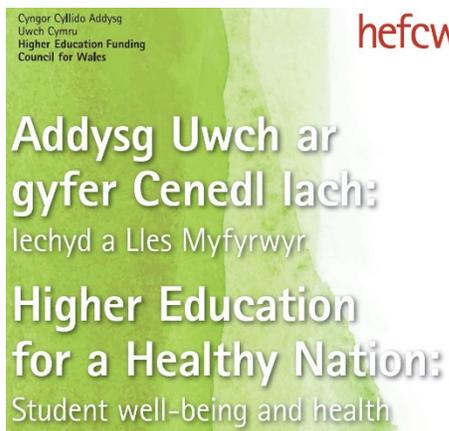


News release

Date: 11 June 2019

Title: New report looks at support for student well-being and health
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hefcw

A new report published today captures the range of health and well-being support available for students in higher education.

Higher Education for a Healthy Nation: Student Well-being and Health will be launched by HEFCW at an [event](#) at the Wales Millennium Centre.

The event is an opportunity to discover the often innovative systems universities and colleges have in place to support students.

Delegates will hear from Kirsty Williams AM, who recently announced an additional £2 million from the Welsh Government to improve mental health and well-being at Welsh universities. Other speakers include:

- David Allen OBE, **HEFCW**
- Niall O'Reilly, **University of South Wales Students' Union**
- Simon Pirotte, **Principal / Chief Executive, Bridgend College**
- Sharon Jones, Director of Student Services | **University of South Wales** and Luke Midgley, Senior Lecturer - Health and Well-being
- Molly-Jean Longden, **Aberystwyth Students' Union (AberSU)**

- Chris Deacy, **Occupational Health and Well-being Manager, Cardiff Metropolitan University**
- Professor Ian Walsh, **Dean of Art and Design, University of Wales Trinity Saint David**
- Liam Powell, **Vice President of Education and Welfare University of South Wales Pontypridd Campus**
- Simon Wright, **Academic Registrar, Cardiff University**

There will also be exhibitions and a chance for higher education providers and others to find out more about support around Wales, and the diverse needs of students.

The publication includes more than forty case studies from higher education providers, including: how they are supporting mental and physical health in students; how students are building resilience through work placements; and how providers are targeting support towards groups such as students with caring responsibilities, international students, Welsh speaking students or visually impaired students.

HEFCW Chair David Allen OBE said: “Universities and colleges play a unique role in the daily lives of students, and they want to be well-equipped to support their large and diverse student populations. From supporting their academic progress early on, to providing a range of services and advice when they face challenges, interventions can make a real difference to student lives.

“This publication shines a light on how universities and colleges foster healthy and thriving higher education environments. We know there is more we can all do: we must challenge structures and processes that create barriers; and continually improve and respond. But we will also continue to work with our partners to champion successes and to promote higher education’s contribution to well-being and health.”

University of South Wales Documentary Photography student Leah Barfield, who is featured in the publication, said: "Within the University, I was lucky enough to receive some mental health mentoring. This support network allows me to have help when it comes to my studies, ensuring that my mental health doesn't affect my quality of work and focus on my studies.

"USW also provides counselling services which many people I know have accessed and have had great experiences with them, whether it be about their studies or personal aspects of their well-being.

"It's so important to talk about mental health and for it to be part of everyday conversation because with one in four people struggling with a mental health problem, it's more common than you think."

The Open University (OU) gives students in secure environments the chance to achieve a higher education qualification, giving them a sense of hope for the future, and in turn improves their mental health and well-being. One student commented: "The benefits of Open University education in prison were immediate. The lessons helped me have a new positive focus on rebuilding my life. The challenging modules helped rebuild my self-confidence."

Aberystwyth University Students' Union recently won a National Lottery Community Fund grant to provide Resilience Skills and Suicide Prevention training to staff and to 2,000 students over three years. Molly-Jean Longden, Aberystwyth Students' Union Well-being Officer, said: "This training is important because it allows us to give our students and staff ways in which to help each other cope and the skills to deal with the situations that come with being a student. We'll be working closely with the University's Student Support and Careers Services to ensure students who are in need continue to have access to appropriate well-being support where needed, while ensuring the training complements existing provision."

Professor Ian Walsh, Dean of Art and Design at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David said: “UWTSD welcomes the HEFCW publication ***Higher Education for a Healthy Nation*** which highlights the excellent work achieved within the sector to support students in Wales to achieve their potential. What is clear in all the case studies is how universities across Wales are all working in partnership with a range of organisations – internally and externally – to provide an environment where students’ feel valued and supported.

“The student experience is at the forefront of our planning and activities at UWTSD and our performance in national league tables attest to our proud track record of supporting our students to achieve their potential and to make a contribution to the society in which we live”.

Ben Lewis, Director of Student Support and Well-being at Cardiff University said: “Our work with our LGBT+ student community to improve access to support for them is something we feel is really important. We know from the evidence base of national research that there is a greater vulnerability around LGBT+ people’s mental health. We wanted to work in partnership to improve the support we offer.”

Ends

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Notes

[Event details](#)

- Photographs from the universities are available on request.
- Photographs from the event will be available on request and [posted on @HEFCW on Twitter](#).

The report *Higher Education for a Healthy Nation: Student Well-being and Health* is available at:

www.hefcw.ac.uk/publications/hefcw_reports_and_statistics/hefcw_commissioned_studies.aspx

Twitter: #HealthyHEFCW | #CCAUCIach

About HEFCW

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales – HEFCW – is the public body operating between Welsh Government and higher education providers. We regulate fee levels at higher education providers, ensure a framework is in place for assessing the quality of higher education and scrutinise the performance of universities and other designated providers. We also provide funding for higher education teaching and research, and apply our influence and expertise to help deliver Welsh Government priorities for higher education that also have wider societal and economic benefits.