

# Cylchlythyr | Circular

## Well-being and health: well-being and health implementation plan funding 2020/21

**Date:** 27 October 2020  
**Reference:** W20/35HE  
**To:** Heads of higher education institutions in Wales  
**Response by:** No response required  
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This circular provides an additional allocation to universities to implement well-being and health strategies in 2020/21.

If you require this document in an alternative accessible format, please email [info@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:info@hefcw.ac.uk).



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## Introduction

1. This circular provides an additional allocation to universities to implement well-being and health strategies in 2020/21.
2. Circular [W20/29HE](#) consulted on this allocation. Consultation responses have been taken into account in finalising this circular. A summary of responses is provided in **Annex A**.
3. Circular W20/29HE indicated that the total allocation was £1.8m. Subsequently, HEFCW's additional remit letter (October 2020) allocated an additional £10m to support well-being and health and student hardship. HEFCW circular [W20/32HE](#) confirmed that, of the £10m, £900k would be allocated to support well-being and health strategy implementation plans. Therefore, £2.7m is being allocated through this circular.
4. **Annex B** provides the universities' allocations.

## Background

5. In addition to inviting well-being and health funded projects, circular [W19/11HE](#) required universities to develop well-being and health strategies and to adopt the frameworks of [#stepchange](#)<sup>1</sup> and [Suicide-safer Universities](#) developed by Universities UK.
6. Ongoing lessons learned in a Covid-19 operating context will impact on the delivery of the above strategies and plans. This learning will require universities to reconsider and revise actions related to well-being and health, including mental health, and support for all staff and students. This additional funding is provided to support this.
7. Most strategies and plans were developed and submitted to us in late 2019/20. We recognise that additional resource is necessary to enable universities to adapt to new ways of working and innovative delivery to meet their staff and student support objectives and key milestones in the current working and learning environment.
8. Universities UK revised the 2018 [#stepchange](#) framework and published [Stepchange: mentally healthy universities](#) in May 2020. Universities should take account of these changes in revising their strategies and plans.
9. To support students in higher education we are co-funding, with the Office for Students, [Student Space](#) managed by [Student Minds](#). Student Space is a large-scale guidance project providing additional, short-term, well-being and health resources alongside universities' own student support services. All universities in Wales should promote links to Student Space.

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<sup>1</sup> The former [#stepchange](#) publication is no longer available following its revision and republication as *Step change: mentally health universities*. The link is provided later in this section of the circular.

## Well-being and health funding strategies and implementation plans

10. We are allocating £2.7m to support universities' review and implementation of their well-being and health strategies in 2020/21. We received high-level strategies from universities.
11. This increased implementation allocation recognises that the first year of new strategy implementation requires additional resources if universities' commitments and intended pace of change are to be maintained in the Covid-19 operating context.
12. Universities should have in place already plans to deliver their well-being and health strategies for staff and students. However, given the likely scale of increased demand for these services in 2020/21, this additional funding will support a review of strategies and plans as well as the implementation of plans, to ensure they remain fit for purpose, appropriately ambitious and agile in responding to the needs of staff and students.
13. We will send universities specific and generic feedback on their well-being and health strategies to inform their further development. The generic feedback applies to most strategies. As some plans submitted to us were more developed than others and clearer in their ambition and extent of their support for staff and students, we will provide university-specific feedback. Our feedback on the well-being and health strategies should inform universities' review of strategies and delivery of the implementation plans in the context of this additional allocation in 2020/21.
14. We would expect implementation plans to take a 'whole university approach' by supporting the needs of staff and students and include:
  - i. a short-time timeframe for reviewing the well-being and health strategy and current implementation plan to ensure they remain fit for purpose;
  - ii. details of how and by when students and a range of staff will be involved in reviewing the strategy, informing revisions to the implementation plan and ongoing monitoring of progress;
  - iii. confirmation that the revised strategy and implementation plan will be subject to ongoing equality impact assessment and how the key findings of the assessment will be addressed;
  - iv. a description of how the implementation plan will take account of the [Well-being of Future Generations Act's goals and ways of working](#);
  - v. a focus on both staff and students and a clear commitment to a 'whole university approach';
  - vi. details of activities and services to deliver the well-being and health strategy objectives/intentions in 2020/21;
  - vii. details of activities and services provided bilingually or in Welsh;

- viii. details of activities and services to safeguard the well-being and health of staff and students, including when teaching and learning online;
  - ix. details of activities and services that take account of guidance provided in *Stepchange: mentally healthy universities* and *Suicide-safer Universities* (see paragraph 15 below);
  - x. dates by when activities and services will be established and completed for 2020/21;
  - xi. confirmation of how progress against the implementation plan will be monitored, including how students and a representative range of staff will be involved; and
  - xii. how the implementation plan will be reported to and through university governance structures.
15. Where universities have separate plans for staff and students we expect them to share with us both strategies and both implementation plans. If they are submitting the HEFCW template they should complete the self-assessment tool once and submit one template indicating clearly which actions relate to staff and which to students. This will enable them to demonstrate their whole university approach to HEFCW and through their own governance structures.
16. In submitting well-being and health funded proposals (see circular [W19/11HE](#)), all universities committed to adopt, from 2019/20, *Step change: mentally healthy universities* and *Suicide-safer Universities* (Stepchange) approaches, as set out the respective UUK documents. The Stepchange *framework* includes [a self-assessment tool](#) to support improvement. We expect universities to use the questions in the self-assessment tool to inform their planning. We have included a link to the self-assessment tool in the implementation plan template. We will ask universities to complete the evidence and comments sections in future progress reporting. We will use the self-assessment tool to inform our understanding of improvement and progress made.
17. We expect implementation plans to take account of the particular needs of staff and students identified in circular [W20/24HE](#) *Covid-19 impact on higher education providers: information on equality, diversity and inclusion*.
18. If universities have well-being and health strategies and implementation plans in their own corporate style already, revised implementation plans may be submitted to us in their existing format, *provided we are able to clearly identify how the points in paragraphs 14-16 above are addressed fully*.
19. If universities are not completing the HEFCW template (**Annex C**), they should:
- use the HEFCW template to indicate on which pages the information in their existing corporate-style implementation plan can be found;

- complete and submit to us the UUK Stepchange self-assessment tool;
  - complete and submit to us the Vice-Chancellor's confirmation in section B of the template.
20. If implementation plans, revised in response to this circular, are submitted to us, please use the implementation plan template provided in **Annex C**.

### **Funding and monitoring**

21. Allocations are made on the basis of student headcounts. We allocated well-being: safeguarding and period dignity funding (circular W19/11HE) on the same basis and it provides a proxy for a 'whole university approach' (staff and students). Details are provided in **Annex B**.
22. We are allocating the first tranche of the £1.8m in two tranches and the additional £900k in one allocation as follows:
- i. October 2020: first tranche allocation of the £1.8m plus £900k to:
    - support the review of well-being and health strategies; and
    - fund implementation activities and services; and
  - ii. February 2021: second tranche allocation of the £1.8m to enable further implementation to the end of 2020/21.
23. We reserve the right to hold back or clawback funding where revised strategies, implementation plans, delivery or reporting and monitoring are not sufficient to assure us and governing bodies that satisfactory progress has been made, at a reasonable pace.
24. A monitoring report will be required in autumn 2021 with information on delivery to date, a self-assessment update, lessons learned and next steps. We encourage universities to contact us during the year where implementation is not as planned or where there is likely to be underspend for us to understand where revised plans may be needed.
25. HEFCW will provide the monitoring report template.

### **Timetable**

26. Well-being and health implementation plans, the completed Stepchange self-assessment tool and Vice-Chancellors' signed planning and investment commitments should be submitted to us by **11 December 2020**, including confirmation that well-being and health strategies have been/will be reviewed.
27. We will be unable to release the second tranche allocation in January 2021 without satisfactory implementation plans.

## Further information

28. For further information contact Ryan Stokes (email [ryan.stokes@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:ryan.stokes@hefcw.ac.uk)).

## Assessing the impact of our policies

29. We have initiated an impact assessment to help safeguard against discrimination and promote equality and diversity in HE. We 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 and ways of working set out in the [Well-Being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) and HEFCW's Well-Being Objectives and our consultation invites responses on these matters.
30. We consider this funding to be a positive intervention in providing increased financial support for well-being and health, including mental health and its alignment with Welsh Government, HEFCW and institutional priorities as they relate to staff and students.
31. Consultation responses confirmed that impacts on the Welsh language will be positive.

Contact [equality@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:equality@hefcw.ac.uk) for more information about impact assessments.

## A summary of consultation submissions and HEFCW's response

1. Seven submissions were received in response to consultation circular ([W20/29HE](#)). We appreciate the responses. We have taken these into account in finalising this circular.
2. The consultation questions are provided below with a brief summary of key points raised and HEFCW's response. Similar points raised in response to different questions have been collected for ease of responding.

***Question 1: Do you agree with our overall approach of funding a review of well-being and health strategies and implementation plans and providing additional support for implementation of these plans in 2020/21 to take account of the impact of Covid-19 on staff and student well-being and health, including mental health?***

3. Consultation submission summary: All submissions agreed with the approach to funding reviews and implementation plans.
4. HEFCW response: no further response.

***Question 2. Are there any unintended consequences of allocating £1.8m to support revised well-being and health strategies and implementation plans in 2020/21, including using the method indicated, and, if so, what are they?***

5. Consultation submission summary:
  - i. Four universities did not comment on the funding methodology, one university welcomed the funding methodology and two universities suggested each suggested different funding methodologies to give more weight to certain groups of staff and students.
  - ii. One university sought clarification on timelines for expenditure.
  - iii. One university urged caution in the definition of activity and service 'completion' as it related to funding spend in 2020/21.
  - iv. Two universities confirmed they had separate staff and student well-being and health strategies which together would deliver a 'whole university approach' which they intended to continue.
  - v. One university suggested that it may be useful to acknowledge that many universities have already put significant resource into enabling provision in the context of Covid-19.
6. HEFCW response: With no consensus on an alternative funding methodology we will allocate funding on same basis as set out the consultation circular and in circular [W19/11HE](#). In finalising the circular we will be clear that universities should plan their allocations against the requirements of their 2020/21 implementation plans. Where activities and

services set out in the implementation plan are not completed by the end of 2020/21 we will expect universities to account for this in monitoring reports. While we appreciate that Covid-19 may create unforeseen planning challenges, we expect that it will result in increased demand for additional activities and services for staff and students which this funding will support.

***Question 3. Is there more we might do to support the implementation of well-being and health strategies as they relate to staff and students in allocating this funding? If so, what more might we do?***

7. Consultation submission summary:
  - i. One university noted that some flexibility on the timescale for implementation of the three year strategy might be helpful and three universities suggested that some flexibility on the timescales for utilising the 2020/21 funding may be helpful.
  - ii. One university recommended promoting the work of HEFCW and the health and well-being strategies in Welsh universities as examples of good practice and a unique selling point (USP) for Welsh universities which could aid marketing and recruitment.
8. HEFCW response: We will monitor progress in this first year of the three year strategies, including the utilisation of 2020/21 funding to support well-being and health, including mental health, of staff and students. We know that universities moved rapidly in 2019/20 to support staff and students and we expect that this additional funding will enable them to continue to do so in 2020/21.

***Question 4. Do the timelines provided present any insurmountable problems and, if so, how might they be revised to ensure universities receive funding to support their students and staff in a timely manner?***

9. Consultation submission summary: two universities questioned whether a review of well-being and health strategies was necessary, while another university indicated that it might take some time to review its strategy.
10. HEFCW response: It is clear that strategies were developed and submitted to us over several months and:
  - i. some strategies, more than others, have taken account of the impact and increased demand for well-being and health services;
  - ii. some strategies are considerably more developed than others;
  - iii. some strategies do not appear to take account of commitments to adopt Stepchange: mentally healthy universities and Suicide-safer universities.

We will be providing specific and generic feedback to universities to inform strategy development and implementation planning.



***Question 5. In relation to the questions asked on Welsh language***

11. Consultation submission summary: responses confirmed there were only positive impacts on the Welsh language with one university noting that the ring-fenced funding HEFCW provided to support Student Space was positive.
12. HEFCW response: no further response.

**Allocations****2020/21 wellbeing and health strategy implementation funding**

- £1,810,000 allocated on the basis of student headcounts as a proxy for a 'whole university approach'. This allocation will be made in two tranches. Plus:
- £900,000 allocated on the same basis as the £1.8m in one tranche.

<b>University</b>	<b>Allocation of £1,810,000 (allocated in two tranches)</b>	<b>Allocation of £900,000 (allocated in one tranche)</b>	<b>Total allocation in 2020/21</b>
University of South Wales	312,643	155,458	468,101
Aberystwyth University	106,909	53,159	160,068
Bangor University	143,451	71,329	214,780
Cardiff University	465,501	231,465	696,966
University of Wales Trinity Saint David	155,012	77,078	232,090
Swansea University	289,606	144,003	433,609
Cardiff Metropolitan University	149,027	74,102	223,129
Wrexham Glyndŵr University	67,705	33,666	101,371
The Open University in Wales	120,146	59,741	179,887
<b>Total £</b>	<b>1,810,000</b>	<b>900,000</b>	<b>2,710,000</b>

## Notes:

Source: HESA student record 2018/19;

HESA standard registration population, all modes and levels, reduced to a headcount.

Final total allocation for 2020/21 is rounded.