

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, focussing 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 (a **max 10%** of the original allocation for Learner Progression and Recovery 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:

- 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

¹ These are Estyn recommendations.

- 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 original budget allocation of the 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 (InvestmentandMonitoring@medr.cymru) by **31 August 2027**.

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 InvestmentandMonitoring@medr.cymru.

6. Annexes

A. Statement of Expenditure – Learner Recovery and Progression Funding



Return to:	InvestmentandMonitoring@medr.cymru
Return by:	31 August 2027

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 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	

B. Funding, Monitoring and Evaluation Template

This should be completed and submitted on the document provided.

Please refer to the guidance notes below when completing this information.

Grant Title	Learner Recovery and Progression Funding	Period of Funding	2026/27 Academic Year
Local Authority		Contact Email	

Funding Table

Name of school	Use of funding Please select from the drop-down box and provide further information in the Comments box. If the group or 1-1 teaching is for Pastoral Support, please include narrative in the comments box to reflect this	Cost (£)	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
	Choose an item.					
	Choose an item.					
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	Choose an item.					
	Choose an item.					
	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) Overall, how effective was the funding in achieving the intended outcomes?

Please reflect on what was achieved in relation to the original objectives. 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					

Q2a) Tell us how the activities delivered via Learner Recovery and Progression Funding have benefited learners with support needs.

Tell us how the activities delivered via Learner Recovery and Progression Funding have benefited learners with ALN.

A learner with additional learning needs (ALN) is one who has a learning difficulty or disability that calls for additional learning provision (ALP) beyond that normally available for learners of the same age, with these needs and the required provision formally identified and recorded in an Individual Development Plan (IDP). See for more information - [The additional learning needs code | GOV.WALES](#)

Tell us how the activities delivered via Learner Recovery and Progression Funding have benefited learners with other support needs

Learner with support needs - A learner with support needs (who does not meet the threshold for ALN) is one who experiences barriers to learning but whose needs can be met through enabling support or reasonable adjustments within provision generally available, without requiring an IDP. For example, this may include short-term intervention support, differentiated teaching and pastoral or wellbeing support.

Number of learners with ALN engaged with under Learner Recovery and Progression Funding

Number of learners with other support needs engaged with under Learner Recovery and Progression Funding

Approximately, what percentage of your funding was used to work with learners with ALN?

%

Approximately, what percentage of your funding was used to work with learners with other support needs?

%

How would you rate the positive impact to those learners with ALN? Please also provide a written response to explain your rating.

Please select a rating on the scale of 1-5	1 No impact	2	3 Moderate	4	5 Positive impact
Please provide a concise written response					

How would you rate the positive impact to those learners with other support needs? Please also provide a written response to explain your rating.

Please select a rating on the scale of 1-5	1 No impact	2	3 Moderate	4	5 Positive impact
Please provide a concise written response					

Q2b) Tell us how the activities delivered via Learner Recovery and Progression Funding have benefited learners who are in receipt of free school meals, low attenders or at risk of becoming NEET.

Number of these learners engaged with under Learner Recovery and Progression Funding

%

Approximately, what percentage of your funding was used to work with these learners?

How would you rate the positive impact to these learners? Please also provide a written response to explain your rating.

Please select a rating on the scale of 1-5	1 No impact	2	3 Moderate	4	5 Positive impact
Please provide a concise written response					

Q3) Rate how you think the work that was funded will have a positive impact on any future activity.

You might want to consider if 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? Are any aspects of the improvements achieved sustainable without continued additional funding? i.e., will they become business as usual/the new norm?

Please select a rating on the scale of 1-5	1 No impact	2	3 Moderate	4	5 Positive impact
Please provide a concise written response					

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Q4) Please include any other comment that you feel appropriate (optional)

C. Funding Table – Completion Guidance

Name of school	Please provide full name of sixth form school.
Use of funding	Please use the drop- down box to select the type of activity. If none of these apply, please select 'other'. Please include any specific information in the Comments box.
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. Please enter in £ format.
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. Please enter a number format.
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. Please ensure that this is entered in a % format.
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.

D. Learner Recovery and Progression Funding Case Study Template – Optional*

*The submission of case studies is optional unless specifically requested by Medr officials. Note that where useful and convenient, you may repeat text already included as part of the monitoring and evaluation questions within your case study submissions. Case study submissions may be shared with wider stakeholders.

Name of Local Authority:
Background information on the setting/provider: This section is intended to give a concise, factual description of the provider and the community it serves. You may want to include some or all of the following: • Numbers of staff/learners, age range of learners. Number of learners studying part-time/full-time. Number of A-level/vocational courses. • Percentage of enrolments at A-Level/L3 Vocational/Level 2/Level 1. • Subject areas with the largest proportion of provision. • Information on the schools/area where learners are recruited from including socio-economic factors. • Information on learners' backgrounds including disability, socio-economic and ethnic factors as appropriate.
Context and background to strategy/activity: This section explains how the need and intended beneficiaries were identified, the nature of the need and the planning activity undertaken • Main reasons for implementation of strategy/activity • Objectives • Cost • Groups of learners targeted

Description of nature of strategy or activity identified: This section provides detail of the approach(es) taken and the nature of the work. • A detailed description of the strategy/activity including details of any collaboration with other providers or organisations. • Photos/pictures/tables can be included (subject to necessary permissions)
Impact of strategy/activity: This section focusses on the difference made to the intended beneficiaries. It may include quotations from learners, staff members and other relevant stakeholders (suitably anonymised and/or with permissions secured). This could include impact on; • Learning • Learners attendance • Learners behaviour • Learners confidence and resilience • Independent learning skills, including time management and research.
Additional comments: • How have you celebrated/shared this best practice? • How sustainable is this activity/strategy? • What are the lessons learned and what can be taken forward into the future?

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Signature: An authorised signatory of the School / Local Authority	
Name:	
Job title:	
Date:	

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Commission for Tertiary Education and Research

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