

FE Lecturer Workload Review: reflections and next steps

Event 2: Attendance management, behaviour and learner wellbeing

Bridgend College, STEAM Academy,
Pencoed

8 February 2024

Aims for the day

- (i) To share the outcomes and recommendations from the Digging In project.
- (ii) To share the outcomes of the collaborative project on attendance management and monitoring, completed in June 2023.
- (iii) To explore the underlying reasons for excess workload associated with attendance management, learner behaviour, wellbeing and support in the FE sector.
- (iv) To share progress being made by colleges as part of their local workload action plans in relation to attendance management, learner behaviour, wellbeing and support.
- (v) To explore the potential for further collaborative work by the FE sector to improve attendance management and learner wellbeing, and alleviate related workload pressures.
- (vi) To identify practical actions and next steps at local and national levels.

Task for delegates before the event

- Review your local workload action plan and outputs from any groups that have been set up to look specifically at attendance management and monitoring
- Bring to the event:
 - Your institution's top three issues relating to attendance management, learner behaviour, wellbeing and support which lead to excess workload – **the more specific, the better**
 - Your institution's policies or strategies for behaviour management and actions that have been taken to manage behaviour
 - The actions that have been taken so far to address these issues
 - Any information you have on the impact of these actions to date

Pre-reading:

Summary of comments from the workforce survey 2023 (Annex A)

Findings and recommendations from collaborative project on attendance management (Annex B)

Recommendations and case studies from the [Digging In project](#) (Annex C)

Agenda

When	What	Who
10.00am	Registration and coffee	
10.30am	Welcome and overview	Kelly Edwards Director of Development, ColegauCymru Viv Buckley Principal & CEO, Bridgend College
10.45am	<i>Digging In</i> project – social partnership and workload reduction	Louise Taylor Lead Consultant Dr. Bev Morris Independent Researcher
11.30am	Workshop 1: Local action plans discussion and feedback	Catherine Lewis Principal, NPTC Group of Colleges
12.45pm	Lunch break	
1.30pm	Outcome of collaborative project: <i>Attendance management</i>	Joe Baldwin Deputy Principal & Project Lead, Bridgend College
2.00pm	Workshop 2: Collaborative solutions and actions	Dave Hagendyk Chief Executive, ColegauCymru
3.15pm	Summary and next steps	Marian Jebb Head of Post-16 Quality, Welsh Government Gareth Lloyd UCU Wales Official Dave Hagendyk Chief Executive, ColegauCymru
3.30pm	CLOSE	

Annex A | FE Workforce survey 2023: Comments relating to attendance management and learner behaviour

The Education Workforce Council undertook a [workforce survey](#) in January-March 2023 on behalf of the FE Workload National Steering Group. The survey included FE lecturers; FE learning support workers; WBL practitioners; and FE business support workers.

Category	Respondents	
	Number of responses	% of registered staff who responded
FE teachers	1413	27.4%
FE learning support workers	355	12.7%
Work-based learning practitioners	419	15.3%
FE business support workers	931	n/a

Open text responses relating to attendance management and learner behaviour:

- *Teaching has become more of an administrative role, this leaves little time to focus on the learning taking place, time is spent dealing with attendance issues, and behaviour issues, and reporting issues twice sometimes 3 times over to management. There is a system used where everything is recorded that managers can access, however spreadsheets have to also be filled out for management convenience, this impacts on our time.*
- *New admin support staff have been appointed e.g. attendance officer however they are unable to get involved with contacting learners until the tutor has contacted them 5 times. Therefore, it is no help.*
- *Most of the time spent by Personal Tutors is dealing with attendance, behaviour, personal problems, learning difficulties, well-being and basic classroom management. Additionally, Personal Tutors are now under pressure to provide regular enrichment activities which again take up many hours of preparation and organization, when the learners are often way behind with their course work... The number of hours allocated to carry out Personal Tutor duties is based on data from 10 years or more ago, and does not reflect the current situation we find ourselves in, nor does it meet the real needs of the learners.*
- *It is getting harder to teach as the behaviour of the majority students is deteriorating and they have a poor work ethic. More time is wasted controlling poor behaviour and less teaching.*

Respondents' suggestions for improvements:

- Include a welfare hour within contact hours for course tutors
- Strengthen policies on learner discipline, make sure that behavioural expectations are clearly explained on induction, and make sure that policies are enforced
- Improve effectiveness and useability of systems for recording learner support and referrals
- Increase numbers of welfare officers
- Shift responsibility for chasing non-attendance from lecturers to support staff

Annex B | Collaborative project 2022/23: Improving Attendance Management and Monitoring to reduce workload

<p>Project aims</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementation of action-based research which will result in key recommendations for all colleges around monitoring and management of attendance in skills pathway lessons 2. Implementation of action-based research which will result in key recommendations for colleges using EBS around effective use of AMM module 3. Case studies of good practice for attendance monitoring 4. Case studies of good practice for attendance management 5. Exemplar policy and guidance for staff 	<p>Partners</p> <p>Bridgend College/Coleg Sir Gâr (lead)</p> <p>Coleg Gwent</p> <p>Coleg y Cymoedd</p> <p>Grŵp Llandrillo Menai</p> <p>The College Merthyr Tydfil</p> <p>NPTC Group of Colleges</p> <p>St David’s Catholic College</p>
<p>Project budget: £26,143</p>	

Project outcomes

The project discovery phase involved an external consultant conducting focus groups with all staff at eight of the participating colleges. The discovery phase identified four themes for further exploration during the project:

- **Digital Systems Integration** and the sharing of good practice.
- **The Attendance/Support Policy** should be clear about the process and lines of responsibility in improving student attendance to avoid duplication of effort. It should also refer strongly to the support/interventions that may be needed to get a student back on track.
- **Additional student attendance management and monitoring roles and structures** brought in by colleges recently beyond lecturing teams should be evaluated on their effectiveness in potentially reducing lecturer workload.
- **Skills staff and classes** were raised by all colleges as a particular student issue. Some colleges are already producing new policies, adapting digital systems or creating data reports to help this team of staff. A further analysis and evaluation of this area is needed to provide an effective system to improve attendance.

The project identified a number of case studies and examples of learner attendance policies, listed in Annex C below. It also produced a [toolkit](#) which provides an overview of the key challenges faced within the FE sector in Wales, along with ideas and insights to help shape and improve provision, support and training.

Annex C | Digging In project: Attendance, behaviour and learner support issues

The [Digging In project](#) was delivered in 2022/23, funded by Welsh Government through a grant agreement with UCU. The project was designed to extend and build on previous funded projects, bringing together related strands of work on staff wellbeing, workload, professional learning, and social partnership.

Delivered by education consultants Louise Taylor and Dr Bev Morris, the project involved working closely with Welsh colleges to:

- Continue to **develop the role of the TU Wellbeing Reps** in three pilot colleges and extend it to two additional colleges.
- **Support project implementation/evaluation or collaborative workload projects** through supportive 'critical friend' activities.
- Support colleges in preparing their final **Local Workload Action Plan reports**.
- **Support** the colleges in developing a **sustainable approach to workload reduction**, through a series of critically reflective focus group and interviews.
- Provide an **overview of good practice** in workload reduction, from across the sector.
- Identify **efficacy and good practice in social partnership working** within the partnerships.
- Identify **challenges and solutions in workload reduction** and **social partnership** working.
- Make **recommendations** based on analysis of qualitative data, gathered through interviews and focus groups, **identifying themes** and **case studies** for dissemination.

Digging In recommendations relating to attendance, behaviour and learner support

- Provide wrap around support roles to filter away time-consuming additional duties from teachers (pastoral support, attendance monitoring and management, examination admin etc).
- Strengthen discipline policies and reinforce standards of acceptable learner behaviour, providing support for lecturers in dealing with poor behaviour.

Resources

Case study 7: [Exploring the Impact of Personal Development and Progression Coaches Pilot – Bridgend College](#)

Case study 8: [Attendance officers – The College Merthyr Tydfil](#)

Case study 9: [Providing support for learners and lecturers – Attendance Officers and Pastoral/Progress Coaches – Gower College Swansea](#)

Case Study 10: [Piloting the EBS Attendance Management and Monitoring module – Coleg Sir Gâr](#)

[Resource: Tackling learner attendance](#)