

Learner Recovery and Progression Funding

Local Authority Sixth Forms

Programme Specification

This version of the specification is valid
until the sector is informed otherwise.

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1. **Background**

Learner Recovery and Progression Funding has been allocated to enable local authority sixth forms and further education institutions to provide additional learning hours for learners in years 12, 13, and above.

This additional funding has been provided in recognition that learners will have experienced disruption as a result of the COVID pandemic. As such, learners may require further support and guidance to help safeguard their wellbeing, develop their resilience and successfully achieve their qualifications.

A recent report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), [What Shapes Pathways and Transitions?](#), identified that learners in Wales feel less confident about learning independently and the activities that support this, such as organising their time and monitoring their progress, than the OECD average.

The OECD report also provides a policy pointer for Wales to explore creating progression pathways which build on the foundations learners have at the point they enter post-16 education, including filling in gaps and missing knowledge and skills, and creating a pathway towards 'completion'.

Estyn has recently published thematic reports on [Fostering mutual respect – promoting positive behaviours in secondary schools](#) and [Learner Behaviour in Further Education Colleges](#). Both recognise the lasting effects of the pandemic that continue to shape learner behaviour with many young people exhibiting developmental delays, particularly in social skills and resilience. Although the immediate impacts of the pandemic have lessened in the past year, the residual challenges are evident in learners' engagement and their capacity to cope with academic pressures.

The *Fostering mutual respect – promoting positive behaviours in secondary schools* report suggests that there are many reasons why pupils may display challenging behaviour. These include family instability, socio-economic pressures, mental health problems and additional learning needs. Common behaviour issues identified by schools involve persistent low-level disruption, acts of defiance and, to a lesser extent, physical confrontations. External factors such as the influence of social media and community-related issues such as anti-social behaviour have led to more complicated behaviours seen in schools. The report recommends that schools strengthen their behaviour management systems by involving all stakeholders, including feeder schools, parents and carers, governors and local authorities, in developing clear, consistent policy and processes.

The *Learner Behaviour in Further Education Colleges* report recognises that negative behaviours are still prevalent in colleges with lateness, absenteeism, inappropriate use of social media, and vaping being commonly reported issues. More concerning behaviours, although less frequent, include incidents of sexual harassment, substance misuse, and peer violence. While the report recognises that Colleges generally provide professional learning opportunities in behaviour management and trauma-informed practices, it also recognises that they are at varying stages in embedding behaviour management practices.

2. Aim of the Programme

The aim of the funding is to ensure that:

- Learners have the opportunity to review previous learning and develop knowledge in order to meet the demands of their course, focusing on filling gaps in missing knowledge and skills.
- Learners are provided with specific pastoral support, including support with social skills, resilience and confidence building to enable them to better cope with academic pressures, aiding successful learning and progression.
- Learners are provided with opportunities to develop their independent learning skills, including research skills and time management.
- Local Authorities and/ or schools are able to establish effective systems with clear frameworks to promote positive behaviour and implement strategies to help improve behaviour and attendance (**max 10%** of funding without prior written approval).

Although the recommendations in Estyn's [Learner Behaviour in Further Education Colleges](#) report are specific to FE colleges, it is expected that learners in sixth forms will be experiencing similar issues to those in FE colleges and therefore Local Authorities and/ or schools should consider the following when developing any new strategies.

The report recommends that providers:

R1 Collaborate to ensure that those with less well-developed behaviour management approaches can learn from those with more well-established systems and processes, enabling them to improve and refine their own practices.

R2 Ensure that there is clear guidance available to learners about the responsible use of social media and implement targeted strategies to manage social media misuse through teaching and learning, and behaviour management processes.

R4 Increase awareness among learners and staff about the availability of specialist behavioural support teams and services, ensuring clear communication channels and visible signposting throughout the college environment.

R5 Further develop tailored, inclusive support for learners who feel more vulnerable as a result of their protected characteristics, ensuring that behavioural support systems meet their unique needs.

3. Programme Content

Each Local Authority will have its own perspective as to how to best support its learners and this will vary dependent on the programmes being undertaken as well as the learner characteristics. However, Local Authorities/ Schools should¹:

¹ These are Estyn recommendations.

- Have a clear vision for the outcomes they desire from additional spending
- Work with a wide range of partners to develop strategies to support learners' progress and wellbeing
- Regularly track and evaluate the impact of additional spending in order to adjust current plans and inform future planning

The examples below are for information only and set out how the funding may be used.

Examples of permitted expenditure

a) Teaching costs (evidenced through the data collection spreadsheet)

- i. *Additional group based hours including:*
 - extended timetabled hours per week for each subject
 - specific upskilling targeted by subject i.e., Maths for Physics, English language for Sociology
 - blocks of maths/English and/ or Welsh specific teaching
 - additional workshop, laboratory, studio group lessons
- ii. *Additional 1-1 teaching:*
 - specific subject tuition
 - Maths / English tuition
 - specific workshop time for practicals/ hand skills/ lab skills/ studio skills
- iii. *Pastoral support (not linked to subject area delivery):*
 - additional timetabled hours to provide support for resilience, return to learning, goal setting, confidence building, exam preparation, study skills, presentation skills (group or 1-1)
 - online support materials for delivery to small groups
- iv. *Additional study skills activities:*
 - additional study skills delivery to small groups by level
 - enhanced induction activities, summer schools, and half term schools
 - 'more able and talented students' events and enrichment activities
 - Independent learning skills

b) Non-teaching costs (Evidenced through the statement of expenditure)

- i. *Learner support services:*
 - additional Wellbeing Officer to support attendance and early intervention
 - additional LSA support to help learners outside of the classroom
 - ELSA (emotional learning support assistant) support for learners with emotional wellbeing
 - additional learner engagement officers to support learners to access the broader curriculum and extracurricular activities

- counselling for learners with more severe mental health needs
- additional IT support
- employability skills support

ii. *Administration:*

- development of learner 'engagement' materials
- development and implementation of effective systems or strategies to promote positive behaviours

Learners can undertake group-based learning, learning on a 1:1 basis or a mixture of both.

Local authority sixth forms may use Learner Recovery and Progression Funding for the delivery of GCSE Resits in Maths and English or Welsh (First Language).

Local authority sixth forms may use, without prior written approval from Medr, up to 10% of their Learner Recovery and Progression Funding to implement strategies to help improve behaviour and attendance.

4. **Funding, Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and audit will play a role in ensuring that the guidance is being applied consistently and to help assess whether policies, procedures and controls are adequate.

Each school in receipt of the funding is asked to complete a *Funding, Monitoring and Evaluation* template (see Annex B) and return this to their local authority. Each local authority is asked to submit a consolidated local authority level overview to Medr (using the same template) to reflect the overall picture across the local authority.

Local authorities should complete:

- the statement of expenditure **signed by the Director of Education** (Annex A); and
- the Funding, Monitoring and Evaluation template (Annex B)

and return to Medr (investmentandperformance@medr.cymru) by **31 August 2026**

A Microsoft Excel 'Learner Recovery and Progression Funding Data Sheet' will be provided to assist schools with calculating the Teaching costs (set out in 3a). There is no requirement to return this spreadsheet to Medr however, it is important that a copy of these spreadsheets are retained by individual schools for a minimum of 6 years in the event that Medr requests a copy for audit purposes.

Reclaim of funding

Following the return of the funding, monitoring and evaluation template and the certificate of expenditure, any underspend below the **95%** target for this allocation will be reclaimed in full. There will be no option of carrying forward this allocation to future years.

5. Contact Details

For any queries relating to the content of this Programme Specification, please contact Medr at the following mailbox: InvestmentandPerformance@medr.cymru.

6. Annexes

A. Statement of Expenditure – Learner Recovery and Progression Funding



Return to:	InvestmentandPerformance@medr.cymru
Return by:	31 August 202X ²

Name of Local Authority	
Total Expenditure for Learner Recovery and Progression Activity	
Date of Last External Assessment of Internal Audit	
Conducted by	
Is this compliant with PSIAS 1312? Yes/No	

I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief that the information given above is correct and that all expenditure was carried out against the agreed aims and objectives in accordance with the Grant Award Letter and associated Terms and Conditions of Funding.

I also certify that clear accounting records have been maintained at provider level to identify receipt of the funding and its subsequent distribution to the respective area of service; and that funding is covered by the authority's normal financial controls, including periodic review by internal audit.

	Director of Education (or equivalent)
Name	
Signature	
Date	

² This date represents the last day in August that immediately follows the end of the academic year the Statement refers to.

B. Funding, Monitoring and Evaluation Template

Grant title	Learner Recovery and Progression Funding	Period of funding	2025/26 Academic Year
Local Authority		Contact email	

Funding Table

Name of school	Use of funding (e.g., name of activity, additional group hours, additional 1-1 hours, or items/services purchased)	Funding/Expenditure (£)	Direct beneficiaries (e.g., level 2 learners, learners with ALN IDP/statements, teaching staff, learners with low attendance, MAT learners etc.)	Approx. number of unique beneficiaries	Approx. number of beneficiaries as % of total cohort	Rate the impact of the spend on a scale of 1-10 (see guidance notes for descriptors)	Comments (optional)

	Total						

Evaluation

Note for local authorities – when completing the evaluative questions as part of the local authority level overview, please reflect on the work across the local authority as a whole. You do not need to repeat the submissions made by your individual schools but may refer to examples from their submissions if helpful. Where you find that there is strong consensus among schools on specific aspects e.g., what went well or how things could be improved, please highlight this within the relevant sections of the LA level overview submission. Note that there is not a separate template for the LA level overview.

Q1) What were the outcomes of the funding? Please describe what was achieved by the funded activity/spend and the impacts seen. You may wish to highlight the aspects which resulted in the greatest and smallest benefits. You may wish to include a brief description of how you were able to gauge the impacts. If any of this work specifically benefitted vulnerable and/or disadvantaged learners, including those with ALN, please refer to this here.

Please provide a concise written response	
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Q2) Overall, how effective was the funding in achieving the intended outcomes? Please reflect on what was achieved in relation to the original objectives set out in this guidance document. You may wish to describe the motivation behind the work that was undertaken. Were there any unexpected outcomes (either positive or negative)? Did funded activity/spending need to be adjusted in any way during the period? You may wish to comment on the value achieved relative to the volume of funding i.e., value for money.

Please select a rating on the scale of 1-5	1 Not at all	2	3 Moderately	4	5 Very
Please provide a concise written response					

Q3a) What went well in terms of utilising this funding? For questions 3a and 3b, please feel free to report on any aspects you feel are relevant, do not restrict responses to the following suggestions only. If appropriate, you may wish to reflect on the process of learning about, applying for, understanding the purposes of, and receiving the funding. In terms of utilisation, were you able to plan based on robust evidence? Were you able to monitor the effectiveness/track progress of the work and adjust? Were working partners reliable? Were milestones achieved within expected timescales? **You may wish to highlight any particular good practices as a case study.**

Please provide a concise written response	
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Q3b) With the benefit of hindsight, what would you have done differently?

Please provide a concise	
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written response	
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Q3c) How will the work that was funded influence any future activity? Will the funded activity/spend that you undertook result in any permanent improvements? i.e., has the funding resulted in permanent changes or are funded changes temporary with practice/circumstances likely to revert to previous norms once the additional funding is discontinued? (Note that this could be optimal if the work was addressing a temporary issue). Are any aspects of the improvements achieved sustainable without continued additional funding? i.e., will they become business as usual/the new norm?

Has the funded activity/spend resulted in any insight that will inform your normal ways of working or planned improvements?

Please provide a concise written response	
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Q4) How could Medr improve the way that similar funding is used and/or allocated in future? Where relevant, use this space to indicate any practical suggestions you wish to make for how these funding arrangements could have been improved. These could include consideration of payment profiles/schedules, conditions/restrictions on funding, guidance issued, support received, volume and lifetime of the funding, the way that funding was allocated between providers and the degree to which the funding complements existing income/grants, as well as any other relevant considerations. Where possible please explain your rationale and provide supporting evidence/examples.

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Other comments (optional)

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Please note: You may be asked to take part in further evaluation activity commissioned by Medr with regards to this funding.

Name		Email	
Signature		Date	

C. Funding Table – Completion Guidance

Name of school	Please provide full name of sixth form school.
Use of funding	Please provide a concise title or label for the activity/expenditure type. This should be a short description of the funded activity, or the goods/services purchased.
Funding / Expenditure (£)	Please provide a figure to indicate how much funding was used to enable each different activity type. The expenditure for additional group-based hours, additional 1-1 teaching, pastoral support and additional study skills activities should be calculated using the Microsoft Excel data sheet provided by Medr. Additional guidance on using the data sheet is provided with the datasheet in a separate worksheet.
Direct beneficiaries	Please state any distinguishing characteristic of the group who directly benefited (e.g., level 2 learners, learners with ALN IDP/statements, teaching staff members, learners with low attendance, MAT learners etc.)
Approx. number of unique beneficiaries	Depending on the context, it is acceptable to give an estimation here (in such cases, please note this in the comments column). Where possible please count individuals who have/are benefitting directly from the funding rather than those who possibly could have benefitted (i.e., had the offer but did not take it up). In addition, for the purposes of this table, there is no need to include indirect beneficiaries. For example, funding for teachers' professional learning will directly benefit the teachers involved, and indirectly benefit their learners; in this case only the number of teachers need be included in this column. Indirect beneficiaries can be highlighted in the comments column if appropriate.
Approx. number of beneficiaries as % of total cohort	When calculating this percentage, please assume that the 'total cohort' consists of the number of unique 16-19 year-old Medr-funded learners at the provider.
Rate the impact of the spend on a scale of 1 to 10	1 Impact was <u>significantly negative</u>, with the activity or funding having a detrimental effect overall; i.e. making things worse than if the funding had not been spent 2 <u>Slightly negative</u> impact overall 3 Impact was <u>neutral</u> overall i.e., broadly no net benefit was gained as a result of the expenditure 4 <u>Little</u> benefit overall 5 <u>Modest</u> benefit overall

	6 <u>Suitable</u> benefit overall 7 <u>Good</u> benefit overall 8 <u>Very good</u> benefit overall 9 <u>Excellent</u> benefit overall that warrants further analysis and highlighting nationally 10 <u>Exceptional</u> benefit overall that warrants further analysis and highlighting nationally
Comments	Use this column to provide any additional contextual information that supports a better understanding of the information entered in the table. For example, you may wish to explain reasoning behind the impact rating you have selected, add context to explain the intended beneficiaries, or provide further description of how the funding was used.

D. Example Expenditure Table Entries³

Name of school	Use of funding	Funding / Expenditure (£)	Direct beneficiaries	Approx. number of unique beneficiaries	Approx. number of beneficiaries as % of total cohort	Rate the impact of the spend on a scale of 1-10	Comments (optional)
	Subject based group teaching sessions	236,000	All Medr funded learners who are normally taught in subject groups	3800	90%	6	All teaching groups were timetabled one additional hour of teaching with a subject tutor for 30 weeks. Average attendance at these sessions among full-time learners was 71%, hence the lower impact rating. Many learners who regularly attended, rated the sessions as useful.
	Group wellbeing sessions	20,000	Learners identified by teachers, learning support/pastoral tutors or self-referred	800	19%	7	Group sessions were either practitioner led group therapy discussions or mindfulness based. Series of five sessions, not all learners attended all five sessions – attendance averaged 75%. Impact rating based on learner feedback.
	One-to-one teaching/tutoring	70,000	Learners identified by teachers, learning support/pastoral tutors or self-referred	1400	33%	8	Several learners undertook more than one session.

³ The following examples are for illustration only; the figures shown do not reflect actual costs.

	Two part-time councillors were hired to support learner mental health and wellbeing	40,000	Learners with emerging mental health and wellbeing issues.	70	2%	7	1.1 FTE
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Medr

Y Comisiwn Addysg Drydyddol ac Ymchwil
Commission for Tertiary Education and Research

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