# REGIONAL BOARD REPORT

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| **Subject:** Covid19 update | **Purpose:**<br>**For Approval** ☐<br>**For Discussion** ☐<br>**For Information** ☒ |
| **Prepared by:** Hazel Robertson<br>VP Finance & Corporate Services | **Date:** 23 November 2021 |

**Purpose:** To provide the Regional Board with an update on the College's position in relation to Covid19.

**Linked to Strategic Ambition: Take a leading role in enabling an inclusive, resilient and sustainable Scotland**

**Performance Measures: Delivery models are personalised focusing on individual & business need**

**Linked to Strategic Risk Register: 1b - COVID Impact**

**New Risk Commentary:** N/A

**Executive Summary:**

This short report provides an overview of our arrangements in relation to Covid-19 and the impact it is having on our delivery of services, for students and staff.

**Governmental advice**

Short notice meetings with the government and the various clinical advisory leads impress the importance of maintaining safety measures and reducing on site activity. The winter period is clearly one of their biggest concerns. We take part in the various advisory groups.

**Controls and safety measures**

We continue to follow all protocols as determined by Scottish Government and the College Sector to ensure the safety of everyone within the College. Internal audits and checks are ongoing to ensure compliance. All changes to our internal protocols are detailed together with NHS information links and any relevant additional information, that staff and students will find helpful and reassuring. Recently there has been a focus on C02 monitoring which provides a guide for when additional fresh air is required. The Health and Safety committee is consulted in relation to any changes in controls. Guidance is communicated using a weekly message from our designated Covid-19 email, along with multiple communication channels to reiterate and share information.

**Responding to possible and actual positive tests**

Staff and students are alerting us to potential/actual positive tests. This allows us to be proactive in advising close contacts to self isolate and undertake testing. We are able to record staff absences and people who are working from home, including whilst tested positive.

**Student experience and outcomes**
We are working hard to avoid deferrals into next year although this is proving more challenging for areas of practical delivery and we are finding that we have some short notice changes in delivery from on campus to online if we have insufficient teaching staff to maintain a number of practical classes simultaneously. We are getting some complaints from students about this, although they do understand the constraints. Some practical classes are six months behind. We are seeing an increase in student withdrawal. Additional student support may be required, we are recruiting to gaps and this will remain under review. It is possible that we may need to combine some of our delivery with another College in order to address staffing constraints.

**Human factors**
We are seeing higher rates of absenteeism and reports of mental health issues in our staff. Often it is not just Covid, but also other external factors. It is possible that we will find difficulties in recruiting to gaps. On the other hand many staff speak positively about working from home. A recent published external survey highlighted significant productivity gains from working from home.

**Financial aspects**
Last year we received a dedicated grant for Covid consequentials. To date we have not received notification of funding for this year. Pressure is being put on SFC to continue this support. The catering contract continues to make significant losses and options to mitigate this are being reviewed. We will continue to protect the budget for the student association. Teaching materials are a significant financial pressure (could be a combined impact of Brexit, Covid and hauliers availability). Availability of labour to undertake repairs and maintenance is challenging, and having an impact on project delivery.

**Graduation**
On a positive note we have been able to adopt a Covid safe graduation process, having not been able to do so last year. The two ceremonies will take place 1st week in December.

**Recommendation:**
That the Board note the position with regards to Covid19.

**Previous Committee Approvals:**
nil

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| **For publication** ☒ | **For publication with redactions** ☐ | **Not for publication** ☐ |