



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE  
Scotland

**BORDERS COLLEGE**

**REVIEW**

**FEEDBACK REPORT**

**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**

Assessor: Julianne Dickey

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Organisation's Objectives from the Assessment:**

The College was interested to find out how well the College is supporting staff in preparation for co-location - for example the impact and value of the Change Management sessions and training on File Management, the value of the Momentum surgeries, the newsletter information, the new information guides on classroom and office design and the Sound Bites sessions.

### **Assessor's Objectives:**

To ascertain whether the College continues to meet all the requirements of the Investors in People Standard, to feedback on the College's specific objective, and to check progress on potential development areas identified in the previous report.

### **Outcomes:**

The Assessor found that the College continues to meet all the requirements of the Standard. It demonstrates some excellent practice in relation to investment in people, and is very committed to continuous improvement. In general the staff are positive about the management of change in relation to the relocations, and a report is give below. All the areas for development mentioned in the previous report – and recommendations relating to staff development in the HMIE report – have been addressed.

The Assessor strongly recommended that the College consider using Investors in People Profile as a framework to drive forward further improvements in a way that would build on current strengths – perhaps on a rolling programme looking at particular indicators at a time. There is also the possibility that the College may adopt an internal review process.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AGAINST THE STANDARD**

### **Examples of Strengths and Good Practice:**

Many examples of good practice are given in the body of this report. In brief, the main areas of particular strength are summed up as:

There is a very strong and clear strategic planning process, linked closely with a wide range of

quality initiatives and staff development. There is a culture of involvement, and staff have many opportunities to contribute to this process, through staff consultations, departmental meetings, management meetings, participation in cross-departmental working groups and on an individual level. (1)

Staff are able to see clearly how their individual objectives fit with wider College objectives, and feel a strong sense of ownership of these objectives, and of their own work. (1.6, 7.3)

Senior management are committed to the concept of an institution which promotes continuous and quality learning for both students and staff. Many and varied opportunities for staff development, both formal and informal, are encouraged – modelling the principle of blended learning. Almost all those interviewed were positive about the opportunities on offer and had undertaken a number of learning activities, which related closely to strategic objectives as well as their own personal development. (2)

Some of the College's managers are examples of excellent leadership, and most staff were very positive about their managers. The Board are fully involved, and the College benefits from a strong working relationship between the Chair and the Principal. (5)

The College's commitment to continuous improvement is demonstrated by the improvements which have been made as result of on-going evaluation – both internal and external – including those driven forward by the new principal. In particular the new performance review system links together strategic planning and staff development. (9, 10)

### **Potential Development Areas:**

While there are many opportunities for staff to be involved in planning activities and to have their suggestions listened to, there were a few support staff who did not feel that this was true for them, and who said that they had not been invited to participate in the strategic review day or workshops. Management may want to consider ways of ensuring that all support staff feel included in the process in some way which is appropriate to their role. (1.6)

Most people were very positive about their training and development opportunities, although there were a few complaints that the training on offer did not meet their needs or that their requests had not been granted – or that they did not have the same opportunities as others. It may be important to ensure that all staff are aware of what is driving the current priorities for staff development and the budgetary constraints. The new review process, administered by Personnel, should help to ensure that Level 2 support staff in particular do have opportunities for development. (2.3, 3.4)

While many staff were very positive about their management, there were a significant minority who did not believe their managers are effective, for reasons given in the body of the report. Senior management has put into place a training programme for middle managers, and the new performance review system may address some of the issues. Management may additionally

wish to consider incorporating feedback on staff experience of management into staff reviews, and soliciting staff feedback for managers' reviews – they would then be able to identify more clearly where problems may lie. (5.3)

This would have the extra benefit of making staff more aware of defined management competencies; although they were able to state what they wanted from managers in a way that was in tune with the competencies, there would be an advantage to all staff being clearer about what they could expect. (4.3)

Where senior managers are aware of concerns raised by staff about their managers, it may be important to be seen to respond more visibly to these concerns, while of course protecting confidentiality. (4.1)

Managers are not expected to quote defined management competencies, but it would also be good to see their expectations of themselves matching these competencies more closely. They may also be more able to say how their management has improved explicitly in relation to these competencies. Again, the new review system should help with this, as they will be appraised against the competencies, with improvements as well as achievements noted and development needs identified. (4.2, 10.2)

The College may wish to review the role of programme leaders, which currently appears a little unclear at least to some staff. Department Heads have a large workload and large numbers of staff to line manage. More responsibility, including some line management, could be devolved to programme leaders – with appropriate training given. It is acknowledged however that this would involve bringing in other resources to take over some of their teaching. (4.1)

The new review system should also help to improve the evaluation of development activities and to link these to the attainment of strategic objectives. It would be good to see the evaluation of training and development activities being more focused on outcomes and impact. It may be useful to do a summary evaluation report for staff, highlighting the key benefits of the investment in training and development for the College. This could be linked to the document outlining the following year's development priorities mentioned in 2.3 above. It may also be useful to provide the Board with more information on staff development. (9.2)

This, along with the performance review, may help with assisting staff to see how their development activities impact on College performance as a whole. The Assessor found that this wider awareness was not always very explicit, although staff could see benefits for themselves and their students. (9.5)

While continuous improvement is an important goal, with so much change happening already it will be important to allow space for current improvements to bed in, the benefits to be felt and change to be absorbed before making too many new changes. Improvements which build on current strengths may be therefore preferable to any more radical departures. (10)

In addition to these potential development areas, further recommendations are made at the end

of the next section on the Momentum campaign.

### **Preparation for co-location**

This section brings together the various elements of the Assessor's observations on staff perception of the change process associated with the estates development project.

The College has embarked on an ambitious, large-scale project to re-locate the main site at Galashiels to adjoin the Heriot Watt campus, and to build another new site to replace the one at Hawick. The Hawick re-location will involve much greater collaboration and integration with Hawick High School, which is situated across the road. The Galashiels move will occasion major changes, for example integration or collaboration with some Heriot Watt activities and functions, downsizing of space leading to much greater reliance on electronic storage, open-plan office space and new facilities and ICT. The move is planned for spring 2009, and a significant part of the three-year strategic plan and the staff development programme are geared towards preparing for and undertaking the move.

One of the Assistant Principals has been seconded to focus on the project full-time, and he heads several committees and working groups dealing with various aspects of the move, as well as liaising with external consultants and contractors and personnel from Heriot Watt and Hawick High School. Another Assistant Principal has also been seconded for part of her time to head a campaign branded as Momentum, which involves a number of initiatives to prepare staff for the move. A number of other staff (mostly managers) are involved in the various groups. The project has required meticulous planning, and appears to be progressing well. The College sees the move as an opportunity to push forward some other important changes, such as an increase in the use of ICT in teaching, more efficient systems, and improved access for the College's further education students to higher education (or at Hawick from high school to further education).

The Momentum campaign has included:

- change management sessions, facilitated by SFEU, where staff have an opportunity to learn about the process of change and express their concerns;
- increased training on electronic file management and ICT generally;
- Sound Bites sessions, where staff have the opportunity to meet with senior management over lunch to discuss any questions or concerns;
- regularly updated information on the project through a Momentum newsletter as well as the general College newsletter;
- updates also fed down to staff through departmental meetings;

- visits to the new site for staff and students;
- visit by some staff to Telford College, which has recently re-located to a similar kind of building;
- staff viewing of the plans, and consultation with them by design engineers about their requirements;
- involvement of staff representatives, involving further staff consultation;
- a survey on stress conducted by the health and safety manager, followed by an event on coping with stress.

The Assessor found that the staff have in general responded positively to these initiatives, and most were feeling enthusiastic or at least philosophical about the move. Everyone agreed that there is an abundance of information about the progress of the project, and that plenty of time has been allowed for preparation. Most people found the change management sessions helpful, and agreed that they had had a number of opportunities to express their concerns. Other things which had helped to allay concerns included visiting the new site, being consulted about classroom or workshop design and having these views taken on board, and activities like seeing the plans for the new site and a mock up of the new individual staff locker, demonstrating its size. There has not been any significant take-up of the Sound Bite sessions – the College has responded to this by reducing the number of senior managers present to two, and making the events less formal and hopefully less intimidating.

Some anxieties remain for some staff members, which senior managers are already aware of, and have been trying to address:

- the timing of the move – staff do not feel that two weeks at Easter is sufficient without major disruption to teaching;
- the lack of personal space and the necessity for hot-desking;
- perceived decrease in student access to staff and the necessity to book meeting rooms rather than meet informally with students;
- the target of increased student numbers despite a smaller amount of workshop space;
- the adequacy of IT facilities to cope with demand;
- the amount of time it takes to go through and discard paper-based files etc – although there was an acknowledgement that the College has provided some admin support for this;
- the amount of rumours which go around, and which can be divisive and destructive;
- the fear that the move is part of a trend to turn the College into running on a business model.

There were two other important concerns raised by a number of staff which the Assessor felt needed addressing as a matter of priority:

1. There are some support staff whose functions may disappear or be merged with those

performed by Heriot Watt staff. While there is a great deal of information in general, some of these staff are anxious as they have not been given any information about their individual futures. Senior management have planned an admin review and a process of consultation with staff and unions about restructuring and possible redundancies, to start later in the year. The Assessor recommends that admin staff are informed of the timetable for this process as soon as possible.

2. There were concerns expressed by a number of staff about how welcomed they and their students would be by Heriot Watt staff and students, and how well the FE and HE cultures would work together. There was considerable resentment about one particular thing which had happened. Senior management are looking to develop a joint strategy with Heriot Watt to promote greater integration and collaboration. The Assessor recommends that this is a priority, and that staff are informed about the timetable for this.

### **Examples of Benefits Gained from using the Standard:**

The main benefits have been to give focus to staff related activity and to ensure strong links between staff development and both strategic and operational planning. Investors in People was a major reason for the College's decision to develop the Operational Plan database as a means to better identify the links and ensure that we follow-up with actions.

### **Conclusion:**

In the Assessor's judgement the organisation continues to meet the Investors in People Standard.

**A feedback meeting was held on:** Friday 25 January 2008

**Attendees:** Liz McIntyre, Principal; Mike Turner; Quality Manager; Julianne Dickey, Investors in People Assessor.

### **Further Reviews**

The Assessor also reminded the organisation's representatives that it must be reviewed again against the Standard within three years. Various options for review are open to recognised organisations and are noted here in brief.

**Review** – This takes place, at most, 36 months after your recognition or last review date and will be similar to your assessment visit or last three year review visit.

**Annual Review** – Review visits will take place on approximately an annual basis, rather than once every 36 months. These visits will be similar to your assessment or 36 month review but will focus on the areas you perceive as most relevant within the Standard or within your organisation at each visit. All of the Standard and all of the organisation must be reviewed within a three year period. Each review will therefore take less time and, in most cases, involve a significantly smaller sample of people.

**Internal Review** – An option which helps recognised organisations monitor their position against the Standard internally by training a small number of employees within your organisation as reviewers. Reviewers operate under the supervision of an IIP Scotland Managing Assessor.

**Profile** – A framework of good practice which provides further stretch for organisations by going beyond the current scope of the Standard. Profile covers a wide range of areas over and above, but linked to, the Investors in People Standard and provides a much wider range of feedback as well as the opportunity for benchmarking against other organisations.

For further information please contact Investors in People Scotland (0131 625 0155) or the Investors in People Scotland help-line (0845 606 6000) or access our web site [www.iipscotland.co.uk](http://www.iipscotland.co.uk)

## FINDINGS AGAINST THE STANDARD

### DEVELOPING STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ORGANISATION

(An Investor in People develops effective strategies to improve the performance of the organisation through its people)

#### Note

To avoid repetition under each indicator, it is noted here that what follows does not for the most part relate to temporary lecturers, who are very part-time, and who for the most part do not engage in College planning processes, management structures or training and development. While they contribute to the strategic objective of providing access to learning for the wider community through day and evening classes, they are to all intents and purposes independent from the College. Where a significant point can be made about their role, it will appear in the appropriate place.

#### **1 A strategy for improving the performance of the organisation is clearly defined and understood.**

*1.1 Top managers make sure the organisation has a clear purpose and vision supported by a strategy for improving its performance.*

The College is very much driven by its mission and its values, which are clearly articulated in the strategic plan as well as other College documents: contributing to the economic and social development of the Borders region through providing high-quality education which will “raise aspirations, create opportunities and enhance the lives of its learners”.

The strategy for improving performance has many strands, including the following main elements:

- Setting out KPIs in the strategic plan and departmental operational plans, which have been transferred to a database for easier monitoring;
- Reviewing plans through a twice-yearly self-evaluation process;
- Putting in place action plans to follow up on unattained targets;
- Staff training and development activities described in 2.1 below;
- Recommendations from internal audits and external reviews such as HMIE;
- Performance review for all staff annually;
- The Momentum campaign to prepare for re-location;

- Student, staff and employer satisfaction surveys;
- Working groups and committees to take forward specific initiatives.

*“Our aim is to make education and training relevant to the needs of the local community – to make a difference to people’s lives.”*

*1.2 Top managers make sure the organisation has a business plan with measurable performance objectives.*

The College has an overall strategic plan 2007-2010. It is drafted by senior management, discussed with the Board, and then goes out to consultation with staff before being signed off by the Board. It is linked to operational plans for each department and the estates redevelopment strategy. For each year of the three-year plan there is an action plan for the year. All these plans set out KPIs and targets informed by Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Council priorities, the HMI Quality Framework, sector benchmarking, identified strengths and weaknesses and college and departmental objectives. The plan for the College’s commercial training arm, BC Consultants, previously separate, is now integrated into the overall plan; this reflects its greater integration into the College and its systems. The New Ways Partnership links the College to local organisations, and it is also involved in consultation.

An example from the strategic plan:

“Objective: to develop Blended Learning and the use of ICT in teaching and learning to enable staff to provide the most appropriate and effective learning and teaching methods for the learner. Targets:

- Deliver staff development programme scheduled in Blend2Learn project by 2010
- Each full time programme to have a range of blended learning material by 2010
- Measure effectiveness through annual student surveys.”

*1.3 Top managers make sure there are constructive relationships with representative groups (where they exist) and the groups are consulted when developing the organisation’s business plan.*

Senior managers confirmed that staff representatives (for lecturers through EIS and Level 1 and Level 2 support staff through other unions) are involved in both the JNC and the JCC. As well as negotiations about terms and conditions and staff policies, they are consulted about changes contained in the plans which impact on staff. Senior managers believe that the relationship with these representatives is constructive. BC Consultants has a separate negotiating committee.

*1.4 Managers can describe how they involve people when developing the organisation's business plan and when agreeing team and individual objectives.*

Staff agree their individual objectives, which are in line with team and departmental plans, at their annual reviews. They are involved in developing team and departmental plans through regular meetings, which all curricular and most support staff attend. There is a twice-yearly departmental Block self-evaluation review, where progress towards KPIs and targets are reviewed and further action plans set. These self-evaluations feed into the overall strategic plan and yearly action plans. In addition to these formal mechanisms, staff are encouraged to make suggestions at any time – including those who do not attend team or departmental meetings. There was also a day to which all staff were invited when the three-year plan was being drawn up, and a series of workshops on different themes. There are also a number of working groups, for example staff development and health and safety. The Momentum campaign includes staff consultation through activities such as the Sound Bite sessions, staff surveys and other events and activities.

*1.5 People who are members of representative groups can confirm that top managers make sure there are constructive relationships with the groups and they are consulted when developing the organisation's business plan.*

The two staff representatives interviewed for this review – one lecturer and one support staff member – confirmed that they have constructive relationships with senior management and that they are fully consulted on all aspects which are relevant and appropriate.

*1.6 People can explain the objectives of their team and the organisation at a level that is appropriate to their role, and can describe how they are expected to contribute to developing and achieving them.*

All staff were clear about the aims of the College and their department. Almost all confirmed that they were involved in developing these aims in the ways described by managers. Almost all felt that they had many opportunities to contribute ideas and to influence the direction of their department. They understood that their departmental plans contributed to the development of the overall strategic plan, and agreed that they had been consulted on it. (A few people however said either that they were consulted after the plans had been decided and that their opinions had no impact – or that they did not attend team meeting, had not been invited to the strategy day and had little opportunity to contribute.) Staff all agreed that there had been opportunities to contribute through the Momentum campaign, though not all had taken these up.

Temporary lecturers were clear about their own objectives – they were free to design their own classes, which sit outside the College curriculum. They confirmed that they are not part of the wider planning process, nor did they wish to be.

*“The College is part of the community – we offer a service to young people and to those who have missed out, to reach their potential... As well as the special programmes, we help staff to integrate core skills into mainstream teaching – it makes them more relevant... We help to make sure that everyone is working towards the same ends – there are clear links with the College strategy plan.”*

## **2 Learning and development is planned to achieve the organisation’s objectives.**

*2.1 Top managers can explain the organisation’s learning and development needs, the plans and resources in place to meet them, how these link to achieving specific objectives and how the impact will be evaluated.*

Senior managers described how learning and development needs arise from the demands of the curriculum and HMI standards (for academic staff), as well as the technical and IT skills required for people to carry out their jobs. Some staff development results from strategic objectives, such as equality and access for all, the co-location and ensuring that all academic staff have teaching qualifications. The Quality Manager has staff development as part of his remit, and is responsible for developing training plans related to strategic objectives. He leads a staff development group which is informed by strategic objectives, course evaluation forms and staff requests and performance review forms. This committee devises a staff development programme each year, with courses such as disability equality, deaf awareness and stress management, which all staff can access.

A major strategic objective is to increase staff competence in ICT; a programme called “E-Skills Key Skills” was devised, and a questionnaire asked staff to identify their skills and gaps and undertake an assessment. This has meant that training can be more precisely geared to individuals; identified gaps are being addressed through IT courses (including electronic file management) and the creation of mentors for advice and guidance.

Departments also arrange their own staff training, and there is a programme of training and other events as part of the Momentum campaign, to ensure that the relocation (including increased use of electronic filing systems) goes smoothly. Budgets are allocated to each of these, and further details are in 9.1. Individuals can also request specific training, related to their objectives, at their performance reviews and at other times.

In addition to training courses, which may be internal or external, staff have access to other learning opportunities. Some examples:

- induction programme for new staff;
- access to training, mentoring or coaching from other staff or departments within the College, or from BC Consultants – for example IT mentors and training for heads of departments on budgets from the finance manager;
- visits to or placements with organisations and companies, to keep up-to-date and to observe best practice;
- the Professional Development Award (PDA) and TQFE programmes for unqualified staff;
- seminars, conferences, networking and other activities;
- on-line learning for example through the College's own website which includes a wide range of resources;
- Community of Practice (COP) groups across a number of colleges for specific subject areas such as libraries, HR and student services – involving an annual conference and two or three events a year which focus on new developments;
- peer reviews of colleagues (academic staff);
- training for some managers to become HMI Associates or Internal Verifiers.

The impact of these development activities are measured through: evaluation forms for every activity which are collated and inform the staff development committee's decisions: feeding back at team meetings: attainment of qualifications: observed improvements in knowledge and practice: internal moderation (for academic staff): improvements in achieving targets: student and staff surveys; internal and external audits; and peer review.

*2.2 Managers can explain team learning and development needs, the activities planned to meet them, how these link to achieving specific team objectives and how the impact will be evaluated.*

Managers described how they discuss staff learning and development needs at the annual performance review and at other times. Lecturers are observed from time to time, including by their colleagues through peer reviews; those undergoing qualifications (PDA and TQFE) are observed by a qualified officer. The College is subject to a periodic assessment by HMIE, and this highlights any deficiencies as well as strengths. Skills gaps are also identified through student surveys, focus groups and representatives, as well as complaints – these gaps translate into training needs.

Some examples include: BCC trainers need updated knowledge to help people through their

care awards, so someone from the Downs Syndrome Society talked to the team meeting, which increased staff awareness and confidence when discussing disability; feedback from the team afterwards was positive. Staff have been provided with a range of opportunities to improve their ICT skills and incorporate these into their teaching. Health and safety training is provided to all staff at induction – thereafter relevant additional training is given; for example those working in the hair salon are trained in the safe use of chemicals. Lecturers and assessors have opportunities to update their knowledge through spending time in other companies. Managers confirmed the evaluation processes described by senior managers.

*“We realised that support staff were not using HMI-type language in their self-evaluations – their reports were not very evaluative - so this was identified as a learning need for them.”*

### *2.3 People can describe how they are involved in identifying their learning and development needs and the activities planned to meet them.*

Staff described how their learning needs are discussed at their performance reviews and through their departments – these arise from their objectives. Those support staff who have previously not had reviews have had less opportunity to discuss learning needs. However all staff said that they could request training at any time, and most can access the staff development programme, the Momentum activities and on-the-job coaching and mentoring. They confirmed the range of development activities described by managers, and were all able to cite activities they had undertaken (with the exception of the temporary lecturers and a couple of janitorial staff who had not required any training over the last few years). There is a goal for all academic staff to be qualified, so those without qualifications were encouraged to attend PDA or TQFE courses.

Some specific examples include: identifying that computer training was essential to an aspect of the job and being supported to do the ECDL; doing the change management course offered through the staff development programme in order to deal more effectively with the transition; and keeping updated on health and safety aspects of chemicals used in the salon.

*“I needed a refresher on haircutting – so I asked at my review – I went on a cutting course – I learned new techniques and styles, which I could pass on to students.”*

*“I asked for extra drama training in social drama – my previous experience was not always relevant, I wanted to use social drama to build life skills... I learned how to make it more concrete so people could grasp the concepts more easily.”*

### *2.4 People can explain what their learning and development activities should achieve for them,*

*their team and the organisation.*

Staff were very clear what their learning activities should achieve. For example those undertaking the PDA or TQFE awards talked about how these sharpened their practice and gave them qualifications. Those undertaking placements felt that they were keeping in touch with what was happening on the ground outside academia. Visits to other educational institutions were an opportunity to learn about new ways of doing things. Events such as the deaf awareness or autism training helped people to work effectively with students with particular needs. Other examples included: training on the Careers Scotland package Career Box, which was used to help make students aware of what they needed to do when seeking employment; and gaining a City and Guilds qualification in moving game birds, which provides updated information on legislation to pass on to students.

*"I did the training to become an internal verifier... it gives me the opportunity to look at quality in SVQs, and to put in systems here."*

*"I attended the conference through my COP group last year – it focused on change management, looking at employment law, employer branding, keeping staff happy – it was useful to hear how other colleges had dealt with major change, it gave a wider view and confirmed how far we have come."*

### **3 Strategies for managing people are designed to promote equality of opportunity in the development of the organisation's people.**

*3.1 Top managers can describe strategies they have in place to create an environment where everyone is encouraged to contribute ideas to improve their own and other people's performance.*

Senior managers believe that they create a climate of welcoming ideas through involving people in the strategic planning process and working groups; soliciting ideas at departmental meetings; asking for feedback in staff surveys; encouraging sharing between colleagues through for example peer review, the internal website and the good practice newsletter. Some staff are involved in working groups for the estates project; staff are also involved in this through for example their representative groups and the senior admin support group – one senior manager described how staff are coming forward with solutions to problems related to the move. The College prides itself on being an institution which fosters learning, and that includes learning from one another.

*3.2 Top managers recognise the different needs of people and can describe strategies they*

*have in place to make sure everyone has appropriate and fair access to the support they need and there is equality of opportunity for people to learn and develop which will improve their performance.*

All staff have an induction programme and appropriate on-the-job training. The annual performance review is an opportunity to discuss learning and support needs – this is now being extended to those support staff who did not previously receive an appraisal under the old system. The new system is being administered now by Personnel, so that reviews are done when scheduled and no staff miss out. All staff as well as managers are currently receiving training from the Principal herself in the new performance review system, so that they know what they can expect and can use it effectively – training must have been undertaken before the reviews can take place.

The staff development programme is open to most support staff as well as academic staff, and the Quality Manager sends around e-mails about training to all staff. All staff can request training or development at any time. There is a commitment to developing the IT skills of all staff for whom this is relevant, and to ensure that all lecturers are supported to attain teaching qualifications. The College is also committed to widening access to learning and to blended learning, and staff have a variety of learning activities available to accommodate different learning styles and approaches. BCC trainers and assessors, who are off-site, and support staff at the outreach sites such as Peebles and Edinburgh are paid to attend staff development events. The College is also prepared to be flexible to accommodate individual needs, for example occasioned by childcare, illness and bereavement. It has an ethos of treating people respectfully as part of a common enterprise.

The above does not generally apply to temporary lecturers, although in future the review will be available to them if they want it. There are however a few temporary lecturers who deliver a number of classes in the daytime who have been given some opportunities for training.

*3.3 Managers recognise the different needs of people and can describe how they make sure everyone has appropriate and fair access to the support they need and there is equality of opportunity for people to learn and develop which will improve their performance.*

Managers described how they undertake performance appraisals with staff every year, and that these provide an opportunity to discuss learning and support needs. They also believed that they operated an open door policy, so that staff could come to them with requests for training, problems and issues at any time. They confirmed that there are a variety of learning activities on offer, and that they encouraged people to take these up.

*3.4 People believe managers are genuinely committed to making sure everyone has appropriate and fair access to the support they need and there is equality of opportunity for them to learn and develop which will improve their performance.*

Almost all staff interviewed believed that their access to learning and support was fair and equitable. Most were very positive about the amount of training and other activities on offer, and all had had their review regularly (except those who had still to receive their review training). Some who had not been able to access desired training understood that this was a result of budgetary limitations. Staff at the outreach sites and almost all part-time staff believed that they had the same access to training, and that they were kept well-informed about what was happening at the College. Most felt that their managers were accessible and were prepared to accommodate for example their personal circumstances.

A few people did not believe that development and support were equitable. This was because they felt that their managers were not accessible, or that their training requests were not granted, or that support staff were overlooked.

*“We all get good opportunities for training – if it’s refused the reasons are explained... They employ a range of methods of training, building up different learning styles, so that you can meet the needs of most learners.”*

*“I’ve been given lots of opportunities for training despite my age – lots of places would think it wasn’t worth it.”*

*“Access to training is as fair as possible – for example we’re asked what are the best days to attend staff development sessions – he goes out of his way to ensure that training opportunities include as many people as possible – support staff are encouraged even if it’s not directly relevant.”*

*3.5 People can give examples of how they have been encouraged to contribute ideas to improve their own and other people’s performance.*

Most staff had been involved in the planning processes described above, and felt that their contributions were welcomed. Even those who had not been actively involved believed that they could make suggestions at other times. Some staff commented on how their opinions about the design of the new site had been listened to and in some instances taken on board. Some are involved in various working groups and committees. People gave examples of how they had contributed to one another’s performance, for example through peer review, sharing feedback from courses at team meetings or coaching. A very few people said that ideas were not listened

to or taken on board.

*"We're always encouraged to put forward ideas... I'm on the marketing group – we look at the website, key dates, annual plan, certification events, local publications and so on."*

#### **4 The capabilities managers need to lead, manage and develop people effectively are clearly defined and understood.**

*4.1 Top managers can describe the knowledge, skills and behaviours managers need to lead, manage and develop people effectively, and the plans they have in place to make sure managers have these capabilities.*

The new performance review for managers includes assessment against a set of defined management competencies, which have been based on the National Standards for Further Education. The review therefore should highlight areas where managers need further development. Senior managers meet regularly in management team meetings with the Principal, and middle managers have regular meetings with senior managers. The Principal meets regularly with the Board and with the Chair of the Board – this arrangement was described as very supportive. The Principal is involved in a CPD programme for College Principals, involving annual residential events, action learning sets and sessions on for example sustainability and finance.

The College has also supported management training – for example some middle managers are currently going through the SFEU SCOPE training, training was held on recruitment and selection, and managers have attended the training on the new performance review. After a restructuring of Assistant Principal roles, learning activities were undertaken – for example the Assistant Principal for Curriculum and Quality came new to the quality arena – she attended an SFEU conference on quality and took part in a consultation on the new HMIE framework, which has given her an early lead on changes being introduced. Heads of departments meet together in a curriculum management team, where issues are discussed, and the Assistant Principal provides learning support. Some senior managers have become HMI Associate Reviewers, which gives them knowledge of any curriculum changes or new standards.

Managers also keep up-to-date with their subject areas - for example by reading HMI reports other colleges who excel in particular areas can be identified and visited to share good practice and to provide a benchmark. One manager talked about attending the SQA quality forum and Chamber of Commerce meetings.

The Chair meets with Board members regularly to discuss their development needs. She occasionally attends events run by the Association of Scotland's Colleges, to share good practice.

*"Good managers are leaders – they are involved, motivated – they help people to understand where we're going... They have to deal with the practicalities and targets,, There's no spare capacity so they have to be focused, clear about what their efforts are for... They are messengers of the vision... But leadership is not embedded in one person, there has to be a team."*

#### *4.2 Managers can describe the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to lead, manage and develop people effectively.*

Managers were able to describe the experience and qualities they needed to be effective, and these were fairly consistent with the competencies – although it did not appear that the managers had absorbed these competencies. Most commonly mentioned were: having subject area knowledge, being approachable and fair, ensuring development of staff, communicating effectively, carrying out practical tasks such as maintaining budgets, being supportive.

The College introduced the role of programme leader into curricular departments some years ago, but it appears that this role has not developed very far. Those programme leaders interviewed generally felt that there was scope to review this and delegate more.

*"Developing the team, delegating, encouraging leadership – making sure that everyone knows their purpose and their responsibilities – feeding down information to staff."*

*"Distributing leadership, supporting staff to be leaders – delegating appropriately... Continually reviewing... Disseminating information."*

#### *4.3 People can describe what their manager should be doing to lead, manage and develop them effectively.*

Again, staff described qualities which they believed important in a way that echoed at least to some extent the defined competencies – but the review process is new and most staff will probably have not yet seen them. Most commonly mentioned by staff were: approachability, understanding, organisational skills, ability to make decisions, being supportive, fairness, leading by example, and striking a balance between being clear about expectations and giving scope for staff to make their own decisions.

*“Managers need good communication skills, they need to listen, distribute work tasks effectively, spend appropriate time with staff.”*

*“Being clear about aims and objectives, being approachable, able to lead.”*

## **TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ORGANISATION**

(An Investor in People takes effective action to improve the performance of the organisation through its people)

### **5 Managers are effective in leading, managing and developing people.**

#### *5.1 Managers can explain how they are effective in leading, managing and developing people.*

Managers all believed that they demonstrated the qualities they thought were important, and were able to give examples of times when they had been effective. For example one person talked about making sure targets are being met and not letting things go. Another mentioned being clear, planning well and being “visibly systematic”, which was reassuring to staff. One manager talked about how she handled a situation by bringing issues into the open and communicating clearly; another talked about how by investing time in staff members, issues had been resolved.

*“I’m a good motivator, I have good relationships with staff – we work well as a team... I keep in touch with them about important things.”*

#### *5.2 Managers can give examples of how they give people constructive feedback on their performance regularly and when appropriate.*

Managers had carried out reviews regularly (although some were waiting for training themselves or had staff waiting for training and therefore had not yet done some of the scheduled reviews). They also believed that they gave feedback at other times as appropriate, on an ad hoc basis, and through departmental meetings. They told staff if they had done a good job, or gave them constructive guidance in order to improve.

*“I give feedback as issues arise – I’m open and upfront, I don’t shy away from things... I tell them if a piece of work is good – I give them appropriate praise, that way the reward is real, not just routine,”*

#### *5.3 People can explain how their managers are effective in leading, managing and developing them.*

Most staff were positive about their managers and believed that they are effective – in some cases stating that their managers were excellent leaders. Such managers were thought to be inspiring role models, good at communication, approachable, able to take tough decisions,

supportive, involving people, well organised, and with a sound knowledge of their subject areas.

About a fifth of non-managerial staff interviewed did not believe that they had effective management. The reasons given included lack of feedback and recognition, not taking suggestions into consideration, not taking decisions in a timely or robust manner, and lack of “people skills”. However some of these people acknowledged that their managers worked hard and were good at some aspects of their jobs.

*“Hard-working, professional, approachable, leads by example, encouraging.”*

*“[Manager] always listens, gives you a straight opinion, your concerns get addressed, good at organising.”*

*“Good at giving direction, communicating expectations, giving support to achieve them.”*

*“Very good, very caring, listens well, delegates, a enabler – makes us feel good.”*

#### *5.4 People can give examples of how they receive constructive feedback on their performance regularly and when appropriate.*

People had had regular reviews in the past, although some were still waiting for training for the current round. They believed that this had been an occasion for constructive feedback. Most also said that they received useful feedback at other times, sometimes very frequently. They also received feedback on progress towards KPIs and targets at departmental meetings and through the self-evaluation process. A few people also said that they received little feedback or recognition outside of the review process. A few others did not believe that they received feedback from managers at all unless there were problems – this was true for those who had not previously had appraisals, including some support staff and temporary lecturers. In some of these cases people would prefer more feedback, and so the new reviews will be welcomed.

*“The new review is not just a paper exercise – there’s lots of emphasis on making sure that people take it seriously – it improves performance management.”*

*“The feedback at the review is always encouraging... the new one in an improvement – there’s more time, it’s more relaxed, more thorough.”*

## **6 People’s contribution to the organisation is recognised and valued.**

### *6.1 Managers can give examples of how they recognise and value people’s individual contribution to the organisation.*

Managers described how they recognised and valued people’s contribution though positive

feedback at reviews, departmental meetings and other times. Managers also believed that they showed staff that they valued them by trusting them to make decisions, by welcoming their ideas, by investing in staff training and by thanking people. People may be asked to share things in team meetings. Achievements are sometimes publicised through the College newsletter.

*“The College culture is one where people as well as learning are valued.”*

*6.2 People can describe how they contribute to the organisation and believe they make a positive difference to its performance.*

Staff described how they contributed to the College through performing their roles to the best of their abilities. Curricular staff contribute to the College objectives through their teaching and extra-curricular support to students – many talked about their commitment to enabling young people to attain their potential. Staff from the Access department contribute to achieving the College goal of widening access to students from all backgrounds and abilities. Support staff ensure that the College is able to function efficiently and in a pleasant environment, and that lecturers are able to undertake their teaching because IT and technology equipment are maintained.

*“I have lots of contact with students – I help them with their everyday needs – I’m a central point for lots of their questions and problems.”*

*“If I didn’t keep the College clean, it would shut on health and safety grounds.”*

*6.3 People can describe how their contribution to the organisation is recognised and valued.*

Almost all staff believed that they were valued, and that their contribution was recognised by their managers through their reviews and at other times. Some said that were thanked and praised regularly, although this was not universal. Staff also appreciated the feedback they receive from colleagues and students. Some mentioned items in the College newsletter.

A few people said that they did not feel particularly valued by their manager, and a couple of people said that there was insufficient contact with senior management.

*“I feel valued by [manager] – there are lots of initiatives and awards – ways of seeing that the College recognises achievement... There is a culture of valuing staff in some departments – but it’s a bit patchy.”*

## **7 People are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility by being involved in decision-making.**

*7.1 Managers can describe how they promote a sense of ownership and responsibility by encouraging people to be involved in decision-making, both individually and through representative groups, where they exist.*

Managers described how people are encouraged to participate in organisational decision-making through the planning processes at departmental and a wider strategic level. Many staff also contribute to working groups, such as those involved in the estates project, for example IT, human resources, marketing. Curricular staff are encouraged to develop their teaching courses in their own way, within certain parameters. Some have responsibility for particular courses; others have developed new courses as a result of their expertise, for example drama work with students with additional support needs. Support staff have responsibility for their own workloads, and for making decisions as appropriate within their roles. Members of representative groups are fully consulted about terms and conditions and all staff policies and working practices. Staff are being involved in the co-location project, through being actively consulted and having their ideas taken on board. People's workloads and targets are agreed at the annual performance review. Minutes of meetings are circulated to staff, and a lot of information is made available – there is a culture of openness which facilitates a sense of ownership.

*“We’re a very open department – there’s lots of discussion about what works best... Peer reviews have become a bit stale – I suggested we try something new, so we looked at it as a team, how you would evidence it.”*

*7.2 People can describe how they are encouraged to be involved in decision-making that affects the performance of individuals, teams and the organisation, at a level that is appropriate to their role.*

Most staff confirmed that they are involved in decision-making at a level appropriate to their role in their departments and teams, and through this to organisational decision-making. Many had participated in at least one event related to the co-location, and several said that they thought their ideas had been acted upon. Curricular staff believed that they had responsibility for their teaching programmes, and support staff mostly felt that they had scope to make decisions within their jobs on a day-to-day basis. Staff representatives confirmed that they are encouraged to participate in relevant decision-making, and are involved in committees such as health and safety.

*“We’re always asked what we think – we went to some workshops about the strategy plan – they involve us, our ideas are taken on board.”*

*“We have meetings every week – there’s a buddy system to relay information to people who can’t come – and twice-yearly block meetings where we take a critical look at what we’re doing... We contribute lots of ideas and opinions – it feeds into the operational plan – we’re heard and listened to.”*

*“You can do what you like with students on a day-today basis – within limits – there’s a lot of flexibility... I feel 100% ownership, I’m proud of what I do.”*

*7.3 People can describe how they are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility for decisions that affect the performance of individuals, teams and the organisation, at a level that is appropriate to their role.*

As well as feeling a sense of ownership of decisions which staff are directly involved in making, or in contributing to, they also appeared to be very much on board with the wider strategic direction of the College. All said that they felt a sense of ownership and responsibility for their individual work, whether that was teaching, administration, technical or IT support or cleaning – this was a result of believing that their work is important, and of having sufficient scope to make their own choices on a day-to-day basis. Participating in specific initiatives or working groups also confers a feeling of responsibility.

## **8 People learn and develop effectively.**

*8.1 Managers can describe how they make sure people’s learning and development needs are met.*

Managers identify learning needs as detailed in 2.1 and 2.2 above. Some of the learning takes place through the staff development programme; for example 95% of staff attended a series of sessions on disability awareness run by an external organisation, to increase people’s competence in teaching and responding effectively to disabled students. BCC staff have had training for the Get Ready for Work programme, ensuring that they adhere to required LEC systems – this covered for example initial assessments and working with young people. One lecturer is being supported to do a post-graduate course in learning disability.

Managers ensure that there are a variety of learning methods. For example the Practitioner Placement Programme placed staff for short periods with other organisations – such as the Balmoral Estate, where a staff member discussed ideas with the head stalker, learned about

larding legislation and saw how top of the range larding equipment works. Visits to colleges which performed well in their HMIE reports were also encouraged in order to observe good practice which might lead to for example improved student retention rates. Nominating ICT mentors in different departments assists lecturers to use more ICT and thus promotes the goal of blended learning.

There is a programme of health and safety training, including IOSH training for technology managers and lecturers, accrediting them to train other staff – this will be rolled out to managers in other areas. This is raising the profile of health and safety training, embedding it particularly in higher risk areas, enabling people to assess and manage risks appropriately, and providing people with qualifications. New lecturers spend one day with the health and safety departments of companies where students have placements, so that they can conduct risk assessments for those placements. All computer users have to undertake the Posture Right training package and demonstrate they can implement it.

There was an acknowledgement however that it could be difficult to free up staff time for development activities and that resources were limited.

*“We have a growing number of autistic students – the Scottish Society for Autism came in and did training – the evaluation was very positive – it gave people an understanding of why students behave as they do.”*

*8.2 People can describe how their learning and development needs have been met, what they have learnt and how they have applied this in their role.*

Almost all staff were able to describe various learning and development activities they had engaged in, and what they had gained from it. Some examples include: One manager talked about becoming an HMI Associate Assessor, and how this had given her a clearer understanding of how quality indicators could be achieved, and an opportunity to witness good practice and share experiences with other Assessors. Those who were undertaking the PDA or TQFE courses all reported that they were learning skills and developing confidence. One team had briefings at team meetings, such as different methods of collecting evidence during assessments, which encouraged different approaches. A number of people talked about computer training, and tasks they were subsequently able to perform, such as PowerPoint presentations and spreadsheets. The change management training had enabled people to deal more effectively with the transition.

*“Through the COP [Community of Practice] I meet with other [subject] lecturers – they’ve been*

*e-mailing me with on-line learning sites... It was encouraging to find the same student behaviour issues and that I was dealing with it in the correct manner.”*

*“The review training was good – it made me aware of the purpose of the review – I realised that my role in the review is important.”*

*8.3 People who are new to the organisation, and those new to a role, can describe how their induction has helped them to perform effectively.*

New staff members were positive about their induction programmes, which they considered thorough and effective. The programme includes an introduction to the College and to terms and conditions, relevant policies, health and safety, fire regulations and so on. They had been able to shadow either their predecessor or others for a period, and had had regular meetings during the induction period. New lecturers attend the PDA programme; although some felt that it was unfair they are not paid to attend this, as people at some Colleges are, they all said that it was worthwhile.

The restructuring of the Assistant Principal functions has led to training on relevant aspects, for example the Assistant Principal for Curriculum and Quality has participated in activities to bring her up to speed on quality matters. The Assistant Principal who has taken on the estates development project has learned on the job, as well as through external consultants and in working parties.

## **EVALUATING THE IMPACT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ORGANISATION**

(An Investor in People can demonstrate the impact of its investment in people on the performance of the organisation)

### **9 Investment in people improves the performance of the organisation.**

*9.1 Top managers can describe the organisation's overall investment of time, money and resources in learning and development.*

Resources for staff training and development come from a number of sources:

- There is a defined central budget, which covers for example the staff development programme and request for training from individuals;
- A temporary staffing budget is currently being used to pay lecturers to deliver the Professional Development Award programme for new lecturers;
- The Blend2Learn programme is run jointly with two other colleges, and other initiatives come through the East of Scotland development group of local colleges – these programmes have the added advantage of sharing skills between colleges;
- Specific pieces of funding are sometimes used for particular projects, for example the Practitioner Placement Project;
- There is a budget for development within the re-location budget, and this has been used to fund for example the change management sessions run by SFEU;
- DEEP funding funds an employer engagement officer and placements of staff in local companies to update their practitioner skills.

In addition to the funding, there is of course the time invested in for example coaching, mentoring, peer reviews, attending learning activities and events. There is also the cost of the Quality Manager, the health and safety manager who delivers a lot of training, staff in Personnel who collate performance reviews and so on.

*9.2 Top managers can explain, and quantify where appropriate, how learning and development has improved the performance of the organisation.*

Senior managers explained that the impact of learning and development is demonstrated through:

- The good reputation of the College, and the acknowledgement that it excels in certain areas;
- Satisfactory progress towards achieving strategic goals, KPIs and targets;
- The fact that most evaluation forms completed after development activities indicate that people have found them useful and been able to implement learning from them;

- Feedback from student surveys, focus group and representatives about the quality of their teaching;
- Relatively few complaints;
- Largely very positive HMIE report;
- Improved staff confidence in the change process occasioned by the relocation project;
- The attainment of teaching qualifications and observing the development of new lecturers;
- Overall improvement in ICT skills and greater integration of ICT into teaching;
- The recruitment and retention of high quality staff in an area where recruitment can be difficult.

*9.3 Top managers can describe how the evaluation of their investment in people is used to develop their strategy for improving the performance of the organisation.*

The last three years have seen reviews of many aspects of the College's management and development processes – some initiated by the new Principal and consulted on with managers and staff. Three examples:

- There was a restructuring of Assistant Principal roles, focusing more on functions – for example there is now one Assistant Principal for curriculum and quality, which has created greater consistency, brings together everything relevant to the area, and makes introducing changes easier. Another is now responsible for organisational development, covering HR, staff development and the Momentum campaign; recently, more of the HR function has been delegated to the HR manager, which has freed up the Assistant Principal for other things.
- Changes have been made to the strategic planning process, with a greater emphasis on outcomes, the identification of ten key KPIs, performance management and self-evaluation by departments – and increased staff participation in the process. The strategic plan now covers three years, with yearly operational plans, and is actively monitored by a new planning liaison group. The Board is now involved at a much earlier stage and are therefore driving the process more; they are also receiving more information about progress against KPIs. Departmental operational plans have been put onto a database, to improve self-evaluation, with support being given to managers to increase the value of the reports.
- BC Consultants has been integrated much more into the College as a whole – this has enabled them to share administrative and IT systems, resulting in greater efficiency, and increased learning opportunities for staff.

*9.4 Managers can give examples of how learning and development has improved the performance of their team and the organisation.*

Managers were all able to give examples of how learning and development had benefited their

departments. For example: one manager talked about a lecturer who did the TQFE programme and developed understanding and confidence – and became involved in developing new resources. Another mentioned that in response to identifying that mental health problems are a reason for withdrawal from College, someone was encouraged to develop their skills and is now supporting students affected by mental health issues – thus helping to improve retention rates. Some managers commented on new ideas brought back by staff after they attended conferences or visited other organisations.

*“Since we’ve increased opportunities for ICT development, staff are much more aware, more confident – I meet with the students and ask them about the use of ICT – there’s been an improvement.”*

*9.5 People can give examples of how learning and development has improved their performance, the performance of their team and that of the organisation.*

People were very aware of how their development had improved their performance and that of their department – and by extension the College, although that was not generally made explicit. One person cited the training for the Virtual Learning Environment, which enabled them to help students access learning materials. Several mentioned the ICT training which was helping lecturers integrate it more into their teaching, and improving efficiency generally. The training courses on deaf awareness, autism and disability was thought by several to have improved their ability to work effectively with particular individuals. Lecturers of land-based courses go with students to visit estates and work alongside them – they keep up their skills and knowledge, make sure that teaching stays “real” and gain respect. Those doing the PDA course had improved their teaching practice through learning new techniques, understanding the need to pace their teaching to accommodate different students, improving their lesson plans and having an opportunity to discuss their fears and concerns and get feedback from one another.

*“The SCOPE training is good – you have contact with staff in other colleges – sometimes there are guest speakers, for example on leadership – we look at challenges for middle managers – it has helped to develop an overview, when to step in and when to leave things alone.”*

*“I did my SVQ3 in business administration through BCC – it was re-affirming, it gave me confidence, and I got much quicker at completing tasks.”*

*“I learned how to operate a programme for students with dyslexia – it’s throughout the College now, and I am able to show staff how to operate it.”*

## **10 Improvements are continually made to the way people are managed and developed.**

*10.1 Top managers can give examples of how the evaluation of their investment in people has resulted in improvements in the organisation's strategy for managing and developing people.*

There have been a number of improvements in relation to management and development, in addition to those mentioned in 9.3. Some examples:

- The performance review: the Principal reviewed the previous appraisal system and felt that it was insufficiently effective and had become too routine. She drafted a new one, which was amended after consultation with staff. There are three different versions of the review, for managers, curricular staff and support staff; it is more closely linked to strategic objectives and operational targets, as are the learning needs identified. The one for managers for the first time refers to management competencies. Training has been provided for all managers and staff, to ensure that it works well. The reviews are administered through HR, ensuring that they held when scheduled, and they are countersigned by a senior manager to ensure quality.
- Evaluation of the staff development programme leads to changes, for example the IT training was felt by some staff to be too basic, so it has been re-arranged into two sections – more experienced staff do not have to attend the first section.
- The Board are increasing their contact with staff, for example by visiting departments, contributing to the newsletter and inviting presentations on the work of different departments at Board meetings.
- Health and safety training has become more dispersed, less centralised – this has raised awareness and led to more people being equipped to manage risks appropriately.

*10.2 Managers can give examples of improvements they have made to the way they manage and develop people.*

All senior and middle managers interviewed were able to state how they had improved their management and development of staff. For example, one person talked about adapting their approach to take account of the culture of the College where that made sense. Another had developed more confidence to deal with unsatisfactory performance. One manager had become more competent in developing objectives related to outcomes.

*"I'm always looking to improve... my listening has improved – I take time to listen before making a judgement about how serious an issue is."*

*"I think as managers we are getting better at self-evaluation – involving staff in identifying areas of weakness... refining the process – staff are seeing the benefits and buying into it."*

*10.3 People can give examples of improvements that have been made to the way the organisation manages and develops its people.*

Several improvements were mentioned by staff. Most common was the new review process - those who had experienced it felt it was more focused and thorough. The Momentum campaign was seen as enabling the change process. Many staff said that they thought communication had improved and that staff were now more involved in planning and were consulted more.

However quite a few staff said that they did not see any improvements (apart from the new review system); a couple of people said that things had got worse. There will of course always be differences in staff perceptions – but it may be that it will take longer for the impact of the improvements that have been put in place to percolate through.

*“The new review process is an improvement – the structure’s better – it’s not just paperwork, it revolves around dialogue.”*

*“They’ve done well with the Momentum preparation – there are a variety of ways of listening to and alleviating anxieties – looking at the changes and what staff development is needed.”*

*“There’s more openness, it’s a breath of fresh air – we’re given more responsibility to do things.”*

*“The new leadership of the College has brought more openness, greater sharing of information – a culture of feedback being welcomed – more involvement in strategic planning.”*

