

UHI | INVERNESS

Meeting	Human Resources Committee
Date and time	Thursday 12 March 2026 at 8.30 a.m.
Location	Virtually – via Microsoft Teams

Governance Officer
19 February 2026

AGENDA

The timings on this agenda are indicative only and may extend beyond times highlighted.

Welcome and Apologies

Declaration of Interests and/or any Statement of Connections or Transparency Statements.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

- 08:30 – 08:35 **1) MINUTES**
- a.) Meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on 20 November 2025
 - b.) Confidential Note of the Human Resources Committee (CN-HR01-112025) held on 20 November 2025
 - c.) Confidential Note of the Human Resources Committee (CN-HR02-112025) held on 20 November 2025
 - d.) Confidential Note of the Human Resources Committee (CN-HR03-092025) held on 20 November 2025
- 08:35 – 08:40 **2) OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**
- 08:40 – 08:50 **3) POLICIES FOR APPROVAL (CONFIDENTIAL)**
Report by Vice Principal Curriculum, Student Engagement & Quality
- a) Student Drug and Alcohol Misuse Policy
- 08:50 – 09:00 **4) VS SCHEME UPDATE (CONFIDENTIAL)**

Report by Vice Principal Curriculum, Operations & External Relations

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 09:00 – 09:10 **5) ANNUAL REVIEW OF SUB-STRATEGIES**
Report by Vice Principal Curriculum, Operations & External Relations
a.) Talent Management Strategy Update
- 09:10 – 09:20 **6) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**
Report by Professional Development Manager
- 09:20 – 09:30 **7) UHI TRANSFORMATION UPDATE (CONFIDENTIAL)
(standing item)**
Verbal Report by Vice Principal Curriculum, Operations & External Relations
- 09:30 – 09:40 **8) NATIONAL BARGAINING / JOB EVALUATION
(CONFIDENTIAL)**
Report by Head of HR
- 09:40 – 09:50 **9) HUMAN RESOURCES – QUARTER 2 REPORT 2025/26
(CONFIDENTIAL)**
Report by Head of HR
- 09:50 – 09:55 **10) HYBRID WORKING UPDATE**
Verbal Report by Head of HR
- 09:55 – 10:05 **11) HSE WELLBEING SURVEY RESULTS**
Report by Health, Safety and Sustainability Manager
- 10:05 – 10:20 **12) EMPLOYMENT LAW UPDATE**
Report by Anderson & Strathern
- 10:20 – 10:30 **13) STRATEGIC PLANNING 2026/27**
Report by Governance Officer
- a.) Terms and Conditions – HR Committee
b.) Code of Good Governance 2025-26

FOR NOTING

- 10:30 – 10:30 **14) EIS REPORT ON FURTHER EDUCATION – SUMMARY –
to follow**
Report by Trade Union Academics Board Member
- 10:30 – 10:30 **15) AOCB**
- 16) DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**
HR Committee Meeting – 04 June 2026

If any member wishes to add an item of business to the Agenda, please inform the Chair and the Governance Officer as soon as possible. Additional items of business will only be considered for inclusion in the agenda in advance of the start of the meeting.

UHI | INVERNESS

Subject/Title:	Outstanding Actions
Author: [Name and Job title]	Ludka Orłowska-Kowal Governance Officer
Meeting:	HR Committee
Meeting Date:	12 March 2026
Date Paper prepared:	03 March 2026
Brief Executive Summary of the paper:	This paper provides the HR Committee with an update on all outstanding actions. The status of the actions has been clearly marked on the action sheet, with updates provided for outstanding actions.
Action requested: [Approval, recommendation, discussion, noting]	Discussion and Noting.
Link to Strategy: Please highlight how the paper links to, or assists with:: <input type="checkbox"/> compliance <input type="checkbox"/> partnership services <input type="checkbox"/> risk management <input type="checkbox"/> strategic plan <input type="checkbox"/> new opportunity/change	Governance Compliance
Resource implications:	Yes / No If yes, please specify:
Risk implications:	Yes / No If yes, please specify: Operational: Organisational:
Equality and Diversity implications:	Yes/ No If yes, please specify:
Student Experience Impact:	Yes/ No If yes, please specify:

Consultation: [staff, students, UHI & Partners, External] and provide detail	N/A		
Status – [Confidential/Non confidential]	Non-Confidential		
Freedom of Information Can this paper be included in “open” business* [Yes/No]	Yes		
*If a paper should not be included within “open” business, please highlight below the reason.			
Its disclosure would substantially prejudice a programme of research (S27)		Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs (S30)	
Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the commercial interests of any person or organisation (s33)		Its disclosure would constitute a breach of confident actionable in court (s36)	
Its disclosure would constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act (s38)		Other (Please give further details)	

Further guidance on application of the exclusions from Freedom of Information legislation is available via

<http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/ScottishPublicAuthorities/ScottishPublicAuthorities.asp> and

http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/web/FILES/Public_Interest_Test.pdf

Purpose of the report

To provide the HR Committee with an update on all outstanding action.

Executive Summary

The HR Committee oversees and monitors the progress of all actions and recommendations raised to date. The status of the actions has been clearly marked, with updates and comments provided for outstanding actions. The Governance Officer monitors the action progress and contacts all actions owners for updates on a regular basis.

Progress update:

- HR Committee action list:
 - ✓ 5 actions complete
 - ✓ 3 outstanding actions

HR Committee - Action List

ITEM 02.a

Action	Academic Year	Status	Finding	Recommendation	Recommendation Significance	Implementation Date	Responsible Officer	Status as at 05 June 2025	Comments
2	05/06/2025 2024/25	Ongoing	Collaborative Leadership Presentation: The Professional Development Manager reported a shift in the work culture reported by participants.	Empirical Evidence, for example via a pulse survey, to be gathered from participants to measure the development and shift within college culture.	Medium	30 September 2025	Professional Development Manager	Proposed	Update at 20/11/2025: The final sessions of the Collaborative Leaders programme will take place in March/April 2026. All participants (46 managers & team leaders) will be surveyed at that point. They will be asked to comment on their own journeys since the start of the programme e.g. their confidence in leading their teams and decision making. They will also be asked to provide feedback on the organisational culture and to provide examples if they perceive any changes. Update at 02/03/2026: Questions about the changes to the culture will be included in the evaluation process of the whole Collaborative Leaders programme and will the answers collected will provide the empirical evidence requested by the committee. The college aims to conclude the programme by the end of April and the outcome of the evaluation will be ready to be presented during Board Creative Session in May. The data will also be included in the report coming to June's committee.
3	05/06/2025 2024/25	Complete	Collaborative Leadership Presentation: The HR Committee found the presentation of great value and recommended to the whole Board of Management.	Collaborative Leadership Presentation to be presented to the whole Board of Management.	Low	31 October 2025	Professional Development Manager & GO	Proposed	Update at 20/11/2025: The Creative Session planned for 25/11/2025 cannot accommodate the Collaborative Leadership Presentation due to time constraints. New date in Jan/Feb 2026 will be selected. Update at 25/02/2026: Presentation will take place on 13/05/2026.
Status as at 04 September 2025									
8	04/09/2025 2025/26	Ongoing	UHI Transformation Update: The Board has raised concerns about the Transformation process on numerous occasions in regard to the lack of transparency and inadequacy of the process and advocated for accountability and post review lessons learnt exercise to be incorporated into the project.	Board's concerns about the lack of transparency of the transformation project, lack of involvement of college Board Members, tight timelines and lack of paperwork prior meetings to be raised with the Chair of the Court.	High	30 September 2025	Chair of the Board	Proposed	Update at 20/11/2025: This action is still ongoing.
Status as at 20 November 2025									
9	20/11/2025	Complete	Annual Review of Sub-strategies: The Committee suggested that all sub-strategies could be mapped onto the KPI Matrix, and an annual evaluation report would provide all Members with clear understanding of all objectives achieved to date.	Annual Evaluation of Sub-Strategies report to be presented to the Committees in March 2026 with sub-strategies mapped onto the KPI Matrix.	Medium	12 March 2026	Vice Principal Curriculum, Operations & External Relations	Proposed	Update at 05/03/2026: Detailed reports on sub-strategies being presented to the HR & FGP Committees in March 2026.
10	20/11/2025	Complete	Annual Review of Substrategies: The Committee suggested that existing KPI Matrix to be evaluated and HR Committee's specific KPIs to be identified.	Existing KPI Matrix to be evaluated and HR Committee's specific KPIs to be identified.	Medium	January 2026	Board & Gov Officer	Proposed	Update at 21/01/2026: KPI session took place as part of the Self-Evaluation process.
11	20/11/2025	Complete	Professional Development Update: The Committee would welcome a report which would clearly present the curriculum planning process used to establish the financial impact on student and staffing resources going forward.	Curriculum planning presentation, including the financial impact on student and staffing resources to be added to the March meeting.	Medium	12 March 2026	Head of Operations & Business Performance & TELs	Proposed	Update at 03/02/2026: Presentation to Board on 03/02/2026.
12	20/11/2025	Complete	Student Drug And Alcohol Misuse Policy Update: The Committee asked for the June's draft policy document and presentation to be re-shared with all Members.	Draft Student Drug And Alcohol Misuse Policy and Presentation from June 2025 to be shared with the Committee.	Medium	31 December 2025	Gov Officer	Action complete on 09/12/2025	
13	20/11/2025	Ongoing	HR - Quarter 1 Report: The Committee Members, LF & AN, offered support for the creation of the risk and action plan around absence levels and suggested a new approach for the PRD process.	Gaps within the PRD process to be identified and addressed.	Medium	12 March 2026	Head of HR, LF & AN	Proposed	Update at 05/03/2026: This action builds on the discussion at the Board Away Day with key themes being: using data sets that are readily available, staff reductions and impact on current payroll costs, "deeper dive" exercise to better understand short terms absences & barriers to PRD process. The KPIs should also be reviewed once the strategic plan and objectives were finalised to ensure alignment.

HR Committee Meeting

Subject/Title:	Review of Talent Management Sub-strategy
Author: [Name and Job title]	Dr Georgina Parker Vice Principal Curriculum, Operations & External Relations
Meeting:	Human Resources Committee
Meeting Date:	12 March 2026
Date Paper prepared:	4 March 2026
Brief Executive Summary of the paper:	<p>This paper provides a summary of the progress against the strategy and associated action plan over the past year.</p> <p>It highlights key achievements, areas where there are partial achievements and ongoing priorities. The KPIs associated with the policy are provided and the action plan updated by the responsible manager is appended.</p> <p>No further summary is provided as the paper itself is an executive summary.</p>
Action requested: [Approval, recommendation, discussion, noting]	The committee is asked to discuss the report, in preparation for the strategic plan refresh.
Link to Strategy: Please highlight how the paper links to, or assists with: - compliance - partnership services - risk management - strategic plan - new opportunity/change	Strategic plan and Talent Management Strategy.
Resource implications:	If yes, please specify:
Risk implications:	If yes, please specify:
Equality and Diversity implications:	If yes, please specify:
Consultation:	

[staff, students, UHI & Partners, External] and provide detail	
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Status – [Non confidential]	Non-confidential
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Freedom of Information Can this paper be included in “open” business* [Yes]	Yes
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Review of Talent Management Sub-strategy – February 2026

Overall Progress

There has been good progress in induction, professional development, and workforce planning. Some actions are ongoing or partially achieved. Most actions are recommended to continue as priorities.

Key Achievements

- Curriculum planning and budget setting consistently carried out annually.
- Strong representation on national policy forums.
- Hybrid working guidance updated and progressing through EMT.
- Corporate induction and L&T induction programmes well established.
- Strong uptake of professional development, funding, and qualifications.
- Widespread engagement initiatives (Wee Connect, Coffee with Chris).
- Employee Engagement Group successfully launched
- Continued refinement of Staff Deployment Record, in line with CPR process.
- Majority of lecturers registered with GTCS.
- Skill matrix process embedded in many areas to support succession planning
- Leadership training widely accessed (Collaborative Leaders, CMI courses).

Areas Behind / Partially Achieved

- Recruitment policy reviews still in progress.
- Further manager training for probation ongoing
- Succession planning framework still in development, building upon skills matrices as these are rolled out across teams.
- Staff PRD completion not accurately captured due to system issues.
- Future Leaders Programme on hold pending completion of Collaborative Leaders programme.

Ongoing Priorities

- Hybrid working implementation under updated guidance
- Improving PRD system accuracy
- Embedding succession planning & skills matrices
- Enhancing data use for decision-making
- Continued roll-out of induction improvements

KPI Measure	Frequency
% Staff turnover	Quarterly
PRD completion - full or review	Quarterly

UHI Inverness Organisational Strategies 2021-26

Talent Management Strategy

Objectives & Action Points	Progress/Evidence	Progress RAG	Any relevant comment and any specific examples	Recommend as ongoing priority to
Strategic Objective 1: Workforce Planning				
To ensure we have an efficient and effective workforce				
Producing sector development plans based on local, regional, national and international data, to develop new and modify existing provision.	Completed for 23/24 and presented to Board Dec 22	Feb 23 (and annually)		Yes
Undertaking annual curriculum planning reviews, supported by monthly School data presentations focussing on quality, efficiency and compliance.	Completed for 23/24 Approved by EMT Dec 22	Oct-Dec 22 (and annually)		Yes
Maintaining our full economic costing (FEC) model.	Ongoing	Ongoing		Yes
Undertaking an annual budget setting process, encompassing all relevant costs.	Completed for 23/24 Approved by EMT	Annually		Yes
Maintaining an understanding of government policy and priorities for the sector, to inform planning activity.	Good representation on national sector forums (CS.CDN, ESP)	Ongoing		Yes
Ensuring that Staff Resource Panels are informed by the curriculum plan, FEC model, internal and external data.	Partly completed New WLA process in development	Fortnightly		Yes
Strategic objective 2: Talent Attraction				
To attract talented employees committed to achieving our shared goals.				
Reviewing our policies to ensure that we offer progressive terms and conditions of employment to support talent attraction.	Supply contracts reviewed to offer an FTC option. Comp. Project plan being devised to commence September 2023.	March 2024		
Reviewing and continuously improving our recruitment and selection processes, providing training to recruiting managers.	Supply contracts reviewed to offer an FTC option. Comp.	March 2024		
Evaluating our hybrid working guidance and developing agile working policies, to widen access to talent	Evaluation activity in progress	Partially achieved	Our Hybrid Working Guidance has been updated, which we worked through at a College Management Team meeting in late 2025. Final amends being made and due to be presented to EMT Committee in February.	Yes
Reviewing and developing our recruitment package and talent attraction approaches.	Not due	Ongoing		
Strategic objective 3: Induction & Engagement				
To ensure that all staff are effectively inducted and supported to succeed in their role				
Ensuring that all staff attend a high-quality corporate induction programme.	We currently ensure that all new starts complete our mandatory corporate induction programme on Brightspace. Completion is checked & followed up. Staff have opportunities to meet with members of EMT via staff briefings, coffee with Chris and other meetings	Ongoing	Corporate Induction material updated for 2025/26 to include email to all new starts with specific information & links to support their health & wellbeing.	Yes

Objectives & Action Points	Progress/Evidence	Progress RAG	Any relevant comment and any specific examples	Recommend as ongoing priority to
Supporting all new lecturers with a longitudinal learning & teaching induction programme.	We currently provide a mandatory L&T induction programme to all new lecturers. We have recently piloted an online element to the programme to support & model hybrid modes of delivery. Further twilight sessions on various I&t themes are offered to all new lecturers throughout the AY.	Ongoing	Pilot L&T Induction in September 2025 changed delivery model from 2 x full days to 4 x twilight sessions. Positive feedback from staff.	Yes
Providing an extended induction to new job roles.	Managers are provided with a new staff checklist to work through. HR notified when checklist issued by PD team. Managers return checklist to HR when completed with their new staff member & HR add to staff record.	Partially achieved		Yes
Providing training for managers to proactively support staff throughout their probation period.	Training material has been developed and further dates being identified to roll out training for managers in AY 2024/25	Partially achieved	3 training sessions for managers Dec 2024-Feb 2025. Attended by 26 managers.	Yes
Engaging with staff through regular written management communications and frequent online and face-to-face forums.	Wee Connect + IConnect + Staff Briefings + Coffee with Chris	Ongoing		
Strategic objective 4: Professional Development To ensure that our staff have opportunities to develop and maintain their knowledge and skills to the highest industry and professional standards and are equipped for an increasingly digital world				
Ensuring staff have the appropriate time available for their professional development, in accordance with current contractual provisions.	The Professional Development policy provides for 6 days (pro rata) of professional learning for all staff (1 day Staff Conference, 1 day Team Development Day + 4 days for relevant training/study). Application of this via the PRD process when managers and staff agree on the plan for the 4 individual days.	Partially achieved	Pilot Staff Development Days in place of Staff Conference June 2025. Feedback from staff expressed preference for Staff Conference as well as Staff Development Days. SD day for all staff planned for February 2025, will measure engagement.	
Providing funding for staff to engage in a wide range of relevant learning opportunities both within and outside of UHI.	Annual Professional Development budget in place. Funding application details available to all staff. Evidence of regular staff uptake of funding for short courses + conferences + training events. Drop-ins for staff available with PD team to discuss individual development needs and opportunities.	Ongoing	2025/26 semester 1: 75 individual staff participated in short courses/events funded by the PD budget. All staff due to participate in Staff Development Day 18/2/26.	
Supporting staff to undertake relevant research and scholarly activities, including additional qualifications.	Process in place for staff to apply for funding for relevant additional qualifications. 20 - 30 staff funded by the scheme per academic year. Two schemes in place to fund staff to engage with research - Enquiring Minds Scheme (launched 2023/24) & Research Connect Scheme (to be launched 2024/25)	Ongoing	2025/26: 18 staff undertaking additional qualifications funded by the PD budget. Further staff undertaking GA programmes. 7 staff engaged in Research Connect Scheme and 2 staff in Enquiring Minds Scheme.	

Objectives & Action Points	Progress/Evidence	Progress RAG	Any relevant comment and any specific examples	Recommend as ongoing priority to
Ensuring that all managers and team leaders are offered the opportunity to undertake a certified leadership and management training programme.	Managers engage with CMI courses and other relevant courses e.g. CDN Leadership courses. In-house Collaborative Leaders programme for all managers.	Ongoing	2025/26: 37 managers participated in Collaborative Leaders programme related to outputs from Wellbeing Survey. Further session planned for all managers April 2026.	
Delivering on our digital transformation strategy.	See DTS			
Strategic objective 5: Organisational Performance Management To continue to develop our high-performance culture, ensuring professional practice of all staff is aligned to sector standards, industry best practice and our values.				
Ensuring that all staff take part in their Professional Review and Development (PRD) at least on an annual basis.	Some improvement but emphasis needed on supporting particular areas to achieve. KPI reported at HR committee	Ongoing	<p>Reporting on PRD completion is based on completed paperwork being uploaded onto our HR system and therefore is not giving an accurate measure.</p> <p>The system is not intuitive and does not take into account the PRDs of staff who are not due to have a PRD from the total sample, for example, staff who are long-term absent, staff on maternity leave, staff on short term supply contracts, staff on sabbatical.</p> <p>The HR team will continue to work with managers to get a truer measure of completion rates and monitoring any non-compliance to allow for follow up and or further exploration into the reasons for individual PRDs not being on the system.</p> <p>The HR Business Partners will continue to work with Managers to support the upload of PRD paperwork to CIPHR as well as working with Professional Development to provide re-fresher training.</p> <p>PD pick up the PRD training with all new managers as they are appointed and can confirm that everyone is up to date apart from the most recent appointee and we have contacted them to schedule their training.</p>	Yes
Using institutional KPIs and team/individual SMART objectives to set and measure expectations of performance.	KPI matrix embedded. New measures required for Finance and Research. Revised policy and procedure for performance management. Shared with staff regularly	Ongoing	KPI matrix	Yes

Objectives & Action Points	Progress/Evidence	Progress RAG	Any relevant comment and any specific examples	Recommend as ongoing priority to
Using data to drive decision making, promoting the understanding of key data across the organisation.	Good progress given restrictions on key data systems. Monthly performance presentations for each school. Analysis and presentation of key HR related data. Increasingly robust Curriculum Planning Review process. Improved sharing of data via Wee Connect and quarterly staff update briefings	Ongoing		
Supporting staff to work towards attaining professional standard accreditation, including GTCS	Majority of eligible lecturers now registered with GTCS. New category of provisional registration will enable others to register - ongoing communication with relevant staff.	Ongoing		
Strategic objective 6: Skills & Succession Planning To deploy strategies to support our organisational resilience.				
Developing and implementing departmental succession plans, including skills matrices.	Some discussions have taken place with PD & HR teams but the succession planning process still needs to be finalised in terms of how it links into the PRD process. Training and embedding of the process will be rolled out once succession planning process agreed.	Partially achieved	Following a pilot - all professional services team managers have now been trained and supported to produce a Skills Matrix for their teams. Initial feedback is positive and a progress check is scheduled for April 2026.	
Continuing the roll-out of a more collaborative model of leadership, including a Future Leaders Programme.	Collaborative Leaders programme delivered to 43 managers from Feb - Dec 2023. Plans for Future Leaders programme for discussion Aug 2024.	Partially achieved	Further delivery of Collaborative Leaders programme as above. Planning in place for Future Leaders programme, on hold currently.	
Introducing a process for reviewing role resilience, ensuring that knowledge of key business functions is shared.	This relies on the completion of activity 1 above	Ongoing		
Reviewing and revising contractual notice periods, to ensure a smooth handover when staff exit the business.	Completed (NJNC Agreement superseded)	Ongoing	Completed (X Committee)	

Objectives & Action Points	Progress/Evidence	Progress RAG	Any relevant comment and any specific examples	Recommend as ongoing priority to
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Ser	KPI Measure	Frequency	Target
43	% Staff turnover	Quarterly	2.45%
44	PRD completion - full or review	Quarterly	75%

Board of Management/Committee Meeting

Subject/Title:	Professional Development update
Author: [Name and Job title]	Fiona Gunn, Head of Professional Development
Meeting:	Board of Management – HR committee
Meeting Date:	12 March 2026
Date Paper prepared:	4 March 2026
Brief Executive Summary of the paper:	<p>This paper provides an update on staff professional development activities, including the recent staff development day.</p> <p>Information is provided on different types of training, including management training, mandatory training and digital skills training.</p> <p>The report also provides an overview of data relating to teaching qualifications and lecturer registration with GTCS.</p>
Action requested: [Approval, recommendation, discussion, noting]	Discussion
Link to Strategy: Please highlight how the paper links to, or assists with: - compliance - partnership services - risk management - strategic plan - new opportunity/change	<p>Links to strategic objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure the professional practice of all staff is aligned to sector standards, industry best practice and our values. To ensure that our staff have opportunities to develop and maintain their knowledge and skills to the highest industry and professional standards and are equipped for an increasingly digital world.
Resource implications:	No
Risk implications:	No
Equality and Diversity implications:	No
Consultation: [staff, students, UHI & Partners, External] and provide detail	No

Status – [Non confidential]	Non-confidential		
Freedom of Information Can this paper be included in “open” business* [Yes]	Yes		
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For how long must the paper be withheld? (express either as the time which needs to pass or a condition which needs to be met.)			

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Purpose

To provide an update on staff professional development activities in academic year 2025/26.

Main body of information

1. Management training

1.1 Sexual Harassment Prevention training

96% of managers have completed sexual harassment prevention training so they are aware of the legislation and requirements around this topic. Training is currently being scheduled for all staff on a team-by-team basis, as well as the very small number of managers who still need to complete.

1.2 Menopause awareness training for managers

54% of managers have now completed this optional training, including the majority (67%) of our male managers. The aim is to support staff wellbeing and raise awareness of the [PDF National Menopause Policy .pdf](#) adopted by UHI Inverness. In addition, and separate to the manager specific training, three further menopause awareness sessions have been well attended by staff.

1.3 Skills Matrix training

As part of our Talent Management strategy, it was agreed that all professional services teams should utilise a skills matrix. 100% of managers of professional services teams have now completed training to support them to develop a skills matrix for their team. This visual tool provides managers with an overview of the specific skills within their team. The matrix also enables identification of skills gaps and training needs. The matrix can be utilised by managers when planning recruitment and during PRDs. Regular review of the team matrix supports the resilience of teams as managers can quickly identify the expertise within their team and the allocated of specific tasks and projects.

1.4 Collaborative Leaders

The final part of the Collaborative Leaders programme for managers will take place in April. The focus will be on specific HR policies and procedures with the sessions jointly led by the Head of HR. The aim of the sessions will be to build manager confidence around key policies and support early resolution of any HR related issues within their teams.

Following the final sessions, a full evaluation of the Collaborative Leaders programme will be undertaken with all managers. This will include questions about changes to the culture as previously discussed at this committee. This

empirical evidence will be included in the planned presentation at the creative space at Board of Management in May and the Professional Development update paper to this committee in June.

2. Staff Development Day

A development day for all staff was held on 18 February with the aim of enabling staff to engage in a range of relevant development opportunities. To facilitate this, all classes were cancelled, with the exception of some apprenticeship groups. This date was selected as it was the first day after the Highland council February academic holiday, so students had a slightly extended break. February was also identified in feedback from professional services teams as the best time for them to engage in development.

249 staff participated in and/or delivered workshops on the day. This was an increase of 55 staff, compared to our previous staff development day, held in June 2025.

24 different workshops covered topics related to learning and teaching as well as specific subjects such as procurement, sustainability and automating business processes. Wellbeing related workshops included pension planning, neurodiversity and nutrition. A full list of the workshops is provided at appendix 1. Staff were encouraged to use time between workshops to complete mandatory training.

Staff also had the opportunity to meet colleagues and engage with a number of external organisations (e.g. trade unions, Highlife Highland, Mikeysline, MCR Pathways, Chaplaincy service), at stalls in the Atrium during coffee time.

Feedback from staff is still being collated and will be inform planning of future events. All managers will shortly receive information on participation by the staff in their team so they can follow this up as part of PRDs and wider discussions about professional development.

3. Lecturer registration with General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS)

Figures are presented below on lecturer registration with GTCS. These relate to permanent staff only, whereas previous summary figures included those on other contracts.

Even a small number of permanent staff retiring or otherwise leaving employment impacts the percentage of lecturers currently registered, as longer serving staff are more likely to be registered.

We rely on lecturers notifying us and providing their GTCS number when they register, so it is likely that the exact numbers registered are slightly higher than presented. GTCS can only provide us with a list of our registered staff once per academic year, usually around the end of March, when we begin the process of deduction at source of registration fees. Once we have this information, it will be cross checked against our records.

	No	%
Total permanent contract lecturers	178	
Lecturers registered with GTCS	116	65%
Lecturers eligible for registration (hold TQFE) but not yet registered	24	13%
Lecturers waiting to do TQFE	25	14%
Lecturers undertaking TQFE 2025/26	8	5%
Lecturers with different qualifications who may apply on different route	5	3%

A current benchmark relating to GTCS registration for the sector is not readily available at this time from College Employers Scotland, SFC or GTCS but we know UHI Inverness have historically been well above sector benchmarks according to insight provided by CDN. It should be noted that TQFE, a prerequisite of GTCS registration, comes with a financial cost to the college due to the remitted time required by staff to engage in study. This is something which is currently being considered against curriculum planning and budgets.

[SFC College Staffing Data 2023-24](#) published May 2025, indicates that 4,960 lecturers were employed at that time. [GTCS Registration Report: Data and Insight \(2025\)](#) indicates that on 31 March 2025, there were 3,658 registrations in the Further Education category. However, as it is possible to hold dual registration and also possible to hold registration but not be employed in the college sector, the relevant figure is likely to be considerably lower and not a reliable indicator for the sector.

Using the figures above as an estimate, would indicate a 74% registration rate but this is unlikely to be very accurate, given the different academic years the figures relate to.

As we seek to increase the number of our lecturers registered with GTCS, the HR team have contacted all lecturers who are eligible to register but have not yet acted on this. It is likely that many of these will register just after 1 April, to obtain

maximum value from their annual subscription which runs from 1 April to 31 March each year.

We continue to work through our waiting list for TQFE and support as many lecturers as possible to undertake the qualification each year, whilst balancing the impact around the requirement for remitted time.

Year	Number
2021/22	11
2022/23	10
2023/24	11
2024/25	12
2025/26	8

4. Mandatory training

4.1 Trauma Informed Practice & PREVENT

In 2025/26 the focus of new mandatory training is Trauma Informed Practice and PREVENT. Staff are reminded to complete training via all staff communication on Wee Connect and through their line managers. All line managers receive reports on their staff completion every semester.

As at 31/01/2026 completions are as follows:

Trauma Skilled Practice 1: 63% of permanent staff have completed

Prevent: 61% of permanent staff have completed

Home Office Prevent Training: 100% of Safeguarding Leads/Deputes have completed

We anticipate an increase in figures when next reported on 31 March, as some staff used time on Staff Development Day to complete mandatory training.

4.2 SafetyHub Core Training

Figures on completion of mandatory health & safety training are reported to Finance & General Purposes committee by the Health, Safety & Sustainability Manager. They are replicated here for information.

Five core health and safety training courses are required to be completed by all staff. Each will be repeated every two years.

As at 25/02/2026, completions are as follows:

Course Title	Percentage of staff complete
Display Screen Equipment	92% (91% at last report)
Electrical Safety	90% (95% at last report)
Fire Awareness	78% (81% at last report)

Slips, Trips and Falls	91% (94% at last report)
General Data Protection Regulations	80% (83% last report)
Cyber Security Awareness	84% (88% last report)

4.3 PECOS user training

A new round of mandatory training on 'purchasing' will shortly be rolled out to all users of the PECOS system. This aligns with budget holder training and aims to support appropriate purchasing decisions and financial controls.

5. Digital Skills training

122 staff have engaged in digital skills training with the Digital Learning Leader so far this academic year.

Sessions are provided on campus, online and hybrid to individuals or small groups of staff.

Targeted sessions completed include:

- Using GenAI for Assessors
- Using GenAI for Learning Assistants & Education Support Advisors
- MS Forms with the HR team
- Introduction to Brightspace for new lecturers
- Gradebook & quizzes on Brightspace for lecturers
- Creating accessible content for lecturers & professional services staff
- Creating engaging digital learning resources with Microsoft & Adobe tools
- Accessible learning & smart tools in Brightspace

Conclusion

There is a continued focus on the development of all staff through provision of a wide range of opportunities. These include management training, mandatory all staff training, teaching qualifications to support professional registration and digital skills training to support enhanced practice. As reported in previous committees, staff also continue to regularly participate in relevant external short courses, undertake further academic qualifications and engage in research activities

Appendix 1

Workshops Staff Development Day - 18 February 2026

Title
Accessible Learning & Smart Tools in Brightspace
Automating Business Process: Lessons from Building Safepoint
Buying without Bureaucracy
Creating Engaging Digital Learning Resources with Microsoft & Adobe Tools
Dealing with Behaviour that Challenges
Evidencing your GTCS Profile
Game of Thrones
Guided Relaxation
Inclusive Classroom
Learning & Teaching Induction (intro)
LGBTIQ+
Meet the Principal
Menopause Awareness
Mentoring Young People
Neurodiversity & Building Better Workplaces
Nutrition; the Science of Optimal Health and Aging Well
Planning for Retirement- Local Government Pension Scheme
Planning for Retirement- Teachers Pension Scheme
Preventative Approaches to Behaviour Management
Psychology of Adolescence
Reduce your Cortisol during Menopause
Sexual Harassment Prevention Training
Sustainable Development Goals
Yoga

 Learning & Teaching/Supporting students

 Business/Digital

 Wellbeing

HR Committee Meeting

Subject/Title:	Wellbeing Survey 2025 Report
Author: [Name and Job title]	Mark McKerral, Health, Safety and Sustainability Manager
Meeting:	Human Resources Committee
Meeting Date:	12 th March 2026
Date Paper prepared:	3 rd March 2026
Brief Executive Summary of the paper:	<p>UHI Inverness conducted a comprehensive Wellbeing Survey in November 2025 using the Health and Safety Executive’s Stress Indicator Tool (SIT), with 209 staff members responding—approximately 50% of the workforce. Results indicate that 38% of respondents experienced work-related stress, anxiety or depression in the past year, and 10% reported associated absence. Benchmarking against the HSE 2025 education sector shows UHI Inverness performing at or above sector averages in most Management Standards, particularly in Control, Support, Relationships, Role, and Change, though Demands scored slightly below benchmark, especially among curriculum teams.</p> <p>A draft action plan proposes targeted interventions to address priority areas such as workload demands, communication during organisational change, manager capability, behaviours and relationships, and staff support mechanisms. Key actions include manager workshops, stress risk assessments, enhanced communication on wellbeing support, behavioural expectations training, and improved mechanisms for staff to raise concerns. The survey is scheduled to be repeated in November 2026 to measure progress.</p>
Action requested: [Approval, recommendation, discussion, noting]	Discussion
Link to Strategy: Please highlight how the paper links to, or assists with: - compliance - partnership services - risk management - strategic plan - new opportunity/change	Talent Management Strategy
Resource implications:	

	If yes, please specify: No
Risk implications:	If yes, please specify: No
Equality and Diversity implications:	If yes, please specify: No
Consultation: [staff, students, UHI & Partners, External] and provide detail	Paper also shared with JCC, HSWBC, Staff Wellbeing Committee and Leadership Forum

Status – [Non confidential]	
Freedom of Information Can this paper be included in “open” business* [Yes]	Yes
*If a paper should not be included within “open” business, please highlight below the reason.	
Its disclosure would substantially prejudice a programme of research (S27)	Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs (S30)
Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the commercial interests of any person or organisation (S33)	Its disclosure would constitute a breach of confidence actionable in court (S36)
Its disclosure would constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act (S38)	Other (please give further details)
For how long must the paper be withheld? (express either as the time which needs to pass or a condition which needs to be met.)	

Background

During November 2025, UHI Inverness conducted a wellbeing survey utilising the Health and Safety Executive’s (HSE) Stress Indicator Tool (SIT). The SIT was selected as it:

- Is aligned with the six factor HSE Management Standards framework, developed with the University of Hull.
- Provides a fully anonymised survey tool, which limits any reporting to groups of ten or more, preventing any individual’s responses from being identified by UHI Inverness.

- Allows customisation of demographic and open questions, to ensure the survey accommodates the nature of the organisation.
- Includes an optional Home and Hybrid Working (HHW) module, to ensure the needs of those working remotely is considered.
- Offers the ability to benchmark against sector averages.

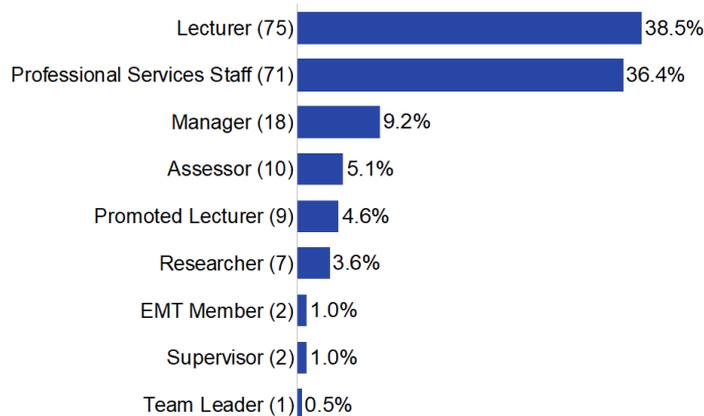
All current staff were invited to take part in the survey. The survey was promoted via:

- Posters displayed in work rooms and other prominent staff areas of 1 Inverness Campus and Balloch Campus.
- Several news posts on the Connect+ staff intranet page.
- An article in the weekly Wee Connect staff newsletter.
- An email directly from the Principal to all staff.

Response Rate and Demographics

Approximately 50% of the work force, 209 individuals, completed a survey response. Not all respondents completed the demographic questions, all questions were optional, however a breakdown of the 195 who answered the role questions shows a fairly even split between Curriculum and Professional Services staff.

Role for Current year

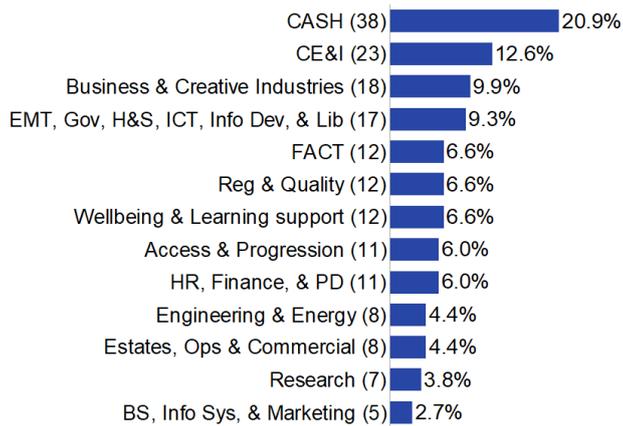


Base: 195 (Current year)

Figure 1 Responses by Role

We believe some in senior roles accidentally selected Manager rather than their actual role (e.g. Director, Promoted Lecturer etc.), this will be addressed in future surveys by renaming Manager to Professional Services Manager.

Department for Current year



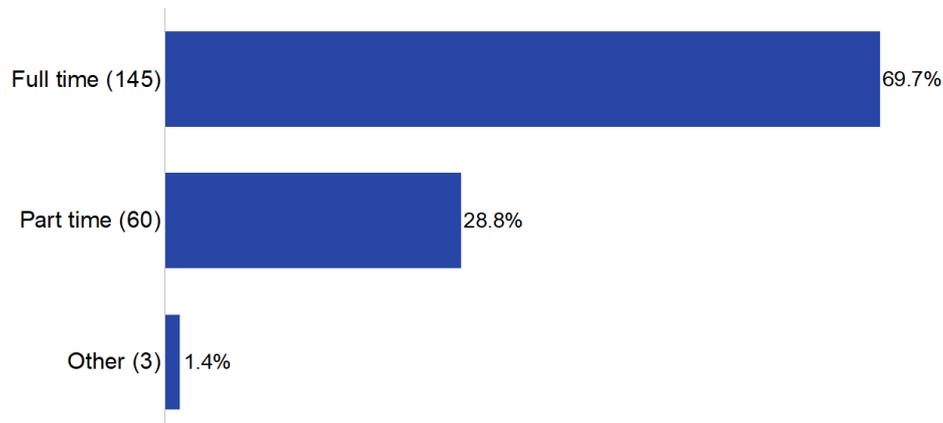
Base: 182 (Current year)

Figure 2 Responses by Department

It is possible that some did not answer the demographic questions as they felt they could be identified from them. In future surveys, we will emphasise that this is not possible.

Most respondents (70%) were full time employees. Three individuals selected ‘Other’ for their working pattern and are most likely supply staff.

My current working pattern is... for Current year



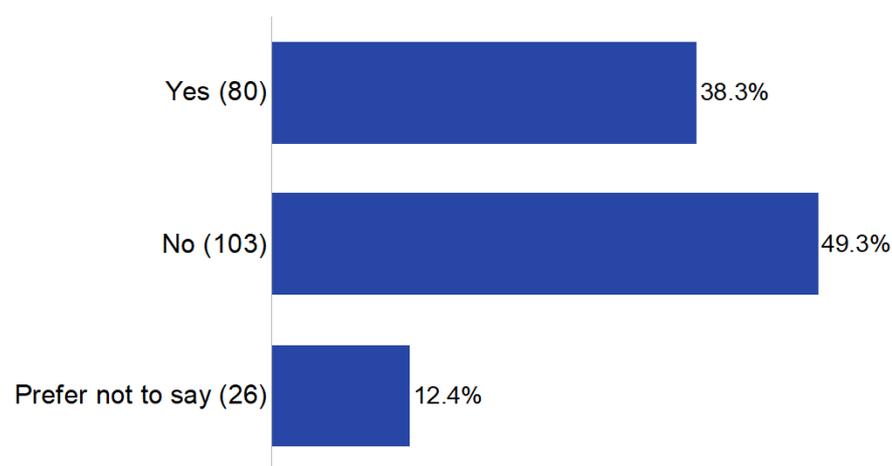
Base: 208 (Current year)

Figure 3 Responses by Working Pattern

Work Related Stress

The survey asked respondents if they had experienced work-related stress, anxiety or depression in the last year, 38% indicated they had. 10% of respondents further stated they had taken time off work due to work-related stress, depression or anxiety in the last year.

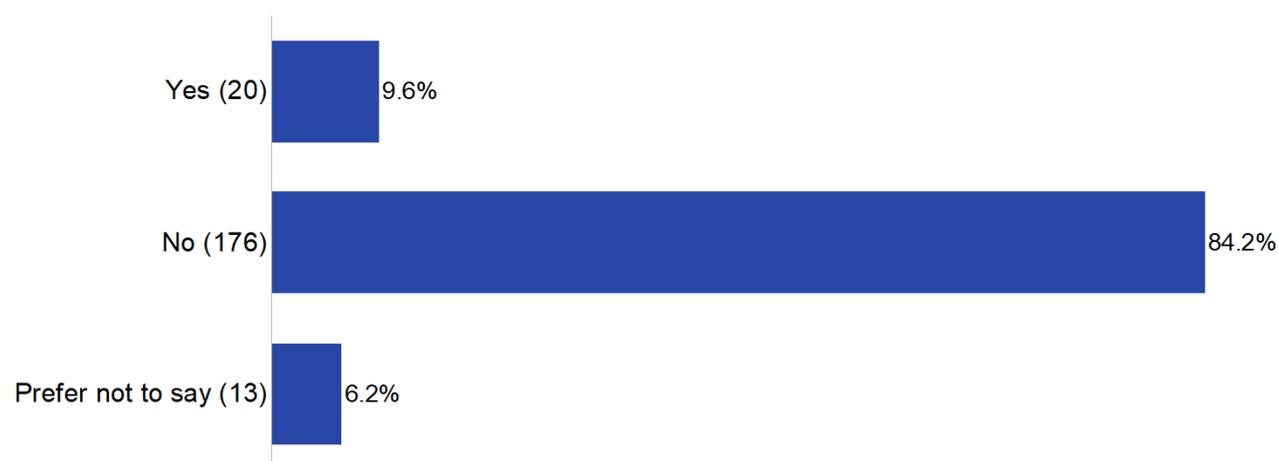
Have you suffered from work-related stress, anxiety or depression in the last year? for Current year



Base: 209 (Current year)

Figure 4 Experience of Work Related Stress etc.

Have you taken time off work due to work-related stress, depression or anxiety in the last year? for Current year



Base: 209 (Current year)

Figure 5 Time off due to work-related stress etc.

For comparison, the following are the reported absence rates from CIPHR.

Absence Reason	23/24			24/25		
	No of Episodes	Days Lost	% of Total Absences	No of Episodes	Days Lost	% of Total Absences
Mental Health	11	141	5.41	13	312	9.75
Stress at Work	8	215	8.25	14	214	6.69
Stress/ Anxiety General	16	312	11.98	11	181	5.65

HSE Management Standards and Benchmarking

The SIT survey's core questions are based on the HSE's six management standards for stress management:

- **Demands:** Ensuring workloads and work patterns are manageable, and the work environment supports employees.
- **Control:** Giving employees sufficient say in how they do their work.
- **Support:** Providing encouragement, resources, and support from managers and colleagues.
- **Relationships:** Promoting positive interactions and addressing conflict or unacceptable behaviour.
- **Role:** Ensuring clear roles, responsibilities, and compatible requirements for employees.
- **Change:** Consulting and managing organisational changes effectively to minimize stress.

In the survey, the support standard is divided into Managers' Support and Peer Support to give a total of seven standards.

Each standard is scored from one to five, with five indicating the highest compliance with the Management Standards. The scores are derived from a set of questions around each standard, with responses then allocated a number from one to five (E.g. 'strongly disagree' = 1, 'disagree' = 2, 'neither agree nor disagree' = 3, 'agree' = 4 and 'strongly agree' = 5). Responses for each question are averaged to score that question, and those scores for each question in a section are then averaged to give a score for the standard.

Use of the standards allows easy comparison to a suite of [Benchmarking data provided by the HSE](#). HSE provide several benchmarks to choose from, they include public sector, charity and not for profit, and education. The education benchmark was selected for comparison with UHI Inverness as HSE informed us it was largely made up of colleges and universities, with only a small number of secondary schools, so should be largely reflective of our sector.

The 2025 education sector benchmark is derived from 5,864 responses across 31 assessments.

	Demands	Control	Managers' Support	Peer Support	Relationships	Role	Change
Education Sector Max	3.53	4.02	4.27	4.49	4.35	4.75	3.9
Education Sector Mean	3.13	3.46	3.7	3.99	4.08	4.15	3.15
Education Sector Minimum	2.29	2.88	2.58	3.06	3.61	3.38	2.43
Education Sector Q1	3.04	3.25	3.59	3.89	3.88	4.03	2.95
Education Sector Q2	3.14	3.51	3.74	4.04	4.11	4.17	3.15
Education Sector Q3	3.31	3.72	3.85	4.1	4.25	4.29	3.42

Figure 7 HSE 2025 Benchmarking Data for Education Sector

Main Findings

The findings from the main survey, against the benchmark interquartiles and broken down by all responses, responses from professional services staff and responses from curriculum staff, are shown in Figure 8.

- All staff: Demands (3.09) is slightly below the education mean (3.13), while Control (3.77), Peer Support (4.06), Role (4.29) and Change (3.22) are above the benchmark. Relationships (4.03) is close to the benchmark mean.
- Professional Services: Above benchmark across all domains; strongest areas are Role (4.43) and Peer Support (4.19).
- Curriculum: Below benchmark for Demands (2.94) with Change (3.18) around the benchmark and Relationships (4.03) close to the benchmark mean.

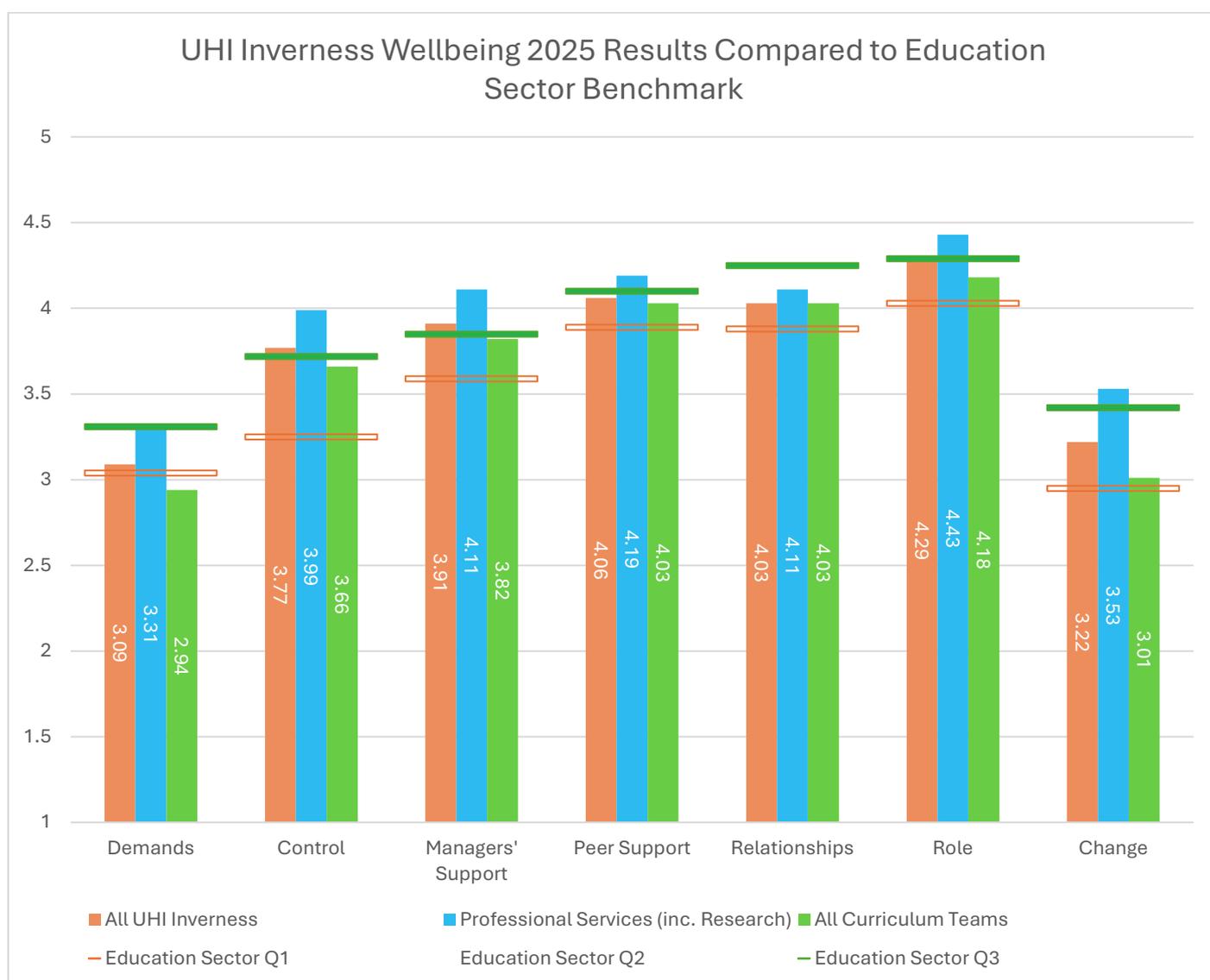


Figure 8 Main Survey Results Chart

The survey does not directly ask respondents which organisational changes they are thinking of when answering the Change question set. However, from reviewing the responses to the open questions, we

believe at least some of the respondents were referring to changes made by UHI to module and course leadership roles, and to the UHI Transformation programme.

	Demands	Control	Managers' Support	Peer Support	Relationships	Role	Change
All UHI Inverness	3.09	3.77	3.91	4.06	4.03	4.29	3.22
Professional Services (inc. Research)	3.31	3.99	4.11	4.19	4.11	4.43	3.53
All Curriculum Teams	2.94	3.66	3.82	4.03	4.03	4.18	3.01

Figure 9 Main Survey Results Table

Hybrid and Home Working Findings

Our Wellbeing Survey also included an optional set of questions for Hybrid and Home Workers (HHW).

The HHW Tool is based on the same Stress Management Standards but removes the Role Standard, as it was found this did not differ from the main question set. It also adds:

- **Work/Home Interface:** Risks associated with balancing home and work when working from home or in a hybrid way.
- **Monitoring:** Concerns about being monitored whilst working remotely.

This tool is much newer than the SIT and has not been as widely adopted, therefore there is not an education specific benchmark available yet. The public sector benchmark has been used instead.

	HHW Demands	HHW Control	HHW Peer Support	HHW Managers' Support	HHW Relationships	HHW Change	Work/home Interface	Monitoring
Public Sector Max	3.77	4.32	4.09	4.12	4.06	3.89	4.36	4.2
Public Sector Mean	3.3	3.98	3.84	3.83	3.65	3.43	3.88	3.67
Public Sector Minimum	2.89	3.67	3.41	3.2	3.04	3.05	3.43	3.36
Public Sector Q1	3.19	3.82	3.75	3.7	3.55	3.28	3.72	3.49
Public Sector Q2	3.3	3.99	3.88	3.87	3.68	3.44	3.94	3.65
Public Sector Q3	3.46	4.11	3.95	3.96	3.73	3.57	3.99	3.8

Figure 10 HSE 2025 HHW Benchmarking Data for Public Sector

The findings from the HHW survey, against the benchmark interquartiles and broken down by all responses, responses from professional services staff and responses from curriculum staff, are shown in Figure 11.

- All staff: HHW Demands (3.34), HHW Peer Support (3.92), HHW Relationships (3.7), HHW Change (3.43) and Work/home Interface (3.88) are all equal to or above the Public Sector mean. HHW Control (3.92), HHW Managers' Support (3.81) and Monitoring (3.64) all sit just below the benchmark mean.

- Professional Services: Above benchmark across all domains; strongest areas are Work/home Interface (4.22) and HHW Managers' Support (4.17).
- Curriculum: Above benchmark mean for HHW Relationships (3.67). Close to the benchmark for HHW Peer Support (3.8). Slightly below benchmark for all others.

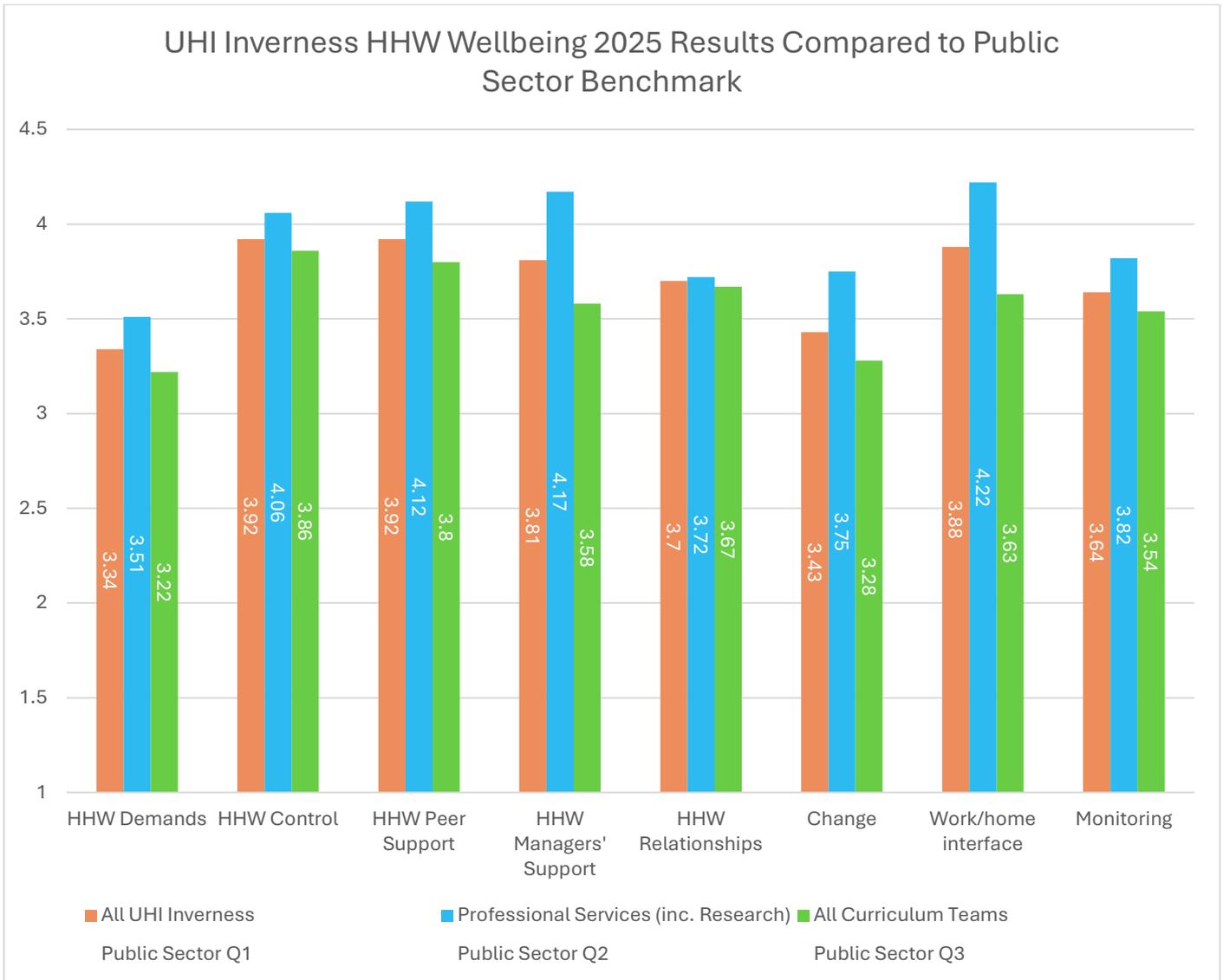


Figure 11 HHW Survey Results Chart

	HHW Demands	HHW Control	HHW Peer Support	HHW Managers' Support	HHW Relationships	HHW Change	Work/home interface	Monitoring
All UHI Inverness	3.34	3.92	3.92	3.81	3.7	3.43	3.88	3.64
Professional Services (inc. Research)	3.51	4.06	4.12	4.17	3.72	3.75	4.22	3.82

All Curriculum Teams	3.22	3.86	3.8	3.58	3.67	3.28	3.63	3.54
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Figure 12 HHW Survey Results Table

Draft Action Plan- For Discussion

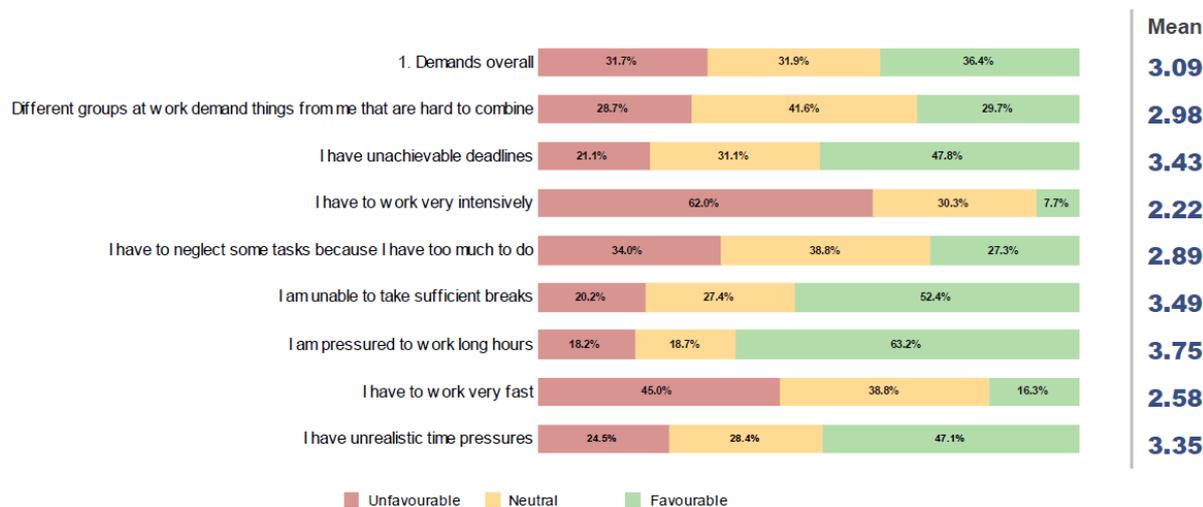
Action	Target Date	Status	Owner
Line managers to attend Stress Management Workshop	December '25	Complete	HSS Manager
Line Managers to meet with HSS Manager to further review survey results for their area	February '26		HSS Manager
Line Managers to utilise the HSE Stress Talking Toolkit to further explore issues of stress with their teams	June '26		Line Managers
All Line Managers to complete a stress risk assessment for their team. RAs to include all 6 management standards, with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demands • Relationships • Change 	June '26		HSS Manager
Establish an informal system for staff to raise concerns or highlight good practice, including anonymously, along the lines of the red button. This would be for staff who feel uncomfortable with something but do not want to raise it formally via grievance etc. Also provides opportunity for early intervention.	By start of AY26/27		HR
Develop a staff communication plan for next 12 months to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of Employee Assistance Programme • Management commitment for zero tolerance towards bullying and harassment • How to formally report concerns about behaviour, including inappropriate behaviour • Expectations for working hours (contracted hours and breaks etc.) • Other support services Able Futures, Mikey's Line etc. • Staff Wellbeing SharePoint • Etc. 	Start immediately		Leadership Forum

To be delivered via a variety of mediums including, but not limited to, staff briefings, Connect+, Wee Connect etc. and printed material.			
Deliver training to staff promoting expectations of respectful behaviour to others.	June '26		HR/ PD
Add specific wellbeing section to corporate induction to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAP • Working hours and breaks • Expectations for working hours (contracted hours and breaks etc.) • Other support services Able Futures, Mikey's Line etc. • Staff Wellbeing SharePoint • Etc. 	By start of AY26/27		H&S/ HR/ PD
Continue respect campaign to address anti-social, disruptive and abusive behaviour from students.	Ongoing	In progress	EMT
Develop a Workroom code of practice/ etiquette guidance to cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housekeeping • Noise • Consideration of others • Etc. 	May '26		Employee Engagement Group
Ensure questions raised by staff about UHI Transformation Programme are responded to in an honest, open and timely manner.	Ongoing		Principal and Board
Repeat Wellbeing Survey	November '26		HSS Manager

Appendix 1- Responses by Question (Main Survey)

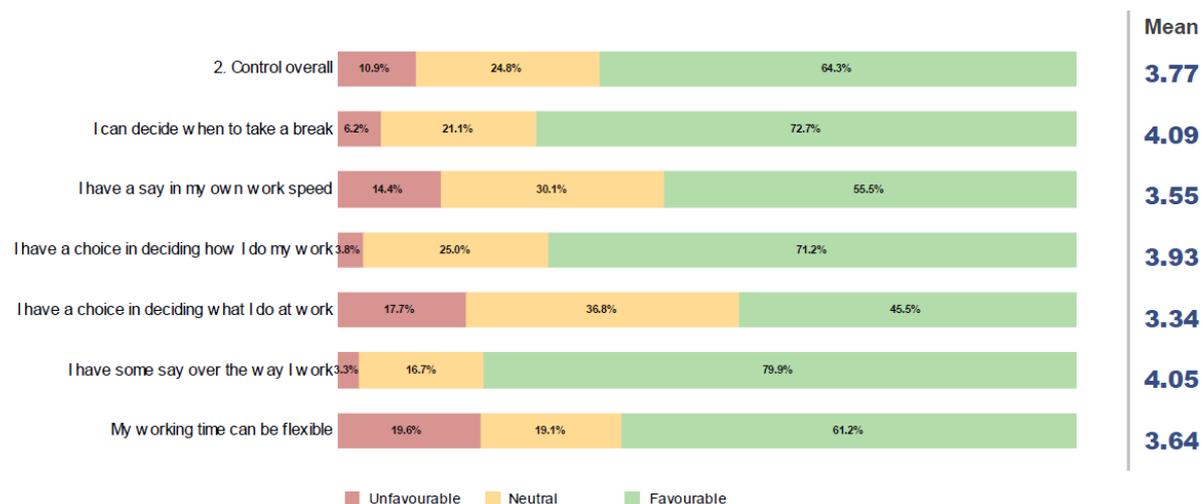
1. Demands

The Demands factor is made up of a number of statements that explore issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment. The findings for UHI Inverness (Current year) are presented below.



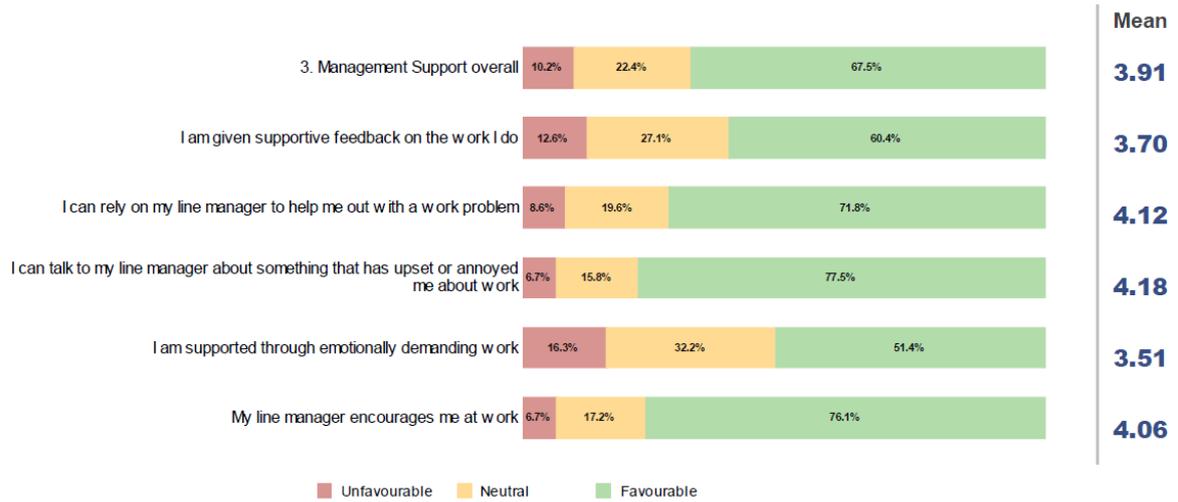
2. Control

The Control factor is made up of a number of statements that explore how much say the person has in the way they do their work. The findings for UHI Inverness (Current year) are presented below.



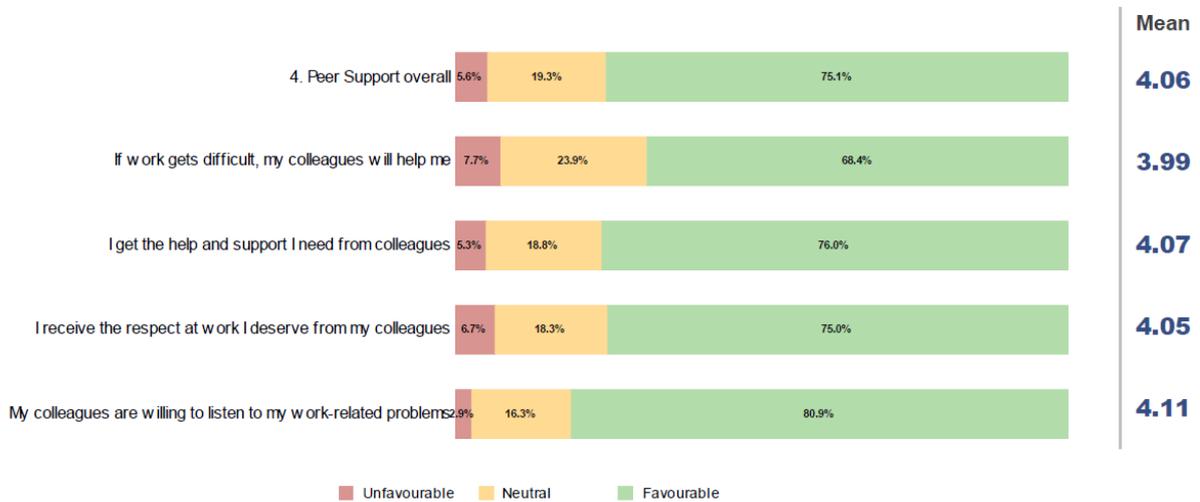
3. Management support

The Management Support factor is made up of a number of statements that explore the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation and line management. The findings for UHI Inverness (Current year) are presented below.



4. Peer support

The Peer Support factor is made up of a number of statements that explore the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by colleagues. The findings for UHI Inverness (Current year) are presented below.

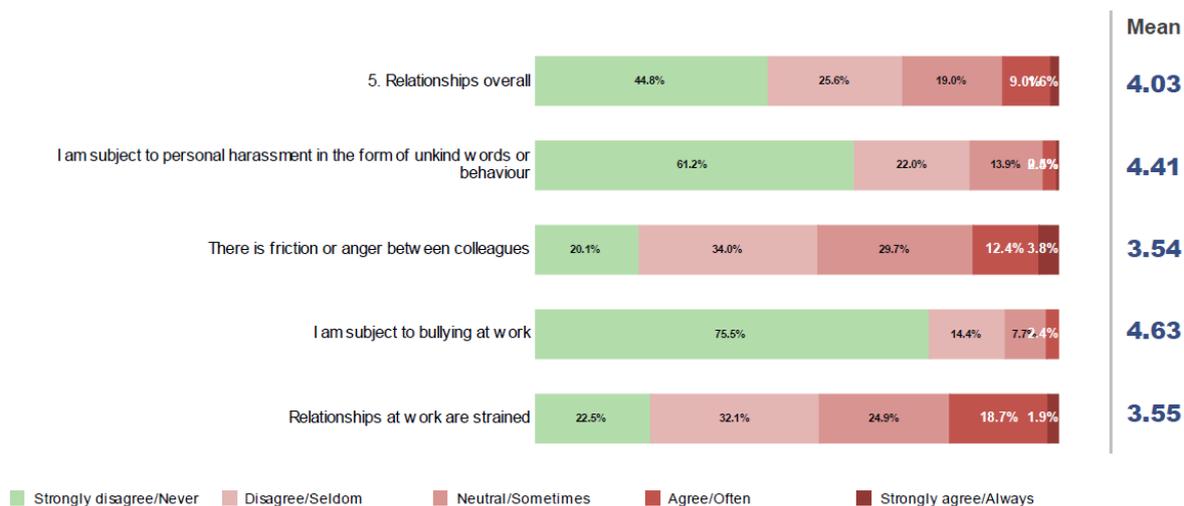


5. Relationships

The Relationships factor is made up of a number of statements that explore promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour. The findings for UHI Inverness (Current year) are presented below.

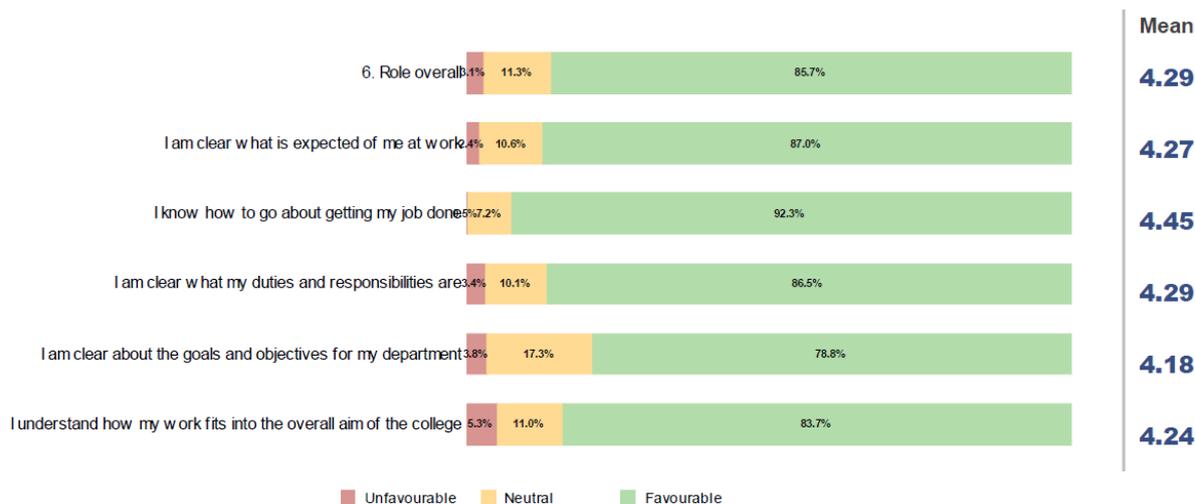
As you will see from the items below, a respondent who selects “Often/Agree” or “Always/Strongly agree” to these items would be reporting a potentially serious issue within your organisation.

The coding approach adopted above (Favourable / Neutral / Unfavourable) is adjusted here, to reflect the HSE’s view that any experience of bullying and harassment in the workplace is unacceptable and should be addressed by the organisation. Below, the proportion of responses for each response category are detailed, to provide greater granularity of your results.



6. Role

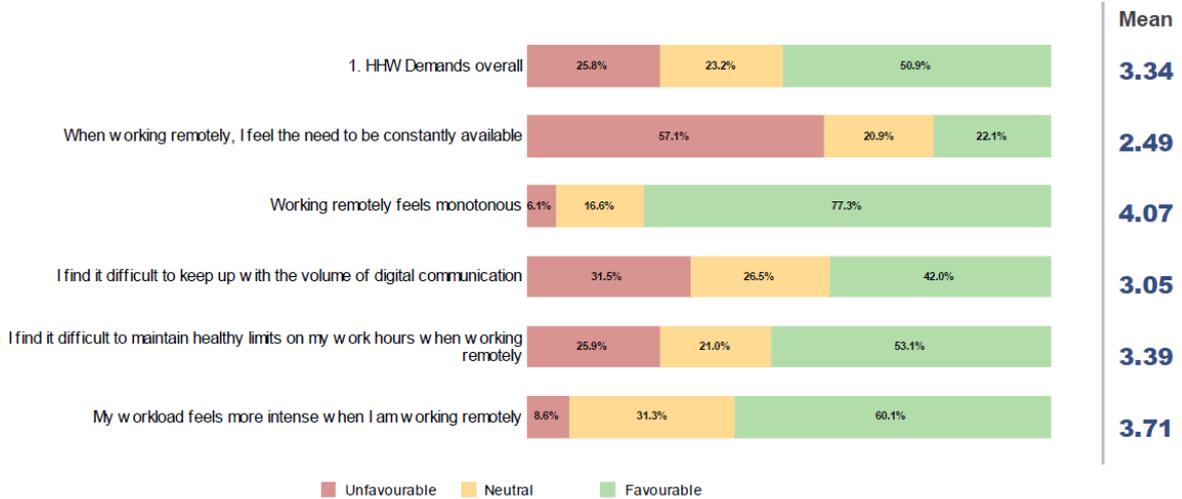
The Role factor is made up of a number of statements that explore whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles. The findings for UHI Inverness (Current year) are presented below.



Appendix 2- Responses by Question (HHW)

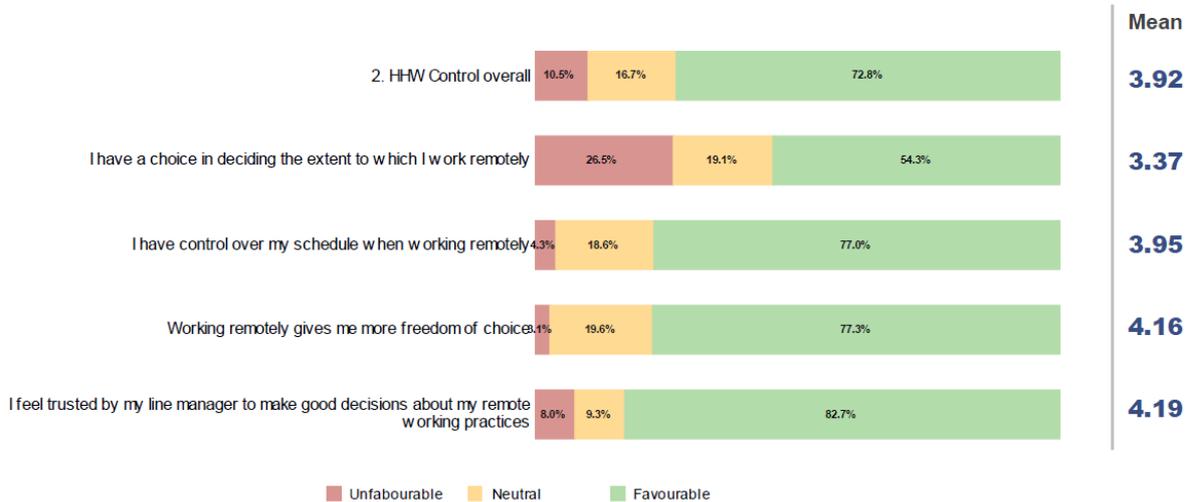
1. HHW Demands

The HHW Demands factor is made up of a number of statements that explore issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment when working remotely. The findings for UHI Inverness (Current year) are presented below.



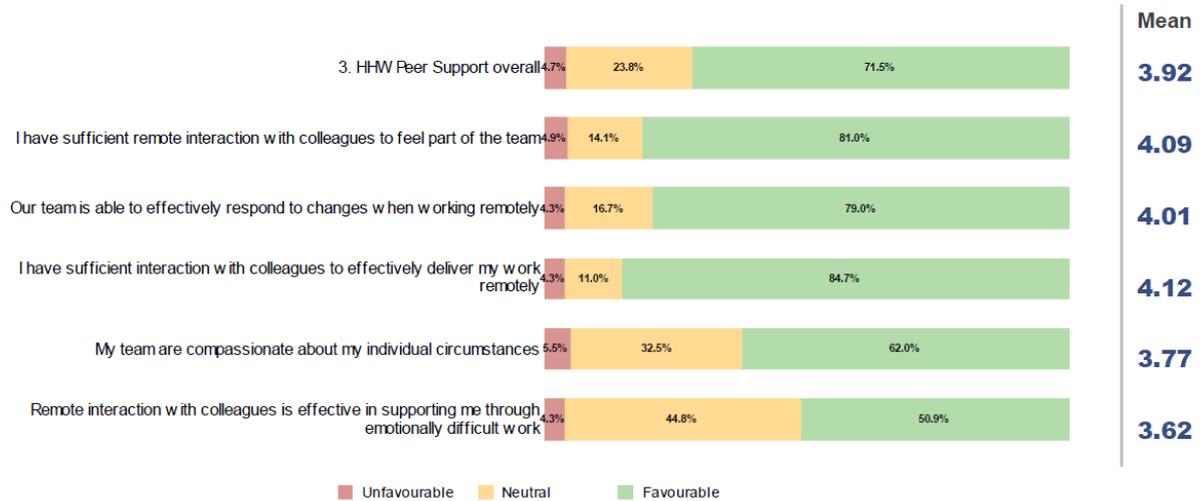
2. HHW Control

The HHW Control factor is made up of a number of statements that explore how much say the person has in the way they do their work when they are working remotely. The findings for UHI Inverness (Current year) are presented below.



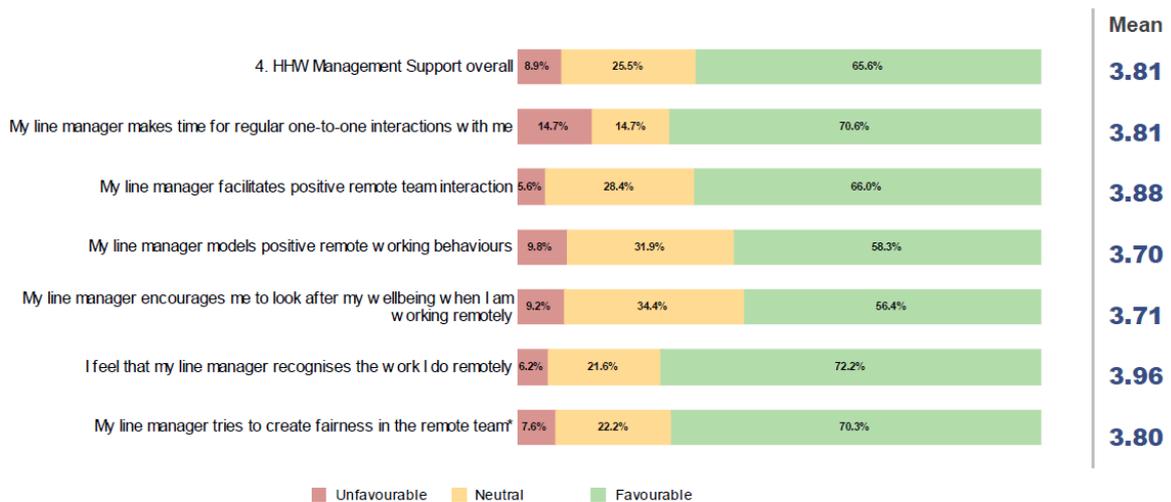
3. HHW Peer Support

The HHW Peer Support factor is made up of a number of statements that explore the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by colleagues when working remotely. The findings for UHI Inverness (Current year) are presented below.



4. HHW Management Support

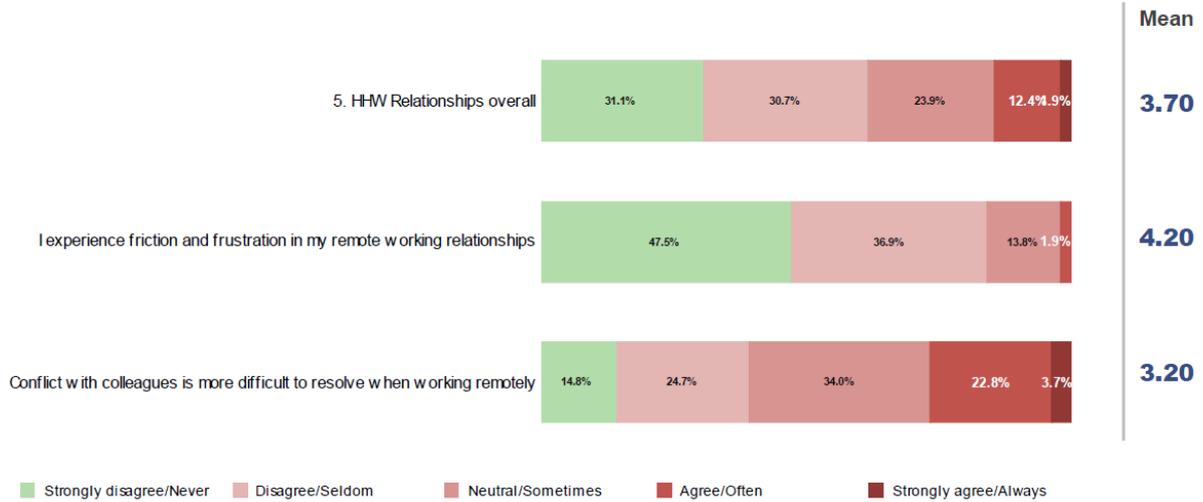
The HHW Management Support factor is made up of a number of statements that explore the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation and line management, when working remotely. The findings for UHI Inverness (Current year) are presented below.



5. HHW Relationships

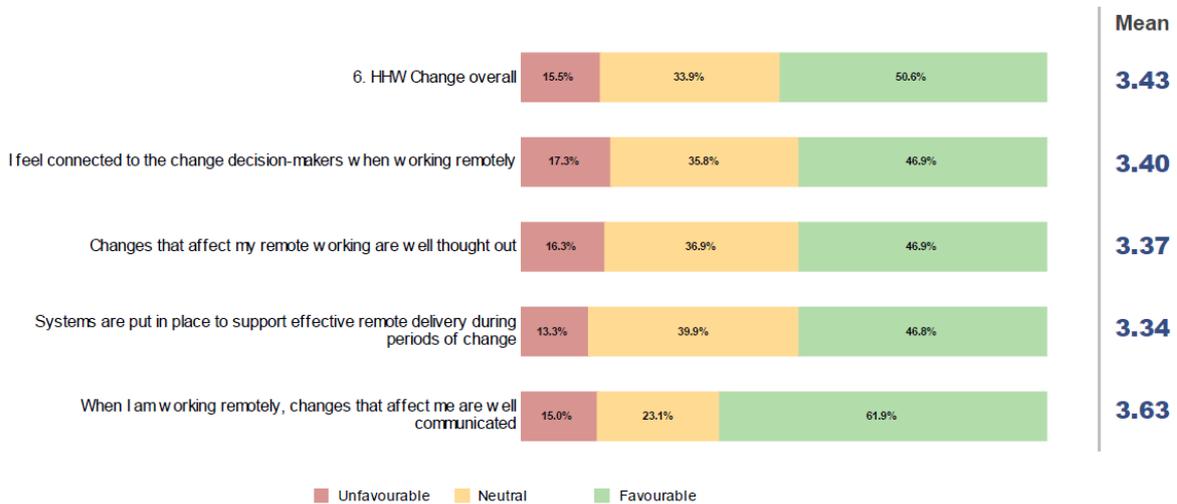
The HHW Relationships factor is made up of two statements that explore conflict and conflict resolution when working remotely. The findings for UHI Inverness (Current year) are presented below.

The coding approach adopted above (Favourable / Neutral / Unfavourable) is adjusted here, and instead, the proportion of responses for each response category are detailed, to provide greater granularity of your results.



6. HHW Change

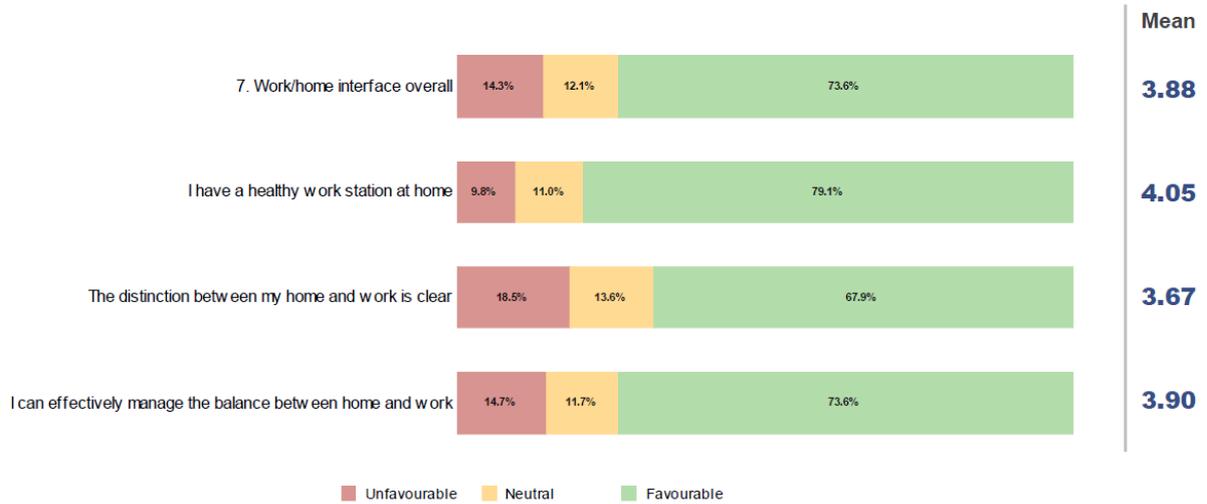
The HHW Change factor is made up of a number of statements that explore how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation when working remotely. The findings for UHI Inverness (Current year) are presented below.



7. Work/Home Interface

The Work/Home Interface factor is made up of three statements that explore risks associated with balancing work and home when working remotely. The findings for UHI Inverness (Current year) are presented below.

These questions are positively phrased so that a score of 5 (“Strongly agree”) would indicate low risk, and a score of 1 (“Strongly disagree”) would indicate high risk.



HR Committee Meeting

Subject/Title:	Employment Act 2025 Update
Author: [Name and Job title]	Annabelle Cowie, Anderson & Strathern
Meeting:	HR Committee
Meeting Date:	12 March 2026
Date Paper prepared:	05 March 2026
Brief Executive Summary of the paper:	<p>The report provides updates on following aspects of the Employment Act 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade Unions • Family Leave Reform (April 2026) • Harassment • Statutory Sick Pay Reform (April 2026) • Employment Tribunal Time Limits (From December 2025 and October 2026) • 2027 Significant changes
Action requested: [Approval, recommendation, discussion, noting]	Discussion and Noting
Link to Strategy: Please highlight how the paper links to, or assists with: - compliance - partnership services - risk management - strategic plan - new opportunity/change	Legal compliance
Resource implications:	If yes, please specify:
Risk implications:	If yes, please specify: Operational: Organisational:

Equality and Diversity implications:	If yes, please specify:
Consultation: [staff, students, UHI & Partners, External] and provide detail	N/A

Status – [Non confidential]	Non-Confidential		
Freedom of Information Can this paper be included in “open” business* [Yes]	Yes		
*If a paper should not be included within “open” business, please highlight below the reason.			
Its disclosure would substantially prejudice a programme of research (S27)		Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs (S30)	
Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the commercial interests of any person or organisation (S33)		Its disclosure would constitute a breach of confidence actionable in court (S36)	
Its disclosure would constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act (S38)		Other (please give further details)	
For how long must the paper be withheld? (express either as the time which needs to pass or a condition which needs to be met.)			

Further guidance on application of the exclusions from Freedom of Information legislation is available via

<http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/ScottishPublicAuthorities/ScottishPublicAuthorities.asp> and

http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/web/FILES/Public_Interest_Test.pdf

Employment Act 2025 – what this means for employers in 2026

The Employment Rights Act 2025 (“the ERA 2025”) received Royal Assent on 18 December 2025, fundamentally altering the employment law landscape.

This paper summarises the key provisions expected to affect employers in 2026 and highlights practical steps employers should consider.

Trade Unions

The ERA 2025 contains provisions affecting trade union rights which will impact both unionised and non-unionised employers.

What has already changed? Repeal of the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023

On 18 December 2025, the ERA 2025 repealed the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023 which enabled the Secretary of State to set minimum service levels for strikes in "relevant services" in the fields of health, transport, education, fire and rescue, border control, and nuclear decommissioning and radioactive waste management services. The repeal means that all associated powers, regulations and defined terms relating to minimum service levels cease to apply.

In force 18 February 2026 - strengthened protections against blacklisting

Before the ERA 2025, the law allowed the Secretary of State to ban the creation of lists that employers or employment agencies (which can include recruitment agencies) might use to discriminate against people when hiring or managing staff.

The ERA 2025 removes the words “By employers or employment agencies” and it will enable the Secretary of State to be able to make laws to prohibit:

- the use of lists which contain details of members of trade unions, or persons who have taken part in the activities of trade unions, for the purposes of discrimination in relation to recruitment or in relation to the treatment of workers; and
- the sale or supply of such lists with a view to being used for those purposes.

In force 18 February 2026 - industrial action

Notice of industrial action must be provided to the employer by the trade union after it has secured a ballot mandate before any action is taken. The ERA 2025 will reduce the notice of industrial action from 14 days to 10 days.

The ERA 2025 will also reduce the information a union must include on the ballot notice and sample voting papers to employers, as well as reducing the information the union must provide to a member with ballot results.

Further, union member support for industrial action will automatically expire after 12 months – it was previously 6 months subject to extension. Unions will also no longer be required to supervise picketing.

Expected October 2026

From October 2026, further reforms regarding trade unions are anticipated, including:

- A new right for qualifying trade unions to access workplaces physically and by communication with workers.
- Employers to give workers a written statement advising that they have a right to join a trade union.
- A simplified path to union recognition, including removal of the turnout threshold for ballots.
- Right to time off and facilities for union equality representatives. The change provides:

“An employer that permits an employee to take time off as required by this section must, where requested by the employee, provide the employee with such accommodation and other facilities for carrying out the duties or undergoing the training for which the employee takes time off as is reasonable in all the circumstances, having regard to any relevant provisions of a Code of Practice issued by Acas.”

This will however require commencement regulations and an Acas Code of Practice.

- Protection against detriment for taking industrial action. This will however require further substantive regulations and the government intends to launch a consultation with a view to bringing measures into force in October 2026.

Practical points:

- Expect an increase in operation challenges and legal risks for industrial action.
- Review internal industrial relations strategy and dispute resolution procedures to check they are fit for purpose.
- Review existing relationships with a view to building an effective and strong industrial relations framework.
- Train managers on handling the potential increased union presence and workplace access.
- Review data privacy, confidentiality, and health and safety protocols for third-party access to premises.
- Contracts of employment and other written particulars should be updated to incorporate the duty to inform, once the final details are confirmed.
- Employers with existing time off arrangements will need to review policies, and how they are implemented locally by managers, to comply.

Family Leave Reform (April 2026)

Under current law, employees must have at least 26 weeks' continuous service by the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth to qualify for statutory paternity leave.

For unpaid parental leave, an employee needs one year's service at the time the leave begins.

Coming into force on 6 April 2026, unpaid leave will become a day one right for eligible employees for paternity leave. This means new parents can take leave as soon as they start employment.

For eligible employers, paternity leave also becomes a day one right.

However, although paternity leave itself becomes available from day one, the eligibility criteria for statutory paternity pay - a minimum of 26 weeks' service by the 15th week before the due date - will remain unchanged.

Additionally, paternity leave can be used either before or after shared parental leave, giving much greater flexibility.

Practical points:

- A wider pool of employees, including those in probation, will be eligible to take leave.
 - HR and managers should plan for increased leave requests from new starters.
 - Policies and procedures should be updated ahead of April.
 - While the financial impact may be minimal (because statutory pay rules remain unchanged), operational disruption could increase.
-

Harassment

Duty to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment

Currently, the Equality Act 2010 requires employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of their employees during the course of their employment. Expected in October 2026, the ERA 2025 will amend the Equality Act 2010 to require employers to take “all reasonable steps” to prevent sexual harassment.

Additionally, expected in October 2026, employers will be under a duty to take “all reasonable steps” to prevent third-party harassment in relation to all relevant protected characteristics. This means that in addition to an employer being prohibited from harassing their own employees or job applicants, employers must also not permit a third party to harass their employees. A “third party” is a person other than the employer or one of its employees.

Practical points:

- The duty to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment for employees, including by third parties, will be onerous on employers.
- It will be important to at least carry out/update training, complete staff surveys and create/review any relevant policies.

Statutory Sick Pay Reform (April 2026)

Currently, SSP is only payable from the fourth day of illness, and employees must earn at least £125 per week to qualify. The rate is currently £118.75 per week or 80% of the employee's average weekly earnings, whichever is lower.

From April 2026, SSP becomes payable from day one (rather than day four) and the lower earnings limit (£125 per week) is removed, making many more workers eligible.

Practical points:

- Budgeting and forecasting will need to take account of possible cost increases.
- As SSP will now be payable from day one, employers may have to contend with a hike in single day absences. Although the reform aims to *reduce* long-term sickness.
- Absence management processes should be reviewed.
- Payroll systems and HR teams should prepare to calculate SSP correctly.
- Clear internal communication to managers and employees is recommended so that expectations are clear and compliance is maintained.

Employment Tribunal Time Limits (From December 2025 and October 2026)

The ERA brings structural changes aimed at relieving pressure on Acas and Employment Tribunals.

Currently, employees have three months from the date of the alleged breach to make a claim. Before lodging a claim, employees are required to go through ACAS Early Conciliation, which paused the limitation period for up to six weeks.

Since December 2025, Early Conciliation period was extended to 12 weeks, giving parties more time to resolve disputes before formal proceedings. It is understood that the 12 week period will be reviewed in October 2026 to decide on its effectiveness.

Effective from October 2026, the time limit for lodging most tribunal claims will be extended from three months to six months. This is a significant change giving more flexibility to employees and reduces the pressure to submit the claim quickly.

Practical points:

- A likely increase in claims: employees will have more time to seek advice and prepare their case.
 - DSARs (data subject access requests) will become more strategically significant: employees may obtain documents in time to inform a claim within the extended limitation window.
 - Employers will need to keep accurate records for longer periods to defend claims effectively. This includes disciplinary notes, grievance records, and correspondence relating to employment decisions.
 - Managers should be reminded of the importance of robust record keeping and proactive risk management.
-

2027 Significant changes

The most significant changes won't come into force until January 2027. They are

1. the requirement for an unfair dismissal claim to be continuously employed for two years being reduced to six months;
2. the removal of the cap on compensation for unfair dismissal claims; and
3. the right to guaranteed hours and shift scheduling.

This means that anyone being recruited in the second part of 2026 will have these enhanced rights making effective monitoring of performance and efficiency of those staff key at an early stage.

Conclusion: Preparing for a transformative year

The ERA 2025 introduces some of the most wide-ranging reforms in recent memory. While not all measures take effect in 2026, the majority of significant changes (particularly in relation to trade union law, family leave, sick pay, and tribunal deadlines) will.

For employers, priorities for 2026 should include:

- Updating policies and contractual documentation.
- Training managers on new rights and obligations.
- Reviewing industrial relations strategies and workforce planning.
- Strengthening documentation and record-keeping processes.
- Ensuring payroll and HR systems are prepared for new entitlements.

Keeping ahead of these changes will not only ensure compliance but also place businesses in a stronger position to manage risk and support their employees through a shifting legal landscape.

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Subject/Title:	Strategic Planning 2026-27
Author: [Name and Job title]	Ludka Orłowska-Kowal Governance Officer
Meeting:	HR Committee
Meeting Date:	12 March 2026
Date Paper prepared:	03 March 2026
Brief Executive Summary of the paper:	<p>This paper provides the HR Committee with an update on agreed and proposed actions at the Board Away Day on 04/02/2026.</p> <p>Following documents need reviewing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference of the HR Committee • Code of Good Governance 2025-26 <p>The Committee are asked to review and propose changes to the above documents that would reflect the actual current scope and remit of the HR Committee.</p>
Action requested: [Approval, recommendation, discussion, noting]	Discussion and Noting.
Link to Strategy: Please highlight how the paper links to, or assists with:: <input type="checkbox"/> compliance <input type="checkbox"/> partnership services <input type="checkbox"/> risk management <input type="checkbox"/> strategic plan <input type="checkbox"/> new opportunity/change	Governance Compliance
Resource implications:	Yes / No If yes, please specify:
Risk implications:	Yes / No If yes, please specify: Operational: Organisational:
Equality and Diversity implications:	Yes/ No If yes, please specify:

Student Experience Impact:	Yes/No If yes, please specify:		
Consultation: [staff, students, UHI & Partners, External] and provide detail	N/A		
Status – [Confidential/Non confidential]	Non-Confidential		
Freedom of Information Can this paper be included in “open” business* [Yes/No]	Yes		
*If a paper should not be included within “open” business, please highlight below the reason.			
Its disclosure would substantially prejudice a programme of research (S27)		Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs (S30)	
Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the commercial interests of any person or organisation (s33)		Its disclosure would constitute a breach of confident actionable in court (s36)	
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http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/web/FILES/Public_Interest_Test.pdf

Purpose of the report

The Committee is asked to review and propose changes to the attached documents that would reflect the actual current scope and remit of the HR Committee.

Executive Summary

The Chair of the Board requested at the last Board Away Day in February for all Committees to review the current scope and remit of the individual Committees and reflect any changes in the governance documents. A Strategic Day will take place in May 2026, date/time tbc, to review all feedback received and propose amendments to the governance documents.

The LTR Committee is asked to review the attached documents and provide feedback to the Governance Officer during and after the meeting.

Progress update:

- Item 13.a - Terms of Reference of the Audit Committee
- Item 13.b – Code of Good Governance 2025/26

The HR Committee members are asked to provide verbal and/or written feedback in regard to the documents above by Tuesday 31st March 2026. All feedback gathered will be shared with the Committee Chair in early April 2026 and then will be presented at the Strategic Day in May 2026.

Any changes within the governance documents relating to the HR Committee will be presented to the Committee at the June meeting for consideration and approval. Once approved by the Committee the updated documents will be presented to the Board of Management for comments and approval.

Human Resources Committee Terms of Reference

Membership

Not less than five Board Members, including the Chair and Principal who are members *ex officio*.

Co-opted members can sit on the Committee.

The Vice Chair of the Committee or another nominated member of the Committee, may deputise in the absence of the Chair. A member of the Executive Management Team may deputise in the Principal's absence.

Quorum

Three members of the Committee entitled to vote upon the items before the meeting.

Frequency of Meetings

The Committee shall meet no less than four times each year.

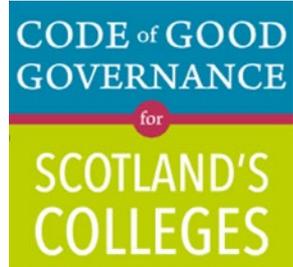
Remit

The Committee has overall strategic responsibility for developing, monitoring and enhancing the direction and oversight of all personnel matters relating to the function of the Board of Management as employer of the College's staff.

The Committee shall support, scrutinise and enhance the development and auditing of all human resource strategies and work streams and this shall include:

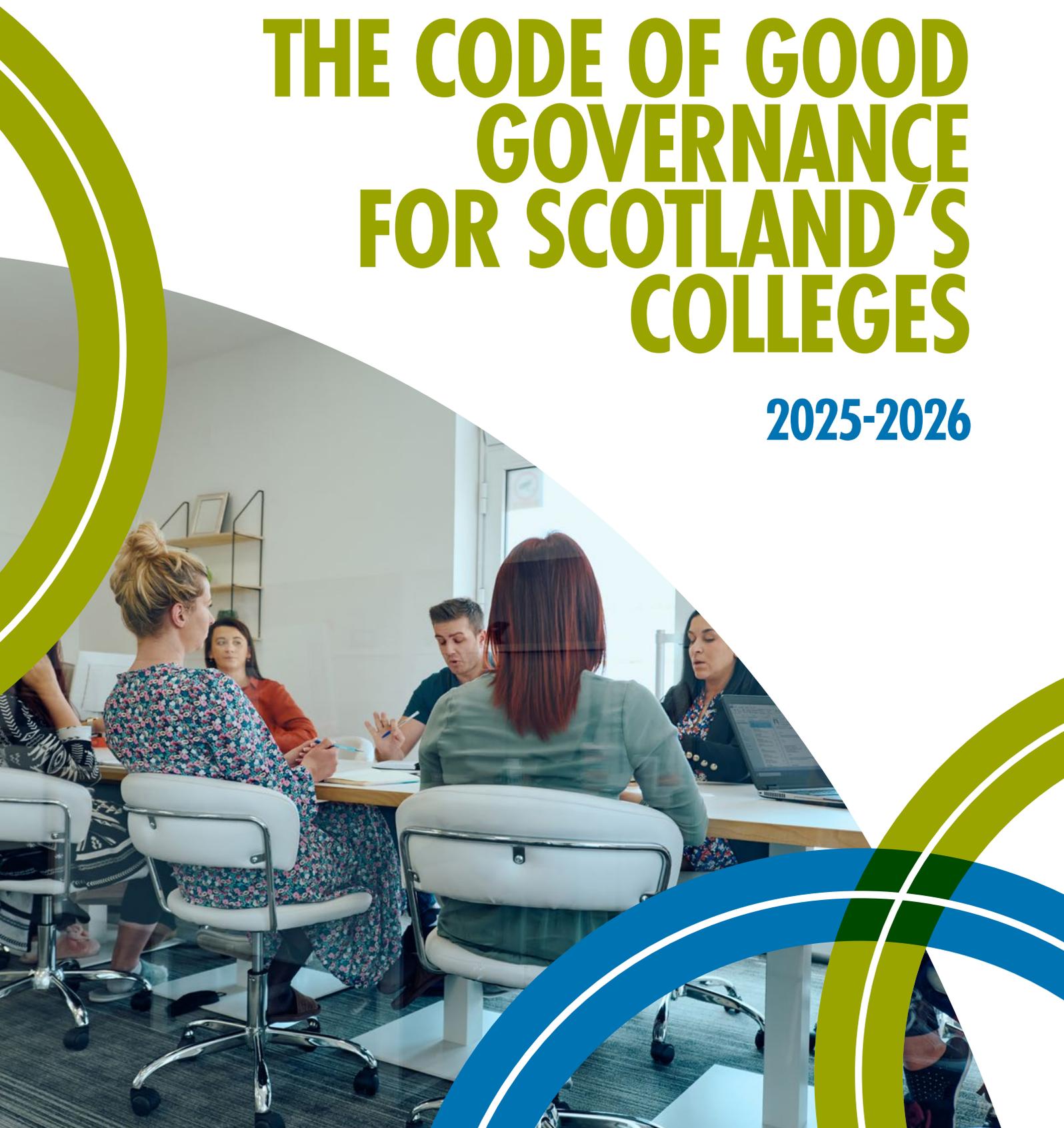
1. The development and implementation of the Talent Management Strategy and the monitoring of actual performance against KPIs.
2. The development and implementation of human resources measures surrounding turnover, absence, diversity and teaching qualifications.
3. Monitor and observe that the College has appropriate succession plans in place for senior management, teaching and support staff.

4. Receive, consider and discuss all Human Resource policies within the College.
5. Support, scrutinise and enhance the provision of occupational health support, the provision of legal services and consideration of legal guidance provided to us, the provision of computerised human resources systems and a Job Evaluation system.
6. Monitor, develop and enhance—progress with regards Equality, Diversity and Inclusion through our Equality Impact Assessments, our Equality Outcomes and our Mainstreaming Report.
7. Monitor, develop, enhance and observe that the College provides appropriate Staff training and development.
8. Develop, enhance and observe that the College has in place an effective Performance Management framework which is received, considered and discussed through regular statistical reports to the Committee.
9. Support, scrutinise, enhance and observe that appropriate arrangements are in place for effective dialogue with trade unions.
10. Support, scrutinise, enhance and observe that pay and conditions of employment are properly determined and that pension arrangements are monitored and observed.
11. Support, scrutinise, and observe that the college is operating within all legal requirements relating to employment law and other legislation affecting employment.
12. Support, scrutinise and enhance the development and implementation of appropriate arrangements to provide assurance of the effective and respectful working relations across the EMT and the wider staff body.



THE CODE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES

2025-2026



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1. BACKGROUND

The original *Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges* was published in December 2014. The Code is reviewed and updated annually by the Good Governance Steering Group. This is the edition for the 2025-26 session.

Colleges Scotland will act as custodian for any future reviews in liaison with the Good Governance Steering Group and in keeping with the way that the Code was created, the broad range of stakeholders who developed the Code will be engaged fully with any revisions. CDN will take responsibility for the production and dissemination of the Code document.

This Code refers to regional colleges, assigned colleges and regional strategic bodies.



2. FOREWORD

Colleges in Scotland thrive in the heart of their communities, serving the interests of those communities, students, employers, governments and their agencies and other stakeholders. They have an essential and valuable role in Scottish society. Colleges deliver 68 million hours of learning each year, and 95% of these learning hours lead to a recognised qualification. Across Scotland colleges employ 14,000 staff and deliver education, skills and training to 248,900 students and 14,830 apprentices. .

Colleges receive substantial public funding and also operate in an increasingly commercial and enterprising way. We value the significant contribution college board members make to governing our colleges and regional strategic bodies, and to their stewardship of taxpayer's money, ensuring its efficient and effective use.

Boards are expected to innovate, pursue new opportunities and take measured risks in delivering what is best for their stakeholders.

Against this background, it is right and proper that the highest standards of governance and propriety are expected of our boards and those individuals who serve them. This Code of Good Governance codifies the principles of good

governance for learners and learning that already exist in our colleges and promotes accountability and continuous improvement in how colleges and regional strategic bodies are governed.

The Code is based on key principles and has been written in a way that is mandatory and anticipates compliance. All colleges that receive funding from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) or from a regional strategic body must comply with the Code as a term and condition of grant. Exceptions should be rare and must be explained publicly.

In addition to demonstrating good governance, colleges and regional strategic bodies must also ensure compliance with their statutory and other obligations. The governance professional role is vital in providing guidance to the board on its legal and other obligations.

Colleges have an important individual and collective role to play in promoting economic, social, and cultural well-being. We expect this Code to provide the essential underpinning to help discharge that role to the highest standards possible.

Dr David C. Watt OBE

Chair of the Good Governance Steering Group



3. CODE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES

Governance and the Code

Corporate governance:

- is the way in which organisations are directed and controlled within a legislative and regulatory framework
- defines the distribution of rights and responsibilities among the different stakeholders and participants in the organisation
- determines the rules and procedures for making decisions on corporate affairs including the process through which the organisation's objectives are set
- provides the means of achieving those objectives and monitoring performance.

Scotland's colleges refer to colleges either funded by SFC or by a regional strategic body for the provision of education. Such colleges can be incorporated or non-incorporated. The overarching purpose of good governance for Scotland's colleges is to:

- lead the college, region or regional strategic body and set its strategic direction and values
- ensure effective management and financial controls to support the student experience within a framework of public accountability and transparency
- deliver high quality learning and outcomes.

The *Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges* has been developed and is owned by the college sector. Colleges are required to comply with it as a condition of grant from either SFC or their regional strategic body. It establishes standards of good governance practice for all boards and provides the essential foundations for compliance within the legislative framework.

Boards must not only follow the letter but also the spirit of the Code to ensure good governance. Boards must think deeply, thoroughly and on a continuing basis about their overall tasks and the implications of these for the roles of their individual members. Key to this is the leadership of the chair, the support given to and by the principal, and the frankness and openness of mind with which issues are discussed and tackled by all board members.

Statement of Compliance with Good Governance

Each board must state its adoption of the Code in the corporate governance statement contained in its annual financial statement. The chair, on behalf of the board, is expected to report as to how the principles have been applied by the board. Where, for whatever reason, a board's practice is not consistent with any principle of the Code, it should make this known to SFC or, if it is an assigned college, the regional strategic body. This should be done immediately they become aware of an inconsistency and, without exception, in advance of publishing the information. An explanation for that inconsistency must be clearly stated in its corporate governance statement. Boards will be expected to offer a clear rationale for exceptions in the context of their college's operational model and to identify mitigations.

Individual board members have a duty to act on serious concerns about the governance of their body. Information on who board members can approach is included in *The Guide for Board Members in the College Sector* available from the College Development Network.

4. PRINCIPLES

Section A: Leadership and Strategy

Conduct in Public Life

- A.1 Every college and regional strategic body must be governed by an effective board that is collectively responsible for setting, demonstrating, and upholding the values and ethos of the organisation.
- A.2 Every board member must ensure that they are familiar with, and their actions comply with the provisions of their board's Code of Conduct.
- A.3 The *Nine Principles of Public Life in Scotland*, which incorporate the seven Nolan principles, must be the basis for board decisions and behaviour. These key principles, which apply individually and collectively, are:
- Duty/Public Service
 - Selflessness
 - Integrity
 - Objectivity
 - Accountability and Stewardship
 - Openness
 - Honesty
 - Leadership
 - Respect

Vision and Strategy

- A.4 The board is responsible for determining their institution's values, vision, strategic direction, educational character, , and ethos. Regional strategic bodies must also determine the regional strategy for colleges assigned to them. The board of an assigned college must have regard to the strategy determined by the regional strategic body. Board members have a collective leadership role in fostering an environment that enables the body to fulfil its mission and meet Scottish Government priorities, for the benefit of students and the community it serves.
- A.5 The board must develop and articulate a clear vision for the region or college. This should be a formally agreed statement of its aims and desired outcomes which should be used as the basis for its overall strategy and planning processes.
- A.6 The board provides overall strategic leadership of the region or college. The board is responsible for formulating and agreeing strategy by identifying strategic priorities and providing direction within a structured planning framework.
- A.7 The board (except in the case of assigned college boards) is responsible for overseeing the negotiation of its funding agreement with SFC, to meet the needs of the college or region and make best use of available funding, consistent with national strategy.
- A.8 The roles and responsibilities of the boards of assigned colleges should be undertaken in the context of the roles and responsibilities of their regional strategic body.



Performance

A.9 The board must ensure that a comprehensive performance measurement system is in place which is clearly linked to the regional strategic framework and identifies key performance indicators. It must ensure that it scrutinises performance measures and reports these on their website in a manner that is both timely and accessible to stakeholders. This will allow the board to determine whether or not the vision and mission of the region or the college are being fulfilled and that the interests of stakeholders are being met.

A.11 The board must exercise its functions with a view to improving economic, cultural and social wellbeing in the locality of the college or region. It must have regard to social and economic needs and social inclusion.

A.12 The board must provide leadership in equality and diversity.

A.13 The board must seek to reflect in its membership, the make-up of the community through offering maximum opportunity of membership to a range of potential members and removing potential barriers to membership, in partnership with its regional strategic body, as appropriate.

Corporate Social Responsibility

A.10 The board must demonstrate high levels of corporate social responsibility by ensuring it behaves ethically and contributes to economic development while seeking to improve the quality of life of the local community, society at large and its workforce.



Section B: Quality of the Student Experience

Student Engagement

- B.1 The board must have close regard to the voice of its students and the quality of the student experience should be central to all board decisions.
- B.2 The board must lead by example in relation to openness, by ensuring that there is meaningful on-going engagement and dialogue with students, the students' association and as appropriate staff and trade unions in relation to the quality of the student experience. Consultation is essential where significant changes are being proposed.
- B.3 The board must consider the outcome of student surveys and other student engagements and monitor action plans that could impact on the quality of the student experience.
- B.4 The college board must have regard to the [Framework for the Development of Strong and Effective College Students' Association in Scotland](#). It must put in place robust partnership procedures (e.g. partnership agreement) to work together to achieve change and which are supported by regular and open communications.
- B.5 The college board must encourage a strong and autonomous students' association and ensure that the students' association is adequately resourced.

B.6 The college board must ensure that the students' association operates in a fair and democratic manner and fulfils its responsibilities.

B.7 The college board should review the written constitution of its students' association at least every five years.

Relevant and High-Quality Learning

B.8 The board must seek to secure coherent provision for students, having regard to other provision in the region or college's locality. The board must be aware of external local, national and international bodies and their impact on the quality of the student experience, including community planning partners, employers, skills development and enterprise agencies and employer bodies. The board must seek to foster good relationships and ensure that the body works in partnership with external bodies to enhance the student experience, including employability and the relevance of learning to industry needs.

Quality Monitoring and Oversight

B.9 The board must ensure appropriate mechanisms are in place for the effective oversight of the quality and inclusivity of the learning experience in the college or region. The board must ensure that the college works in partnership with sector quality agencies and other appropriate bodies to support and promote quality enhancement and high-quality services for students.



Section C: Accountability

Accountability and Delegation

- C.1 The board is primarily accountable to its main funder, either SFC or its regional strategic body. Through the chain of funding, the body is ultimately responsible to the Scottish Ministers who are accountable to the Scottish Parliament.
- C.2 The board must ensure delivery of its agreed outcomes or in the case of an assigned college, its agreed contribution to the region's agreed outcomes.
- C.3 The board must ensure it fulfils its statutory duties and other obligations on it, and that the terms and conditions of its grant are being met.
- C.4 Scottish Ministers have powers to suspend or remove by order any or all board members of an incorporated college (except the principal) or a regional board for serious or repeated breaches of a term and condition of grant.
- C.5 The board also has a wider accountability to a range of stakeholders including students (both current and prospective), its staff, the wider public, employers and the community it serves, for the provision high quality education that improves people's life chances and social and economic well-being.
- C.6 Incorporated colleges and regional boards must maintain and publicly disclose a current register of interests for all board members. Board members have a personal responsibility to ensure any changes to their register of interests are notified timeously to the governance professional and to declare any specific conflicts of interest in the business of the meeting prior to the commencement of each meeting of the board and its committees and withdraw from meetings as appropriate.
- See section D.6 for the 'objective test' for judging if there is a conflict of interest.
- C.7 The board must ensure that its decision-making processes are transparent, properly informed, rigorous and timely, and that appropriate and effective systems of financial and operational control, quality, management of staff, risk assessment and management are established, monitored, continuously improved and appropriately impact assessed. This includes:
- the prompt production, dissemination and online publication of board/committee agendas, minutes and papers to the public
 - every board meeting and every committee meeting having a well-structured agenda circulated timeously in advance
 - the retention of all key documentation which help justify the decisions made by the board and its committees
 - setting quorum for board and committee meetings in line with good practice and preferably at 50% or higher are non-executive members. A board should satisfy itself that adequate arrangements are in place to ensure that decisions it has delegated to a committee are taken with a non-executive majority. When determining a quorum, the chair of the board may be considered to be a non-executive member. (see Annex 1 for the definition of non-executive)
- C.8 The board may delegate responsibilities to committees for the effective conduct of board business. As a minimum the committees required are Audit, Remuneration, Finance and Nominations/Appointments. Delegation of responsibilities from and matters reserved to the board and its committees must be set out in a scheme of delegation including the functions delegated by the board to the chair, committees, the principal and the governance professional (and any other members of staff).

Incorporated college boards and regional boards have no powers to delegate functions to an individual board member (except the chair who has no authority to act out with their delegated powers).

- C.9 The board must ensure every board committee has a specified member of the management team to provide objective, specialist advice to support it to discharge its remit, including by explaining in an accessible way the matters under discussion and the possible implications of different options.
- C.10 The board must consider and have in place procedures to ensure effective working relationships and constructive dialogue amongst the board as a whole and ensure there are effective reporting and two-way communications between committees and the board. The board must ensure that discussions and decisions of every committee are accurately recorded and reported to the board, no later than the next meeting of the board.

Risk Management

- C.11 The board of a college or a regional body is responsible for the overall management of risk and opportunity. It must set the risk appetite of the body and ensure there is an appropriate balance between risk and opportunity and that this is communicated via the principal to the body's management team.
- C.12 The board must ensure that sound risk management and internal control systems are in place and maintained. It must ensure there is a formal on-going process for identifying, reporting, evaluating and managing the body's significant risks and review the effectiveness of risk management, business continuity planning and internal control systems.

Audit Committee

- C.13 The Audit Committee must support the board and the principal by reviewing the comprehensiveness, reliability and integrity of assurances including the body's governance, risk management and internal control framework. The Scottish Government Audit and Assurance Committee Handbook promotes the development of an assurance framework to aid the Committee in fulfilling this role. See [Audit and Assurance Committee Handbook](#)
- C.14 The scope of the Audit Committee's work must be defined in its terms of reference and encompass all the assurance needs of the board and the principal. The Audit Committee must have particular engagement with internal and external audit, and must work with management and auditors to resolve any issues in relation to financial reporting.
- C.15 The Audit Committee must promptly pursue recommendations arising from audit reports and must monitor their implementation.
- C.16 The membership of the Audit Committee cannot include the board chair or the principal and, in line with the Audit and Assurance Committee Handbook, 'executive members of the organisation should not be appointed to the Audit and Assurance Committee', and the majority of members must be non-executive. The role of the college executive is to attend meetings at the invitation of the committee chair and to provide information for particular agenda items.
- C.17 The Audit Committee terms of reference must provide for the committee to sit privately without any non-members present for all or part of a meeting if they so decide. The Audit Committee members should meet with the internal and external auditors without the executive team present at least annually.

C.18 At least one member of the Audit Committee should have recent relevant financial or audit experience.

Remuneration Committee

- C.19 It is essential that members of the Remuneration Committee understand their role and responsibilities. Members must undertake the online training module for Remuneration Committees provided by College Development Network within one month of appointment.
- C.20 The board must have a formal procedure in place for setting the remuneration of the principal by a designated committee of non-executive members. The board may wish to supplement this by taking evidence from a range of sources. In particular, staff and students should have a role in gathering and submitting evidence in relation to the college principal to the relevant committee.
- C.21 The board chair cannot be the chair of the Remuneration Committee (but they can be a member of it).

Financial and Institutional Sustainability

C.22 The board is responsible for ensuring the financial and institutional sustainability of the body. The board must ensure compliance with its Financial Memorandum (either with SFC or the regional strategic body, depending on which is funding it), including in relation to incorporated colleges and regional boards, relevant aspects of the Scottish Public Finance Manual.

C.23 The board must ensure that:

- funds are used as economically, efficiently and effectively as possible
- effective monitoring arrangements are in place
- college staff report relevant financial matters to it.

C.24 For colleges that are charitable organisations, board members are also charity trustees. The board of a college that is a charity must ensure its members are aware of their responsibilities under charity legislation and for complying with relevant provisions as set out by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator. See [OSCR Guidance and Good Practice for Charity Trustees \(02.04.25\)](#)

Staff Governance

- C.25 The college board as the employer, is responsible for promoting positive employee relations and for ensuring effective partnership between recognised trade unions and management.
- C.26 The board must have a system of corporate accountability in place for the fair and effective management of all staff, to ensure all legal obligations are met and all policies and agreements are implemented and identify areas that require improvement and to develop action plans to address them.
- C.27 The college board must comply with collective agreements placed on it through national collective bargaining for colleges.

Section D: Effectiveness

The Board Chair

D.1 The chair is responsible for leadership of the board and ensuring its effectiveness in all aspects of its role. The chair is responsible for setting the board's agenda and ensuring that adequate time is available for discussion of all agenda items, particularly strategic issues. The chair must promote a culture of openness and debate by:

- encouraging the effective contribution of all board members
- fostering constructive challenge and support to the principal, executive team and fellow board members
- effective team-working
- positive relations between board members.

The chair must engage with the principal and the governance professional in a manner which is both constructive and effective.

D.2 The board and its committees must have the appropriate balance of skills, experience, independence and knowledge of the body to enable them to discharge their respective duties and responsibilities effectively.

Senior Independent Member

D.3 The board must appoint one of the non-executive members to be the senior independent member to provide a sounding board for the chair and to serve as an intermediary for the principal, other board members and the governance professional when necessary (see Annex 1 for the definition of 'non-executive'). The senior independent member should also be available where contact through the normal channels of chair, principal or governance professional has failed to resolve an issue or for which such contact is inappropriate. The senior independent member is also responsible for holding annual meetings with Board members, without the Chair, to appraise the Chair's performance and provide the Chair with relevant feedback

Further information on the role of the senior independent member can be found in [The Guide for Board Members in the College Sector](#).



Board Members

- D.4 Each board member is collectively responsible and accountable for all board decisions. Board members must make decisions in the best interests of the college and/or region as a whole rather than selectively or in the interests of a particular group.
- D.5 Staff, student and trade union board members are full board members and bring essential and unique, skills, knowledge and experience to the board. Staff, student and trade union board members must not be excluded from board business unless there is a clear conflict of interest, in common with all board members.
- D.6 Where the college is a charity, all board members, as charity trustees, including staff, student and trade union board members, have legal duties and responsibilities under the Charities Act 2005. This includes registering any personal interests that could be seen as conflicting with the interests of the body. The 'objective test' for judging if there is a conflict of interest is:
- "... whether a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard the interest as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your decision making in your role as a member of a public body".*
- D.9 The college board must delegate to the principal, as chief executive, authority for the academic, corporate, financial, estate and human resource management of the college, and must ensure the establishment of such management functions are undertaken by and under the authority of the principal.
- D.10 The college board must ensure a clear process is in place to set and agree personal performance measures for the principal. This process should seek the views of students and staff. The chair, on behalf of the board, should monitor, review and record the principal's performance, at least annually, against the agreed performance measures.
- D.11 The principal, as a board member, shares responsibility for good governance with the chair and all other members of the board, supported by the governance professional. The principal also enables good governance through supporting effective communication and interaction between the body and the rest of the college including staff and students.
- D.12 The board provides strategic direction for the region and/or college, and the chair provides leadership to the board. The principal provides leadership to the staff of the body.
- D.13 The board must provide a constructive challenge to the principal and executive team and hold them to account.

Principal and Chief Executive

- D.7 The college board must appoint the principal as chief executive of the college, securing approval for the appointment and terms and conditions of the appointment from the regional strategic body if necessary.
- D.8 The college board must ensure there is an open and transparent recruitment process for the appointment. Students and staff must have an opportunity to contribute to the recruitment process.



Governance Professional

D.14 The board must appoint a governance professional who is responsible to it and reports directly to the chair in their governance professional capacity. The governance professional may be a member of the senior management team in their governance professional capacity, but they cannot hold any other senior management team position at the same time. The appointment and removal of the governance professional is a decision of the board.

D.15 All board members must have access to the governance professional who has an important governance role in advising the board, the committees and individual board members and supporting good governance. The distinctive governance professional role includes:

- facilitating good governance and advising board members on:
 - the proper exercise of their powers, including in relation to relevant legislation
 - the board's compliance with its Financial Memorandum, the Code for Good Governance, its Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation
 - their behaviour and conduct in relation to the board's Code of Conduct.

- providing clear advice to the chair and the board/committees on any concerns the governance professional may have that board members have not been given:
 - sufficient information
 - information in an appropriate form
 - sufficient time to monitor, scrutinise or make informed and rigorous decisions in an open and transparent way.
- attending and providing support to every board meeting and every meeting of every board committee. Where the governance professional is unable to attend, while the governance professional retains overall responsibility, proper arrangements must be made to cover the role with a person who is fully able to discharge the role effectively.
- having an unambiguous right to speak at board and committee meetings to convey any concerns they may have about governance. This extends to someone substituting for the governance professional.
- reporting any unresolved concerns about the governance of the body to the relevant funding body (i.e., SFC or the regional strategic body).

D.16 The board must ensure the governance professional:

- has suitable skills, knowledge and behaviours to carry out their role effectively
- receives appropriate induction, and if new to the role, is mentored by a more experienced governance professional for at least their first year
- has adequate time and resources available to undertake their role effectively.

D.17 The board must ensure arrangements are in place to deal with a governance professional's potential or real conflicts of interest.

Board Member Appointment, Induction and Training

- D.18 For boards with responsibility for board appointments, the board must ensure a formal and open procedure is in place for recruiting and selecting new non-executive board members. Boards must have regard to current Ministerial Guidance on board appointments.
- D.19 The board is responsible for ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place for the conduct of student elections and nominations, and elections and nominations of staff and trade union members to the board.
- D.20 The chair must ensure that new board members receive a formal induction on joining the board, tailored in accordance with their individual and collective needs. The governance professional should support the chair in the provision of relevant induction for new board members.
- D.21 The board must ensure all board members undertake appropriate training and development in respect of their governance role. The governance professional should support the chair in the provision of relevant training and development opportunities for board members, which should be tailored to meet board members skills and needs. The governance professional must keep records of the development activity of board members, including the chair.
- D.22 The board must ensure that new committee members receive a committee induction and have their specific training needs assessed and met.

Board Evaluation

- D.23 Extension of the term of office of board appointments requires evidence and the board must ensure appropriate mechanisms are in place to support this.
- D.24 The board must keep its effectiveness under annual review and have in place a robust self-evaluation process. There should also be an externally facilitated evaluation of its effectiveness every three to five years. The board should determine the timing for this externally facilitated review as part of the annual effectiveness review. The board is not required to conduct a self-evaluation of its effectiveness in the same year as an externally facilitated evaluation. The board must send its self-evaluation (including an externally facilitated evaluation) and board development plan (including progress on previous year's plan) to its funding body and publish them online.
- D.25 The board must agree a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the board chair and the committee chairs. The evaluation of the board chair should normally be led by the senior independent member.
- D.26 The board must ensure all board members are subject to appraisal of their performance, conducted at least annually, normally by the chair of the board.
- D.27 The performance of regional college chairs will also be evaluated by the Scottish Government, as regional college chairs are appointed by the Scottish Ministers and are personally accountable to them.
- D.28 The performance of assigned, incorporated college chairs will also be evaluated by the regional strategic body, as they are appointed by the regional strategic body and are personally accountable to them.

Section E: Relationships and Collaboration

Partnership Working

- E.1 The board must work in partnership to secure the coherent provision of high quality fundable further and higher education in their localities.
- E.2 The board must ensure effective consultation, local and regional planning and must follow the principles of effective collaborative working: mutual respect, trust and working towards commonly agreed outcomes.
- E.3 The board must ensure effective partnership working with local and national bodies including businesses, public and third sector organisations to develop commonly agreed priorities following the principles of effective collaborative working.
- E.4 The board must encourage and support effective partnership working and collaboration within and across regions to address local needs and meet national priorities and specialisms.



ANNEX 1

References and Definitions

- “**college**” means a college funded by either SFC or a regional strategic body.
- “**incorporated college**” means a college with a board of management under part 1 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992.
- “**assigned college**” means a college assigned to a regional strategic body.
- “**board**” means the governing body of the college or to the regional strategic body.
- “**body**” means the organisation in question, i.e., a college or regional strategic body.
- “**principal**” includes where appropriate in the context, the chief officer or equivalent person of a regional strategic body.
- ‘**non-executive**’ means a member who is not the chair of the board and who does not otherwise hold a specific position on the board i.e., is not a student member or a staff or trade union member; and in the case of a college board, is not the principal; and in the case of a regional board is not the chair of an assigned college.
- The reference to a non-executive majority under C.7(d) reflects the underlying governance principle of ensuring an appropriate degree of independence and objectivity in all board decision-making. A board quorum should always require a non-executive majority. When determining a quorum, the chair of the board may be considered to be a non-executive member.
- The Court of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) is the Regional Strategic Body (RSB) for the region and is the only RSB in Scotland.



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