



Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref  
David Allen  
Chair  
Higher Education Funding Council for Wales  
Tŷ Afon  
Bedwas Road  
Bedwas  
Caerphilly  
CF83 8WT

9 October 2020

Dear David,

### **REVISED REMIT LETTER 2020-21**

Further to my letter of 10 August, I am writing again to inform you of a further revenue allocation to HEFCW in this financial year specifically to provide additional support to students in higher education.

The start of this academic year has not been typical and I am very aware of the additional concerns and anxieties many students are facing about their current circumstances and also, for some, worries over their financial situation. I am very pleased therefore that the Minister for Finance and Trefnydd has agreed a further allocation of £10m revenue to be distributed to our universities specifically to support student mental health services and financial hardship funds.

Since September 2018, our student support package has prioritised helping students with their day-to-day living costs through a combination of grants and loans. However, I am aware that the disruption caused by the pandemic has caused particular issues relating to student hardship, which can in turn affect their wellbeing.

I also recognise that the impact of the disruption has been particularly difficult for those students who have just begun their studies, although the impact will also be felt by those who are returning to university this term. Whilst I am keen to ensure that action is taken to mitigate this impact, and should remain the primary focus of this funding, I also recognise the impact of the current situation on staff.

In allocating this funding I would like the Council to prioritise the following activities:

- Additional funding for student financial hardship in line with the approach set out in my letter of 10 August.
- Additional investment in mental health and wellbeing strategies, including extending its participation in the Student Minds project to the end of March 2021.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

[Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

- Increasing capacity in students' unions and universities for the provision of advice and support services for both students and staff, including online support, with a focus on mental health support and suicide-safer measures for students and staff. This includes support through the medium of Welsh.
- Extending universities' contracted services with providers of mental health support.
- Extra provision for learning support for vulnerable students, those with disabilities and those with caring responsibilities, including helping to address digital poverty.
- Support and services, including food services, for students required to self-isolate.

This funding has been allocated from the Welsh Government's Covid-19 Reserve to support our response to the pandemic and is made on the basis that monthly monitoring arrangements will be in place to review demand. I have therefore asked my officials to discuss and review progress with the allocation and uptake of these funds as a feature of our regular monitoring meetings. I should also like a report to be provided to me at the end of March 2021 on the distribution of the funds, details of the activities supported and your assessment of the impact the interventions have had.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', is centered on the page. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Kirsty Williams AC/AM**  
Y Gweinidog Addysg  
Minister for Education

## Annex 1 (October 2020 update)

Detailed allocations for the HEFCW Budget Expenditure Lines for 2020-21 are set out below (£s):

Revenue (net)	203,357,000
Non-cash (depreciation)	90,000
Capital (net)	10,000,000
<b>Total provisional Grant-in-Aid</b>	<b>£213,447,000</b>

The HEFCW revenue expenditure is an amalgamation of the following budget lines that were in place prior to 2017-18:

- For our Future;
- HEFCW running costs; and
- HEFCW receipts.

Decisions on the level of funding allocated to each expenditure line are now the responsibility of the Council. However, at the start of each financial year, HEFCW must provide the Welsh Government with an estimate of their running costs for the year and an estimate of their anticipated receipts for the year. Any shortfall in anticipated receipts will need to be managed within HEFCW's overall budget allocation, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Welsh Government.

The HEFCW Revenue Expenditure Line includes the following allocations:

- £27m to support the HE sector mitigate the effects of the pandemic through the Higher Education Investment and Recovery Fund;
- £3m to support Degree Apprenticeships;
- £1.5m to provide additional support for Go Wales; and
- £10m to support student mental health services and financial hardship funds.