

# SUSTAINABILITY AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT

As a largescale educator and employer, West College Scotland enjoys a prominent regional and national profile. The College recognises and accepts a special responsibility for sustainable development and corporate social responsibility across its activities.

## OUR BUSINESS

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West College Scotland conducts its business in an ethical way, protecting the College's reputation at all times. We work with many businesses and organisations, some of which provide the College with important commercial income through the purchase of training, development and other products.

Before engaging with any third party West College Scotland will undertake due diligence to ensure any formal or informal associations with business, commercial, financial or voluntary organisations are socially responsible and align with our Strategic Objectives; that they promote educational, economic, social or cultural opportunities to our students, staff and local communities; and that they support the regional economy.

## OUR STUDENTS

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As a socially responsible organisation, West College Scotland accepts a special duty for the safety, care and wellbeing of all our students.

Nearly half of our teaching supports students from among the 20 per cent most deprived communities in Scotland. We understand that some of our students will have issues surrounding family breakdown, generational unemployment, poverty and mental health. We respond to these by providing professional services, including Time4U, West College Scotland's free counselling service.

Our Corporate Parenting team supports looked-after young people at College, care-leavers and care-experienced students. In March 2018, our College became the first in the UK to take the **Stand Alone Pledge**. This commits us to promoting greater awareness of and support for students who are estranged from their families.

The College has a range of initiatives and interventions designed to safeguard students, including those with protected characteristics, as defined by the **Equality Act 2010**.

## OUR STAFF

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West College Scotland is one of the largest employers in the West Region and recognises a duty of care to the many teaching and other professional staff who work for us. Their health and wellbeing is a major organisational priority.

The College is a proud recipient of the Healthy Working Lives (HWL) Gold Award and uses HWL's programmes and framework to provide a multi-layered response to the needs of our employees, including physical and mental health. Through events, initiatives and CPD activities, the College promotes a healthy lifestyle to all staff. In 2017, the College won the College Development Network Gold Prize in the Health-Promoting College category.

We are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and support an EDI manager and active committee. We are also committed to an open and honest culture, so that all staff feel comfortable questioning and challenging senior management.

The Poverty Alliance has awarded the College the **Living Wage Employer Mark**. We are also an accredited **Disability Confident Employer** and a **Carer Positive Employer**.

## OUR ENVIRONMENT

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West College Scotland is committed to environmental sustainability, through its policies, its actions and its role as an educator. The College strives to embed sustainability through knowledge, engagement, collaboration and innovation.

The **Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009** imposes on Scottish public bodies certain responsibilities to tackle climate change. Working with the Carbon Trust, the College has agreed a **Carbon Management Plan 2016-21**, designed to reduce our carbon footprint through the reduction of emissions, by recycling materials and improving energy efficiency. We have also adopted a **Sustainability Policy** which describes our operational targets and how we mean to achieve them.

Our approach is supported through procurement policies, staff awareness-raising efforts, the management of our estate and a commitment to reduce staff travel.