NOTICE OF MEETING
There will be a meeting of the Human Resources Committee on Tuesday 21 July 2015, 1030-1130 hours in Room G10 at Aberdeen City Campus.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
Ms. S Brimmer
Mr. I Gossip
Mr. J Henderson
Ms. C Inglis (Chair)
Mr. K Milroy
Ms. A Simpson
Mr. A Smith
Mr. S Smith
Mr. R Wallen

IN ATTENDANCE
Ms. E Hart, Vice Principal Human Resources
Ms. P May, Secretary to the Board of Management
Ms. P Kesson, Minute Secretary
AGENDA
Meeting of 21 JULY 2015

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Minute of Previous Meeting
   2.1 Minute of 19 May 2015 (paper enclosed)

3. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting
   3.1 To be raised at meeting

4. Report to Committee by the Principal (paper enclosed)

5. Matters for Decision
   5.1 Sickness Policy (paper enclosed)
   5.2 Long Service Awards Policy (paper enclosed)

6. Matters for Discussion
   6.1 HR Priorities and Strategy Implementation (paper enclosed)
   6.2 HR Policies (paper enclosed)
   6.3 Investors in People (paper enclosed)
   6.4 Vision and Values (Paper enclosed)
   6.5 SFC Guidance on Severance Schemes and Settlement Agreements (paper enclosed)

7. Matters for Information
   7.1 Report on Organisational Development Activity (paper enclosed)
   7.2 Key Health and Safety Performance Indicators (paper enclosed)

8. Summation of Business and Date and Time of Next Meeting
   
   Reserved Item of Business

9. Matter for Discussion
   9.1 Update on Voluntary Severance (oral update)

10. Summation of Reserved Item of Business
Draft Minute of Meeting of 19 May 2015

The meeting commenced at 1030 hours.

PRESENT – S Brimmer, I Gossip, K Gravells, J Henderson, C Inglis (Chair), K Milroy, A Simpson, A Smith, S Smith, R Wallen
IN ATTENDANCE – D Duthie, E Hart, P May, P Kesson

It was noted that Mr Dunn’s term of office as Teaching Staff Representative on the Board of Management had ended. Members were advised that Mr Dunn would be invited to attend the Board meeting on 08 June 2015 to enable Members to pass on their thanks. Members were also advised that an election for a new Teaching Staff Representative was currently underway.

1. Apologies for Absence
There were no apologies.

2. Minute of previous Meeting
The Minute of Meeting held on 17 March 2015 was approved.

3. Matters arising from previous Meeting
There were no matters arising.

4. Report by the Principal
The Committee noted a report providing information on: the College’s Vision and Values; harmonisation; and the end of year inter campus football competition.

Mr Wallen provided information on the outcome of a recent Vision and Values staff survey and discussions with College Managers and said that the Senior Management Team had identified a programme of actions to address issues raised which would be implemented in due course. Mr Wallen commented that it was disappointing that a number of staff had indicated that there were no positive outcomes from the merger. Members commended the high response rate to the survey.

Mr Wallen also provided further information on the forthcoming football competition.

5. Matters for Discussion

5.1 HR Priorities and Strategy Implementation
The Committee considered a paper providing information on progress regarding the key HR priorities and the implementation of the HR Strategy.

Information was provided on HR priorities for 2014/15; the seven key themes of the HR Strategy; and equality and diversity training.

Ms Inglis commented that it was good to see the amount of work undertaken against each of the seven themes.

Ms Hart agreed to provide to the Committee, on a biannual basis, information on savings generated from the use of e-recruitment.

In response to a question from Ms Inglis about the need for a broader digital strategy for the College, Mr Wallen said that he did not think this was an issue for non-teaching staff but added that there was a need to ensure that teaching staff understand the use of IT in the curriculum.
Ms Hart informed the Committee that a new Head of HR had been appointed and would take up the post on 15 June 2015.

The Committee noted the report and the priorities contained in the paper.

5.2 HR Policies
The Committee considered a paper providing an update on the development of HR policies.

The Committee noted the information on the status of the various policies. Members were informed that the policies currently identified for approval by the Board or one of its Standing Committees would be considered at the meeting of the Board on 08 June 2015.

5.3 HR and Payroll Project
The Committee considered a paper providing an update on the HR and Payroll Project.

Ms Hart provided additional information on the intended outcomes of the project.

Members noted the challenges encountered and the measures which have been taken to ensure the successful completion of the project.

5.4 Succession Planning
The Committee considered a paper providing information on the approach being adopted to succession planning in the College.

Members noted the programme for Future Leaders and the intention to run a pilot project for promoted teaching staff.

In response to a query from Mr S Smith, Mr Wallen confirmed that there would be an opportunity for support staff to participate in the succession planning process.

It was suggested that, for succession planning for the senior managers the process should include exposure to meetings, as observers, of the Board and its Committees.

Members noted that it was important to manage staff perceptions of the succession planning programme.

It was agreed that consideration would also be given to possible qualifications (e.g. The Institute of Leadership and Management programme) which could be offered as part of the succession planning.

6. Matters for Information
6.1 Key HR Performance Indicators
The Committee noted a paper providing information on key performance indicators relating to the HR function.

Information was provided on recruitment and selection; headcount; staff profile; sickness absence; and occupational health referrals.

It was agreed that the average time taken to fill staff vacancies would be included in future PI reports.
6.2 Organisational Development Activity
The Committee noted a report providing information on the status of Professional Development Qualifications managed by the Organisational Development Team.

Information was provided on: the Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE) for Lecturers; benchmarking for the TQFE; assessment and verification qualifications; teaching in colleges today; qualifications for Instructor/Assessors/VTAs; and Guidance Tutors.

It was agreed that the TQFE table in the paper would be amended to include information on the number and percentage of eligible staff.

The Committee commended the very comprehensive information contained in the paper.

6.3 Key Health and Safety Performance Indicators
The Committee noted a report providing information on key performance indicators relating to the Health and Safety Function.

Information was provided on: accident statistics; work placement visits; approved contractor list; workplace dust monitoring; food hygiene inspections; and BSI: OHSAS 18001 Standard Surveillance Audit.

Concern was expressed at the higher rate of minor accidents at Fraserburgh Campus and it was decided that Mr Beattie, Head of Health & Safety, would be asked to look into this and report back to the next meeting of the Committee. Members also requested that the reporting of ‘near misses’ be considered.

6.4 National Collective Bargaining
Mr Wallen provided Members with an oral update on recent developments relating to sector discussions on National Collective Bargaining.

Members were advised that a meeting would shortly take place with the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning to ascertain the Scottish Government’s position on national collective bargaining.

7. Summation of Business and Date of next Meeting
The Secretary gave a summation of the business conducted. The next meeting of the Human Resources Committee is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 21 July 2015 at 1030 hours.

Ms Gravells and Mr S Smith left the meeting prior to discussion of the reserved items of business.

8. Reserved Items of Business for Discussion
8.1 Long Service Awards Policy
8.2 Staff Excellence Awards
8.3 Update on Voluntary Severance Scheme

The meeting concluded at 1158 hours.
Report to the Committee by the Principal

1. **Introduction**
   1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide information on significant matters relevant to the Committee.

2. **HR Structure**
   2.1 Kimra Donnelly commenced employment as Head of HR on 15 June 2015. Kimra previously worked for Aberdeenshire Council for over 20 years leading a team of HR Business Partners. She brings significant relevant experience and knowledge to the College’s HR Team and will enable the HR Strategy to move forward.
   
   2.2 Kimra’s appointment means that the HR Team is now fully resourced.

3. **HR PIs**
   3.1 In order to provide meaningful data to the Committee these will be produced for the September meeting to cover up to the end of the academic year.

4. **Vision and Values Implementation**
   4.1 A paper is provided at 6.4 updating the Committee on the excellent progress that is being made to implement and embed the College’s Vision and Values.

5. **National Bargaining**
   5.1 Meetings were held of the LJNCs for Support and Lecturing Staff to discuss the implications of the National Recognition and Procedures Agreement. The staff representatives will consult those they represent and feed back to the management side in due course.

6. **Pool Cars**
   6.1 Tenders are under evaluation for replacement of the vehicles in the College’s motor vehicle pool. Seven Vauxhall Mokka 4-wheel drive vehicles are being sourced to replace the 2-wheel drive vehicles used currently for travel between Campuses.

7. **Recommendation**
   7.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of this report.

Rob Wallen
Principal
Sickness Policy

1. **Introduction**
   1.1 The purpose of this paper is to present the draft Sickness Policy for the Committee to review prior to finalisation and issue.

2. **Background**
   2.1 The draft policy is attached as Appendix 1. This is an updated policy and there have been no changes to the processes or payments contained in the previous policies of the former Colleges.

   2.3 Staff representatives at the Local Joint Negotiating Committees have also been consulted on this policy.

3. **Recommendation**
   3.1 It is recommended that the Committee consider and, if so minded, approve the policy.

Rob Wallen    Elaine Hart
Principal    Vice Principal Human Resources
Sickness Policy

Review Date: April 2017
1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 North East Scotland College is committed to promoting the health and well-being of staff and to supporting them through periods of ill health. Whilst recognising that staff may be prevented from attending work through ill health, the College has a responsibility to maintain service delivery and minimise disruption and is therefore committed to managing attendance and sickness absence. The College believes that it is the responsibility of managers, staff and trade union representatives and occupational health to work together to promote positive approaches to the management of sickness absence and ill health.

1.2 The primary focus of the College’s approach to managing health and attendance is to promote the health and wellbeing of staff by the early identification of patterns of absence which may reveal a need for appropriate supportive measures on the part of the manager.

1.3 Managers have a key role to play in the management of employee attendance and the development of a positive attendance culture. All managers must take positive action in supporting individual well-being as well as taking a consistent, sensitive and supportive approach towards employees who are absent from work due to ill health.

1.4 This positive attendance culture is supported by the College’s approach to promoting employee well-being by encouraging and assisting individuals in the achievement of a healthy work-life balance and also by the College’s core values.

2 ABOUT THIS POLICY

2.1 Sickness absence can vary from a period of short term absence to a period of long-term absence and can be due to varying causes (for example, injuries, recurring conditions, serious illnesses or mental health issues.)

2.2 The College wishes to ensure that reasons for sickness absence are understood in a sensitive and confidential manner and assessed where necessary. In addition, where needed and reasonably practicable, measures will be implemented to assist members of staff
who have been absent by reason of sickness to return to work as early as health permits.

2.3 This policy is applicable to all employees however it does not apply to agency workers, contractors or self-employed contractors.

2.4 This policy does not form part of any employee’s contract of employment and may be varied at any time.

3 DISABILITIES

3.1 We are aware that sickness absence may result from a disability. At each stage of the sickness absence meetings procedure set out in this policy, particular consideration will be given to whether there are reasonable adjustments that could be made to the requirements of a job or other aspects of working arrangements that will provide support at work and/or assist a return to work.

3.2 If you consider that you are affected by a disability or any medical condition you should inform Human Resources or your line manager.

4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Employees

4.1.1 The College expects its employees to make a full commitment to the job for which they are employed. Therefore all staff must:

(a) Care for their health and seek medical help wherever appropriate

(b) Raise concerns with their manager if they believe that their work is making them ill or contributing to their illness

(c) Not attend work if they are unfit to do so

(d) Follow sickness absence notification procedures if they are unable to attend work

(e) Provide the reason for their absence to their line manager and Human Resources.
4.2. Managers

4.2.1 Managers have a duty of care for the health, safety and welfare of their staff members and should work supportively in conjunction with HR and the College’s nominated Occupational Health provider to support staff with genuine sickness absence.

4.2.2 Managers must develop a culture where everyone works to achieve high attendance levels through:

(a) Monitoring and managing attendance.

(b) Seeking to identify the presence of any underlying problems and to look for joint solutions with the employee.

(c) Carrying out a Return to Work Meeting after each period of sickness absence with the purpose of supporting the employee back to work.

(d) Taking appropriate action where an employee's absence record begins to cause concern.

(e) Maintain supportive and appropriate contact with employees during absence.

4.3. Human Resources

4.3.1 The role of HR is to provide specialist advice and support to managers and staff in dealing with absence issues. HR may attend any meeting held under the formal stages of this policy.

4.3.2 HR will provide statistical information to support the management of absence.

4.3.3 HR will highlight to management when trigger points are reached in respect of particular employees. Any information held will be in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act and confidentiality maintained.

4.3.4 HR will work with managers and staff to facilitate a return to work, including provision of advice, support and referrals to OH.
4.3.5. HR will provide information updates to managers and staff on sickness issues, for example, to advise of changes in legislation and best practice.
4.4. Occupational Health

4.4.1. The College works with an independent occupational health (OH) provider to support and raise awareness of health issues with staff and support health and wellbeing events and initiatives.

4.4.2. OH provide confidential professional advice on health issues at work and provide health assessments to:

(a) advise on fitness for work with a view to supporting staff to continue at work;

(b) advise on reasonable adjustments;

(c) facilitate rehabilitation for staff returning to work following a period of ill health; and

(d) advise on capability issues.

5. ABSENCE DEFINITIONS AND TRIGGER POINTS

5.1 For the monitoring and management of sickness absence the College makes the following distinctions:

5.1.1 Short Term Absence - This is defined as absence which is of a short-term duration (e.g. a day or a few days).

5.1.2 Frequent Short-term Absence – This is defined as absence of a short-term duration, which occurs on a regular basis. When a manager is concerned about an employee’s absence record then it is recommended that they commence with formal monitoring.

5.1.3 Long Term Sickness Absence – This is defined as absence through illness, where an employee is absent for a continuous period of at least 28 calendar days [in any rolling three month period]. Once an employee’s absence meets this trigger point then formal monitoring should commence and advice sought from Occupational Health. For more information refer to Managing Long Term Sickness Absence.
5.2. This is a guide only and depending on the individual circumstances of the case a referral to Occupational Health may be earlier or later than the 28 calendar day period.

5.3. Trigger Points

5.3.1. Trigger points can help to indicate to employees and managers when absence levels are becoming a cause for concern and where further action may be necessary.

5.3.2. The following triggers will be used as indicators to assist a manager in determining whether there is cause for concern:

(a) When an individual has three or more instances of absence in any six-month period; or

(b) When an individual accumulates five or more days absence within any six-month period; or

(c) When an absence appears to have a recurring recognisable pattern, for example frequent absenteeism around a weekend.

5.3.3. NB: TRIGGER POINTS SHOULD NOT BE REGARDED AS CUES FOR AUTOMATIC ACTION

6. SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORTING PROCEDURE

6.1. In order for service delivery to be maintained, it is essential for the College to be advised when you are unable to attend work due to illness. Accordingly

6.1.1. If you are taken ill or are injured whilst at work you should contact your line manager in the first instance. They may give permission for you to leave work. Departmental Managers may contact the College HR Department and ask for your next of kin to be informed. Your next of kin may wish to accompany you home.

If the injury is because of a work related accident and emergency first aid is required then College First Aid personnel (service provided currently by the security team) should be contacted who will attend. They may recommend you attend
the hospital, if the injury is severe, an ambulance will be called for you.

6.2 Exceptionally, if you are unable to telephone in person, you must arrange for someone to telephone on your behalf and you must make direct contact with the College as soon as possible thereafter.

6.3 The following details should be provided:

6.3.1 The nature of the illness or injury.

6.3.2 The expected length of your absence from work.

6.3.3 Contact details

6.3.4 Any outstanding or urgent work that requires attention.

6.4 Failure to follow this procedure may lead to absence from work being considered as unauthorised, resulting in loss of pay and possibly disciplinary action.

6.5 If you believe that your absence may have been caused by something that happened at work you must inform us of this and arrange for an Accident Report to be completed.

6.6 Managers should ensure that:

6.6.1 Any sickness absence notified should be recorded and reported to Human Resources in accordance with notified procedures.

6.6.2 Arrangements are made, where necessary, to cover work and to inform colleagues and clients as appropriate (whilst maintaining confidentiality at all times.)

7. EVIDENCE OF INCAPACITY

Sickness absence of up to seven calendar days requires completion of an online self-certification form or a paper version where this is not available. The manager will conduct a Return to Work meeting to
confirm they have discussed the absence and then send the self-certificate to HR.

7.1 In addition to the above, for absence of more than a week you must obtain a Statement of Fitness for Work (medical certificate) from your General Practitioner and forward it to HR. HR will confirm to the line manager receipt of the certificate.

Where the College is concerned about the reason for absence, or frequent short-term absence, a medical certificate may be required for each absence regardless of duration. In such circumstances, the College will cover any costs incurred in obtaining such medical certificates, for absences of a week or less, on production of a doctor's invoice.

7.2 If your GP indicates that you "may be fit for work" then HR will arrange for a meeting with you and your line manager and/or Occupational Health to discuss the recommendations. At this meeting any additional measures that may be needed to facilitate your return to work, will be discussed, taking account of GP advice.

7.3 If appropriate measures cannot be taken, you will remain on sick leave and a date will be set to review the situation.

7.4 Phased returns – After Return to Work Meetings

The College will, wherever practicable, implement the recommendations of Occupational Health.

If a phased return-to-work is recommended, the College will allow the member of staff to gradually build up the amount of the work they are able to do, in line with Occupational Health recommendations, for a period of 6-8 weeks. This will be on a full-pay basis.

If, after a 6-8 week phased return, the member of staff is unable to work on a full-time basis, then it may be possible for the member of staff to work on a part-time basis, if recommended by Occupational Health. This would then be paid on a pro-rata basis.

Members of staff who already work on a part-time basis and who are unable to work their contractual part-time hours, may be able to reduce the number of hours they work, as recommended by
Occupational Health. The reduced hours would then be paid on a pro-rata basis.

After a period of working on a part-time/reduced hours basis, the situation will be reviewed by Occupational Health who will advise whether the member of staff is able to return to work on their previous contractual hours basis.

In some instances, Occupational Health may recommend that the College makes adjustments which the College is not able to implement. The reasons why the College cannot make the adjustments will be discussed with the member of staff. If, without the adjustments being made, the member of staff is not able to carry out their duties, further guidance will be obtained from Occupational Health. At this point, the member of staff may be advised that they are not fit to come back to work. The member of staff must then stay off work due to their ill-health and submit a medical certificate to cover their period of absence.

8. MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

8.1 The College may, at any time in operating this policy, require you to consent to a medical examination by our Occupational Health Provider or a doctor nominated by the College.

8.2 You will be asked to agree that any report produced in connection with any such examination may be disclosed to the College and that we may discuss the contents of the report with the relevant doctor.

9. UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

9.1 Cases of unauthorised absence will be dealt with under the College’s Disciplinary Procedure.

9.2 Absence that has not been notified according to the sickness absence reporting procedure will be treated as unauthorised absence.

9.3 If you do not report for work and have not telephoned your line manager to explain the reason for your absence, your line manager or HR will try to contact you, by telephone and in writing if necessary.
This should not be treated as a substitute for reporting sickness absence.

10. **SICK PAY**

10.1 You may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if you satisfy the relevant statutory requirements. Qualifying days for SSP are Monday to Friday, or the days worked, as set out in the employment contract. The rate of SSP is set by the government in April each year. No SSP is payable for the first three consecutive days of absence. It starts on the fourth day of absence and may be payable for up to 28 weeks. If you are not eligible for SSP or if their SSP entitlement is coming to an end the College will give you a form SSP1 explaining the reasons.

10.2 You will be entitled to receive College sick pay provided you have complied with this policy in all respects. Enhanced sick pay is inclusive of any SSP that may be due for the same period, and is paid on the following basis:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Less than one year's service:</th>
<th>5 weeks' full pay 5 weeks' half pay in any 12-month period.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One to two years' service:</td>
<td>9 weeks' full pay and 9 weeks' half pay in any 12-month period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two to three years' service:</td>
<td>18 weeks' full pay and 18 weeks' half pay in any 12-month period.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three to five years' service:</td>
<td>22 weeks' full pay and 22 weeks' half pay in any 12-month period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over five years' service:</td>
<td>26 weeks' full pay and 26 weeks' half pay in any 12-month period.</td>
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10.3 In all cases, where you have exhausted your sick pay entitlement in any 12 month period, you will not qualify for enhanced sick pay again until you have returned to work for at least 26 weeks in total.

10.4 If a period of sickness absence is or appears to be occasioned by actionable negligence, nuisance or breach of any statutory duty on the part of a third party, in respect of which damages are or may be recoverable by you, must immediately notify HR of that fact and of any claim, compromise, settlement or judgment made or awarded.
in connection with it and all relevant particulars that we may reasonably require. If we require you to do so, you must co-operate in any related legal proceedings and refund to us that part of any damages or compensation you recover that relates to lost earnings for the period of sickness absence as we may reasonably determine, less any costs you incurred in connection with the recovery of such damages or compensation, provided that the amount to be refunded to us shall not exceed the total amount we paid to you in respect of the period of sickness absence.

10.5 Any employer and employee pension contributions will continue subject to the relevant scheme rules during any period of enhanced sick pay or SSP.

11. **SICK LEAVE AND HOLIDAYS**

11.1 If you become sick or injured while on annual leave such that you would be unfit for work you may ask the College to treat the period of incapacity as sick leave and reclaim the annual leave.

11.2 To be able to claim enhanced sick pay you must notify your manager of your incapacity immediately, and the usual requirements for medical evidence in this policy will also apply, even if you are abroad.

11.3 If you are on sick leave you may choose to cancel any pre-arranged annual leave that would otherwise coincide with your sick leave. You should notify your manager as soon as possible that you wish to do this.

11.4 The College will allow you to take your holiday entitlement while on sick leave. If you wish to take holiday while on sick leave you should seek approval in accordance with the College’s normal procedures. The College may at its entire discretion, waive the need for you to comply with normal notice requirements or any other applicable policy.

11.5 If your period of sick leave extends into the next holiday year, or if there is not enough time left in the current holiday year to make it practicable to take your remaining holiday entitlement, you can carry any unused holiday entitlement over to the following leave year to be used within three months of your return to work. Any annual leave not taken within 15 months of the end of the holiday
11.6 If the employment is terminated before you return from sick leave, you will receive a payment in lieu of any accrued but untaken statutory holiday entitlement.

12. KEEPING IN CONTACT DURING SICKNESS ABSENCE

12.1 If you are absent on sick leave you should expect to be contacted from time to time by your line manager and/or HR in order to discuss your wellbeing, expected length of continued absence from work and any of your work that requires attention. Such contact is intended to provide reassurance and will be kept to a reasonable minimum.

12.2 If you have any concerns while absent on sick leave, whether about the reason for your absence or your ability to return to work, you should feel free to contact your line manager and/or HR at any time.

13 RETURN-TO-WORK MEETING

13.1 All staff will have a return to work discussion with their manager, normally on their first day back at work.

13.2 The purpose of a return to work discussion is to ensure that your manager is aware of issues which affect your attendance at work and your state of health so that the appropriate support and action may be taken. For example, your manager should be made aware of whether:

13.2.1 You have an underlying medical condition;

13.2.2 Any adjustments are needed if you have a disability;

13.2.3 You are suffering from stress which may relate to personal issues or to issues at work;

13.2.4 There are personal issues outside work which are affecting your attendance.
14 SICKNESS ABSENCE MEETINGS PROCEDURE

14.1 The purpose of a Sickness Absence Meeting is to discuss your absence record and where applicable, review the progress achieved since any previous meeting. The meetings will:

14.1.1 Explore the reason for the absence and consider any other underlying factors.

14.1.2 Provide you with information on the availability of support if appropriate.

14.1.3 Discuss referral to Occupational Health if appropriate

14.1.4 If related to disability, consider whether any reasonable adjustments should be made under the Equalities Act 2010.

14.1.5 Set targets for improvement and provide clarification of what further action may be taken if improvement targets are not met.

14.2 This procedure may be applied whenever considered necessary, including, for example, if you:

14.2.1 Have reached one or more of the sickness absence triggers

14.2.2 Have discussed matters at a return-to-work interview that require investigation;

14.3 Wherever possible you will be given at least 2 days’ written notice of the date, time and place of a sickness absence meeting.

14.4 You will be informed in that letter of the concerns in relation to your sickness absence and the basis for those concerns or otherwise advised why the meeting is being called.

14.5 The meeting will be conducted by your line manager and will normally be attended by a member of the Human Resources Department. You may bring a companion with you to the meeting (see below).

14.6 You must take all reasonable steps to attend a meeting. Failure to do so without good reason may be treated as misconduct. If you or
your companion are unable to attend at the time specified you should immediately inform your line manager who will seek to agree an alternative time.

14.7 Where you are unable to attend a meeting at their workplace due to ill health then, if it is mutually agreed, the meeting could take place at your home. If a home visit is agreed then a responsible manager (preferably the line manager) and a representative from HR should attend; ideally you should know at least one of these people. If a face-to-face meeting is not practicable, then contact should be made over the telephone or in writing. A meeting may be adjourned if your line manager is awaiting receipt of information, needs to gather any further information or give consideration to matters discussed at a previous meeting. You will be given a reasonable opportunity to consider any new information obtained before the meeting is reconvened.

14.8 Confirmation of any decision made at a meeting, the reasons for it, and of the right of appeal will be given to you in writing within one week of a sickness absence meeting (unless this time scale is not practicable, in which case it will be provided as soon as is practicable).

14.9 If, at any time, your line manager considers that you have taken or are taking sickness absence when you are not unwell, they may refer matters to be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

14.10 **Stage One Sickness Absence Meeting**

14.10.1 The purposes of a first sickness absence meeting may include:

(a) Discussing the reasons for absence.

(b) Where you are on long-term sickness absence, determining how long the absence is likely to last.

(c) Where you have been absent on a number of occasions, determining the likelihood of further absences.

(d) Considering whether medical advice is required.
(e) Considering what, if any, measures might improve your health and/or attendance.

(f) Agreeing a way forward, action that will be taken and a timescale for review and/or a further meeting under the sickness absence procedure.

14.10.2 A record will be kept of this meeting and a written outcome will be provided detailing the actions agreed.

14.11 Stage Two Sickness Absence Meeting(s)

14.11.1 Depending on the matters agreed at the first stage of the sickness absence procedure, a further meeting or meetings may be necessary.

14.11.2 The purposes of further meeting(s) may include:

(a) Discussing the reasons for and impact of your ongoing absence(s).

(b) Where you are on long-term sickness absence, discussing how long your absence is likely to last.

(c) Where you have been absent on a number of occasions, discussing the likelihood of further absences.

(d) If it has not been obtained, considering whether medical advice is required. If it has been obtained, considering the advice that has been given and whether further advice is required.

(e) Considering your ability to return to/remain in your job in view both of your capabilities and our business needs and any adjustments that can reasonably be made to your job to enable you to do so.

(f) Considering possible redeployment opportunities and whether any adjustments can reasonably be made to assist in redeploying you.
(g) Where you are able to return from long-term sick leave, whether to your job or a redeployed job, agreeing a return-to-work programme.

(h) If it is considered that you are unlikely to be able to return to work from long-term absence, whether there are any benefits for which you should be considered, including, if you have been making contributions to a pension scheme, whether retirement on the grounds of ill health is possible.

(i) Agreeing a way forward, action that will be taken and a timescale for review and/or a further meeting(s). This may, depending on steps we have already taken, include warning you that you are at risk of dismissal.

14.11.3 A record will be kept of this meeting(s) and a written outcome(s) will be provided detailing the actions agreed.

14.12 Stage Three Sickness Absence Meeting

14.12.1 Where you have been warned that you are at risk of dismissal, we may invite you to a meeting with a member of the Senior Management Team under the third stage of the sickness absence procedure.

14.12.2 Whilst in the majority of cases an employee will recover from their illness and be able to return to work, in some situations this may not be practicable. If at any point during the employee’s absence it becomes clear that they will not be able to return to their substantive position despite reasonable adjustments being made then in the first instance redeployment to a suitable alternative position should be considered. If this is not an option then termination of employment may be necessary and a meeting will take place. In those circumstances, the College may proceed straight to a stage three sickness absence meeting.

14.12.3 The purposes of the meeting will be:

(a) To fully review the meetings that have taken place and matters discussed with you including advice received from Occupational Health.
(b) To fully consider the impact that the absence(s) are having on the operation of the College.

(c) To ensure that the sickness absence procedures have been followed appropriately.

(d) For long-term sickness absence, to consider whether there have been any changes since the last meeting that need to be taken into account.

(e) To ensure that all alternatives have been fully considered including reasonable adjustments and redeployment.

(f) To ensure that, if you have been making contributions to a pension scheme, retirement on the grounds of ill health has been explored as a possibility.

(g) To consider any further matters that you wish to raise.

(h) To consider whether there is a reasonable likelihood a return to work or achieving the desired level of attendance in a reasonable time.

(i) To consider the possible termination of employment.

14.12.4 Termination will normally be with full notice or payment in lieu of notice.

14.13 Appeals

14.13.1 You may appeal against the outcome of any stage of this procedure and you may bring a companion to an appeal meeting.

14.13.2 An appeal should be made in writing, stating the full grounds of appeal, to the Head of HR within one week of the date on which the decision was sent to you.

14.13.3 You will be given written notice of the date, time and place of the appeal hearing. This will normally be two to seven days after you receive the written notice.
14.13.4 Any new matters raised in an appeal may delay an appeal meeting if further investigation is required.

14.13.5 You will be provided with written details of any new information before an appeal meeting. You will also be given a reasonable opportunity to consider this information before the meeting.

14.13.6 An appeal meeting will be conducted by a member of the Senior Management Team who has not been part of the process previously. A member of the HR Team will be present.

14.13.7 Depending on the circumstances, an appeal meeting may be a complete rehearing of the matter or a review of the original decision.

14.13.8 The final decision will be confirmed in writing, if possible within one week of the appeal meeting. There will be no further right of appeal.

14.13.9 The date that any dismissal takes effect will not be delayed pending the outcome of an appeal. However, if the appeal is successful, the decision to dismiss will be revoked with no loss of continuity or pay.

15  **RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED**

15.1 You may bring a companion to any meeting or appeal meeting under this procedure.

15.2 Your companion may be either a trade union representative or a work colleague.

15.3 Companions are allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay to support you. However, they are not obliged to act as a companion and may decline a request if they so wish.

15.4 The Meeting Manager may permit other companions where this will help overcome particular difficulties caused by a disability, illness, or difficulty understanding English.
15.5 A companion may make representations, ask questions, and sum up your position, but will not be allowed to answer questions on your behalf. You may confer privately with your companion at any time during a meeting.
Long Service Awards Policy

1. **Introduction**
   1.1 The purpose of this paper is to present the draft Long Service Awards Policy for the Committee to review prior to finalisation and issue.

2. **Background**
   2.1 At its meeting on 19 May 2015 the Committee agreed to the changes suggested to update this policy. The updated policy is attached as Appendix 1.

   2.3 Staff representatives at the Local Joint Negotiating Committees have also been consulted on this policy.

3. **Recommendation**
   3.1 It is recommended that the Committee consider and, if so minded, approve the policy.

Rob Wallen          Elaine Hart
Principal           Vice Principal Human Resources
Long Service Awards Policy

Review Date: November 2017
1. **Introduction**

   1.1 North East Scotland College values the commitment of its employees to providing a quality student experience and therefore wishes to recognise and reward long serving employees’ loyalty and dedication.

2. **Scope**

   2.2 This policy applies to all staff irrespective of their role, and whether this role is full or part time.

   2.3 This policy does not form part of the contract of employment and the College may at its discretion amend it at any time.

3. **Eligibility**

   3.1 All employees shall be eligible for the Long Service Awards Scheme on completion of not less than 20 years’ continuous service with the College. In addition, total years’ service may also count towards an Award. See paragraph 4.3 below.

   3.2 An employee will not be entitled to receive a long service award if they or the College has served notice of termination and their service anniversary date falls during the notice period.

   3.3 Any member of staff who is due to retire and who has not received an award to which they are entitled will receive the last award due on retirement if they have completed the requisite number of years. For example, if a member of staff is due to retire after 32 years’ service and they have not received the long service award then they will be entitled to an award for 30 years of service.

4. **Continuity of Service**

   4.1 The College will calculate an employee’s number of years’ service from the date of commencement of employment.

   4.2 When calculating an employee’s number of years’ service the College will include the following periods during which an employee has spent on:

   - Ill health
   - Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Parental leave
   - Any Agreed Special Leave
   - Sabbatical leave
   - Service with the territorial army so long as the employee was employed immediately prior to and immediately after any deployment
   - Previous service where an employee has broken their service to have a child or children before Maternity Leave Provisions were in force. In these circumstances employees can aggregate their service for the purposes of Long Service provision. This is subject to their not having other employment during the break...
4.3 If an employee left their employment with the College for whatever reason and was later re-employed, consideration will be given to counting total years of service towards a long service award. In these circumstances where employment records no longer exist the employee will need to provide proof of previous employment.

4.4 It should be noted that employees would need to notify HR of their previous service as it will not automatically be counted, and that any award made under these circumstances will be subject to tax and NI deductions. The final decision as to whether to award total years’ service will be made by the Principal.

5. The Award

5.1 The employee may choose either cash, vouchers or a gift to the value stated according to the number of completed years’ service.

5.2 The employee must not have received a long service award in the preceding ten years.

5.3 All cash awards are subject to tax and NI deductions

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<th>Value</th>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
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<td>40 or more</td>
<td>£800</td>
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<td>years</td>
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</table>

6. Procedure

6.1 Employees with continuous service will be notified by HR one month prior to the anniversary of their service date. They will be asked to choose how they wish to receive their award.

6.2 Employees who qualify for total service will need to contact HR as per paragraph 4.4 above.
HR Priorities and Strategy Implementation

1. Introduction
1.1 The purpose of this paper is to update the Committee on progress regarding the College’s key HR priorities.

2. The HR Priorities
2.1 The HR Priorities have been updated to reflect the current status and progress to date - see Appendix 1. It is, however, appropriate to provide more detail on the undernoted.

2.2 HR Systems Project - Building Resilience in HR and Payroll
2.2.1 Following on from the paper presented to the Committee in May 2015, the report to the Board on Overpayments on 08 June 2015 and the paper presented to the Audit and Finance and General Purposes Committee, this is to update the Committee on progress to date.

2.2.2 The Head of HR commenced employment on 15 June 2015. This will give the HR Team the management stability and consistency that it has lacked and enable key priorities and projects to be fully implemented. She has taken ownership of the HR element of this project and is working closely with key stakeholders to deliver.

2.2.3 A dedicated member of HR staff is now working closely with the Payroll Supervisor to improve current processes. In addition, a former member of Aberdeen payroll staff has returned for 2 days per week to help build skill levels and standardise processes. We have also recruited an experienced Payroll/Pensions Administrator on a fixed term contract for 12 months to build resilience in the payroll function.

2.2.4 Internal Audit has conducted a review of data. The HR Team is working closely with them and has dedicated a further member of staff to diligently checking each employee record to ensure accuracy of data going forward.

2.2.5 An urgent programme of systems training has been put in place to upskill the HR Team to ensure that there is resilience and systems knowledge going forward.

2.2.6 A paper has been presented to the July meetings of the Audit and Finance and General Purposes Committees updating on progress against the Internal Audits of HR and Payroll undertaken earlier this year.

2.2.7 HR business process mapping has commenced to standardise processes and obtain maximum efficiency going forward.

2.3 Now that key roles are filled and knowledge is being rebuilt along with diligent checking and mapping of business processes we can move forward with some confidence.

3. Recommendation
3.1 It is recommended that:
3.1.2 The Committee considers the priorities contained in this paper.
3.1.3 The Committee notes the content of this report.

Rob Wallen    Elaine Hart
Principal    Vice Principal Human Resources
## HR PRIORITIES JULY 2015

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<tr>
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<th>Priority</th>
<th>Commentary</th>
<th>Start/End Date</th>
<th>RAG</th>
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<td>Implementation Programme For Vision and Values</td>
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<td>See Agenda Item 6.4</td>
<td>S 31 Dec 2014 E Reporting on initial actions against projects Sept 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop and implement Recruitment Strategy</td>
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<td>MyJobs Scotland (Talent Link) under implementation At the time of writing this paper the project plan was not available.</td>
<td>S July 2015 E Dec 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop and implement suite of integrated HR Policies and Procedures</td>
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<td>See Agenda Item 6.2</td>
<td>S April 2014 E Sept 2015</td>
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<td>Succession Planning</td>
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<td>See Agenda Item 7.1 Pilot to commence in new academic year.</td>
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<td>Ensure full and effective utilisation of existing HR system</td>
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<td>Performance Management</td>
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<td>Achieve IiP Gold Status</td>
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<td>See Agenda Item 6.3.</td>
<td>S Dec 2014 E Dec 2015</td>
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### KEY - Priorities

- **High Priority**
- **Medium Term Priority**
- **Longer Term Priority**

### KEY - RAG

- **On track**
- **Possible risk of not achieving deadline**
- **High risk of not achieving deadline**
HR Policies

1. Introduction
   1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide the Committee with an update on the development of Human Resources policies for North East Scotland College.

2. Update
   2.2 Attached at Appendix 1 is a table detailing the current status of all HR Policies.
   2.3 There are three policies outstanding and there is an explanation of the current status, priority and RAG ratings.
   2.4 11 policies have been completed and approved.
   2.5 The table denotes whether Board/HR Committee/Principal approval is required.

3. Recommendation
   3.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of this paper.

Rob Wallen    Elaine Hart
Principal    Vice Principal Human Resources
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<thead>
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**KEY - Priorities**
- **High Priority**: On track
- **Medium Term Priority**: Possible risk of not achieving deadline
- **Longer Term Priority**: High risk of not achieving deadline

**KEY - RAG**

**Policies Completed**

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**Policies Outstanding**

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**KEY - RAG**

- **Higher RAG**: New
- **Medium RAG**: Updated
- **Lower RAG**: Under review
Investors in People

1. Introduction
1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide the Committee with information about the changes to the Investors in People (IiP) standard and to recommend a way forward.

2. Background
2.1 Prior to merger in November 2013, the two former Colleges, Aberdeen and Banff & Buchan both held IiP accreditation. Aberdeen College held Gold standard and Banff & Buchan College held Bronze. At the point of merger we negotiated with IiP so that each Campus could hold onto its accreditation temporarily. It was our ultimate goal to achieve the Gold standard for North East Scotland College but we recognised that at the point of merger with the work that was required it would be unlikely that we would achieve this. Review visits, however, were imminent. Consequently a review visit took place in May 2014 where the Fraserburgh Campus retained Bronze standard. The Aberdeen Campus visit was due to take place in autumn 2014. However, by this point a full College visit should have taken place. A full College assessment against the Gold standard was unlikely to be successful so again we negotiated with IiP and a strategic assessment took place on the Aberdeen Campus in December 2014. The aim of this was for IiP to provide us with an indication of where the College currently sat in terms of the framework and to support us in developing an action plan so that we could achieve our ultimate goal.

3. The Current Position
3.1 To retain IiP accreditation we must go through a reassessment as North East Scotland College this autumn. In order to prepare we need to agree what standard we intend to aim for. There are two factors which need to be taken into account. The first of these is the outcome of the strategic assessment. Whilst many good practices were identified as a result of the strategic assessment, the indicators were, at that point in time, that the College as a whole was falling short of the IiP standard. This means that we had work to do to meet the basic standard and were a considerable way off Gold. Since receiving the report we have created and agreed an action plan to address the issues identified, and work is well underway on these.

3.2 The second factor to take into account is that the IiP standard is currently undergoing a refresh and the new framework/assessment model is due to be implemented in August this year. At this point we can elect to be assessed against the current or the new model. The new framework is somewhat different to the current. Under the current framework there are 10 criteria. Against each of these are a number of statements some falling into the “basic standard” and some the “extended framework”. Organisations have to meet all the basic standards and then depending upon the number of elements they request to be assessed against and achieved would be awarded Bronze, Silver or Gold.

3.3 The new framework is designed to be developmental and allow organisations to grow. Instead of 10 criteria there will be 9 and the statements work on the maturity of the organisation with four levels: 1. Developed; 2. Established; 3. Advanced and 4. High performing. Organisations match themselves on each criteria against the level that they feel they are working at. The Bronze, Silver and Gold standards will still be a part of the new model. However, achieving Gold under the current framework does not automatically transfer to Gold under the new framework.
4 The New Assessment Model
4.1 Recent IiP assessments, under the current framework have focused on a series of interviews with staff chosen by the IiP assessor. The new assessment model promises to be more holistic utilising a cross-College questionnaire, interviews as before plus desk top research where we can submit evidence to support our case – such as attainment figures, other audits etc.

5 Costs
5.1 Currently costs are not available for the new framework but are expected to be similar to the current one. Assessment against the current framework Gold standard would cost the College in the region of £16,000 plus assessor expenses (travel and accommodation). Assessment against the standard framework would cost approximately £10,500 plus expenses. Given the current financial position of the College it would make sense to elect to be assessed against a lower standard which we feel capable of achieving rather than the full Gold standard which may not be successful.

6 Summary
6.1 North East Scotland College, as an entity, is a new organisation. If we are to continue with IiP accreditation, it makes sense, to elect to be assessed against the new framework. This would allow us to formally establish our current position and as the College ‘matures’ to develop our proficiency with the ultimate aim of achieving Gold for the new College within an agreed time frame. The new assessment model has advantages in that we are currently collating a substantial amount of evidence for the Action Learning Project which would be made available for the IiP assessment and avoid duplication. Similarly the results of the IiP assessment would feed back into the ALP repository for our self-assessment.

6.2 Following the strategic assessment at the end of last year the suggestion is that, looking at the new framework, we should aim for level 2 “established” on many of the criteria, and level 3 “advanced” on some. However, once we have reviewed the new framework and our progress against the action plan we can revisit this and set goals which we feel are achievable.

6.3 The Senior Management Team have agreed that the new assessment model offers the best options for the College going forward for its assessment due at the end of this year.

6. Recommendation
6.1 It is recommended that the Committee consider the contents of this report.

Rob Wallen
Principal

Elaine Hart
Vice Principal Human Resources
The following action plan identifies areas for development that were highlighted following the December 2014 audit of the Aberdeen Campus. All action points relate to all College campuses.

### Investors in People Action Plan 2015

**Framework**

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<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Development Needs</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Deadlines / Commentary</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Vision and Values</strong></td>
<td>- Address knowledge to be created to enhance the College culture and initiative and being</td>
<td>- Cross College, Cross College, Cross College, Cross College</td>
<td>- Action plan to be finalised by June 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Build and strengthen their team, creativity and culture change and job satisfaction will follow</td>
<td>- Managerial training</td>
<td>- Action plan to be completed by December 2015</td>
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<td>- Value and morale</td>
<td>- All College campuses</td>
<td>- Action plan to be reviewed by December 2015</td>
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<td>- Cross College teamwork</td>
<td>- Cross College, Cross College, Cross College, Cross College</td>
<td>- Action plan to be completed by December 2015</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Framework:**

- V&V to be created by board of Management
- Workshops coordinated by AP(HR) and HRM (OD)
- Roll out coordinated by AP(HR)
- Board of Management to agree and publish

**Commentary:**

- Workshops took place under 2015/16
- Staff consultation between January and April 2015
- SMT met May 2015 and action plan written
- Action plan to be finalised by June 2015
- Roll out to be completed by December 2015
- Review to take place June 2016

- Cross College teamwork
- Value and morale
- Cross College training
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<td>Commentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framework transfer.</td>
<td>Motivation – managers being encouraged to allow staff to develop their own creativity and to provide positive feedback on employees’ efforts</td>
<td>Transformation needed</td>
<td>Communication and Engagement Strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too many different communication methods have existed. New communication &amp; engagement needs to be established to review workings party to be working effectively. Need for better communication and engagement</td>
<td>Communication &amp; Engagement &amp; Communication strategies</td>
<td>Communication working group led by DP</td>
<td>2016 Communication Summer to be established under roll out of V&amp;V initiative</td>
<td>First awards ceremony to be held November 2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication strategy to be implemented using turnaround model. Likely to be Transformation change needed.</td>
<td>Recognition and Reward</td>
<td>Staff Excellence Awards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Initiative | Development Needs identified and responsibility defined | Deadlines | Commentary
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership and Management Development Programme</td>
<td>This contains two strands – one is about general management development (which will help current managers to see competencies needed for future) and a succession planning scheme introduced which will enable us to develop skills required to provide future leaders (which will help current managers to see competencies needed for future).</td>
<td>October 2015, implementation start: September 2015. First succession planning cohort to commence June 2015. Initial training to start to develop competencies identified.</td>
<td>Regular feedback given on progress and achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRM (OD) in liaison with AP (HR) and HOHR</td>
<td>Performance Review to be evaluated and updated. Clarification of roles and recognition and reward.</td>
<td>June 2015, initial training to commence. September 2015, first succession planning cohort to commence.</td>
<td>Feedback on performance and recognition and reward.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vision and Values

1. Introduction
   1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide the Committee with an update on the implementation of the College’s Vision and Values.

2. Background
   2.1 As the Committee is aware there is in place an on-going programme entitled “One College” to embed and implement the Vision and Values.

3. Update
   3.1 A series of Workshops for College managers ran from February until April 2015. In addition a 2-question questionnaire was sent out to staff asking them 1. What has been the main positive outcomes from becoming One College and 2. What one thing could we improve that would make a positive impact?

   3.2 The feedback from the Workshops and the 2-question questionnaire were collated and discussed by the Senior Management Team (SMT) (see Appendix 1) and key actions were identified (see Appendix 2).

4. The One College Project
   4.1 The main key action was to set up a One College Project Team in order to make real progress in taking forward the key actions identified and embed the Values. It was decided that the best group of staff to own and take forward the One College Project were the Leadership Group which consists of all Heads of Service from Support and Curriculum.

   4.2 A meeting was held with the Leadership Group and the theme was Vision and Values. The Group discussed the outcomes and the key actions. From the outcomes the following project strands had been identified:

   4.2.1 Communication – To improve organisational communication (connecting with the work already carried out by the Communications Group).

   4.2.2 Integration/Implementation – To improve organisational integration by identifying projects and actions including the sharing of best practice across College Centres.

   4.2.3 Leadership – To build and improve leadership and management capacity.

   4.3 The common brief of all the projects is to drive forward the implementation and embedding of the College’s Vision and Values to effect organisational improvement. The Project Sponsors are the SMT. The members of the Leadership Team were asked to state their preference as to which project they wished to work on.

5. Next Steps
   5.1 The first meetings of the project teams were held at the end of June to enable members to fully understand the team’s purpose and the way forward.

   5.2 The teams “elected” a leader and decided on additional members who may need to be co-opted onto the team to assist.

   5.3 The teams will now develop a plan of action with timescales considering how they will communicate their progress to the wider College.

   5.4 The project leads will report back to SMT and the Leadership Team in mid-September, and routinely thereafter on progress.
6. **Team Workshops**
   6.1 In order to further embed the Vision and Values and cascade further down the organisation it was also agreed that SMT and the Leadership Team would ensure that each team under their management would hold a workshop to discuss and agree what the Vision and Values mean to them and how it could improve their service. They would be coordinated and assisted by the Organisation Development Team if required who would produce a framework to assist the running of the workshop.

   6.2 Outcomes from the Team Workshops will be collated and reported back through the Integration Project as appropriate. The focus will be on looking for impact – what has improved as a result.

7. **Recommendation**
   7.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of this paper.

Rob Wallen    Elaine Hart
Principal    Vice Principal Human Resources
One College – Embedding the College’s Vision and Values

Results of the 2-question survey

Thank you to those of you who completed the recent 2 question survey. We have now had an opportunity to review the responses and they have been very helpful in informing our planning as we move forward with the implementation and embedding of the Vision and Values.

While 70 of the 277 respondents to question 1 of the survey said they had seen no benefits from the merger, many staff saw a range of benefits. The most frequently occurring of these were:

- increased opportunities
- the opportunity to share or gain new knowledge and experience
- the opportunity to work with new colleagues
- being more efficient and offering a better service
- improved resources and sharing of resources,
- better pay and holidays and harmonised conditions.

The responses to question 2 of the survey indicated a number of recurring themes with respect to what should be done to improve the College. The most commonly recurring of these (the ones that occurred in more than ten of the 277 responses) were:

- improvements in IT (60)
- improved communication within the College (54)
- the development of management skills and style appropriate to the single regional College (32)
- greater consistency of job roles and approaches across the College (19)
- more opportunities to integrate staff (16)

Outcomes from Managers’ Vision and Values Workshops

Thank you to all the managers who participated in these workshops for their valuable ideas and feedback. Many of the themes from the questionnaire recurred in these workshops. Other issues that arose included:

- the need for all managers to adopt management practice that encourages innovation and creativity by all staff
- staff on all campuses wanting to see members of the SMT on their campus more frequently
- the need for all managers to provide positive feedback to their teams
- the need to embed the Vision and Values in all teams
- the need for managers to have more time with the senior management team to better understand the strategic priorities and challenges
- the need for greater clarity of individuals’ job roles
- the need to streamline processes and avoid duplication and repetition
Key Actions arising from the Vision and Values questionnaire and workshops

We will:

- establish a project team to lead the embedding of the Vision and Values with regular updates to staff on progress
- provide an opportunity for each team to explore what the Vision and Values mean for them
- work with staff to ensure that the potential benefits of merger are achieved
- provide regular updates to staff on the progress being made in addressing underlying IT issues and the timescale for their resolution and offer staff the opportunity to meet face-to-face with the Head of IT and Technical Services and the RM Managed Service Manager.
- implement the recommendations of the Communication Review Group that had been chaired by Paul Sherrington with staff representation from all campuses, and ensure that communication is a two-way process
- develop a programme of management training for all relevant staff to include general management skills, people management, change management, time management, management styles, as appropriate
- provide role clarification where required and ensure that workloads across the College are kept under review
- ensure that cross-campus team meetings and inter-team meetings take place on a regular basis
- encourage the staff association to provide opportunities for social interaction between staff on different campuses
- ensure senior managers are regularly present on each main campus
- further develop the Leadership Team meetings as a forum for sharing ideas between the Senior Management Team and other managers
- ensure that consultative and representative forums and arrangements are fully effective
- develop a new staff intranet to provide easily-accessible information to support people in carrying out their roles
- review business processes within teams/areas and streamline processes where possible

While some of these actions have already been initiated, by their nature, many of them will involve long-term work. You will receive regular progress reports over the coming months.

Rob Wallen, Principal
18 May 2015
SFC Guidance on Severance Schemes and Settlement Agreements

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide the Committee with information on draft guidance on severance payments prepared by the Scottish Funding Council.

2. Background

2.1 The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has issued the guidance, included as Appendices 1 and 2 to this paper, on seeking approval for severance payments. Colleges Scotland, at the time of writing this paper, were seeking views from the following groups:

- Funding and Finance Committee
- Employment Relations Committee
- Finance Development Network Steering Group
- HR & OD Advisory Group.

2.2 In addition they are seeking the view of the College Principals Group. To provide a sector position they had requested an extension to the deadline for consultation until the end of August (the deadline was 01 July). This was not agreed but a revised deadline of 23 July was adopted.

3. Summary of the Guidance

3.1 The guidance imposes the requirement to seek prior approval from the SFC for any special severance payment in excess of £1,000. A special payment is defined as one that goes beyond contractual entitlement.

3.2 Provided the payment is within the terms of an existing scheme there is no requirement to seek prior approval.

3.3 However, any Settlement Agreement will require prior approval by the SFC regardless of whether it is being issued within the terms of an existing scheme.

3.4 The SFC state that Settlement Agreements should not be a standard feature of Voluntary Severance (VS) Schemes. They do not believe it to be a requirement for setting out the terms of a termination of employment. They state that this can be done through a standard termination letter. In addition they state that there should be a presumption against the use of confidentiality clauses.

3.5 In this guidance Settlement Agreements may be used to resolve an employment dispute.

3.6 This guidance imposes strict processes and Board accountability. The SFC expect the Remuneration Committee to undertake robust scrutiny of proposed severance schemes or Settlement Agreements before recommending approval to the Board.

3.7 Following Board approval, approval must then be sought from the SFC using the forms provided in the Annexes.

3.8 In addition to complying with the terms of the guidance, Colleges are required to look at wider sources of good practice and to have regard to the principles of good practice set out in the Audit Scotland Report “Managing early departures from the Scottish Public Sector” May 2013.

3.9 Colleges are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the contents of the reports of best practice and the guidance provided and are required to confirm that such a review has taken place to the SFC by 20 September 2015.
4. **Implications**
   4.1 The SFC have confirmed that the VS Scheme will not be extended beyond December 2015.

   4.2 However, this guidance will require a complete review of how the current scheme is run as it will not allow for Settlement Agreements for VS payments as used currently.

   4.3 This is a concern as the College will have no protection against employment claims resulting either from the termination of employment or from other actions during employment. These concerns are shared by the sector.

   4.4 In addition, the College will have no flexibility to use Settlement Agreements in the future to resolve employment disputes. The process that will need to be followed will mean that utilising and negotiating such agreements will be problematic and time-consuming and the College will be exposed to the risk of extended litigation, where a commercial decision to resolve an employment dispute via a Settlement Agreement would have been in the best interests of the College.

5. **Conclusion**
   5.1 The College is seeking the views of its solicitors on this guidance. At the time of writing this paper this was not available.

   5.2 Colleges Scotland are formulating a sector response. At the time of writing this paper this was not available. However, it is indicated that the response of the sector is not in agreement with the guidance for the reasons stated in this paper.

   5.3 However, it is very probable that this guidance will be imposed on the College sector as it is in line with practice in other areas of the public sector in Scotland.

6. **Recommendation**
   6.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of this paper.
XX June 2015

To: Principals of Further Education Colleges  
copied to: Chairs and Finance Directors

Dear Principal

**Guidance on seeking approval for severance schemes and settlement agreements**

The purpose of this letter is to provide further guidance to incorporated colleges on meeting the requirements in the Scottish Public Finance Manual (SPFM) in relation to severance schemes and settlement agreements. The scope of this guidance covers all severance schemes and severance payments made under early severance or retirement, redundancy or settlement agreement and applies to all FE colleges (while the general terms of the SPFM do not apply to non-incorporated colleges and the requirements set out in the guidance do apply). This further guidance replaces that issued by the SFC in 2000 (FE/03/00) and 2004 (FE/13/04).

As set out in the Financial Memorandum (FM) with incorporated colleges, the SPFM requires colleges to seek approval from the SFC for any new severance scheme, change to a previously approved scheme or use of a settlement agreement. In addition, the delegated limits set out in the FM require approval for any special severance payment in excess of £1,000. A special severance payment is defined as any payment beyond contractual entitlement. In all cases, approval must be sought prior to any terms being agreed. Provided a severance payment is within the terms of a scheme which has been approved by the SFC there is no requirement to seek approval for individual payments. However, any settlement agreement requires prior approval by the SFC.
In developing this further guidance we have been mindful of the burden it places on colleges and have therefore kept the requirements to the minimum needed to ensure colleges and the SFC comply with the terms of the SPFM and good practice. While the process and format for seeking SFC approval are new, the information requested should be no more than colleges would be already preparing for this purpose.

In considering any severance colleges must ensure that issues of regularity, propriety and value for money are fully taken into account. In doing so it is important that policies and procedures are established and applied, including ensuring documentation of decisions is retained and that there is clear evidence of governance oversight. We expect the Remuneration Committee, or equivalent, to undertake robust scrutiny of proposed severance schemes and settlement agreements before recommending approval to the Boards. In the event of complex or sensitive cases it may be necessary for the Remuneration Committee, or equivalent, to meet on a number of occasions. In order to preserve governance boundaries it is important that the Chair of the Remuneration Committee is not the Chair of the Board.

Where a severance might be considered sensitive or high profile the college should alert the SFC as early as possible. In such cases, and others deemed by the SFC as requiring it, Minsterial views on the terms of the proposed severance might be sought by the SFC.

When considering any severance, colleges should ensure that the following principles are observed:

- public funds must not be used wastefully or to underwrite inequitable or over-generous conditions of service, including severance;
- notice of termination of appointments should not be delayed in order to generate compensation payments in lieu of notice;
- where appropriate, ex-gratia severance or redundancy packages should be based on the arrangements set out within relevant extant terms and conditions of employment. In particular, prior consideration should be given to the availability of pension and compensation benefits within these conditions;
- special payments should be transparent and negotiated in a way which avoids conflicts of interest;
- offers of subsequent employment or consultancy work should be exceptional and only made where they represent value for money; and
- any undertakings about confidentiality should leave transactions open to proper public scrutiny.
The SFC’s assessment of any proposed severance will look for conformation that:

- the above principles have been observed;
- the justification or business case, including value for money, it is clearly set out and costs are affordable;
- the terms of settlements are appropriate (including checking comparability with the arrangements in place within the Scottish Government and set out in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme); and
- that appropriate management and governance procedures have been followed.

Severance schemes should be time limited and linked to a programme of managing early departures. Colleges which are currently operating a voluntary exist scheme should ensure it has an appropriate end date and compare the terms of the scheme against this guidance. If colleges have any questions about this guidance in relation to a current voluntary exit scheme they should contact SFC.

The two main routes to severance are voluntary exit schemes and settlement agreements.

**Voluntary exit schemes**

Voluntary exit schemes have standard terms and conditions applying to all those staff who successfully apply to leave under the scheme. Statutory or contractual terms normally provide the bases for such schemes. Voluntary severance schemes are used to manage headcount reductions either across the organisation or in particular areas, and run for a specified length of time. Applications are assessed against set criteria which include the business case for releasing a member of staff early and the value for money which can be obtained as a result. The numbers of staff leaving through voluntary exit schemes and the associated costs will be reported in colleges’ annual accounts.

Audit Scotland’s reports, ‘Managing early departures from the Scottish public sector’ and ‘Managing Scotland’s public sector workforce’ highlight the importance of planning staff departures.


In setting out the justification or business case for the new or changed scheme, colleges should outline:

- the rationale for introducing/changing the scheme;
mitigating action already taken or planned to avoid the need for headcount reductions e.g. recruitment freeze, redeployment, reductions in working hours;

- the terms available under the relevant compensation/pension scheme and the rationale for offering terms other than the contractual minimum;

- the estimated annual costs and savings of the new/revised scheme over the payback period;

- details of how, by whom and over what timescale the costs of the scheme will be funded; and

- the impact that the restructuring/headcount reduction will have on the paybill.

Colleges should use the template provided at Annex A to submit requests for approval of any proposed severance scheme or change to a previously approved scheme.

**Settlement Agreements**


The principles of this guidance apply to colleges which form the contents of this letter. Colleges require SFC’s prior approval in all cases where a settlement agreement or the offer of a financial consideration is above £1,000 to secure a voluntary resignation which is outwith the terms of an existing and approved scheme is proposed.

Settlement agreements are agreements between an individual member of staff and the employer to resolve an employment dispute. Settlement agreements normally relate to the termination of employment, but they can also be used to settle disputes during employment. The terms of a settlement agreement reflect the circumstances under which the person is leaving and may include a sum for loss of office as well as any contractual payments due to the individual. They are designed to allow individuals to leave the organisation on mutually negotiated terms and avoid potentially protracted and more costly employment disputes. Settlement agreements will be the subject of an annual report by Scottish Government to the Scottish Parliament.

Settlement Agreements may be used as outlined above, but should not be a standard feature of voluntary severance schemes. There should also be a presumption against the use of confidentiality clauses except in exceptional circumstances. However, either party (i.e. employee or employer) can request a confidentiality clause be inserted. In such a situation the terms of the clause must be agreed by both parties.
Nothing in any confidentiality clause should restrict an individual’s right to make a protected disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1998.

It seems that some colleges believe that a settlement agreement is necessary in order to set out the terms of the termination of employment. This is not the case. It is necessary to set out the terms of termination of employment, but this can be done through a standard termination letter or agreement. An example of such a letter is included at Annex E which colleges may wish to adopt.

Settlement Agreements often include a clause in relation to disclosing of information. Any such clause should explicitly note that the SFC and the Scottish Government will have sight of the information and will collate it for the purpose of parliamentary scrutiny. The Scottish Government’s Settlement Agreement guidance sets out the following draft clause which colleges might choose to adopt.

“The Scottish Government will be entitled to use the fact that an Agreement has been entered into to enable them to collate and provide information on the number of Settlement Agreements entered into with the Scottish Government and across the wider public sector and also to provide collated information on the costs involved. The Scottish Government will not however disclose the terms or circumstances of the Agreement or the name of the Employee without the written consent of the Employee or as required by the Scottish Parliament solely for the purposes of Parliamentary scrutiny relating to the use of public money or as required by law.”

The request to SFC for approval of a Settlement Agreement or proposed to secure a voluntary resignation through the offer of a financial consideration exceeding £1,000 should be in the form of a business case which should include, as a minimum:

• an explanation of the circumstances of the case, including the legal assessment of the risk of litigation and likely outcome;
• confirmation that relevant management and governance procedures have been followed;
• an assessment of the value for money offered by the proposal, including a breakdown of each of the constituent parts of the proposal and any associated contractual elements that may be relevant; and
• any non-financial considerations e.g. where it is desirable to end a person’s employment but dismissal is not warranted.

Colleges should use the template provided at Annex B to submit business cases.

Colleges are required to follow the guidance contained in this letter. Those responsible for the preparation of a business case or severance generally should also familiarise themselves with the substance of the guidance on severance contained in
the SPFM. The relevant section of the SPFM is; “Settlement agreements, severance, early retirement and redundancy terms” and can be found through the following link: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/severanceetcterms

**Procedure for submitting business cases**

Business cases should be completed using the templates at Annex A or B and submitted to the Deputy Director, Learning, Governance and Sustainability (LGS) at the SFC. Receipt of business cases will be acknowledged and processed within five working days (20 where Ministerial input is required). Colleges should give the SFC advance notice of any pending business cases and submit these as early as possible in case further information is required.

**Good practice and learning from poor practice**

In addition to complying with the terms of this guidance colleges should look to wider sources of good practice. In particular, colleges must have regard to the principles of good practice set out in the Audit Scotland report ‘Managing early departures from the Scottish public sector’ May 2013. A summary of the key principles is reproduced at Annex D. The full report can be found through the following link: http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/central/2013/nr_130523_early_departures.pdf

Audit Scotland’s recent report ‘Scotland’s colleges 2015’, highlights weaknesses in how some colleges managed and approved senior staff severance arrangements. [Add link to as report.] Auditors at six colleges identified that the way severance arrangements had been handled fell short of good practice. In two of these cases (North Glasgow and Coatbridge College) the Auditor General proposed a separate statutory report (Section 22) setting out shortcomings in governance and reporting.

The Section 22 report on North Glasgow College is currently under consideration by the Scottish Parliament Public Audit Committee (PAC) and we anticipate the Section 22 report on Coatbridge College will be the subject of PAC’s scrutiny. The full text of the Section 22 report and the associated reports from the PAC can be found through the following link: http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/central/2014/s22_140507_north_glasgow_college.pdf

[Add text re Coatbridge if a public domain]

Colleges are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the contents of the above reports and the guidance provided in Annex D, and use this information as a benchmark against which local procedures and practice should be reviewed. **Confirmation that such a review has been undertaken along with the results should be reported to the SFC by 20 September 2015.**
Failure to adhere to the severance guidance

In the event that a college fails to adhere to the severance guidance outlined in this letter then SFC will consider clawback of grant or reductions in future funding.

Further information

I would be grateful if you could arrange to circulate this guidance to your college’s board of management and relevant staff. Please do not hesitate to contact Andrew Millar, Senior Financial Analyst (Tel: 0131 313 6538; Email: amillar@sfc.ac.uk) or Dorothy Carson, Financial Analyst (Tel: 0131 313 6607; Email: dcarson@sfc.ac.uk) if you have any questions regarding the guidance.

Yours sincerely

Brian Baverstock
Deputy Director
Learning, Governance and Sustainability Group
### REQUEST FOR APPROVAL FOR NEW SEVERANCE SCHEME OR CHANGES TO A PREVIOUSLY APPROVED SCHEME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of college</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New scheme or change to existing scheme?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for introducing the scheme or changing old scheme</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Outline of and confirmation that appropriate management and governance procedures have been followed. A copy of the Board or Board committee minute approving the proposed scheme or change to scheme should be provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What mitigating actions have been taken or are planned to avoid the need for headcount reductions?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outline the key terms proposed under the new/changed scheme and the rationale for offering over the contractual minimum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the estimated annual costs and savings of the new/changed scheme over the payback period?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How will the new/changed scheme be funded?

What impact will the headcount reduction have on the recurrent paybill?

Signature

Date

Note: this form should be completed where a college intends to establish a new scheme or make changes to a previously approved scheme. The form should be sent to Deputy Director: Learning, Governance and Sustainability at the Scottish Funding Council.

Colleges should also refer to the “Settlement agreements, severance, early retirements and redundancy terms’ section of the Scottish Public Finance manual at the following link: http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/severanceetcterms
REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF BUSINESS CASE FOR SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT OR PROPOSAL TO SECURE A VOLUNTARY RESIGNATION THROUGH THE OFFER OF A FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION EXCEEDING £1,000

Name of college

Confirm whether this is a proposed Settlement Agreement or a proposal to offer a financial consideration to secure the voluntary resignation of an employee

Background and circumstances of the case

Risks arising

Outline of and confirmation that the appropriate management and governance procedures have been followed. A copy of the Board or Board committee minute approving the proposed settlement agreement or financial payment should be provided.

An assessment of the value for money offered by the proposal by reference to the completed (attached) Employment Information Schedule

Any non-financial considerations, e.g. where it is desirable to end a person's employment but dismissal is not warranted
Confirmation that the principles set out at Annex C have been applied.

Signature

Date

Note: this form should be completed where a college intends to pay an employee an amount in excess of contractual terms and over £1,000. The form should be sent to Deputy Director: Learning, Governance and Sustainability at the Scottish Funding Council.

Colleges should also refer to the “Settlement agreements, severance, early retirements and redundancy terms’ section of the Scottish Public Finance manual at the following link: http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/severanceetcterms
### EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION SCHEDULE FOR BUSINESS CASE

**COLLEGE NAME:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 1 - Employee detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1 Employee name</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.2 Job title</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **1.3 Length of continuous service**  
(years/months) | |
| **1.4 Full Time Equivalent** | |
| **1.5 Age** | |
| **1.6 Current pay grade** | |
| **1.7 Contractual notice period** | |
| **1.8 Does contract provide for**  
Payment in lieu of notice? | |
| **1.9 Name of pension scheme** | |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 2 - Employment benefits and costs arising through normal course of employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Remuneration received by employee before deductions (last 12 months)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **2.1 Current annual salary rate**  
£ | |
| **2.5 Any other remuneration received over last 12 months**  
(specific) | £ |
<p>| <strong>Total remuneration received by employee before deductions</strong> | £ |
| <strong>Other benefits received</strong> |
| <strong>2.6 Benefit 1 (specify)</strong> | £ |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Benefit 2 (specify)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total other benefits</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total remuneration and benefits received by employee before deductions</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employer on-costs of remuneration and benefits received</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Employer's Pension Scheme Contributions</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>Earnings Related National Insurance Contributions (ERNIC)</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>Other (including VAT)</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total employer on-costs of remuneration and benefits received</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total cost to employer of benefits received by employee</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 3 - Termination costs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Compensation In Lieu of Notice (CILON)</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Payment in lieu of annual leave untaken</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Other (e.g. Time Off In Lieu untaken)</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Employer cost of making up any pension shortfall</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Other costs (specify, if any)</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total termination costs</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 4 - Estimate costs of defending a case</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Can you confirm whether legal advice has been taken on whether the case should be defended? Please summarise advice given:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 5 - Proposed terms of agreement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Gross value of any non-contractual sum to be offered</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Net value of any non-contractual sum to be offered after any tax deducted</td>
<td>£</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Maximum value of employee support for legal assistance</td>
<td>£</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Other (specify)</td>
<td>£</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. cost of outplacement support for employee not available through normal course of employment. (Include any VAT)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 What are the estimated costs of negotiating and concluding an agreement?</td>
<td>£</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total proposed terms of agreement</td>
<td>£</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section 6 – Settlement Agreement**

| 6.1 Does the settlement agreement include a confidentiality clause? If so, why? | |

**NB.** Where the costs in section 5 are estimated, SFC should be provided with updated actual costs when these are known.
When considering any severance, colleges should ensure that the following principles are observed:

- public funds must not be used wastefully or to underwrite inequitable or over-generous conditions of service, including severance;
- notice of termination of appointments should not be delayed in order to generate compensation payments in lieu of notice;
- where appropriate, ex-gratia severance or redundancy packages should be based on the arrangements set out within relevant extant terms and conditions of employment. In particular, prior consideration should be given to the availability of pension and compensation benefits within these conditions;
- special payments should be transparent and negotiated in a way which avoids conflicts of interest;
- offers of subsequent employment or consultancy work should be exceptional and only made where they represent value for money; and
- any undertakings about confidentiality should leave transactions open to proper public scrutiny.

Workforce planning

Early departure schemes should be driven by the needs of organisations, not the wishes of individuals.

Workforce and service plans should be used to help shape proposals for early departure schemes, identifying parts of the organisation or particular grades where there is greatest need for reducing the number of employees.

Organisations should ensure that they retain sufficient skills and experience before authorising individual early departures.

Option appraisal

In order to avoid unnecessary costs, alternatives to early departures should be considered. These include:

- natural turnover;
- vacancy management;
- reducing overtime levels; and
- reducing the use of agency or contract staff.

Policies and procedures

Policies and procedures for early departure schemes should be regularly updated to reflect the changing needs of organisations, the results of earlier schemes and relevant guidance.

Policies and procedures should cover issues such as:

- incentives, such as ‘added years’, that might be available;
- criteria for the use of ill-health retiral; and
- restrictions on any return to employment within the organisation or sector.

Organisations should consult with trade unions or staff representatives to help ensure that they are seen as fair and reasonable.
Policies and procedures should be clearly communicated to all staff and be transparent to the public.

Policies and procedures should be consistently applied to all staff, except where the organisation’s programme is being targeted at specific grades or business areas.

**Business cases**

Proposals should be supported by clear business cases, showing the full additional costs of early departures and their anticipated savings.

There should be restrictions on staff who have accepted an early departure package from being re-employed by their previous employer.

Business cases should include ‘strain on the fund’ and ‘added years’ costs, borne by pension funds and recharged to employers, not just those costs directly charged to an organisation’s budget.

Business cases should take into account the costs of any replacement staff employed at lower pay scales.

Organisations should ensure they are using appropriate and justifiable payback periods.

**Compromise agreements**

Organisations should be clear about which employment rights they expect individuals to waive in return for *ex gratia* payments.

Compromise agreements should not be used to help silence whistle-blowers and limit public accountability.

**Independent scrutiny**

Councillors or board members should oversee early departure schemes, ensuring that proposals represent value for money.

While there may be some need for confidentiality, proposals affecting senior managers should be subject to detailed formal scrutiny by councillors or board members.
Costs presented to councillors or board members should detail separately the costs borne by the organisation as a result of offering ‘added years’ (the ‘added years’ lump sum and capitalised ‘added year’ costs).

**Monitoring**

Senior managers should monitor progress to help ensure that planned savings are realised and review future proposals accordingly.

Senior managers should report regularly to councillors or board members, detailing the cost of early departure schemes, and providing assurance that business cases are accurate and that value for money has been achieved.

**Openness**

Organisations should be open in their annual reports and accounts about the costs of early departures and the savings they have generated.
Example of standard termination letter

[To be added]
Report on Organisational Development Activity

1. Introduction
1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with information on the progress of activities undertaken by the Organisational Development Team during academic year 2014-15.

2. Qualifications
2.1 The following table illustrates the number and range of qualifications undertaken by staff during 2014-15:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Number of staff undertaking the award this year</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Anticipated achievement rates &amp; commentary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Qualification in Further Education</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>The award is taught by the University of Aberdeen. Staff are supported in College by Co-Tutors who are part of Organisational Development.</td>
<td>84% Two members of staff left the College whilst undertaking the award. Two others have deferred for completion in 2015-16. The remainder are expected to achieve the TQFE this summer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessor Awards</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>SQA certified assessor awards are taught by professional development tutors working within the team.</td>
<td>76% Six members of staff are not expected to achieve this year due to a range of issues including work pressure, personal problems and ill health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verifier Award</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>SQA certified verifier awards are also taught within the OD team.</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and Delivering Learning Sessions to Groups</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>This SQA certified award is used for Instructors and non-teaching staff who have to deliver training sessions or presentations to students.</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Agenda Item 7.1

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE
Meeting of 21 July 2015

Table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Number of staff undertaking the award this year</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Anticipated achievement rates &amp; commentary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching in Colleges Today</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>This award is certified by College Development Network and assessed by OD staff.</td>
<td>88% One member of staff has left the College and a further three joined the College later in the year and have deferred assessment until 2015-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA in Professional Development</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>The award is taught by the University of Aberdeen. Some staff are undertaking the award to upgrade their qualifications to degree level and some as an entry point for TQFE.</td>
<td>N/A Two members of staff achieved this award this academic year. Two have withdrawn from the award. The remainder are part way through the qualification and will continue in 2015-16.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher National Certificates</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>The majority of these staff are taking the award internally supported by different teaching teams.</td>
<td>Information not currently available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TESOL Diploma; NEBOSH certificate; Master of Science</td>
<td>One for each award</td>
<td>These staff are taking awards taught and assessed by different awarding bodies.</td>
<td>Information not currently available.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Training

3.1 The following table illustrates the number of internal and external training courses attended by staff this academic year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of training events run internally</th>
<th>Total numbers attending events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>188+</td>
<td>2,040</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of e-learning courses run internally</th>
<th>Total number of staff completing these courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>479</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 These courses include mandatory training courses such as “Child Protection”, information briefings and developmental courses such as “Behaviour Management”.

3.3 In addition 167 external training events have been attended by staff this year.

3.4 22 staff have undertaken College run courses such as ECDL.
4. Initiatives and Developments
   4.1 A revised induction programme was implemented in August 2014 which is currently being audited.
   4.2 A new appraisal system was introduced in autumn 2014. This will be reviewed in the new academic year and a report will come to the Committee in due course.
   4.3 Implementation of the College Vision and Values are well underway with all managers now briefed. (See Agenda Item 6.4).
   4.4 A detailed development plan has been drafted to support our application for IiP accreditation which is due to take place this autumn. (See Agenda Item 6.3).
   4.5 The pilot Futures Leaders programme reported on at the Committee meeting in May 2015 is about to get underway with an advert going out for staff to apply. This will commence in September 2015.
   4.6 In addition leadership development training designed to strengthen and consolidate the capacities of both staff in leadership positions and those aspiring to leadership positions is due to be developed with implementation anticipated in the autumn.

5. Recommendation
   5.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of this report.

Rob Wallen   Elaine Hart
Principal    Vice Principal Human Resources
Key Health and Safety Performance Indicators

1. **Introduction**
   1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with information on key performance indicators relating to the College’s Health and Safety function.

2. **Accident Statistics**
   2.1 Accident statistics for the period 1st August 2014 to 26th June 2015 are noted in the table below with comparative information for previous years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total No. of accidents</td>
<td>86 of which 16 were reported to HSE</td>
<td>50 of which 8 were reported to HSE</td>
<td>77 of which 11 were reported to HSE</td>
<td>43 of which 4 were reported to HSE</td>
<td>42 of which 5 were reported to HSE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The accidents and one non injury incident which were notified to the HSE involved:

- Short in main incoming electrical transformer causing minor explosion (Aberdeen City Campus)
- Student cut finger in construction class. (Fraserburgh)
- Student did not follow instruction so cut palm with chisel. (Fraserburgh)
- Student cut finger with craft knife after hand slipped. (Fraserburgh)
- Fellow student dropped washing machine drawer on another student’s foot. (Fraserburgh).

2.3 An analysis of the accidents in the period 01 August 2014 to 26 June 2015 shows that they involved the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number Aberdeen Sites</th>
<th>Number Fraserburgh Campus</th>
<th>NESCol Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Pupils</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of the Public</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explosion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.4 The categories of accidents were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Injury</th>
<th>Number Aberdeen Sites</th>
<th>Number Fraserburgh Campus</th>
<th>NESCol Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cut</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concussion</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fracture</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burn</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprain/Strain</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bump/Knock</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scratch</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slip Trip</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislocation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye Ingress</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crush</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruise</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bite</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stave</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asthma Attack</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Explosion (Boiler Room)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakdown by Site</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen City Campus</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altens Campus</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen Sports Village</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craibstone Campus</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraserburgh Campus</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinterty Campus</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. **Work Placement Visits**

3.1 The following table shows the number of visits which were undertaken in the period 01 August 2014 to 26 June 2015:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Visits to be Undertaken</th>
<th>% of Visits Undertaken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>205</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 The number of placement providers across the North East is currently being reviewed with a view to establishing a co-ordinated programme of visits for the whole College.

4. **Approved Contractor List**

4.1 External contractor companies are approved by the Head of Health, Safety and Security to carry out work for the College. This is to ensure that all contractors comply with health and safety standards as specified by the College.

4.2 The following table provides details of the total number of companies currently approved to carry out work in North East Scotland College, and the number removed from the list for failing to meet College safety standards in the period 01 August 2014 to 30 April 2015:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Approved Contractors</th>
<th>No. Removed from List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>199</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. **Workplace Dust Monitoring**

5.1 Under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) a duty is placed on employers to ensure the risk from workplace exposure to dust is removed, so far as reasonably practicable.

5.2 Checks to measure the concentration of inhalable and respirable dust in the air are undertaken by the Health and Safety Department.

5.3 All construction and joinery workshops are included in this programme.

5.4 Each workshop is sampled for respirable dust using a direct reading dust monitor; this monitor also provides the facility for inhalable and thoracic dust checks.

5.5 The following table provides details of the number of dust samples taken and the number of inspections that fell below statutory limits in the period 01 August 2014 to 30 April 2015:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Dust Samples Undertaken</th>
<th>No. of Inspection Failures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Food Hygiene Inspections

6.1 In order to ensure that the College complies with the Food Safety Act 1990, the Food Labelling Regulation 1996 (as amended), the General Food Regulation 2004 and the Food Hygiene (Scotland) Regulations 2006, the Health and Safety Team carry out a programme of kitchen inspections.

6.2 A member of the Health and Safety Team is a qualified Food Hygiene Inspector.

6.3 All kitchens including training and contractor controlled areas are included in the programme.

6.4 The following table shows details of the number of kitchens inspected and any that fell below the required standard in the period 01 August 2014 to 30 April 2015:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Kitchen Inspections Undertaken</th>
<th>No. of Inspection Failures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Review on Accident Reporting Variations

7.1 It was identified at the previous meeting of the HR Committee held in May that there was a perceived difference between the number of accidents reported at the Fraserburgh and Aberdeen Campuses.

7.2 All College accidents were reviewed by the Head of Health, Safety and Security, Mr Colin Beattie to identify any possible reasons for this disparity.

7.3 No significant differences in either classroom practice or supervision arrangements could be found to exist between locations.

7.4 Some difference in levels of accident reporting has been noted in previous years.

7.5 This has found not to be suspicious or to be a cause for any major concern.

7.6 Accident reporting is not an exact science and relies heavy of human decisions and judgements on what should and should not be recorded.

7.7 At the recent meeting of the College’s Health and Safety Committee, Mr Beattie raised this matter formally with its members, which include the Heads of Schools and a program of education within the college Schools and Faculties will take place aimed at standardising accident reporting.

8. Arrangements for Reporting Incident/Near Misses

8.1 The College has a procedure for reporting incidents/near misses.

8.2 The incident/near miss reporting procedure is similar to many “card based” systems used in other industries.

8.3 The incident reporting form is held on the College intranet, so it can be easily obtained and used by all staff.

8.4 The completed incident forms are returned to the Health and Safety Team.
8.5 The Health and Safety Team analyses the submitted forms to identify any trend developing or for any areas of potential concern.

8.6 The College incident/near miss procedure is fully compliant with the requirements of the OHSAS 18001 Standard.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of this report.

Rob Wallen  
Principal

Elaine Hart  
Vice Principal Human Resources