



The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP
Secretary of State for Education

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25 January 2024

Dear Lord Wharton,

Guidance to the Office for Students on the use of £10m from the Higher Education Strategic Priorities Grant (SPG) for the 2023-24 Financial Year

I noted in my guidance to the OfS on 30 March 2023, concerning the Strategic Priorities Grant, that I would write to you once we were clear how to best deploy the funding that I requested be set aside in case it were required for emerging priorities (£5m) and the preparation for the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (£5m).

It is an absolute priority for this Government that students receive the effective mental health and wellbeing support they need to allow them to flourish in their studies. We want higher education providers to make mental health a priority and to learn lessons from suspected student suicides and attempted suicides to prevent further tragedies.

I also recognise that the cost of living continues to impact students in higher education, and that demands on providers' hardship funds have increased.

Therefore, I ask that the £10m of aforementioned budget be allocated to support student access and participation in a way which will enable HE providers to make local decisions about how best to use this funding to enhance their efforts to support students in financial hardship, promote students' mental health and prevent suicides. This funding should be treated as one-off temporary additional support.

Yours sincerely,

The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP
Secretary of State for Education