

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymchwiliad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg i gymorth iechyd meddwl mewn addysg uwch](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee inquiry into Mental Health support in Higher Education](#)

MHHE 3

Ymateb gan: Coleg Cambria

Response from: Coleg Cambria

Nodwch eich barn mewn perthynas â chylch gorchwyl yr ymchwiliad. | Record your views against the inquiry's terms of reference.

1. Maint yr angen | Extent of need

- Numbers of students accessing internal mental health services in Coleg Cambria HE have increased by 96% from 20/21 to 21/22. Learner surveys and feedback demonstrate that HE students feel they are able to access support through the college wellbeing teams.
- The majority of requests for support are for anxiety and/or social anxiety (31%), followed by relationship difficulties (23%) and depression (19%). Through greater awareness and training, we are now monitoring the effects of Trauma and PTSD and this represents 12% of support sessions. There has been a recent increase in reported anxiety due to financial difficulties.
- Support services have been expanded in response to the Covid 19 pandemic. Mental Health support was provided online during lockdowns and triage was provided and monitored by the Mental Health Practitioner. Vulnerable students were monitored and where required, supported on site.
- Some students presented with increased levels of anxiety whilst managing at-home child care. However, a minority reported lower levels due to the flexibility of online studying. There has been a significant impact on demand for support with social anxiety as a result of lockdowns.

2. Adnabod a darpariaeth | Identification and provision

- Where Higher Education is provided in a college setting, as in Coleg Cambria, students benefit from the wider college services. All Coleg Cambria HE staff access to excellent training in Mental Health, Trauma and Resilience. Referral processes are effective. In addition, Student Mental Health is supported through:
 - Induction
 - Student Voice activities
 - Access to Wellbeing relaxation Hubs and social signposting services.
 - Access to resilience support sessions and/or counselling.
 - Planned activities and resources.
 - A dedicated health and wellbeing portal.
- Mental Health Needs are identified :-
 - On application
 - On course (self-referral)
 - On course (tutor referral)

Identification has improved through staff training and the creation of a graduated approach toolkit. A Wellbeing Early Identification Survey has been piloted with ACCESS students in 21/22, resulting in improved signposting.

- Referrals to external Mental Health Services can be difficult, especially during the crossover from children's/young people to adult services. Having a qualified mental health practitioner for triage and risk management has improved the quality and appropriateness of referrals to external services.
- The majority of HE students at Coleg Cambria are local and therefore do not require a GP change.
- Coleg Cambria has developed a new process with MH Services for transition and data sharing and this is being piloted in 22/23.

3. Polisiau, deddfwriaeth a chyllid Llywodraeth Cymru | Welsh Government policy, legislation and funding

- In regards to Mental Health, there is a distinction between the needs of students in HE settings and those in Further Education Higher provision. Many HE students in FE settings are from low socio-economic backgrounds. Financial insecurity is cited as a cause for a number of referrals for anxiety. It would be beneficial to differentiate between settings and unique needs for future regulatory arrangements.
- It is essential that transition between settings is standardised and that mental health information is shared easily and in a timely manner. Social signposting, early identification, trauma awareness and resilience training should continue to be a priority for the sector.
- Early intervention is essential for mental wellbeing. College HE support services are effective. However, increases in the cost of living and childcare have created financial insecurity, which is having a detrimental effect on the wellbeing of students in College HE provision.
- Disabled Students Allowance funding supports long term additional needs. However, without diagnosis or condition longevity, it can be difficult for students to access this funding.
- A ring-fenced, needs-based hardship fund would allow colleges to provide HE students with responsive, timely and accessible financial support that reduces anxiety and increases resilience.

4. Argymhellion ar gyfer newid | Recommendations for change

- Proactive planning needs to be in place to bridge the gap between services and the transition between settings.

5. Arall | Other