

Senedd Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

Ymchwiliad i effaith argyfwng Covid-19 ar
blant a phobl ifanc yng Nghymru

COV 66
Ymateb gan: Grŵp Colegau NPTC

Welsh Parliament
Children, Young People and Education Committee

Inquiry into the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on
children and young people in Wales

COV 66
Response from: NPTC Group of Colleges

On the 20th March 2020 further education moved teaching and learning on line as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our Student Services team immediately identified its target groups for additional support, over and above the day to day contact from their tutors.

- Young Adult Carers and Carers
- LACs and CLs
- Students with significant wellbeing concerns
- Armed forces veterans and children of armed forces personnel
- Student with criminal convictions and supported by the youth justice services
- Students with ALN

This group has subsequently grown as the pandemic has grown and there are significantly more learners needing additional support as a result of family / personal changing situations.

The Wellbeing and the Study Coach Teams share with Heads and Deputy Heads of School at the regular Student Support meetings, which have continued, to ensure any concerns identified by tutors are communicated and followed up. The *School at Risk Lists* are dynamic and are added to and taken away from depending on the reviewed circumstances of individual students.

A new studentsupport@nptcgroup.ac.uk inbox has been created that is used on all publicity and is manned by a large team of staff who direct incoming enquiries to the most appropriate individuals

Any safeguarding concerns are dealt with immediately and referred if necessary to the appropriate agencies.

The college runs an engagement monitor which is analysed weekly, any non-engagement for unknown reasons are followed up by the Wellbeing team. A key aspect of the log is for the identification of any wellbeing / disengagement concerns. Issues that are identified in respect of individual students are passed on to the students support team to address. A

summary report is prepared on a weekly basis. In the past week, the college knows that 72.5% of its students are engaging with the College for learning and support which is down from a high of 89.5%

From the College perspective this shows that students potentially become more vulnerable as time goes on, they are identified and supported and the dynamic nature of the College *At Risk List* is maintained through the new and revised remote working arrangements.

Initially the college identified 211 at risk students of these 46 students considered to be of most concern to us. This has now gone up to 242 students and it is expected that now the student engagement monitor is fully implemented the number will rise rapidly over the next two weeks. In respect of the 242 students more than 700 individual contacts have been made.

The Counselling team continue to offer a high level of service by contacting clients by telephone and email. Additional information has been made available on Moodle to assist students with the referral process and the team are working closely with the Wellbeing and Study Coach Teams. The team are currently supporting 36 students per week with scheduled remote appointments. Since Easter there have been 5 new referrals and currently there are no students waiting for counselling support.

The Colleges Resilience Officer has developed and run resilience workshops to students. To date 11 have been delivered with good feedback. A further three workshops have been planned for construction students. There is an increasing demand from teaching teams for this type of support for students who wouldn't otherwise need access to the support services.

Until recently the request for IT has been quiet but as time progresses we have received more requests as families struggle with poor equipment, poor broadband or phones and the sharing of devices amongst family members coping with working and schooling from home. A large number of students report that worries over the lack of education appropriate IT and internet access and not being able to engage in learning and support is causing increased anxiety levels. The college has ordered 150 additional devices and associated technology support which will be delivered before the end of May.

A number of adult students report they are finding it increasingly challenging to be able to support their children through home schooling and to be able to participate fully and at the designated time slots with their own college learning. Where this is raised tutors are supportive and make alternate arrangements. The reported difficulties do indicate increased levels of anxieties and worries about not completing courses.

Students becoming estranged from their families - a few students have requested support because of family breakdown at this time. The College has linked with its supporting agencies to find accommodation and has put in its own full financial and wellbeing support package. During this time the student becomes disengaged in learning.

Feedback from **Young Adult Carers** - they indicate they are feeling more isolated and the responsibility for caring has intensified for them during the lockdown. To support them, the College provides a minimum of weekly one to one contact with an identified Wellbeing Team member. To date two additional students have identified themselves as being Young Adult Carers.

In conclusion for many learners and particularly students on foundation programmes and those from the supported groups, the College is their safe space. They spend 5 out of the 7 days each week with friends and with highly supportive teaching and support teams. The time spent away from the College environment and these support networks is now causing challenges to them both educationally and socially. By far the most reported issue for students at this time is social isolation.