

Cylchlythyr | Circular

Well-being and health: improving safeguarding policies and practices and promoting period dignity in HE

Date: 02 March 2020
Reference: W20/08HE
To: Heads of universities in Wales
Response by: 23 March 2020
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This circular provides well-being and health allocations to improve safeguarding policies and practices and to promote period dignity initiatives in higher education.

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Introduction

1. This circular provides well-being and health allocations to improve safeguarding policies and practices and to promote period dignity initiatives in higher education.
2. Welsh Government made available to HEFCW an additional funding allocation of £1.5m in financial (FY) 2019-20, as set out in the [revised remit letter issued December 2019 for financial year \(FY\) 2019-20](#). We consulted on the allocation of this funding in circular [W19/45HE](#).
3. Safeguarding practices underpin many aspects of supporting well-being and health, including mental health. This funding is to enable universities to improve their policies and practice in safeguarding for staff and students.
4. Promoting period dignity to students is the other priority for this funding. This allocation will enable institutions to promote period dignity initiatives.
5. We invite universities in Wales, including the Open University in Wales, to submit plans to us to account for their investment in these two well-being and health priority areas. The total budget is £1.5m and university allocations are set out in **Annex A**.

Background

6. In HEFCW's 2019-20 annual remit letter we are asked to continue to prioritise safeguarding and well-being activity for students and staff.
7. In 2019, HEFCW published its [Well-being and Health in Higher Education Policy Statement](#). A key theme of the Statement is; 'to promote continuous improvement and effective practice in well-being and health in higher education' and we commit: 'to work with higher education providers to strengthen approaches to enhancing safeguarding practices and resilience'. The approaches must cover both staff and students.
8. Safeguarding underpins many aspects of securing well-being and health for staff and students which are priorities for Welsh Government and HEFCW including, but not limited to:
 - tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence;
 - tackling identity-based violence and harassment;
 - supporting mental health and suicide-safer approaches;
 - supporting refugees and asylum seekers; and
 - supporting care experienced students and prospective students;
9. In 2019, the [National Union of Students Wales \(NUS Wales\) launched a campaign to end period poverty](#) (now period dignity) and asking the Welsh Government to invest in period dignity.

10. We recognise the importance of ensuring period dignity for well-being and health, including mental health, and the student experience. Therefore, we expect universities to promote their period dignity initiatives.
11. Safeguarding policies should be reviewed and, where appropriate, revised for implementation at the start of academic year 2020/21. The promotion of period dignity support should be in place by at least the start of academic year 2020/21 though institutions may choose to improve promotion in 2019/20.

Funding allocation

12. We consulted on the use of this allocation ([circular W19/45HE](#)). We received nine responses to the circular¹ and, having taken account of consultation responses, we propose to allocate funding for improving safeguarding and period dignity based on the headcount number of students for all modes and levels of study at the provider as set out in **Annex A**.
13. We intend to make allocations by 31 March 2020, subject to the receipt of Expenditure Plans. HEFCW reserves the right to clawback funding if the Expenditure Plans or future reporting is unsatisfactory.

Reporting

14. Universities will be expected report to HEFCW on the deliverables and expenditure at the end of the funding period December 2020.
15. We will work with universities to share effective practice following the reporting process.

Submission of Expenditure Plans for universities to improve their policies and practice in safeguarding for staff and students and to promote period dignity initiatives

16. Expenditure Plans must include an investment breakdown and clearly defined deliverables as set out in **Annex B**.
17. Expenditure Plans must be submitted to HEFCW by 23 March 2020.

¹ The following institutions responded to the consultation circular: University of South Wales, Aberystwyth University, Bangor University, Cardiff University, Swansea University, Cardiff Metropolitan University, Wrexham Glyndŵr University, The Open University in Wales and Grŵp Llandrillo Menai.

Developing satisfactory Expenditure Plans

18. Satisfactory Expenditure Plans should include the points set out in **Annex B** and should consider, where relevant, the UK and Welsh legislation, policies and reports outlined in **Annex C**.
19. In submitting Expenditure Plans the university should confirm the following:
 - the Expenditure Plan has been equality impact assessed;
 - the Expenditure Plan complies with the Welsh Language Standards (2018);
 - the Expenditure Plan takes account of the Well-being of Future Generations Act goals and ways of working; and
 - the Expenditure Plan aligns with university's approach to [#Step Change](#) and [Suicide Safer Universities](#).

Timetable

HEFCW circular published	2 March 2020
University Expenditure Plans submitted by:	23 March 2020
HEFCW to allocate funding <i>subject to the receipt of Expenditure Plans</i>	31 March 2020
Funding period:	April 2020- December 2020
HEFCW to disseminate promising practice following completion of funding.	Following analysis of institutional reporting

Further information / responses to

20. For further information, contact Ryan Stokes (tel 029 2085 9736; email ryan.stokes@hefcw.ac.uk).

Assessing the impact of our policies

21. We have carried out an impact assessment to help safeguard against discrimination and promote equality. 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. Contact equality@hefcw.ac.uk for more information about impact assessments. Additionally, impact assessment questions formed part of the funding consultation circular W19/45HE.

Funding allocations to support safeguarding and promote period dignity in HE

Total allocation **£1,500,000**

Institution	£
University of South Wales	259,097
Aberystwyth University	88,598
Bangor University	118,882
Cardiff University	385,774
University of Wales Trinity Saint David	128,463
Swansea University	240,005
Cardiff Metropolitan University	123,503
Wrexham Glyndŵr University	56,109
The Open University in Wales	99,568
Total	1,500,000

Source:
HESA student record 2018/19