

Regional Outcome Agreement 2021-22

1. Introduction

The West College Scotland Corporate Strategy 2019-2025 has four main priorities:

- **Personalisation**
- **Collaboration**
- **Agile and Adaptive**
- **Digital**

In responding to the COVID pandemic, the College has significantly progressed all of our Corporate Strategy priorities, proving to be exceptionally agile and adapting quickly and continually as pandemic conditions changed. We have proactively collaborated with others, developed our digital capacity, our working practices and curriculum delivery and provided a more tailored and personalised learning experience for our students.

Our role is to ensure students leave West College Scotland equipped with the skills and knowledge to compete in the jobs market and to make a full contribution to the wellbeing of their families, their communities, and the economic growth of the country. As well as scope, we also have scale. As one of Scotland's largest regional colleges, with over 20,000 students, around 1,150 staff and a turnover of £71.4 million, ours is a significant organisation in the region and a major employer, uniquely placed to help shape the West Region's educational and skills landscape and contribute to its social and economic development.

The College has received £46.7m to deliver 164,405 credits for academic year 2021-22 and is fully committed to delivering value for money and the very best outcomes for our students and region.

We have been offered the additional allocation of 2,898 credits to deliver 'Skills Boost' provision for over 25-year-old unemployed, at risk of being unemployed or being made redundant through National Transitional Training Fund (NTTF) and 16–24-year-olds funded through Young Persons Guarantee (YPG). We anticipate challenges meeting our Core and ESF credit target and at this point we await further information from SFC for us to determine whether the additional NTTF and YPG credits will be achievable.

COVID has made our role as a College even more critical to ensure that we provide relevant learning opportunities for our students to gain appropriate skills for now and the future and that we contribute to an education-led economic recovery post-COVID in our Region and beyond. Recruitment to August start mainstream courses has been lower than target, in part due to the additional places provided to Universities, availability of employment in sectors such as Hospitality and Care and initiatives providing alternative training, such as Kickstart. A redesigned 'Winter Start' programme tailored to meet the likely skills development needs aims to increase enrolment in year but at this point the actual demand is unknown.

The College will continue to flex and adapt our plans to meet demand where it exists and work closely with our employer and Local Authority partners in planning provision to meet their needs and those of our communities.

We are fully committed to proactively delivering the key sector priorities and outcomes for students - ensuring fair access, particularly for our most disadvantaged students, enabling student success and progression through the highest quality learning, teaching and support. We are an ambitious College, keen to take a leading role in our Region, adapt and innovate. We are committed to our role regionally and nationally in contributing to economic recovery and social renewal and being a responsive and collaborative institution. We believe that our work through 2020-21 and in this session demonstrates this commitment and capability. Our progress and successes in the last two years shows our College's capacity to adapt and respond, with our student needs at the centre.

2. Outcomes for students

2.1 Fair Access and Transitions.

West College Scotland is committed to ensuring that we provide the highest quality of learning opportunities for students from all backgrounds and support them all to flourish, achieve and progress to further study or to employment. The College has continued to work towards the recommendations within the Blueprint for Fairness Report, particularly in supporting students and young people from deprived areas and those with a Care Experienced background.

Deprivation

The West Region has some of the most deprived areas in Scotland and as a College we have always recognised and worked to address the many challenges that our students face in achieving full success. We are acutely aware that communities within our Region have been disproportionately impacted by COVID and post-pandemic recovery will be far more challenging for our deprived communities. The most deprived area in Scotland is now Greenock Town Centre and prior to this, it was Ferguslie in Renfrewshire which remains a seriously deprived community.

As a College, we are experienced in continually adapting learning and support services to better meet our student needs, particularly in relation to building resilience and improving mental health and wellbeing. During 2020-21 this focus was even more critical, and we responded by supporting those in digital poverty to provide vital access to digital equipment to enable learning and providing enhanced student support, particularly for health and wellbeing. In 2021-22 this focus has continued by providing a greater range of IT devices, depending on specific course needs and access to MiFi for those requiring Wi-Fi access at home. Our approach to meeting our student specific needs was recognised in the [Herald Diversity Awards 2021](#) with the College winning the **Diversity in Education Award** and [The Herald Digital Transformation Awards 2021](#) winning the Diversity Category for our work to address digital exclusion.

Following the restricted delivery of Community Learning in 2020-21, this session we can deliver more provision face to face. However, our community recruitment remains low as we continue to work our way out of the pandemic with many local centres remaining closed or working a restricted provision reducing the opportunity for community learners to participate in meaningful

activity. Currently we are operating at 50% of normal capacity for Community Learning and will build this activity back when it is possible to do so.

The Learning Communities team have fostered closer working with Inverclyde Local Authority on community provision and involvement in a review of community learning.

West Dunbartonshire Council are making a significant investment with the Faifley Campus project, the £25 million investment will create a lot of social value opportunities which should be directly targeted at the local area. The College is an active partner in this new venture with Hub West Scotland (hWs). In alignment with national, regional, and local economic strategies, hWS aim to ensure that inclusive growth is embedded within our Community Investment approach.

The College is contributing fully to the implementation and achievements of our Community Planning Partnership goals, including Local Outcome Improvement Plans and COVID Recovery Plans.

The College was successful in securing £60k in a Tackling Child Poverty bid for a 'Learning beyond Lockdown' project, in partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) and Inverclyde Council, to help young parents in poverty have a sustainable route to positive destinations and a route out of poverty. The Project stalled due to COVID lockdown in early 2020 impacting on recruitment and engagement of participants. SFC have now granted an extension to the project. The project will deliver both enabling and preventative approaches 'helping to ensure that young parents in poverty have a sustainable route to positive destinations and a route out of poverty, to support young mothers and fathers in further education, acknowledging the particular support they need and enabling them to build a future for themselves and their families'. In doing so, the project will equip young parents with the skills that enable them to both parent learners, more impactful students; and be better prepared for the world of work.

Care Experienced, Carers and Estranged Students

Each Care Experienced, Estranged, Young Adult Carer and any unpaid Carer student has a named person who welcomes the student to the College, supports with paperwork and funding applications, establishes adjustments that may be necessary and ensures these are communicated sensitively to their lecturers. The Named Person carries out a wellbeing check with the student at 12-week intervals or sooner if there is a concern or if the students are seeking support and learning adaptations. The Named Person also works closely with local authorities and external services.

In 2021-22, the College has recruited an additional Student Wellbeing Officer and a Staff Wellbeing Officer with funding the £402,781 received to support Mental Health in Colleges. The three Student Wellbeing Officers work with our team of Counsellors who support many of our Care Experienced, Estranged and Young Adult Carers and are continuously enhancing their service to encourage other Care Experienced and Young Adult Carers to make use of the service in flexible ways. The College Students' Association also has a Young Adult Carers and Unpaid Carers Officer to support and offer respite opportunities.

West College Scotland is proud to be a Corporate Parent, and whilst it is a great privilege it is also a significant responsibility which we take seriously as a College. We work closely with all many partners across the region. We have continued our work with Action for Children executing an SFC funded project STAY providing support to learners who have been part of the care system, providing the wrap around services to enable them to be supported fully during their study. The

College is also working closely with Who Cares? Scotland and the delivery of The Promise Plan 21-21 (#KeepThePromise), where we will create local promises from our teaching and support teams to help enhance the route map for a Care Experienced student and provide direction during and after study.

The College was successful in 2020-21 in achieving the Carers Trust Going Further Student Carers Recognition Award and Driving Change Project in FE to:

- identify, support and report on student carers, and recognise good practice
- improve the support that young adult carers receive in further education
- receive tailored one-to-one support to review their provision for young adult carers
- Implement actions that will enable our young adult carers to achieve better

Working with The Carers Trust and Driving change in FE project, we will improve access to College courses for Carers, ensure wellbeing and support services are accessible as and when needed, improve retention and attainment, enhance understanding of being a Carer and make positive adjustments to practice that benefit carers, establish a support network within the College and in partnership with local services for carers and celebrate success.

We have seen a significant increase in students declaring that they are a vulnerable group student year on year. In 2020-21, over 5,000 students declared a disability, an increase of 300 students. Over a hundred more students reported a mental health condition, bringing this total to almost 1,800. We welcome the additional funding to support these students, but the complexity of issues and annual increases puts considerable pressure on our Student Services team and lecturing staff in providing the continued support as set out by national agenda programmes.

Digital Access

During and through the Covid-19 pandemic, the College has provided over 2,500 loan digital devices to enable students to access and engage with new blended models of learning and assessment. These devices support students' off-campus learning with online classes now being part of the students' normal timetable, as well as learning when on campus. The online learning provides student access to recorded class sessions for those who cannot attend scheduled classes or to replay later to reinforce learning. The College provides functionality which supports the student learning experience, including Office 365 and Microsoft Teams, OneNote, Moodle, and PowerPoint together, with the ability to download the required subject Apps from the Apps Store and work in tandem with the College Student Portal 'MyDay'.

The Scottish Funding Council has provided the College with funding to support digital learning in 2021-22. This has allowed the College to procure a further 2,900 devices comprising Windows laptops, Google Chromebooks, Android tablets and Apple MacBooks. In addition, a range of peripherals, including Mi-Fi units, have been made available to support digital connectivity.

Through the work of our Digital Strategy Group, we identified that equipping students with a device wasn't our only priority. We were acutely aware of the need for a support service to aid students in their digital engagement. In response to this, we continue to offer Microsoft Teams training sessions for students, parents and guardians. Staff support in building the digital capabilities of the students has been supported by way of 108 training digital training sessions covering 18 digital threads. The creation of our Staff Digital Virtual Hub in September 2021 now

provides a one-stop-shop portal to all digital developments and required support for staff. Our bespoke Student TechTeam Helpdesk provide on-campus and remote access support for students. This service, run by our HN Computing students as paid work-placements, has enabled the successful distribution of devices and the wrap around support services needed for student engagement in digital learning.

In addition to this, basic training and support is provided for operating and navigating through the College digital platform in use - Microsoft Teams. As an extension to further support digital skills, we are building on the use of the Jisc Digital Capability Tool with our students. This means of digital self-assessment has enabled our students to benchmark where their strengths and areas for development lie. This programme has in-built signposting to free digital upskilling packages to encourage independent learning and skills development. Additionally, work has commenced on an assessment of need and systems required to support blended learning which would facilitate a combination of 'at home', 'near home' or on-campus learning simultaneously.

The 'Connecting Scotland' Funds of 350 MiFi and 310 Chromebooks totalling £240,006 have enabled us to provide more digital devices and Wi-Fi access for students supporting those identified families with children, care leavers and our vulnerable students and digitally disadvantaged unemployed students aged 16+.

Health and Wellbeing

The College has Health and Wellbeing Strategies for both Employees and Students the same themes under 'PROSPER' – Promote, Respond, Observe, Support, Practice, Educate and Review. [Staff Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#), [Student Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

The College won the 'Health Promoting College' award in the CDN Awards 2020, recognising our work in supporting Health and Wellbeing for both students and staff, particularly during the pandemic. Our Strategies and our connected Healthy Working Lives approach enabled us to respond well to the challenges faced through the COVID pandemic and to proactively support staff and students and this continues in 2021-22, with particular focus on:

- Development of the CALM curriculum – a safety valve mindfulness tool for staff and students
- Grow our connection with external agents
- Working collaboratively in ensuring or students receive support out of hours
- Improving the physical health of both staff and students through a developed programme of activity
- Feeding mental health preservation by providing free access to healthy breakfast and lunches for students
- Creation of wellbeing spaces both externally and internally across our College to provide dedicated spaces to take a break, recharge, and refresh

The PROSPER framework is at the core of everything that we do as a College and we are confident that we have a sustainable and strategic approach which recognises different dimensions of health promotion. Our Health & Wellbeing programme throughout this academic year has seen a calendar of valuable support, development, and community activity.

The College continues to experience an increase in students declaring a mental health condition. The College is acutely aware of the impact COVID has had, and continues to have, on our student

mental health this session. The College has in place a team of Counsellors working across the campuses and welcomed the addition funding in 2020-21 to increase this team and better meet demand, with new members recruited post lockdown and immediately equipped to engage with students remotely. The SFC funding of £122,000 for 2021-22 allows us to continue to support our students during this very difficult period.

The College has invested in the training of Mental Health First Aiders across our teaching and support teams, and this enables staff to better understand the mental health related issues faced by both students and staff and complements our Counsellor team. The College uses SilverCloud Online Computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (cCBT) Resource, an online mental health support platform covering support tools dealing with, COVID, anxiety, body image and resilience. We have continued to deliver more staff CPD to help with their own mental health and wellbeing and to better support our students.

In 2020-21 the College introduced the C.A.L.M Mindfulness tool, developed by one of our teaching team. This is a tool to help students and staff cope with the demands of online learning/teaching or any anxiety about being within the College environment. A “Mindfulness safety valve” to release pressure in a healthy, controlled manner is achievable using C.A.L.M. The technique can be used at the start, during or at the end of a lesson. The College will further develop this activity and will run internal development programmes on a train the trainer programme to enable the longevity of our invested time in this product.

Articulation and Transitions

The College is committed to enabling students to progress their learning and to shortening the student journey by improving articulation to university.

The University of the West of Scotland remains the College’s largest articulation partner by volume, but relations with Glasgow Caledonian University continue to strengthen, resulting in an increase of Guaranteed Places and application rates across our programmes in Business, Tourism, Social Science and Sport. With two new degree routes created the pathway opportunities for our students into GCU continue to broaden. The College is now using data from the Articulation Dashboard to promote pathways to staff and students and is working with the senior team at UWS to explore closer partnership working opportunities.

In addition to working on articulation pathways, the College has maintained a very positive relationship with SWAP West, delivering programmes in Social Sciences, Science and Access to Primary Education, enabling mature students from deprived areas to access University. The College was the first in 2019-20 to deliver the January start Access to Nursing, and whilst challenging, particularly with COVID, the students successfully progressed to University.

The College has continued to support student transitions and progression between institutions and between courses. After a review of 2021-22 recruitment, a new approach is being piloted for our Winter Start courses using a centralised management of the process and alternative methods whereby applicant can apply for a cluster of courses and be placed on the most relevant course to suit their skills and needs. The aim is to simplify the application process for the applicants, as well as improving conversion to enrolment. The Winter Start programme includes an extended Transitions 2 College course on every campus designed to develop core skills and provide a range

of taster vocational activity to enable students to make informed choices for progression and improve pathways.

The Learner Development Sector has supported transitions with all their students successfully completing and progressing onto other Learner Development courses or gaining places on mainstream courses. A new internal partnership approach has been adopted whereby Learner Development staff jointly interview with vocational staff for SCQF4 courses to ensure students are placed on the most appropriate course and provision can be more personalised to student needs.

School College Partnership

The College places real value the School College partnership work with all our Local Authority partners to provide vocational opportunities, skills development, and pathways for young people. In the past we provided opportunities for almost 4,000 pupils each year but there was a 60% reduction in the number of school pupils engaging with the College in 2020-21 due to the pandemic restrictions and changes to SFC funding criteria for pupils below Senior Phase for STEM activities. While numbers overall were down, there was an increase in credit activity for Senior Phase pupils undertaking vocational qualifications and an increase in Foundation Apprenticeships.

College School College Partnership course enrolment in 2021-22 has increased slightly from last year by 3%. This has been accompanied by a decrease in withdrawals of 47% at the same point this session. Engagement and attendance have improved in most programmes compared to the previous year and we believe this is due to the fact that the majority of programmes are now being delivered on campus rather than online. Where it is appropriate to the learning activity, online learning remains in place.

Recruitment onto Foundation Apprenticeship programmes in this session has decreased by 17%, accompanied by a decrease in withdrawals at the same point this session.

It is anticipated that the new DYW Coordinator roles will play a significant role in supporting those school pupils most at risk of not reaching a sustained positive destination. It is envisaged that these roles will work closely with the DYW Regional Group and be able to introduce more employer offers into the school and we have plans to engage and work closely with the Coordinators once fully recruited.

As a regional College we are actively promoting post-school progression opportunities via the School College Programme where pupils get the opportunity during their course to speak with lecturers and other students regarding progression pathways. The West Partnership has a dedicated member of staff, Foundation Apprenticeship School Engagement Coordinator working with all the schools in the West Region partnership promoting FAs. Our marketing material and course specifications outline articulation routes. The Student Advisory Service, SDS Careers Advisor and Sector staff also take part in post-school progression giving information and advice.

2.2 High quality learning, teaching and support

The College is committed to ensuring the highest quality of learning experience for students and to enable them to engage, achieve and progress and a safe, supportive environment.

Staff continue to build on the experiences of adapting classroom-based learning into interactive online learning providing a blended approach for delivery. A survey of new and continuing students at the start of the session showed 89% of new students looking forward to undertaking part of their course online but only 64% of returning students were. Returning students found learning online last session convenient but had found it difficult to interact with their peers,

struggled with the lack of routine and working in an inappropriate learning environment. Many of the students last session completed almost their entire course online. This session however, changes to COVID restrictions have enabled a tailored approach to better suit student needs and curriculum delivery with a more appropriate mix of on and off campus learning.

Through ongoing staff development, the College continues to improve the delivery of remote online learning this session. We have also significantly increased the number of lecturers provided with the opportunity to complete their TQFE qualifications in 2021-22.

Students were prepared for their 2021-22 learning through a specific induction programme, including information on student support services, COVID measures and training in the use of Microsoft Teams through the 'Developing Confidence to Learn Online' unit.

Student Advisory Services, our libraries and Enabling Services have all adapted their practice to provide online access and continued support to students. Through digital means, Enabling Services are now able to support a student on any campus and flex their staffing to ensure equity in student access to support, no matter where staff are based. This has helped our efficiencies and response times to students. Demand for this service continues to grow however and staffing levels are under review to ensure our students receive the support they need.

2.3 Student Participation and Engagement in their educational experience

The College works in partnership with the Students' Association to support and develop the student voice across all areas of curriculum and Support Services. During the pandemic this partnership working has been even more critical, and we work effectively together to plan and coordinate important messages to students about COVID, learning arrangements and support student wellbeing. The College worked with the Student Association to adapt the Student Behaviours Framework in response to COVID and to promote the health and safety measures for students on campus and the Student President continues to be a key member of the 'Mobilisation Group' to address COVID safe operations.

In 2020-21, we had improved participation rates in the end of session Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey. Whilst unsurprisingly satisfaction rates were generally not as high as previous years due to the COVID disruption to the learning experience, there were the same positive response rates to the question about student suggestions being taken seriously and an increase in the percentage believing that all students are treated equally and fairly by staff. As a College we are proactive in gathering and responding to student feedback. We have a dedicated Stakeholder Experience Team with Student Feedback Assistants and have invested in an additional staff post to work with the Student Association.

The in early student experience survey at the start of 2021-22, 99% of new students reported a positive experience with West College Scotland so far.

2.4 Learning with impact

Our major priority is to provide a curriculum which meets employer needs, supports the economic growth of our Region, and provides our students with appropriate qualifications and skills to build successful long-term careers.

The College has significantly increased the work experience elements in courses over the last few years and works closely with employers to provide students either with placements or live project working. In addition, students benefit from simulated work-experience within the College, particularly in Hospitality, Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy. In these areas, our facilities were

forced to close due to COVID restrictions and students were not able to undertake the breadth of work-experience. However, areas are now reopening with appropriate additional safety measures to provide critical work experience opportunities. For example, with £25,000 from the Savoy Educational Trust, the College has purchased specialist video equipment to facilitate and stream live practical demonstrations in our professional cookery kitchens, to allow students to watch at home or view from a socially distanced environment within the College.

As a College, we have recognised the critical digital skills needed for both learning and future employment and developed a 'Developing the Confidence to Learn Online' unit which was provided for all 2021-22 students prior to them starting their courses to develop skills for collaborating, learning, and working online. Unlike last year, the COVID situation at the start of this session allowed us to bring students onto campus to better prepare and equip them for the online learning parts of the course.

During the initial lockdown period in 2019-20, we scaled up our online learning curriculum and the associated staff team to respond to and support the significantly increased demand, particularly from those in the Care sector. Our learning materials to support upskilling for those working in Care, with children or to support mental health proved to be very relevant to meet the needs of online learners at that time and we continue to have high demand this session. The Team also are providing support for mainstream students undertaking additional online options to improve their employability skills and chances of gaining employment.

Our training for employers has been adapted to online and blended provision and we have developed packages of learning to meet key upskilling requirements. Our work with Renfrewshire Council in providing 'Your Employability Skills' provision was recognised in the CDN 2020 Awards by winning the Essential Skills category and shortlisted in the Herald Diversity Awards.

2.5 Public Health Emergency

From the initial planning for session 2020-21, in response to COVID the College adopted three Key Principles:

- To have the **fewest** possible people on a campus at any one time.
- To ensure the **safest** possible environment for those on any campus
- To ensure the **best** possible learning and working experience for students and staff.

These principles guided our College operations and ensured that we had very restricted campus activity from the start of 2020-21, with most staff working off campus and student classes delivered online. In 2021-22, our first principle has been amended and the others two remain, with a changed priority order to reflect the College focus:

- To ensure the **best** possible learning and working experience for students and staff.
- To ensure the **safest** possible environment for those on any campus.
- To ensure that any campus attendance either **enables or enhances** learning and work for students and staff.

The West Region communities have been disproportionately impacted by COVID due to the high levels of deprivation in Inverclyde, Renfrewshire, and West Dunbartonshire. In the initial part of the pandemic, Inverclyde was the 'COVID capital of Scotland' and the West Region has continued to have high levels of cases, however the College has had no related cases where transmission relates to being on Campus. Any related cases which we have identified appear to be attributable to students car sharing or to off campus social activities. The enforcement of mask wearing, appropriate social distancing, hand hygiene, sanitisation cleaning and adequate ventilation are our key control measures.

The College has implemented rigorous health and safety measures on all campuses and monitor and address our COVID response through a weekly Mobilisation Group, including student and Union participation, reporting into a COVID Executive Group. The health and safety of our staff and students is prioritised and ensured through the collaborative approaches of the Mobilisation Group and with regular communication to staff and students. The College continues to comply with and exceed Government Guidance at all times and has adjusted activities in response to changes in local and national restrictions. The College has provided vaccination opportunities on all campuses in 2021-22 and distributes lateral flow testing kits.

After extensive consultation, new staff Hybrid Working guidance was launched at the start of 2021-22 to support new ways of working, capitalising on the benefits the pandemic has brought and empowering staff, where possible, to take ownership and make the right decision for the College, their students, customers, and themselves about how and where they work from each day. It is intended that this will allow staff to work in a way which achieves maximum productivity but ensures that students remain at the core of our work.

2.6 Equalities and inclusion.

The College has published our [Equality Outcomes 2021-23](#) which aim to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on staff and students who share protected characteristics. We anticipate that our Equality Outcomes will be iterative, and emerging data will drive how we proceed. While we are committed to doing everything possible to achieve our Outcomes, we are also conscious of the impact of the current challenging economic environment, with volatility in funding. We will aim to make the maximum possible use of our resources to drive our ambitions in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

The College has continued to support students with disabilities, including remote support for our deaf students. Caption.ed (<https://talk-type.com/captioned/>) was implemented in 2020-21. This provides a means of supporting those with Specific Learning Difficulties, not only BSL and will provide invaluable support for those who struggle with the written word as a form of communication.

3. Outcomes for Economic Recovery and Social Renewal

3.1 Responsive Institutions.

The College is focused on responding to employer needs and to prioritising the current and future skills requirements of our Region. A new College Curriculum Strategy was published at the start of 2021-22 to make the direction of curriculum change explicit in response to student, employer, and regional needs, capitalising on the changes through COVID and to ensure that the College curriculum is best placed to provide the required learning and skills development opportunities. The Strategy is 2021-26 and an action plan for 2021-22 includes a revised course approvals process including a schedule of reapproval to ensure consistency in course design, with explicit pathways, work integrated learning and the development of core and Meta Skills. The Action Plan prioritises the work to make our courses more flexible, respond to growth opportunities and discontinue or revise provision. We are working to grow apprenticeship delivery and standardise the learning approaches and management of SCQF4 provision across the College. Whilst we continue to develop a cross-campus approach to curriculum development and delivery, the Strategy also recognises the requirement to differentiate our curriculum to meet specific local needs. In meeting the aims of the Strategy, we will require to adapt resources including accommodation and staffing.

Senior staff have been participating in Local Authority economic development forums and economic recovery planning. Prior to the College Curriculum Planning and Review process in the autumn, specific development sessions were held with Heads and Curriculum & Quality Leaders to consider the labour market information and Regional Skills Assessments for our region and discuss the impact on our College and how we should respond to contribute to economic recovery. In a response to COVID and labour market information, we have adjusted our curriculum far more rapidly to respond to demand from students and employers and to take advantage of any additional funding opportunities available. We have increased our Construction offering, including adapting some accommodation to facilitate the increased numbers. We have met the increased demand for Engineering Apprentices for companies including BAE, Babcock, Fergusons and Dyodes. We have however reduced demand in areas where employment has been particularly impacted by COVID, such as in Travel and Tourism, as well as sectors where employment is currently available for those with few qualifications such as Hospitality and Care.

The College continues to engage with local Community Planning partners and regional stakeholders in curriculum planning. We are an active and key contributor to economic recovery discussions with West Dunbartonshire Delivery and Improvement Group, Inverclyde Alliance Board, East Renfrewshire Local Employability Group and Renfrewshire Economic Leadership Panel as well as the Glasgow City Deal Skills group; supporting integrated economic recovery planning and ensuring skills alignment with a Covid-19 focus and economic recovery response. From this, a range of interventions and partnerships have been developed, including measures to address digital equity, tackle poverty and respond to the needs of our local and regional economy.

The College is at the heart of skills development in our local area. We have been successful in three bids for Community Renewal funds totalling £820,000. This will provide a Care Academy in West Dunbartonshire and another one in Inverclyde. It will also fund a Blue Economy initiative for the College in partnership with Inverclyde Trust, Verdancy Group, Travel Tech for Scotland, Inverclyde Chamber of Commerce and University of the West of Scotland to transform Inverclyde's marine economy through equipping local people with the skills to enter marine and tourism jobs, build the digital capability of local tourism businesses, support marine businesses collaborate to develop circular economies and help local people create new enterprises.

In addition, the College will receive over £100,000 to from Renfrewshire Community Grants to support a Chef and Hospitality school and employability delivery.

The College involvement in delivering the Tackling Child Poverty 'Learning beyond Lockdown' project will enable young parents (under 25) of school age children, to develop their Essential, Digital and Communication literacy skills, equipping young parents with skills that enable them to be both parent learners, more impactful students; and better prepared for the world of work.

The College is committed to ensuring we respond to meet the growing upskilling and re-skilling needs of individuals within our Region with appropriate provision and pathways. We have amended the 'Winter Start' January and February programme and offered increased November Start courses. We are working closely with the Local Authorities to offer appropriate up-skilling courses and provision suitable for school winter leavers.

Flexible Workforce Development Fund

Our Flexible Workforce Development Funded (FWDF) provision continues to grow and respond to market and economic recovery requirements particularly in the areas of Digital,

Management, Leadership, Health and Safety, and Wellbeing. In Year 4 (20-21) an increase in funds to support SMEs allowed us to increase our already substantial relationships to include over 60 small and medium sized enterprises in the West Region. In Year 5 (21-22) SFC has maintained our FWDF allocation at ~£1.2m reflecting our success in business engagement, company training analysis and delivery of key upskilling requirements and associated qualifications. We continue to work closely with our local Chambers of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses, SDS and CPP partners to maximise the impact and range of organisations being supported. Responding to individual and organisational changing needs, our FWDF upskilling and reskilling training is offered on a face to face, blended, and fully online basis.

3.2 Confident and Highly Capable Work-ready students

Undoubtedly, the employment situation for our students leaving courses will be impacted by COVID. At this time, staff are working to support our students' employability skill development, continue to work closely with employers and adapt provision where required to provide the best opportunities for our students to be prepared to enter employment. All of our courses are designed to develop employability skills and we have a clear focus on core and Meta Skills.

The College works in partnership with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to provide students with access to careers advice and other services. SDS Careers provide support in relation to career management skills. This service has remained active throughout the pandemic and continues to grow from strength to strength. We also advertise courses directly with SDS when we are recruiting and through the relationship developed, they contact us with particular enquires re guidance for individuals. We are working on the reintroduction of "My world of work" online support systems. SDS are working closely with teaching teams across the College to develop online sessions with the group working through skills profiling, practical approaches to career management skills and CV Building and preparing for interviews. This has been an advantageous partnership which is both beneficial to the staff and students.

Despite COVID restrictions, we have work-integrated learning in all courses and develop employment related Meta skills to enable our students to flourish in current or future employment. In the 2020-21 student survey, despite serious limitations on work-experience, 85% of our students reported that their courses had allowed them to develop the knowledge and skills for the workplace. Students in Health and Social Care who were unable to complete the mandatory placements required for their courses last session are being supported to do so in 2021-22. We are also ensuring any skills development restricted last session is addressed this session for progressing students to ensure they have the competence and confidence to enter the workplace. In 2021-22, in partnership with the company SAS, we will be providing some students with the opportunity to develop relevant data literacy and data analytics skills.

SFC published the College Leaver Destination report for session 2018-19 in November 2020 reporting on student destinations 3-6 months after finishing a course. Individuals who are in work, training or further study are counted as having a positive destination. The confirmed positive destinations for the West College Scotland students leaving session 2018-19 was 94%, a small decrease of 1% and just 1% below the Sector average. The employment situation for those who completed courses last session and in 2021-22 may be difficult but the College is focusing strongly on employability skills for our students and in using our 'Your Essential Skills' portal and guidance time to help students reflect on and recognise the development of their skills, including those gained by managing their studies during the COVID disrupted period.

The College has signed up as a Young Persons Guarantee Employer and are employing MAs in Science and Engineering Technical Support and taking on nine Kickstart posts in Administration, Hospitality, Creative Digital and as a Videographer. In addition, we are providing placements in Marketing for Foundation Apprentices, as well as the paid Student Placements in IT for Computing students to run the IT Student Helpdesk and work in the College IT Team

3.3 Knowledge Exchange and Innovation

West College Scotland continues to be a leader in the college sector in its approach to knowledge exchange and innovation particularly in its offer to employers and in recognising the need for our staff and students to be resilient and agile in order to support Scotland's economic recovery.

Innovation - Supporting Place and Industry

The College is currently working closely with Renfrewshire Council and other regional stakeholders in supporting the Advancing Manufacturing Innovation District (AMIDS) to be an internationally recognised location for innovation, research and advanced manufacturing. At the heart of AMIDS is the National Manufacturing Institute for Scotland (NMIS) which will support the transformation of Scotland's manufacturing industry in terms of innovation and digital opportunities, creating sustainable, high-value and highly skilled jobs. The College is also delivering Engineer Apprenticeships for the Advanced Forming Research Centre (AFRC) in partnership with the University of Strathclyde.

Our Critical Engineer project with a multi-funding package of almost £1m has allowed the College to create our regional skills hub giving SMEs access to the latest training in Manufacturing 4.0 technologies through a combination of online, College and work-based learning, expert support and innovation partnerships. In 21-22, we plan to install state-of-the-art Manufacturing 4.0 equipment at our Paisley campus and create an associated bespoke online learning platform and learning content. All of this will facilitate industry and education knowledge exchange between the College and Renfrewshire SMEs as part of a coherent and integrated package of support. Supporting this, West College Scotland and other educational partners are planning to work with UK design experts to collaborate and design 4 courses for local, regional and national organisations covering: 1) An Introduction to Meta Skills; 2) Applying Critical Thinking in the Workplace; 3) Using Creativity for Business Solutions and 4) Creating an Innovation Culture within your Business. We fully anticipate having the content, course framework, learning tools and platforms to offer these courses to our respective regional businesses in place by the start of 2022.

Innovation – Supporting Skills

Harnessing the innovation potential of employees depends on both Fair Work and the employers' ability to be innovative in how the workplace and work practices are designed. In the current economic situation, digital and management skills have become an even greater challenge for many organisations, and a lack of skills in these areas is recognised as a key barrier in the ability of some Scottish businesses to realise their full productivity.

To ensure businesses have the ability to maximise their potential to sustain and innovate, we continue to grow our number of online and blended Microcredential training packages which focus on developing vocational specific digital skills, lean management, leadership, team working, and enhancing productivity. As one of the country's largest providers of training through the Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF), West College Scotland is supporting the upskilling and reskilling of employees from across various parts of the Region including

private, public and third sector organisations. Building on previous years, we continue to nurture current and new client relationships and develop new products and services directly informed by business demand.

Innovation – Supporting People

To support workforce development, our Learning Technology team continues to develop and enhance CoLT, the Centre of Learning Technologies, our bespoke online hub which aggregates all interactive online learning, teaching and assessment tools in one place and supports people through tutorials and examples to easily create engaging and enriching interactive content to provide high quality teaching and learning assessment experiences for students and staff.

This resource provides key digital skills enhancement for both our staff and students supporting them on their digital journey. Several new products have been developed for students both in employment and those who are hoping to enter industry to ensure they have the requisite digital skills to sustain themselves through their training and qualification and ultimately in the workforce.

Given the shift in digital skill requirements, we recognised that a significant number of people would need baseline skills to be able to undertake training and skills development whether provided remotely, blended or online. A multifaceted resource was developed to help build confidence to learn online, provide the tools and skills to engage, support health and wellbeing and maximised connectivity with others. We not only provided this to people undertaking skills and qualifications but also offered it to parents, carers and families who may also require these skills themselves or to support others. In showcasing this product and its potential reach and impact, the College has had significant interest from our community and local authority partners in how we can provide further access to people who need this most and for whom it may be a barrier to work, education, services, and ultimately inclusive economic growth within the Region.

3.3. Collaboration

West College Scotland senior staff are very active externally, working collaboratively with other Colleges, with Awarding Bodies, SDS and Local Authorities in addressing the COVID challenges and response to the pandemic. The current emergency has improved the collaborative working of the College sector nationally and joint working has been instrumental in successfully meeting many of the recent challenges, particularly in relation to quality and health and safety. College teaching staff have benefited from collaborative working at curriculum level with other Colleges and through networks, including CDN, to share development work and approaches to adjusting the curriculum and enabling interactive online learning.

We work collaboratively in Community Planning Partnerships, with educational establishments, CLD, a range of Sector Skills agencies and with employers. A new partnership is developing this session with the NHS Academy and the Golden Jubilee Hospital. The College will be at the heart of the NHS upskilling plans.

3.4 Climate Emergency

The College is responding to the climate emergency in several ways including:

- Development of a College Sustainability Strategy which encompasses all aspects of College operations and is based upon the [Climate Action Roadmap for FE Colleges](#).

- Use of sustainability webpage to keep the wider college community updated on actions they can take to alleviate the impacts of climate change, as well as the work that the College is doing in this area.
- The 2016-21 Carbon Management Plan (CMP) was due to be updated at the end of 2021 but has been delayed as we consider the impact of the global pandemic on the use of facilities. The 2016-21 CMP had a stated aim of a 10% reduction over the course of the plan which was equivalent to 530 tonnes of CO₂. The latest reporting period to 31 July 2021 shows that the College has reduced its carbon emissions by 2,241 tonnes (42%). An element of this reduction is due to the closure of the College campuses as part of the response to the global pandemic. In the last full year of operations (2018-19) the College had reduced its emissions by 1,024 tonnes (19%) which is almost double the intended target. The College intends to build upon this solid baseline position through the implementation of the Sustainability Strategy and updated Carbon Management Plan.

The College has, during the past 12 months:

- Refined its consolidated waste contract with almost all waste materials being recycled
- Removed the use of single use plastic bottles and aiming to remove completely the purchase of single use plastic containers and cutlery by the end of 2022
- Transferred staff connectivity to Microsoft Teams thereby significantly reducing the need for staff to travel between campuses.
- Started the review of printing across the College with the aim being to reduce the number of printers thereby, reducing electricity and paper consumption.
- Despite the global pandemic, continued to deliver online training to staff on how they can reduce their carbon footprint.

The objective in the coming year is to ensure that the lessons learned/good practices implemented during the global pandemic are built upon. One of the more significant areas of investment which will be undertaken this year is the replacement of windows across several floors of the Finnart Street campus. It is intended that this will prolong the life of the building and reduce heat loss thereby reducing the consumption of gas for heating. The College is also replacing the roof at its Renfrew Road campus which will decrease heat lost through the roof.

The College continues to be a Sector Leader in delivering training in green energy, including training for Electric Vehicle charging, Heat Pumps and Smart Controls. We purchased electric and hybrid vehicles last session to provide training in 2021-22, and in other areas of provision, have bought in boilers that can operate on a mix of natural gas and hydrogen to support sector transition to fuel sources with reduced carbon emissions. We are currently developing Hydrogen Fuel Cell technician courses to meet other aspects of a hydrogen economy. With investment in facilities to train for in-roof solar panel installation, the College is one of nine new Renewable and Energy Efficient Training Centres as launched by Michael Matheson, Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport in June, supported by ESP and funded by SP Energy Networks' £20 million Green Economy Fund. The College has received an upgrade to our Renewable Training Centre facility, as well as the creation of a centre of excellence for insulation, one of only four in the country.

The College aims to further develop its training facilities to ensure we are the key institution for employers to support their Green Economy and Net Zero training needs.

College Outcome Agreement Impact Framework: Supporting Data

Measure	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
A Credits Delivered (Core)	166,520	159,174	159,039	160,376	157,853	155,288	152,263	157,323
Credits Delivered (ESF)	0	7,086	7,094	7,103	6,673	9,308	7,442	5,638
Credits Delivered (Core + ESF)	166,520	166,260	166,133	167,479	164,526	164,596	159,705	162,961
B Volume of Credits Delivered to 10% most deprived postcode areas	46,369	45,832	45,261	41,664	41,227	41,357	39,294	40,740
Proportion of Credits delivered to 10% most deprived postcode areas	27.8%	27.6%	27.2%	24.9%	25.1%	25.1%	24.6%	25.0%
C Volume of credits delivered to care-experienced learners	870	3,788	3,119	2,463	8,277	13,822	11,953	13,037
Proportion of credits delivered to care-experienced learners	0.5%	2.3%	1.9%	1.5%	5.0%	8.4%	7.5%	8.0%
D Number of senior phase age pupils studying vocational qualifications delivered by colleges	178	115	97	342	425	563	598	580
E1 Proportion of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Full time FE)	59.7%	63.7%	68.7%	69.2%	67.9%	66.8%	66.7%	67.0%
Number of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Full time FE)	2,531	2,699	3,174	3,045	2,953	2,867	2,426	2,345
Total number of FTFE students	4,237	4,240	4,622	4,402	4,348	4,293	3,635	3,500
E2 Proportion of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Part time FE)	64.3%	52.5%	67.6%	72.3%	76.1%	76.6%	69.9%	70.0%
Number of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Part time FE)	8,366	7,613	9,467	9,414	9,574	8,941	8,459	8,050
Total number of PTFE students	13,002	14,501	14,003	13,023	12,576	11,665	12,097	11,500
E3 Proportion of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Full time HE)	67.1%	65.4%	68.7%	69.4%	64.9%	69.1%	67.2%	68.0%
Number of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Full time HE)	1,858	1,817	1,849	1,912	1,713	1,642	1,480	1,360
Total number of FTHE students	2,771	2,780	2,693	2,757	2,640	2,377	2,204	2,000
E4 Proportion of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Part time HE)	76.5%	74.1%	76.9%	80.2%	80.3%	73.2%	85.4%	80.0%
Number of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Part time HE)	329	420	445	491	494	418	607	440
Total number of PTHE students	430	567	579	612	615	571	711	550
F Number of students achieving an HNC/D qualification articulating to degree level courses		545	526	609	608	493	468	450
Number of students achieving an HNC/D qualification articulating to degree level courses with advanced standing		297	243	311	317	273	284	257
Proportion of students achieving an HNC/D qualification articulating to degree level courses with advanced standing		54.5%	46.2%	51.1%	52.1%	55.4%	60.7%	57.0%
G Total number of full-time FE college qualifiers (in confirmed destinations)	2,149	2,455	2,594	2,474	2,345	2,028		2,000
Number of full-time FE college qualifiers in work, training or further study 3-6 months after qualifying	2,065	2,362	2,502	2,353	2,258	1,930		1,900
Proportion of full-time FE college qualifiers in work, training or further study 3-6 months after qualifying	96.1%	96.2%	96.5%	95.1%	96.3%	95.2%		95.0%
Total number of full-time HE college qualifiers (in confirmed destinations)	1,542	1,517	1,519	1,601	1,492	1,207		1,200
Number of full-time HE college qualifiers in work, training or further study 3-6 months after qualifying	1,448	1,438	1,459	1,532	1,353	1,155		1,140
Proportion of full-time HE college qualifiers in work, training or further study 3-6 months after qualifying	93.9%	94.8%	96.1%	95.7%	90.7%	95.7%		95.0%
H Percentage of students overall satisfied with their college experience (SSES survey)	-	90.1%	93.4%	N/A - see note	95.1%	-	83.9%	89.0%

Please note that 2019-20 figures for measures E, G and H and all 2020-21 figures were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and may not be directly comparable to other years

RAPID IMPACT ASSESSMENT

West College Scotland Regional Outcomes Agreement 21-22

A Rapid Impact Assessment (Screening tool) should be a first step in the policy/strategy making process. It directs the development of the policy and shapes the assessment areas. If the policymaking team do not know the answers, further evidence and insight should be sought. If an organisation does not have established links to representative of faith groups, or organisations that advocate on behalf of different groups sharing a protected characteristic it should a) take steps to create such a network and b) access networks and sources of evidence and insight used by other public bodies.

Which protected characteristic groups will be affected by this strategy/aim/outcome/policy?

- Minority ethnic people
- Women and Men
- Members of different religious/faiths
- People who do not have spoken English as a first language
- Disabled people
- Older people/younger people/children
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual ,
- Transgender, Non-Binary.
- SIMD 20
- Homeless
- Care-experienced
- Estranged students
- People involved /previously involved in criminal justice system
- Academic staff
- Support staff
- Management staff

Any other groups?

The Agreement will also affect other stakeholders such as regional employers and community partners.

What impact will this activity have on

- Access to education
- Attainment
- Positive destinations
- Health & Wellbeing
- Promotion / Development
- Research activity

What positive impacts will there be?

The Agreement aims to increase access to education through mainstreaming equality in all of the College’s activities and should positively impact all of the groups referenced in the first section of this Rapid Impact Assessment.

	<p>The Agreement includes positive action initiatives which should encourage the participation of under represented groups.</p> <p>The focus on quality and participation should have a positive impact and complements the College's duty to work to advance equality.</p> <p>The aim of supporting positive destinations will have a positive impact on protected groups who face barriers to employment and educational progression.</p> <p>The focus on Health and Wellbeing should positively impact from an intersectional perspective as some groups, such as women, are more likely to report mental health conditions, while other groups, including ethnic minorities and younger men, are less likely to seek support.</p> <p>There is often an intersectionality with socio economic circumstances and protected characteristics, and the focus on addressing the consequences of deprivation has been developed to result in a positive impact.</p> <p>The School College Partnership should support the future employment of younger people in the Region.</p> <p>Improving articulation has a particular benefit on mature students as the data shows a positive impact.</p> <p>The commitment to safeguard public health is highly relevant for people who are clinically vulnerable or people who</p>
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	<p>care for those who are clinically vulnerable.</p> <p>Lone parents are predominantly female, and may have spent more of the socially distanced time caring. The aims of the Agreement in respect of digital access, improving articulation, quality and being work-ready will support lone parents in the emergence of the post pandemic period.</p> <p>Increasing digital access should also result in benefits for all groups, in particular those with a disability, people who do not speak English as a first language, and people with caring responsibilities.</p> <p>The Agreement could positively impact career progression for staff as there are opportunities for new ways of working and innovation.</p> <p>It is not anticipated that the Agreement impacts staff on the basis of research activity.</p> <p>How do you know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality data analysis of participation, retention and success. • Use of data, evaluation and reflection in the Portfolio Review process. • Outputs from Student and Staff Surveys. • Complaints data. • Staff CPD participation data. • Referrals to support/counselling. • Referrals to Enabling Services. <p>What negative impacts will there be?</p> <p>It is not anticipated that the Agreement will negatively impact any groups.</p>
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	<p>How do you know? We will know from monitoring emerging data regularly.</p>
<p>Will the activity have an impact on the social environment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social status • Income • Social/family support & networks • Stress / health / wellbeing • Employment • Work placements • Volunteering 	<p>The Agreement aims to encourage economic recovery and social renewal post pandemic.</p> <p>Increasing attainment and supporting the progression of protected groups should positively affect social status.</p> <p>Learning with Impact should increase employment prospects and positively impact income and employment prospects.</p> <p>Being work-ready can involve the use of work placements which allow opportunities for social engagement and can increase prospects.</p> <p>Identifying Health and Wellbeing as a strategic aim should positively impact the social environment particularly given the consequences of the pandemic where there is emerging evidence of a marked decrease in wellbeing.</p>
<p>Will the proposal have any impact on Discrimination? Equality of opportunity Relations between groups?</p>	<p>It should reduce the risk of discrimination and mitigate barriers which are faced by protected groups. It should advance equality of opportunity and promote good relations between groups.</p>
<p>Will the proposal have an impact on the physical environment, For example will there be impacts on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living conditions? • Working conditions? • Study space? • Pollution/climate change? • Public safety? 	<p>Apart from the public safety element, the impact on the physical environment is comparatively remote.</p> <p>In terms of public safety, the Agreement includes the College's commitment to the safest possible working and learning environment.</p>

<p>Will the proposal affect access to and experience of services?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health care • Transport • Social Services • Housing services • Helplines – eg Rape crisis / Citizens advice • Justice • Faith <p>Will the current provision of services affect your planned activity? Eg infrequent bus service, health care information or helpline information only available in English</p>	<p>We will continue to work with our community partners such as those in health care and social services to ensure we use a multi-agency partnership approach to support our students.</p> <p>We wil continue to work people who are or have been involved in the criminal justics system, and our EDI activities will take into account the needs of diverse faiths.</p> <p>We do not anticipate that the current provision of services will affect our planned acitivity and we will work with our community partners to provide a joined up approach to continuous improvement.</p>
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**Outcome Agreement between West College Scotland and the Scottish
Funding Council for AY 2021-22**

On behalf of West College Scotland:

Signed:

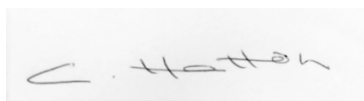


Print name: LIZ CONNOLLY

Position: Principal and Chief Executive

Date: 24th May 2022

Signed:



Print name: WAIYIN HATTON

Position: Chair

Date: 24th May 2022

On behalf of the Scottish Funding Council:

Signed:



Print name: Karen Watt

Position: Chief Executive

Date: 28 July 2022