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

Medr/2026/36: Annex E

Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund 2026/27

Further education

Version 1

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Introduction

1. This fund is one of the five component funding streams within the Support and Wellbeing Fund.

2. This publication confirms funding allocation of £4,050,000 direct funding to the further education (FE) sector for the 2026/27 academic year to support mental health and wellbeing initiatives for both learners and staff and sets out Medr's expectations for the use and monitoring of FE Mental Health and Wellbeing funding for the 2026/27 academic year.

Funding context

3. The allocation supports providers to deliver effective, evidence-informed mental health and wellbeing provision that meets the needs of their learners.

4. This funding contributes directly to the:
   - Staff and Learner Welfare Regulatory Condition which requires providers to have effective arrangements, including policies, procedures and services, that promote and support staff and learner wellbeing and safety using ongoing self-evaluation to identify strengths, gaps and emerging risks to plan activities;
   - Medr's Common Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework which provides a shared approach to mental health and wellbeing across tertiary education in Wales. It supports the development of a Support Map that helps learners access appropriate support, from early intervention through to crisis response.

5. For 2026/27, Medr will continue to support a number of national projects aligned to mental health and wellbeing priorities. These will be funded separately via grant letter.

6. Medr welcomes the FE sector's work to embed a Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (TrACE) organisational approach within its practice as well as the work on the continued rollout of a mental health severity index. We encourage FE providers to continue to develop their approaches and share learning, where appropriate.

7. Evidence from Estyn reviews on Peer-on-peer sexual harassment among 16-19 year old learners in FE (2023) and Understanding, Supporting and Promoting Positive Behaviour (2025) are important and colleges should review their own policies, procedures and activity to ensure they take account of the recommendations.

8. Welsh Government highlights the continuing importance of strong mental health and wellbeing support across the post-16 sector. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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

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

Funding allocations

12. In 2026/27 £4,050,000 will be allocated directly to FE institutions as outlined in Table 1, 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.

13. Funding allocations have been determined using a formula-based approach, incorporating full-time and part-time learner numbers, together with deprivation and sparsity factors. A protection factor has been applied, ensuring that no provider receives a reduction greater than -2% compared to their 2025/26 allocation.

Table 1: Further Education Mental Health and Wellbeing allocations

Provider	2026/27 allocation
Bridgend College	£216,827
Coleg Sir Gâr	£250,693
Coleg Gwent	£541,070
Grŵp Llandrillo Menai	£449,134
The College Merthyr Tydfil	£170,286
Pembrokeshire College	£187,653
St David's Catholic Sixth Form College	£148,161
Gower College Swansea	£330,936
Cardiff and Vale College	£468,139
Coleg Cambria	£483,850
Coleg y Cymoedd	£404,986
NPTC Group of Colleges	£310,189
Adult Learning Wales	£88,077

Table 1 allocation to be paid in full in April 2027.

14. For FE providers who are registered providers of higher education and are direct receipt Medr higher education funding, a separate allocation is made to support higher education learners as outline in Table 2. For these providers this funding must be used to support HE learners specifically and activity should be reported using the monitoring template outlined in this document.

Table 2: Further Education Institutions that are registered Higher Education providers Mental Health and Wellbeing allocations

Provider	2026/27 allocation
Grŵp Llandrillo Menai	£11,634
Gower College Swansea	£439
Coleg Cambria	£524
NPTC Group of Colleges	£1,587

Notes: Verified HESA student record 2024/25 data. Headcounts - HESA standard registration population, all modes and levels, reduced to a headcount where students have more than one enrolment.

Table 2 allocation to be paid in full in December 2026.

Use of funding

15. Providers must ensure that Mental Health and Wellbeing funding is used to deliver effective, evidence-informed support that meets the needs of their learners and staff.

16. Funding may be used to support a broad range of activity, including (but not limited to):
    - Meet salary costs for staff supporting emotional and mental wellbeing to staff or learners;
    - Expansion of internal wellbeing services which could include delivery of one-to-one and group-based mental health support, counselling and therapeutic interventions (where appropriate) and drop-in services, workshops and psychoeducational programmes;
    - Development of whole-college wellbeing approaches or new developments;
    - Embedding mental health and wellbeing within the curriculum;
    - Initiatives to support resilience, coping strategies and self-management for learners experiencing mild to moderate mental health challenges;
    - Activities aimed at reducing escalation to crisis-level need;
    - Improve joined-up service delivery and support for learner transition;
    - Training for staff to recognise and respond to mental health needs and deliver trauma-informed and inclusive practice;
    - Strengthening referral pathways and partnerships with external services and collaborative partnership working;
    - 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;

- 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.

17. Funding should not be used for capital expenditure (e.g. purchase of equipment) is not eligible for funding.

18. 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 national projects, which include:
    - Active well-being;
    - Anti-racist curriculum (Metaverse) project;
    - HE/FE national student mental health partnership project and development of the mental health severity index;
    - Peer-on-peer abuse (PoPA) project;
    - Safeguarding Project;
    - Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Project.

    For further information on projects contact wa.inclusion@medr.cymru.

19. Providers must ensure engagement with their learners, in line with expectations of the Learner Engagement Code, to inform the development, review and delivery of arrangements to promote and support learner wellbeing.

20. In line with the expectations of the Staff and Learner Welfare Regulatory Condition, providers should engage with staff representatives, including recognised trade unions, where appropriate, as part of their arrangements to promote and support staff wellbeing.

21. We expect providers in direct receipt of Medr funding to manage and spend in full in-year their 2026/27 allocations.

22. Medr reserves the right to clawback funding where it is not used in line with the purpose and conditions set out in this guidance. This includes, but is not limited to, unspent funding identified through monitoring or ineligible expenditure.

Monitoring and reporting

23. Providers are not required to submit a standalone action plan for Mental Health and Wellbeing funding. Medr will instead draw on the two-year welfare action (required under the Staff and Learner Welfare Regulatory Condition) and the Support and Wellbeing Fund plan to understand providers' activity delivery intentions and strategic priorities.

24. Providers are expected to maintain ongoing dialogue with Medr throughout the academic year. This approach supports timely intervention and ongoing development across the sector. This could include:
    - Raising emerging issues or delivery challenges as they arise;
    - Providing updates through meetings, networks and engagement activity;
    - Sharing learning and practice.

25. Providers are required to submit an end-of-year monitoring return, the template to be shared in Spring 2027. This should provide a clear, evidence-informed account of how funding has been used and the difference it has made and will include, as a minimum:
    - a summary of the provider's overall approach to using the funding, and how funding was deployed in line with strategic priorities and welfare action planning;
    - an overview of key activities delivered with evidence of reach and delivery, such as the numbers of learners and staff engaged, the type and volume of activity delivered, and the nature of support provided;
    - information on how activity aligns with progress towards embedding the Common Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework and partnership working through funded projects;
    - a financial summary and any variance.

26. The completed monitoring return must be submitted by 24 September 2027.

27. Medr will review all monitoring returns to ensure that funding has been used in line with the purpose and expectations set out in this guidance.

28. Medr will also use information from monitoring returns to identify and share emerging practice, innovation and approaches across the sector. This will support collective learning and contribute to the ongoing development and improvement of mental health and wellbeing provision.

29. Please contact the Widening Access and Inclusion Team (wa.inclusion@medr.cymru) with any queries or for further information.

Assessing the impact of our policies

30. 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.

31. 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.

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