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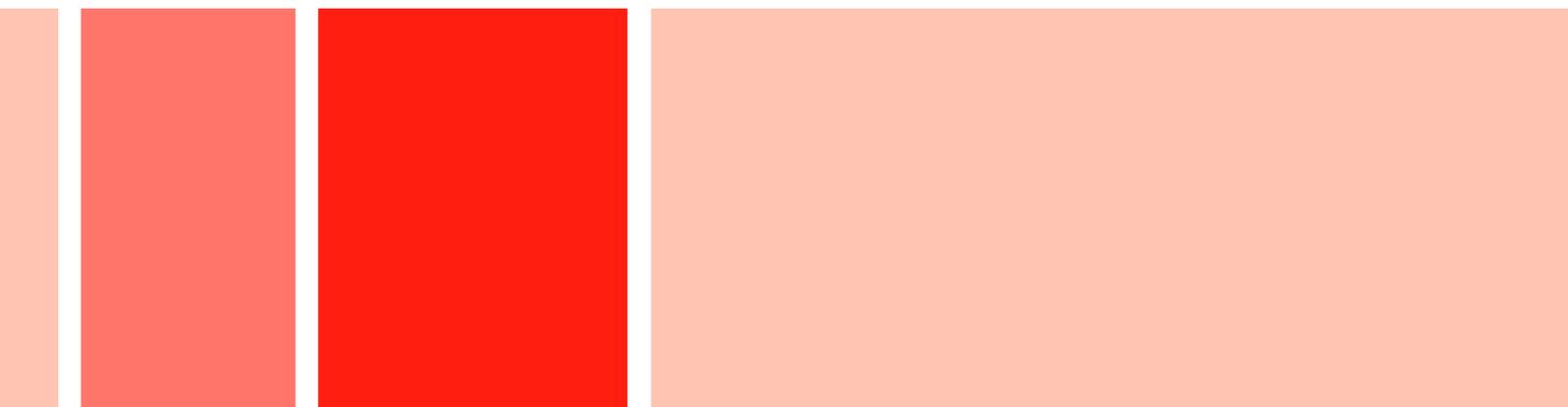
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# Evaluation of the Financial Contingency Fund (FCF) Annexes



# **Evaluation of the Financial Contingency Fund (FCF) Annexes**

**Authored by Nia Bryer, Old Bell 3 Ltd**

Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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## Annex 1: Questionnaire and Topic Guide for FEI/HEIs

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name of Institution	
Contact Name	
Total Number of Student Enrolments at Institution during 2011/12 [All sites]	

### FINANCIAL ALLOCATION

What was your FCF financial allocation for 2011/12?	£
Has this amount been consistent over the last three years since 2009/10?	Yes/No
Please note how your FCF financial allocation has changed over the last few years?  [Please state if these changes have been the result of any mergers]	
How much of your FCF financial allocation for 2011/12 was used to cover scheme administration costs?	£
How much of your FCF financial allocation for 2011/12 was used to cover scheme promotional costs?	£
How much of your FCF financial allocation for 2011/12 was distributed to students during the year?  Please explain any under-allocations and what happened to such under-allocations.	£
Do you ring-fence any FCF funds for particular types of activities e.g. childcare, accommodate etc?  If so please provide detail of provisions and the amount usually allocated per academic year to these provisions.	
What proportion of your FCF funds are usually allocated or awarded before or during the first academic term?	

### PROMOTION

How do students usually come to hear about the FCF at your institution?	
Do you make available more than one generic FCF application form e.g. dyslexia assessment application form, summer fund application form?  If so please give details of others.	
Can students access FCF application forms on your website?	

## APPLICATIONS

How regularly are applications for the FCF assessed (e.g. once a year, once a term, as and when applications are received)?	
Do you have a Panel or Committee in place to assess FCF applications?	
What is the membership composition of this Awarding Panel or Committee?	
Do you operate a minimum FCF award figure for students and if so, what is the minimum value of an award that students can apply for in any one academic year?	
Do you operate a maximum FCF award figure and if so, what is the maximum value of award students can apply for in any one academic year?	
Have the number of FCF applications you receive in recent years changed at all (e.g. increased or decreased)?  Please give an indication of the change in applications received and explain why.	

## USE OF THE FUND

What proportion, if any, of the FCF fund would you say is being paid directly to providers e.g. of childcare or transport (as opposed to students)?	
What proportion of the FCF fund is being awarded as (a) loans and (b) grants?	Loans = ___% Grants = ___%
Typically what is the range of funds made available to students via the FCF scheme? [Please provide lowest and highest award values made in 2011/12]	Lowest value grant: Highest value grant:
Do you fund 100% of the cost of meeting the need identified by the FCF application or do you require students to make a financial contribution? If so, what rules apply?	

## IMPACT UPON STUDENTS

What is the withdrawal rate for: a) Students at your institution generally b) FCF supported students (if known)	a. b.
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## TOPIC GUIDE FOR FEIs/HEIs

### INTRODUCTION

- Thank you for agreeing to talk to me as part of our evaluation of the Financial Contingency Fund and for completing the brief questionnaire we sent to you recently.
- As part of this Evaluation, we are consulting with a range of stakeholders, HEI and FEI representatives and students who have had experience of FCF with a view to reporting back to the Welsh Government early in 2013.
- [Where appropriate] Your institution has been selected as a case study institution so we are interviewing a range of staff and students during our visit today.
- The areas I'd like to discuss with you today include your views on:
  - The rationale and need for FCF including its fit with other student support provision available to your students;
  - How the FCF is being used and the difference it is having upon student participation and retention;
  - The implementation of FCF by the WG and your own Institution;
  - Whether FCF is being used effectively and is fit for purpose;
  - The future direction of the Fund and whether the schemes should be amalgamated and/or become statutory.
- We will not attribute anything you say to you by name or organisation in the final published report although we may identify examples of good practice at HEIs/FEIs.
- Do you have anything you want to ask before we start?

The contact person at Old Bell 3 is Nia Bryer 01558 822922.

The contact person in the Welsh Government is Julie Owens 0300 062 5484.

### BACKGROUND

Interviewee Name	
Interviewee Role	
Date of Interview	
Interviewer	

#### A. Involvement with FCF

1. First of all tell me a little about your involvement with the FCF and your role.

#### B. Rationale and Need

2. To what extent is there a need for a contingency fund to support students studying at HE or FE? Why do you say this?
3. To what extent does FCF fit with other statutory and discretionary student support provision in Wales? Ask for fit with these provisions [See Student Finance Wales website for further detail on each]:

- a. Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) [FEIs only]
  - b. Assembly Learning Grant (and Special Support Grant)
  - c. Tuition Fee Loans and Tuition Fee Grant [HEIs only]
  - d. Maintenance Grants and Loans [HEIs only]
  - e. Disabled Students' Allowance
  - f. Student Childcare Grant [HEIs only]
  - g. Parent's Learning Allowance
  - h. Adults Dependent's Grant
  - i. HE/FE Bursaries
  - j. Transport costs and provision
4. Are the current student priority groups identified within WG FCF guidance (HE<sup>1</sup> or FE<sup>2</sup>) appropriate?
    - a. Should there be an order of precedence for these priority groups?
    - b. Are there any groups not catered for within FCF who should be?
  5. Are the range of needs (e.g. childcare lunch vouchers and transport for the FE sector) that can be funded via the FCF (either HE or FE) appropriate<sup>3,4</sup>?
    - a. Should there be an order of precedence for the type of activities that FCF should fund?
    - b. Are there any requirements or activities not catered for within FCF?
  6. Are the student residency requirements set out in the FCF guidance appropriate? [Note that HE FCF is available to UK domiciled students and FE FCF open to EU students]? What are your thoughts on restricting FCF to Welsh domiciled students in the future?
  7. What, if any, other hardship or contingency fund does your Institution make available to students?
    - a. Do you provide any non-financial support such as free transport to students?
    - b. [HE only] In what way, if at all, does your Institution make available any contingency funds to non UK domiciled students who cannot access FCF?
  8. [Those with HE provision only] What effect did the 2010/11 cuts for HE FCF have upon your institution and students?

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<sup>1</sup> HE Priority Groups identified in the 2011/12 guidance were (i) students with children (ii) students with existing essential financial commitments (iii) disabled students (iv) care leavers (v) final year students who are in financial difficulty (vi) foyer residents and other homeless students and (vii) students who are ineligible for support under Assembly Learning Grant and Loans or equivalent.

<sup>2</sup> FE Priority Groups identified in the 2011/12 guidance were (i) students who need help with childcare costs, especially lone parents (ii) students who reach 20 before completing A Levels and other FE courses who face financial difficulties (iii) students who have been in care, on probation or are at risk (iv) Students on low income/low income families and (v) students from Super Output Area with a level of educational deprivation above a specific threshold.

<sup>3</sup> See HE Guidance Note:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/highereducation/sfwp/sfwppublications/guidancechapters2012/fcf1112/?lang=en>

<sup>4</sup> See FE Guidance Note: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/financialfund/?lang=en>

### **C. Context**

9. [Where appropriate] What impact have recent college or University mergers had upon the availability, use and administration of FCF? Were any lessons learnt that could be shared with other institutions who are likely to merge in the future?
10. [Where appropriate for those cases where a merger between a college and a school sixth form has taken place] What impact have any mergers between a college and sixth form school had upon the availability, use and administration of FCF?

### **D. Use of FCF at Institution**

11. [Prompt with data available for each institution] Overall, what type of activities and provisions is the FCF being awarded for at your institution?
  - a. To what extent are these activities or provisions ones which are generic to particular groups of students, and can be foreseen in advance (e.g. transport costs in FEIs)?
12. Are there any activities or provisions which are regarded as priorities for FCF within your Institution and why is this the case?
13. Do you have a distinct policy that distinguishes between full and part time students applying for FCF?
14. [Drawing on questionnaire responses] Do you require students to make a financial contribution to the costs of meeting the need which is the subject of the FCF application?
  - a. What is the rationale for this?
  - b. What type of provisions do you ask for such as contribution?
  - c. How much contribution would be expected from the student?
15. What is your policy on awarding funding to a student who has already accessed FCF in the past (either same course or different course)?
16. [Drawing on questionnaire responses] [If loans used] In what circumstances do you provide loans rather than grants for FCF? What are the advantages and disadvantages of using loans [If no loans] Have you considered paying FCF in loans rather than grants in any circumstances? Why have you not done so?
17. [Drawing on data available for each institution] How has the profile of students, applying for and receiving FCF funds changed in recent years? Ask for profile of students by:
  - a. Full time/part time
  - b. Under-graduates; Post-graduates; FE; WfA
  - c. Study subject areas
  - d. Demographics – Gender, Disability, Age
  - e. Nature of the catchment area

## HE ONLY

18. [HE only] Is the FCF used to cover students' contribution to the cost of childcare when also claiming a statutory childcare grant? If so,
  - a. What proportion of the FCF allocation is spent on these provisions?
  - b. Is this deemed to be effective use of the Fund?
19. [HE only] Is there demand for out of hours childcare financial assistance amongst students?
  - a. Should the FCF be used to cover these costs of out of hours childcare?
  - b. Would this be deemed to be effective use of the Fund?
20. [HE only] Does the FCF provide support to NHS funded students? If so,
  - a. What proportion of the FCF allocation is allocated to NHS funded students and is this ring-fenced?
  - b. Why is support to NHS students deemed necessary?
  - c. In what way are NHS students using the Fund?
21. [HE only] In what way does the FCF provide support to disabled students?
  - a. Is FCF used to cover disability specific costs e.g. to pay for medical assessment costs that would enable a student to access the SDA, unforeseen disability requirement costs;
  - b. What issues facing disabled students are prioritised?
22. [HE only] Are the accommodation costs incurred by your students higher or lower than the average for Wales?
  - a. How does FCF (and the awarding Institution) accommodate this difference?

## FE ONLY

23. [FE only] Does the Institution ring-fence a proportion of FCF funds to cover student childcare costs?
  - a. What proportion of funds is ring-fenced (and used) for this purpose?
  - b. What are the benefits and disadvantages of this approach?
  - c. Are applications dealt with in a different way to other FCF applications?
24. [FE only] What is the Institution's policy on making available free or subsidised childcare?
  - a. What impact does this have upon the use of FCF to cover childcare requirements?
25. [FE only] What impact does the variation in the start age for nursery education across Local Authorities have upon the allocation of the FCF fund for childcare costs?
26. [FE only] Is FCF used to cover student transport costs?
  - a. What proportion of the fund is used for this?

- b. What impact does Local Authority policy on providing free transport have upon the use of FCF in this way?
- c. What impact does the provision of Local Authority free transport passes to learners with Additional Needs (in receipt of disability living allowance) have upon the use of the FCF in this way?

#### **E. WfA (Institutions with WfA Centres only)**

- 27. What role does the Student Support department have in relation to dealing with WfA FCF applications?
- 28. In what ways are WfA FCF applications administered differently to other FCF applications (ask about role of assessment panel, awarding criteria, eligibility considerations, amount of funds awarded, timings etc)
- 29. What difference does WfA FCF funds have upon students supported?
- 30. How appropriate is it to have a ring-fenced WfA FCF budget?

#### **F. NHS Students (Institutions with NHS provision only)**

- 31. What role does the Student Support department have in relation to applications from NHS students?
- 32. In what ways are NHS student applications administered differently to other FCF applications (ask about role of assessment panel, awarding criteria, eligibility considerations, amount of funds awarded, timings etc)
- 33. What difference does the FCF funds have upon NHS students supported?
- 34. How appropriate is it to make FCF available to NHS students?

#### **G. Welsh Government Guidance and Administration**

- 35. What are your views on the processes adopted by the Welsh Government to determine institutional FCF funding allocations?
  - a. Should the current formula be revised in any way?
  - b. Should the grant be allocated on a headcount basis?
  - c. How could these processes be made more responsive to changes (such as college mergers, increases/drop in student numbers)?
  - d. What, if any, is the impact upon Institutions (and students) when allocations are announced later than expected?
  - e. How far in advance of the start of the academic year would it be desirable to be notified of the allocations? Why if FCF is a mechanism to respond to unforeseen needs is late notification an issue?
- 36. Should the FCF grant be paid to HEIs/FEI at stages throughout the year to cater for students who start at times other than September?
- 37. What are your views on the Welsh Government Annual Guidance Notice for HEIs/FEIs?
  - a. Should these be strengthened or changed at all, and if so, in what way?
  - b. Is the guidance flexible enough?

- c. Should the guidance be more descriptive or more prescriptive?
38. What are your views on the Welsh Government Annual Monitoring Forms for HEIs/FEIs? Are there any elements which need to be changed or improved?

#### **H. Administration of FCF at Institution**

39. [Drawing on questionnaire responses] Please explain how the FCF is managed and administered at your institution? Ask about
- a. Operation and Effectiveness of Awarding Panels/Committees
  - b. Operational Teams and Staffing
40. What decision making procedures does your Institution follow in approving or refusing funding? What criteria does the Institution adopt when awarding funding?
41. [See WG data on number of applications and awards made for institution] What proportion of FCF applications made are successful and what accounts for this high/low rate?
42. What appeals procedures are in place for FCF at your institution and how effective are these procedures?
43. What monitoring and reporting arrangements are in place for FCF?
- a. Other than the data collected for WG reporting requirements, what other data do you hold?
44. Are the arrangements for awarding funds to FE students in HEIs and HE students in FEIs (as well as WfA students in HEIs) appropriate? How does this work in practice and would there be more effective ways of managing this?
45. [FEIs spanning several local authority areas] What are the implications of administering FCF across several local authority areas?

#### **I. Promotion and Marketing of FCF**

46. How is the fund communicated by the Institution to students (and parents, where relevant)?
47. What are the strengths and weaknesses of communication methods adopted by the Institution?
48. Do you think any students are missing out on FCF because they are less well informed about it than other students?
- a. Why is that?

#### **J. Student Application Experience**

49. What process does the typical student follow when applying for the FCF? Are there any elements of this process which could be improved?
50. What support and advice is provided to students during the FCF application process?

51. What arrangements are in place within the Institution to provide financial advisory support to FCF supported students (e.g. is it a condition of the grant funding to see a financial advisor?)
52. How are students who enrol at different points in the year catered for? Do those who enrol mid-way in the year find it more difficult to access FCF funds?

#### **K. Impact of FCF**

53. What evidence, if any, do you have to show that FCF is making a difference to student participation and retention rates?
  - a. [Drawing on responses to questionnaire] How does the withdrawal rate for FCF supported students compare with the institution withdrawal rate? What accounts for any difference?
  - b. What factors, other than financial ones, result in students withdrawing from their studies?
  - c. Other than financial assistance, what would help improve retention rates at your institution?
54. Had students not been able to access FCF, what would have happened?
  - a. What evidence do you have to support this claim?
  - b. What proportion of supported students would have continued to study at the institution anyway without FCF?

#### **L. Sharing of Good Practice**

55. How effective do you believe the FCF FE/HE Advisory Groups to be?
56. How can best practice be shared across the sectors?

#### **M. The Future of FCF**

57. Is there still a need for contingency funding to be made available to students studying at Welsh FEIs/HEIs?
58. Should FCF remain a discretionary scheme? Why do you say this?
59. Should FCF, or elements of it, be introduced as a statutory scheme?
  - a. Which elements ought to be introduced as a statutory scheme?
60. Should a statutory fund be introduced, should there be a cap on the funds any single student could access which would take other grants and benefits into consideration?
61. What changes (if any) should be introduced for FCF so as to improve student retention and reduce student financial hardship?
62. What are your views on allocating FCF to institutions as part of their core grant funding?
63. Should there be one FCF fund for both HE and FE? Why do you say this?

64. Should students be required to make a contribution towards some of the costs being funded via FCF, and if so, should WG guidance stipulate this?
65. Should institutions be allowed to use funding to subsidise their own childcare/crèche/nursery facilities in the future?
66. What impact, if any, do you envisage that the new student fee structure will have upon the availability, use and administration of FCF?

## Annex 2: Topic Guide for Interviews with Stakeholders

### INTRODUCTION

- Thank you for agreeing to talk to me as part of our evaluation of the Financial Contingency Fund.
- As part of this Evaluation, we are consulting with a range of stakeholders, HEI and FEI representatives and students who have had experience of FCF with a view to reporting back to the Welsh Government early in 2013.
- The areas I'd like to discuss with you today include your views on:
  - The rationale and need for FCF including its fit with other student support provision;
  - Whether FCF is being implemented by the WG and FE/HE Institutions efficiently;
  - Whether FCF is being used effectively and is fit for purpose;
  - The difference FCF is having upon student participation and retention;
  - The future direction of the Fund and whether the schemes should be amalgamated and/or become statutory.
- We will not attribute anything you say to you by name or organisation in the final published report although we may identify examples of good practice at HEIs/FEIs.
- Do you have anything you want to ask before we start?

The contact person at Old Bell 3 is Nia Bryer 01558 822922.

The contact person in the Welsh Government is Julie Owens 0300 062 5484.

### BACKGROUND

Interviewee Name	
Interviewee Role	
Date of Interview	
Interviewer	

#### A. Involvement with FCF

1. First of all tell me a little about your involvement with the FCF and your role.

#### B. Rationale and Need

2. To what extent is there a need for a contingency fund to support students studying at HE or FE? Why do you say this?
3. To what extent does FCF fit with other statutory and discretionary student support provision in Wales? Ask for fit with these provisions [See Student Finance Wales website for further detail on each]:
  - a. Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) [FEIs only]
  - b. Assembly Learning Grant (and Special Support Grant)
  - c. Tuition Fee Loans and Tuition Fee Grant [HEIs only]
  - d. Maintenance Grants and Loans [HEIs only]

- e. Disabled Students' Allowance
  - f. Student Childcare Grant [HEIs only]
  - g. Parent's Learning Allowance
  - h. Adults Dependent's Grant
  - i. HE/FE Bursaries
4. Are the current student priority groups identified within WG FCF guidance (HE<sup>5</sup> or FE<sup>6</sup>) appropriate?
    - a. Should there be an order of precedence for these priority groups?
    - b. Are there any groups not catered for within FCF?
  5. Are the range of requirements or activities (e.g. childcare lunch vouchers and transport for the FE sector) that can be funded via the FCF (either HE or FE) guidance appropriate<sup>7,8</sup>?
    - a. Should there be an order of precedence for the type of activities that FCF should fund?
    - b. Are there any requirements or activities not catered for within FCF?
  6. Are the student residency requirements set out in the FCF guidance appropriate? [Note that HE FCF is available to UK domiciled students and FE FCF open to EU students]? What are your thoughts on restricting FCF to Welsh domiciled students in the future?
  7. What other hardship or contingency funds are you aware of that are available to students?
    - a. How consistent is the picture across HEIs/FEIs?
  8. [If appropriate] What effects did the 2010/11 cuts for HE FCF have Welsh HEIs and their students?

### C. Context

9. [Where appropriate] What impact have any recent college or University mergers had upon the availability, use and administration of FCF? Were any lessons learnt that could be shared with other institutions who are likely to merge in the future?
10. [Where appropriate] What impact have any changes to 14-19 provision (e.g. closure of school sixth forms) had upon the availability, use and administration of FCF?

### D. Use of FCF at Institutions

<sup>5</sup> HE Priority Groups identified in the 2011/12 guidance were (i) students with children (ii) students with existing essential financial commitments (iii) disabled students (iv) care leavers (v) final year students who are in financial difficulty (vi) foyer residents and other homeless students and (vii) students who are ineligible for support under Assembly Learning Grant and Loans or equivalent.

<sup>6</sup> FE Priority Groups identified in the 2011/12 guidance were (i) students who need help with childcare costs, especially lone parents (ii) students who reach 20 before completing A Levels and other FE courses who face financial difficulties (iii) students who have been in care, on probation or are at risk (iv) Students on low income/low income families and (v) students from Super Output Area with a level of educational deprivation above a specific threshold.

<sup>7</sup> See HE Guidance Note:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/highereducation/sfwp/sfwppublications/guidancechapters2012/fcf1112/?lang=en>

<sup>8</sup> See FE Guidance Note: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/financialfund/?lang=en>

11. What are your views on the type of activities and provisions being funded via FCF? Are these the right sorts of provisions to be funded?
12. What are your views on the type of students and priority groups being funded via FCF? Are these the most appropriate groups of students to be funded?

#### HE Issues

13. Is it appropriate for FCF to be used to cover HE students' contribution to the cost of childcare when also claiming a statutory childcare grant?
14. Should FCF be used to cover out of hours childcare costs amongst students?
15. Is it appropriate that FCF is used to provide support to NHS funded students?
16. Is FCF being used appropriately to support disabled students?
17. Do you think that HEIs in awarding FCF accommodate the variation in accommodation costs and local rent across Wales?

#### FE Issues

18. What are your views on FEIs making available (and, in some cases, ringfencing) FCF to cover:
  - a. student childcare costs
  - b. student transport costsWhat are the benefits and disadvantages of this approach?
19. What impact does local policy have upon the use of FCF at FEIs?
  - a. Prompt for impact of the variation in the start age for nursery education across Local Authorities
  - b. Prompt for impact of LA policy on providing free transport to students
  - c. Prompt for impact of LA free transport passes to learners with Additional Needs (in receipt of disability living allowance)

#### **E. WfA**

20. How appropriate is it to have a ring-fenced WfA FCF budget and should this continue in the future?
21. How effective are current procedures adopted by HEI/FEIs in managing WfA FCF funds? What improvements, if any, are required?
22. Should WfA FCF funding remain to be administered by individual HEI/FEIs? If not, what alternative model should be explored?

#### **F. NHS Students**

23. How effective are current procedures adopted by HEIs to cater for NHS student applications? What improvements, if any, are required?
24. What difference does the FCF fund have upon NHS students supported?
25. How appropriate is it to make FCF available to NHS students?

#### **G. Welsh Government Guidance and Administration**

26. What are your views on the processes adopted by the Welsh Government to determine institutional FCF funding allocations?
  - a. Should the current formula be revised in any way?
  - b. Should the grant be allocated on a headcount basis?
  - c. How could these processes be made more responsive to changes (such as college mergers, increases/drop in student numbers)?
  - d. What, if any, is the impact upon Institutions (and students) when allocations are announced later than expected?
  - e. How far in advance of the start of the academic year would it be desirable to be notified of the allocations? Why if FCF is a mechanism to respond to unforeseen needs is late notification an issue?
27. Should the FCF grant be paid to HEIs/FEI at stages throughout the year to cater for students who start at times other than September?
28. What are your views on the Welsh Government Annual Guidance Notice for HEIs/FEIs?
  - a. Should these be strengthened or changed at all, and if so, in what way?
  - b. Is the guidance flexible enough?
  - c. Should the guidance be more descriptive or more prescriptive?
29. What are your views on the Welsh Government Annual Monitoring Forms for HEIs/FEIs? Are there any elements which need to be changed or improved?

#### **H. Administration of FCF**

30. How effective are HEI/FEIs at managing and administering FCF? Ask about
  - c. Operation and Effectiveness of Awarding Panels/Committees
  - d. Decision making policies and procedures
  - e. Operational Teams and Staffing
  - f. Appeals Procedures
  - g. Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements
31. Are the arrangements for awarding funds to FE students in HEIs and HE students in FEIs (as well as WfA students in HEIs) appropriate? Would there be more effective ways of managing this?

#### **I. Promotion and Marketing of FCF**

32. How effective are HEIs/FEIs communication and promotional methods to students (and parents where relevant)?
33. Do you think any students are missing out on FCF because they are less well informed about it than other students?
  - a. Why do you say that?
34. How could the promotion of FCF be improved (explore role of other partners such as Student Finance Wales)?

#### **J. Student Application Experience**

35. What are your views on the support and advice provided to students during the FCF application process and the application process as a whole? Are there any elements of the support provided by Institutions which could be improved?
36. What are your views on the financial advisory support made available to FCF supported students by the institutions themselves?
37. How well are students who enrol at different points in the year catered for? What evidence do you have to substantiate this?

#### **K. Impact of FCF**

38. What evidence do you have to show that FCF is making a difference to student participation and retention rates?
  - a. What factors, other than financial ones, result in students withdrawing from their studies?
39. What evidence, if any, do you have to show what would have happened to FCF supported students had they not been able to access FCF?

#### **L. Sharing of Good Practice**

40. How effective do you believe the FCF FE/HE Advisory Groups to be?
41. How can best practice be shared across the sectors?

#### **M. The Future of FCF**

42. Is there still a need for contingency funding to be made available to students studying at Welsh FEIs/HEIs?
43. Should FCF remain a discretionary scheme? Why do you say this?
44. Should FCF, or elements of it, be introduced as a statutory scheme?
  - b. Which elements ought to be introduced as a statutory scheme?
45. Should a statutory fund be introduced, should there be a cap on the funds any single student could access which would take other grants and benefits into consideration?
46. What changes (if any) should be introduced for FCF so as to improve the impact upon students?

47. What are your views on allocating FCF to institutions as part of their core grant funding?
48. Should there be one FCF fund for both HE and FE? Why do you say this?
49. Should students be required to make a contribution towards some of the costs being funded via FCF, and if so, should WG guidance stipulate this?
50. Should institutions be allowed to use funding to subsidise their own childcare/crèche/nursery facilities in the future?
51. What impact, if any, do you envisage that the new student fee structure will have upon the availability, use and administration of FCF?

## **Annex 3: Introductory letter and questionnaire for Welsh for Adult Centres**

[DATE] 2012

At sylw Canolfanau Cymraeg i Oedolion

### **GWERTHUSIAD O'R GRONFA ARIANNOL WRTH GEFN**

Comisiynwyd Old Bell 3 i gynnal gwerthusiad o'r Gronfa Ariannol wrth Gefn ar ran Llywodraeth Cymru.

Golyga'r gwaith yma ymgynghori gyda nifer o sefydliadau addysg uwch a phellach yng Nghymru, yn ogystal â myfyrwyr sydd wedi cael profiad o'r Gronfa, gyda'r bwriad o adrodd yn ôl i Lywodraeth Cymru yn gynnar yn 2013.

Fel rhan o'r gwaith yma, yr ydym yn awyddus i gasglu gwybodaeth gan bob Canolfan Cymraeg i Oedolion er mwyn deall sut mae'r Gronfa yn cael ei gweithredu a'r gweithgareddau a ariennir ar hyn o bryd. Fel cam cyntaf, mae Lisa Vranck o Brifysgol Morgannwg wedi cytuno i gasglu dogfennaeth cefndirol ar ein cyfer, gan gynnwys copiau o ffurflenni ymgeisio ar gyfer y Gronfa, a diolchaf ichi am eich cymorth gyda'r elfen yma.

Gofynnaf yn garedig ichi i ddarparu ychydig o wybodaeth ffeithiol am ddefnydd a gweithrediad y Gronfa yn eich Canolfan chi ar hyn o bryd. Byddwn yn gwerthfawrogi petai modd i chi ateb y cwestiynau dilynol a dychwelyd y ddogfen yma ataf i, Nia Bryer, trwy e-bost ([nia@oldbell3.co.uk](mailto:nia@oldbell3.co.uk)) erbyn diwedd mis Medi 2012.

Mae'n fwriad gennym yn ogystal i gyfarfod â chynrychiolwyr o'r Canolfannau ar y cyd yn ystod tymor yr hydref er mwyn adeiladu ar yr wybodaeth yma.

Yn y cyfamser, mae croeso i chi gysylltu â mi os fydd angen unrhyw gymorth arnoch i gwblhau'r holiadur.

Gyda diolch am eich cymorth,



**NIA BRYER**

Cyfarwyddwr, Old Bell 3 Cyf.

**GWYBODAETH GEFNDIROL**

Enw'r Ganolfan Cymraeg i Oedolion	
Enw'r Swyddog	
Nifer ymrestrïadau myfyrwyr CiO fu yn eich Canolfan yn ystod 2011/12	

**DYRIANIAD ARIANNOL**

Faint o ddyraniad a gafodd eich Canolfan CiO gan Lywodraeth Cymru drwy'r Gronfa Ariannol wrth Gefn ar gyfer y flwyddyn academaidd 2011/12?	£
Bu'r ffigur yma'n gyson dros y dair blynedd ddiwethaf?  Os bu newid i'r gyllideb o gwbl, nodwch sut y newidiodd.	Do/Naddo
A ddefnyddir unrhyw elfen o'r dyraniad blynyddol i dalu am gostau gweinyddu'r Gronfa?  Os a ddefnyddir, nodwch y gyllideb a ddefnyddiwyd yn ystod 2011/12 ar gyfer hyn.	£
A ddefnyddir unrhyw elfen o'r dyraniad blynyddol i dalu am gostau hyrwyddo'r gronfa?  Os a ddefnyddir, nodwch y gyllideb a ddefnyddiwyd yn ystod 2011/12 ar gyfer hyn.	£
Faint o'r dyraniad ariannol ar gyfer 2011/12 a ddosbarthwyd i fyfyrwyr CiO yn ystod y flwyddyn honno?  Rhowch reswm am unrhyw dan-wariant a nodwch beth ddigwyddodd i'r tan-wariant os gwelwch yn dda	£
A ydych yn clustondi rhan o'r dyraniad ariannol ar gyfer unrhyw weithgareddau penodol (e.e. costau teithio myfyrwyr, costau gofal ayyb)?  Nodwch pa weithgareddau yw'r rhain a'r swm yr ydych fel arfel yn ei glustodi ar gyfer y gweithgaredd.	
Pa ganran o'r dyraniad ariannol blynyddol sydd yn cael ei benodi cyn neu yn ystod y tymor academaidd cyntaf?	

**HYRWYDDO**

Sut ydych yn hyrwyddo'r Gronfa i fyfyrwyr? (e.e. drwy diwtoriaid, wrth ymrestru ayb)	
A ydych yn dosbarthu taflen farchnata am y Gronfa i fyfyrwyr CiO?	Ydym/Nac Ydym
A yw eich ffurflenni ymgeisio ar gyfer y Gronfa ar gael	Ydynt/Nac ydynt

ar eich gwefan?	
-----------------	--

### CEISIADAU

Pa mor aml mae ceisiadau ar gyfer y Gronfa yn cael eu hasesu? (e.e. unwaith neu ddwywaith y flwyddyn)	
Pwy sy'n gyfrifol am asesu'r ceisiadau?	
Tua faint o geisiadau a dderbynnir yn flynyddol ar gyfer y Gronfa o blith eich myfyrwyr CiO?	
Faint o grantiau a ddyranwyd gennych yn ystod 2011/12?	
A fu unrhyw newid yn y nifer o geisiadau am y gronfa a dderbyniodd eich Canolfan CiO dros y blynyddoedd diweddar?	
Beth sydd yn gyfrifol am y newidiadau yma?	
A oes isafswm i'r grant y medrid ymgeisio amdano ac os oes, beth yw'r ffigur yma?	
A oes uchafswm i'r grant (neu uchafswm am weithgaredd penodol) mewn lle ac os oes, beth yw'r ffigur yma?	

### DEFNYDD Y GRONFA

Pa rai o'r gweithgareddau/costau canlynol y cafodd y Gronfa ei ddefnyddio ar eu cyfer yn ystod 2011/12?		
Byddai'n ddefnyddiol petai modd i chi nodi'r gyllideb a wariwyd ar bob un o'r gweithgareddau canlynol (mae croeso i chi ychwanegu gweithgareddau eraill fel bo angen):	A ariannwyd y rhain? (Do/Naddo)	Gwariant ar y rhain:
Costau teithio myfyrwyr		£
Costau gofal plant		£
Costau cyrsiau preswyl		£
Costau cyrsiau dysgu anffurfiol eraill (e.e. sesiynau siarad)		£
Costau deunyddiau dysgu (e.e. llyfrau ychwanegol)		£
Costau caledi neu sefyllfaoedd argyfyngus myfyrwyr		£
		£
		£
Os ydych yn talu costau teithio drwy'r Gronfa beth y medrid eu hawlio (e.e. lwfans milltiroedd, costau cludiant cyhoeddus ayyb)?		
Oes gennych bolisi ar gostau gofal y medrid eu hawlio gan fyfyrwyr drwy'r Gronfa? (e.e. a oes angen i'r myfyrwyr gyfrannu canran o'r gost). Os		

oes, rhowch fanylion os gwelwch yn dda.	
A oes unrhyw elfen o'r dyraniad ariannol yn cael ei gyflwyno fel benthyciad yn hytrach na grant?	
Os oes, rhowch fanylion os gwelwch yn dda.	
A ydych yn ariannu 100% o gostau'r cais a wneir ar gyfer y Gronfa neu a oes disgwyl i fyfyrwyr wneud cyfraniad ariannol eu hunain tuag at y costau? Rhowch fanylion pellach os yn addas.	

#### **MYFYRWYR SY'N ELWA**

Pa grwpiau o fyfyrwyr CiO sydd mwyaf tebygol o wneud cais ar gyfer arian drwy'r Gronfa (e.e. myfyrwyr anabl, rhieni, henoed, myfyrwyr cyrsiau dwys ayyb)?	
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#### **EFFAITH AR FYFYRWYR**

Beth ydi'r raddfa ymadael ymlith myfyrwyr CiO? Nodwch y raddfa ymadael ar gyfer:	
a) Myfyrwyr CiO yn gyffredinol yn eich sefydliad	a)
b) Myfyrwyr CiO sy'n derbyn arian o'r gronfa?	b)

## Annex 4: Topic Guide for FCF Student Recipients

### INTRODUCTION

- Thank you for agreeing to talk to me as part of our evaluation of the Financial Contingency Fund.
- As part of this Evaluation, we are consulting with a range of people including HEI and FEI representatives and students who have had experience of FCF with a view to reporting back to the Welsh Government early in 2013. This important evaluation will help inform Welsh Government thinking about the future of the Fund, in the context of the significant financial pressures on the student finance budget.
- Your institution has been selected as a case study institution so we are interviewing a range of staff and students during our visit today.
- The areas I'd like to discuss with you today include:
  - How you got to hear about FCF and why you applied for it;
  - What you thought of the application process;
  - What difference the funds have made to you;
  - What you would have done had you not had the funding;
- We will not attribute anything you say to you by name in the final published report although we may identify anonymised examples. I'd also like to ask each of you not to talk to other people outside the room about any personal information which other participants give in the course of the discussion.
- We will give you £10 to cover your time and costs in attending this session provided that you complete a participation form to acknowledge that you attended and have received the money.
- Should you wish to do so, you are free to leave at any time during this discussion.
- Should you have any concerns about this session or wish to make a complaint you can do so by contacting Nia Bryer of Old Bell 3 on 01558 822922 or by e-mail [nia@oldbell3.co.uk](mailto:nia@oldbell3.co.uk)
- Do you have anything you want to ask before we start?

The contact person at Old Bell 3 is Nia Bryer 01558 822922.

The contact person in the Welsh Government is Julie Owens 0300 062 5484.

**[Please print this form for each student and get them to complete it at the start of each focus group. Use either the HE or FE section as appropriate.]**

Thank you for participating in this focus group. Please read and complete this form before handing it back to your facilitator in order to receive £10 payment to cover any costs associated in attending this focus group.

**HE STUDENTS**

Name	
Course Subject	

Are you studying:	<input type="checkbox"/> Full time <input type="checkbox"/> Part time
Are you an under or post graduate?	<input type="checkbox"/> An under graduate <input type="checkbox"/> A post graduate
Are you currently in your first, second or final year?	<input type="checkbox"/> First <input type="checkbox"/> Second <input type="checkbox"/> Third year of study
How old are you?	
How much FCF award did you receive?	
Was this FCF award made in:	<input type="checkbox"/> 2011/12 <input type="checkbox"/> 2012/13
In which month did you submit your FCF application?	
Have you received any of the following grants or loans	<input type="checkbox"/> Assembly Learning Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Special Support Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Tuition Fee Loans <input type="checkbox"/> Tuition Fee Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance Loans <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance Grants <input type="checkbox"/> Disabled Students' Allowance <input type="checkbox"/> Student Childcare Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Parent's Learning Allowance <input type="checkbox"/> Adults Dependant's Grant <input type="checkbox"/> University or College Bursaries <input type="checkbox"/> Other grants or loans – please specify _____

**FE STUDENTS**

Name	
Course Subject	

Are you studying:	<input type="checkbox"/> Full time <input type="checkbox"/> Part time
How old are you?	
How much FCF award did you receive?	
Was this FCF award made in:	<input type="checkbox"/> 2011/12 <input type="checkbox"/> 2012/13
In which month did you submit your FCF application?	
Have you received any of the following grants or loans	<input type="checkbox"/> Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) <input type="checkbox"/> Assembly Learning Grant <input type="checkbox"/> College Bursaries <input type="checkbox"/> Other grants or loans – please specify _____

DISCLAIMER: I understand that I am responsible for any tax or benefit liabilities arising from the receipt of this sum.			
Signature		Date	

1. First of all tell me a little about yourselves – such as study subject, career aspirations, whether you work part time as well as study.
2. Why in general terms did you need to apply for FCF? [Distinguish between planned activities and hardship provision].
  - a. What did you intend to use the funding for?
  - b. How did you intend to pay for these costs prior to coming to university/college?
3. A. To what extent were you considering dropping out from the University or College when you made your application OR  
  
B. What bearing did being able to receive the FCF funds upfront have upon your decision to attend the College/University?
4. How did you get to hear about the FCF?
  - a. Had you applied for, and/or received FCF funds in previous years?
5. How easy or otherwise was it to find out about FCF?
  - a. (if relevant) How could the promotion of FCF be improved?
6. What did the application process involve?
  - a. What support and advice did you get from the University or College when applying for FCF?
  - b. Did you get support or advice from anyone else to complete the application form? If so who?
  - c. How easy or difficult was the application form to complete? Why do you say this?
  - d. What did you think of the Guidance provided in completing the application form?
7. How long did it take for your application to be approved?
  - a. Was the timescale acceptable?
8. Did you know that there was an appeals procedure in place if your application was turned down?
9. Did you have to appeal against an initial unsuccessful decision?
  - a. If so, what did you think of the appeals procedure?
10. Did the FCF meet the full costs of meeting the need which prompted your application?
  - a. If not, was it clear in advance that you needed to meet part of the cost yourself?
  - b. Were you awarded funding for the full amount you requested?
  - c. How did you make up any shortfall in funds?

11. What difference did the FCF fund make to you and your ability to study at the institution?
12. How does your experience of FCF compare with other Student Financial Support (such as Student Finance Wales) that you may have accessed?
13. Do you think FCF should continue to be made available in the future? Why do you say this?
14. What is your financial situation like now?
  - a. How is your current financial situation likely to affect your studies?
15. Is there anything else you wish to say about the FCF?

## Annex 5: Topic Guide for FCF Unsuccessful Student Applicants

### INTRODUCTION

- Thank you for agreeing to talk to me as part of our evaluation of the Financial Contingency Fund.
- As part of this Evaluation, we are consulting with a range of people including HEI and FEI representatives and students who have had experience of FCF with a view to reporting back to the Welsh Government early in 2013. This important evaluation will help inform Welsh Government thinking about the future of the Fund, in the context of the significant financial pressures on the student finance budget.
- Your institution has been selected as a case study institution so we are interviewing a range of staff and students during our visit today.
- The areas I'd like to discuss with you today include:
  - How you got to hear about FCF and why you applied for it;
  - What you thought of the application process;
  - The reasons why an award was not made;
  - What you have done in the absence of the funds;
- We will not attribute anything you say to you by name in the final published report although we may identify anonymised examples. I'd also like to ask each of you not to talk to other people outside the room about any personal information which other participants give in the course of the discussion.
- We will give you £10 to cover your time and costs in attending this session provided that you complete a participation form to acknowledge that you attended and have received the money.
- Should you wish to do so, you are free to leave at any time during this discussion.
- Should you have any concerns about this session or wish to make a complaint you can do so by contacting Nia Bryer of Old Bell 3 on 01558 822922 or by e-mail [nia@oldbell3.co.uk](mailto:nia@oldbell3.co.uk)
- Do you have anything you want to ask before we start?

The contact person at Old Bell 3 is Nia Bryer 01558 822922.

The contact person in the Welsh Government is Julie Owens 0300 062 5484.

**[Please print this form for each student and get them to complete it at the start of each focus group]**

Thank you for participating in this focus group. Please read and complete this form before handing it back to your facilitator in order to receive £10 payment to cover any costs associated in attending this focus group.

**HE STUDENTS**

Name	
Course Subject	
Are you studying:	<input type="checkbox"/> Full time <input type="checkbox"/> Part time
Are you an under or post graduate?	<input type="checkbox"/> An under graduate <input type="checkbox"/> A post graduate
Are you currently in your first, second or final year?	<input type="checkbox"/> First <input type="checkbox"/> Second <input type="checkbox"/> Third year of study
How old are you?	
How much FCF funds did you request?	
Was your FCF application made in:	<input type="checkbox"/> 2011/12 <input type="checkbox"/> 2012/13
In which month did you submit your FCF application?	
Have you received any of the following grants or loans	<input type="checkbox"/> Assembly Learning Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Special Support Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Tuition Fee Loans <input type="checkbox"/> Tuition Fee Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance Loans <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance Grants <input type="checkbox"/> Disabled Students' Allowance <input type="checkbox"/> Student Childcare Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Parent's Learning Allowance <input type="checkbox"/> Adults Dependant's Grant <input type="checkbox"/> University or College Bursaries <input type="checkbox"/> Other grants or loans – please specify _____

**FE STUDENTS**

Name	
Course Subject	
Are you studying:	<input type="checkbox"/> Full time <input type="checkbox"/> Part time
How old are you?	
How much FCF funds did you request?	
Was your FCF application made in:	<input type="checkbox"/> 2011/12 <input type="checkbox"/> 2012/13
In which month did you submit your FCF application?	
Have you received any of the following grants or loans	<input type="checkbox"/> Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) <input type="checkbox"/> Assembly Learning Grant <input type="checkbox"/> College Bursaries <input type="checkbox"/> Other grants or loans – please specify _____

<p><b>DISCLAIMER:</b> I understand that I am responsible for any tax or benefit liabilities arising from the receipt of this sum.</p>			
Signature		Date	

1. First of all tell me a little about yourself – such as study subject, career aspirations, whether you work part time as well as study.
2. Why in general terms did you need to apply for FCF? [Distinguish between planned activities and hardship provision].
  - a. What did you intend to use the funding for?
  - b. How did you intend to pay for these costs prior to coming to University/College?
3. A. To what extent were you considering withdrawing from the University of College when you made your application
4. How did you get to hear about the FCF?
  - a. Had you applied for, and/or received FCF funds in previous years?
5. How easy or otherwise was it to find out about FCF?
  - a. (if relevant) How could the promotion of FCF be improved?
6. What did the application process involve?
  - a. What support and advice did you get from the University or College when applying for FCF?
  - b. How easy or difficult was the application form to complete? Why do you say this?
  - c. What did you think of the Guidance provided in completing the application form?
7. How long did it take for your application to be processed? Was the timescale acceptable?
8. Why was your application turned down? What did you think of these reasons?
9. Did you know that there was an appeals procedure in place for applicants who were turned down?
10. Did you appeal against the decision at all? If so, what did you think of the appeals procedure?
11. How did you/are you covering the costs of the provisions for which you originally applied for FCF funds?
12. Did you apply for funding elsewhere? If so, can you provide some details?
13. Were you redirected by the College or University to any alternative sources of funding or advice? If so please provide some details.

14. Did you seek advice from any other sources and if so, which sources did you use?
15. What is your financial situation like now?
  - a. How is your current financial situation likely to affect your studies?
16. Is there anything else you wish to say about the FCF?