

Item 12
For Discussion and Noting

Glasgow Kelvin College
Finance and Resources Committee – 4 June 2024
People and Culture Services Update
Report by Director of People and Culture

1. Introduction

The main purpose of this paper is to provide members with an update on People and Culture Services matters in relation to the following areas:

- 2.0 Human Resource Management
- 3.0 Organisational Development and Wellbeing
- 4.0 Equality and Inclusion
- 5.0 Attendance Management

2. Human Resource Management

2.1 Employment Relations

The purpose of this section is to provide members with an update on employment relations in terms of both National Collective Bargaining and local matters between the College and its recognised trade unions, EIS-FELA and Unison.

2.1.1 National

EIS-FELA

Members will recall that the EIS-FELA notified the College of the results of its statutory ballot on 16 January 2024. The ballot result achieved a mandate for further industrial action and action short of strike action (ASOS, including a resulting boycott). At the time of writing this paper the industrial action taken by members of the EIS-FELA in respect of Glasgow Kelvin College and Nationally amounted to six days with a further seven days National strike planned for May and early June 2024.

EIS-FELA commenced ASOS on 12 February 2024 and this will continue until 15 July 2024. EIS-FELA have submitted a revised wage claim and have entered into further negotiations with College's Employer Scotland (CES). Discussions are ongoing.

Unison

Members will recall that Unison achieved a mandate for industrial action in December 2023. Following the result of the ballot Unison members have taken part in four day's strike action, two days in September 2023, one in October 2023 and they joined EIS-FELA, on 29 February 2024. Further action was planned for Monday 13 May 2024 however the College was informed on Friday 10 May 2024 that the strike action had been suspended. A further two days' action was planned for Monday 20 May and Thursday 23 May 2024, however this strike action was also suspended. Unison is currently balloting its members on the three-year wage award. The ballot closes on 30 May 2024. There are three support Trade Unions in the college sector, Unison, Unite and GMB and both the GMB and Unite have accepted the three-year pay award.

The College has kept its three campus buildings open during the strike action and will continue to do so. It has taken appropriate steps to ensure the safe management of each building. The College continues to communicate with staff, students and stakeholders informing them of the strike action taking place.

National Job Evaluation and Pay and Grading

Discussions on job evaluation are ongoing at a National Level with the support staff Trade Unions.

National Policies and Procedures

Members will be aware that the College implemented the Nationally agreed Menopause Policy. CES recently undertook a Further Education (FE) sector survey to assess the impact of the policy and it published a [good news story](#) on its website regarding the changes made within colleges to their support staff. The article was also published in the Glasgow Herald [Colleges to launch national staff menopause policy | The Herald \(heraldscotland.com\)](#)

The National Policy Workgroup is in the final stages of developing the Discipline Policy and it is anticipated that this will be implemented within the FE sector early Academic Year (AY) 2024/25. The next policy due for development by the Group is the Grievance Policy.

2.1.2 Local

Members will be aware that the College and both its recognised Trade unions meet in accordance with an agreed schedule through its Joint Negotiating/Consultation Committees (JNCC). Six formal and six informal JNCC meetings per year are scheduled with the EIS-FELA and 12 formal meetings are scheduled with Unison. In the main the meetings have been taking place in accordance with the agreed schedule.

The College and its recognised Trade Unions continue to work together, and management strives to maintain good employment relations with its trade union colleagues.

2.1.3 Consultation – Changes to Team Structures

Four consultation exercises are ongoing with Unison, these include:

Changes to the Finance and Funding Team

Members will recall that consultation is ongoing with Unison and relevant staff in relation to the changes proposed with the Finance and Funding Team. Training for the staff is well underway and the consultation timeline has been extended to the end of July 2024. This will provide sufficient time to assess the effectiveness of the new role on service delivery to enable the College to make an informed decision about the proposed changes for this Team.

Regular meetings are taking place to review progress.

Security

Members will recall that the College entered into consultation with staff and Unison with respect to removing the manned 24-hour guarding that covers overnight and weekends at its Easterhouse and East End Campuses.

Proposals were shared with Unison and the Teams who are involved in the proposed changes, Administration and Secretariat and the Estates Team. A number of meetings were held with these Teams and Unison.

Considering the feedback received from the consultation exercise, the College reviewed its proposal and it has implemented an alternative solution which minimises the impact on these Teams. The new arrangement has been in place since 29 April 2024 and is operating effectively.

2.2 Voluntary Severance

Members will be aware that the College's Voluntary Severance (VS) Scheme opened on 15 January and closed on 26 January 2026.

The Board of Management Remuneration Committee approved the voluntary severance applications recommended by the College, a total of 19 staff, 12 teaching (10.01fte) and 7 support (5.82fte) will exit the College by 31 July 2024.

In addition to the posts removed through the voluntary severance process the College has also reduced its overall staffing budget through the non-filling of vacancies where this was operationally possible throughout AY 2023/24. Through effective management of recruitment, a total of 14 posts were not filled. Of the 14 posts that were not filled 2 (1.5 FTE, 15%) are Teaching and 12 (8.43 FTE, 85%) are Support.

3. Organisational Development and Wellbeing

The College continues to develop its approach to Organisational Development, working in partnership with staff, managers, and representatives of its recognised Trade Unions. This section provides an update on five key areas:

- Leading Through Change and Coping with Change
- Professional Development Fund
- Discipline and Grievance for Managers
- Team Kelvin Sessions
- Wellbeing Activities - Active Campus Coordinator

3.1 Leading Through Change and Coping with Change

Members will recall that a paper was presented to the Finance and Resources Committee at its meeting on 30 May 2023 regarding leadership training for members of the Senior Management Team. The training was aimed at further developing their leaderships skills to support staff through the persistent changes being experienced within the FE Sector.

The College indicated at the Committee meeting that it would deliver similar training to develop its operational managers and offer awareness training for all staff in coping with change during AY 2023/24. The training aims to support managers' and staff's wellbeing, helping them to cope with the challenges being faced as a result of the ongoing changes within the College and wider FE Sector.

The training for operational managers and awareness training for staff took place in March 2024 as planned. Feedback from the sessions delivered to operational managers is attached as [Appendix 1](#)

The feedback received from managers after the first session that was delivered led to an adjustment to the content of the programme to reduce the length. The provider was exceptionally responsive and immediately amended the content for the following session to be delivered the next day. Overall, the feedback received was highly positive and staff recognised the value of the programme in supporting them to undertake their managerial role and engage with their staff.

A small number of managers were unable to attend the sessions previously organised therefore the decision was taken to run one additional session. This will be delivered in June 2024. In addition, the College will offer staff one further opportunity to attend a session on raising awareness on coping with change, which was also incredibly well received by staff who participated.

3.2 Professional Development Fund

Members will be aware that the College operates a Professional Development Fund which provides staff with the opportunity to undertake a certificated qualification. There is a budget of £5,000 available each AY available for staff to access, and the fund is administered by the Professional Development Fund Steering Group. The Group is responsible for reviewing the applications, making recommendations as to which requests should be funded, and the kind of contribution that will be made available.

The level of contribution will depend on the total number of applications, and to what extent they meet the criteria. Access to the Fund is now closed. The College received eight applications which the Group will now consider.

3.3 Discipline and Grievance Training for Managers

A programme of refresher training is planned for managers in June 2024 on managing discipline and grievance and on how to conduct investigations.

Key managers who are unable to attend the arranged dates in June have attended the training separately. The refresher training will ensure that managers involved in managing this key area are fully up to date in terms of their knowledge and skills.

The College has also invited representatives of its recognised Trade Unions to attend the training to support the internal application of its procedures.

3.4 Team Kelvin Sessions

Members may recall that the College introduced Team Kelvin Sessions (TKS) in AY 2022/23 as part of its wellbeing initiatives post COVID-19. Essentially, a TKS is an activity (bowling; tour; escape room etc.) chosen by a team, with the aim of bringing staff together to support team relationships and staff wellbeing.

TKS has received positive feedback from staff, the first opportunity offered in the Autumn 2022 was accessed by 6 teams, 70 staff and in the summer of 2023, 13 teams, 140 staff took part. The TKS initiative was seen by staff and managers as a positive way to maintain staff motivation, and for the College to further demonstrate that the efforts of staff is valued.

Summer 2023 proved to be a more appropriate time to run TKS and the College will shortly open access to the TKS for summer 2024 to run between June and July 2024. The College will invite feedback from Teams on the wellbeing benefits for staff of this year's TKS and provide a report to the Senior Management Team early in the next session.

3.5 Wellbeing Activities – Active Campus Coordinator

Members will be aware that the College appointed, and Active Campus Coordinator (ACC) role funded by Sports Scotland until August 2025. The purpose of the role is to create opportunities that improve the physical and mental wellbeing of students and staff.

The post has been operational since August 2023 within the Faculty of Health, Care, Community and Learning Development. Attached at [Appendix 2](#) is a presentation recently given by the ACC to the Academic Board which outlines the challenges, the impact of the role on students and staff and the plans for AY 2024/25. The challenges reported are managing workload and expectations, bureaucracy, and access to facilities.

The College is aware of the challenges highlighted in the presentation and several steps to address these are already in place for students and staff, for example it continues to:

- Reduce and improve processes and systems for staff and students through its Continuous Improvement Team.
- Develop its Organisational Stress Risk Assessment in partnership with its recognised Trade Union representatives, staff and managers with the aim of ensuring a supporting framework in place to create a working environment that supports health and wellbeing.
- Work in partnership with its external providers for Occupational Health and Employee Assistance to proactively support the wellbeing of staff.
- Ensure a programme of wellbeing activities are provided to staff and students throughout the AY.

4. Equality and Inclusion

The College continues to work in partnership with staff, managers, and representatives of its recognised Trade Unions to embed equality and diversity into all aspects of College life. This section provides an update on three key areas:

- British Sign Language Action Plan
- LGBT+ Charter
- Accessibility Audit – Springburn Campus

4.1 British Sign Language Action Plan

The British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 requires listed public bodies in Scotland to publish an Action Plan every six years, showing how they will progress, and facilitate the promotion of the use and understanding of [British Sign Language](#) (BSL) in Scotland. These Plans take account of local circumstances and consider how best to respond to BSL users' needs within local communities, organisations, or services. The College produced its BSL Action Plan when the Act came into effect, and it has recently reviewed it in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

The College's Equality and Inclusion Committee has responsibility for the Plan and overseeing its implementation and effectiveness. The Committee will consider the BSL Action Plan at its next meeting scheduled for 29 May 2024. Once the Plan has been approved it will be made available on the College's website and promoted to staff and students.

4.2 LGBT+ Charter

The College has agreed to pursue the achievement of the LGBT Charter. A short-life work group consisting of staff, students and representatives of recognised Trade Unions has been established, led by the College's Equality and Inclusion Lead.

The initial assessment gap analysis has been completed and an Action Plan is being developed to progress the achievement of the Charter in AY 2024/25.

4.3 Accessibility Audit

The College partnered with an organisation called [Your Options Understood](#) (Y.O.U) to assess the accessibility of its Springburn Campus. Y.O.U offer independent advice and is a non-profit community interest company, who offer a range of flexible person-cantered services that can be developed and /or adjusted to meet the needs of those with a disability.

An accessibility audit conducted by Y.O.U is designed to evaluate and enhance the inclusivity of the organisation and identify barriers that may hinder access for individuals with disabilities and provides practical, tailored recommendations to address these issues. The audit report identified a number of recommendations. A meeting has been arranged with the relevant managers to discuss and progress appropriate actions, where possible.

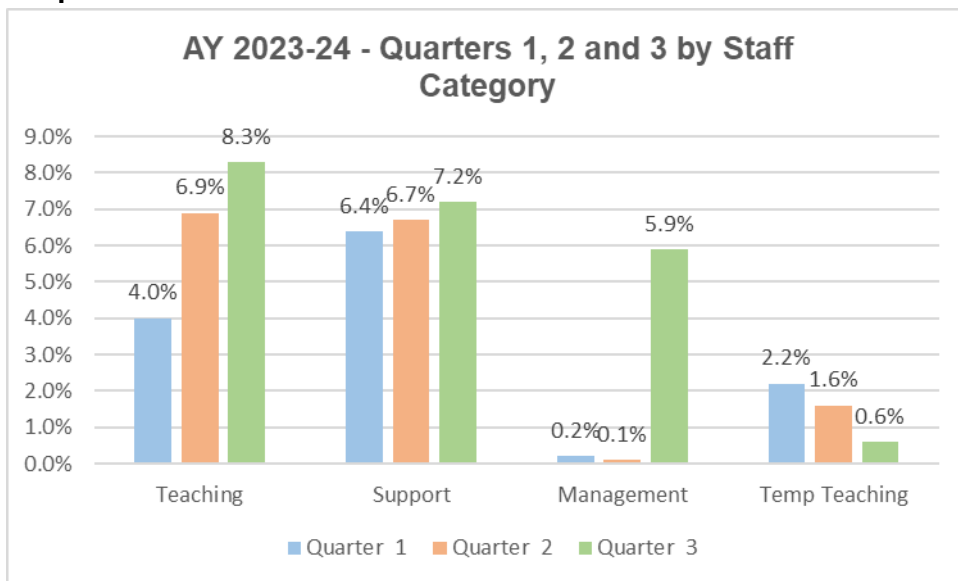
An audit at the College's Easterhouse and East End Campus is currently being arranged.

5. Attendance Management Statistics

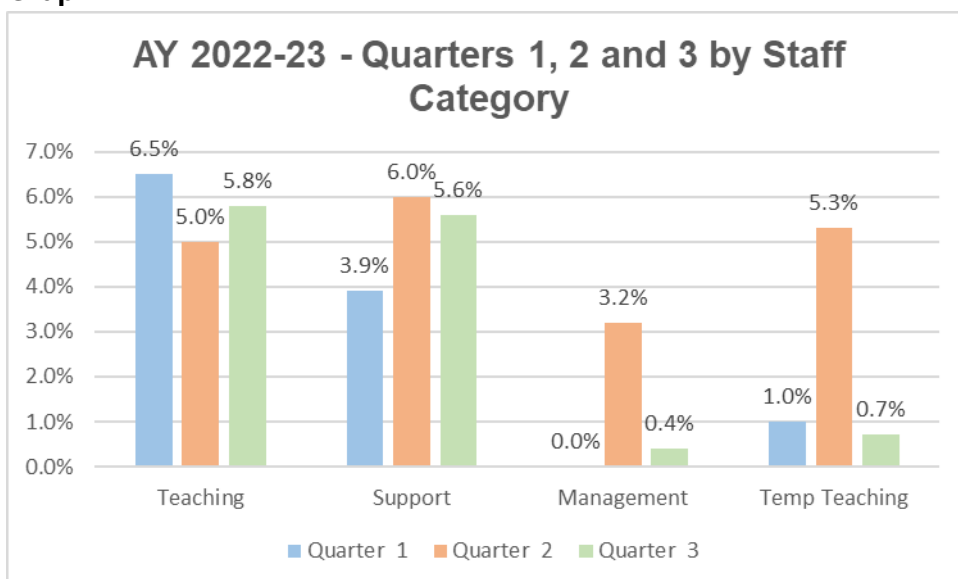
The attendance and absence information for the College is split into four main staff groups represented in the College workforce. The allocation is Permanent Teaching Staff and Temporary Teaching Staff, Support Staff and SMT/OMT.

Graph 1 below shows the absence statistics for the four staff groups for Quarters 1, 2 and 3 (1 August 2023 to 30 April 2024) for AY 2023-24. **Graph 2** shows the statistics for the same quarters in AY 2022-23 for comparison.

Graph 1



Graph 2



The absence rate for teaching staff in Quarter 1, AY 23-24 shows a decrease, however Quarters 2 and 3 shows a considerable increase in comparison to AY 2022-23.

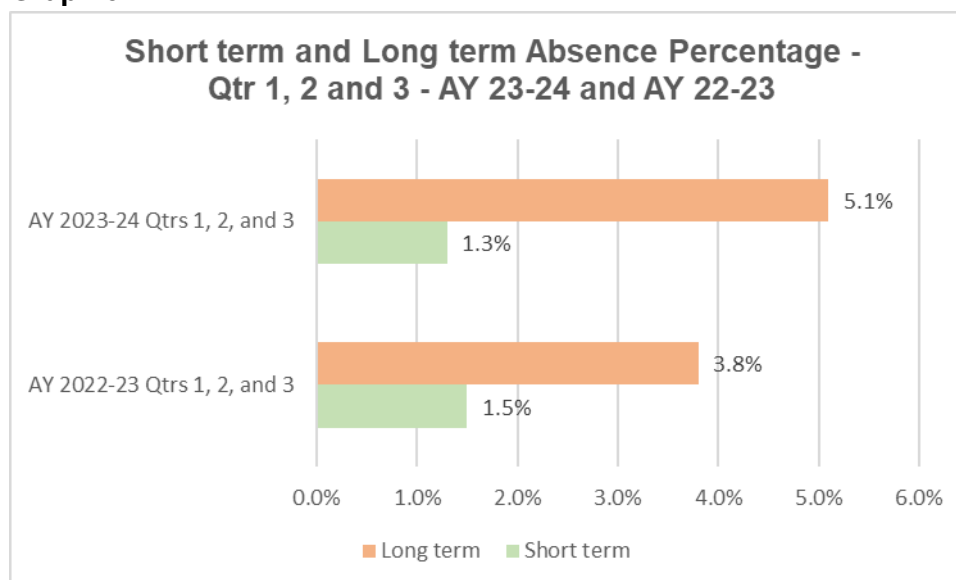
The absence rate for support staff shows an increase in the absence rate for each quarter in AY 2023-24 in comparison to AY 2022-23.

The absence rate for management shows an increase in Quarter 3 AY 2033-24 and this is solely related to a member of SMT/OMT with long-term sickness absence.

The absence rate for temporary teaching staff shows an improved absence percentage rate on average across AY 2023-24 in comparison to AY 2022-23.

Graph 3 below shows the absence percentage by short term and long-term absence for the first three quarters of AY 2023-24 (1 August 2023 to 30 April 2024) in comparison to the same period in AY 2022-23. The percentage rate for short term absence shows a slight decrease, however the percentage rate for long term absence shows an increase of 1.3%.

Graph 3



The absence percentage rate for the first three quarters of AY 2023-24 is 6.3%. The direct cost of sickness absence for the College for this period in AY 2023-24 is c£785k and these costs do not include the expenditure for additional hours for class cover and agency or temporary staff costs.

A total of 36 absence instances, involving 30 staff, were associated with mental health and wellbeing, of which 9 were related to a mental health diagnosis, 16 related to personal stressors and 5 were associated with work related stressors. Of the 30 staff, 14 were support staff and 16 were teaching. Absences associated with mental health and wellbeing accounted for 0.29% of the 6.3% absence percentage rate for this period.

High levels of sickness absence can impact on the wellbeing of staff affected and significantly undermine the College's efficiency and disrupting service delivery. It may also have a negative impact on remaining staff members as they must cover for absent colleagues which can result in increased stress and workload for those present, potentially causing a ripple effect of further absenteeism. In addition to the direct costs such as Occupational Sick Pay and indirect costs, additional hours or the potential need for temporary staff, the cumulative impact can harm the College's ability to meet its objectives, maintain high standards of service and sustain a positive workplace culture.

A review of the College's approach to managing attendance will therefore be undertaken in the interests of staff wellbeing and minimise the impact on service provision to students, local communities, partners and employers. Effective management of sickness absence requires a comprehensive policy that balances empathy with accountability. The College's current Attendance Management and Support Policy and Procedure achieves this balance.

Managers play a crucial role in the management of sickness absence, as they are directly responsible for staff, providing support, and implementing the College's policies and procedures. A review of current practices will be undertaken in consultation with managers to identify if there are any gaps in the College's approach, consider if support strategies are sufficient or if there is inconsistent application of policies and procedures. Feedback will assist the College to develop a more robust framework. The aim is to reduce the level of absenteeism and foster a supportive working environment where staff feel valued and motivated.

6. Resource Implications

There is a resource implication identified as a result of this report associated with the cost of funding any future Nationally negotiated pay awards, in excess of Public Sector Pay Policy, and with National Job Evaluation. High levels of sickness absence also has the potential to have a negative impact on the College both financially and on service delivery.

7. Impact on Students

The introduction of the initiatives under section 4 aims to support the delivery of engaging and positive learning experiences and high levels of student success. The effective management of attendance will minimise the disruption to service delivery.

8. Risk and Assurance

The cost of the pay awards will result in further cost pressures and may require further savings to be made.

9. Equality

The various initiatives outlined in section 4 will progress the National Equality Outcomes and the College Equality Outcomes and strengthen the College's commitment to creating an inclusive working and learning environment.

10. Data Protection

No data protection issues have been identified as a result of this report.

11. Environmental and Sustainability

There are no Environmental and Sustainability implications arising as a consequence of this report.

12. Recommendations

Members of the Finance and Resources Committee are recommended to note the content of this report.

13. Further Information

Further information on the content of this report can be obtained from Doreen Shiels, Director of People and Culture Services (dshiels@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk).