

TrACE CASE STUDY: Coleg Gwent

Coleg Gwent is one of Wales's largest and top performing further and higher education colleges across five campuses offering a wide range of part-time and full-time academic and vocational courses. Coleg Gwent promotes the core values of respect for all, solutions driven, always learner first and act with integrity as well as a diversity charter and TrACE culture.

Changes made in line with the TrACE Toolkit

Policies and procedures



As a result of implementing the TrACE Toolkit, Coleg Gwent changed its Learner Disciplinary Policy (May 2021) to a 'Behaviour' policy (March 2024).

The emphasis of the earlier Disciplinary Policy was on the procedure of disciplining students, using a system of raising concerns in the first instance, followed by a 1st formal warning (yellow card) a 2nd formal warning (red card) and finally at the 3rd stage, a disciplinary hearing. This disciplinary system was set within the context of the college providing a safe and orderly learning environment for all learners with the understanding that they are more likely to behave well if they are in an environment where they feel respected and capable.

In contrast, the Behaviour Policy of March 2024 uses restorative approaches rather than punishment to address negative behaviour, ensuring that all learners are treated fairly, are shown respect and are supported to develop life skills for learning. The behaviour expectations are linked to the 3 college values of 'Be Respectful, Be Ready, Be Safe'. In this policy, the guidance for managing learner behaviour is all around the modelling of expected behaviour by staff; for example, being aware of one's own moods and triggers, taking time to greet and smile at learners, being visible, not shouting, and engaging in reflective dialogue with learners. Praise for positive behaviour is encouraged, whilst negative behaviour can be reminded of in private; respectfully and fairly.

In interviews with Coleg Gwent staff, most mentioned that the college has revised its Behaviour Policy to focus on support rather than punishment. They explained how the approach now emphasises understanding the reasons behind behaviour and offering help to prevent future issues. The ethos of being 'respectful, ready, safe' has been introduced to all learners and staff and was described as being aligned with a trauma and ACE-informed approach.

Workforce training and support



The Coleg Gwent staff intranet pages contain a wealth of information around TrACE, including a description of ACEs, education around psychological tools such as ‘the window of tolerance’ and Dan Siegel’s Hand Model¹, signposting to educational videos, posters and guides, reports and leaflets, and links to ACE Hub Wales and other useful internet sites. This provides a rich resource for staff, all in one place.

Additionally, it is through the staff intranet that training in trauma-informed practice can be requested. This can be delivered as bespoke, individual or training in groups. The training on offer covers awareness of ACEs and the impact on behaviour, enabling everyone to recognise their role in a ‘whole college’ trauma and ACE-informed approach; provides techniques and strategies for working with learners and staff who may have experienced trauma and finally a review of college practice to become more trauma-informed.

Coleg Gwent have invested in training a significant proportion of their workforce. The table below highlights that as of June 2024, over 800 members of staff had received TrACE training. In interviews with staff from Coleg Gwent, they noted that the TrACE training was shortened to fit staff schedules so that it did not impact teaching time. Participants also explained that the college are continuing to train all new staff and are keen to further embed online training. During the Ripple Effect Mapping (REM)² session in February 2025, staff described a structured induction process for all new staff who receive training on trauma and ACEs. Staff also have access to refresher training on request.

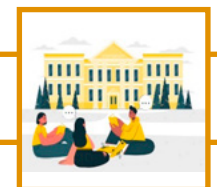
Training snapshot June 2024

	Phase 1	Phase 2
Campus 1	148	35
Campus 2	96	70
Campus 3	30	20
Campus 4	99	86
Campus 5	139	139
TOTALS	512	350

1 [Hand Model of the Brain - Dr. Dan Siegel](#)

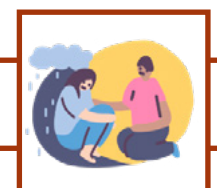
2 This was a session facilitated by the evaluation team with staff members who had been involved in implementing the TrACE Toolkit. The purpose of the session was to understand if and how changes had led to impacts.

Physical environment



Interviews with Coleg Gwent staff suggest some campuses have installed display boards to help students access support more easily. Where possible, and in new builds, campuses are designed to provide large support rooms, reflective spaces and a prayer room. They have carried out surveys to better understand what learners want but admit that they have challenges with how old the buildings are and finding the funding to change them. Several participants mentioned that the physical environment is a work in progress, with a willingness and desire to create more inviting spaces.

Service design and delivery



Interviews with Coleg Gwent staff suggest that the culture has changed to reflect the shift in learning perspectives with trauma in mind. This was said to affect everything they do for the learners and how the learners interact with the college. One mentioned that they're working on embedding support mechanisms across all of the campuses (for learners), such as having a support hub, reception and library, all in the same area, so learners don't have to walk long distances for what they need. In addition, it was mentioned during interviews and the REM session, that various on-site and external services, such as counsellors, sexual health resources, and partnerships with organisations like Mind, are available to students.

Evidence of Impact

Training feedback data

Feedback collected by Coleg Gwent suggests high satisfaction with the training provided. Following TrACE Phase 1 training, 45 evaluation forms were received, of which 69% of staff scored the usefulness of the session at 100%. A further 29% of staff scored the usefulness of the session at 80-90%. Overall 69% declared that they would definitely make changes to their professional practice as a consequence of the training.

Comments suggested the presentation of the session was engaging, with an interesting variety of material (videos, images, stats, card games); *"there were lots of videos and images etc to break up delivery of the course"* and participants were encouraged to take part. The group discussions came in for particular praise; *"discussing with others, listening to others ideas."* Additionally comments spoke highly of the quality of the delivery of the course; *"You were able to make it so interesting and not feel like a chore"* *"Well delivered by 3 members of staff"*.

"There were lots of videos and images etc. to break up delivery of the course."

Student feedback data

Coleg Gwent also provided us with data about the experience of students. Overwhelmingly, learners agreed that the college is a safe place to learn and study.

99% of students feel the college is a safe place to learn and study.

93% of students were aware of the Be Ready, Be Respectful, Be Safe communication campaign.

Staff feedback during the REM session

Staff who took part in the REM session described witnessing a cultural shift in the college, with staff in non-pastoral roles feeling more confident in handling student behaviour. They also commented that staff were more aware of the barriers that learners face, that more students were being referred to appropriate services and that the college had a more welcoming and inclusive environment.