West College Scotland
HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

January 2020 – July 2021

WEST COLLEGE SCOTLAND

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

The Human Resources Report provides an update to the Board of Management on a range of activities covered by the Organisational Development and HR Directorate from January 2020 to July 2021. Performance indicators are also included for Organisational Development and HR metrics.

Where possible these indicators are compared externally against relevant data from the Scottish Government, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), Scottish Funding Council (SFC), XpertHR and the Office for National Statistics.

This report covers a 19-month period from January 2020 to July 2021 and going forward will align with academic and financial year.

The Human Resources Report will be circulated to the recognised trade unions and made available to all staff on the College intranet following member review and approval.

1.1 The Impact of COVID-19

As with all organisations, the global COVID pandemic has presented all sorts of challenges in terms of service delivery. The Organisational Development and HR directorate has played a major support role throughout the crisis with every sub function within the team playing their part.

Health and Safety: Providing a range of advice, detailed guidance, organisational/activity-based/individual risk assessments, identifying PPE, responding to issues on site, suggesting solutions to COVID related problems etc.

HR: Processing the individual aspects of furlough, communication with staff and providing support, advising managers on individual issues, adapting HR processing to virtual platforms e.g. recruitment and onboarding processes carried out using Teams.

Payroll: Processing furlough payments and "top ups", processing COVID related expenses.

OD: Enabling the move to online platforms with the provision of appropriate staff learning and development.

Data Protection: Providing advice on the storage and handling of personal COVID-related data.

EDI: Offering workshops relating to vulnerable groups affected by COVID.

2. SUMMARY INFORMATION
2.1 SUMMARY OF KEY HR METRICS

Table 1: HR Metrics

	31 December 2019	31 July 2021	External Benchmark
Headcount	1185	1148	n/a
Staffing costs as a percentage of income	84% (31 July 2020)	82%	n/a
Employee turnover	9.8%	13.1% (18 months)	17.1%*
Male/female ratio	40/60	42/58	39/61**
Percentage of BME staff	1.5%	1.7%	2.2%**
Percentage of staff with a disability	6.9%	6.9%	6.0%**
Sickness absence	5.3%	3.6%	2.8%***
Age bracket highest number of staff	30-49	30-49	30-49****

*Labour Turnover Rates Survey, XpertHR, 2020

**College Staffing Data AY 18/19, SFC, published March 2020

*** Absence Rate and Costs, XpertHR Survey, 2021

**** Scotland's Census, 2011

2.2 HR REPORT SUMMARY

2.2.1 Staffing Profile

The staff headcount as at 31st July 2021 was 1148, 3% down on the previous year of 1185. All recruitment goes through a rigorous approval process which includes a member of the Executive, the Director of Organisational Development and HR and the Director of Finance providing financial approval for the employment request.

The staffing costs as a percentage of income have reduced slightly from 84% at end of July 2020 to 82% at end of July 2021 although staff costs increased £1.8m year on year.

2.2.2 Employee turnover

Employee turnover appears to be higher this year but we are reporting over a longer period so we would expect more staff to leave within that timeframe. Nonetheless our turnover rate for that extended period still looks reasonable compared to the benchmark.

2.2.3 Length of Service

The length of service of the majority of teaching staff is in excess of 10 years which has been the case for many years, but, for support staff, the majority of staff have less than 10 years' service.

2.2.4 Sickness Absence

The sickness absence rate for the reporting period dropped to 3.6% from 5.3% in 2019. This has been the period of the global COVID-19 pandemic with homeworking and furlough likely masking a certain proportion of absences.

2.2.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

This Section provides key highlights of actions we have taken to advance equality, including the development of CPD and tools to enhance practice during remote working, developing an effective response to Gender Based Violence, and showcasing our EDI work to the national FE and HE sectors.

Our equality data compares well with the sector, and there have been indications of positive change, with ongoing incremental increases in the diversity of our staff. We are pleased to note a decrease in the gender pay gap, which is lower than the national benchmark.

2.2.6 Learning & Development

A move to online delivery of curriculum and support services has required a huge effort in providing online face-to-face training, e-learning and other resources relating to Microsoft Teams.

Staff wellbeing has also featured significantly with awareness of mental health issues and mindfulness being key themes and will continue to do so over the coming year. Additional funding has been received to support this area.

2.2.7 Employee Relations

The strike action which took place in the Spring of 2021 by EIS/FELA was the dominating employee relations issue of the reporting period. This was resolved at the end of April with an NJNC agreement.

2.2.8 Resourcing & Talent Planning

The College used the governments furlough scheme for staff who were not able to do their work from home.

The College ran a voluntary severance scheme with 23 staff leaving the College on that basis.

The Catering Team was significantly reduced in size following 16 staff leaving under voluntary severance and 1 being redeployed, reflecting the reduced demand for on-campus catering. The voluntary severance cost £450k and annual savings of £600k (including on-costs) will be delivered as a result.

2.2.9 Health & Wellbeing

The reporting period (January 2020 - July 2021) was one of the most challenging we ever faced, especially as far as Health, Safety and Wellbeing was concerned. As an organisation we reacted very quickly to the demands of the outbreak and we implemented a number of control measures early on, with continuous adjustments and

monitoring thereafter. These now embedded processes are supporting greatly as we start the new academic year.

2.2.10 Data Protection & Freedom of Information

The Data Protection Toolkit continues to track progress in terms of compliance – it is noted that many of these items overlap with the requirements of the Scottish Government's Cybersecurity Framework document, and work will continue to consider these items as requirements for both areas of compliance (data protection and cybersecurity). ICO's recently released Accountability Framework is being assessed, with a view to adoption for tracking the College's accountability work as required by UKGDPR Article 5, (2).

3. COLLEGE HR METRICS
3.1 COLLEGE STAFFING PROFILE

The staff headcount as at 31st July 2021 was 1148. This compares to an end of year figure in 2019 of 1185 which means that headcount in the College continues on a slight downward trend. This is partly due to 23 staff taking voluntary severance and a rigorous approval process before recruitment can be undertaken, including for replacement of leavers.

The staffing profiles shown below (Figures 1 and 2) compare 31st December 2019 and 31st July 2021 headcount figures for Teaching and for support staff.
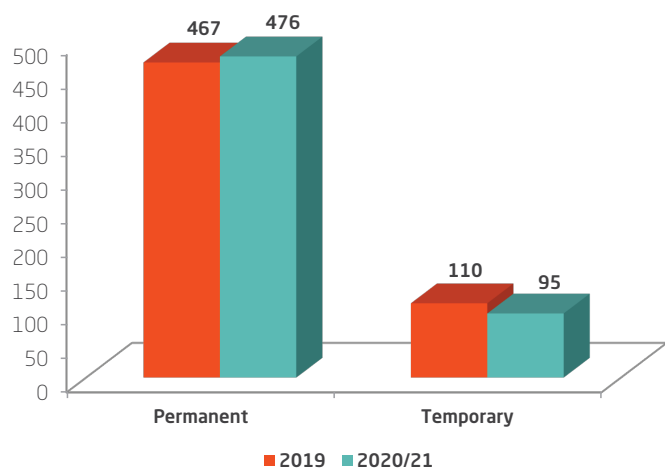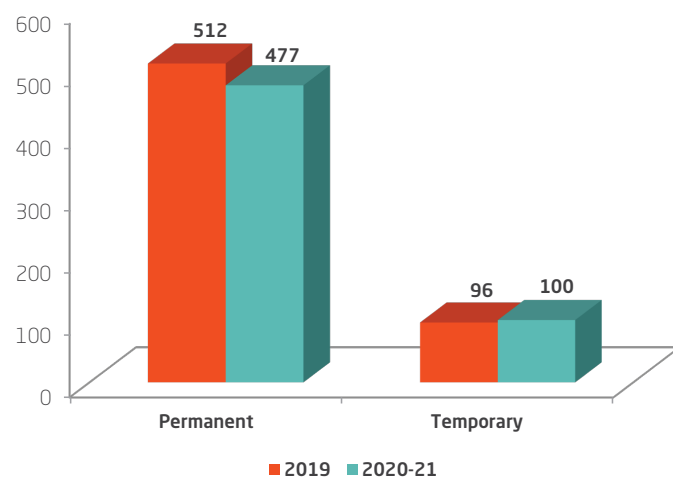
Figure 1: Teaching Staff

Figure 2: Support Staff

There are some migrations from temporary to permanent staffing as lecturers reach two years of continuous service. Overall numbers have been reduced by 4 members of teaching staff leaving under voluntary severance.

Support staff headcount savings have been made from 19 staff taking Voluntary Severance. The Catering Service has contributed to this due to a reduction in demand for catering services driven by an increased range of alternative external provision available, particularly at the Paisley Campus.

3.2 EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

The College average employee turnover (Figure 3) was 13.1% for January 2020 – July 2021 which is higher than 2019, when it was 9.8%. If you pro-rata average employee turnover during this 19 month period, then an equivalent turnover figure for a 12 month period would be 8.3% which is slightly lower than in 2019.

Even with this extended time period, our retention of staff compares favourably with the average rate of employee turnover detailed in the XpertHR Labour Turnover Rates Survey 2020, which was 17.1% for all industries. However, the same survey showed a rate for the public sector alone of 9.5% which is more comparable with our figures

It should be noted that the turnover figures for both support staff and teaching staff does not include those on temporary, fixed term, contracts.

The majority of turnover is attributable to employees leaving voluntarily and the turnover rate is higher amongst support staff (18.2%) than teaching staff (8.0%), reflecting the fact that there are more opportunities for support staff to join other organisations outwith the sector.

Figure 3: Employee Turnover
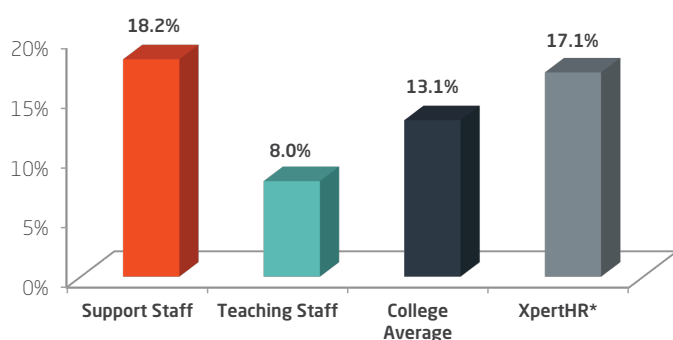
*XpertHR, 2020

The top three reasons for staff leaving West College Scotland between January 2020 and July 2021 are resignation, retirement and voluntary severance (see **figures 4 and 5**).

Figure 4:
Reasons for Teaching Staff Leaving

Figure 5:
Reasons for Support Staff Leaving

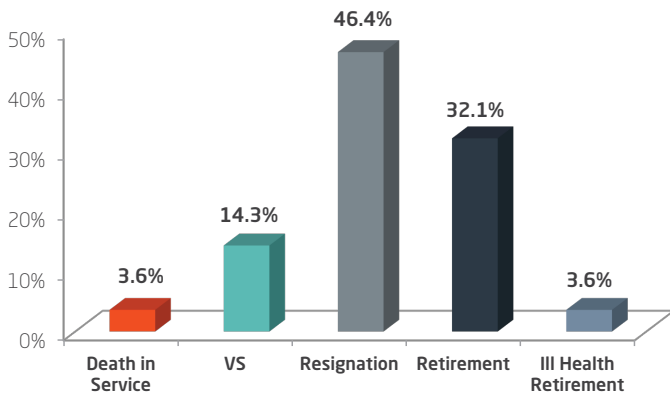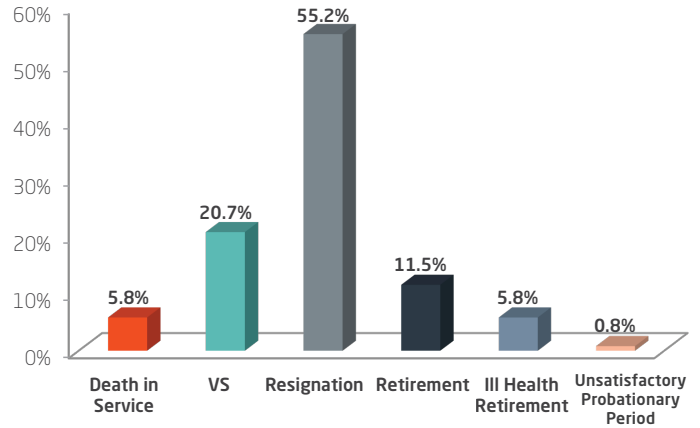Unfortunately we have had some deaths in service that have been linked to the pandemic, despite not having any College outbreaks. All deaths in service have a significant impact on the teams the individual members of staff belonged to and the wider College community they may have worked with. We reflect upon these losses with great sadness and are thankful for the contribution these staff brought to enriching the lives of all within our College community. The Staff Association will be donating a remembrance bench to each campus to allow a place for staff and students to reflect and remember colleagues, reflective of the depth of feeling both among students and staff.

3.3 LENGTH OF SERVICE

The length of service of teaching and support staff are included as Figures 6 and 7. Service is with West College Scotland and does not include previous public sector service.

The length of service of the majority of teaching staff (55.5%) is in excess of 10 years which has been the case for many years, but, for support staff, the majority of staff (53.7%) have less than 10 years service. There are also large differences between clusters on the charts for teaching staff and support staff. For example, after the 0-4 years service peak, there is a large cluster on the teaching chart at 15-19 years service (20.5%) and a large cluster on the support chart at 5-9 years service (21.7%).

The relatively long service amongst West College Scotland employees, particularly teaching staff, could be related to the vocational nature of the teaching profession as well as the competitive terms and conditions of employment in the College Sector such as pension, holidays and flexible working. Long service leads to an ageing workforce over time however we have the opportunity to retain good staff and grow knowledge further. Consequently, as an integral part of the College's workforce planning activity, the implications and opportunities of the long service staffing profile are taken into account.

Figure 6: Length of Service - Teaching Staff (%)

Figure 7: Length of Service - Support Staff (%)
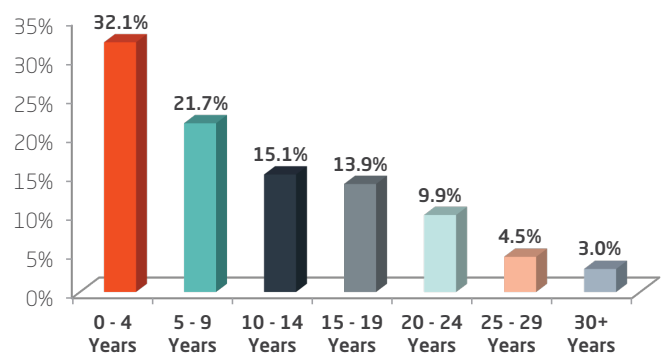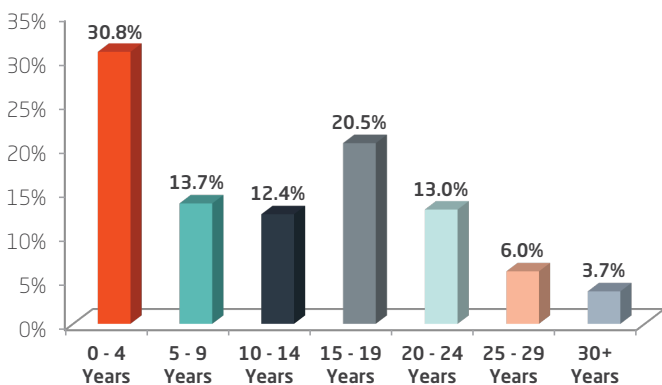
3.4 SICKNESS ABSENCE

3.4.1 Rates of Absence

In reporting on the levels of sickness absence within the College, from 1st January 2020 to 31st July 2021, it is important to highlight that the majority of staff, 61%, have had no sickness absence at all within that timeframe.

The table below illustrates how many staff were affected by increasing instances of sickness absence (note that the staff numbers are in FTE, not headcount).

Table 2: Instances of Sickness Absence

| Instances of sickness absence	Total sick days lost (FTE)	No. of permanent staff (FTE)
0	0	621
1	6287	238
2	3770	109
3	1717	35
4	206	8
5	39	2
6	0	0
7	0	2
8	0	0
9	0	0
10	0	0
11	112	1

3.4.2 Absence Rates

The average level of sickness absence for the period 1st January 2020 - 31st July 2021 was 3.6%. The average level of sickness absence for 2019 was 5.3%. This is a difference of 1.7%.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to measure the extent to which COVID-19 and "stay at home" measures have affected the absence rate. Other organisations who have implemented remote working have also seen a reduction in their sickness absence during the pandemic. We believe that this reduction is due to many factors, including that some individuals working from home, who may have called in sick if they were working from the College premises, decided not to do so as they felt able to work at home; and that the "stay at home" arrangements have reduced the spread of other illnesses, such as seasonal flu resulting in less sickness absence. It could also be that, for some staff, "furlough" has meant they haven't been at work and therefore haven't had sickness absence.

The average level of employee sickness absence for the public sector based on the latest survey from XpertHR (the 2021 Survey based on 2020 figures) was 2.8%. Please note that this is based on the number of days' absence per employee per annum, which is the basis of the West College Scotland figures. Against this figure, the College's current rate of 3.6% is higher but we need to be mindful of the difference in reporting periods – it is not a direct comparison.

The split in percentage absence for teaching and for support staff in 2019 compared to January 2020 to July 2021 is shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Sickness Absence for 2019 compared to January 2020 to July 2021
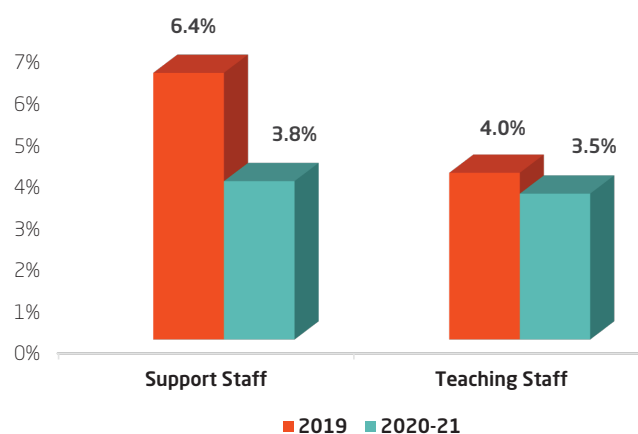
It is easy to see that the absence rate for support staff has varied significantly more than the rate for teaching staff with staff being furloughed thought to be the main factor here.

Staying at home has also made minor illnesses such as absences due to the cold or flu significantly less common, reducing from 62.5% to 49.8% of teaching staff absence and from 62.1% to 53.3% of support staff absence.

3.4.3 Causes of Absence

Short term absence is an absence of less than twenty working days. Long term absence is twenty days or more.

In this Section it should be noted that the percentages (shown in figures 9, 10, 11 and 12) relate to the proportion of overall absence which that cause of absence represents. It is not the percentage of employees affected by that cause of absence.

3.4.3.1 Causes of Short Term absence

The main cause of short term absence within West College Scotland, for both support staff and teaching staff, remains minor illnesses (for example colds/flu, stomach upsets, headaches and migraines). This is overwhelmingly the case for most organisations according to the CIPD Health and Well-being at Work Survey 2020. The 2020 survey also cites musculoskeletal injuries (including back pain, neck strain and repetitive strain injury) and stress as among the top causes of short-term absence.

Figure 9: Short Term Absence (less than 4 weeks) – Teaching

Cause	2019	2020-21
Stress (Work Related)	3.1%	0.8%
Stress (Non Work Related)	2.0%	6.4%
Recurring Medical Condition	5.0%	4.8%
Musculoskeletal	10.6%	13.4%
Minor Illness	62.5%	49.8%
Hospital / Post Operative Recovery	6.1%	8.6%
Bereavement	6.1%	5.2%
Anxiety / Depression (Work Related)	0.0%	0.0%
Anxiety / Depression (Non Work Related)	2.1%	5.1%
Acute Medical Condition	0.0%	4.4%
Accident	1.3%	1.5%
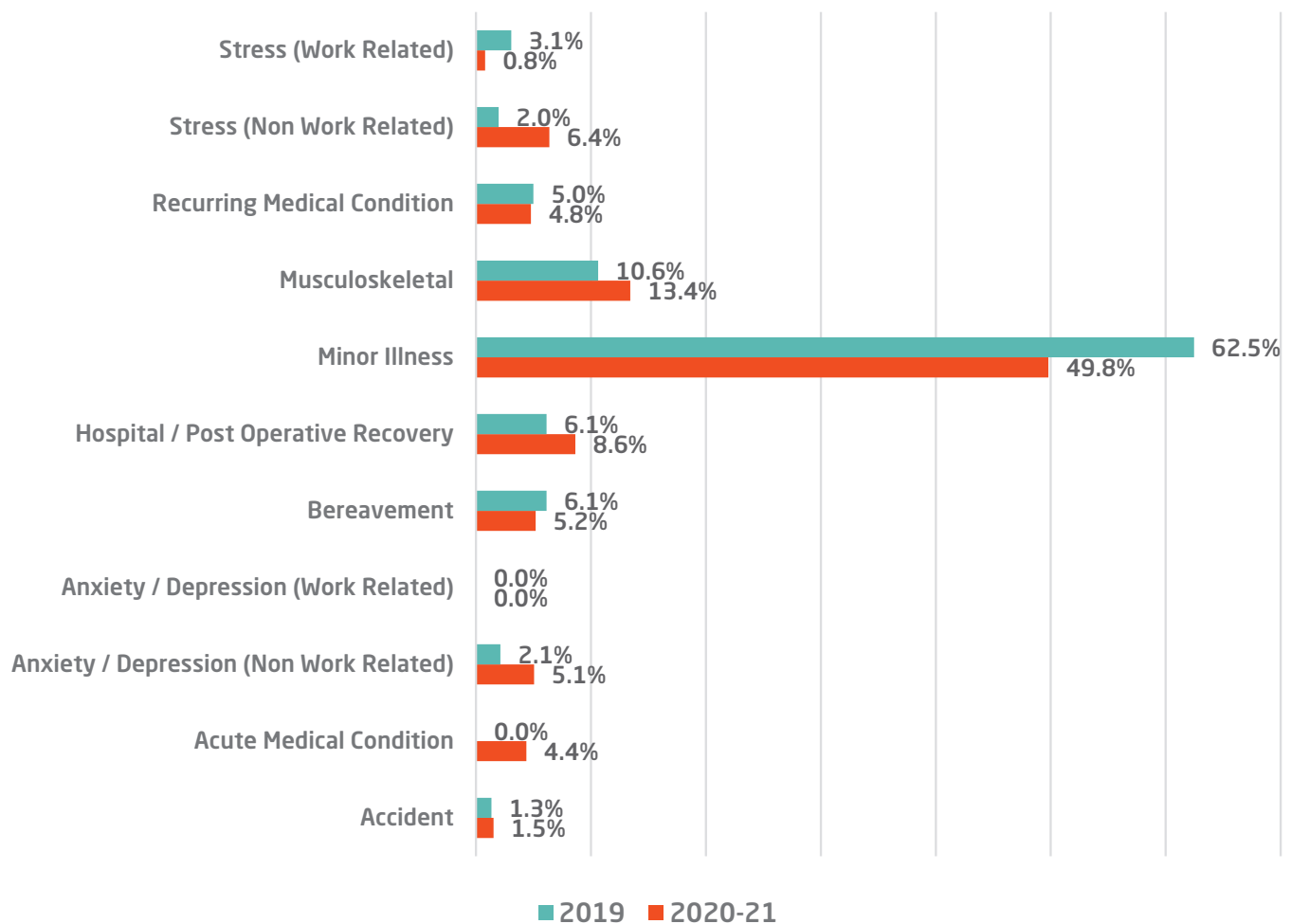
If we look at short term absence reasons for teaching staff in WCS (shown in figure 9) we see that minor illnesses and musculoskeletal are the top two reasons for absence. Hospital/Post-Operative Recovery is at number three, which may reflect the fact that WCS has an ageing workforce. Stress, even if work-related and non-work-related are added together, comes in fourth place.

Figure 10: Short Term Absence (less than 4 weeks) – Support
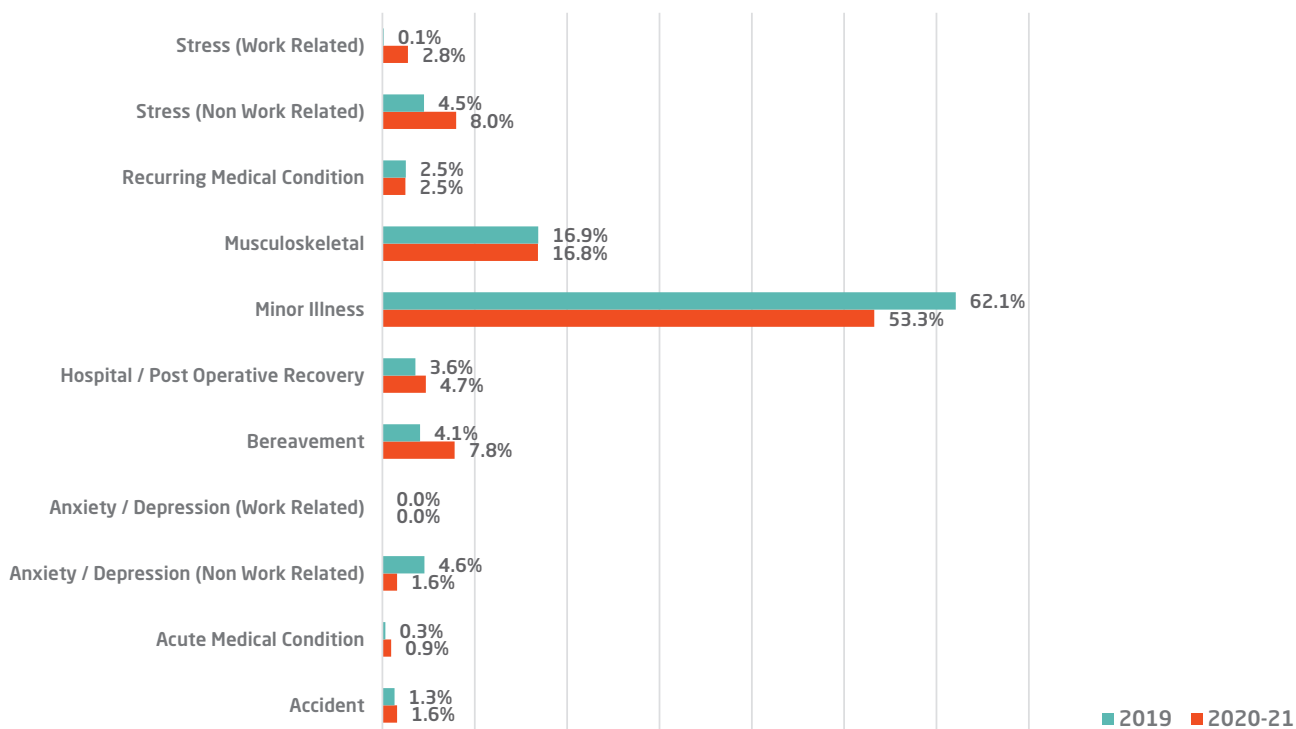
Turning to short term absence for support staff, we see that the top three causes of absence are indicative of the top three nationally, as measured by the 2020 CIPD survey. However, it is important to notice the increasing proportion of short-term absence linked to stress – both work-related and non-work-related.

3.4.3.2 Causes of Long Term Absence

According to the CIPD Health and Wellbeing at Work Survey 2020, the most common cause of long term absence is mental ill health (for example clinical depression and anxiety). This is not the case for West College Scotland, neither for teaching staff, nor for support staff.

Figure 11: Long Term Absence (20 days+) – Teaching
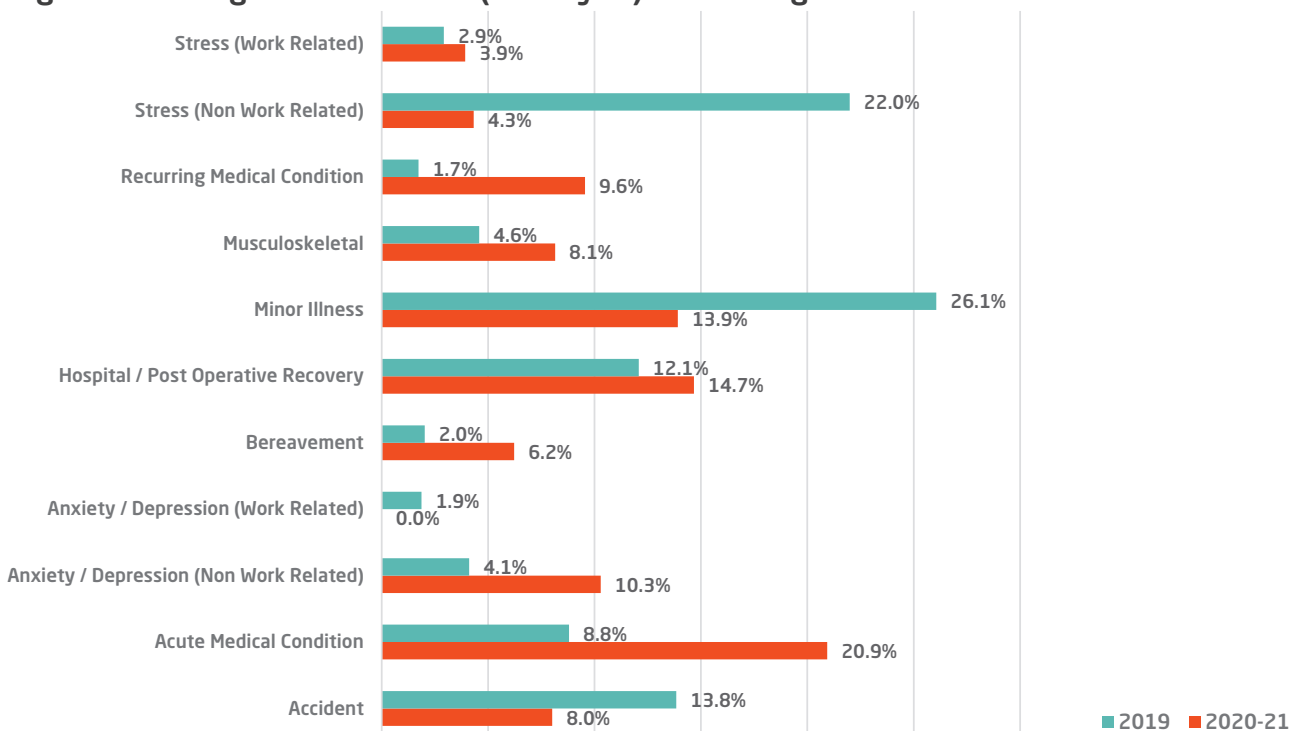
If we look at teaching staff (figure 11) we find that the most common cause of long term absence for teaching staff is acute medical conditions (for example stroke, heart attack and cancer). This is followed by hospital and post-operative recovery and then minor illness, even though the contribution of this cause to overall absence has significantly reduced compared to 2020.

A point of note is the significant reduction in the contribution that non-work-related stress made in long-term absences amongst teaching staff. In 2019 the proportion was 22%. This has dropped to 4.3% during January 2020 – July 2021, however the proportion of absence due to non-work-related Anxiety/Depression has increased from 4.1% in 2019 to 10.3% during January 2020 to July 2021.

Figure 12: Long Term Absence (20 days+) – Support

Legend: 2019, 2020-21

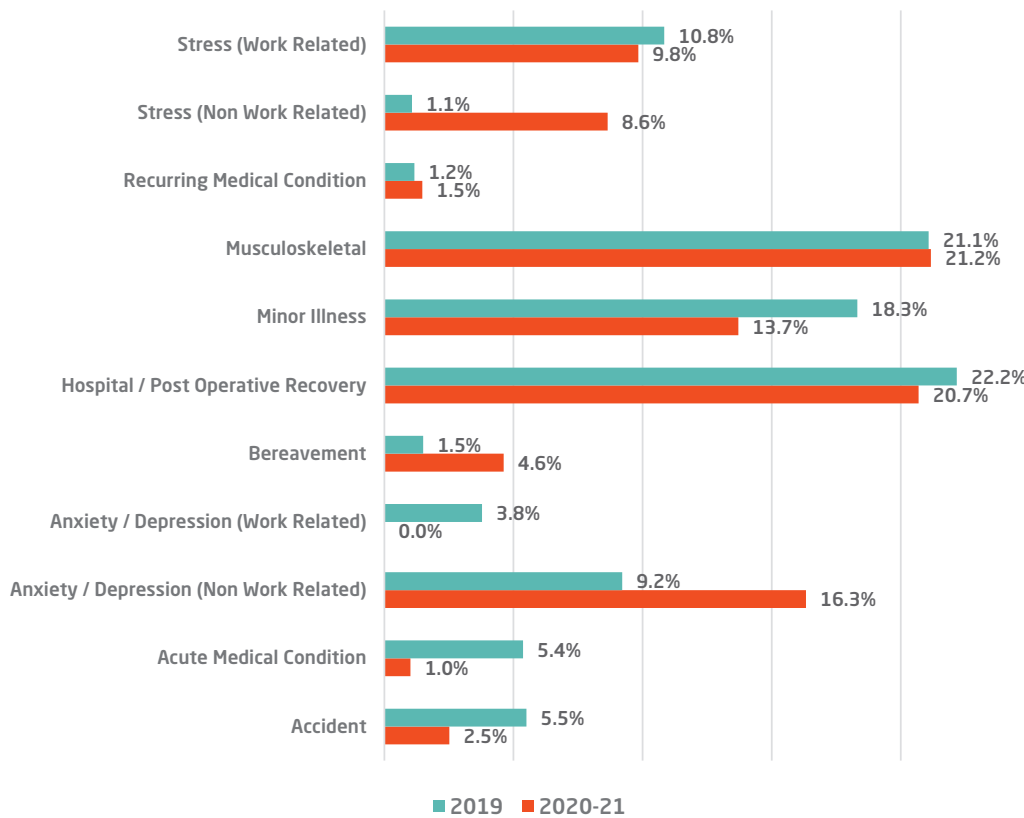| Category	2019	2020-21
Stress (Work Related)	10.8%	9.8%
Stress (Non Work Related)	1.1%	8.6%
Recurring Medical Condition	1.2%	1.5%
Musculoskeletal	21.1%	21.2%
Minor Illness	18.3%	13.7%
Hospital / Post Operative Recovery	22.2%	20.7%
Bereavement	1.5%	4.6%
Anxiety / Depression (Work Related)	3.8%	0.0%
Anxiety / Depression (Non Work Related)	9.2%	16.3%
Acute Medical Condition	5.4%	1.0%
Accident	5.5%	2.5%

Turning to support staff we see that musculoskeletal together with hospital/post-operative recovery are the most significant causes of long term absence. Non-work-related Anxiety/Depression is in third place. This is concerning because it has risen from fifth position in 2019, increasing from 9.2% to 16.3%. It is also worth noting that non-work-related stress has also risen as a proportion of the causes of long-term absence amongst support staff from 1.1% in 2019 to 8.6% in the period January 2020 to July 2021.

4. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

PEOPLE STRATEGY

"We aim to cultivate and maintain an inclusive environment which respects and encourages diversity in all of its activities. We will be proactive in removing barriers to enhance a personalised approach which supports how we adapt and respond to our diverse stakeholders."

4.1 INTRODUCTION

We ask staff to disclose equality data regarding all of the protected characteristics. In this report, we focus on gender, age, race and disability as we are able to benchmark this data within the FE sector. We publish fuller information in our biennial statutory report.

The following information is based upon the headcount of staff as at end of July 2021.

Figure 13: Gender Profile

All Staff
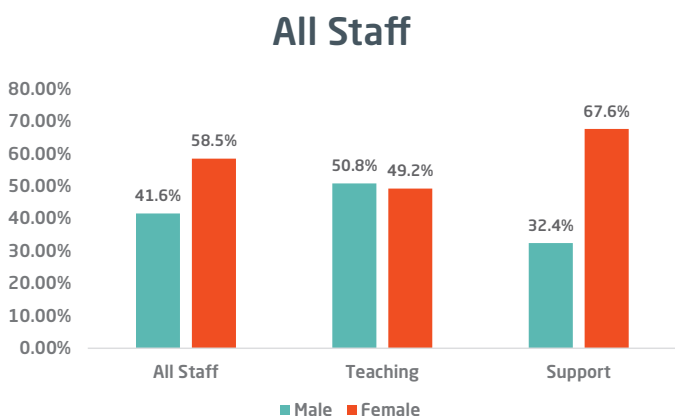
- There has not been a significant change in the overall gender balance of staff, with 58.5% of our staff being female. This is slightly lower than the sector benchmark where females account for 61% of headcount.

- There is a higher rate of proportionality of gender with teaching staff compared with support staff. The current rates are very similar to national demographics, where 51% of the people in Scotland are female.

- The greatest gender imbalance appears in support staff however this is in line with national FE sector data, whereby females account for 68% of non-teaching staff. The SFC report states that nationally the proportion of females has remained the same since 2015 – this is broadly the same for WCS.

Figure 14: Equal Pay Gap

Gender Pay Gap

- The gender pay gap is the difference between average full time equivalent salaries of male and female permanent staff presented as a percentage.

- The College's gender pay gap has decreased by 1.6 pp since December 2019. There has also been a 3.5 pp decrease in Scotland's national pay gap over the same period.

- While the College pay gap compares well with the national pay gap, the Equality and Human Rights Commission advise than any pay gap which exceeds 5% is regarded as "significant". The College has developed an action plan to address this gap, including initiatives to address barriers to career development for female staff and the promotion of flexible working which we will monitor over the coming year to understand effectiveness.
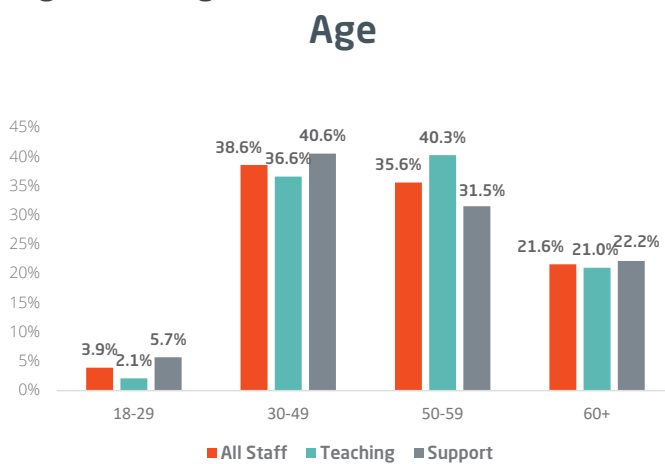
- Looking at the gender pay gap for support staff only, it rises to 9.7%, this is due to two-thirds of this group being female but females only accounting for 40% of senior post holders (Heads of Sector/Department and above), at end of July 2021.

- The College SMT consists of 6 females and 5 males, and a female has been appointed to the vacant Vice Principal position which will increase this to 7 females and will result in an all female Executive team when she starts in August 2021. The other group of senior staff that is impacting most upon the gender pay gap is the Head of Sector/Department level where there are 12 males, 5 females and one vacancy.

- Below support staff grade 9 there are more females than males at every grade and at grade 1 this is 85% female.

- When the gender pay gap is considered for teaching staff it is -0.4%, i.e. the mean female salary is 0.4% higher than the mean male salary. This demonstrates that we have gender equal pay amongst our Teaching Staff.

Figure 15: Age Profile

Age

- The age data shows similar patterns for teaching and support staff. The age bracket with the highest number of staff overall is between 30-49 (38.6%) The second largest age group is aged between 50-59 (35.6%).

- 57.2% of staff are age 50 or older, with 61.3% of teaching staff and 53.7% of support staff being 50 or older.

- The overall age profile has remained largely unchanged since last year.

- The staff age demographics broadly aligns with the sector benchmark.

- The College intends to introduce a more formal Youth Programme in 2021/2022 to build succession for anticipated retirals.

Figure 16: Ethnic Profile

- BAME
- White
- Not Specified

6.2% 1.7%

92.9%
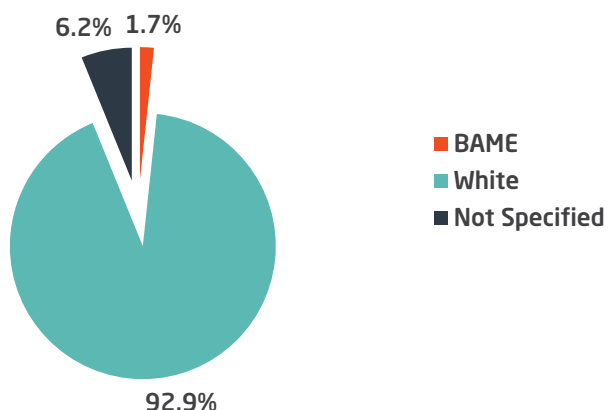
- Teaching and support staff have been combined for this analysis given the relatively low numbers of ethnic minority staff. Overall, 1.7% of staff are from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background. This is a slight increase since last reported, where 1.5% of staff were BAME.

- This can be compared with the demographics of the campus local council areas of West Dunbartonshire, Inverclyde and Renfrewshire, where between 1-3% of residents are BAME. The sector benchmark is 2.1%.

- The College plans to use the newly published Scottish Government's Minority Ethnic Recruitment Toolkit to support our aim to recruit more people from ethnic minority backgrounds and has made race equality a focus in its Equality Outcomes 2021-2023.

Figure 17: Profile of Staff with a Disability

- No disability
- Disability

6.9%

93.0%
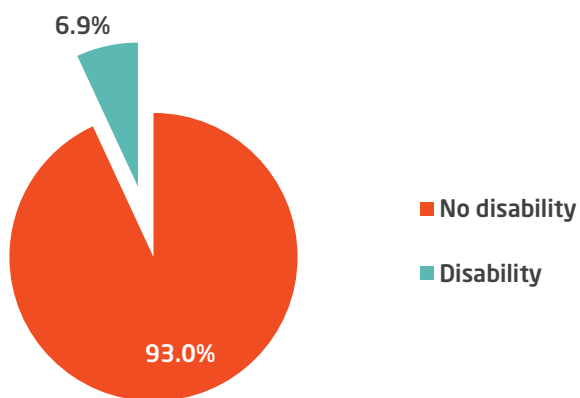
- As the number of staff with a disability is comparatively small, and in order to protect the confidentiality of staff, Figure 5 shows an overall staff profile.

- There has been no significant change in the percentage of staff who have declared a disability since last reported.

- The proportion of staff who have reported a disability is 6.9%, which is lower than national indicators. The Scottish Government estimate that approximately 10% of the population who are economically active have a long term, activity limiting health problem. WCS's proportion is slightly higher than the sector benchmark of 6.0%.

- The College will continue to encourage staff to disclose disabilities through use of the self-service HR system and promotion of the Disability Confident scheme.

4.2 PROGRESS TO DATE

4.2.1 Continuous Professional Development

We developed online training for managers to support them in meeting the needs of protected groups who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Other CPD activities which have been available in the past year include An Introduction to British Sign Language, Mental Health First Aid and Dyslexia Awareness.

4.2.2 Focus on Preventing Gender Based Violence

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager has been working closely with Student Services and Communities to develop an effective response to Gender Based Violence (GBV). An internal working group has been formed to oversee the implementation of Equally Safe, and awareness raising sessions have been delivered to key groups. We have joined Fearless Glasgow, a partnership of Universities and Colleges in the West of Scotland, which helps raise awareness of sexual violence and offers enhanced support to more than 150,000 students. We also contribute to the Renfrewshire Strategy Group which has been formed to reduce GBV. We promoted White Ribbon Day (which encourages men to stand up to violence against women) and procured specialist training for First Responders. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager was a key speaker at a national online conference sharing how the College had developed a strategic response to the prevention of GBV.

4.2.3 COVID-19

We are conscious of the disproportionate impact the pandemic has had on protected groups. We invested in SilverCloud Online CBT Resource, an online mental health support platform covering support tools dealing with COVID-19, anxiety, body image and resilience. Enabling Services has supported an increased number of students in their learning this session. Feedback from students on services and adaptations made by staff has been positive and engagement has been high.

Normal governance procedures for equalities have continued to operate throughout the period January 2020 – July 2021 with scheduled Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee meetings being held online, including student representation.

4.2.4 Equality Report and Development of Equality Outcomes 2021-2023

We published our biennial Equality Report in April 21, which detailed progress on Equality Outcomes and provided an analysis of staff and student equality data. A Staff Equality Survey and engagement with the Student Association informed the development of new Equality Outcomes 21-23.

5. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

5.1 TEACHING QUALIFICATIONS

A total of 10 Lecturers successfully completed the Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE) programme through the University of Dundee at the end of session 2019/20. A further 11 Lecturers also successfully completed the TQFE programme with the University of Aberdeen at the end of session 2020/21. It has been agreed that WCS will support 25 staff members on the TQFE programme for session 2021/22 with the University of Aberdeen.

College Development Network have recently revised the Teaching in Colleges Today (TiCT) programme and the updated course material and units will be available from September 2021. It is anticipated that WCS will have a cohort of 30 staff commencing the TiCT programme at the start of the 2021/22 academic session. This programme is for staff who are new to teaching or do not hold a recognised teaching qualification.

5.2 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

A further cohort of the West College Scotland Leadership Development Programme was successfully delivered by College Development Network (CDN). This programme started with face to face workshops and after a delay due to COVID, the programme recommenced on a virtual basis with 13 staff members successfully completed the programme. The programme objectives are:

- **To build understanding of your role as a leader in shaping the future of West College Scotland.**
- **To work with structured groups to develop your leadership and management style and plan for the future of your area of responsibility.**
- **To explore frameworks and techniques to integrate culture, performance management and operations.**
- **To develop your skills as a reflective practitioner and your personal approach to leadership.**
- **To build your capacity for self-awareness and authentic leadership.**

College Development Network were commissioned to deliver a further cohort of the WCS Leadership Development Programme commencing virtually in March 2021. There are 16 staff including Curriculum and Quality Leaders, Support Managers, Team Leaders and aspiring Managers who are undertaking this programme which is due to be completed in September 2021.

5.3 CPD ACTIVITY JANUARY 2020 – JULY 2021

The CPD programme of activity over the last year and a half was significantly altered due to COVID-19. All planned face to face CPD activity was cancelled and an alternative virtual programme of delivery was put in place. The focus of the revised programme was on supporting staff working from home and adapting to using Microsoft Teams as the main form of communication throughout the organisation and for teaching staff to adapt their classes to online virtual learning. A total of 2,336 delegates attended 165 internal and 188 external staff development events during this period.

A range of internal workshops, short courses and awareness sessions took place including:

5.3.1 Learning and Teaching

- **Teaching in Colleges Today (TiCT)**
- **L&D9DI Assessor Award**
- **L&D11 Internal Verifier Award**
- **Classroom to Virtual Delivery Skills**
- **Microsoft Teams for Education Intermediate**
- **Microsoft Teams for Education Advanced**
- **Teaching Techniques for Virtual Learning Sessions**
- **TLC - 'Bad Lesson bad day, Good Lesson good day'**
- **TLC - Professional Support & Discussions for CQLs**

5.3.2 Learning Technologies / IT

- **Getting the most out of Microsoft Teams and Collaborating**
- **Introduction to OneDrive**
- **Microsoft Teams using OneNote & Assignments**
- **Microsoft Excel Advanced**
- **Microsoft Teams Essentials**
- **Quick Guide to Digital Resources for MS Teams & Moodle**
- **Quick Guide to Wakelet**

5.3.3 Policy and Legislative

- **Challenging Times - EDI Practice Update**
- **Complaints Investigation Skills**
- **Recruitment and Selection Training**

5.3.4 General

- British Sign Language / Deaf Awareness
- Dementia Awareness Workshop
- Helping Learners with Mental Health Problems
- Menopause and the Workplace (for managers)
- Menopause Awareness
- Who Cares? Scotland Staff CPD session

5.3.5 Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Throughout the year various wellbeing, safety and health training sessions were delivered covering topics such as:

- First Aid at Work
- Developing Personal Resilience
- Mental Health Awareness well-being
- Mental Health Awareness: Safeguarding our Wellbeing
- Mindfulness in the Moment
- Mindfulness Moving Forward
- Mindfulness to De Stress
- Stress Management Tools and Techniques
- C.A.L.M in the Curriculum

5.4 CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCEDURE

The Continuing Professional Development Internal Audit Report in March 2020 made the following recommendations:

- Alignment of staff training with the College's strategic objectives.
- Alignment of the annual staff development programme to the operational planning cycle.
- Completion of CPDR process review and re-launch of revised approach.
- Alignment of staff objectives and development plans with corporate objectives and operational priorities.
- Quality assurance checks of staff objectives to be implemented.

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation, the Audit Committee have agreed an extension for completion of these actions to the 31st March 2022. Good progress is being made towards that target with a substantially different approach to CPDR being developed.

5.5 ELEARNING ONLINE TRAINING COURSES

Staff members have direct access to mandatory eLearning via the Staff Room area in Moodle which can be accessed from the Staff Intranet page or from outside the College. The Organisational Development & HR Team are monitoring progress on completion rates, which as at end of July 2021 range from 57% to 70% and reminders have been issued to staff who have still to complete the online courses. The mandatory learning modules are:

- Safeguarding Essentials
- Equality & Diversity Essentials
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Information Security Essentials
- Health and Safety Essentials (two mandatory modules)
  - Module 1: Fire Safety
  - Module 7: Understanding Health & Safety

The following eLearning programmes are also available for relevant staff to undertake.

- Personal Safety and Conflict Awareness
- Supporting Student Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Supporting Student Carers at College

Following Internal Audit recommendations there is a further requirement for staff to complete a Fraud Awareness online training course. A new Fraud Prevention online module will be included in the mandatory online training suite at the start of the 2021/22 academic session.

5.6 JISC DIGITAL DISCOVERY TOOL

As part of the College Digital Strategy the JISC Digital Discovery Tool has been made available for staff to access. The JISC Discovery Tool is a developmental tool that staff can use to self-assess their digital capabilities, identify their strengths and opportunities to develop their skills further to enhance their practice of learning. It uses a series of reflective questions that relate to the JISC building digital capabilities framework. On completion of the questionnaire, you will receive a personalised report with suggested next steps and links to free resources that can help you develop your digital skills further.

Pilot groups have been testing the discovery tool with the view to having a full launch to all staff early in the academic session in 2021/22.

6. EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

PEOPLE STRATEGY

"The college wants to maintain positive employee relations in a challenging financial environment that will be significantly influenced by the introduction of national bargaining."

6.1 LOCAL EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

The College has maintained good working relations with local trade union representatives from the recognised trade unions (EIS/FELA, Unison and Unite) based on the values of mutual respect and trust during a period of difficult industrial relations at a national level, as well as overcoming the difficulties of service provision during a global pandemic.

Formal channels of consultation and negotiations were based on the Local Recognition and Procedure Agreements, which include provision for monthly Committee meetings with trade union representatives during term time, chaired by the Principal or another member of the College Executive. Agreed minutes of these meetings were posted on the staff intranet. There was a slight interruption to the sequence of meetings due to COVID-19, however the meetings resumed with attendance on the Microsoft Teams platform.

An additional consultation forum was set up during the pandemic called the Mobilisation Group. As well as key advisors from across the College representing Estates, HR, Health and Safety, Curriculum, Information Technology, Policy and Communications, the group included representatives from the recognised trade unions.

These formal collective arrangements were complemented by regular informal, open agenda meetings with local trade union representatives.

6.2 NATIONAL BARGAINING

All negotiations took place through the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) and the college had representatives from both the management and staff sides on this forum. The key outcomes and developments during the fifth full year of national bargaining were as follows:

Teaching Staff

Date	Outcome/Development
5 March 2020	EIS/FELA submitted a National Pay Claim for 2020/21 which was for a consolidated flat rate pay rise of £1950
28 August 2020	EIS/FELA formally lodged a failure to agree regarding a belief that Colleges were replacing Lecturers with Instructor/Assessor roles
29 August 2020	Formal Agreement reached with EIS/FELA on 2% pay increase effective from 1 September 2020 -31 August 2021
18 December 2020	EIS/FELA formally notified management side on outcome of indicative ballot of members relating to dispute over Instructor/Lecturing roles. 86% were in favour of strike action.
March - April 2021	Strike action took place Thurs 25th March, Wed 31st March, Thurs 1st April, Tues 20th April, Wed 21st April.
21 April 2021	Action came to an end after EIS and Colleges Scotland agreed to ratify an NJNC Agreement.
17 June 2021	EIS/FELA submitted a National Pay Claim for 2021/22 which was for a consolidated flat rate pay rise of £2000 on all salary scale points, effective 1 September 2021.

Support Staff

Date	Outcome/Development
7 April 2020	Unison Unite GMB lodged a National Collective Dispute on the refusal of Colleges Scotland to negotiate on Annual Leave. After two Dispute meetings an agreement was reached which ended the dispute
10 June 2020	Unite Unison GMB lodged a failure to agree on the implementation of the 1 April 2020 pay settlement.
17 June 2020	Unison, Unite and GMB submitted 2020/21 National Pay Claim "Package for the New Normal" which included £1100 flat rate increase and 4 day working week with no loss of earnings based on 32 hour working week.
2 December 2020	Staff Side lodged a dispute in relation to changes to the Job Evaluation Role Analyst Release Agreement. The Dispute was resolved at the meeting.
13 April 2021	Formal Agreement reached with Unison, Unite and GMB effective from 1 September 2020 - 31 August 2021 for a 2% increase on all salary points (min £750 FTE and max £2000); one additional flexible leave day in annual leave year 2020/21; paid morning and afternoon breaks.
3 August 2021	Unison, Unite and GMB submitted 2021/22 National Pay Claim which included a £2000 consolidated flat rate increase; pursuance of negotiations on a strategy to achieve a four-day working week; payment of the homeworking allowances which formed part of the 2020/21 pay claim; two additional support staff career development days per year; two flexible wellbeing days per year to support staff mental health; and agreement on national pay and grading for support staff.

7. RESOURCING AND TALENT PLANNING

PEOPLE STRATEGY

"The College wishes to ensure that it secures, develops, retains and effectively manages sufficient teaching and support staff to provide quality education to students and employer clients within the resources available. It wishes to attract and engage diverse and talented individuals from different backgrounds, heritages and lifestyles. The College wishes to be an "Employer of Choice" by becoming recognised for its positive working environment and conditions of service."

7.1 FURLOUGH

The coronavirus situation has meant that the College has had to make use of the Government's Furlough Scheme for certain categories of staff. The staff affected have been those whose role has meant they cannot work from home. For a period at the start of lockdown, this included cleaners, property maintenance assistants, general assistants, catering staff, technicians, workshop stewards, print room assistants, classroom assistants etc. As we gradually returned to campus, a number of these staff were brought off furlough, with catering staff remaining on furlough for the longest time.

7.2 WORKFORCE PLANNING

The priorities identified at the end of 2019 have been the focus for 2020 and into 2021:

- digital literacy of staff (see section 7.3)
- ageing workforce – we have taken a more strategic approach to our youth recruitment and will be launching a Youth Programme in 2021-2022 to ensure a programme of development and support is provided for all our Modern Apprentices, Foundation Apprentices and those on the Kickstart programme. Work will continue more widely in this area as part of the continuing Workforce Planning activity.
- enhancing the bank of teaching staff – we continue to attract new bank staff as required

Our response to the pandemic has meant that a review and refresh of our workforce planning approach will be taken forward in 2021-2022.

7.3 DIGITAL LITERACY

This was identified through 2019 workforce planning as an area for focus and became one of the most immediate challenges for the College during the pandemic as teaching and support services had to move to a virtual platform via Microsoft Teams. From the very start of this process, we were offering virtual face-to-face training in Teams along with a large online training and guidance resource. We have continued to expand this offering, developing bespoke training to make the best use of Microsoft Teams in the delivery of the curriculum.

In addition to this we have adopted the JISC Discovery Tool which is an online self-assessment routine which helps users identify gaps in their skills and knowledge and offers resources to support them.

7.4 VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE

A voluntary severance scheme was offered to staff during the period 2020-2021. 23 staff left the College as a result of that initiative.

7.5 CATERING TEAM RESTRUCTURE

Our catering service has not seen sufficient demand for some time as there is a great deal of competition from local food outlets. The pandemic exacerbated the challenges as there have been significantly reduced numbers of staff and students on campus. As a result, we have reduced the number of staff working in the service which will allow us to deliver an offering more appropriate to demand going forward. This was achieved through voluntary severance and redeployment. There were no compulsory redundancies.

7.6 HR MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

Improvements in HR Management Information continue to be made, as we have started to make use of Power BI which will continue over the coming year. Our current focus is on absence reporting and a draft report has been built which will remove the requirement for manual manipulation of data and will save significant time for the HR team.

8. HEALTH SAFETY AND WELLBEING

PEOPLE STRATEGY

"The College will demonstrate that there is a robust system for managing health, safety and risk with clear accountability, to ensure compliance with statutory requirements .The health and safety structure, policy and arrangements will be developed in line with Health and Safety HSG 65 Guidance adopting principles of Plan, Do, Check, Act."

8.1 COVID-19

The reporting period (January 2020 – July 2021) has, unsurprisingly, been one of the most challenging as far as Health, Safety and Wellbeing is concerned. As an organisation we reacted very quickly to the demands of the COVID-19 outbreak and we implemented a number control measures early on with continuous adjustments and monitoring thereafter. These are described as follows.

8.1.1 Advisory and Consultative Forums

We established the Mobilisation Group which is an advisory/consultative group whose role is to make recommendations to the Executive about how to respond to the changing nature of the pandemic. The group consists of senior stakeholders representing OD and HR, Estates, IT, Policy and Communications, and Curriculum as well as representatives from each of the three trade unions.

The Mobilisation Group won the 2021 'Team of the Year' Staff Award for their ongoing efforts.

A second group, the COVID-19 Group, consisting of the Executive Team and key members of SMT, also meet regularly to endorse recommendations from the Mobilisation Group and to consider key strategic decisions that have been required to be made throughout the pandemic.

8.1.2 Individual Risk Self-Assessment Questionnaire

In collaboration with our Occupational Health Provider, we developed a self-assessment questionnaire so that all staff could assess their level of risk if exposed to COVID-19 (this was based on covid age research and at a later date a similar approach was taken by Scottish Government). This allowed us to deal with individual risk without staff having to disclose sensitive medical information to the College. That also meant we didn't need to hold that sensitive data which avoided the possibility of Data Protection issues.

Those who were a low risk were able to come on campus as allowed in line with Scottish Government guidance. Those who were a moderate risk were referred to Occupational Health for individual consultations, resulting in tailored recommendations for us to implement. Those who were high risk were also referred to Occupational Health, but in addition we also ensured that individuals in this group did not come on site at all until shielding restrictions were eased.

8.1.3 General COVID-19 Risk Assessment

We developed a General COVID-19 Risk Assessment which, in effect, established our site rules during the pandemic, the most significant being 2 metre physical distancing, face coverings at all times, hand hygiene and sanitisation of touch surfaces.

8.1.4 COVID-19 Risk Assessments for Specific Activities

A template was designed to allow individual teams to develop covid related risk assessments for individual activities. Teams were supported by our Health and Safety Advisers in developing these assessments.

8.1.5 COVID-19 Guidance Notes

We developed guidance notes on specific covid related issues e.g.

- **Circulation Principles**
- **Cleaning Principles**
- **What to do if someone presents on campus with symptoms of COVID-19**
- **Working from Home Safely**

8.1.6 COVID-19 Intranet/Internet Pages

Throughout the pandemic, our guidance and advice has been promoted on our intranet and student web pages. As part of that, staff could raise any question relating to our covid arrangements which were referred to our internal advisors for a published response.

8.1.7 Healthy Working Lives

The College has a proud history of participation in this initiative, and we used the machinery of Healthy Working Lives to develop a range of supports during covid. This included an extensive collection of curated advice and links on a specially developed and dedicated portal, as well as a whole package of initiatives including:

- **Mental Health Awareness Training**
- **Online fitness challenges**
- **Mindfulness video clips**
- **The Step Count Challenge**
- **Virtual coffee and a chat**
- **Mindfulness training**
- **Online yoga classes**

8.2 CDN AWARD

Our Healthy Working Lives efforts described above, won WCS the Health Promoting College of the Year Award at the CDN Awards in November 2020.

8.3 INCIDENTS

As at the end of July 2021, the College had no identifiable COVID-19 outbreaks during the pandemic. As case rates rise in the 2021/22 academic year, we do have an expectation that there could be COVID transmission within the College – we have established procedures in place and links to public health to manage this risk for all students and staff.

A total of 62 injuries were reported to the Health and Safety Team in the eighteen-month period January 2020 – July 2021, 35 less than the twelve-month period 2019. This reduction is clearly due to less activity on site during the pandemic. However, it is worth noting that the curriculum activity which did go on during the pandemic, were with practical classes, such as hospitality and construction, which do tend to have the most accident reports.

There was 1 incident reportable to the Health and Safety Executive under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013) when a Plumbing student sustained a laceration to his leg and attended hospital to have it glued.

A total of 4 near misses were reported. Remedial action was taken in each case to remove/eliminate the hazard going forward.

There were 109 fewer First Aid /Illness (no injury) related calls during the period January 2020 to July 2021 than in 2019 (Table 3). This is likely due to there being fewer staff and students on site.

All other accidents required minor (first aid) treatment. These are predominantly attributed to the period at the start of an academic session when students are learning to use potentially hazardous equipment such as sharp hand tools in construction, knives within the hospitality department, hammers in the joinery department and hot irons in hairdressing.

Table 3: Accidents and Other Incidents January 2020 - July 2021 Compared to 2019	2020-21	2019
Minor Injury (Work Activity)	42	57
Minor Injury (Other College Activity)	20	19
Illness/First Aid*	29	138
RIDDOR Reportable	1	2
Near Miss	4	3
Verbal Abuse	1	0
Total	97	219

*No injury

Figure 18: Breakdown of Accidents and Incidents by Group

- 13
- 18
- 66

■ Students
■ Staff
■ Other
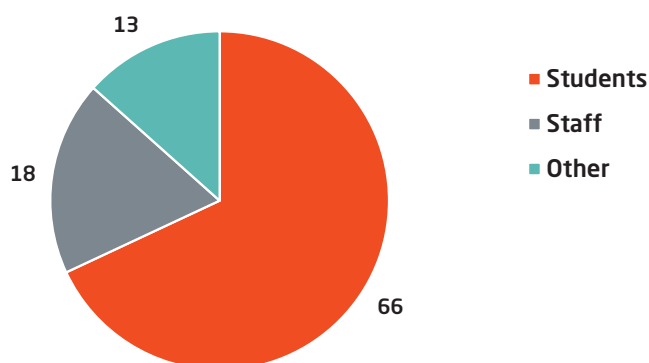
Figure 19: Injuries to Body

Note that one individual can have injuries to more than one part of the body.

- 14
- 14
- 9
- 43

■ Face, head, neck
■ Arms, wrists, fingers
■ Foot, leg
■ Back, chest
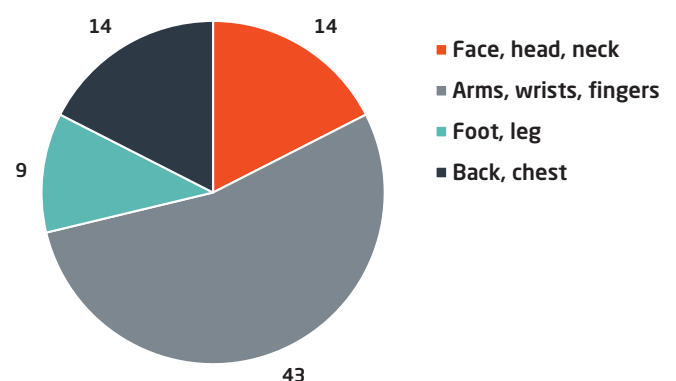
9. DATA PROTECTION AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

9.1 DATA PROTECTION

Due to the UK's exit from the EU (31/12/20), GDPR generally no longer applies in the UK, and the main data protection laws in the UK now consist of: UKGDPR, and the Data Protection Act 2018. Both items were flagged in 2019 via the Keeling Schedules, which made amendments to the EU GDPR, and the Data Protection Act 2018 in relation to exit from the EU.

On 28th June 2021, the EU Commission adopted an adequacy decision for the UK, both in terms of GDPR and the law enforcement directive. This means that data can continue to flow seamlessly from, and to, the European Economic Area.

9.1.1 Information Request Statistics (January 2020 - July 2021)

Table 4: Subject Access Request Statistics

Nature of Request

Requested By	Student Personal Data	Staff Personal Data	Total
Police Scotland	5		5
Solicitors	5	5	10
Staff Member			
Student	4 *		4
Local Authority		1	1
Insurance Company		2	2
SAAS	6		6
Commercial Business		1	1
Total	20	9	29

*4 Right to Erasure (or 'Right to be Forgotten') requests.

Table 5: Data Breaches

		Nature of Incident		
	Number affected	Type of data	Resolved?	Reportable to ICO?
Letter sent to wrong recipient	1 staff member	Special Category (sensitive)	Yes, letter was returned.	No
Ransomware attack	Student data (multiple, UNITe database)	Mixed, including special category	Yes, with minimal data loss. No further action taken by ICO.	Yes
Student data sent to wrong recipient	1	Personal data	Yes, apologies made, data deleted by recipient.	No
Student data sent to wrong recipient	1	Personal data	Yes, apologies made, data deleted by recipient.	No
List of job candidates shared with wrong interview panel	6	Mixed, including special category data	Yes, apologies made, data deleted by recipients.	No
Contract letter sent to wrong individual	1	Personal data	Yes, discussed with recipient, data deleted.	No

9.1.2 Data Protection Compliance

The GDPR Steering Group has been renamed as the Data Protection Steering Group, due to recent statutory changes. It continues to oversee data protection compliance work across the College.

The Steering Group set up a sub-group in 2020, the Data Storage and Communications Group, to make recommendations relating to the compliant use of storage tools across the college; best practice in terms of communications and retention periods; records management issues, including data and document classification systems.

The Data Protection Toolkit continues to track progress in terms of compliance, and the last meeting of the Steering Group considered a short review document which highlighted outstanding, or partially overtaken, items in the Toolkit. It was noted that many of these items overlapped with the requirements of the Scottish Government's Cybersecurity Framework document, and work will continue to consider these items as requirements for both areas of compliance (data protection and cybersecurity). ICO's recently released Accountability Framework is being assessed, with a view to adoption for tracking the College's accountability work as required by UKGDPR Article 5, (2).

The HEFESTIS shared services DPO continues to ensure that developments and resources across the HE/FE sector are pooled wherever possible, to minimise effort in compliance work. The HEFESTIS Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) group will be able to help the DPO in areas where data protection and cybersecurity overlap.

9.2 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 came into force on 1st January 2005 and covers public authorities in Scotland. Under the Act a person who requests information from a Scottish Public authority which holds it is entitled is entitled to be given it by the Authority. The right is subject to certain conditions and exemptions. The Act is enforced by the Scottish Information Commissioner.

As well as responding to requests, Public Authorities must publish certain information on their website.

Public Authorities must provide the information, or tell requestors why they will not provide it, within 20 working days.

The College received 13 FOI requests during 2020. This is significantly less than the 29 requests the previous year with a notable decrease in requests from trade unions. From 1st January 2020 to 31st July 2021 the College received 25 FOI requests. Table 6 provides an indication of the broad areas the requests covered from 1st January 2020 to 31st July 2021.

Table 6: FOI Requests - January 2020 to July 2021

		Procurement Issues	Student Issues and Numbers	HR and Staff Issues	IT Provision and use	Other	Financial Information	Management and Admin of College	Total
Requested By	Commercial Organisations	2	1						**3**
	Journalists		1	1		1			**3**
	Own Students		1						**1**
	Researchers from other institutions			1	1				**2**
	Trade unions		1	2			3	2	**8**
	Not provided	2	2		1		3		**8**
	Total	**4**	**6**	**4**	**2**	**1**	**6**	**2**	**25**

10. FORWARD LOOK TO 2021-2022 AND BEYOND

As we move into 2021-2022, the key areas of focus for the Organisational Development and HR Directorate include:

- Enabling the College to reset and restart further to the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring a safe return to campus for staff and students, and leading on the College's new ways of working
- Reviewing and relaunching the Continuing Professional Development Review process to enable staff to focus their personal development and ensure that their work and outputs are aligned to the WCS Corporate Plan
- Progressing our commitments and Equality Outcomes outlined in the Equality Report 2021, with a focus on race equality
- Introducing a Youth Programme to increase the number of young people we employ and retain within WCS, building succession for future retirals
- Developing a new People Strategy that enables the achievement of the WCS Corporate Plan.

11. APPENDIX

ORGANISATION CHART, ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND HR DIRECTORATE AS AT 31 JULY 2021

- Director Organisational Development & HR 1 FTE
  - Data Protection Officer 0.6 FTE
  - Head of Organisational Development & HR - 1 FTE
    - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Manager 0.55 FTE
    - Health & Safety Advisor 2 FTE
      - HR Assistant (H&S) 0.5 FTE
    - Organisational Development Manager 1 FTE
      - HR Assistant (OD) 0.5 FTE
    - HR Manager 1 FTE
      - HR Assistant 2 x 0.55 FTE
    - HR Manager 1 FTE
      - Senior Payroll Advisor / Administrator / Developer 1 FTE
        - Payroll Advisors / System Administrators 2 FTE
      - HR Assistant 2 x 0.5 FTE
    - HR Manager 1 FTE
      - HR Assistant 1 FTE
    - HR Manager 1 FTE
      - HR Filing Assistant 0.20 FTE
      - HR Assistant 0.86 FTE