

## Wellbeing and health funding 2024/25 and monitoring requirements

**Date:** 20 November 2024

**Reference:** Medr/2024/07

**To:** **Heads of higher education institutions in Wales**  
**Principals of directly-funded further education institutions in Wales**

**Respond by:** **Friday 31 January 2025**  
**Friday 26 September 2025**

**More information:**

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On 1 August 2024, Medr took over the full range of duties from the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), and a range of functions from the Welsh Government relating to tertiary education.

This publication builds on guidance previously issued by HEFCW and provides Medr guidance and monitoring templates for the allocation of £2m funding to universities to implement well-being and health strategies for 2024/25 (universities only) and for the allocation of an additional £2m in 2024/25 to well-being and health, including additional financial support for higher education students (universities and directly funded colleges).



## Introduction

1. This publication provides Medr guidance and monitoring templates for the allocation of £2m funding to universities to implement well-being and health strategies for 2024/25 (universities only) and for the allocation of an additional £2m in 2024/25 to well-being and health, including additional financial support for higher education students (universities and directly funded colleges).
2. This publication builds on guidance previously issued by HEFCW, in support of Medr's aim to ensure a smooth transition for providers and learners in the first instance, as Medr takes on its new duties and responsibilities. Until the implementation of the new registration system for higher education providers, Medr has inherited HEFCW's powers for funding and regulation of higher education.

## Medr's duties and responsibilities

3. Medr, the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research, became operational on 1 August 2024 after the dissolution of the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) on 31 July 2024.
4. 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.*"
5. In 2024, Welsh Ministers published their [statement of strategic priorities](#) for tertiary education and research and innovation that include a priority for Medr to create a common framework for mental health and well-being support across tertiary education.
6. Medr is required to prepare a strategic plan setting out how it will address the priorities and how it will discharge the strategic duties given to it under the [Tertiary Education and Research \(Wales\) Act 2022](#).
7. In September 2024, Medr published its [Strategic Plan consultation](#). The final version of the plan must be submitted to the Welsh Ministers for approval by 15 December 2024. The Commission is under a duty to publish its approved plan and take all reasonable steps to implement it.

8. The draft 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.
9. When developing and revising their well-being and health strategies, suicide safer approaches and well-being policies, we expect universities to take account of the following publications, policy and funding developments and, where appropriate, include related-actions in their 2024/25 implementation plans.

### **University well-being and health, including mental health, policy, funding and research update and our expectations arising from them**

10. In February 2024, the Welsh Government consulted in its draft [mental health and well-being strategy](#).
11. In July 2024, Universities UK published its report [Enabling Student Health and Success](#): Tackling supply and demand for drugs and improving harm reduction.
12. In 2024/25 Medr continues to fund:
  - a. the student mental health service model development project. Medr are providing in 2024/25 additional funding to support the development of a data storage solution, continued rollout of the severity index and exploration and development of information sharing protocols.
  - b. [Myf Cymru](#) to provide Welsh language student well-being resources and practitioners network.
  - c. the national [Student Space programme](#) with online student well-being materials available in Welsh.

### **Well-being and health, including mental health, wider equality and intersectionality considerations**

13. The Welsh Parliament Health and Social Care Committee published its [Connecting the dots: tackling mental health inequalities in Wales](#) report with 27 recommendations. In February 2023 the Welsh Government published its [response](#) to the report.
14. Universities should consider the report recommendations when developing their well-being and health/mental health approaches including:
  - i. [Trauma-informed Practice Framework](#) that will be a key component in the Welsh Government's drive to make Wales a trauma-informed nation.
  - ii. The Welsh Government's [national framework for social prescribing](#).
15. In March 2023, HEFCW published circular [W23/06HE: Safe and inclusive higher education: supporting equality and diversity education](#). The circular set out specific actions Welsh Government and/or HEFCW expected universities and regulated colleges to take and drew attention to:
  - The Welsh Government's [LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales](#);

- The Welsh Government's [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](#);
  - The Welsh Government's [Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan](#);
  - HEFCW's race, access and success policy developments; and
  - HEFCW's Well-being and health, including mental health policy developments.
16. During 2023/24, TASO published the following reports:
- [What works to tackle mental health inequalities in higher education](#)
  - [Student wellbeing over time: analysing Student Academic Experience Survey data for undergraduates and taught postgraduates](#)
  - [Student mental health in 2023: Who is struggling and how the situation is changing](#).
17. The TASO Student well-being over time report found evidence to suggest that the following groups of students are at greater risk of poor mental health:
- Students from households with low economic status
  - Students from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic backgrounds
  - Mature students
  - Students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning or have other sexual identities (LGBTQ+) and
  - Care-experienced students.
18. In July 2024, the Equality and Human Right Commission (EHRC) published an [advice note for the higher education sector](#) arising from the legal case of University of Bristol vs Abrahart. Universities must take account of the information provided in the note, particularly in relation to what the EHRC now considers compliance with the law looks like based on the court findings.
19. In September 2024, the Student Space programme published online resources on [navigating university life as a Black student](#). The content was co-created by experts with lived experience and a steering group of Black students.
20. When developing and revising their well-being and health strategies, suicide safer approaches and well-being policies, universities must consider equality and intersectionality, conduct equality impact assessments and where appropriate include related actions in their 2024/25 implementation plans.

### **Well-being and health funding strategies and implementation plan funding 2023/24 (£2m, universities only)**

21. We expect implementation plans in 2024/25 to continue to take a 'whole university approach', supporting and addressing the needs of staff and students and taking account of all aspects of university life, including living and working life. Where universities choose to fund well-being and health, including mental health activity and services from non-Medr funding, please include these activities and services and the sources of funding in the plans.

22. Universities should also consider supporting the transition, progression and success of applicants and students, as this relates to well-being and health, including mental health, working in partnership with schools, colleges and other external partners.
23. 2024/25 implementation plans should account for the university's 2024/25 funding allocations (£2m strategy funding and £2m hardship funding) and any additional resources provided from non-Medr sources and include:
  - i. well-being and health, including mental health, strategy objectives/intentions being prioritised in 2024/25;
  - ii. activities, services, training, and resources, against the objectives/intentions, including dates by when new or continuing activities, services and resources will be established and/or completed;
  - iii. activities, services, training and resources provided bilingually and/or separately in Welsh;
  - iv. activities, services, training, and resources including students at franchise/partner organisations;
  - v. activities, services, training, and resources for postgraduate students;
  - vi. activities, services, training, and resources for international students;
  - vii. activities, services, training and resources to secure the well-being and health of staff and students, including health affected by harassment, hate and sexual misconduct and violence, regardless of identity;
  - viii. activities, services, training and resources provided specifically to, or providing information about supporting, staff and students with protected characteristics;
  - ix. activities, services, training and resources that take account of the Universities UK (UUK) Stepchange: mentally healthy universities self-assessment findings and recommendations;
  - x. clearly identifiable actions to address gaps, priorities or recommendations identified as a result of the university's review using the UUK self-assessment tool;
  - xi. confirmation of how progress against the implementation plan will be monitored and measured;
  - xii. an explanation of how a representative range of students, staff and interested parties have been involved in developing the plan;
  - xiii. an explanation of how impact assessment findings have informed the objectives/intentions, activities and services to be delivered;
  - xiv. an explanation of how the implementation plan's monitoring and review will be reported to and through university governance structures.
24. In addition, we expect implementation plans to take account of equality and intersectionality through the use of equality impact assessments, including but not limited to the following groups of students:
  - Disabled students and students with long-term health conditions
  - International students
  - LGBTQ+ students
  - Postgraduate students
  - Students from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic backgrounds
  - Students from a lower socio-economic background
  - Students with caring responsibilities / returning after a break in education
  - Care-experienced students.

## **Additional well-being and health funding to support student hardship 2024/25 (£2m, universities and further education providers of higher education)**

25. We strongly encourage universities and colleges, working with their Students' Unions or equivalent body, to build on measures to address the ongoing cost of living increases impacting on well-being and health, including mental and physical health. All students, including postgraduate and international students should be considered for support, subject to need.
26. Universities and colleges must ensure that student financial support is informed by equality impact assessments.
27. Financial support may include:
  - i. increasing and/or extending the availability of, and criteria for, 'hardship' or other financial support to students most in need;
  - ii. ensuring vulnerable potential applicants and students are supported with information, advice and funding, as appropriate, including those with care-experience backgrounds, carers, those experiencing violence, domestic abuse, sexual violence, and asylum seekers and refugees;
  - iii. ensuring that potential applicants and students with protected characteristics, including those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, are aware of all financial support, information and advice available and relevant to them;
  - iv. ensuring all financial information, advice and services are available and accessible in Welsh;
  - v. involving students with experience of financial challenges in developing and reviewing financial support services;
  - vi. providing inclusive activities, resources, services and/or products at low or no-cost to support potential applicants and students experiencing financial pressures, including where this may impact on well-being, health, mental health, a sense of belonging or loneliness, the student experience, retention and success.
28. While 'one-off' support and activities may primarily benefit current students, some provision could support well-being, health and mental health provision in the longer-term. Longer-term sustainability might include providing web-based information and resources.

### **Universities should use this funding to:**

- provide financial support to higher education students, by extending funding or other resources for those experiencing financial pressures, which are impacting on their student experience, well-being, health, retention and success;
- review, and promote on websites, baseline services to support applicants' and students' well-being and health, including mental health;
- work with unions to support the mental health and well-being of staff, including as they provide effective support to students as part of a whole-institution approach to well-being and health;
- promote and provide accessible staff training on mental health; and
- provide mental health training in Welsh for staff and students.

### **Directly-funded colleges should use this funding to:**

- enhance and promote money advice and information services for higher education students.
- provide financial support to higher education students by extending hardship funding or other resources to support those experiencing financial pressures.
- support potential applicants and applicants transitioning into higher education provision, as well as existing students.
- measures to help address the cost of living increases on higher education students of all ages and those transitioning into higher education.
- extend, enhance or subsidise period dignity and personal hygiene products and/or clothes washing services for students.
- working collaboratively with Students' Unions or the equivalent to ensure support provided meets the needs of higher education students; and
- involve students with experience of financial challenges in reviewing the support provided.

## **University and directly funded college funding allocations**

### **Universities**

29. The 2024/25 Well-being and health, including mental health, strategy implementation plan funding will be allocated in one payment, on the basis of student headcounts, as set out in **Annex A**.
30. The 2024/25 additional well-being and health funding to support student hardship funding will be allocated in one payment, on the basis of student headcounts, as set out in **Annex B**.
31. In 2024/25 we will allocate both **Annex A** and **Annex B** funding in **one tranche** payment in **December 2024** subject to:
  - i. submission of 2023/24 well-being and health including mental health monitoring reports including confirmation of the satisfactory use of 2023/24 funding.
32. Submission of 2024/25 Well-being and health, including mental health, implementation plans (see template provided at **Annex C and Appendix C1**). **The submission date for this reporting is Friday 31 January 2025.**
33. We expect universities to manage and spend in full in-year their 2024/25 allocations.
34. We will reclaim any uncommitted underspend at the end of 2024/25, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and we will reclaim/withhold future funding where there is unsatisfactory or limited reporting against our monitoring requirements.

## Directly-funded colleges

35. The 2024/25 additional well-being and health funding to support student hardship funding will be allocated in one payment, on the basis of student headcounts, as set out in **Annex B**.
36. In 2024/25 we will allocate **Annex B** funding in **one tranche** payment in **December 2024** subject to:
  - submission of 2023/24 additional well-being and health funding to support student hardship health monitoring reports including confirmation of the satisfactory use of 2023/24 funding.
37. 2024/25 Additional well-being and health funding to support student hardship implementation plan (see template provided at **Annex D**). **The submission date for this reporting is Friday 31 of January 2025.**
38. We expect directly funded colleges to manage and spend in full in-year their 2024/25 allocations.
39. We will reclaim any uncommitted underspend at the end of 2024/25, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and we will reclaim/withhold future funding where there is unsatisfactory or limited reporting against our monitoring requirements.

## University and directly funded college monitoring requirements

40. We will monitor expenditure and the use of this funding. Our monitoring may be used to inform our reporting to the Welsh Government or to share interesting practice.

## University monitoring

41. We are combining the monitoring of the £2m annual strategy implementation funding with monitoring of the additional £2m for hardship. The universities' combined monitoring template for both allocations is provided in **Annex E** and **Appendix E1** of this publication. **(See timetable below for submission dates.)**
42. Combined monitoring is intended to ease the burden of reporting against well-being and health allocations and it recognises that the universities' implementation plans will drive the planning and use of the funding in the round.

## Directly-funded college monitoring

43. For colleges a monitoring and case study template is attached as **Annex F** and **Appendix F1**. **(See timetable below for submission dates.)**



## Timetable

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

**Table 1**

<b>Submission and reporting requirements</b>	<b>Submission date</b>
Universities completed 2024/25 Well-being and health, including mental health, implementation plan	<b>Friday 31 January 2025</b>
Directly funded colleges completed 2024/25 additional well-being and health funding to support student hardship implementation plan	<b>Friday 31 January 2025</b>
Universities and directly funded colleges completed 2024/25 monitoring report template	<b>Friday 26 September 2025</b>

### Further information / responses to

45. For further information contact Ryan Stokes ([ryan.stokes@medr.cymru](mailto:ryan.stokes@medr.cymru)).

46. Responses to be submitted to Ryan Stokes ([ryan.stokes@medr.cymru](mailto:ryan.stokes@medr.cymru)).

### Assessing the impact of our policies

47. 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 HE sector in Wales and potential impacts towards the goals set out in the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 including our Well-Being Objectives.

48. 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.
- noting that the funding guidance and monitoring seeks to have a positive impact on the Welsh Language.

## Wellbeing and health, including mental health, strategy implementation allocations 2024/25

	2024/25 allocation £
University of South Wales*	318,062
Aberystwyth University	107,179
Bangor University	144,981
Cardiff University	437,896
University of Wales Trinity Saint David	223,014
Swansea University	288,057
Cardiff Metropolitan University	180,891
Wrexham University	102,576
The Open University in Wales	197,343
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,000,000</b>

\*The University of South Wales includes an allocation for the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and its Students' Union.

Verified HESA student record 2022/23 data

Headcounts - HESA standard registration population, all modes and levels, reduced to a headcount where students have more than one enrolment

**Wellbeing and health, additional student hardship funding 2024/25**

<b>Provider</b>	<b>2024/25 allocation £</b>
University of South Wales*	315,730
Aberystwyth University	106,393
Bangor University	143,918
Cardiff University	434,685
University of Wales Trinity Saint David	221,379
Swansea University	285,945
Cardiff Metropolitan University	179,565
Wrexham University	101,824
The Open University in Wales	195,896
Grŵp Llandrillo Menai	11,642
Grŵp Colegau NPTC Group of Colleges	2,491
Gower College Swansea	533
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,000,000</b>

\*The University of South Wales includes an allocation for the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and its Students' Union.

**Notes**

HESA student record 2022/23 – verified data

HESA standard registration population reduced to a headcount

All modes and levels of study

All student domiciles

# Medr

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

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