



Report To:	Inverclyde Alliance Board	Date:	16 March 2020
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Subject:	West College Scotland – Regional Outcome Agreement 2021-22		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Inverclyde Alliance Board with an early draft of the West College Scotland Regional Outcome agreement in order to raise awareness of the College priorities and to invite the inclusion of any other relevant partnership priorities for our region.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 In line with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) guidance timetable, a first draft document was submitted to SFC on 13 December and is provided for the Inverclyde Alliance Board's information and any comment. We still await feedback from SFC on this draft and have until the end of March to submit the final document for SFC approval.
- 2.2 The College outcome agreements are required to follow the SFC guidance to ensure consistency across the whole College sector and therefore the contents are fairly restricted.

The College priorities are set out in terms of:

- **Access and Learning** which includes retention, attainment and progression, as well as priorities around the wellbeing of our students and equalities. In line with the guidance, the College has specific priorities and targets relating to special groups of students, including Care Experienced.
 - **The System** which includes skills alignment to meet employer needs and the economic growth of our region. This section also covers our School College Partnership, ESOL, contribution to Public Health, STEM, Digital and Climate Change Emergency.
 - **Innovation** covering how the College supports business innovation and knowledge exchange
- 2.3 There is a common set of Measurement Targets which are still to be completed once SFC confirmed data is provided for 2018-19.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Alliance Board notes the content of the draft Outcome Agreement and comment on any aspects where partners may contribute further to College priorities or suggest any relevant other matters for inclusion within the document.
- 3.2 That it be noted that partners have been asked to provide any comments on or input into the draft Outcome Agreement in advance of the Alliance Board meeting.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Each College region produces a 3-year Regional Outcome Agreement in line with the guidance from the Scottish Funding Council. These documents are updated on an annual basis through negotiation with SFC. The West College outcome agreement for 2019-20 is published on the SFC website https://www.westcollegescotland.ac.uk/media/213513/west_scotland_outcome_agreement_2019-20.pdf.
- 4.2 The purpose of an Outcome Agreement is to demonstrate each region's distinct contribution to the Scottish Government's priority outcomes and the impact of associated investment. West College Scotland is a single college in the region and therefore the outcome agreement is for both the college and the region.
- 4.3 In October 2019, SFC published guidance for the new 3-year College Regional Outcome Agreements, identifying the topics which must be referenced. These priorities follow from an annual ministerial letter of guidance to the funding council. The new Regional Outcome Agreement guidance aims to result in shorter documents, with less detail and more links to existing documentation than in previous years. <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/publications-statistics/guidance/2019/SFCGD202019.aspx>

5.0 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 None

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 **Legal:** None.
Finance: None.
Human Resources: None.
Equality and Diversity: None.
Repopulation: None.
Inequalities: None.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 We welcome any feedback on this early draft from our Community Planning Partners.
- This draft Regional Outcome Agreement will be presented at similar meetings with our other Community Planning Partnerships.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None



West College Scotland Regional Outcome Agreement

2020-21 to 2022-23

For submission MARCH 2019

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Introduction

The Board of Management of West College Scotland submits the following West Region Outcome Agreement to the Scottish Funding Council. The Outcome Agreement reflects the College's commitment to respond to the educational and skills needs within our region, aligned to the Scottish Funding Council's priorities and to demonstrate the College's contribution to the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy. The Outcome Agreement sets out the processes and mechanisms that West College Scotland has established to monitor performance and progress in achieving its goals and objectives.

West of Scotland will receive core grant-in-aid of £? from the Scottish Funding Council for academic year 2020-21 to plan and deliver further and higher education in the region.

The College will continue to intensify efforts to meet government priorities of:

- Widening Access and Articulation
- Improving Attainment and Retention
- Equalities, Health and Wellbeing
- Developing the Young Workforce (DYW)
- Skills, Apprenticeships and STEM
- Innovation and Industry Partnerships
- Climate change emergency

The Regional Outcome Agreement is developed and progress is monitored through our Board Committees, including representation from our Student Association. The Regional Outcome Agreement is informed by our close working with Local Authorities, Community Planning Partnerships, employers and other stakeholders. Our progress, future objectives and aspirations are shared throughout the development of the updates to the Regional Outcome Agreement with staff, Trade Unions, students and stakeholders.

The College has a new [Corporate Strategy](#) for 2019-2025 with four main priorities:

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

Our job is to ensure students leave West College Scotland equipped with the skills and knowledge to compete in the jobs market; to make a full contribution to the wellbeing of their families, their communities and the economic growth of the country. As well as scope, we also have scale. As one of Scotland's largest regional colleges, with over 20,000 students, 1,200 staff and a turnover of £? million, ours is a huge organisation and a major employer, uniquely placed to help shape the West region's educational landscape and contribute to its social and economic development.

Outcome Agreement Commitments

By 2023 we will have: (to be completed)

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Our Regional Context

West College Scotland delivers further and higher education across the West Region covering the main local authority areas of Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and West Dunbartonshire. In addition, the College provides education to other neighbouring local authorities including East Renfrewshire, Argyll and Bute, Ayrshire, Lanarkshire and Glasgow.

A link will be provided to the West College Scotland Context document covering Population, Employment, School Leaver Destinations, Qualifications and Participation, Deprivation and Poverty, Economic Performance and Business Profile

Section 1: The Learner

Access and learning

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

The West Region contains some of the most deprived areas of Scotland, including the most deprived area in the country within Ferguslie Park Paisley. Inverclyde and West Dunbartonshire are the 2nd and 3rd most deprived Local Authorities within Scotland by share of 20% datazones, as measured in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2016. The College plays a key role in improving the life chances of individuals within all our communities. The deprivation and poverty profile of the West Region will continue to drive our strategic priorities, aligned to access and equality and effective engagement with Community Planning Partners.

Our College is clearly defined by the support and opportunities we provide to these communities and our student feedback confirms the College's strengths in ensuring a very inclusive and supportive environment. We recognise some of the many challenges our students face in achieving full success at college and are committed to continuing to work to adapt learning to better meet their needs and provide the support they need, particularly around resilience, mental health and wellbeing.

Retention and Attainment

Improving retention and attainment is a key priority for the College, particularly in curriculum areas with low performance indicators. The College has aspirations to have overall student success levels in the upper quartile of sector rates by 2020. This is a challenging aspiration when the College serves a region with high levels of deprivation and has a strong priority in supporting wider access, offering opportunities and developing individuals at a pace and level best suited to them.

Our student retention and success rates for full time FE programmes are already around 3% above Sector averages and have been for the last three years. In addition, we have been closing the attainment gap for those from our most deprived areas, although the gap increased slightly in 2018-19. Our SIMD10 full time FE rates are better than Sector but closing this gap further remains a priority for the College, as well as improving the success rates in curriculum areas where rates are lower and for categories of students such as Care Experienced and those with a disability.

Unlike FE programmes, College overall success rates for HE full time are below sector averages and whilst we had been achieving increasingly better rates for successive years, 2018-19 rates saw a significant reduction. Improving HE success rates is a major college priority and we are addressing this through a greater level of in-year monitoring and scrutiny, to result in more significant interventions and improvements. Aiding this will be a far better use of data analytics, increased student support and more sharing successful interventions across the curriculum areas.

Whilst attainment rates may be lower, our HE student satisfaction rates are significantly above sector averages and students report that their programmes prepare them for work and take responsibility for their learning. Our HE student retention rates could be better but compare well to similar other colleges. In some cases, our retention and success rates are impacted on by students securing employment before the end of their course and we will work to provide these students with more flexible ways of completing their qualification whilst in employment.

Our student destination rates are broadly in line with the Sector and in many curriculum areas almost all students are securing immediate, relevant employment on completion of their courses. We see successful student progression to positive destinations to be even more critical than success rates and are committed to improving our data and analysis in this area to better inform curriculum developments to ensure our students have the best possible opportunities to progress.

Articulation

The Scottish Funding Council's aspiration for Access is that at least 60% of HN entrants to university should articulate with advanced standing by academic year 2019-20 and by 75% by 2025-26.

The College is committed to enabling students to progress their learning and to shortening the student journey by improving articulation. In 2017-18, 274 successful HN students from West College Scotland articulated to University with advanced standing (48% of the HN students who went to university, which was an 8% improvement on 2016-17) but the College recognises more work is to be done by both the College and by the Universities to achieve the SFC aspirations.

The College has many well-established articulation links, particularly with Glasgow Caledonian University and also with the University of the West of Scotland where 78 students per year are also supported through the additional places arrangements. We will continue to work with UWS under our partnership agreement to work collaboratively and smooth the transition of students to the university.

The College has a partnership agreement with the Open University and an Academy model with Strathclyde University has been running successfully for some time for Engineering.

Formal articulation arrangements are now being expanded upon in the areas of Business including Accountancy, Tourism and Computing areas with Glasgow Caledonian University. Similarly, formal articulation arrangements with University of Glasgow are in negotiation for Science and Social Science and being progressed with Glasgow School of Art for Interior Architecture into the Architecture and Interior Design Faculties. Arrangements are also in place for a collaboration with Glasgow University for direct articulation for HNC Applied Science and Social Science.

Curriculum reviews have highlighted more opportunities for articulation in Engineering and consideration being given to a collaboration with Bolton University and BBC Scotland for Make Up Artistry degree provision. There have been early discussions with University of Stirling, for articulation in Nursing, Social Sciences and Sports

SFC is currently funding a Curriculum Mapping exercise to inform any future estates developments for the College and UWS in Paisley. We will consider any opportunities which are identified through this work to further develop our articulation and progression to university for our students.

In addition to working on articulation pathways, the College maintains a very positive relationship with SWAP West. We deliver programmes in Social Sciences, Science and Access to Primary Education, enabling mature students from deprived areas to access University.

Deprivation - SIMD10/20

The Scottish Funding Council National Aspirations for Access includes the aim that 20% of College activity per year should be delivered to students from SIMD10 postcodes by 2020-21. 25% of West College Scotland activity is for students from SIMD10, well above Sector averages and a reflection of the deprived areas that the College serves. This student activity level has reduced slightly in last two years, although the Local Authority areas we serve have also reduced the proportion of the population in SIMD10.

SFC no longer expect Colleges to grow the SIMD10 intake but to sustain it and to work towards ensuring comparable successful completion rates as for other students.

The success rate for SIMD10 students on courses 160 hours or more in 2018-19 was 63.4%, and 66.7% for non SIMD10. The attainment gap narrowed due to a 2% improvement for SIMD10 students and 3% reduction for non SIMD10. In 2018-19 there was a 3.3% attainment gap compared to a 8.4% gap in 2017-18. Full time HE students from SIMD10 actually had better success rates than those students not from SIMD10.

The College continues to analyse performance of SIMD10 students and provide the support required to help them stay on their courses and achieve. In 2018-19 there was a 2% difference in the early retention rates with SIMD10 students more likely to withdraw early and more is being done to monitor and provide interventions where possible to address this.

The College works extensively with SWAP to provide a range of courses for mature students from deprived areas to develop their academic and personal skills to enable them to progress to University. During session 2018/19 the College enrolled 261 students on to SWAP programmes, an increase of 31% on the previous year and the highest amongst the SWAP West region, with 107 students articulating to university directly from college and others progressing internally to our HNC programmes in college. Success rates for SWAP programmes were 74% for session 2018-19, substantially higher than for other FE full time programmes. The College is planning to further increase this provision and working with SWAP to consider community-based programmes that further encourage and broaden access opportunities. <https://www.scottishwideraccess.org/west>

The College community-based adult learning involves learning activities that meet national and College learning objectives: 'Life-long' with learner-centred learning built around the interests and motivations of the students, and 'Life-wide' covering the personal, work, family and community aspects of living. (Scotland's Adult Learning Statement of Ambition, 2014).

The College provides community-based adult learning in West Dunbartonshire, Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde. West Dunbartonshire and Ferguslie Learning Centre remain the 'flagship' community programmes and are delivered in completely distinct and unique ways to suit

these communities. The Ferguslie Learning Centre, is the outreach centre for West College Scotland, operating from a base in the Ferguslie Park area of Paisley, the most deprived area in Scotland.

The College partnership with [Working4U](#) and West Dunbartonshire Council's Adult Learning Team to provide community based certificated learning has been highlighted as good practice by Education Scotland: [CLD and college collaboration in West Dunbartonshire](#)

In collaboration with Inverclyde Council, the College is working to expand community provision in Inverclyde, replicating the strengths of the West Dunbartonshire programmes, with clear progression routes to further education and employment in key areas to support local economic priorities.

Mental health and wellbeing

Supporting the good mental health and wellbeing of our students and staff is an increasingly high priority in the College. We have an Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy in place with themes under 'PROSPER' – Promote, Respond, Observe, Support, Practice, Educate and Review and a newly developed Student Health and Wellbeing Strategy under the same themes

[Staff Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

Student link: <https://www.westcollegescotland.ac.uk/media/213570/student-health-wellbeing-strategy.pdf>

The second largest cohort of students with a disability are those who have declared a mental health condition. Concerningly, this increased by 2% in 2018-19 to 1,400 of our students. In addition to those with a declared condition, staff report that student mental health is a serious issue with many other students and this impacts on learning and teaching and on student success.

The College has a signed Student Mental Health Agreement with the Student Association and will continue to work in partnership with them to address mental health and wellbeing. The new Student Wellbeing Advisor post has had very positive feedback from staff and students and has implemented a range of successful initiatives, including 'Gie's A Break cafes' to support students' mental health. The College will continue to seek more funding opportunities to support initiatives to support mental health and wellbeing of our students including provision of free breakfast for Students or soup at lunchtime.

The College has in place a team of Counsellors working across the campuses and welcomes the recent funding of £122k to increase this team and better meet demand. The College has a team of Mental Health First Aiders who also complement our Counsellor team. In addition, the College has invested in 'Silver Cloud' an online mental health support platform and will be continuing to deliver more staff CPD to help with their own mental health and wellbeing and to better support our students. The College won the CDN Health Promoting College in 2017 and was highly commended for similar work in 2019, building on achieving the Health Working Lives Gold Award. Through the actions in our staff and student Health and Wellbeing Strategies, we will be working to promote good mental health and respond to needs across the college.

Student Safety

The College takes the health and safety of our staff and students very seriously. College staff and the Students' Association work together to address health and safety. The Student Association has

representation on the College main Health and Safety Committee and is free to table papers and contribute to any discussions.

We regularly practice campus evacuation procedures for all students, ensuring adequate knowledge and expectations around safe exit from buildings and assembly points.

Risk assessments are carried out as required for both internal and external student activities and are monitored by the campus Health and Safety Advisors. All students in workshops and/or placements are provided with appropriate PPE

CCTV cameras are in operation across many areas in our campuses and we maintain close working relationships and contact with local representatives from Police Scotland to ensure prompt reporting and support for any student who is vulnerable.

We undertake suicide and sexual awareness raising sessions with students on matters which may impact on their personal lives.

Gender

Our College [Gender Action Plan](#) (GAP) details the work we will do to address the most persistent gender imbalances, and how we will work proactively in partnership with schools, parents, industry and our local communities to achieve our ambition to reduce gender segregation in participation, achievement and retention

Progress towards our 2020 commitment to a 5% increase in participation within gender imbalanced curriculum areas has not been uniform. There has been positive movement in Mechanical Engineering, Building Services and IT: Computer Science/Programming/Systems, where the 5% increase has been exceeded. There have been slight improvements in courses which are traditionally dominated by female students. Imbalances in Building/Construction Operations and Construction (General) appear more stubborn, and we will concentrate on these areas moving forward.

In terms of retention, no uniform pattern can be identified in the analysis of the most imbalanced subjects. With regards to early withdrawals, the superclasses with most parity in 2018-19 were those traditionally dominated by female students. In terms of further withdrawal, there has been a significant decrease in the retention of male students in Hair/Personal Care Services, and we will carry out further investigation into this area.

Overall in the College, FE males continue to succeed better than FE females and conversely, HE females attain better than males. This has been the same pattern for the last few years and is in line with the sector. HE males had the lowest PI for courses of 160 hours or more last session and the highest early withdrawal percentages. Action is continuing at curriculum level to analyse and implement improvement actions.

Our GAP contains specific ambitions to ensure that we support and enhance the experience of students who are trans or gender diverse. In consultation with the Student Association, we will further investigate the trans and gender diverse student experience, and work in partnership with employers to support and encourage their transition.

Gender Representation at Board and Senior Level

Good progress has been achieved in the gender balance at Board level, with 45% female non-executive directors ($n=6M; 5F$), and 50% female board members, including executive staff ($n=9M; 9F$). The Board's **Development Action Plan** outlines how we plan to proactively improve and widen access to Board membership, including the implementation of recommendations from a short life working group which was formed to enhance Board diversity.

With regards to staff at senior levels, there are a total of 28 staff in the Executive, SMT and Heads of Sector, of whom 36% are female. We will work towards a more balanced senior level of staff, and plan to encourage more women to join the College's Emerging Leaders Programme. We will also ensure that flexible working practices enable the retention and progression of staff, and that we make effective use of the Continuing Professional Review Procedure to assist career progression.

Equally Safe

We will continue our work with the Student Association on adopting and working with the Equally Safe Toolkit. We will focus our approach on the key workstreams of response, prevention, intervention and curriculum exchange to enable us to contribute to a local and national coordinated approach. We have been effective in our work to date on proactive engagement and communication to increase understanding of all forms of violence against women and girls. This has included staff awareness raising talks to staff and students across all campuses.

We plan to ensure we provide a trauma-informed support and wellbeing approach to survivors. We will adopt a whole campus approach, and work with the Student Association to develop an action plan to implement the toolkit. We will improve our evidence base and gather data on the extent and nature of Gender based violence within the college community; the level of formal/informal reporting; and the effectiveness of responses to survivors.

Student voice

The College works in partnership with the Students' Association to support and develop the student voice across all areas of curriculum and Support Services. A formal partnership agreement has been signed by both parties and forms the basis of our joint work. The Students' Association has continued to strengthen, increase its visibility amongst the student population and make a positive impact on the work of the College. The success of our Students' Association was recognised when they won Student Association Team of the Year at the National Union of Students in March 2019

The College is committed to continuing to strengthen and support the sustainability of the Association. The Board of Management have committed to maintaining the level of funding to support them to have autonomy and stability. In addition, the College is providing further support through the creation of a Students' Association Liaison Officer post to facilitate cross college work and Association profile raising.

The Students' Association actively participates in the College governance structure and has an active role in the Board of Management, Learning Teaching and Quality Committee and the Equality and Diversity Committee. Through the Board of Management and Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee, the Student Association is involved in the development of the Regional Outcome Agreement and associated targets. The Students' Association also aligns with college processes in developing their own Operational Plan for each year, setting out their key priorities.

The student voice is developed through a student representative system with Class Representatives recruited and trained for their role, cross inter-departmental meetings and departmental focus groups. Student feedback from surveys is communicated to the students via Learning from Feedback activities. The College will continue to improve the recruitment of class representatives and work in partnership with the Students' Association to address their training needs and strengthen their engagement and contribution to overall quality enhancement. In the 2018-19 Student Satisfaction Survey, 91% of students reported that they are able to influence learning on their course and 85% believe their suggestions are taken seriously. These are improved response rates and the College will continue to work with staff and students to further develop their influence and engagement in curriculum delivery. In the same survey, there was a substantial improvement in the percentage trend of students (61%) who reported that the Students' Association influences change for the better. The College will continue to support the Students' Association to ensure their work is even more visible through events, activities and social media.

The Students' Association and college partnership work has included joint activities on the Healthy Body, Healthy Minds campaign and on the introduction of our 'SilverCloud' online platform and online training for staff and students to support good mental health. There is engagement with 22 external agents to support student life at the College through the Student Wellbeing Adviser and Students' Association

The Students' Association have developed a Student Behaviours Framework ([insert Link](#)) which mirrors the college expectation of staff behaviours, as set out in the Building our Collective Ambition document. This Student Behaviours Framework will be further promoted to ensure the understanding and the development of appropriate student behaviours, supported by Think Only Positively curriculum initiatives.

Equality and Diversity

Our College Mainstreaming Report and Equality Outcomes sets out our ambitions for improvements in how we advance equality. Our proposed areas of focus include decreasing the attainment gap for students with mental health issues, increasing the attainment and retention rate for students under 18, and enhancing the support of staff and students who are transitioning gender, or who are gender diverse.

The Report details how the College uses funding allocated to it to advance equality, such as the procurement of CPD to raise awareness, the development of a Behavioural Framework which emphasises the need for tolerance and respect, and the PAM Assist counselling service for staff. The College's Disability Confident status was renewed in August 2019 and we will continue to uphold the commitments of the Scheme.

We have identified priority areas for improvement in the reporting and analysis of equality data, more specifically:-

- Improving how we analyse the intersectionality of protected groups with their socio economic circumstance; and
- Further developing staff information systems to allow for analysis of career progression with equality data.

[more to be added here linking OA outcomes with Equality Outcomes]

Access and Inclusion Funds

West College Scotland receives an Access and Inclusion allocation to enhance our inclusive practices and meet the needs of our students. These funds are intended to ensure successful student completion, progression and destination, as well as contributing to a positive, engaging student experience.

The College [Access and Inclusion Strategy](#) and updated [Action Plan \(insert link\)](#) demonstrates our commitment to delivering an inclusive curriculum which recognises the needs of all individuals studying at our college. Where appropriate, we embed our inclusive practices across all aspects of college life. The anticipated outcome of our Access and Inclusion Strategy is the creation of confident and ensured 'independent learners.' West College Scotland aims to enable and empower all students to ensure they have skills for learning, skills for work and skills for life. The actions we have taken have resulted in greater numbers of students being provided access to support services, which improve their chances of successful outcomes and positive destinations to work or further study.

Our Enabling Services staff have a presence in each of our main campuses and saw over 1000 students in 2018-19, representing a 10% increase on the previous year in students accessing the support available. We will continue to work on other access initiatives such as the partnership working with Renfrewshire Council to deliver personal skills development course for their employability programmes, in line with government agenda 'No One Left Behind' and the 'Keys to Learn' programme which successfully enabled ex-offenders up skill, improving their chances of a positive future.

Care-Experienced students

The Scottish Funding Council aspiration is that there should be no difference in outcomes between Care-Experienced students and their peers by 2030.

In addition to its commitment to support all vulnerable students, the College is fulfilling its corporate parenting obligations from the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. It has nominated a senior manager (Assistant Principal Student Life and Skills) with a lead role in ensuring compliance with the legislation and best practice in the provision of support and educational opportunities for this vulnerable group, whilst at the same time recognising the corporate parenting responsibilities of all staff to support the ethos of corporate parenting.

We regard this group as having a protected characteristic and will therefore monitor, evaluate and revise our practices and procedures in order to improve the outcomes for this group of students in line with our quality assurance and equalities policies. We will evaluate our progress towards improving outcomes for this group of vulnerable students with reference to the targets detailed in our operational plans and [Corporate Parenting Action Plan](#)

The Centre for Excellence for Looked after Children in Scotland (CELCIS) was commissioned by SFC to run the first ever Scottish-wide survey of care-experienced students. The College collaborated with CELCIS in the creation of the survey, alongside Edinburgh Napier University. The Survey was published in November 2018 and the College is working towards the associated recommendations.

The College has an exceptionally high number of Care-Experienced students and has seen a further increase in 2019-20, probably due to the guaranteed bursary for Care-Experienced students.

Curriculum staff consider the needs of Care-Experienced students and adapt course delivery or attendance requirements where possible. A named person within each campus provides access to ongoing additional support and monitoring as part of the Care Experienced Student Support Team.

In 2018-19 there was a 4% improvement in attainment for Care Experience students but there is still a 10% attainment gap with other students. Early withdrawal for these students was improved and was at a comparable level to other students but overall later withdrawal was higher.

The College is a partner organisation in the initiative [Home and Belonging for Care Experienced young people in Renfrewshire](#) which was launched in 2019. Other partners include Renfrewshire Council, Quarriers, Engage, RAMH and Impact Arts. The project will run for 3 years and each year it aims to support 20-25 care experienced young people from Renfrewshire, as they move into their own accommodation.

The College is jointly funding a post in Inverclyde in 2019-20, working in partnership with Action for Children to pilot increased support for Care-Experienced students. This will provide additional individual support, including out of hours and off campus. We intend to learn from the pilot activity with Action for Children on how best to engage with our Care-Experienced students and seek how this opportunity can be best applied across our whole college

The College is also working in partnership with Action for Children and the Students' Association to create a new revised Corporate Parenting Plan. We will ensure our Corporate Parenting Plan actively incorporates and achieves the recommendations from the CELCIS study.

Veterans

The College has signed the Armed Forces Covenant and is committed to providing appropriate learning for veterans and considering their existing skills and qualifications in entry to college courses. The College had 63 veterans on college courses in 2018-19 and is now working with external partners to develop initiatives that specifically benefit this cohort. The College has also been working with the Cadet service with a view to ensuring credit transfer in college, for non-formal learning and qualifications achieved through engagement with the Cadets.

Students in Sport and Complementary Therapies work with veterans and staff from the Scottish War Blind Association in Paisley and The Erskine Reid MacEwan Activity Centre in Bishopton to improve fitness and deliver treatments such as massage, aromatherapy and mindfulness. The College was shortlisted for the Herald HE Awards in 2019 for Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community for its work with Veterans.

Work with veterans and the armed services will continue and we plan further involvement with external partners including the Military Preparation College through the Events Chair of Trustee: Motivation & Learning Trust.

Carers and Estranged students

The College has made a 'Stand Alone Pledge' to commit to provide support for students estranged from their families. The College is working towards achievement of "Going Further Student Carers Recognition Award". Both carers and estranged students are supported through our Student Advisory team as we would Care-Experienced students.

Our Access and Inclusion strategy highlights our priorities with regard to all vulnerable students, but especially those who are Care-Experienced and those who are Carers (young or adult). Our support includes early identification; provision of targeted support systems to reduce barriers to success; monitoring achievement and progression; transitions; the development of collaborative partnerships with local and national agencies; training and development of staff; operational action plan. We are working with Carers Trust Scotland developing ideas for the future but have concerns about realizing our aspirations within current resources.

In the last five years, the College has seen a significant increase in the number of students identifying themselves as Carers with 1,500 students in 2018-19.

Through on course guidance and support, curriculum staff take into account the needs of students with caring responsibilities and adapt course delivery or attendance requirements where possible.

The College supports staff with caring responsibilities through flexible working arrangements and family friendly policies. The College has been successful in being awarded status as a 'Caring Positive' employer demonstrating our commitment to supporting staff with caring responsibilities.

The College will continue to be active partners with [Stand Alone](#) organisation to ensure continued support for students facing estrangement and supporting national policy work to ensure this identified at risk group receives equitable support while in education.

British Sign Language

The College provides specific support for BSL students and those with sensory needs. The College has amended the coordination of these Sensory Support Services in line with the Government's BSL Strategy and has published its [BSL Action Plan](#). Our BSL action was developed in conjunction with our BSL students. The [BSL Version](#) of the Plan was created by our BSL students for our BSL communities.

The BSL version of the plan was showcased as best practice, and included two West College Scotland platform party speakers, at the SFC National BSL Event in Edinburgh in May 2019.

Section Two: The System

Skills Alignment

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

Through the business transformation plan 'Future Proofing our College,' we have been working to ensure that our curriculum is well aligned to meet regional needs and our courses provide effective and efficient pathways for students.

Processes are in place to enable teams to formally review curriculum using internal performance measures and feedback data, as well as external environmental analysis, including the use of Regional Skills Assessments and Skills Investment Plans. We have plans to further enhance these processes through better access to data and supporting information.

The curriculum is effectively enhanced by a high level of employer involvement and increasing engagement of employers and industry bodies in the design and support of the delivery of courses is a key objective of all college curriculum areas.

We are committed to continuing to work closely with SDS across the College in the development of our provision and in the support of our students. Engagement with SDS in the skills agenda has been embedded in some curriculum areas through partnership working with the SDS regional Career Advisors. This partnership working is proving to be increasingly effective, particularly in our work on embedding employment specialism related Meta Skills in the curriculum, supporting staff understanding of the skills agenda and providing data to shape our programmes.

Developing the Young Workforce (DYW)

The aims of the Scottish Government's Youth Employment Strategy are embedded within the College objectives. Specifically, to support vocational provision for school pupils in the Senior Phase, to introduce Foundation Apprenticeships, to reduce gender imbalances, to increase work-placement and work experience opportunities and prioritise STEM subject areas and STEM learning throughout the curriculum.

The College works in partnership with our five key Local Authorities, 32 schools and a variety of employers to increase the range of high quality school pupil vocational pathways to the workplace.

The College led on the development and establishment of the employer led [Developing the Young Workforce Group](#) for the West Region which provides leadership and a single point of contact and support to facilitate engagement between employers and education. The West Region DYW Group has representation from across key industry sectors and involves private sector employers with membership drawn from local employers, the third sector, education and economic development bodies from across the regional footprint. Over the period to 2020, the College will remain an active member of the Group seeking to support engagement between employers and the education sector as a whole. The College will, as a member of the Group, seek to aim to ensure that the work of the Group is sustainable after the core funding is no longer available.

School College Partnership provision has been and will be enormously beneficial in delivering the College's strategic aim to reduce poverty, promote attainment and support economic growth. Our courses at entry level provide clear routes from school into and through College; and providing opportunities for students furthest away from education and employment will continue to be a key College focus.

We will enhance the marketing and promotion of college vocational learning opportunities through the creation and maintenance of a regional curriculum focus group. Through this continued collaborative work with our Local Authorities, we will create a curriculum for the future that will provide increased access to skills-based learning through our School College Partnership. Expected outcomes from this work would be seen in the following:

- Promotion of STEM initiatives and skills learning
- Address employment sector gaps in local school provision
- Align the programme of activity to both College and Apprenticeship family pathways
- Strengthen partnership working between employers, schools and the College

The focus group will continue to review and evaluate performance, identify and implement interventions, both in schools and in college, to improve retention and attainment on vocational programmes.

Through the School College Partnership, the College will enable staff in schools and in the College to share practice in their areas of specialism, directly linking vocational learning pathways from the class to the world of work and enhancing CPD opportunities.

DYW Progress Report (to be added)

The Apprenticeship Family

The College is the region's biggest provider of Apprenticeships and Skills and we will continue to work to ensure that the region secures investment from government which is commensurate with the skills need and employer demand. West College Scotland delivers significant workbased learning to support the growth of key growth sectors, including Life Sciences, Construction, Engineering and Hospitality. In addition to this, the College continues to successfully grow the contracts with key sector bodies including CITB, SNIPEF and SECTT to ensure their MAs have the skills, capacity and qualifications required by the industry.

Programme design, development and delivery will be informed by insight provided from Regional Skills Assessments and engagement with employers supporting West College Scotland to prioritise net growth, through equipping people with the skills to secure work in regional growth sectors. In addition, we will act as an exemplar College in how we engage with employers, working with agility and flexibility to respond to their short and long term needs. Specific actions will include a commitment to meaningfully engage and support over 600 regional employers each year, enabling the College to make a greater contribution towards the Government's MA target, with a focus on young people, higher level and STEM-related delivery. Over the lifetime of our Outcome Agreement, the College will strive to track above achievement rates for the FE Sector across Foundation, Modern and Graduate Level Apprenticeships.

West College Scotland has been delivering Foundation Apprenticeships for 4 years in partnership with our 4 main Local Authorities. Recruitment to Foundation Apprenticeship programmes is a challenge and the College will continue to work in partnership with SDS and our Local Authorities to promote the value of the qualification to pupils, teachers, parents and employers. We will continue to engage with employers in particular, to secure the necessary placement opportunities and industry challenges and to work to improve success rates on the qualifications.

To further enhance the opportunities associated with apprenticeships and to provide a seamless apprenticeship/workbased learning journey, the College will look to deliver relevant Graduate Apprenticeship frameworks. Building upon our FA and MA offers, and supporting the College STEM manifesto, we will take forward the potential for introducing a Civil Engineering Graduate Apprenticeship as part of our portfolio. This links to both West Region employer and economic need, as well as the workforce required by the wider Glasgow Region City Deal.

Early learning and childcare

The College is one of the largest providers of early learning and childcare training in Scotland and has been responsive to the 1140 Early Years expansion plan outlined by the Scottish Government,

increasing recruitment and offering a range of flexible delivery options including day release, evening and twilight provision.

The expansion of provision is challenging both in terms of the recruitment of suitably qualified candidates and in terms of finding appropriate placements in order to complete the stringent learning requirements. We work very closely with our Local Authority partners who each have different challenges around ensuring that they have a quality workforce in place in the timescales identified.

The College is committed to the Scottish Government priority of increasing the number of enrolments and graduates in Early Learning and Childcare to create a highly skilled, diverse and dedicated workforce. We are committed to increasing the flexibility of study options, including delivering part time over 2 years and with twilight options to support those with specific needs or disabilities. We are planning more flexible, blended programmes to suit those who cannot commit to full time study due to family or financial responsibilities.

Our Early Learning Childcare courses are publicised widely, including through social media, promoting the diversity of students in the marketing. Staff from the College will continue to prioritise the work in schools, in partnership with the Local Authorities, to publicise the workforce opportunities with both male and female practitioners in attendance. We will continue to work with local authorities to support career changers.

Public health

The College recognises that the places we live, work and play, the connections we have with others and the extent to which we feel able to influence the decisions that affect us, all have a significant impact on our health and wellbeing. The immediate physical environment, the social community networks we belong to, the local economy, our workplace and the accessibility of services are all important.

Addressing the health and wellbeing issues of our young people and recognising, respecting and promoting their rights is essential to achieving this outcome. The College is fully committed to its work focusing on Early Years, including within its own nurseries and training the Early Years workforce and supporting Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) in partnership with our Local Authorities.

Good mental health is profoundly important for growth, development, learning and resilience. It is associated with better physical health, positive interpersonal relationships and well-functioning, more equitable and productive societies. Mental health is also linked to wider inequalities. Socio-economic status has a bearing on mental health and those who experience disadvantage are more likely to have poorer mental health. Loneliness and isolation also has a serious impact. The College provides strong support to our staff and students in their mental health and wellbeing and plans to continue to develop this area, including the work on Health Body Health Mind with our Student Association.

Substance use, including tobacco and alcohol, is an area where the College can make positive and sustainable changes now to realise significant progress and address the persistent public health problems that face our communities. In partnership with the Student Association, the College will continue to provide information and support events to raise awareness in our student population and support initiatives such as stopping smoking and the Alcohol Awareness and Healthy Eating courses we provide for school pupils.

The College will continue to work as an active member of all our Community Planning Partnerships and sub groups and work with other regional partners to support inclusive growth and the public health agenda.

STEM education and training

Developing STEM skills in all curriculum areas is a key priority for the College, in line with the College [STEM Manifesto](#). The College has made a pledge to our students, employer partners and the region to inform how STEM is relevant to future career opportunities for women learners; improve skills in maths and numeracy; ensure learning is enjoyable and provide STEM training relevant to the needs of the region's workforce.

The College has been awarded STEM Assured status and achieved best practice recognition for the categories of Strategic and Business Planning, Collaboration and Consultation and the Impact of STEM on organisational performance.

The College leads the West Region STEM Partnership involving all four local authorities, UWS, DYW, Education Scotland, SDS and key local partners. The College is working through this Partnership to promote STEM opportunities, improve STEM learning pathways and provide Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) for teaching staff. The STEM West Partnership will continue to collaborate on the numerous promotional STEM activities across the region which engage our school pupils and focus on improving the curriculum pathways and the development of STEM learning for both teaching staff, pupils and students.

Enrolment on college STEM courses, as defined by SFC, increased in 2018-19 to 24% of the College credit activity. 43% of our STEM activity is in Engineering and 27% in Construction and both areas have steadily increased over the last few years. 20% is in IT and 11% in Science and Maths which have seen small reductions. Our plans are to grow Construction and Engineering in particular, to meet the employment opportunities in our Region and to develop the digital skills of students in all courses. A significant part of our STEM related activity is for school pupils, including activity to support Primary schools.

The College has expanded the number of students enrolling as STEM Ambassadors across curriculum areas including Science, Early Years, Access to Primary Teaching, Computing and Engineering.

Digital

In October 2019 the College published its [Digital Strategy](#) covering the next five years to 2025. This ambitious statement of intent takes direction from the Corporate Plan, setting out goals on Inspirational Learning, developing our skills base and making more intelligent use of data. The Strategic aims have been set around our six key areas of digital development - Delivery, Capability, Intelligence, Infrastructure, Resources and Partnerships.

The College already has many of the resources and attributes that underpin digital development. The Strategy aims to harness these, supplement them and focus resource and activity on enhancing the digital knowledge and experience of all who engage with the College. This includes the 'Curriculum Re-imagined' project to deliver learning in new ways and a revamped CPD process and programmes with emphasis on digital skills development

We will continue to support and engage with the Digital Skills Partnership to enhance links with industry and universities. The College has active involvement nationally in the digital agenda including supporting the CDN Digital Ambition development group.

Our focus is placing digital at the heart of everything we do and aligning to the ambitions as laid out by the Government, as indicated in the recent FE & HE 'ICT Strategy 2019-2021' and as specified in Colleges Scotland's 'Infrastructure Commission for Scotland' paper.

We recognise the need to prepare our students for the workforce of the future and the fundamental role digital skills and technology play in achieving this, together with wider economic growth and prosperity for our communities. In preparing our students, we will, in tandem, be developing a digitally-skilled and inclusive workforce to meet this National agenda which recognises that digital skills will be fundamental to improving the life chances of our students and the economic success of the country. Our recently launched Digital Strategy will play a critical role in the skilling, upskilling and reskilling our staff to deliver our promise to our students.

We acknowledge the risks around a 'digital divide' and the creation of new forms of 'social exclusion' as students and staff struggle to respond to the digital disruption to traditional methods, jobs and industries. We are committed to ensuring that we are inclusive in our approaches and supportive in enabling this digital change. We also recognise the urgency to harness, and to deliver, a new type of curriculum which embraces a flexible approach responsive to emerging technologies such as the internet of things, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, big data, machine learning, artificial reality and Skills 4.0. Given that these new technologies and drivers demand new ways of delivering learning, teaching, and assessment which rely significantly on a digitally skilled workforce, our approach will be more than simple CPD for staff and more of a significant cultural shift in thinking, practices and approach to enable an inclusive digital environment for learning, teaching and assessment. In doing so, we will also be mapping this to the aims and ambitions set within the Enterprise and Skills Strategic Plan and the CDN New Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland and GTCS registration requirements.

We are in the process of developing our Digital Action Plan to sit under the Digital Strategy which will support the above. Within our Action Plan, we will be, and have commenced, partnership working with The Digital Skills Partnership, Digital Ambition Short Life Working Group, Jisc and Microsoft. We are in the process of identifying Digital Ambassadors and strengthening the presence of our Microsoft Innovative Experts within the College to grow the digital skills base of our staff.

The College will continue to prioritise infrastructure investment via SMT management of IT Maintenance spending, planning and supporting the introduction of increased data analytics.

Information Technology Strategy to Support Digital delivery

The fundamental role of the College IT Strategy is to provide the support and infrastructure that is necessary in order to deliver the College's wider digital needs and ambitions. The College IT Strategy provides the framework and direction to ensure that technological change and development:

- Is driven by curricular learning and teaching need.
- Will support innovation in teaching and learning.
- Provides online access to established and emerging learner and support processes.
- Ensures existing hardware and software assets are utilised to their maximum potential.
- Embraces mobile and flexible working models.

- Recognises the benefits of collaborative working and shared service delivery.
- Ensures adherence to legislative and policy requirements.
- Supports a mobile, flexible and hybrid-cloud infrastructure.
- Provides required levels of ICT service delivery and standards.

The College [IT Strategy](#) was approved by the Board of Management in 2016 and is entering Year 5 of implementation, with an updated Strategy to be developed for implementation during 2020-21 in support of College digital ambitions. The College has made progress in delivering IT Strategy outcomes despite a challenging financial environment and the need for higher levels of investment to support key outcomes.

The need for IT investment remains significant. College ability to invest in the ICT infrastructure is becoming increasingly challenging given the annual level of resource available is decreasing, and this has been documented within Regional Outcome Agreements over the last few years. The level of IT funding is the subject of ongoing dialogue with the SFC and should this lead to any further resource becoming available then this will be used to support delivery of IT Strategy outcomes - particularly in replacing and improving wireless access.

The College will continue to engage with the SFC in seeking to secure strategic funding to support implementation and delivery of the IT Strategy and achievement of digital ambitions. The College will also engage fully with the Colleges Scotland working group which is developing a digital ambition strategy for the sector.

The College IT plans include:

- the successful conclusion of the Skype for Business cross-campus project to improve cross campus communication and reduce travel.
- the full deployment of Windows 10
- Reviewing options and costs for replacing and improving campus wireless facilities;
- Cyber Essentials re-accreditation to support the Scottish Government's strategy on Cyber Resilience;
- Continuing to engage with the Student Association to better refine and understand feedback on use, availability and functionality of IT resource;
- Ensuring teaching and learning IT needs are prioritised within available resource parameters.

Climate Change Emergency

The College is a member of Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges and an active member of the Smaller Institutions Group.

The College [Estates Strategy](#) 2016-26 recognises the importance of addressing climate change. This strategy recognises the need for the College to replace two of its campuses (Paisley and Greenock) if it is to fully address the Colleges commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The College has a comprehensive [Carbon Management Plan](#) in place with oversight on progress achieved provided by the Board of Management Estates Committee. The Committee receive regular update reports on the sustainability work undertaken by the College. There is a dedicated

Sustainability [College Intranet Page](#) supported by a full-time Sustainability Officer who is responsible for embedding sustainability matters across the College.

Over the past 5 years, the College has delivered on its Carbon Management Plan objective of reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 10% in the period to July 2021 across the College:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Co2</i>	<i>Saving %</i>
2014-15	Base year	5,303	
2015-16		5,133	3.2
2016-17		4,859	8.4
2017-18		4,430	16.4
2018-19	Draft	4,220	20.4

The College has participated in the required annual Climate Change Duties Report. This report not only highlights the progress made by the College but also provides a significant level of background information on the areas such as governance, project management and climate change adaptations.

The College will continue to pursue the redevelopment of both its Paisley and Greenock campuses. The redevelopment of either of these campuses would have a material impact on the College carbon emission levels.

We will continue to investigate the viability of the Clydebank campus joining the West Dunbartonshire Council district heating system. Joining this scheme would significantly reduce the level of emissions at the Clydebank campus. However, there is likely to be an increased level of running costs associated with this project due to the increased running costs.

Through the Heads of Sector, we will engage with EAUC staff to assess what resources and additional materials are available for their respective areas. We are increasingly building sustainability in as a topic into our curriculum and plan to use the interest in Climate Change as a method of increasing engagement in STEM learning with our school pupils and students.

We will continue to implement emission reduction projects across all campuses including replacing lights with energy efficient bulbs/fittings; installation of electric charging points; improved waste management arrangements leading to greater level of waste materials being recycled; and awareness campaigns ranging from switch off lights to removal of single use plastics.

We are looking to further develop the partnership working already established with local community groups, local authorities and other sustainability groups i.e. Zero Waste Scotland, to see what works can be undertaken to advance the sustainability agendas of all organisations.

Gaelic

Whilst we have not had and do not anticipate demand from stakeholders related to immediate support for the Gaelic language, we will continue to keep this under review and consider where we may make a contribution to the Local Authority Gaelic Action Plans.

More to be added regarding cultural support for Gaelic locally

English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL)

Insert Link: [joint delivery plans with CPPs.](#)

The College ensures that it meets the ESOL needs of our region by working in partnership with our Local Community Planning Partnerships. The College delivers significant ESOL provision in Clydebank and Paisley and the continued growth of ESOL demand within the Inverclyde CPP is being addressed.

The College has plans to increase pre-entry lower level ESOL courses to meet unmet demand from applicants and community partners and to focus on more pre-elementary level and fewer Level 5 courses, in line with market need. The College will adapt some ESOL provision to better meet the applicant profile (high percentage of mothers with children who would benefit from provision from 10am – 2pm to assist with childcare issues)

The introduction of ESOL+ College courses has been successful in combining language tuition with vocational subjects, thereby shortening the student journey and contributing to improved employability. Key employment growth sectors for the West Region are financial and business services, ICT/digital and health and social care. The College ESOL + courses in Care, ICT and Business and Finance are starting ESOL learners on the path towards these employment opportunities. The College plans to develop ESOL plus with STEM, provide a wider offering of ICT, and more progression routes to health care.

Quality Reporting

West College Scotland continues to enhance the quality of our provision through self-evaluation activities, across both teaching and support services, and by further analysing data and feedback in order to improve the quality of the student experience.

The College published its first [Evaluation Report and Enhancement Plan](#) in December 2017, followed by a three year [Evaluation Report and Enhancement Plan 2017-18 to 2019-20](#) under refreshed SFC/Education Scotland Arrangements for assuring quality. The quality framework How Good is Our College? supports an evidence-based approach to self-assessment, with supporting evidence externally validated and outcomes graded against three high level quality principles. The College continues to progress the actions in the Enhancement Plan. College evaluation activities are informing the next phase of preparation for the Evaluative Report and Enhancement Plan due to be completed in October 2020. [\(awaiting 2019/20 guidance\)](#)

Professional standards

The College was extensively involved in the development of the new Professional Standards for lecturers, providing a key input into their development through involvement in the Steering Group and through staff feedback during the development phase. The Professional Standards are now being used to inform training needs and prioritise aspects of the College CPD programme for teaching staff.

The College was awarded the GTCS Professional Update Validation Award in September 2019 and our staff are continuing to actively work with GTCS in the planning for professional registration.

The College is committed to supporting the professional development of all staff and this includes a range of CPD as well as a West College Scotland Leadership Development Programme providing the CMI Certificate in Management and Leadership (SCQF8) qualification.

The College has prepared a Workforce Plan which has analysed the current workforce and extended the analysis to identify future skills and competencies needed to deliver organisational success. West College Scotland has developed plans to 'Future Proof' the College with SFC and the Workforce Plan is a critical component of that wider plan.

Section Three: Innovation

Effective knowledge exchange and innovation

West College Scotland is a primary leader in the college sector in its approach to embedding innovation in the curriculum, in its offer to businesses and in recognising the need for our staff and students to be agile and adaptive to diversify and realise emerging opportunities. Supporting the ambitions outlined in the Enterprise and Skills Strategic Plan, particularly the Priorities linked to Innovation including 'Make best use of university and college research, knowledge and talent to drive growth and equip Scotland's people with the tools and skills needed to innovate'. The College has successfully led and developed a number of bold strategic multi-agency initiatives which have been delivered in partnership between Curriculum Sectors, Learning Technologists, Business Engagement teams and Industry.

West College Scotland supports the Scottish Government's ambition for Scotland to be in the top quartile for productivity amongst OECD member countries, recognising that Innovation is a driver for productivity and growth. The OECD estimates that, owing to the fourth industrial revolution and automation, 38 per cent to 42 per cent of the UK population will need to completely retrain in the next 10 years in order to remain employable, and suggests that for the UK "developing the right set of skills and making full use of them in the economy is a recipe for higher productivity, growth, and inclusiveness". Strategically the College works in supporting businesses to increase their level of innovation, realise their growth ambitions and create job wealth across our Region and explicitly links these activities to supporting inclusive growth through the five outcomes of Productivity, Population, Participation, People and Place. Examples of activity and future plans are below:

Supporting Business Innovation

Digital and management skills are a challenge for many SMEs and a lack of skills in these areas is likely to play an important role in the ability of some Scottish businesses to adopt, and make the most of, innovations. According to the Enterprise and Skills Review, Phase 2; competence in these areas is central to the capability of our businesses for innovation and for long-term economic performance. To ensure businesses, and in particular SMEs, have the ability to maximise their potential to innovate we will create a number of small 'chunkable' online and blended training packages which focus on developing digital skills, lean management, leadership, team working, virtual collaboration and enhancing productivity.

West College Scotland is one of the Scotland's largest providers of training through the Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF). In 2018-19, the College supported the upskilling and retraining of staff from more than 50 employers across the private, public and third sectors. We have nurtured new client relationships and developed new products and services directly informed by business demand. To date we have introduced almost 150 'new to market' products ranging from Strategic

Leadership and Digital Skills to Health and Safety and Resilience Building, as well as supporting specific opportunities for role specific in-work training. The College continues to successfully deliver the FWDF in 2019-20 strengthening and embedding new business relationships and providing further insight into employer skill and product demands that inform not only our offer to businesses but also college curriculum development to ensure our students have the skills and attributes required by their future or current employers. The College is in a good position to continue to deliver and build on FWDF in the future to meet the needs of our regional employers and workforce.

Innovation Centres Partnership

The introduction of innovation vouchers and the wider cross sectoral collaborations supported by the SFC FUTUREquipped project and College Innovation Accelerator Fund activities, has allowed strategic developments that go beyond transactional business/college engagement and facilitate colleges and their students to be part of the value chain in developing solutions dealing with industry, economic, environmental or demographic issues.

Building upon this, we continue to engage with Innovation Centres on planning and integrating their research, resources and services within a number of areas including; CSIC in relation to VR training on the use of advanced construction equipment. CENSIS where we are exploring the potential around sensors and environmental control in community housing, working with vulnerable and socially isolated groups.

The College is currently working closely with Renfrewshire Council and other regional stakeholders in supporting the Advancing Manufacturing Innovation District (AMIDS) to be an internationally recognised location for innovation, research and advanced manufacturing. At the heart of AMIDS is the National Manufacturing Institute for Scotland (NMIS) which will support the transformation of Scotland's manufacturing industry in terms of innovation and digital opportunities, creating sustainable, high-value and highly skilled jobs. The College is also delivering Engineer Apprenticeships for the Advanced Forming Research Centre (AFRC) in partnership with the University of Strathclyde. All of these strategic partnership activities provided a platform for us to submit a College led proposal with Renfrewshire Council to the Advancing Manufacturing Challenge Fund for further investment to support SMEs. (insert outcome when known)

Supporting Social Innovation – Eco Skills Academy

Case Study

West College Scotland and AC Whyte have established a unique partnership through the creation of a Skills Academy as a direct response to a company identified skills shortage. The College developed a previously underperforming course into a recognised industry qualification with a guarantee of employment on successful completion. The partnership has committed to deliver the programme for the next 5 years which will provide a bright and promising future for College students. West College Scotland is the only College in Scotland delivering this qualification and providing learners with a unique learning opportunity. The College identified that upskilling students to apply thermal insulation would not only embed sustainability issues into curriculum delivery but also support the Scottish Government ambition in tackling fuel poverty which affects an estimated 25% homes in Scotland and around 1.3 million people. The initiative has involved industry experts in shaping and directing the curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of both industry and the economy. For AC Whyte, they secure

a reliable flow of high-quality staff, address some aspects of fuel poverty within the West of Scotland, and assist students to gain a qualification and future employment. This project was recognised earlier this year with West College Scotland winning the **‘Outstanding Business Engagement in Colleges Award’ at The Herald Higher Education Awards 2019.**

Innovating Solution Space – Shaping Workplace Innovation

Workplaces and employees are at the heart of the innovation process. Harnessing the innovation potential of employees depends on both Fair Work and the employers’ ability to be innovative in how the workplace and work practices are designed.

We have recently submitted a Strategic bid to the SFC **College Innovation Fund**. We plan to conduct primary Research and Development (R&D) through the delivery and results from three, major hackathons in West, East and North Scotland. The result of our work will be to help 100 businesses identify the right conditions within their workplaces for employees to develop the skills necessary for businesses to prosper in a Manufacturing 4.0 environment.

Case Study

The College received funding from University for Industry (Ufi) for the discovery phase of our ‘Critical Engineer’ project. We outlined the initial phase of the project to be a process that reflected the pace, technology and uncertainty of Manufacturing 4.0. Working in partnership with Dundee and Angus College Service Design Academy and with a cohort of Engineers from Scottish Leather Group (SLG), the approach used was to enable the Engineers to fully understand, respond positively and actively engage with service design methodologies and tools to explore and gather insight into the existing technical and meta skills, culture and Engineering working environment. They were introduced to key methods within user research such as service observations, open interview techniques, capturing stakeholder views and disseminating these in a coherent fashion. It was essential that the SLG Engineers were at the heart of ‘the problem’ which was to support our definition of a Critical Engineer, ‘to shape and agree a set of skills, personal qualities and values, and the working environment conducive for a Critical Engineer to prosper in Manufacturing 4.0.’ By bringing employees closer to the ‘problem’ and providing a collaborative space and appropriate service design methodologies this supported innovative approaches and outputs which will shape the concept for their individual benefit, that of the Scottish Leather Group and of the broader Manufacturing industry in the West of Scotland.

Innovating Technology Space – Enabling Action

To support the College Digital Strategy ambitions as well as our Workforce Development and Learning and Teaching strategies, our Learning Technology team launched COLT – the Centre of Learning Technologies. COLT is an innovative online hub which aggregates all interactive online learning, teaching and assessment tools in one place and supports teaching staff, through tutorials and examples to easily create engaging and enriching interactive content to provide high quality teaching and learning assessment/feedback experiences for students and staff.

Users of COLT are discovering innovative ways to create, collaborate and re-purpose interactive content easily to enhance the teaching and learning experience. It also provides all staff with access to resources which help develop their own digital skills.

Case Study

HiP (Homecare in your Pocket)

The HiP app is designed to equip homecare workers with the knowledge and skills required of them in a changing social care landscape. The app landing screen has easily identifiable and accessible icons directing users to their personal profile, the App's function, and the main learning areas. Each learning area has subcategories with bitesize, focused learning that users will be able to easily filter to suit their needs, supporting access for a mobile and remote peripatetic workforce both providing learning solutions but also a reference guide to current practice and depository of relevant information and support.

Building on this, the College has secured seed investment from Ufi to develop a prototype and 'proof of concept' App. To maximise the impact of the design development of the App, a student competition for College HND Graphic Design students was set as a live client brief to design logo icons and promotional materials. The winning design has been applied to the prototype which will be trialled on the Apple Appstore/Android Play store to begin the testing process of training packages in:

- Infection Control
- Health, Well-Being and Resilience
- Cultural Awareness within Care Settings

The App is currently entering its initial feedback stage being tested and reviewed by students at West College Scotland and at the University of the West of Scotland, a Care Provider and SSSC. Once the testing is complete, our findings will be reviewed and further enhancements made to the App, reflecting the feedback and finalising the development of the prototype which will subsequently be rolled out to social care organisations and employees.

Innovating Talent Space – Empowering People

The College is developing an Innovation Hub which will support the entrepreneurial ecosystem including providing a dedicated space for individuals to enhance their digital skills, provide opportunities for multi-sectoral collaboration as well as providing access to leadership and entrepreneurial skills training for emerging entrepreneurs, innovators and businesses. This complements the College's partnership with Young Enterprise Scotland who deliver our Bridge 2 Business programme through a dedicated Entrepreneurial Executive and supports our students through dedicated enterprise and business growth workshops as well as grant funding.

Innovating Intelligence Space – Understanding Data

Data will drive Scotland's next economic revolution therefore Data Driven Innovation is a theme the College is strategically embedding within its activities. Recognising the importance of policy analysis and horizon scanning, the College is sector leading in having a Policy Officer who provides Futures Analysis, bespoke thematic reports, policy reviews, sectoral LMI, and longitudinal research to provide information, insight and intelligence to recognise trends and emerging priorities to support effective strategic planning and decision making.

The College is planning to further invest in the development of our digital and data tools to improve innovation, including enhancement of our business analytics capabilities to deliver interactive visualisations and business intelligence as well as establishing a Data Analysis team and resource hub.