive in their studies, that makes Seren an initiative that I value."



**Elfed Thomas Morris**  
Gwynedd & Anglesey hub coordinator  
elfedmorris@gwynedd.gov.uk

Elfed was formerly a Deputy Head teacher in the secondary sector, a senior manager in the FE sector as well as an LEA Advisor. He had previously worked in the oil industry, and as a chemistry teacher, head of department and head of science faculty. He has been the Gwynedd and Anglesey 16+ Consortium Manager since 2014 and part of the Seren Network since the hub's launch in April 2016.

**He said:** "In a rural region like Gwynedd and Anglesey, it's really important that we bring our brightest young people together and create a support network for them. We have arranged workshops on a range of topics, including personal statements, mock interviews, subject lectures, and have also brought in alumni to provide support and guidance and arranged visits to top universities in the UK. The most important thing is to help the students by building their confidence and developing their skills and knowledge, and to make them aware of opportunities and to expand their horizons by creating excellent links with universities in Wales, the UK and across the world. Seren helps students to raise their ambitions and aspirations."

## Meet the hubs

### Cardiff



**Yousuf Bakshi,**  
Fitzalan High School

Yousuf studied A-levels in maths, physics, computer science and the Welsh Baccalaureate at Fitzalan High School in Cardiff and. His aspiration is to study computer science at a university in the US. **He said:** *"The Seren Network has funded my dreams of attending Yale University in the US for two weeks on the YYGS programme. It has been the experience of a lifetime, along with another programme; the Sutton Trust US Programme, which was also available for me to pursue after hearing about it via the Seren Network. This will also help me apply and enhance my application to American universities. I took part in numerous workshops and lectures within Seren, which have provided me with such opportunities, and I truly believe Seren has helped me learn and progress throughout my AS year. It's been a big help to be surrounded by pupils who share the same passion for studying as I do, as we all share our dreams and anxieties together. It's helped me achieve more than I thought I could and guided me to make the ultimate decision that I prefer the US liberal arts system over the UK system, after having the great opportunity to experience uni life on both sides of the pond."*



**Julie Elliott**  
Cardiff hub coordinator  
julie.elliott@cardiff.gov.uk

Julie has worked in education for over 20 years. Originally a primary teacher, she now works as a Partnership Inclusion Officer, supporting and challenging 23 schools in both primary and secondary sectors. In addition, she has responsibility for more able and talented pupils in Cardiff, supporting schools across the city and all over Wales. **She said:** *"We make sure that all our Seren students are catered for with a variety of subject masterclasses, ranging from arts and humanities and STEM to personal statement and application guidance. We've already seen an increase in the number of students receiving offers to elite universities, with some students heading to America! We're also seeing a lot more direct contact from students as their confidence grows, asking specific questions about universities they're considering or if they can be partnered with alumni, and it's very encouraging to see them taking a keen interest."*

### Ceredigion



**Miles Hermann**  
Ysgol Gyfun Aberaeron

Miles studied A-levels in english literature, history, geography and Welsh Baccalaureate at Ysgol Gyfun Aberaeron. **He said:** *"I'm hoping to go to Cardiff university to study human geography with the intention of following a GDL (graduate diploma in law) after that to study environmental law. I have been so lucky to have been a part of the Seren network, especially having been offered a place on the inaugural Jesus College summer school, which completely opened my eyes to how higher education works. I'm so thankful to the Seren Network as it's really shown me what I want to pursue, diolch yn fawr!"*



**Sian Bowen**  
Ceredigion hub coordinator  
c/o mary.davies@ceredigion.gov.uk

Siân has worked in secondary education for over 30 years. Having spent a number of years as a Sixth Form tutor with responsibility for preparing students for Higher Education, she then spent 14 years as Assistant and then Deputy Head teacher with responsibility for Pastoral Support and the Curriculum. Recently, she has been a member of the working group at Aberystwyth University developing a new Initial Teacher Education Programme. She now works as Challenge Advisor for Ceredigion supporting and challenging secondary and all-through schools in the county. **She said:** *"The Seren Network prepares students for one of the most important decisions that they will make. The range of opportunities opens students' eyes to the opportunities that Higher Education can provide. The direct contact with elite universities, their participation in subject master classes and the specific advice that is provided for the preparation of their applications and personal statements is invaluable to students. Involvement in Seren raises students' aspirations whilst also supporting them in making informed decisions and in achieving their goals."*

## Meet the hubs

### Vale of Glamorgan



**Emily Nanji**  
Barry Sixth Form

Emily Nanji is currently studying A-levels in English literature, history and philosophy at Barry Sixth Form. Whilst being unsure of exactly which university she'd like to go to, Emily would like to study international law and diplomatic relations, in either the US or Canada.

**She said:** "For me, Seren has opened up so many wonderful opportunities, including the chance to study international affairs and security for two weeks at the prestigious Yale University. Before joining the Seren Network, studying abroad seemed like an impossible goal, however, the constant support from my Seren hub has made my dream more possible. I have been able to find like-minded students who are going through a similar experience and make connections with alumni from several universities that I'm interested in. This September, I will start the application process of applying to some of the most competitive universities worldwide, and I know that the Seren Network will be there to help me every step of the way."



**Nisha Shukla**, Vale of Glamorgan  
hub coordinator  
nshukla@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Nisha has worked for the third sector and public sector for the last 12 years. She started working for the Vale of Glamorgan Learning & Skills Partnership in 2011, and worked as the Vale coordinator for the Welsh Government Youth Engagement & Progression Framework in 2013, where she was responsible for reducing the numbers of young people Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) in the Vale.

**She said:** "The Vale Seren hub was launched in November 2016 and has helped students access a range of masterclasses to give them a taste of university-style teaching. Students have attended sessions such as 'An introduction to Oxbridge and Higher Education' and 'Supporting and preparing applications for Oxford and Cambridge'. They have also been able to participate in open discussions around applying to the top universities in the UK as well as accessing advice and guidance that has helped clarify any doubts and build confidence."

## University partnerships

Seren has established partnerships with the majority of Russell Group universities. Here's what some of these university partners have to say about Seren:

### Oxford University

"Seren is a fantastic network. It has been of enormous benefit to its participants, as well as being invaluable to academics like me who want to meet the brightest and best from across Wales. It is with the help of Seren that we in Oxford will be able to host our first ever all-Wales summer school in August 2017. We then more than trebled this in August 2018 for 75 students and 11 teachers. There are exciting plans to continue the Seren summer school in 2019, along with on-going engagements with individual Seren hubs."

**Dr Matthew Williams**, Access and Career Development Fellow, Jesus College, Oxford



### Cambridge University

"The Seren Network and the learners it supports are progressing from strength to strength. At Cambridge, we have lately seen year-on-year increases in the number of Seren-eligible applicants from Wales. We hope this trend will continue, here and elsewhere, as more outstanding Welsh students discriminatingly select the courses and universities that are right for them."

**Dr Jonathan Padley**, Fellow and Admissions Tutor, Churchill College, University of Cambridge

"Expanding the reach of the Yale Young Global Scholars Programme and attracting new students from across the world are ongoing priorities for us, so it's been brilliant to work with the Seren Network over the past year to build new relationships and promote the YYGS opportunity to Welsh students. The newly formed YYGS-Seren Partnership offered 16 of Wales' brightest sixth-formers a truly life-changing opportunity this summer and gave Yale direct access to some of Wales' very best academic talent. We look forward to developing the relationship further for the 2018/2019 academic year"

**Amy Shah**, Associate Director for Student Relations and External Affairs for the Yale Young Global Scholars Programme



## Seren students in the States



This year saw one of the major success stories of Seren to date; the inaugural Seren – Yale Young Global Scholars Programme partnership. A unique opportunity made possible through the Seren Network, the programme saw 16 Welsh Seren students join more than 1,500 other students from 126 countries and 50 US states at Yale's Young Global Scholars Programme.

The pupils spent two weeks on Yale's New Haven campus, where they took part in a rigorous academic programme in one of six areas, including International Affairs & Security, Frontiers of Science & Technology and Politics, Law & Economics.

The summer programme was made available to Welsh students thanks to a scholarship from Yale Young Global Scholars, funding from Welsh Government and sponsorship from 10 Welsh organisations.

The partnership has been established to broaden the academic horizons of Welsh students, giving them a taste of university life in the States and the opportunity to make strong university applications when they return.

The partnership between Yale Young Global Scholars and Seren will continue for 2019, with applications opening in the autumn. Keep an eye on the channels and speak with your hub co-ordinator for more details.

### Yale University

*"Since returning to Wales last year, it's been a real privilege to work with high potential Welsh students through the Seren Network and Yale's Alumni Schools Committee. Over the past few months, I've worked to build a new relationship between Yale and The Seren Network, which culminated in the fantastic partnership and scholarship opportunity. This scholarship has delivered life-changing opportunities to some of Wales' brightest sixth-formers and gives Yale the opportunity to access some of Wales' very best talent."*

**Liam Rahman, co-director at E-Qual Recruitment Education and a Yale University alumnus**

## Opportunities for you

As well as the workshops, visits and sessions you will be invited to as part of the Seren Network, there are also a range of other opportunities available to you, some of which are outlined below:



### UK Summer Schools

The Sutton Trust's UK Summer School programme is run at 11 leading universities across the UK, including Cambridge, UCL, Bristol and Edinburgh.

It gives Year 12 students from UK state schools a free residential course where they can explore university life. Students pick a subject and a university and find out what it would be like to be an undergraduate student for a week.

The programme has supported over 15,000 young people so far and there will be over 2,000 places for the 2019 programme. Applications open in January and close in early March. More information can be found at: <https://summerschools.suttontrust.com/>



### Oxford Foundation Year

The Lady Margaret Hall (LMH) Foundation Year is a fully funded, year-long course designed to help students from socio-economic backgrounds that are under-represented in higher education to reach their potential. Students live and study at Lady Margaret Hall, a college at the University of Oxford. The Foundation Year accepts students with grades that are lower than the traditional Oxford offer (e.g. BBB instead of AAA). Applications to the Foundation Year are separate to UCAS, and so will not affect a student's UCAS application in any way. <http://www.lmh.ox.ac.uk/prospective-students/foundation-year>

### University of Cambridge partnership

The University of Cambridge is proud to have supported the Seren Network from its inception, and remains committed to help Welsh students aspire to attend the very best universities, in the UK and globally.

As part of the relationship with Seren, the University of Cambridge will continue to offer information and guidance sessions for every hub to guide students through each part of the university entrance process. Students will benefit from the advice of admissions experts on everything from considering their choices, through preparing UCAS forms and personal statements, to getting ready for interviews. Seren students may also have an opportunity to visit Cambridge and participate in additional sessions that will give them insight into university life.





### US Programme

The Sutton Trust US Programme, delivered by the US-UK Fulbright Commission, offers talented, ambitious students from low and middle income families in the UK an opportunity to take part in exploring US study over an 18-month period. If students want to apply to US universities, the programme will support them and their schools through the application process. The cost of residentials, travel, accommodation and trip to the US is completely covered by the Sutton Trust. . In 2018, 16 students from Wales joined the programme and they all came through the Seren Network. For more information visit :<https://us.suttontrust.com>



### LEDLET

The Lord Edmund-Davies Legal Education Trust (LEDLET) is an independent charity established in 2013 to serve young people in Wales who are interested in entering the legal profession. LEDLET intends to ensure that all young people in Wales have an opportunity to consider the possibility of a career in the law. It also provides educational experiences, including summer schemes and competitions, that encourage and support those drawn to such careers in their efforts to pursue them. LEDLET's motto is 'Anela'n uchel' or 'Aim high' in English. <https://www.ledlet.org.uk/>

## The annual Seren Conference 2018

The annual Seren Conference in December will be the biggest yet and aims to bring together pupils from the Network with leading academics for a packed programme that goes beyond the curriculum. The three-day conference is a great opportunity to meet other students across the Network and take part in exciting workshops and masterclasses led by experts from universities including Oxford, Cambridge, Kings College London, Imperial College London and Bath. This year we are very pleased to welcome guest speakers from the US to provide valuable insights into studying at top US universities and the application process.



New financial support for eligible part and full-time undergraduates. [gov.wales/studentmoney](http://gov.wales/studentmoney)

# DON'T LET MONEY GET IN THE WAY OF UNIVERSITY

All eligible first time Welsh students starting a university course will receive support for living costs, made up of a mixture of grants and loans. Most will receive support equivalent to the National Living Wage. This will mean you can focus on your studies and spend less time worrying about making ends meet.

The minimum grant you could get is £1,000, which you do not have to pay back. If you're studying full-time as an undergraduate, through a mixture of grants and loans, you could be eligible for up to £11,250 a year towards your living costs if you live away from home and study in London, and £9,000 per year in the rest of the UK. Part-time undergraduates will receive similar support, on a pro-rata basis based on the course's intensity.

In addition, most students will have no upfront costs to pay as a tuition fee loan can be taken out to cover their course.

To find out more about your options, visit [www.studentfinancewales.co.uk](http://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk)





[www.gov.wales/seren](http://www.gov.wales/seren)

 [facebook.com/serennetwork](https://facebook.com/serennetwork)

 [@Seren\\_Network](https://twitter.com/Seren_Network)

 [@serennetwork](https://instagram.com/serennetwork)

 [serennetwork.blog.gov.wales](http://serennetwork.blog.gov.wales)