



Scottish Funding Council  
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

## Funding for Mental Health in colleges AY 2021-22

# SFC Announcement

Issue Date: 10 June 2021

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Reference: SFC/AN/21/2021

Summary: Announcement of and guidance on additional funding in Academic Year (AY) 2021-22 for mental health and wellbeing support in colleges.

FAO: Principals/Directors, Finance Directors, Chairs and Board Secretaries of Scotland's colleges.

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## Funding for Mental Health in colleges for AY 2021-22

### Summary

1. I am writing to confirm and provide guidance on the allocation of additional funding in Academic Year (AY) 2021-22 for mental health and wellbeing support for students and staff in colleges. This funding was announced in the indicative college funding allocations for AY 2021-22 [published](#) on 24 March 2021.

### Purpose of the funding

2. We recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns have impacted the mental health and wellbeing of both students and staff. In the college sector, the greater number of vulnerable students and fewer existing mental health resources has increased these challenges. Disruption to in-person teaching - particularly for practical and vocational courses - and disruption to articulation pathways has also impacted the mental health and wellbeing of college students.
3. On 25 February 2021, the Scottish Government announced additional funding of £4.4 million for the college sector to help colleges to further support student and staff mental health and wellbeing. This funding is in addition to and separate from the funding that institutions have received for the recruitment of additional counsellors, announced in September 2020<sup>1</sup>. It is also additional to and separate from the funding received for Student Mental Health and Wellbeing<sup>2</sup> and Students Associations<sup>3</sup> issued in FY 2020-21.
4. This funding will enable colleges to develop mental health and resilience packages that are most appropriate to the needs of their college communities. Colleges should consider the approaches as outlined in this guidance, although it is recognised that colleges should have the flexibility to utilise this funding to provide the best platform from which to meet the varying mental health and wellbeing needs of students and staff across Scotland. Central to this will be the role of a Mental Health Co-ordinator, to oversee these activities and to align mental health support more widely within the region. Colleges should use this funding to explore and support the following areas of mental health provision. These approaches have been developed in consultation with Colleges Scotland and NUS Think Positive:
  - The development of a Mental Health Co-ordinator role in colleges.
  - Investment within college Student Associations, for peer-to-peer support or other equivalent mental health support.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/announcements\\_sfcan162020/Funding\\_for\\_counsellors\\_2020-21.pdf](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/announcements_sfcan162020/Funding_for_counsellors_2020-21.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/publications-statistics/announcements/2020/SFCAN212020.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/publications-statistics/announcements/2021/SFCAN012021.aspx>

- Developing Nightline support within the college sector.
- Mental health support for staff.

### **Mental Health Co-ordinators**

5. Funding should be used to invest in a Mental Health Co-ordinator role. We would encourage local collaboration with other colleges and college regions as appropriate. In particular, smaller institutions may work collaboratively with other local colleges to provide access to a Mental Health Co-ordinator.
6. Mental Health Co-ordinators should oversee and co-ordinate the activities delivered with this funding, working in partnership with Students' Associations as appropriate. Key responsibilities of the Mental Health Co-ordinator role would include:
  - Providing co-ordination and oversight of the student mental health support services outlined below.
  - Supervision of Student Peer Mentors and/or Mental Health Mentors, including recruitment, training and ongoing support as appropriate.
  - Identifying cases which need to be escalated to clinical support services.
  - Liaising with other local colleges and universities to share and enhance services.
7. The Scottish Government has also provided funding for local authorities to deliver new and enhanced services to support the mental and emotional wellbeing for children and young people up to the age of 24 (or 26 for care-experienced young people). These services are aligned to the attached framework<sup>4</sup>. An important role for the Mental Health Co-ordinator will be to liaise with their local Community Planning Partnership, identifying the local lead on provision to enable effective joint working at a local level, and maximise access to services for students.
8. Where the Mental Health Co-ordinator is providing supervision of Peer Mentors, they should hold or be undertaking a recognised counselling or therapeutic support qualification.

### **Student Mental Health Support**

9. Colleges should use this funding to develop student mental health that is locally appropriate and effective within their institution and region. The programmes below have been identified as beneficial in building on existing investments made to date by the Scottish Government to support student mental health and wellbeing, and should be explored by colleges.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/policies/improving-public-services/community-planning/>

### ***Peer-to-Peer Student Support***

10. Colleges may wish to allocate a proportion of this funding to Student Associations to establish and deliver a Peer-to-Peer support programme, using recognised approaches including Peer Listening, Peer Tutoring and Peer Education.
11. It is essential that Peer-to-Peer student mentors receive appropriate training and that there is sufficient supervision and support in place. Further information and resources can be found from the Scottish Recovery Network<sup>5</sup> and the Mental Health Foundation<sup>6</sup>. Colleges may also wish to work in collaboration with relevant local services and third sector organisations to develop these services.
12. NUS Scotland's Think Positive will have an important role in supporting colleges to deliver this work, to ensure these Peer Support networks are effectively informed and empowered to deliver. Through existing channels, NUS Scotland's Think Positive will co-ordinate institutional level action, with Colleges Scotland working in partnership with College Development Network and NUS/Think Positive to establish best practice and standards to be applied across colleges.
13. Colleges should also consider how the work supported by this funding can be reflected in their Student Mental Health Agreements.
14. The Mental Health Co-ordinator may also work with Student's Associations to identify and develop other appropriate and effective mental health support services.

### ***Mental Health Mentors***

15. We recognise that Peer Support services will not be appropriate for all colleges, and that some colleges may already have such services in place. Therefore, colleges may also wish to consider using this funding to support a Mental Health Mentor service, either in place of or to complement a new or existing Peer Support service.
16. Mental Health Mentors would work with individual students, supporting them to achieve their full potential at college, while also mitigating the impact their mental health condition might have on them. Mentors would work with students with a range of mental health difficulties, helping them improve their self-management and coping skills, as well as coming to terms with their diagnosis. This would also include assistance with scheduling, workload management and liaising with college disability services as required.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.scottishrecovery.net/resources/the-future-is-peer/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/peer-support-manual>

17. Colleges may use this funding to employ a specific mentor, or to provide training and upskilling for existing support staff to provide this role. These approaches may also be used in conjunction, to ensure that staff have the confidence and knowledge to support and appropriately refer students, and complement the work of mentors.

### ***Nightline***

18. Nightline is a student-run confidential listening, emotional support and information service. This service can be accessed both over the phone and through instant messenger. It is currently well established in the university sector, but with limited engagement in colleges.
19. Colleges may wish to explore developing a Nightline service within the sector. To avoid duplication of activity, this should be explored at a regional or sectoral level, with strategic oversight from senior management.

### **Staff Mental Health Support**

20. SFC recognises the impact that COVID-19 has also had on the mental health and wellbeing of college staff, and the subsequent impact on learning and teaching and the ability to recognise and support wellbeing issues in students.
21. In recognition of the challenges facing staff at this time, a portion of this funding may be used to provide mental health support for staff where required. This funding is supplementary to colleges' core funds, which should continue to be used to support staff. Accessing such support would help to not only resolve pressures facing individual members of staff, but also enable them to recognise mental health difficulties and stress in themselves and others and understand how these might be addressed.
22. Colleges may wish to contract external mental health support services to provide this staff support, or to develop a complementary Peer-to-Peer staff support service. These approaches, administered on an institutional basis and involving trade unions as appropriate, should be linked to a recognised and agreed outcomes framework, whilst also building staff capacity in terms of mental health and well-being awareness training.

### **Funding allocations**

23. This additional funding has been allocated in proportion to colleges'/college regions' share of student activity (credit) targets. A breakdown of funding for individual colleges/regions is shown in Annex A.

## Conditions of funding

24. This funding must only be used for the purpose(s) for which it is being allocated; that is, for the provision of additional mental health and wellbeing support for students and staff. SFC retains the right to audit relevant institutional documentation to satisfy itself that this is the case (and the college undertakes that it will provide such assistance as SFC reasonably requires).
25. All institutions (or in the case of a multiple college region the Regional Strategic Board/Body) should complete the attached reporting template (Annex B), outlining how they intend using their funds. This should be returned to Emma Roberts, email: [eroberts@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:eroberts@sfc.ac.uk) by **Friday 2 July 2021**.

## Payment of funds

26. Incorporated colleges should draw down funding from their allocations, in line with need, over AY 2021-22. Non-incorporated colleges will be paid in two equal instalments in September 2021 and January 2022.

## Further information

27. Should you require any further information, please contact Fiona Burns, Assistant Director - Access & Outcomes, tel: 0131 313 6517, email: [fburns@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:fburns@sfc.ac.uk) or Emma Roberts, Policy/Analysis Officer tel: 0131 313 6570, email: [eroberts@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:eroberts@sfc.ac.uk).



**James Dunphy**  
Director of Access, Learning and Outcomes



## Annex A

### Breakdown of funding for Mental Health for individual colleges/college regions in AY 2021-22

<b>College/Region</b>	<b>Funding allocation</b>
Ayrshire College	£316,954
Borders College	£65,051
Dumfries & Galloway College	£78,168
Dundee & Angus College	£272,606
Edinburgh College	£476,833
Fife College	£336,273
Forth Valley College	£217,993
Glasgow Region	£977,113
Highlands & Islands Region	£285,434
Lanarkshire Region	£461,036
Newbattle Abbey College	£2,340
North East Scotland College	£335,044
Sabhal Mòr Ostaig	£2,029
SRUC	£57,773
West College Scotland	£402,782
West Lothian College	£112,572
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4,400,000</b>

**Funding for Mental Health in colleges for AY 2021-22: reporting template**

Please return this form to Emma Roberts, email: [eroberts@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:eroberts@sfc.ac.uk), copying in your Outcome Agreement Manager by **Friday 2 July 2021**.

Please briefly outline how you will use this funding, with reference to the activities outlined in the guidance. Please include details of training and supervision arrangements where appropriate, and any organisations that you have consulted with in the development of these services. Please also outline how your plans have been developed in consultation with staff and student bodies.

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