

Further education wellbeing and mental health funding 2025/26

Date: 13 October 2025

Reference: Medr/2025/23

To: Heads of further education colleges

Respond by:

Funding plan from FE institutions **24 October 2025**

Interim monitoring report **01 March 2026**

Final monitoring report **01 July 2026**

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Summary:

This publication confirms funding and provides further information on its use and monitoring requirements. The Medr allocation of £4,050,000 direct funding to the further education (FE) sector for the 2025/26 academic year to support mental health and wellbeing initiatives for both learners and staff.

The publication also confirms funding and provides further information on additional funding for national projects.

Introduction

1. This publication sets out our intentions in 2025/26 to allocate:
 - £4,050,000 direct funding to the Further Education (FE) sector for the 2025/26 academic year to support mental health and wellbeing initiatives for both learners and staff;
 - additional £350,000 to support FE staff and student emotional and mental well-being initiatives at a national level; and
 - additional well-being and health funding to support joint further and higher education projects.
2. This publication builds on guidance previously issued by the Welsh Government, in support of Medr's aim to ensure a smooth transition for providers and learners, as Medr takes on its new duties and responsibilities.
3. Medr has a strategic duty to promote equality of opportunity in tertiary education and will introduce a staff and student/learner welfare related condition of registration. The [Tertiary Education and Research \(Wales\) Bill: Exploratory Memorandum](#) notes:

'The initial and ongoing conditions regarding support for and the promotion of student and staff welfare will introduce new regulatory requirements for providers which, it was envisaged, would encompass matters such as mental health, wellbeing and safety of learners and staff at the provider. The Commission will be required to set out and publish requirements which must be met by registered providers regarding their arrangements in respect to the initial and ongoing conditions. In the context of student and staff welfare, it is envisaged that 'arrangements' would include policies, procedures and support services for student and staff wellbeing and safety. 'Wellbeing' in this context is intended to mean emotional wellbeing and mental health. 'Safety' is intended to mean freedom from harms including harassment, misconduct, violence (including sexual violence), and hate crime.'
4. In 2024, Welsh Ministers published their [statement of strategic priorities](#) for tertiary education research and innovation which include a priority for Medr to create a common framework for mental health and well-being support across tertiary education.
5. In March 2025, Medr published its [Strategic Plan](#) for 2025-30 and in June 2025 its [operational plan for 2025-26 financial year](#).
6. The Strategic Plan includes a founding commitment for Medr to develop a common framework for mental health and well-being by 1 August 2026, affirming equality of opportunity and strengthened by regulatory conditions to support staff and learner welfare.

Further education emotional and mental well-being and health, including mental policy, update and our expectations arising from them

7. In April 2025, the Welsh Government published its [Mental health and wellbeing strategy 2025 to 2035](#). Medr expects all FE providers to take account of the national

mental health and well-being strategy when developing and revising their well-being and health strategies, suicide prevention and self-harm approaches and well-being policies and, where appropriate, include related actions in their 2025/26 funding proposal applications.

8. In April 2025, the Welsh Government published its [Suicide Prevention and Self-harm Strategy for Wales](#). Medr encourages all FE providers to participate in, and contribute to, the Suicide Prevention and Self-Harm Community of Practice.
9. Medr welcomes the FE sector's work to embed a Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (TrACE) organisational approach within its practice. We encourage FE providers to continue to develop their approaches and share learning, where appropriate.

Estyn Thematic Reviews

10. In June 2023, Estyn published its review: Peer on peer sexual harassment among 16-19 year old learners in FE. This report considers the incidence of peer-on-peer sexual harassment in the lives of young people and reviews the culture and processes that help protect and support 16 to 18-year-old learners in further education colleges in Wales. The review makes five recommendations for further education providers.
11. In May 2025, Estyn published its review: Understanding, Supporting and Promoting Positive Behaviour. The report includes research which indicates that learner behaviour impacts on staff well-being and that there was inconsistent availability of well-being and emotional support mechanisms for staff. In addition, the report highlights the mental health challenges facing the sector, resulting from the rising numbers of learners requiring additional support for anxiety and depression. The report includes five recommendations for further education providers.
12. These reports are important and colleges should review their own policies, procedures and activity to ensure they take account of the recommendations.

Emotional and mental well-being, and wider equality and intersectionality considerations

13. We expect providers to take account of intersectional impacts on learner and staff emotional and mental well-being. Therefore, providers should take account of how the mental health and well-being funding contributes to the following Welsh Government equality plans:
 - Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan;
 - LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales;
 - Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence: strategy 2022 to 2026 and its Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence: blueprint high level action plan;
 - Disabled People's Rights Plan: 2025 to 2035 which is currently under consultation.

While the Draft Disabled People's Rights Plan is not yet finalised, we encourage providers to take account of its proposed priorities and principles, where appropriate.

14. FE providers must use the findings and conclusion of the equality impact assessments to inform plans, policies, procedures to demonstrate actions are evidence-based.

Colegau Cymru

15. In 2025/26 Colegau Cymru will be coordinating a mental health network on which Medr will be represented and we encourage all colleges to participate fully.
16. FE providers should consider the Active Well-being Strategy and collaborative work coordinated by Colegau Cymru.

Direct funding to FE institutions 2025/26

17. In 2025/26 £4,050,000 will be allocated directly to FE institutions, for front-line staffing for wellbeing support, capacity building, counselling to support staff and learners, and well-being and mental health activities that will benefit learners and staff across the sector.
18. The £4,050,000 will be allocated based on the size of each institution as a proxy for the number of learners and staff. Full allocations are detailed in **Annex A**.
19. The funding can be used for activities that reflect each institution's individual priorities, based on its own policies and the identified support needs of its learners and staff, informed by their own data and evidence.
20. You are encouraged to use your funding for collaborative activity and can choose to "pool" funding to support collaborative projects.
21. In 2025/26 we expect all FE providers build on work of the Well Aware project which provides a safe space for staff and for trade union wellbeing representatives to promote and support a campaign of sustainable wellbeing. Providers should allocate funding for a minimum of one trade union wellbeing representative per college, working at least one hour per week over a thirty-three week period. *(Please note: from 2025-26 this funding should be drawn from your provider allocation set out in this publication.)*
22. In 2025/26 all FE providers must review their approach to suicide prevention and put in place mitigating action/s.
23. Providers should consider the suicide prevention guidance, most of which has been uploaded to the HE&FE suicide prevention community of practice Padlet. They should also take into account the implications for FE from the National Review of HE Student Suicides and consider actions that address the recommendations relevant to the FE sector.

Eligible activities

24. Funding can be used to:

- Deliver support for wellbeing learners and staff.
- Meet salary costs for staff supporting emotional and mental wellbeing to staff or learners.
- Further develop, implement, and evaluate wellbeing policies and strategies.
- Undertake action research with a view to it being sustained by the college through this funding stream.
- Implement and embed successful projects and initiatives developed by regions.
- Develop new projects based on need and changing priorities.
- Develop, pilot, and evaluate approaches.
- Improve joined-up service delivery and support for learner transition.
- Develop curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment models to support staff and learner mental wellbeing.
- Develop bilingual resources and guidance for college wide benefit, including for work-based and adult learning; this could also include adapting and translating existing resources.
- Activities that tackle racism, sexual misconduct and behaviours that impact on staff and student well-being and mental health.
- Staff training to support emotional and mental well-being.
- Funding can also be used to release staff time to take part in activities, to procure expert services including training and consultancy, and to produce and translate resources.

25. Capital expenditure (e.g., purchase of equipment) is not eligible for funding.

26. In planning your delivery, we expect all institutions to focus on achieving sustainable outcomes and whilst we welcome the development of new initiatives, it is important to build and embed previous initiatives including those developed as part of the National projects, which includes:

- Peer on peer abuse project;
- Ant-racist curriculum (Metaverse) project;
- Active well-being;
- Well-aware project; and
- HE/FE national student mental health partnership project.

27. Applications must include activities designed to support both learner and staff wellbeing.

National further education project/s

28. In 2025/26, Medr will allocate to colleges an additional £350,000 to support FE staff and student emotional and mental well-being initiatives at a national level. Medr, will be engaging with the sector to identify which national project/s will be taken forward.

Additional 2025/26 further and higher education funding

29. In 2025/26 the Welsh Government provided Medr with additional funding to support further and higher education providers. It is Medr's intention to allocate £350,000 to FE colleges via formula funding as detailed in paragraphs 17 and 18, fund the development of a FE specific suicide safer framework and to fund the following national FE and HE projects:
- Continued funding to the national student mental health partnership programme led by Cardiff University and building on pilot work originally funded by HEFCW and Welsh Government. In 2025/26, Medr is providing continuation funding to support the development of a data storage solution, continued rollout of a mental health severity index, exploration and development of information-sharing protocols and an external evaluation of the programme.
 - [Myf.Cymru](#) led by Bangor University to provide Welsh language student well-being resources and practitioners network for further and higher education.

2025/26 funding allocation process

30. Medr requires FE providers to submit a 2025/26 funding plan which must:
- include support for the emotional and mental wellbeing of both learners and staff;
 - meet the eligible criteria listed in paragraph 22;
 - directly fund trade union wellbeing representatives, building on the work of the Well Aware project (1 day a week for 30 weeks);
 - build on and embed previous institutional, collaborative and/or sector-wide work on mental health and wellbeing;
 - demonstrate how impact will be measured and evaluated.
31. A 2025/26 funding plan template is attached as **Annex B**. (See **Table 1** below for submission dates.)

Directly-funded college monitoring

32. Interim and final monitoring and case study templates will be circulated in October 2025.

Timetable

33. **Table 1** below sets out the directly funded college submission and reporting deadlines.

Table 1

Submission and reporting requirements	Submission date
Guidance issued	September 2025
Deadline for submission of funding plan from FE institutions	24 October 2025
Project delivery	1 August 2025 onwards
Grant offer letters issued	November 2025
Submission of interim monitoring report	1 March 2026
1 st payment	April 2026
Submission of final monitoring report	1 July 2026
2 nd payment	July 2026

Further information / responses to

34. For further information contact Ryan Stokes (ryan.stokes@medr.cymru).
35. Responses to be submitted to wa.inclusion@medr.cymru.

Assessing the impact of our policies

36. We have updated our ongoing impact assessment to take account of equality, diversity and inclusion. We also considered the impact of policies on the Welsh language, and Welsh language provision within the tertiary sector in Wales and potential impacts on the goals set out in the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
37. Our impact assessment findings include:
- identifying likely positive impacts on the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. No negative impacts were identified.
 - confirming that the funding supports five of the seven well-being goals and takes account of the five ways of working of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.
 - noting that the funding and monitoring seeks to have a positive impact on the Welsh Language.

FE direct wellbeing and mental health allocations 2025/26

Provider	2025/26 allocation
Adult Learning Wales	£89,874.00
Bridgend College	£221,252.00
Cardiff and Vale College	£471,816.00
Coleg Cambria	£470,552.00
Coleg Gwent	£540,475.00
Coleg Sir Gâr	£253,773.00
Coleg Y Cymoedd	£403,855.00
Gower College Swansea	£329,322.00
Grŵp Llandrillo Menai	£441,421.00
Grŵp NPTC Group	£311,231.00
Pembrokeshire College	£191,483.00
St David's Catholic Sixth Form College	£151,185.00
The College Merthyr Tydfil	£173,761.00
Total	£4,050,000.00

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