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## FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

13<sup>th</sup> March 2025

### Mid-Year Monitoring Report 2024/25 – People Services

#### 1.0 PURPOSE OF PAPER For discussion

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide an update to the committee on People Services' activity and related statistics.

#### 2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The paper provides statistical data and information to provide assurance to the Board that the College is meeting its ambition under the Workforce Strategy.

#### 3.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)/ACTION(S) REQUIRED

- 3.1 I recommend that the Finance and Resources Committee note the contents of this paper and seek clarification if required.

#### 4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The paper provides mid-year data and where possible has some detail from external benchmarking.
- 4.2 A newly formed benchmarking group is being established from the HR Practitioners Group and further benchmarking data should become available as that team begins to pull together a remit and work plan.
- 4.3 Information regarding activity undertaken during the period and other updates are included in the paper.

#### 5.0 MID-YEAR MONITORING REPORT 2024/25

##### 5.1 People Services

- 5.1.1 People Services covers the whole employment journey, from recruitment through employment and termination as well as managing pensions, people policies, payroll, change management, learning and development, equality and diversity, wellbeing and welfare.

#### 5.1.2 The department is staffed as follows:

Debbie Kerr - Director of People Services  
Louise Kerr – People Services Business Partner  
Karen McDonald – People Services Officer  
Sheila White – People Services/Payroll Officer  
Hilary Broatch – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer

### 5.2 Statistics

5.2.1 Staff Sickness Absence - The total number of days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) to sickness absence during the period 1 August 2024 to 31 January 2025 was 3.9 days approximately, 2.1% absence rate. For the same period the previous year this was 3.6 days approximately and 2%.

The 0.1% increase is due to a small number of staff who have been on long term absence. Staff in this situation are being monitored by Occupational Health and guidance on managing their absence and potential return to work is being followed by the Managers concerned. Welfare meetings are being arranged to discuss these absences with the staff members concerned.

	2023/2024 August to January	2024/25 August to January
No of days lost due to short term absence	258 days (54 staff)	231 days (47 staff)
No of days lost due to long term absence (more than 3 weeks)	448 days (16 staff)	536 days (14 staff)
Total	706 days (70 staff)	767 days (61 staff)

5.2.2 Benchmarking data received from other colleges ranges from 1.91% to 4.10% for the same period in 2024/25.

5.2.3 Voluntary staff turnover for the period August 2024 to January 2025 – 3.5% a decrease from 8.9% for the full year last year.

5.2.4 Vacancy Rate - We currently only have 1 vacancy outstanding for a Lecturer in Plumbing. Therefore, our vacancy rate is less than 1%.

### 5.3 Employee Engagement

5.3.1 The College has committed to engaging with GPTW for a total of 4 years in order to measure staff engagement and be able to monitor trends and respond to changes in the reporting.

- 5.3.2 The next survey is planned to be released to staff on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025 with initial feedback being delivered to SLT at the end of April 2025. A report will be provided to this committee at the June meeting.

#### **5.4 Staff Engagement Group – Feedback Survey**

- 5.4.1 The newly established Staff Engagement Group made up of volunteers from various departments in the College has conducted a survey of staff to gather feedback on a number of initiatives in the College for staff. These vary from opportunities to network both formally and informally with colleagues, social events, and wellbeing initiative.
- 5.4.2 The feedback from the survey was discussed with the Principal and myself and will be used to inform future events and initiatives.
- 5.4.3 One example of this is the introduction of a Wellbeing hour for staff to enable them to take part in activities to improve their wellbeing at work. This initiative is being supported by our Active Campus Coordinator and Sport Scotland.

#### **5.5 Union Relations**

- 5.5.1 Engagement and open communication with EIS-FELA remains strong with regular meetings both formal and informal enabling an effective voice for staff.
- 5.5.2 On 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024, UNISON FE-Branch was put under supervision and the activists involved in the branch were suspended pending investigation. Since then the College has been allocated an Area Officer, Lynne Williamson from UNISON Scotland while the FE Branch is re-constituted and re-built with new activists. Lynne has been on campus to meet with current members, recruit new members and recruit local stewards and will be on campus on a monthly basis until we have trained local representation in place. Janet Stewart, Regional Organiser visited the College on 6<sup>th</sup> February and I can report that relations with the Union has improved significantly. UNISON are looking for ways to work together in partnership and I am hopeful for a positive relationship continuing into the future.

#### **5.6 Pay and Terms and Conditions**

- 5.6.1 Pay policy is determined at a national level through membership of the College Employers Scotland National Joint Negotiating Committee.
- 5.6.2 Pay for lecturing staff is now settled through to 2025/26 and as I write we are expecting a pay claim from Support Staff this week or early next week.
- 5.6.3 UNISON are keen to progress Job Evaluation quickly and are open to engaging ECC who own the system to carry out the scoring and quality control work to enable the outcomes of job evaluation to be realised within a reasonable timeframe. A further verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

## **5.7 New Policy**

- 5.7.1 A new national policy and model procedure on Discipline has been agreed at a national level for implementation locally. This output is expected to come from the next Central Committee Table in May 2025.

## **5.8 E-Learning**

- 5.8.1 Staff are required to undertake a number of e-learning modules to remain up to date with regard to legislation. Previously a number of these modules have been provided by Cylx at a cost of about £3k per annum.
- 5.8.2 Recently we have launched a new e-learning platform connected to our VLE and provided by RBS Mentor, our legal advisors. This platform gives staff access to a significant number of modules which are both essential and optional to complete. These range from Equality and Diversity, Sexual Harassment, Safeguarding, Data Protection through to a number of Wellbeing and Health and Safety modules. This provides staff with a comprehensive and useful toolkit to confidently and competently undertake their roles.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS**

### **6.1 Financial Implications**

- 6.1.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this paper.

### **6.2 Learner Implications**

- 6.2.1 While there are no direct learner implications as a result of this paper, sufficient well trained, motivated and skilled staff are essential to delivering our services and curriculum.

### **6.3 Staff Implications**

- 6.3.1 While there are no direct implications as a result of this paper, our Workforce Strategy is intended to ensure we have valued, engaged and motivated staff.

### **6.4 Equality and Diversity Implications/Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.4.1 While there are no direct implications as a result of this paper, equalities and an inclusive environment for work and study are central to our purpose.

### **6.5 Sustainability/Environmental Implications**

- 6.5.1 While there are no direct implications as a result of this paper, our agreed College behaviours are intended to match our ambition for net zero and a sustainable College.

## 7.0 RISK COMMENTARY

- 7.1 The Board has a duty to ensure that the College is well managed and that we are meeting our obligations under the Workforce Strategy, This report aims to keep the Board well informed and up to date with activities to ensure good governance.
- 7.2 Should national bargaining agree a sum in excess of that budgeted for job evaluation, this may present a risk to College financial sustainability. My close involvement in the process will ensure that the College is kept appraised of emerging issues.

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The College continues to meet the main objectives of its Workforce Strategy. Members should note any items and seek clarification on any points.

Deborah M Kerr

Director of People Services

March 2025

### Previous Board or College Committee Approvals:

None

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