

Post-16 Strategic Development Fund – call for bids

Date: 17 October 2025

Reference: Medr/2025/24

To: Heads of higher education institutions
Principals of further education institutions
Directors of Education of Local Authorities
Apprenticeship commissioned contract holders

Respond by: 10 November 2025

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Summary:

This publication invites bids to Medr's Strategic Development Fund in which £5m is available for academic year (AY) 2025/26.

This publication outlines the themes projects should address to be eligible for consideration for funding and describes the processes and timescales by which bids should be submitted and will be assessed, as well as monitoring arrangements for successful bids.

Introduction

1. This publication invites bids to Medr's Strategic Development Fund in which £5m is available for academic year (AY) 2025/26.
2. This publication outlines the themes projects should address to be eligible for consideration for funding and describes the processes and timescales by which bids should be submitted and will be assessed, as well as monitoring arrangements for successful bids.

Background

3. It is unlikely that this funding will be available on a recurrent basis, and we are therefore creating a one-off fund to be distributed via a bid process.
4. The purpose of this funding is to encourage more collaboration within the tertiary education sector. The bidding process will also allow us to gather intelligence from the sector about the type of projects that could be possible with some strategic investment, to inform future planning.
5. In the first instance the fund has been set at £5m.

Fund priorities

6. Bids should be for projects to develop solutions or approaches which address all bullet points below and at least one of Medr's strategic aims:
 - **Collaboration** – projects which illustrate collaboration across the tertiary sector of at least two organisations. Collaboration across different parts of the sector will be weighted heavier in the scoring matrix than between providers of the same type, although, bids reflecting all types of collaboration are welcomed.
 - **New** – project activity must be new, and no part of the project can have already started. However, the partners involved may have worked together previously or be part of an established collaborative arrangement. Bids may also request funding to take forward activity which has already been scoped but may not be used to cover costs already incurred.
 - **Strategic** – the project must be linked to the strategic ambitions of Medr, which are noted below. Projects linked to multiple aims will have a higher weighting than projects which are linked to one aim.

Strategic aim 1: To focus the tertiary education sector around the needs of the learner.

Strategic aim 2: To create a flexible and joined-up tertiary system where everyone can acquire the skills and knowledge they need for a changing economy and society.

Strategic aim 3: To ensure learners receive the highest-quality provision in a tertiary education sector that strives for continuous improvement.

Strategic aim 4: To grow internationally-acclaimed research and inspire innovation throughout the tertiary education sector.

Strategic aim 5: To encourage greater use of the Welsh language, increasing demand for and participation in learning and assessment through the medium of Welsh.

7. The lead partner submitting the bid must be a university, further education college, local authority or apprenticeship provider who is funded directly by Medr. Other organisations working within the tertiary sector in Wales may be included as collaborative partners. Each bid should be for a single, defined project. In order to manage the number of bids submitted, and capacity within the sector to take forward meaningful activity, one organisation may make or be a partner in a maximum of two bids.
8. There is no maximum amount per bid, but in allocating funding we will be mindful of ensuring benefit to all parts of Wales within the fund as a whole, and of ensuring each successful project receives sufficient funding to make an impact. We may award a smaller amount of funding than that requested for an individual project bid in order to achieve this.

Process

9. Applications should be submitted using the template at **Annex A**. Bids should include:
 - Project aims.
 - A rationale which notes how the project addresses the aforementioned themes and the exit strategy of the project. In addition, you will be required to complete an end of project evaluation, see **Annex C**.
 - A summary of project delivery which outlines timescales and notes how the project will engage with learners and trade unions.
 - A consideration of the potential risks of the project.
 - A description of outputs and outcomes.
 - Plans for the long-term sustainability of the impact and outcomes of the project.
 - The total funding required for the project with a summarised analysis of the planned expenditure including the nature of the costs and the timescale for expenditure. All project costs will need to be fully committed no later than 31 July 2026.
 - A summary of how an equality impact assessment, the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards, and the goals, sustainable development principle and ways of working of the Well-being of Future Generations Act have informed the bid.
10. Applications should be submitted by email to InvestmentandPerformance@medr.cymru by 10 November 2025.

11. A panel comprised of Medr Directors will assess the bids and make recommendations to Board for decisions regarding funding. The criteria used to determine which bids to fund will include:
- The extent to which each bid addresses the strategic aims of Medr.
 - The likely sustainability of the project's impact and outcomes.
 - The extent to which stakeholders will be involved in the creation and the implementation of the project.
 - The need to ensure benefits for all parts of Wales from the fund as a whole.
 - Value for money.
12. If we are unable to allocate the full value of the fund in this first round, due either to the quality or volume of bids received, we reserve the right to announce a second round of bidding.

Monitoring

13. Projects will be required to complete an interim project report at the midpoint of the project and a final project report at the end of the project using the templates in **Annex B**.
14. As a condition of funding, it is an expectation that projects share their learnings from the project. From the monitoring noted in **Annex B**, we will identify learning and share across the network. In addition we would welcome project bids to include within the bids how you would expect to disseminate your learning.

Timetable

15. Medr will share a payment schedule once projects have been agreed.

Documentation released	17 October 2025
Deadline for submission of bids	10 November 2025
Outcomes of assessment communicated	December 2025

Further information

16. For further information, contact investmentandperformance@medr.cymru.

Medr

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