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Dear Convener,

Further to my session with the Committee on 21 June 2023, and Members' interest regarding Scottish Government support for student mental health and wellbeing, I am now writing to provide an update.

I am pleased to inform Members that we will support mental health and wellbeing provision in institutions in Academic Year 23/24, including for counsellor provision where this continues to be their preferred approach. This one-off funding allocation in respect of mental health and wellbeing support in colleges and universities from August 2023 to July 2024 will be £3.21 million.

Making this substantial investment at a time of increasing financial pressure has not been an easy undertaking but one which I know will be welcomed by both sectors.

This is a transitional arrangement to take us towards a future position where student mental health and wellbeing is established as a shared commitment, which meets student needs and integrates with local services.

I have written separately to Universities Scotland, Colleges Scotland, and NUS Scotland to inform them of this decision, and the funds will be released over the course of the Academic Year.

I hope that the Committee finds this update helpful.

**GRAEME DEY**

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