

Agenda No: 02



**PEOPLE COMMITTEE – MAIN MINUTES**

Thursday 19 February 2026 – 4.00pm to 6.00pm

Microsoft Teams

<b>Governors</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
Lisa Crichton-Jones	Chair of Committee – Independent Governor	LCJ	X	
Michael Williams	Committee Member – Independent Governor	MW	X	
Aneela Ali	Committee Member – Independent Governor	AA	X^	
Peter Francis	Committee Member – Independent Governor	PF	X	
David Alexander	Committee Member – Principal / CEO	DA	X	
<b>Clerk</b>				
Nicola Taylor	Director of Governance & Compliance	NT	X	
<b>Presenters / Attendees</b>				
Katy Malia	Staff Governor	KM	X	
Vicki Casey	Director of People & OD	VC	X	
Lori Casson	Head of People	LC	X	

^Attended for part of the meeting

**P/094 1. Chair's Welcome, Apologies and Conflict of Interest**

The Chair welcomed the attendees. No apologies were received and AA was expected to join the meeting. The Committee **agreed** that the meeting was quorate.

No conflicts of interest were declared at the start of the meeting and members were reminded to declare any conflicts that arose during the discussions in the meeting.

**P/095 2. Minutes of the People and Remuneration Committee**

**A. 16 October 2025 – Main Minutes**

The Committee **reviewed** the main minutes from the previous meeting and **agreed** that they were a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

**B. 16 October 2025 – Confidential Minutes**

The Committee **reviewed** the confidential minutes from the previous meeting and **agreed** that they were a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

***The minutes were approved.***

**P/096 3. Matters Arising / Action Log**

VC presented the action log. There were 3 actions to report, two completed and one not yet due. The Committee **agreed** the action not yet due relating to Health and Safety reporting could be marked as closed as would become usual business going forward.

***The report was noted.***

**P/097 4. People Committee KPIs**

LC presented the report and highlighted the following:

- As of November 2025, the College rolling year percentage for absence stood at 4.2% with an average of 7.4 days lost per member of staff. This was a decrease on the previous year rolling year figure of 4.7% and 8.7 lost days, and below the agreed target of 4.8%.
- Long term absence of four weeks or more had reduced to 69.9% of total absence, compared to the previous rolling year figure of 73.4%.
- 57.7% of all sickness absence came from curriculum staff and 42.3% from Professional Services. This showed a slight improvement for curriculum staff compared with November 2024, where the split was 59% curriculum and 41% Professional Services.
- Absence related to mental health was showing a positive declining trend.
- The labour turnover rolling year figure was 15.9%. This was a decrease on the previous year rolling figure to November 2024 of 16.7%, and below the agreed target of 17.8%
- There was a slight increase in the Professional Services turnover rate, but this was not believed to be of concern.
- Plans were in place to improve the leaver and exit process, including the introduction of an electronic leaver survey to increase the volume of feedback.

*AA joined the meeting.*

The Committee **discussed** and **queried** the following:

- The impact of curriculum staff absence on learner experience.
- The improvement in absence and the supportive approaches in place.
- The positive declining trend in absence relating to mental health.
- The impact of increased learner numbers on staff.

The Staff Governor (KM) provided some anecdotal feedback relating to pay of competitors, noting a potential risk to recruitment and retention. VC confirmed this would be explored however suggested that engagement drivers, based on the most recent staff survey, didn't relate to pay.

VC provided reassurance of the supportive approaches in place for staff, including the offer of free counselling for staff and their dependents, fostering an open and supportive environment relating to mental health, and the more proactive approach to absence management.

The Committee **noted** the positive progress being made.

***The report was noted.***

**P/098 5. Policy Update – College Grievance Procedure (Staff)**

LC presented the updated procedure, noting this had been reviewed as part of its usual review cycle. Only minor amends had been proposed.

The Committee **discussed** the operation of the procedure in practice and potential operational queries that could arise. VC confirmed the procedure aligned with the ACAS code of practice.

**The Committee recommended the Grievance Procedure for Board approval (April 2026).**

**Action: NT to progress Grievance Procedure for Board approval.**

***The policy was recommended.***

**P/099 6. Director of People and Organisational Development Update**

VC presented the report and highlighted the following:

- Progress was being made across each theme of the People Strategy.
- The College's new three-year Learning & Development Plan had been approved and CONNECT (the new performance conversations framework) was to be launched with staff at an upcoming Development Day.
- Since the last update to the Committee in October 2025, phase 2 of the Attracting and Recruiting Talent project had begun implementation activity. The focus was on strengthening attraction interventions, improving core recruitment processes, and embedding more consistent, inclusive practices to support the College's ability to secure high-quality candidates from a diverse talent pool.
- The College achieved a 'Maintaining Excellence' rating in the Better Health at Work Award (BHAWA) in December 2025.

The Committee **discussed** and **queried** the following:

- How success would be measured in relation to the launch of CONNECT – it was suggested that completion of conversations would be recorded and a system had been designed to capture this information. As well as recording conversations, the College were also keen to hear staff voice of the new process, and this would be captured by staff surveys. As part of the launch, teams would have the opportunity to discuss how the process would work best for them and feedback from this would be collated and considered.

The Committee **noted** the positive level of staff engagement involved in the development of the new appraisal process.

- Approaches to strengthening staff engagement, with a particular focus on reaching colleagues who may not routinely contribute through existing channels or are hard to reach, ensuring all staff voices are heard.
- The risks associated with potential industrial action and acknowledging the link between industrial relations and business continuity planning,

recognising that pay negotiations are expected to be a significant area of focus in the coming months.

- The potential impact and consequences of the Employment Rights Act and other regulatory changes impacting workforce policy, employment practices, and organisational compliance. The Committee **queried** if any changes under the Employment Rights Act 2025 reprioritised any project work however it was confirmed not at present however further information was awaited.
- The limitations of the current tracking of staff training and development, and any risks to compliance. It was confirmed that the current system was able to track and record data, however an improved system would have the ability to provide insights and better qualitative data.
- The importance of joined-up approaches between the Learning and Development Plan and the Teacher Academy.
- The impact, cost and benefit of using external talent specialists and if there was any learning the College could take from this to reduce cost in the future. It was suggested that although there wasn't specific data relating to cost benefit, this was cost effective in comparison to agency fees. The organisation had leveraged their networks to promote vacancy opportunities, and this highlighted to the College that more could be done with social media in terms of reach of applicants. The concern for the College would be the skill and capacity to undertake this in-house, but also that an in-house talent specialist would not be cost effective. It was confirmed that further information could be shared at a future meeting to provide assurance of external support in terms of cost and benefit.

**Action: VC / People Team to report back on the cost benefit of external talent specialists (May 2026).**

*The report was noted.*

## **7. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

### **P/100 7.1. Annual EDI Report 2024/25**

LC presented the report and highlighted the following:

- For this academic year, the reporting of the EDI data had been split between the People and Curriculum and Quality Standards Committee, with the People Committee receiving Staff EDI data in the HR Annual Report, presented in October 2025, and CQS Committee receiving Learner EDI data at their February 2026 meeting.
- The report set out progress against the set EDI objectives, and in future years this would be presented alongside the relevant EDI data in October.
- Both EDI reports would be amalgamated, alongside the additional data relating to progress against objectives, and presented for Board approval ahead of 31 March 2026.
- Positive progress had been made against the objectives. Key highlighted included the College's Staff Inclusion Group had grown across the year, and had provided insight into policy reviewed, supported college campaigns and was a central mechanism for collecting staff voice.

- Priorities included embedding the Equality Impact Assessment process across decision making, improving the inclusivity of recruitment practices and strengthen partnerships.

The Committee **discussed** and **queried** the following:

- Evidence measures for inclusivity, culture and safe spaces. It was suggested that alongside positive staff feedback in the annual staff survey, there was also a lower number of grievances across the College, with any concerns dealt with at early stages.
- The ability for staff to report concerns where they might feel uncomfortable, harassed or victimised, with the focus on ensuring an effective and open process to enable this. The Committee **suggested** that reporting of low level concerns would be highly likely due to the size of the organisation and **sought assurance** there were appropriate reporting mechanisms in place, outside of a formal grievance process, and the ability to challenge low level concerns and use awareness raising initiatives to reinforce clear expectations.

**Action: VC / People Team to review mechanisms for staff to raise low level concerns, including considering this with the staff voice group and reporting back at the next meeting (May 2026).**

- The difference in diversity between the staff workforce and student body, and the potential challenges this could bring.
- The assurances and evidence sources for key initiatives and achievements.

The Committee **recommended** the EDI report for Board approval.

**Action: NT to progress EDI Report 2024/2025 for Board approval (March 2026).**

*The report was recommended.*

## **P/101 7.2. Gender Pay Gap Report 2024/25**

LC presented the report and highlighted the following:

- The College continued to maintain a relatively low gender pay gap, with both the mean and median figures showing only minimal movement from the prior year. The median gender pay gap of 11.1% remained below the national average of 12.8%.
- The gender balance across the quartiles remained largely unchanged from the prior year. Women continued to be more highly represented in the lower and lower-middle quartiles, while the upper quartile remained balanced. This distribution continued to shape the gender pay gap, with the gap reflecting the roles in which men and women work, rather than unequal pay for comparable roles.
- The lower-middle quartile remained a key area of focus.

The Committee **discussed** and **queried** the following:

- Whether the mean and medium were masking any concerns, and what variations were in place across different roles.

- If the data could be broken down further to provide greater assurance. It was confirmed this was possible at an operational level however the main focus was on the metrics provided by the reporting requirements.
- How the report informed recruitment and staff development activity, particularly in understanding and addressing any gender related biases. It was confirmed that the report was used within the People function and that improvements had already been made to the recruitment process to support a more balanced approach.
- The potential lack of balance relating to service progression between gender. VC provided reassurance that there were no equal pay concerns between roles.

**The Committee recommended the Gender Pay Gap Report 2024/2025 for Board approval.**

**Action: NT to progress Gender Pay Gap Report 2024/2025 for Board approval (March 2026).**

***The report was recommended for Board approval.***

**P/102 8. HR Case Work Update**

LC provided a verbal update of ongoing HR case work. Reassurance was provided that the People Team were working with legal advisers via the College's insurers to support claims.

***The update was noted.***

**P/103 9. Strategic Risk Register**

VC presented the report, noting the risk register had been updated and reviewed following discussion at Audit Committee and a subsequent governor risk workshop in January 2026. The risk under the remit of the People Committee had been expanded to include failure to modernise working practices and set out the controls in place to mitigate this. The appetite of this risk remained unchanged at "cautious".

The Committee **confirmed they were comfortable** with the risk scoring and level of assurance provided in relation to the strategic risk under the remit of the People Committee.

***The report was noted.***

**P/104 10. Any Other Business**

N/A

**P/105 11. Date of Next Meeting:**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 14 May 2026 at 4.00pm.