



Scottish Funding Council
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

Funding for counsellors in AY 2021-22

SFC Announcement

Issue Date: 16 July 2021

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Reference: SFC/AN/25/2021

Summary: Announcement of additional funding in Academic Year 2021-22 for counsellors in colleges and universities.

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

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Funding for counsellors in AY 2021-22

Summary

1. I am writing to announce the allocation of funding in Academic Year (AY) 2021-22 to provide additional counsellors in colleges and universities. This funding has been allocated by the Scottish Government.

Purpose of funding

2. In the 2018 Programme for Government (PfG) the Scottish Government committed to “providing more than 80 additional counsellors in Further and Higher Education over the next four years”, with an investment of around £20 million. SFC announced the first year of this funding in November 2019¹. The purpose and principles behind this commitment have not changed since the original announcement.
3. In the AY 2020-21 funding for counsellors guidance, we outlined our commitment to supporting equity of access to counselling support across colleges and universities, and that this work would be taken forward as a matter of priority. The Scottish Government has also committed to address the issue of equity of access. In consultation with key stakeholders from both the college and university sectors, the funding methodology for AY 2021-22 has been amended to allow colleges to increase their counselling services in line with the university sector, whilst allowing universities to continue to support and develop the provision that they have in place (no-detriment policy). Further details can be found in paragraph 9. Similar funding adjustments, based on the principles of addressing equity of access and no detriment, will be applied for the remaining years of the funding commitment
4. The Scottish Government remains committed to its PfG commitment to funding 80 additional counsellors in colleges and universities, and addressing the issue of equity of access to counselling services. Institutions should also use these resources to help them work towards the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) recommendation of one counsellor per 3,000 students², and ensure that they have a counselling service in place that is suitable for the needs of their students. However, we also recognise feedback from the sector regarding greater flexibility in the use of this funding.
5. It is therefore proposed that institutions which can evidence that they have put additional counsellors in place, and that recruitment of further counsellors would not be effective, can retain funds for the final year of the commitment

¹ [Funding for counsellors 2019-20](#)

² <https://www.bacp.co.uk/media/2237/bacp-university-college-counselling-services-sector-resource-003.pdf>

(AY 2022-23) for wider mental health activities. Through the SFC, these proposed additional activities will be collated and further considered in light of PfG and manifesto commitments. Institutions should contact Emma Roberts (email: eroberts@sfc.ac.uk) with any such proposals before the end of Financial Year (FY) 2021-22 (31 March 2022).

6. This funding is separate from and additional to the funding announced in June 2021 for student and staff mental health support in colleges³. Colleges should continue to use this funding to develop their counselling provision as outlined in this guidance.
7. Colleges and universities can continue to utilise any unspent funding from AY 2020-21 for the provision of counselling services. The upcoming AY 2020-21 baseline survey will request details from institutions about their current levels of underspend, and SFC will work with institutions to facilitate how any underspend will be utilised and managed in the final year of the funding commitment.
8. The total funding for counsellors to be received by the college and university sectors in AY 2021-22 is **£4.23 million**; an increase of £0.58 million from AY 2020-21.

Funding allocations for AY 2021-22

9. Funding for counsellors has been allocated to colleges and universities on the following basis:
 - As a starting point, both sectors will receive a sum of money identical to what they received last year: £1.91 million for colleges and £1.74 million for universities.
 - Of the £0.58 million increase, £0.52 million has been allocated to colleges, with the remaining £0.07 million allocated to universities.
 - **This means that in total, for AY 2021-22, the college sector will receive £2.42 million and the university sector will receive £1.81 million.**
 - This equates to 57.3% of the total funding going to the college sector and 42.7% to the university sector – supporting both equity of access and no detriment to the university sector.
10. The base allocations were derived by the Scottish Government based on a range of indicators which inform demand for counselling services, including student numbers at colleges and universities, student mental health

³ <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/publications-statistics/announcements/2021/SFCAN212021.aspx>

declarations and regional mental health scores from health surveys. Allocations also account for factors that affect supply of counselling services, including the rural placing of institutions and institutions which have multiple campuses. The funding methodology can be found here: [Annex A of the AY 2019-20 funding announcement](#).

11. A breakdown of the above funding for individual colleges and universities for AY 2021-22 is shown in [Annex A](#) of this announcement.

Conditions of funding

12. This funding must only be used for the purpose(s) for which it is being allocated; that is, for the provision of additional counsellors and related mental health support. SFC retains the right to audit relevant institutional documentation to satisfy itself that this is the case (and the institution undertakes that it will provide such assistance as SFC reasonably requires). A definition of Counselling (for the purposes of this funding) is provided in paragraph 10 of the baseline survey in [Annex D of the original announcement](#).
13. Institutions may identify qualified counsellors who are registered with statutory regulators not included on the Professional Standards Agency (PSA) register, particularly when investing in a specific type of counselling support, for example, the British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP). In such cases, please discuss this with SFC (Emma Roberts) before committing the resource.
14. Institutions should ensure that any additional counselling provision is able to be accessed by students in an appropriate format during any COVID-19 restrictions e.g. online or telephone counselling, and be conscious of the flexibility required to reflect the diverse needs of the student population and modes of study. Institutions should also ensure that counsellors have received adequate training to deliver counselling remotely, and that online security and data protection measures are in place to ensure confidentiality. Further information is available from the BACP⁴. Colleges should note that this is separate from any phone support services they may be establishing using their additional student mental health funding.
15. We expect institutions to work in collaboration with their students and student associations to ensure the provision of joined up and accessible mental health and counselling support which meets students' needs. We encourage institutions to sign up for NUS Think Positive's Student Mental Health Agreement project⁵, which should be central to a whole-institution approach to mental health and counselling support.

⁴ [BACP Working online resources](#)

⁵ <https://www.thinkpositive.scot/projects/smha/>

16. Institutions should ensure that their counselling services are accessible to and appropriate for students studying Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry and other healthcare professions - including those who are on placements. Institutions should consult and collaborate with relevant student councils and associations to ensure their needs are met. Institutions may also wish to consult with the BMA Scottish Students Committee⁶.
17. A principle of collaboration underpins our approach to funding allocations, and we would ask institutions to build on this in the next AY. This includes collaboration across institutions with regard to counselling services, and in relation to developing partnerships with NHS Scotland, Health and Social Care Partnerships, and third sector counselling organisations.
18. We may wish to approach institutions further into the AY regarding aggregate outcome data on the impact of the investment. Where possible, institutions should evidence outcomes for students from counselling provision, utilising measurement tools that have been validated for assessing counselling outcomes.
19. All institutions must utilise, or source, suitable premises for their counselling services. These premises must be appropriate and accessible for all students seeking support. This does not apply to students accessing virtual counselling outwith the institution's premises.
20. All institutions should update their baseline survey to monitor progress towards the Scottish Government's commitment of providing 80 additional counsellors. A baseline survey for AY 2020-21 will be sent in a separate communication in September/October. **Please ensure that you inform SFC of any changes to the contact details for your institution's Mental Health lead by emailing Emma Roberts at: eroberts@sfc.ac.uk.**
21. All institutions should note that SFC may request brief quarterly updates to inform progress towards the 80 additional counsellors committed to in the PfG.

Payment of funds

22. SFC will make payment of funding to universities in AY 2021-22 in line with the following profile:

Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22
7.0%	7.0%	7.0%	7.0%	7.0%	7.0%	6.0%	6.0%	11.5%	11.5%	11.5%	11.5%

⁶ <https://www.bma.org.uk/what-we-do/committees/medical-students-committee/scottish-medical-students-committee>

23. Incorporated colleges should drawdown funding as required with up to 54% of their funding allocation to be drawn down in FY 2021-22 (by end of March 2022) and no more than 46% to be drawn down between April and July 2022.
24. The allocation of funding for AY 2021-22 and the above profile is subject to the transfer of funding from the Scottish Government in FYs 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Acceptance of grant

25. Institutions are invited to formally accept this offer of funding by emailing Graeme Scotland, Senior Budgeting & Reporting Officer, email: gscotland@sfc.ac.uk by **Friday 23 July 2021**.

Further information

26. Please contact Fiona Burns, Assistant Director - Access & Outcomes, tel: 0131 313 6517, email: fburns@sfc.ac.uk or Emma Roberts, Policy/Analysis Officer, tel: 0131 313 6570, email: eroberts@sfc.ac.uk.



James Dunphy
Director, Access, Learning and Outcomes

Funding allocation for AY 2021-22

College/region allocation of funding for counsellors		
College/region	Total funding allocation*	No. of counsellors (FTE)**
Ayrshire College	£133,000	2.55
Borders College	£97,000	1.86
Dumfries & Galloway College	£104,500	2.00
Dundee & Angus College	£151,500	2.90
Edinburgh & Lothians College	£161,500	3.09
Fife College	£163,500	3.13
Forth Valley College	£118,500	2.27
Glasgow Region	£404,500	7.75
Highlands & Islands Region***	£363,500	6.96
Lanarkshire Region	£165,500	3.17
Newbattle Abbey College	£12,000	0.23
North East Scotland College	£145,500	2.79
Sabhal Mòr Ostaig	£14,500	0.28
SRUC****	£125,000	2.39
West College Region	£160,000	3.06
West Lothian College	£103,000	1.97
Total	£2,423,000	46.40
* Numbers rounded to the nearest £500 ** Rounded to the nearest 0.01 FTE counsellor *** Includes funding for UHI's HE students **** Includes funding for SRUC's HE students		

University allocation of funding for counsellors		
Institution	Total funding allocation*	No. of counsellors (FTE)**
Aberdeen, University of	£97,000	1.86
Abertay University	£65,000	1.24
Dundee, University of	£116,000	2.22
Edinburgh Napier University	£97,000	1.86
Edinburgh, University of	£173,000	3.31
Glasgow Caledonian University	£128,000	2.45
Glasgow School of Art	£58,000	1.11
Glasgow, University	£198,000	3.79
Heriot-Watt University	£97,000	1.86
Highlands & Islands, University of the***	-	-
Open University in Scotland	£104,000	1.99
Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh	£66,000	1.26
Robert Gordon University	£90,000	1.72
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS)	£53,000	1.01
SRUC***	-	-
St Andrews, University of	£90,000	1.72
Stirling, University of	£98,000	1.88
Strathclyde, University of	£156,000	2.99
West of Scotland, University of the	£120,000	2.30
Total	£1,806,000	34.57
* Numbers rounded to the nearest £500		
** Rounded to the nearest 0.01 FTE counsellor		
*** Funding for UHI's and SRUC's students included within college allocation		