



FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

2nd October 2025

Annual 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.

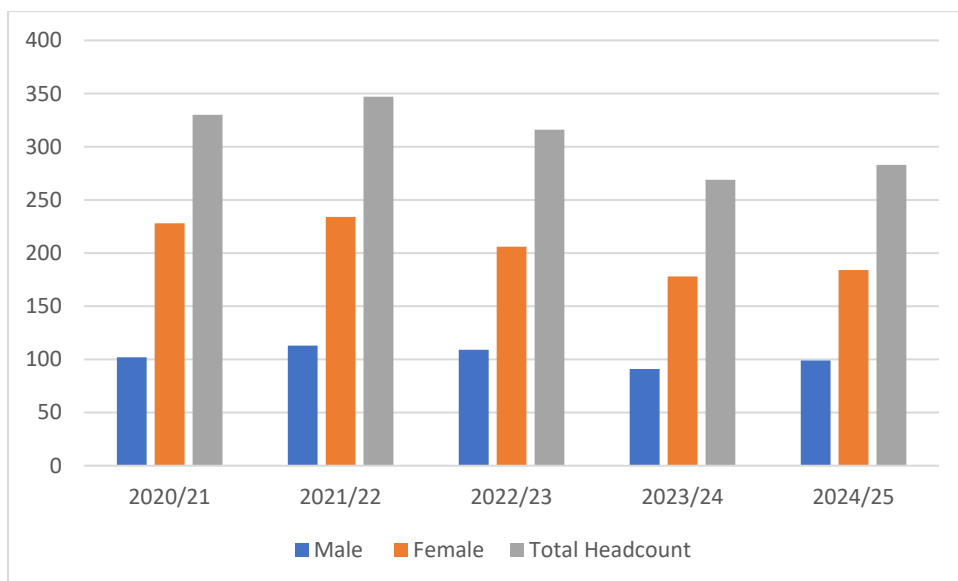
4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The paper provides data both for the current year and previous years and where possible has some detail from external benchmarking.
- 4.2 Information regarding activity undertaken during the period and outcomes from staff engagement activity is reported within the paper.

5.0 Annual Monitoring Report 2024/25 – People Services

5.1 Statistics

Gender of Staff Employed during the year



Year	Male	Female	Total Headcount
2020/21	102	228	330
2021/22	113	234	347
2022/23	109	206	316
2023/24	91	178	269
2024/25	99	184	283

Full time Equivalent staff

2021/22	217.6 fte
2022/23	206.18 fte
2023/24	189.2 fte
2024/25	186.6 fte

This reduction in 24/25 was due to the successful VS scheme where posts were removed from the structure.

5.2 Staff Sickness Absence

The total number of days lost per full-time equivalent (FTE) due to sickness absence during 2024/25 was 10.6 days.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
No of days lost due to short term absence	430 days (76 staff)	490 (86)	481 (82)	536 (82)

No of days lost due to long term absence (more than 3 weeks)	3415 days (23 staff)	1825 (38)	1466 (39)	1543 (24)
Total	3845 days(99 staff)	2315 (124)	1947 (121)	2079 (106)

Although less people were absent during 2024/25 they were absent for longer periods of time. There were a small number of individuals absent due to long term illness who have since been granted ill health retirement or have left the organisation. Absence is managed closely and staff are referred to the Occupational Health Service for support and to inform management with regard to any necessary action to manage absence levels.

5.3 Voluntary (left for another job) Staff Turnover 2023/24

Turnover for 2024/25 was 8.6% a decrease from 8.9% last year. This indicates that staff tend to stay with the College for a long time which could indicate high satisfaction, loyalty and engagement.

5.4 Vacancy Rate

The vacancy rate at year end was 0%. During the year we advertised 36 vacancies. Moving forward it is the intention to provide quarterly information on the average vacancy rate.

5.5 Demographics

The table below shows the demographics in age of our staff as reported to the SFC on the annual Staffing Return 2024/25.

Age range (years of age)	Gender	Employment category				
		Teaching		Senior management	Other	Total
		Permanent	Temporary			
24 & under	Male	0	0	0	3	3
	Female	0	0	0	4	4
25 - 30	Male	1	2	0	1	4
	Female	3	0	0	9	12
31 - 35	Male	2	1	0	4	7

	Female	1	2	0	6	9
36 - 40	Male	5	1	0	3	9
	Female	5	1	0	8	14
41 - 45	Male	6	2	0	6	14
	Female	8	3	0	17	28
46 - 50	Male	5	2	0	4	11
	Female	6	0	0	16	22
51 - 55	Male	4	1	0	5	10
	Female	7	0	1	23	31
56 - 60	Male	4	0	1	8	13
	Female	7	1	1	25	34
61 - 65	Male	7	0	0	6	13
	Female	4	0	0	12	16
66 & over	Male	2	0	0	2	4
	Female	1	0	0	3	4
Total	Male	36	9	1	42	88
	Female	42	7	2	123	174

Figures on this table differ from those at 5.1 as not all staff are reported on the SFC Staffing return.

We have been working through our workforce planning and recruitment processes to reduce the age profile of our staff and have been successful in starting to make some changes to this although the majority of our staff are still in the 50 plus age range.

5.5 GTCS Professional Update Re-validation

The College has undertaken a self-evaluation and remains approved as a recognised organisation for Professional Update by the General Teaching Council for Scotland. This evaluation assessed our policies, practices and recording methods for CPD for lecturing staff which is sufficient for GTCS to issue this re-validation. This means that staff can rely on College processes (such as our Staff Development Performance Review) to provide sufficient evidence of practice, observation of learning and staff development activity and means that they are not required to undertake a separate assessment on an annual basis for GTCS.

5.6 Employee Engagement

The College has committed to engaging with GPTW for a further 2 years in order to measure staff engagement and be able to monitor trends and respond to changes in the reporting.

The high level results were that in 2025 76% of staff determined that Borders College is a Great Place to Work.

Year	GPTW Score
2022	72%
2023	71%
2024	69%
2025	76%

In order to better engage with staff and provide staff with the opportunity to have their voice heard we are establishing a Staff Voice Group. The Remit of the group is attached as Appendix 1.

5.7 **Great Places to Work**

The College has again been awarded with Great Place to Work Certified Employer.

This year we have also been awarded :

- Great Place to Work for Wellbeing
- Great Place to Work for Women
- Great Place to Work for Development
- Great Place to Work for Education Sector

We will find out early 2026 if we have made the Best Workplaces list.

5.8 **Exit Interviews**

All of individuals who carried out a leaving interview in 2024/25 would recommend BC as a place to work. Some of the comments received from a staff members as part of this anonymous process is detailed here: “I have been fortunate to work with some amazing people both colleagues and students and to see at first hand the value of Further Education.” And “although I have found this post quite challenging I have learned a great deal about myself and met some great people.”

All staff who resign from the College are sent a link to a leavers survey and are invited if they wish to take part in a leaving interview which is carried out by the Business Partner People Services.

5.9 **Staff Involvement/Communication**

We meet regularly with the recognised trade unions, the EIS (Educational Institute for Scotland).

Unison have had no local steward since the beginning of 2022 and despite our offers of assistance and access to the campus to recruit have failed to appoint any local stewards thus far. We have now signed a Local Recognition

and Procedure Agreement with UNISON and are working in partnership well with the UNISON Local Area Officer who is attending College on a regular basis and providing support for members.

As well as formal arrangements to meet a member of the Principal and myself meet with all of the representatives on an informal basis to keep communication channels flowing and to resolve any issues quickly and effectively.

5.10 Staffing Structure

During the latter part of 2024/25 the College launched a Consultation on the new delivery model. As part of the consultation the voluntary severance scheme was highlighted in order to achieve the new structure and a reducing in staffing levels. As a result of the Consultation there were 4 posts removed from the structure, Director of Enterprise & Business Innovation, Senior Business Skills Advisor, Business Skills Advisor (part time) and Curriculum Administrator (part time).

The Voluntary Severance Scheme remains open until July 2026.

In addition we have removed one part time post as Cleaner in Hawick and the Director of Finance and Procurement role will be removed in October 2025.

The new Delivery model was fully implemented on 1st August 2025 and will be reviewed in December 2025 to ensure that the new model is delivering the anticipated efficiencies and is working well.

5.11 Pay and Terms and Conditions

Pay policy is determined at a national level through membership of College Employers Scotland National Joint Negotiating Committee.

I remain a member of the Management Side Negotiating Committee and work alongside College Employers Scotland staff in terms and conditions working groups, policy working groups, Job Evaluation Pay working group, fair work working group, hybrid working group, the Support Staff Side Table and deputise on the Lecturers Side Table. This enables us to have a strong influence on agreements and to some extent protect the College and at least make us more prepared for impending changes.

Work is continuing at a national level to take us towards the conclusion of Job Evaluation for Support staff.

We are currently awaiting confirmation from Scottish Government that they will meet their commitment to cover the additional cost over and above 3% of the Support Staff pay offer prior to the offer being sent to members to ballot on acceptance of the offer. Once this is confirmed this will lead to a 3 year pay

deal with Support Staff which will enable us to move forward to negotiation with EIS-FELA for their 2026/27 pay settlement.

5.12 National Recognition Agreement

As the Committee may be aware UNISON and UNITE gave notice under the current National Recognition and Procedures Agreement and work has been ongoing with UNISON and UNITE to establish a new National Recognition Agreement. Once a final version is agreed this will come to Board for sign off by Borders College which is expected to happen in the next few months.

5.13 Fair Work

The College has reached a workforce agreement with EIS-FELA and UNISON, our two recognised unions on campus on its position as a Fair Work Employer. A copy of the signed agreement is available on the college web site <https://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2025-08/Fair%20Work%20at%20Borders%20College%202024-25%20%28signed%29.pdf>

5.14 Changes to relevant Employment Law

There have been no significant changes to employment law over the last period which directly affects the College. However, we are aware of significant changes which may come as part of the Employment Bill and will be keeping a close eye on the progress of this legislation as it moves through the process ahead of implementation in the future

5.15 Staff Wellbeing - Wellbeing hour

Following a successful pilot project in summer 2024, through 2024/25 and feedback from the Staff Engagement Survey, we are pleased to be able to extend the Wellbeing Hour to session 2025/26.

The Wellbeing Hour is an optional initiative that allows all staff to dedicate up to one hour per week, during working time, to an activity that supports their health and wellbeing. This initiative is supported by Eric Jones, Active Campus Coordinator and a report is provided to SLT annually on uptake and activity. It is anticipated that this will show an increase in physical activity and wellbeing of staff over the period.

Feedback received from staff in the pilot included – “I just wanted to get in touch to say that I am entirely grateful that the college is providing a wellbeing hour, I have used it to walk my dog and join mindfulness and compassion courses to help me cope. I truly appreciate this, so, thank you! And could you please pass on my thanks to whoever broached this idea in the first place. It has made a large difference in my life.”

5.16 Compressed week

We are committed to developing and supporting a modern and adaptive workforce that thrives in a dynamic work environment.

Following an agreement reached at NJNC – Side Table Support regarding a trial of a four day working week which took place at West Lothian College in session 2024/25, the College is proposing a similar trail.

A number of staff already benefit from working compressed working hours and this has already been successfully implemented for individual members of professional services staff in a number of departments in the College.

A compressed working week means pay and contracted hours remain unchanged but hours are worked across fewer working days – enabling the staff member to benefit from non-working days.

The two main approaches are a 4 day working week where one day of the week is a non-working day or a 9 day fortnight where one day of the two working weeks is a non-working day.

A review will be carried out in June to ensure that services are not adversely affected by this change.

5.17 Future Reports

Moving forward it is my intention that the reports provided to this Committee with focus on the People Strategy KPI's and updates on the work we are undertaking towards to objectives listed within the Strategy.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications

Funding implications which affect our ability to provide more high quality/cost benefits to our staff to enhance attracting and retaining staff and demonstrating value to our staff.

6.2 Learner Implications

Sufficient well trained and skilled staff to deliver services and curriculum

6.3 Staff Implications

Work need to continue to ensure that Staff feel valued, engaged and motivated

6.4 Equality and Diversity Implications/Equality Impact Assessment

Inclusive environment for work and study

6.5 Sustainability/Environmental Implications

Demonstrated Behaviours match our values and meet our sustainability goals

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 People Strategy. This report aims to keep the Board well informed and up to date with activities to ensure good governance.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Member should note any items and seek clarification on any points.

Deborah M Kerr

Director of People Services

October 2025

Previous Board or College Committee Approvals:

None

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	If not, why not?
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Appendix 1

Terms of Reference – Borders College Staff Voice Group

Purpose

The purpose of the Borders College Staff Voice Group is to foster a culture of communication, collaboration, and continuous improvement within Borders College.

The group will be a mechanism through which employees can actively participate in shaping their work environment and contribute towards the success of Borders College. The group will share information, encourage feedback, seek the views of staff on relevant matters and make recommendations to the Borders College Leadership for consideration.

Negotiation on matters relating to terms and conditions of employment will not be within the remit of the Staff Voice Group and will continue to be discussed at the regular meetings with representatives from the recognised trade unions: EIS-FELA, and UNISON.

Duties

The principal duties of the Borders College Staff Voice Group are as follows:

Communication and Feedback

- To provide a platform for open communications between departments.
- To identify and act as a mechanism of communication for staff ideas.
- To engage with colleagues by listening and reacting to issues which directly affect them in the workplace.
- To provide two-way communication between the members of the group and their colleagues in the departments they represent to ensure the views of all staff are considered.
- To discuss potential changes, updates and evolving priorities in relation to issues impacting on staff.
- To produce a monthly article for inclusion in the College e-magazine

Recognition and Achievement

- Support the recognition of accomplishments, milestones, and contributions of individual employees or teams through highlighting achievements to the

Borders College Leadership and other stakeholders as appropriate through Staff Voice Group feedback.

Problem-Solving and Improvement

- Advocate for and implement positive solutions to issues that matter to staff.
- Use our collective expertise to continuously improve what we do, develop new initiatives and enhance existing practices.
- Serve as a platform for collaborative problem-solving. We will work together with management to address any identified concerns or areas for improvement that come to the group and find solutions, leading to more effective resolutions and solutions.

Sounding Board for new Policies, Procedures and Developments

- Support new developments by providing a sounding board to departments seeking new approaches in policy or practices, providing feedback on aspects of the proposals.
- Support the development of the Equalities and Sustainability Calendar planning and provide support to associated events.

Staff Development

- Be a platform for discussing professional development opportunities, training needs, and career growth.
- Contribute to initiatives that support staff learning and progression.

Wellbeing

- Be a platform for discussing and organising staff wellbeing events including planning for Work Rest and Play Day, wellbeing hour activities and staff social events e.g. end of term, Christmas and staff recognition events

Recommendations

- To make recommendations to the Borders College Leadership for consideration.

Frequency of Meetings

The group shall meet monthly, in the first instance. This will be reviewed regularly and should be flexible if circumstances require. At the end of each meeting a facilitator for the next meeting will be agreed.

Reporting

The meeting notes of the Borders College Staff Voice Group shall be recorded and submitted to Borders College's Leadership.

A report detailing impact of the group should be provided to the Leadership Team on an annual basis.

A member of the group will attend Leadership meetings as required and vice versa.

Membership

The group's membership shall consist of nominated members representing one member from each of our professional services teams and up to two members from each delivery team.

All representatives to ensure that they have at least one identified back-up representative in case they are unable to attend a meeting.

Support

Support to the Borders College Staff Voice Group will be provided by the People Services Department. This may include setting up email groups, teams pages, administration and circulation of papers.

Review

This Terms of Reference document will be reviewed periodically to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.

