



PEOPLE AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

Meeting of Wednesday 23
September 2026, held in G10,
City Campus

PEOPLE & CULTURE COMMITTEE

NOTICE

There will be a meeting of the People & Culture Committee of North East Scotland College on Wednesday 23 September 2026 at 1:00pm in G10 Boardroom, City Campus

AGENDA

Agenda Item		Paper
	Consider if sufficient time has been provided to read all papers	
01-26/27	Apologies for Absence	
02-26/27	Declaration of any Potential Conflicts of Interest in relation to any Agenda Items	
03-26/27	Minute of Previous Meeting – 19/05/26	X
04-26/27	Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting	X
	Matters for Decision	
05-26/27	Employers Discretionary Policy	X
06-26/27	Committee Terms of Reference	X
07-26/27	Programme of Business AY2026/27	X
	Reserved Matters for Discussion	
08-26/27	People Services Strategic Risks	x
09-26/27	Agency Staff Guidance	x
	Matters for Discussion	
10-26/27	People Services Annual Report - Management Information (Annual Report) (L Hamilton to attend)	X
11-26/27	Employee Engagement and Internal Communications	X
12-26/27	People Services Enhancement Plan AY2026-2028	X
13-26/27	Our Colleagues Committee Update	X
14-26/27	Elevating Staff Profile (presentation to be shared on the day)	
	Reserved Matters for Information	
	Matters for Information	
15-26/27	National Bargaining Update (verbal)	
16-26/27	New MyLearning System presentation (Jill Leishman to attend to present)	
17-26/27	Any Other Business	
18-26/27	Summation of Action and Date of Next Meeting The next P&C Committee meeting will take place on 24 February 2027	

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

NOTE OF MEETING

Draft Minute of Meeting of NESCol's Human Resources Committee held on Tuesday 19 May 2026 at 1:00pm via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Leona McDermid – Chair
 Jim Gifford – Vice Chair
 Susan Elston
 Cindy Dempster
 Gerry Lawrie
 Duncan Cockburn, from 1:58pm

In attendance:

Kimra Donnelly, Assistant Principal - People Services
 Susan Lawrance, Secretary to the Board
 Karen Fraser, Minute Secretary

Agenda Item	
29-25	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received in advance from N Cowie and E MacIsaac.
30-25	Declaration of any Potential Conflicts of Interest in relation to any Agenda Items K Donnelly declared a potential conflict of interest by virtue of her position on the Educational Competencies Consortium (ECC)'s Board and in relation to Agenda Item 38-25. D Cockburn declared a transparency statement by virtue of his position with RGU and the University's use of Zellis in relation to Agenda Item 39-25.
31-25	Minute of Previous Meeting – 04/03/26 The Minute was approved as a true and accurate record.
32-25	Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting Members noted that the 4 matters arising were marked as completed. Regarding the Action relating to Agenda Item 21-25, K Donnelly advised of a planned review of the KPIs at the Our Colleagues Committee so that they are more reflective and add value. These will then be re-presented to the HR Committee.
	Matter for Decision
33-25	HR Committee Amended Terms of Reference Enhancements to the Committee's remit, updates to the Terms of Reference, and a change of name were presented for decision, in advance of consideration by the Regional Board.

	In discussion, clarity was sought regarding the wording in 1.1 Membership and with the phrase "confidence in leadership communication" under Specific Duties in 1.3 Remit. Action: K Donnelly to address. K Donnelly explained the document being "live" currently to enable ongoing updates, its' good alignment with the Our Colleagues Sub-Strategy, and the benefit associated with P Smith's addition. S Lawrance advised that Terms of Reference from another College which has already embedded a People and Culture Committee have been shared and considered. Whilst being in a period of transition, positivity and a sense of modernity were noted regarding the amendments put forward. Members were content with the direction of travel, with recognition of the ToR's content being on-point currently. The potential need to review in 6-12 months' time was noted. Action: Review to be added to PoB. Decision = subject to 2 x wording adjustments and with the caveat that the document should be reviewed in 6-12 months, the proposals were approved for presentation to the Regional Board for approval.
	Reserved Matter for Discussion
34-25	Review of People Services' Risks on Strategic Risk Register
	Matter for Discussion
35-25	People Services Enhancement Plan Progress Report Updates applied to the Enhancement Plan for AY2024-25 and AY2025-26 were spotlighted in discussion. Members noted the 2-year Plan having almost reached its' conclusion, an adaption applied to the rag-rating, and 3 areas for onward inclusion into the next Plan (enhancing access to and use of staff data in decision-making; operational and policy reviews; learning and development framework). Summations were provided for each of the 8 areas for development. In response to a voiced compliment of the Learning and Development team, K Donnelly expressed thanks and assured of onward sharing. Giving consideration to a query shared regarding collected evidence to determine the impact of Wellbeing Days, K Donnelly advised of post-event surveys but noted the difficulty in realistically measuring and quantifying the feedback received. How to measure "softer" practices was identified as an area requiring research. In response to a query, K Donnelly confirmed the "clean" data within the Zellis system and the incompatibility with other systems. It was confirmed that the new People Services Enhancement Plan will be ready for the next Meeting.

	Reserved Matters for Information
36-25	
37-25	Employment Rights Act 2025
38-25	Job Evaluation Update (verbal)

39-25	People Services Contract Renewals (Presentation)
	Matter for Information
40-25	SFC Staffing Data AY2024-25 The high-level, informative data was shared to provide an overview of sector-wide staffing trends across Scotland. Its' use as a baseline and it containing no surprises were noted. Being provided with SFC's funding allocation alongside the staffing data was recognised as something which would have been useful, to enable correlation. It was put forward that time should be spent on analysing the rate of decline at NESCol in comparison to the rest of the sector, and any identified strategic challenge should be brought to the attention of Regional Board. In response, time spent on workforce and succession planning was recognised. Discussions on the configuration of NESCol workforce were held.
41-25	Any Other Business No other business was raised.
42-25	Summation of Action and Date of Next Meeting A summation of actions was provided by S Lawrance.
	Members were advised that the draft schedule of meetings for AY2026-27 will be presented at the 17/06/26 Regional Board Meeting, and subject to approval, the first meeting of this Committee (under its' revised title if approved) will be held in-person at City Campus on Wed 23/09/26. New teaching staff member Jim Douglas (lecturer, travel and tourism) will be joining.

	Meeting ended at 2:50pm
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Actions from the Human Resources Committee Meeting – 19 May 2026			
Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility of	Deadline
33-25	HR Committee Amended Terms of Reference: wording in 1.1 Membership and “confidence in leadership communication” under Specific Duties in 1.3 Remit to be reviewed.	K Donnelly	03/06/26
33-25	HR Committee Terms of Reference: to be reviewed within 6-12 months.	K Donnelly	24/02/27
34-25	Review of People Services’ Risks on Strategic Risk Register:		

PEOPLE & CULTURE COMMITTEE

An update on matters arising from the meeting of the then-titled Human Resources Committee held on 19/05/26.

Agenda Item	
33-25	Action: P&C Committee Amended Terms of Reference: wording in 1.1 Membership and "confidence in leadership communication" under Specific Duties in 1.3 Remit to be reviewed. Status: Complete. Wording reviewed and to remain "as is".
33-25	Action: P&C Committee Terms of Reference: to be reviewed within 6-12 months. Status: Complete. Included in PoB for AY2026/27
34-25	Action: Review of People Services' Risks on Strategic Risk Register: Status:

PEOPLE AND CULTURE COMMITTEE	
Meeting of 23 September 2026	
Title: Employers Discretions Policy	
Author: Kimra Donnelly, Assistant Principal People Services	Contributor(s):
Type of Agenda Item: For Decision ☒ For Discussion ☐ For Information ☐ Reserved Item of Business ☐	
Purpose: To enable the Committee to consider and approve the Employers Local Government Pension Scheme Discretions Policy.	
Linked to Core Objective: 4. Building a stronger and more sustainable College	
Linked to Strategic Risk(s): 5.1 & 6.1	
Executive Summary: Appendix 1 contains the Employers Discretions Policy approved by the HR Committee in October 2024. There are no changes to the policy previously presented to the Committee, other than updates to job titles. The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Regulations contain a number of areas in which employers have discretionary powers. Following changes to the Regulations introduced in 2018, all employers participating in the Scheme are required to review and maintain an up-to-date Employers Discretions Policy, as held by the North-East Scotland Pension Fund. The Employers Discretions Policy sets out how the College, as a participating employer in the Fund, will exercise and administer these discretionary powers in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme. It is proposed that the HR Committee formally approves the Employers Discretions Policy and that it continues to be published on the College's intranet.	
Recommendation: It is recommended that the HR Committee approve the Employers Pension Scheme Discretions Policy.	

Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval: The HR Committee previously approved the Employers Discretions Policy at the October HR Committee and agreed that it would be regularly reviewed.

Equality Impact Assessment:

Positive Impact ☒

Negative Impact ☐

No Impact ☐

Evidence:

The policy provides a clear, transparent and consistent framework for exercising pension discretions, helping to reduce the risk of subjective decision-making and ensuring that employees are treated fairly and equitably in relation to pension benefits and discretionary payments. This promotes fairness, transparency and consistency across the workforce.



EMPLOYER DISCRETIONS POLICY

September 2024

Version Date: — September 2025 —

Review Date: _____



Employer Discretions Policy

This policy on discretions applies with effect from 1 June 2024 and sets out our policy on the way in which we are likely to exercise our discretions as a Scheme employer under the Local Government Pension Scheme in Scotland.

The document begins by setting out the position in so far as it relates to the current Scheme, but for former members of the Scheme a number of other key provisions remain relevant depending on when they were a member and these are detailed further later on.

If you have any queries on this policy, please contact Kimra Donnelly by email: k.donnelly@nescol.ac.uk.

PLEASE NOTE THAT IF A DISCRETION IS IN BOLD THIS MEANS A WRITTEN POLICY REGARDING IT MUST BE MAINTAINED

Current discretions including those applicable to the current career average revalued earnings (CARE) Scheme

The following table sets out discretions under the current Local Government Pension Scheme which is governed by the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 2018. In some cases, the equivalent discretions under Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 2014 will apply instead and so some entries in the table make reference to both sets of regulations. The Scottish Government has clarified that 2018 Regulations did not create a new scheme.

The following regulations are referred to for this purpose:

- the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 2018 [prefix R]¹
- the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 2014 [prefix R2]²
- the Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provisions and Savings) (Scotland) Regulations 2014 [prefix TP]
- the Local Government Pension Scheme (Administration) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 [prefix A]
- the Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contributions) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 (as amended) [prefix B]
- the Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provisions) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 [prefix T]
- the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 1998 (as amended) [prefix L]

Discretion	Regulation	North East Scotland College policy on the exercise of this discretion
1. Whether, how much, and in what circumstances to contribute to a shared cost APC scheme.	R16(2)(e) & R16(4)(d)	We will not exercise this discretion.
2. Whether to extend 30 day deadline for member to elect for a shared cost APC upon return from a period of absence from work with permission with no pensionable pay (otherwise than because of illness or injury, relevant child-related leave or reserve force service leave).	R16(16)	We may extend the deadline in exceptional circumstances where it can be shown that members may not have been informed of the requirement for this decision within 30 days of return.
3. Whether all or some benefits can be paid if an employee reduces their hours or grade from age 55 onwards (flexible retirement).	R29(7) & TP11(2) ³	We will not exercise this discretion.
4. Whether to waive, in whole or in part, any actuarial reduction on benefits paid on flexible retirement.	R29(9) and TPSch 2, para 2(1)	We will not exercise this discretion.

¹ The 2018 Regulations (R) apply to post 01.06.2018 active members and post 01.06.2018 leavers and discretions in the table under the 2018 Regulations only apply to those persons

² The 2014 Regulations (R2) apply to members who left the scheme between 01.04.2015 and 31.05.2018 and discretions in the table under the 2014 Regulations only apply to those persons

³ TP11(2) refers to R2~29(6): this reference is understood to have been carried forward to R29(7) by R102(2)

<u>Note:</u> any resultant strain cost from the exercise of this discretion will be charged to the employer regardless of the member's age at date of retirement.		
5. Whether to apply the 85 year rule for a member voluntarily drawing benefits, with employer consent, on or after age 55 and before age 60 (other than on the grounds of flexible retirement).	TPSch 2, paras 1(2) and 2(1)⁴	We will not exercise this discretion.
6. Whether to waive, in whole or in part, actuarial reduction on benefits which a member voluntarily draws before normal pension age, other than on the grounds of flexible retirement (where the member only has post 31/3/15 membership). <u>Note:</u> any resultant strain costs due to the exercise of this discretion will be charged to the employer regardless of the employee's age.	R29(9) or R2 29(8)	We will not exercise this discretion..
7. Whether to waive, in whole or in part, any actuarial reduction on pre and post April 2015 benefits which a member voluntarily draws before normal pension age other than on the grounds of flexible retirement (where the member has both pre 1/4/15 and post 31/3/15 membership).	TP3(1), (5) and (12), TPSch 2, para 2(1)⁵	We will not exercise this discretion.
8. Whether to grant additional pension to an active member or within 6 months of ceasing to be an active member by reason of redundancy or business efficiency (by up to a prescribed cap).	R30	We will not exercise this discretion.
9. Decide which employees to nominate for membership (admission bodies).	R3(1)(b)	All employees who are eligible to join the scheme will be nominated for membership in accordance with North East Scotland College admission agreement with NESPF.
10. Whether, in respect of an admission body providing a service in respect of outsourced work, to set off against payments due to that body any sums due from that body to the Fund.	RSch 2, Part 2, para 12(c)	We will consider any application of this discretion on a case by case basis.

⁴ Discretion applicable to all scheme members to whom the 2018 or 2014 Regulations apply.

⁵ Discretion applicable to all scheme members to whom the 2018 or 2014 Regulations apply.

11. Determine the rate of employee's contributions.	R9(1) to R9(4)	The employee's rate of contributions will be determined in accordance with these Regulations and from the guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers.
12. Determine intervals at which employees' contributions are to be made.	R9(8)	Employees' contributions will be aligned to the North East Scotland College set pay periods.
13. Whether and in what circumstances to contribute to a shared cost AVC scheme.	R17(1) & definition of SCAVC in RSch 1	We have an established a shared cost AVC scheme, which members have the option to elect to participate in.
14. Allow late application to convert scheme AVCs into membership credit i.e. allow application more than 30 days after cessation of active membership (where AVC arrangement was entered into before 30/6/05).	TP15(1)(b) & L65(8) & former L65(9)(b) ⁶	We will not have a general policy to allow late application to convert scheme AVCs into membership credit but may do so if exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated, such as the member being unaware of this right. Each case will be considered on its individual merits.
15. No right to a return of contributions due to an offence of a fraudulent character or grave misconduct unless the employer directs a total or partial refund is to be made.	R19(2)	We will not direct a return of contributions in the event of an offence of a fraudulent character or grave misconduct.
16. Specify in an employee's contract what other payments or benefits, other than those specified in R20(1)(a) and not otherwise precluded by R20(2), are to be pensionable.	R20(1)(b)	Elements of pay received by an employee other than those specified in these regulations and not otherwise precluded will only be pensionable if specified as such in the member's contract of employment.
17. In determining Assumed Pensionable Pay (APP), whether a lump sum payment made in the previous 12 months is a "regular lump sum".	R21(5)	The exercise of this discretion will be considered on a case by case basis with due regard given to all circumstances relating to the calculation of a member's APP.
18. Where in the Employer's opinion, the pensionable pay received in relation to an employment (adjusted to reflect any lump sum payments) in the 3 months (or 12 weeks if not paid monthly) preceding the commencement of Assumed Pensionable Pay), is materially lower than the level of pensionable pay the member would have normally received, decide whether to substitute a higher level of	R21(6)	Where pensionable pay in the 3 month period prior to commencement of APP is materially lower than the level of pay that would normally have been received, We will not normally substitute this with a higher level of pensionable pay, except when determining calculations for ill health retirement or death in service when we will consider each case on its merits.

⁶ Discretion applicable to all scheme members to whom the 2018 or 2014 Regulations apply.

pensionable pay having had regard to the level of pensionable pay received by the member in the previous 12 months.		
19. Whether to extend the 12 month option period for a member to elect that post 2015 deferred benefits should not be aggregated with an ongoing concurrent employment.	R22(7)(b)	We will not normally extend the 12 month time limit but may do so if exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. Each case will be considered on its merits.
20. Whether to extend the 12 month option period for a member to elect that post 2015 deferred benefits should not be aggregated with a new employment.	R22(8)(b)	We will not normally extend the 12 month time limit but may do so if exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. Each case will be considered on its merits.
21. Whether to extend the 12 month option period for a member to elect that pre 2015 deferred benefits for a member who re-joined post 31 March 2015 can be aggregated to purchase an amount of CARE pension.	TP10(6) ⁷	We will not normally extend the 12 month time limit but may do so if exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. Each case will be considered on its merits.
22. Whether to use a certificate produced by an IRMP under the 2009 Scheme for the purposes of making an ill health determination under the 2015 Scheme.	TP12(4)	We will not have a general policy regarding this issue.
23. Whether to apply to Scottish Ministers for a forfeiture certificate (where member is convicted of a relevant offence).	R86(1) & (8) or R2 89(1) & (8)	After considering each case on its individual merits, We may apply for a forfeiture certificate where a member is convicted of a relevant offence.
24. Where a forfeiture certificate is issued, whether to direct that benefits are to be forfeited (other than rights to GMP – but see R89/ R2 92 below).	R86(4) or R2 89(4)	Following the issue of a forfeiture certificate, We may direct that benefits are to be forfeited.
25. Whether to recover from the Fund any monetary obligation or, if less, the value of the member's benefits (other than, transferred in pension rights or AVCs/ SCAVCs) where the obligation was incurred as a result of a grave misconduct or a criminal, negligent or fraudulent act or omission in connection with the employment and as a result of which the person has left the employment.	R87(2) or R2 90(2)	After considering each case on its individual merits, We may recover from North East Scotland Pension Fund the amount of loss in cases of criminal, negligent or fraudulent acts by a member.

⁷ Discretion applicable to all scheme members to whom the 2018 or 2014 Regulations apply.

26. Whether, if the member has committed treason or been imprisoned for at least 10 years for one or more offences under the Official Secrets Acts, forfeiture under R86/ R2 89 or recovery of a monetary obligation under R87/ R2 90 should deprive the member or the member's surviving spouse or civil partner of any GMP entitlement.	R89 or R2 92	We may consider whether should there be forfeiture under R 86 or recovery of a monetary obligation under R 87, the member or the member's surviving spouse or civil partner should be deprived of any Guaranteed Minimum Pension entitlement. Each case will be considered on its individual merits.
27. Decide whether to issue a Certificate of Protection if the member does not request one within 12 months of a reduction or restriction in pay.	R90(5) or R2 93(4A)	We will normally issue a Certificate of Protection of pension benefits if requested by the employee within twelve months of the date of reduction. A certificate may be issued on application from the member out with the 12 month period specified in the regulations if exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated, such as the employee being unaware of this facility.
28. Agree to bulk transfer payment.	R93(1)(b) or R2 96(1)(b)	We will consult with NESPF and the fund actuaries in this regard.
29. Extend normal time limit for acceptance of a transfer value beyond the 12 month time limit from joining the LGPS.	R95(6)	We will not generally extend the normal time limit for acceptance of a transfer value beyond 12 months from joining the scheme but may do so where exceptional circumstances can be proved. Each case will be considered on its individual merits including if there would be any financial impact on North East Scotland College and/or the Pension Fund.
30. Whether to allow a member to select final pay period for fees to be any 3 consecutive years ending in the 10 years prior to leaving and ending on the anniversary of the date of leaving.	TP3(6), TP4(6)(c), TP8(4), TP10(2)(a), TP17(2)(b) & B11(2) ⁸	We will allow a member to select final pay for fees to be any three consecutive years ending 31 st March in the 10 years prior to leaving. We agree that this will automatically be done by NESPF.
31. Issue a certificate of protection of pension benefits where eligible non-councillor member fails to apply for one (pay cuts / restrictions occurring pre 1.4.15.)	TP3(1)(a), A43(5) ⁹	We will issue a certificate of protection of pension benefits if requested by the employee within twelve months of the date of reduction. A certificate may be issued on application from the member outwith the 12 month period specified in the regulations if exceptional circumstances can be proved such as the employee being unaware of this facility.

Formulating and publishing a policy under the 2014 and 2018 Regulations

The employer must formulate, publish and keep under review a statement of their policy. A copy of the policy must be sent to the relevant administering authority.

If the employer decides to amend the policy, they must send a copy to the relevant administering authority within one month of the date of the decision to amend the policy.

⁸ Discretion applicable to all scheme members to whom the 2018 or 2014 Regulations apply.

⁹ Discretion applicable to all scheme members to whom the 2018 or 2014 Regulations apply.

In formulating and reviewing its policy an employer is required by the Regulations to have regard to the extent to which the exercise of their discretionary powers could lead to a serious loss of confidence in the public service.

Discretions specific to scheme members who ceased active membership on or after 01 April 2009. and before 01 April 2015

Discretion	Regulation	North East Scotland College policy on the exercise of this discretion
1. Whether to waive, on compassionate grounds, the actuarial reduction applied to deferred benefits paid early.	B30(5)	We will not exercise this discretion.
2. Allow late application to convert scheme AVCs into membership credit i.e. allow application more than 30 days after cessation of active membership.	TSch1 & L65(8) & former L65(9)(b)	We will not have a general policy to allow late application to convert scheme AVCs into membership credit but may do so if exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated, such as the member being unaware of this right. Each case will be considered on its individual merits.
3. No right to a return of contributions due to an offence of a fraudulent character or grave misconduct unless the employer directs a total or partial refund is to be made.	A42(2)	We will not direct a return of contributions in the event of an offence of a fraudulent character or grave misconduct.
4. Employer may issue a certificate of protection where an employee fails to apply for one.	A43(5)	We will issue a certificate of protection of pension benefits if requested by the employee within twelve months of the date of reduction. A certificate may be issued on application from the member outwith the 12 month period specified in the regulations if exceptional circumstances can be proved such as the employee being unaware of this facility.
5. Whether Contribution Equivalent Premium (CEP) in excess of the Certified Amount (CA) recovered from a refund of contributions can be recovered from the Pension Fund.	A45(1) & (2)	We will consider each case on its merits.
6. Whether to extend six month period to lodge a stage one IDR appeal (where employer is the person making the stage one IDR decision in the case of a pre-01.04.15 leaver).	A54(7)(b)	We will consider each case on its merits.
7. Whether to apply to the Scottish Ministers for a forfeiture certificate (where a member is convicted of a relevant offence).	A66(6)	We may apply for a forfeiture certificate where a member is convicted of a relevant offence
8. Where forfeiture certificate is issued, whether to direct that benefits are to be forfeited.	A66(2)	Following the issue of the forfeiture certificate, We may direct that benefits are to be forfeited.
9. Where forfeiture certificate is issued, whether to direct interim payments out of the Pension Fund until a decision is taken to either apply the certificate or to pay benefits.	A67(1) & (2)	Following the issue of a forfeiture certificate, We may direct interim payments out of the Pension Fund until a decision is taken to either apply the certificate or to pay benefits.

10. Whether to recover from the Fund any monetary obligation or, if less, the value of the member's benefits (other than transferred in pension rights or AVCs/SCAVCs) where the obligation was as a result of a criminal, negligent or fraudulent act or omission in connection with the employment and as a result of which the person has left the employment.	A68(2)	After considering each case on its individual merits, We may recover from North East Scotland Pension Fund the amount of loss in cases of criminal, negligent or fraudulent acts by a member.
11. Whether to recover from the Fund any financial loss caused by fraudulent offence or grave misconduct of an employee (who has left because of that) or amount of refund if less.	A70(2) & (3)	After considering each case on its individual merits, We may recover from North East Scotland Pension Fund the amount of loss caused by fraudulent offence or grave misconduct of the employee (who has left because of that) or the amount of refund if less.
12. Whether to allow a member to select a final pay period for fees to be any 3 consecutive years ending with 31 st March in the 10 years prior to leaving.	B11(2)	We will allow a member to select final pay for fees to be any three consecutive years ending 31 st March in the 10 years prior to leaving. We agree that this will automatically be done by NESPF.

Formulating and publishing a policy under the 2009 Scheme Regulations

The employer must formulate, publish and keep under review a statement of their policy. A copy of the policy must be sent to the relevant administering authority.

If the employer decides to amend the policy, they must send a copy to the relevant administering authority within one month of the date of the decision to amend the policy.

In formulating and reviewing its policy an employer is required by the Regulations to have regard to the extent to which the exercise of their discretionary powers could lead to a serious loss of confidence in the public service.

Discretions under the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 1998 (as amended) specific to pre 01.04.2009. scheme leavers

Discretion	Regulation	North East Scotland College policy on the exercise of this discretion
1. Grant application from a post 31.3.98. / pre 1.4.09. leaver for early payment of benefits on or after age 50 and before age 60 (see Important Note below this table).	30(2)	We will not exercise this discretion.
2. Waive, on compassionate grounds, the actuarial reduction applied to benefits paid early for a post 31.3.98. / pre 1.4.09. leaver.	30(5)	We will not exercise this discretion.

<u>Note</u> : any resultant strain cost from the exercise of this discretion will be charged to the employer regardless of the member's age at date of retirement.		
3. Pre 1.4.09. optants out only to get benefits paid from NRD while in service if employer agrees.	30(7A)	We will have a general policy of approving applications under this regulation.
4. Allow member to select final pay period for fees to be a period of not less than 3 or more than 5 years back from date of leaving [Note: to all intents and purposes this discretion is now spent].	21(1)(b)	We will consider each case on its merits.
5. Decide, in the absence of an election from the member within 3 months of being able to elect, which benefit is to be paid where the member would be entitled to a pension or retirement grant under 2 or more regulations in respect of the same period of Scheme membership (post 31.3.98 / pre 1.4.09 leavers).	33(1)(b)	We may exercise this discretion in partnership with NESPF.
6. Consent to a member's former employer assigning to the new employer rights under any SCAVC life assurance policy.	70(7)(a)	We will consider any instance of this position on its merits.
7. Agree dates on which instalments under reg 79(5) (Employer's Further Payments) are due.	79(7)(b)	We may exercise this discretion in partnership with NESPF.
8. No right to return of contributions due to offence of a fraudulent character unless employer directs a total or partial refund is to be made (pre 1.4.09. leavers).	87(2)	We will not direct a return of contributions in the event of an offence of a fraudulent character or grave misconduct.
9. Contribution Equivalent Premium (CEP) in excess of the Certified Amount (CA) recovered from a refund of contributions can be recovered from the Pension Fund (pre 1.4.09. leavers).	91	We will consider each case on its merits.
10. Forfeiture of pension rights on issue of Secretary of State's certificate (pre 1.4.09. leavers).	111(2) & (5)	After considering each case on its merits, We may apply for a forfeiture certificate where a member is convicted of a relevant offence.
11. Where forfeiture certificate is issued, direct interim payments out of Pension Fund until decision is taken to either apply the certificate or to pay benefits (pre 1.4.09. leavers).	112(1)	Following the issue of a forfeiture certificate, We may direct that benefits are to be forfeited.
12. Recovery from Fund of monetary obligation owed by former employee or, if less, the value of the member's benefits (other than transferred in pension rights) (pre 1.4.09. leavers).	113(2)	We will consider each case covered by this regulation on its merits.

13. Recovery from Fund of financial loss caused by employee, or amount of refund if less (pre 1.4.09. leavers).	115(2) & (3)	We will consider each case covered by this regulation on its merits.
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Note: benefits paid on or after age 50 and before age 55 are subject to an unauthorised payments charge and, where applicable, an unauthorised payments surcharge under the Finance Act 2006. Also, any part of the benefits which had accrued after 5 April 2006 would generate a scheme sanction charge.

Formulating and publishing a policy under the LGPS (Scotland) Regulations 1998

The employer must formulate, publish and keep under review a statement of their policy. A copy of the policy must be sent to the relevant administering authority.

If the employer decides to amend the policy, they must send a copy to the relevant administering authority within one month of the date of the decision to amend the policy.

In formulating and reviewing its policy an employer is required by the Regulations to have regard to the extent to which the exercise of their discretionary powers could lead to a serious loss of confidence in the public service.

Discretions under the Local Government Superannuation (Scotland) Regulations 1987 (as amended) specific to pre 01.04.1998. scheme leavers

Discretion	Regulation	North East Scotland College policy on the exercise of this discretion
1. Grant application from a pre 1.4.98. leaver for early payment of deferred benefits on or after age 50 on compassionate grounds (see Important Note below this table).	E2(6)(b)	We will not exercise this discretion.

Note: benefits paid on or after age 50 and before age 55 are subject to an unauthorised payments charge and, where applicable, an unauthorised payments surcharge under the Finance Act 2006. However, as the benefits had accrued prior to 6 April 2006, they would not generate a scheme sanction charge.

Discretions specific to the Local Government (Discretionary Payments and Injury Benefits) (Scotland) Regulations 1998 (as amended)

Under Regulation 51A of the Discretionary Payments Regulations, there is a general obligation on schedule body Scheme employers to formulate and keep under review a policy which applies in respect of exercising their discretions under these regulations. In practice this facility is open to admitted body scheme employers wishing to offer benefits under these regulations. Those wishing to do so also need to maintain such a policy.

Mandatory discretions

The following table sets out mandatory discretions which should be included in such a policy:

Discretion	Regulation	<u>North East Scotland College</u> policy on the exercise of this discretion
1. Power to increase statutory redundancy payments above statutory weekly pay limit	4(1)	We will calculate statutory redundancy payments based on the employee's actual pay where it exceeds the statutory weekly pay limit.
2. To award compensatory added years to an individual on retirement on efficiency / redundancy Grounds	8(1)	We will not grant compensatory added years to an individual on retirement on efficiency / redundancy grounds.
3. How to apportion any surviving spouse's annual compensatory added years payment where the deceased person is survived by more than one spouse.	20(2)	We will consider each case on its merits
4. If, under the preceding decision, the authority's policy is to apply the normal suspension rules, whether the spouse's or civil partner's annual compensatory added years payment should be reinstated after the end of the remarriage, new civil partnership or cohabitation.	20(4)	We will consider each case on its merits
5. Whether, in respect of the spouse or civil partner of a person who ceased employment before 1 April 1998, the normal pension suspension rules should be disapplied during a period of re- marriage or new civil partnership i.e. whether the spouse's or civil partner's annual compensatory added years payments should continue to be paid.	20(6)	We will consider each case on its merits
6. Whether, in respect of the spouse or civil partner of a person who ceased employment before 1 April 1998 and where the spouse or civil partner remarries or cohabits or enters into a civil partnership with another person who is also entitled to a spouse's or civil partners annual CAY payment, the normal rule requiring one of them to forego payment whilst the period of marriage, civil partnership or co-habitation lasts, should be disapplied i.e. whether the spouses' or civil partners' annual CAY payments should continue to be paid to both of them.	20(6)	We will consider each case on its merits
7. How it will decide to whom any children's annual compensatory added years payments are to be paid where children's pensions are not payable under the LGPS (because the employee had not joined the LGPS) and, in such a case, how the annual added years will be apportioned amongst the eligible children.	26(2)	We will consider each case on its merits.
8. Intervals at which instalments of annual compensation are payable (paying authority may agree to pay at different intervals to that on which LGPS pension is payable).	29(1)	We may exercise this discretion in partnership with NESPF.

9. To award lump sum compensation of up to 104 weeks' pay instead of compensatory added years	35	We will not exercise this discretion.
10. To award a lump sum of up to 30 weeks' pay in cases where, in the case of a member of the LGPS who has 2 or more years membership, the employer terminates employment on the grounds of ill health or infirmity of mind or body but does not terminate the employment under regulation 34 of the LGPS Regulations (Scotland) 2018.	49B	We will not exercise this discretion.

Formulating and publishing a policy under regulation 51A of the Discretionary Payments Regulations 1998

Each employer obliged to maintain a policy statement under these regulations must formulate, publish and keep this under review.

If the employer decides to amend the policy, a new written statement must be published within a month of when the employer decided on the amendment(s). No change can come into effect until one month has passed since the date the amended policy statement was published.

In formulating and reviewing its policy an employer is required by the Regulations to:

- have regard to the extent to which the exercise of their discretionary powers, unless properly limited, could lead to a serious loss of confidence in the public service, and
- be satisfied that the policy is workable, affordable and reasonable having regard to the foreseeable costs.

Disclaimer: This document has been prepared based on a standard form document provided by the North East Scotland Pension Fund (NESPF). The standard form on which this document is based represented NESPF's understanding of the information available at the time that document was published including the relevant statutory Instruments governing the Local Government Pension Scheme in Scotland and associated overriding legislation. Changes to rules and regulations can happen at short notice. It is acknowledged that employers should take their own legal/ financial advice on the interpretation of any particular piece of legislation. It is further acknowledged and should be noted that no responsibility whatsoever will be assumed by NESPF for any direct or consequential loss, financial or otherwise, damage or inconvenience, or any other obligation or liability incurred by employers or readers relying on any information contained in this document.

Status:	Approved	Summary of changes September 2026 – no changes have been made to the policy since last reviewed. September 2024 – the policy has been updated: • with reference to the North East Scotland Pension Fund 'Guide to Discretions – May 2022' and in the template format provided by the North East Scotland Pension Fund. • With the College's position of the use of the pension scheme
Approved by:		
Date of version:	September 2024	
Responsibility for Policy:	Assistant Principal People Services	
Responsibility for Review:	Assistant Principal People Services	
Review date:	September 2027	
DPIA date:	September 2024	
EIA date:	September 2024	

		discretions in line with the current financial climate.
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DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA)

1. Does the activity that this policy or procedure relates to use personal data in any way? (Use may refer to collecting and gathering; storing electronically; storing by paper; sharing with other parties (internal or external to college); use of images as well as written information; retaining and archiving; or erasing, deleting and destroying)	No
2. Does the activity that this policy or procedure relates to use special category personal data in any way? (Special category data is data about: race; ethnic origin; politics; religion; trade union membership; genetics; biometrics (where used for ID purposes); health; sex life; or sexual orientation)	No
3. Does the activity that this policy or procedure relates to involve the use of social media or a third-party system?	No

If the answer is 'yes' to one or more of the above questions, the Data Protection Officer must be consulted.

Date of DPO consultation:	
Description of outcome and actions required (if any):	
DPIA screening/full DPIA required:	Yes / No

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

Part 1. Background Information. (Please enter relevant information as specified.)

Title of Policy or Procedure. Details of Relevant Practice:	Local Government Pensions Scheme and Discretionary Fund
Person(s) Responsible.	Assistant Principal People Services
Date of Assessment:	September 2024
What are the aims of the policy, procedure or practice being considered?	Legal compliance, the college must formulate, publish and keep under review its policy concerning the exercise of discretionary functions permitted by identified different pensions regulations.
Who will this policy, procedure or practice impact upon?	All staff in a pension scheme falling under the regulations.

Part 2. Public Sector Equality Duty comparison (Consider the proposed action against each element of the PSED and describe potential impact, which may be positive, neutral or negative. Provide details of evidence.)

Need	Evidence
Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.	Local Government Pension Scheme which is governed by the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 2018.
Impact: This policy ensures that the College's legal obligations are met and regulations are applied consistently for all members of the Local Government Pension Scheme. It should be noted that the calculation of Redundancy payments are linked to age and length of service. Accordingly older employees with longer service will benefit proportionately more than younger employees. This is justified on the basis that older employees may find it more difficult to obtain alternative employment in the event of a redundancy situation. This Policy is consistent in its approach to Discretionary Payments regardless of the employee's gender.	
Need	Evidence
Advancing Equality of Opportunity	Local Government Pension Scheme, which is governed by the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 2018.
Impact:	

With the exception of age as detailed above, there is no likelihood that this Policy will affect people who share protected characteristics differently from other people. The eligibility criteria which are used in the Policy are objective and the entitlement limits are fixed. The documentation used is accessible and in clear and plain English.

Need	Evidence
Promoting Good relations	Local Government Pension Scheme, which is governed by the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 2018.

Impact:

It should be acknowledged that operation of the scheme can lead to some employees feeling resentful towards each other eg if some are selected under Cessation on Grounds of Efficiency (Voluntary Severance).

Part 3. Identifying Impact on Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Marriage/Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
Impact Identified: - Positive (P) - Negative (N) - Neutral Impact (N/I)	N	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I

Part 4. Action & Outcome (Following initial assessment, describe any action that will be taken to address impact detected)

The Local Government Pensions Scheme and Discretionary Fund Policy and how it has been implemented will be reviewed annually by the HR Committee.

Sign-off, authorisation and publishing *

Name:	Kimra Donnelly
Position:	Assistant Principal People Services
Date of original EIA	September 2024
Date EIA last reviewed	

**Please note that an electronic sign-off is sufficient*

PEOPLE AND CULTURE COMMITTEE Meeting of 23 September 2026	
Title: People and Culture Committee - Terms of Reference	
Author: Susan Lawrance, Board Secretary	Contributor(s): HR Committee; Susan Lawrance (Secretary to the Board)
Type of Agenda Item: For Decision ☒ For Discussion ☐ For Information ☐ Reserved Item of Business ☐	
Purpose: To seek the Committee's approval of the People and Culture Terms of Reference as discussed at the last meeting of the HR Committee (May 2026) and following the Regional Board's approval (June 2026). As part of the Regional Board's overall Governance the Terms of Reference are presented annually at the first meeting of each Committee.	
Linked to Strategic Theme: 4. Delivering Excellence and Innovation	
Linked to Strategic Risk(s): 2.1,2.2,6.1,6.2	
Executive Summary: There are no changes to the Terms of Reference as presented to the HR Committee in May 2026 and approved by Regional Board in June 2026.	
Recommendation: It is recommended that the Committee approve the Terms of Reference as presented.	
Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable): The proposal was approved by HR Committee arising from Enhancement Committee Oversight of the Our Colleagues Sub-Strategy Report presented to Committee in May 2026, approved by Regional Board (June 2026)	
Equality Impact Assessment: Positive Impact ☐ Negative Impact ☐	

No Impact



Evidence:

PEOPLE AND CULTURE COMMITTEE		
1.1	Membership	The Committee shall comprise a minimum of five members, one of which shall be appointed as Committee Chair in addition to: The Principal One Staff Member; and One Student Member
1.2	Quorum	No less than one half of the members entitled to vote.
1.3	Remit	General The Committee supports the Board in delivering the Our Colleagues Sub-Strategy by promoting a positive, inclusive, engaged and well-informed workforce, underpinned by effective leadership, fair work practices and strong internal communication. The Committee shall make recommendations and take decisions within its delegated authority, reporting these to the Regional Board, and shall conduct its business in accordance with the Standing Orders. Specific Duties The Committee shall operate at a strategic, governance and assurance level, ensuring alignment between the College's people frameworks, organisational culture and overall performance. The Committee has responsibility for the direction and oversight of people and culture matters arising from the Regional Board's role as employer of the College's staff. The Committee shall: • Provide oversight of the Our Colleagues Sub-Strategy, ensuring it is aligned to the College Strategic Plan. • Oversee workforce engagement insights across the employee lifecycle and ensure learning is acted upon. • Provide oversight and assurance of the College's internal communication approach, ensuring it: ○ Is timely, clear, consistent and accessible ○ Supports strategic objectives and organisational change ○ Enables two-way communication and staff voice • Monitor staff feedback on the effectiveness of internal communication, including: ○ Understanding of strategic priorities ○ Confidence in leadership communication ○ Awareness of change and decision-making • Monitor key people-related performance indicators, trends and risks, ensuring management information is robust, transparent and used to support decision-making. • Oversee strategic workforce planning, ensuring future skills and capacity needs are identified and addressed. • Provide assurance that the College meets its public sector equality duties and promotes equality, diversity and inclusion. • Oversee workforce equality data, trends and improvement actions. Approve or recommend to the Board: ○ Equality Outcomes and associated plans ○ Equal Pay Statements and equality reporting • Seek assurance that Fair Work principles are embedded across policies, practices and culture.

	• Ensure wellbeing is integrated into leadership practice, workforce planning and organisational culture. • Oversee the strategic approach to learning and development, leadership and management development and career pathways and internal progression. • Maintain strategic oversight of the College's employee relations environment. Including implementation of national collective bargaining agreements and operation of local negotiating structures, including LJNC. • Review and approve employment-related policies and frameworks. • Seek assurance that the College complies with employment, equality and health & safety legislation. • Monitor people-related risks within the Corporate Risk Register and escalate concerns to the Board where required.
1.4	Meetings The People and Culture Committee will normally meet three times per year, with additional meetings convened if required.
1.5	Management Support The following member of the Leadership Team provides objective, specialist advice to support the Committee to discharge its remit: • Assistant Principal People Services. • Assistant Principal Planning & Communication

PEOPLE & CULTURE COMMITTEE – PROGRAMME OF BUSINESS AY2026-27

Please note that the Programme of Business will be amended as required to include agenda items that arise throughout the academic year.

23 September 2026
For Decision
Committee Terms of Reference
Programme of Business AY2026/27
Employers Discretionary Policy
For Discussion
Risk Register Review as it applies to People and Culture Committee
Agency Staff Guidance
People Services Management Information (Annual Report)
Employee Engagement & Internal Communications Review
People Services Enhancement Plan AY2026-2028
Our Colleagues Committee Update
Elevating Staff Profile
For Information
National Collective Bargaining Update (verbal)
New MyLearning System presentation (Jill L)

24 February 2027
For Decision
HR Policies Update (if required)
Equal Pay Policy and Statement (Reviewed Annually)
For Discussion
People Services Enhancement Plan (Update)
People Services Equalities Action Plan
Learning Technologies Update
Wellbeing Update
Committee Evaluation
For Information
National Collective Bargaining Update

2 June 2027
For Decision
HR Policies Update (if required)
People Services Equalities Action Plan
NESCoI Equality Reporting
For Discussion
People Services Enhancement Plan – Progress Report
Pension Discretionary Policy (Reviewed Annually)
People and Culture Committee – Review of Terms of Reference
Risk Register Review as it applies to People and Culture Committee
For Information
National Collective Bargaining Update

Red Text Denotes Reserved items

PEOPLE AND CULTURE COMMITTEE	
Meeting of 23 September 2026	
Title: People Services Annual Report – Management Information	
Author: Lindsey Hamilton, Head of HR; Jill Leishman, Learning & Development Manager	Contributor(s): Kimra Donnelly, Assistant Principal People Services
Type of Agenda Item: For Decision ☐ For Discussion ☐ For Information ☒ Reserved Item of Business ☐	
Purpose: To provide the HR Committee with People Services annual management information for the period of January 2025 – December 2025.	
Linked to Core Objective: 4. Building a stronger and more sustainable College	
Linked to Strategic Risk(s): 2.1	
Executive Summary: Appendix 1-The People Services Annual Report provides management information in relation to staff turnover, absence and employee wellbeing & engagement. In 2025, North East Scotland College maintained a stable workforce with an average monthly headcount of 584.08 (496.66FTE), reflecting a very slight increase from the previous year. Staff turnover was 10.3% excluding student interns and 12.5% including them, with resignations, retirements and end-of-contracts being the most common reasons for leaving. Overall staff turn excluding student interns has remained virtually unchanged compared to 2024. Recruitment activity remained strong, with 48 posts advertised and 51 appointments made, demonstrating flexible hiring practices. In 2025 Sickness absence accounted for 5000 working days lost, with long-term absences comprising 3,325 days. The overall absence rate was 3.15%, and the average number of days lost per employee was 8.2, with mental health-related conditions being the leading cause.	

The number of working days lost to long-term sickness absence in 2024 were 2,750 compared with 2,962 in 2023 and 2044 in 2022.

The College continued to prioritise staff wellbeing and engagement through a range of initiatives. The NESCol Minibites programme achieved high awareness and participation, with 90% of respondents attending at least one session and 89% finding them useful. Wellbeing workshops on Imposter Syndrome and Sleep received excellent feedback, and further training was delivered on topics such as suicide prevention and trauma-informed practice.

Occupational Health supported staff through 64 referrals and 180 flu vaccinations.

The Pluxee benefits platform saw strong engagement (52.46%), and the annual Wellbeing Day was a highlight, with a wide range of activities and an average feedback rating of 4.81/5. These efforts reflect the College's ongoing commitment to fostering a healthy, inclusive, and supportive working environment.

We have collaborated with the College HR Network to conduct sector-wide benchmarking of sickness absence rates. But to date no information has been shared from the group working on this.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Committee consider and note the information provided in this report

Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable):

Equality Impact Assessment:

Positive Impact ☐

Negative Impact ☐

No Impact ☒

Evidence: This report is for information only each area reported on will consider the requirement for an EIA.



People Services Annual Report - 2025

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Attracting, Recruiting, Rewarding & Retaining Staff - Management Information
3. Empowering, Engaging & Wellbeing

Please note that the management information in this report relates to the period January - December 2025 unless otherwise stated.

1. Introduction

Previously the People Services Annual report has been aligned to the College's Strategic Plan 2021-2023 along with the subsequent People Services Strategy. Priorities were previously set and measured in line with the College Strategic Plan and People Services Strategy. These are detailed below:

College Strategic Plan 2021-2023

The College Strategic Plan for 2021-23 was focused on five Strategic Themes and their accompanying Strategic Goals:

1. Being Agile and Responsive
2. Empowering People
3. Advancing Partnership Working
4. Delivering Excellence and Innovation
5. Leading Sustainability.

People Strategy 2021-23

Six key themes were identified:

1. Attraction, Recruitment, Reward & Retention
2. Empower & Engage
3. Performance & Development
4. Leadership & Management
5. Equality & Diversity
6. Wellbeing

Moving forward we will be setting and measuring our priorities within this report to align with NESCol's Strategic Plan 2025-2030 as well as the Our Colleagues Sub-Strategy.

NESCol's Strategic Plan 2025 - 2030

NESCol's Strategic Plan for 2025-2030 is focused on the following main five Strategic Themes and accompanying Goals;

1. Delivering Outstanding Education and Learning
2. Building a Better Future with Students
3. Strengthening Our Region's Communities and Economy
4. Building a Stronger and More Sustainable College
5. Striving to Deliver Excellence and Growth

Our Colleagues – Sub Strategy 2025 - 2030

The Key Objectives are to:

1. Attract and retain talent
2. Enhance the employee experience and engagement

3. Support meaningful learning and development
4. Enhance performance and productivity
5. Enhance leadership, communication and culture

2. Attracting, Recruiting, Rewarding, Retaining Staff: Management Information – 2025

Headcount/ Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

Average monthly headcount and FTE was 584.08 (496.66 FTE) in 2025, compared with an average of 564.75 (495.65 FTE) in 2024.

Average Monthly Headcount & FTE – 01 January – 31 December 2025	Head Count	FTE
All Staff	584.08	496.66
Department	Head Count	FTE
Lecturer	314.17	276.35
Professional Services*	267.92	220.71
Campus	Head Count	FTE
Aberdeen City	357.75	303.15
Altens	68.67	66.29
Ellon	N/A	N/A
Fraserburgh	145.83	119.28
Peterhead	10.75	8.3

*Note: Professional staff includes Instructors and on average 20 Student Interns

Please note that the 'all staff' headcount figures and the figures by campus and department do not tally. This is because some staff have 2 posts and are counted twice in the headcount by department and campus (as some staff have both lecturing and professional services posts and work in more than one campus) but are only counted once in the all staff headcount figures.

Snapshot Headcount & FTE figures as at 31 December 2025	Head Count	FTE
All Staff	602	507.60
Department	Head Count	FTE
Lecturer	321	281.48
Professional Services *	277	226.12
Campus	Head Count	FTE
Aberdeen City	369	308.51
Altens	75	72.07
Ellon	N/A	N/A
Fraserburgh	146	118.47
Peterhead	11	8.55

*Note: Professional Services staff includes Instructors and Student Interns

Please note that the 'all staff' headcount figures and the figures by campus and department do not tally. This is because some staff have 2 posts and are counted twice in the headcount by department and campus (as some staff have both lecturing and professional services posts and work in more than one campus) but are only counted once in the all staff headcount figures.

This report has included Student Interns within the headcount and FTE. This could affect figures due to the nature of this role as these are fixed-term contracts with an intake at specific times of the year and depending on the student's course, these contracts may be extended into the following year.

Leavers

Leavers 2025	Headcount	FTE
Total	31	26.67
Lecturer	9	7.7
Professional services	22	18.97

*Note: Professional services staff includes Instructors

**Note: This figure does not include Student Interns. An additional 20 Student Helpdesk Interns left from 01/01/2025 – 31/12/2025 due to their fixed-term contracts ending.

Leavers 2024	Headcount	FTE
Total	58	48.92
Lecturer	30	25.97
Professional services	28	22.95

*Note: Professional services staff includes Instructors

** Note: This figure does not include Student Interns. An additional 15 Student Helpdesk Interns left from 01/01/2024 – 31/12/2024 due to their fixed-term contracts ending.

Number of Leavers by Campus, 2025

Campus	Head Count*	FTE
Aberdeen City	5	5
Altens	16	13.2571
Fraserburgh	10	8.4143
Peterhead	0	0

Number of Leavers by Age, 2024

Age of leaver	Head Count	FTE
<25	1	0.8571
25-34	6	4.7
35-44	5	4.3
45-54	4	3.4571
55-64	7	6.3429
65 & Over	8	7.0143

Number of Leavers by Length of Service, 2024

Length of Service	Head Count	FTE
< 1 Year	7	5.499
1-5 Years	4	3.5
6-10 Years	4	3.3143
11-15 Years	3	2.8
16-20 Years	6	5.414
21-25 Years	1	1
26-30 Years	1	1
31- 39 Years	5	4.1429
40+ Years	0	0

Please note that all FTE figures in this section have been rounded and so may not tally

The Top Reasons for Leaving, 2025

Reason Given	Number of Leavers
Resignation	11
Mutual Agreement	0
End of Contract	5
Retirement	11
Death in Service	1
Dismissal	<5

Turnover

The overall staff turnover, excluding student interns, in 2025 was 10.3%

The total number of leavers in the year divided by the average monthly staff headcount in the year x 100 (rounded to one decimal place) i.e. 58 (leavers excluding student interns)/564.08 (ie average staff headcount minus an average of 20 headcount of student interns) x100 = 10.3%.

The overall staff turnover, including student interns, in 2025, was 12.5%

The total number of leavers in the year, including student interns divided by the average monthly staff headcount in the year x 100 (rounded to one decimal place) i.e. 73 (58 staff leavers plus 15 student intern leavers)/584.08 (ie average staff headcount inc student interns) x100 = 12.5%.

Recruitment Data - Number of Vacancies, Applicants & Appointments

During 2025, 85 posts were advertised and 87 appointments were made.

Post Type	Vacancies Advertised	Appointments Made
Professional services Staff	48	51

Lecturer	37	36
TOTAL	85	87

There is a difference between the number of appointments made and vacancies advertised due to some posts being filled by multiple individuals (e.g. on a job share basis) or using the same advertisement to recruitment for 2 vacancies of the same role.

Campus	Vacancies
Aberdeen City	44
Altens	24
Fraserburgh	14
Peterhead	3
TOTAL	85

Number and Type of Vacancy Filled Internally and Externally

Post Type	Appointments	Internal	Protocol	External
Professional services Staff	51	11	4	36
Lecturer	36	10	4	22
TOTAL	87	21	8	58

Sickness Absence Data

The overall number of working days lost to sickness absence in 2025 were 5,000 compared with 4,628 in 2024, and 4,708 in 2023.

The number of working days lost to long-term sickness absence in 2024 were 4,628 compared with 4,708 in 2023, and 4,379.5 in 2022.

The College's sickness absence rate for 2025 was 3.19%.

Calculation: $\text{number of days lost due to absence} / (\text{headcount} \times \text{number of working days available}) \times 100$
5000

The average number of days lost at the College for 2025 was 8.6.

Calculation: $\text{number of days lost due to absence} / (\text{average headcount including interns})$

Overall Absence (Number of Working Days Lost)	Long Term Absence (Number of Working Days Lost)
5000	3324.5

Absence Type	Number of Days Lost	Number of Employees
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Anxiety/stress/depression/other psychiatric	759	27
Unknown causes / Not specified	715.5	46
Cold, Cough, Flu - Influenza	605	143
Other known causes (nec)	603.8333333	33
Gastrointestinal problems	394.5	97
Injury, fracture	374	19
Benign and malignant tumours, cancers	346	<5
Chest & respiratory problems	225	22
Heart, cardiac & circulatory problems	220.5	<5
Other musculoskeletal problems	180.5	12
Back Problems	173	11
Null (No System Entry)	106	8
Headache / migraine	95	45
Ear, nose, throat (ENT)	64.5	19
Genitourinary & gynaecological disorders	30	8
Blood disorders	27	<5
Pregnancy related disorders	23	3
Dental and oral problems	22	6
Eye problems	18	3
Endocrine / glandular problems	4	<5
Asthma	4	<5
Infectious diseases	4	<5
Burns, poisoning, frostbite, hypothermia	3	<5
Nervous system disorders	3	<5

3. Empowering, Engaging & Wellbeing

In 2025, the People Services team continued to focus on embedding wellbeing for staff through:

Wellbeing Workshops

- With the introduction of the new student records system, NESCol Minibites were scaled back to allow the focus of staff's development to be on this new system. There were, however, opportunities for staff to take part in wellbeing workshops throughout the year.
- Scottish Mental Health First Aid was taken up by newer members of the Student Advice and Support Team and student presidents.
- The Science of Sleep was a popular session delivered online by a sleep expert which well received.
- Staff who could not attend the previous psychological safety training were offered an opportunity to attend a short minibite introducing the topic. This partnered nicely with a two hour, in person workshop on Celebrating Failure facilitated by college coach, Matt Middler.
- Curriculum Managers had a refresher on Wellbeing and Sickness Absence to be able to further professional services staff.
- Financial Wellbeing was also accounted for with two sessions on Finance and Pension advice from local financial planner Laura Pike.

L.I.S.T.E.N Training

The largest project in 2025 was L.I.S.T.E.N Training. Working in partnership with Student Advice and Support, every member of staff was to undertake this mandatory gender-based violence three-hour session. Sessions were held across each campus and online from April to October to ensure all staff had the opportunity for this critical learning. From October this session was embedded in the induction session for new starts to ensure continuity.

Trauma Informed Practice

To tie in with LISTEN training, all staff were invited to mandatory sessions held by College Development Network on Trauma Informed Practice. These took place in Fraserburgh, City and online on Thursday 19th June.

SLT had a bespoke session, which included LISTEN and trauma informed practice.

1:1 Transformational Coaching

Partnership working with our college coach continued in 2025, with 6 staff commencing a programme of six one-hour coaching sessions. This investment supports our belief that people perform at their best when they are at their best.

Ongoing wellbeing initiatives and provisions for staff wellbeing in 2025 are detailed below:

Occupational Health

In 2025, the College recorded the following activity:

- 66 Occupational Health referrals, including:
- 12 workstation assessments
- 10 pregnancy risk assessments
- 205 flu vaccinations were administered across campuses during October

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Care First, the College's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), provided annual usage data for the period 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025.

Usage is shown in the below table:

Employee Assistance Programme

Raw monthly data for benefit usage

	Sept-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25
(not specified)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Call back – attempt 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Call back – attempt 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CF - cCBT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CI/Trauma Response	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clinical Management Team	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CMH Counselling Session	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
In The Moment - Online Counselling	1	1	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
In The Moment - Telephone Counsellor	0	1	1	0	13	0	1	0	0	2	0	0
In The Moment - Telephone Information Specialist	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Structured Counselling - AC Face-To-Face	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Structured Counselling - AC Video	0	0	0	0	3	6	5	2	0	0	0	0
Structured Counselling - DNA Fee Face-To-Face	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Structured Counselling - DNA No Fee Face-To-Face	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Structured Counselling - Menopause Support Session	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Structured Counselling - SP Face-To-Face	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Structured Counselling - SP Video	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Structured Counselling - Telephone	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total:	1	3	4	1	17	6	9	2	0	2	0	0

C1 - Internal Usage - Pluxee

A total of 45 contacts were made to Care First during this time, representing a notable increase of 29 contacts compared to the previous year's report.

Employee Online Benefits Scheme - Pluxee

During this period, we had 336 staff members registered on the site, resulting in an engagement rate of approximately 52.46%, based on the average headcount. This is a strong level of engagement and an increase of 5.77% from the previous year.

Top retailers included Tesco and Currys, indicating that many staff are using the platform to save money on everyday purchases—not just on larger, one-off items. To date, a total of £212,787 has been spent on the site with total savings coming in at £12,548.

Cycle to Work

The College's Cycle to Work Scheme, delivered through Pluxee, continues to be well-received but with 10 less applications than the previous year with only 4 approved. This has resulted in an estimated NI saving of £1050 for the College and £2240 for staff. During this time we increased the threshold for staff purchasing bikes to an allowance of £7000

New Staff Benefits

Smart Pay – Introduced in early 2025 this benefit is accessible through our Pluxee platform. This benefits allows staff to purchase vouchers for selected retailers and spread the cost over several months, paid via their salary with no interest attached. The uptake for this has been good so far with 15 approved applications with a total spend of £7941. This isn't a salary sacrifice scheme so there are no NI savings for staff or the College, just the financial wellbeing benefit.

Refurbished Technology – Also introduced in early 2025. This benefit is also accessed via the Pluxee platform and is available to us through Mobile Advantage. This benefit is a salary sacrifice scheme allowing savings for both staff and the College. Staff can purchase refurbished technology and pay the balance through salary sacrifice. They can also recycle their old devices and receive cashback. There is also the option for current devices to be fixed as well.

This has also been well received with 171 registrations on the site, 30 approved orders to purchase tech, 3 recycled orders and 1 repair order.

To date there is an estimated £10,579.22 in savings for save compared to buying new tech. There is also an estimated 22,963.00 Kg of CO2 emissions saved.

Electric Cars via Knowles Fleet – Introduced in mid 2025 as a salary sacrifice option the initial interest in this benefit was high with a total of 8 cars being delivered to staff from July to December 2025.

Wellbeing Day

Wellbeing Day 2025 took place on Tuesday 24th June. Staff were offered a range of on-the-day activities which included walks, crafting, paddle boarding, pole fitness, goats and golf. Other wellbeing opportunities were available throughout the

two resulting weeks with on-campus activities such as table tennis, lifestyle checks and Andy's Man Club.

A survey was conducted before the end of term to ask colleagues how they feel about Wellbeing Day, and the results were as follows.

154 colleagues responded to the survey with **84%** of respondents taking part in Wellbeing Day.

The most common reasons for not taking part were:

- Still teaching
- Too busy to take part
- No activities of interest available

Colleagues were asked their views on the new layout of the programme, with **69%** of respondents sharing they found it more user-friendly.

Those who took part were asked to rate their activity with the average score being **9.49/10**.

A new addition to the survey was to measure the impact of Wellbeing Day. **81.8%** of respondents shared that Wellbeing Day had a positive impact on their health and happiness. **93.4%** of respondents shared they felt Wellbeing Day is a valuable part of the college offer for staff.

65 colleagues shared ideas for next year's activities, which will give us a fantastic place to start when planning for Wellbeing Day 2026.

There were 81 additional comments including:

"I think Wellbeing Day is a really generous gesture. It is something that I look forward to and appreciate very much. As well as the opportunity to take some time to focus on our own wellbeing, it offers value in the opportunity to try out new pursuits or interests and to meet a cross-section of colleagues, many of whom I would never normally meet in the fulfilment of my daily role at NESCol. I am grateful for the provision of this day of activities, thank you."

PEOPLE AND CULTURE COMMITTEE Meeting of 23 September 2026	
Title: Employee Engagement and Internal Communication	
Author: Paul Smith	Contributor(s):
Type of Agenda Item: For Decision ☐ For Discussion ☒ For Information ☐ Reserved Item of Business ☐	
Purpose: To provide an update to the committee on internal communication and employee engagement activity planned for 2026/27 and to provide an overview of an ongoing review of internal communication, including initial staff survey findings.	
Linked to Core Objective: 5. Striving to deliver excellence and growth	
Linked to Strategic Risk(s): N/A	
Executive Summary: Enhancing internal communication - ensuring clarity of messaging and fostering employee engagement - is a focus for 2026/27. A review is being conducted, informed by staff feedback and sector research, with the aim of identifying areas for improvement and expansion. Objectives within the Our Colleagues sub-strategy are the primary driver. The paper provides further information on each of the core internal communication channels, including current activity and potential developments, as well as a high-level introduction to the staff survey results. A full report on the survey will be collated for a subsequent committee meeting.	
Recommendation: Item for discussion.	

Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable):

Equality Impact Assessment:

Positive Impact ☐

Negative Impact ☐

No Impact ☒

Evidence: Item for discussion rather than decision.

1. Introduction

Internal communication and employee engagement are recognised as key pillars in relation to the delivery of the NESCoI Strategic Plan 2025-30 and specifically objectives within the Our Colleagues sub-strategy.

These objectives include:

- To enhance the employee experience and engagement by fostering a positive, inclusive and motivating work environment. Staff will be encouraged to co-design the workplace community and culture as well as being offered opportunities to actively shape and influence the strategic direction of services.
- To enhance leadership, communication and culture by embedding a values-driven culture of trust through strong leadership and clear, transparent communication which encourages conversation and enables the voices of all employees to be heard. Modelling effective leadership behaviours at every level, being visible and committed to embodying the values outlined in our strategic plan, will provide the foundation for success.

As part of the commitment to enhancing engagement and communication, a review of existing activity and approaches is being undertaken in 2026/27.

A staff survey, issued in August, has been carried out as part of this project and will help inform the direction of travel. Input from the Employee Voice Group, in-person staff events and the Our Colleagues Committee will also be used to shape the recommendations and actions.

Operational responsibility for internal communication sits within the Marketing and Communications team. For employee engagement, responsibility is shared between the Marketing and Communications and People Services team.

The Executive Team and Strategic Leadership Team have strategic responsibilities in relation to staff engagement, internal communication and visible leadership at senior level.

2. Existing channels

Five main channels are utilised for staff communication:

- Staff intranet (COLIN)
- Notes from the Principal's Office (weekly email communication)
- NESCol Staff Bulletin (monthly email communication)
- All-staff email
- In-person activity (all-staff information sessions, Coffee Break Conversations, tailored information sessions, team meetings, one-to-one meetings)

3. Intranet

The staff intranet, COLIN, in its existing form has been in place since 201X. A design refresh was carried out in 202X. The current contract with the platform provider, Interact, is due for renewal in summer 2027. Discussions with the Procurement team are ongoing to consider options.

The Marketing and Communications team, supported by staff from the ITDS team, are currently carrying out a content cleanse. This recognised user dissatisfaction in relation to out of date or hard to find content. The work will provide the foundation for a review of navigation, with the aim of simplifying menus.

In tandem with this, work is also being undertaken to renew images in the staff directory. A longer term project to automate directory updates, linking to HR systems, is also progressing.

4. Notes from the Principal's Office

First introduced in 2020 during the Covid-19 remote working period, the weekly Notes have become a key communication tool. The first-person updates from the Principal are collated for issue each Monday and designed to provide a mix of important sector and College-wide updates alongside less formal updates and news relating to the College and its staff, as well as a mechanism for providing recognition to teams and individuals.

5. NESCol Staff Bulletin

Introduced in 202X, the Bulletin was introduced to provide a standardised approach to information that should be cascaded through the organisation. The current format includes external and internal information, campus updates, staff changes and key dates. Managers are asked to ensure information contained in the Bulletin is disseminated at team level. Developments under consideration include the introduction of more human-interest content and features, and closer alignment of content with sub-strategies.

6. All-staff email

All-staff email groups are currently segmented between staff based in Aberdeen and Fraserburgh, as well as a group for those employed by Protocol. Access to these all-staff groups is restricted to a specified group of individuals (including the Principal and Assistant Principal Planning and Communication) and teams (including ITDS and People Services). Use of all-staff email has been defined as for 'urgent updates, People Services information or corporate communication'. Developments include

the creation of an Altens specific email group to enable better segmentation of email communication.

7. In-person activity

The current programme of corporate all-staff activity includes large scale open staff information sessions, hosted by Executive Team and Strategic Leadership Team members on all campuses around three times per academic year, and smaller scale Coffee Break Conversations. The Coffee Break Conversations, also hosted by ET and SLT members, were introduced in 2025 to provide a less formal opportunity for staff to engage.

The schedule for 2026/27 includes Coffee Break Conversations in September and all-staff information sessions in November and December. Opportunities for development include the use of interactive technology to encourage engagement during sessions.

In addition, People Services invite guest specialists (eg. wellbeing, pension, benefits) to host smaller-scale staff sessions. There is also an expectation at team level that team meetings and regular one-to-one meetings (where applicable) serve as a vehicle for cascading College-level information.

8. Review

A review is being undertaken in 2026/27 with the aim of identifying areas for enhancement in staff engagement and internal communication. Informed by the results of the recent staff survey, the Marketing and Communications team will be tasked with considering each existing communication channel in relation to: user experience; content; effectiveness. Identifying options for improvement in each of those broad categories will shape an action plan. This work is scheduled to be carried out between October and January. Opportunities to consider alternative channels (eg. intranet platform, Mailchimp as email platform) and innovation will also be included in the scope of the review.

9. Staff survey and feedback

A staff survey on internal communication was issued on 10 August and closed on 4 September. There were 105 responses, providing a representative sample to support the review process. Qualitative and quantitative data is being collated and will be the subject of a future Committee update.

Initial sampling shows general satisfaction with existing internal communication channels and activity, exceeding pre-survey expectations, with constructive feedback on potential additions and revisions to content and format.

Survey returns underlined known issues (eg. COLIN search functionality, lack of distinction between Notes and Bulletin content) and also provided interesting insight in relation to engagement (eg. demand for reintroduction of online staff sessions, which ceased post-Covid).

10. Next steps

The Marketing and Communications team, in conjunction with colleagues from People Services and ITDS teams, will carry out the following review actions:

- Ongoing content cleansing of COLIN and navigation review (supported by Interact).
- Collate internal communication survey data and feedback (some cleansing required);
- College-sector research (via CDN networks) and communications industry research on best practice;
- Channel by channel review, building in survey results, research and additional feedback;
- Development of action plan for implementation in 2026/27.

PEOPLE AND CULTURE COMMITTEE	
Meeting of 23 September 2026	
Title: People Services Enhancement Plan 2026-28	
Author: Kimra Donnelly, Assistant Principal People Services	Contributor(s): People Services Teams
Type of Agenda Item: For Decision ☐ For Discussion ☒ For Information ☒ Reserved Item of Business ☐	
Purpose: To enable the Committee to consider and discuss the People Services Enhancement Plan for academic years 2026-27 & 2027-28	
Linked to Core Objective: 1. Delivering outstanding education and training	
Linked to Strategic Risk(s): 2.1	
Executive Summary: Appendix 1 presents the People Services Self-Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP) for 2026-28. The plan has been developed following evaluation of service performance during 2025-26 and identifies the key areas for improvement, innovation and strategic development that will support delivery of the College's Strategic Plan 2025-30 and the Our Colleagues sub-strategy. The action plan provides a structured framework for continuous improvement across all People Services functions, with clear actions, responsibilities and measures of success over the next two academic years. The People Services SEAP reflects both the outstanding priorities carried forward from the previous enhancement cycle and a number of new strategic developments arising from organisational priorities, legislative change and service review activity. The plan places a particular emphasis on data-informed decision making, digital transformation, workforce sustainability, equality and inclusion, employee development and improved engagement with students and stakeholders. The eight priority areas identified for enhancement during 2026-28 are:	

1. Enhancing access to and use of staff data in decision making through improved workforce analytics and Power BI reporting capability.
2. Operational and policy reviews, including Employment Rights Act compliance, key employment policies and development of supporting toolkits.
3. Procurement and implementation of a new HR and Payroll system to modernise processes, improve self-service functionality and strengthen management information.
4. A comprehensive review of recruitment policy and practice to improve attraction, inclusion, candidate experience and workforce planning.
5. Delivery of an annual Learning and Development and Learning Technologies programme aligned to strategic priorities and organisational capability requirements.
6. Progression of People Services equality priorities and mainstreaming of equality considerations across workforce policies and decision-making.
7. Workforce sustainability initiatives focused on wellbeing, engagement, workforce planning, succession planning and talent development.
8. Greater student engagement to ensure the student voice informs appropriate People Services projects and service improvements.

Collectively, these actions are intended to strengthen organisational capability, improve service effectiveness, ensure compliance with emerging legislative requirements, enhance the employee experience and support the College in attracting, developing and retaining a talented, engaged and diverse workforce.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Committee consider and note the information provided in this report.

Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable):

Equality Impact Assessment:

Positive Impact ☒

Negative Impact ☐

No Impact ☒

Evidence: This report is for information only, Each initiative will have an Equality Impact Assessment as require.



SECTION 10: PEOPLE SERVICES ENHANCEMENT PLAN 2026-28

Guidance notes

Action/s to be taken, deadline/s and the individual responsible for taking action should be identified. In identifying the actions, it is important to **ensure that they address an identified area for improvement and are designed to positively impact on service delivery**. The actions should be SMART - specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound – and should seek to address any areas for improvement identified in commentaries

Please reference each Developmental Driver using the following coding:

Area for Improvement (from the self-evaluation) – Reference back to the self-evaluation (AI) above

Strategic Objective (from a College Supporting Strategy) – See each [strategy](#) for reference code (SO)

Re-establishing a previous strength or as a new development – Reference to [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework](#) (e.g. TQEF3)

Corporate Operational Risk – Reference back to the College Risk Register (R)

Equality Outcome – Reference to the [Equality Outcomes](#) and Action Plan (E)

You are required to evaluate progress and update the plan in **February** and **June**. You should give a brief update of progress and evaluate your progress using the RAG status.

RAG Guidance

February Colour the box green if the impact has been achieved or you are on target to achieve the desired impact. Colour the box amber if there is a chance you will not achieve the desired impact by June and colour the box red if you feel there is a significant likelihood of not achieving the desired impact by June.

June Green achieved desired impact, Orange partially achieved desired impact, and Red did not achieve the desired impact.

You can add further areas for development at other times in the year as they arise.

ACTION PLAN

No.	Area for Development (Developmental Driver)	Impact (The intended difference to be made)	Actions to be taken (Describe each activity you will undertake to have the desired impact)	By When & by Whom	Developmental Driver Code (e.g. AI1, E1, R1, SO1.2, TQEF2)
1	Enhance Access to and Use of Staff Data in Decision Making.	Data-driven decision making is essential for People Services, as it impacts every service and employee. People analytics helps clarify, identify, and guide actions across the College to achieve our strategic goals.	1. Establish an API/Connector to and from the College's HR Payroll system to the College's Power BI platform. Directing linked to HR/Payroll System procurement. 2. Identify reporting required and the priorities of these being developed. 3. Actively use Power BI's analytics tools to analyse the data, spot trends and provide the required management information to managers. Including KPIs such as turnover and absence. 4. Develop People Services team members in the use of Power BI and presenting the data in an informative and accessible way.	December 2027 - Assistant Principal People Services; People Services Teams.	AI, SO, R
January 2027 Update & Evaluation:					
May 2027 Update & Evaluation:					
September 2027 Update & Evaluation:					
2	Operational & Policy Reviews	These reviews will focus on three operational areas: Employment Rights Act 2025 Compliance, Sexual Harassment / Grievance, and Health & Attendance. The goal is to ensure that the related policies, procedures, and practices	1. Ensure the College is compliant with the Employments Rights Act 2025. 2. Create an action plan detailing updates, consultation, and approval requirements, implementation and review timeline. 3. Review existing and or develop a legally compliant Sexual Harassment policy.	May 2028 - Assistant Principal People Services; People Services Teams.	AI, SO, R

		are compliant, proactive, and suitable for their intended purpose.	4. Development of the Learning & Development & Learning Technology Frameworks and Policy 5. Complete review of the College's Health and Attendance Policy ensuring it is meeting staff and management requirements, and supports wellbeing and business delivery. 6. Create policy operational toolkits for managers and employees.		
January 2027 Update & Evaluation:					
May 2027 Update & Evaluation:					
September 2027 Update & Evaluation:					
3	HR/Payroll System Procurement and Implementation	A modern, secure and user-centred HR/payroll system is procured and implemented, enabling reliable data, efficient self-service, reduced manual processing and future integration with Power BI.	1. Undertake procurement activity in accordance with College's procurement regulations. 2. Establish a detailed implementation plan including milestones, resources, risks and dependencies. 3. Develop and deliver a comprehensive communication and change-management programme. 4. Deliver training programmes for: • People Services staff • Payroll staff • Managers • Employees. 5. Implement the new system and provide enhanced support during the transition period.	August 2027 - Assistant Principal People Services; People Services Teams.	

			6. Develop a suite of workforce dashboards and management information reports aligned to the "Our Colleagues" sub-strategy priorities. 7. Introduce automated reporting for key workforce indicators including: • Absence • Turnover • Recruitment • Equality monitoring • Workforce demographics		
January 2027 Update & Evaluation:					
May 2027 Update & Evaluation:					
September 2027 Update & Evaluation:					
4	Comprehensive Review of Recruitment Policy and Practices.	The College attracts sufficiently strong and diverse applicant pools, provides a fair and accessible candidate experience, fills vacancies more efficiently and supports internal progression and retention.	1. Establish baseline measures for applications, shortlist conversion, diversity, internal appointments, time to hire, cost to hire, candidate feedback and early turnover. 2. Map the end-to-end process from role approval and job design to onboarding; identify delay, duplication, and inconsistency. 3. Review recruitment, selection and probation policy and practice, including job descriptions, advertising, shortlisting, interview, reasonable adjustments, checks, decision records. 4. Co-design improvements with recruiting managers, recent applicants/new starts, student association and Marketing & Communications. 5. Pilot revised guidance, templates, inclusive recruitment training and candidate	August 2028 - Assistant Principal People Services; People Services Teams.	

			communications in selected services, then evaluate and refine. 6. Implement the approved framework, accompanied by manager development.		
January 2027 Update & Evaluation:					
May 2027 Update & Evaluation:					
September 2027 Update & Evaluation:					
5	Learning and Development & Learning Technologies Annual Programme of Business	Employees have access to learning and development opportunities that support them in their role, help them develop their skills and careers, and ensure the College has the capability required to deliver its strategic priorities.	1. Complete an annual needs analysis drawing on strategic priorities, workforce data, iCon/team objectives, mandatory requirements, employee voice, curriculum/service needs and digital capability evidence. 2. Publish a prioritised annual programme. Align activity with the Learning and Teaching Futures Academy, management and leadership development, digital capability, induction, probation and mandatory learning. 3. Introduce a consistent evaluation model which reports participation, completion, access by employee group, learner confidence, application of learning and impact. 4. Review MyLearning and Learning Technologies usage data each term; target support to low-engagement areas and address accessibility or digital barriers. 5. Provide mid-year and year-end impact reports, with priorities for the following period.	August 2027 - Learning & Development Manager; Learning & Technologies Manager; HR Manager.	
January 2027 Update & Evaluation:					
May 2027 Update & Evaluation:					

September 2027 Update & Evaluation:					
6	Equalities	People Services policies, employment practices and workforce development demonstrably advance the College's Equality Outcomes, reduce identified barriers and provide assurance that equality is mainstreamed in workforce decision making.	1. Map People Services actions to the Equality Outcomes and agreed People Services Equalities Action Plan, with owners, milestones and evidence. 2. Complete Equality Impact Assessments for policy and service changes, and publish or record outcomes through the agreed process. 3. Progress actions arising from gender pay reporting and recruitment review, including female progression and inclusive candidate practice where supported by evidence. 4. Work with Equalities & Wellbeing Group to clarify shared priorities, avoid duplication and evaluate employee/student impact. 5. Create a Menopause Action Plan covering policies, workplace adjustments and training	August 2028 Head of HR; Learning & Development Manager	
January 2027 Update & Evaluation:					
May 2027 Update & Evaluation:					
September 2027 Update & Evaluation:					
7	Sustainability	Staff feel supported, valued and able to develop their careers at NESCol, helping the College attract, retain and develop the workforce needed to deliver its strategic priorities.	1. Strengthen workforce planning, wellbeing, employee engagement, career development, succession planning and inclusion initiatives, using workforce data and employee feedback to evaluate impact and inform continuous improvement. 2. Review and strengthen initiatives that support employee wellbeing, work-life balance and positive workplace culture. 3. Introduction of a flexible work day for Professional Service Staff.	August 2028 People Services Teams	

			4.Promote and support opportunities for staff development, career progression and internal talent development. 5. Work with managers to improve workforce planning and succession planning arrangements, identifying critical roles and future skills requirements.		
January 2027 Update & Evaluation:					
May 2027 Update & Evaluation:					
September 2027 Update & Evaluation:					
8	Student Engagement	Ensure the Student voice informs the projects and priorities undertaken in People Services.	1. Create opportunities to bring the student voice to relevant projects, such as recruitment to student-facing roles, staff development, wellbeing, equality, sustainability and service redesign. 2. Record feedback, decisions and “you said, we did” actions, including where a proposal cannot be progressed and why.	August 2028 Assistant Principal People Services; People Services Teams	
January 2027 Update & Evaluation:					
May 2027 Update & Evaluation:					
September 2027 Update & Evaluation:					

PEOPLE AND CULTURE COMMITTEE	
Meeting of 23 September 2026	
Title: Our Colleagues Committee Update	
Author: Kimra Donnelly, Assistant Principal People Services	Contributor(s):
Type of Agenda Item: For Decision ☐ For Discussion ☐ For Information ☒ Reserved Item of Business ☐	
Purpose: To provide the Committee with an update on the first meeting of the Our Colleagues Committee.	
Linked to Core Objective: 5. Striving to deliver excellence and growth	
Linked to Strategic Risk(s): 2.1 & 2.2	
Executive Summary: The first meeting of the Our Colleagues Committee took place on 1 September 2026. Appendix 1 is for information only and provides details of the discussion topics. The meeting provided an opportunity to establish the Committee's remit and ways of working, with the Terms of Reference agreed subject to minor amendments. Members also considered the proposed approach to measuring progress against the Our Colleagues Sub-Strategy and agreed that a clearer distinction should be made between measurable KPIs and wider projects, with future activity and reporting more directly aligned to the Sub-Strategy key objectives. Discussion focused on employee voice, communication, wellbeing and the use of workforce information to support future decision-making. The Committee agreed that the Employee Voice Group would develop proposals for an action plan, with the Committee responsible for agreeing SMART actions and communicating these back to the Group. Members also provided initial feedback on the People Services Annual Report, the Communications Survey and the Committee's future work programme. HR policies will be included as a standing agenda item, supporting colleague consultation before policies progress through the formal governance process.	

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Committee consider and note the information in this report.

Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable):

Equality Impact Assessment:

Positive Impact ☒

Negative Impact ☐

No Impact ☒

Evidence: This Report is for information only.

OUR COLLEAGUES COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Agenda of the Our Colleagues Committee meeting, to be held
on Tuesday 1st September 2026 at 2:00pm in G10, City Campus

Item		Description	Time Allocation	Lead	Paper
01	2026/27	Welcome and Apologies for Absence	5 mins	Chair	
		Action Log			
02	2026/27	Review of Progress and Update from Action Owner(s)	5 mins	Chair	
		Guest/Showcase			
03	2026/27	My Learning Platform	15 mins	Jill Leishman	
		For Decision			
04	2026/27	Our Colleagues Terms of Reference	5 mins	Kimra Donnelly	X
05	2026/27	KPIs – Proposal for Going Forward	10 mins	Kimra Donnelly/ Paul Smith	X
06	2026/27	Employee Voice Action Plan	15 mins	Lindsey Hamilton	
		For Discussion			
07	2026/27	People Services Annual Report	10 mins	Lindsey Hamilton / Jill Leishman	X
08	2026/27	Communications Survey	5 mins	Paul Smith	
09	2026/27	People Services Enhancement Plan 2024 - 2026	10 mins	Kimra Donnelly	X
10	2026/27	Marketing & Communications Project Overview	15 mins	Paul Smith	X
11	2026/27	Committee Agenda – Standing Items, HR Policies, HR Payroll System	5 mins	Kimra Donnelly & Paul Smith	
		For Information			
12	2026/27	Learning Technologies Update	15 mins	Iain Henderson	X
13	2026/27	Employment Rights Act 2025	5 mins	Kimra Donnelly	X
		Any Other Business			
14	2026/27	Any Other Business Items		Chair	
		Summation of Actions			
	2026/27			Chair	

		Date and Time of Next Meeting			
	2026/27	12 January 2027 at 1400 via Teams		Chair	