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Curriculum Quality and Student Experience Report

BORDERS COLLEGE REGIONAL BOARD

Subject: Student Welfare and Guidance Report October 2023	**Purpose:** **For Approval** ☐ **For Discussion** ☒ **For Information** ☐
Prepared by: Amy Brydon	**Date of Committee: 19/10/2023**

Purpose:

This paper provides the committee with an overview of student support delivery to date during academic year 2023-2024. It also gives updates on recent changes to the service and opportunities for development over the coming months.

Executive Summary:

Key items:

- The Student Support Services team are moving through a period of change and will work together to identify enhanced ways of working to ensure support is accessible, flexible and meets the needs of our students.
- After the October break, the Student Support Services team will launch new partnerships to provide additional mental health support options to students across all college campuses.
- The Student Support Services team will explore opportunities to reduce the impacts of the cost of living crisis on Borders College students.

Questions that Members should ask themselves when reading the paper:

- Is the Board satisfied that this report provides a suitable overview of the student support services team? Is there anything else you would like included in future papers?

Linked to Strategic Ambition(s):
Create high quality learning and training opportunities which are relevant, enabling and flexible

Take a leading role in enabling an inclusive, resilient and sustainable Scotland

Performance Measures:
Student Outcomes in top quartile of national colleges

Delivery models are personalised focusing on individual & business need

Linked to Strategic Risk Register: 1c - Learners Needs Choose an item.	
Recommendation:	
Previous Committee Approvals: N/A	
For publication ☐	**Not for publication** ☒ **If not, why not?** For internal information.

CQSE. Thursday 19 October 2023

Title of Paper: Student Welfare and Guidance Report

Introduction:

Based in the Advice Centre at Borders College Galashiels campus, the Student Support Services team provide a range of pastoral support on matters relating to course information, funding, progression and articulation, welfare, health and wellbeing, funding and benefits, and learning support.

This paper provides an overview of student support delivery to date during academic year 2023-2024. It also provides an update on recent changes to the service and opportunities for development over the coming months.

Learning Support

- Based on 2023-24 enrolment data, **28%** of all students enrolled at Borders College have disclosed a disability. This represents a **15.2%** increase in disability disclosures since 2021.

- To date, **279** students are receiving learning support. This equates to **27%** of full time students and **3%** of part time students. By comparison, the learning support team were supporting **267** students at the end of AY 2022-23. Year to date we are **+4%** on last year's support. This is expected to rise over the coming year.

- In response to rising levels of disability disclosure, the Student Services team must look at ways to create efficiency within the learning support team to manage increasing demand. Currently, the learning support team deliver 1-to-1 and group study skills sessions. Through a combination of upskilling and partnership working there is opportunity to embed study skills provision more widely across the college, and provide the learning support team with increased capacity to deliver specialist learning support. We hope to begin to explore these opportunities in the coming year.

Welfare Support

- To date, **13** self-referrals for wellbeing support have been received. **61%** of these relate to mental health and wellbeing.

- As part of recent work to re-align pastoral support across the College, the Student Support team have acquired a team of Student Support Officers (formerly Achievement Coaches). As the new team settles in to their new department we are looking forward to re-shaping the way support is delivered across the college, and enhancing the accessibility of our support offer for students.

Demographics

Student Carers
7% of Borders College students have disclosed caring responsibilities. **9%** of full time students are carers, and **5%** of part time students are carers. **6%** of all student carers have withdrawn from college this year.

Students with learning support in place
13% of all Borders College students have some form of learning support in place. **27%** of full-time students are currently receiving learning support and **3%** of part-time students are recieving learning support. 20% of students

Students who are care-experienced
6% of all students have disclosed they are care-experienced. **10%** of full time students are care-experienced and **3%** of part-time students are care-experienced.

Students with disclosed mental health conditions
6% of all students have disclosed a mental health condition. **10%** of full time students have a mental health condition and **5%** of part-time students have a mental health condition

Students on the Borders Young Talent (BYT) programme
<1% of all students are part of the BYT programme. **2%** of full time students are recieving BYT support and no part-time students are recieving BYT support.

Estranged students
2% of all students have disclosed that they are estranged. **2%** of full time students are estranged and **1%** of part-time students are estranged.

Withdrawals

- There have been **56** withdrawals to date in AY 2023-24 (**19** early withdrawals and **37** further withdrawals).

- **47%** of all early withdrawals were due to students returning to employment. **20%** of total withdrawals to due to students returning to employment.

- **7%** of all withdrawals to date are linked to poor mental health.

Financial Implications:

- Mental health support continues to be critical for our students. Borders College is expected to receive an allocation of **circa £72k** under the Scottish Government's one-year 'Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Transition Fund' for college and universities. This fund aims to provide financial support for institutions to transition from previous arrangements to more sustainable models which meet students' needs and integrate with local services.

Learner Implications:

- In 2023, NUS reported that **37%** of students had considered dropping out of College for financial reasons and **52%** had skipped a meal because of lack of money. Results from a recent survey of Borders College students showed that **65%** of respondents had experienced financial difficulties while at college.

Equality and Diversity Implications/Equality Impact Assessment:

- Supported by the transitional fund, partnerships are now in place with two local mental health organisations with support commencing shortly after the October break. A further local partnership is currently being explored. If adopted, this will provide mental health support for 16-18 year old students.

- Student poverty continues to affect students across the sector. Speculatively, this may account for the number of students' choosing to withdraw from their course to return to employment. The Student Services team is working with the Students' Association and student funding team to identify sustainable and embedded ways to tackle poverty.

Staff Implications:

- A recent re-alignment of student support will bring all pastoral support colleagues from across the college within the Student Support Team. The Student Services team will spend the following weeks and months bedding in the new structure and working together to identify more flexible and aligned

ways of working. The priority is to develop a flexible and accessible trauma-informed service that meets the needs of our students.

Conclusion

- The Student Support Services team are moving through a period of change and will work together to identify improved ways of working to ensure support is accessible, flexible and meets the needs of our students.

- After the October break, the Student Support Services team will launch new partnerships to provide additional mental health support options to students across all college campuses.

- The Student Support Services team will explore opportunities to reduce the impacts of the cost of living crisis on Borders College students.