

**Belfast Metropolitan College Human Resources Committee held 3.00pm Wednesday 12 November 2025 in TQ Board Room and via MS Teams**

**Committee Members:** Lauren McAteer (Chair); Damian Duffy, Michele Corkey, Sheena McKinney, Sinead Sharpe, and Rose Byrne.

**Management:** Paula Graham, Director of People and Culture (DPC); Stephanie McCormack, Head of Human Resources (HHR), and Lisa Valentine (HR).

**Secretary to the Governing Body:** Jim Woods

**HR14  
25-26**

**Quorum, Apologies, Welcome, Conflicts of Interest, Notice of AOB and Leadership Culture**

**Quorum:** The meeting was quorate under the terms of Section 6.2 of the Terms of Reference for the Human Resource Committee (approved 11 December 2024 GB31 24-25) (2 Governors).

**Apologies:** Seamus McGoran and William Buckley

**Welcome:** Lisa Valentine who is in attendance from HR.

**Conflicts of Interest:**

There were no perceived, potential, or actual conflicts of interest under the terms of Section 8.1 of the Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body Standing Orders V5 dated December 2024 (GB20 24-25).

**AOB:** There were no notified items of any other business.

**Leadership Culture was reiterated as:** *Creative and Courageous Conversation in an 'atmosphere' OR 'culture' of challenge and respect in line with our Code of Conduct.*

<b>Agenda Item</b>	
<b>HR15 25-26</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2025</b></p> <p>The Committee considered and approved minutes of the previous meeting held 2 September 2025.</p>
<b>HR16 25-26</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2025</b></p> <p>There were no matters arising that were not covered by the agenda.</p>
<b>HR17 25-26</b>	<p><b>Governance Guidance and Information</b></p> <p>There have been no updates reported.</p>
<b>HR18 25-26</b>	<p><b>Notification of change to the internal control environment under Section 12d of Governing Body Standing Orders 11 December 2024</b></p> <p>No changes were recorded.</p>
<b>HR19 25-26</b>	<p><b>Chair's Business</b></p> <p>The Chair advised members that the advertisement was live for the position of Principal and Chief Executive.</p>
<b>HR20 25-26</b>	<p><b>Update from FE Sector HR Working Group (HRWG)</b></p> <p>HHR took members through the paper in detail presenting an update on the work of the sectoral HRWG as requested by HRC. She explained that it set out the key objectives of the group under the agreed collaboration plan for 25/26. Progress updates were provided against each of the priorities namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecturers' workload agreement</li> <li>• Recruitment and retention proposals for hard to fill roles.</li> <li>• Holiday pay agreements</li> <li>• Policy improvement and modernization</li> <li>• HR systems development</li> </ul> <p>Members asked that the item was retained as a standing item on future agendas. The Committee sought clarity for the plans to migrate to a new HR system.</p> <p>In response to questions, it was explained that each College was represented by P&amp;CE and Chairs and that papers will only be shared with HR Committees when agreement has been reached.</p> <p>The Committee noted the information provided on Sector working groups.</p>
<b>HR21 25-26</b>	<p><b>Annual Metrics Report, headlines and analysis.</b></p> <p>DPC led on the item introducing Lisa Valentine who presented the year end performance metrics for 24/25 for HR and comparison against 2023/24. Metrics are provided in relation to four key</p>

Agenda Item	
	<p>areas – Recruitment, Employee Relations, Workforce Profile and Absence. Indicators support the objectives of the powered by people strategy i.e.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Build a People Oriented, Collaborative and Inclusive College</li> <li>➤ Promote and Enhance Employee Wellbeing</li> <li>➤ Attract, Retain and Develop Talent</li> </ul> <p>The key Insights demonstrated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Data shows performance improvements across all areas with increases in recruitment application rates, improved time to fill, decrease in number of formal ER cases, decrease in staff turnover and reduced sickness absence.</li> <li>➤ Recruitment application rate exceeds UK benchmarks reflecting effective talent attraction strategies, though re-advertisement rates remain high in specialist sectors. Time to hire has reduced by 10%.</li> <li>➤ Data shows an improving picture of employee relations with more informal resolutions and fewer escalated cases, suggesting that early interventions, better triage and a partnership approach with trade unions is working. However, sector benchmarks highlight the need for continued focus.</li> <li>➤ Workforce profile shows a stabilizing picture post VR with low turnover of 6.5% which compares favorably to the NI education sector average of 7.5% and UK education sector average of 28.2%.</li> <li>➤ Overall absence has reduced by 25%. Percentage of workforce with no absence has increased by 23% to currently 76%. Average days lost per person has reduced by 35%. However, whilst an improving picture, Belfast Met still exceeds sector absence benchmarks, indicating the need for further progress.</li> </ul> <p>After a series of debated members sought clarity at a strategic level on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A further in-depth look at absenteeism and practical steps that might address absences. DPC advised that a deep dive analysis into sick absence was delivered at HRC in Sept. Not due for further deep dive analysis at this point in time.</li> <li>➤ Details from the first point of contact to the resolution of cases. HHR to consider how best to report.</li> <li>➤ Given the volume of part-time staff information in terms of, FT, PT and FTEs HHR advised that this forms part of normal quarterly metrics reporting.</li> <li>➤ Include diversity data into the cultural Audit. Will be considered as part of scoping of this project.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee noted the information provided on Sector working groups.</p>
<b>HR11 25-26</b>	<p><b>Meeting feedback</b></p> <p>The Committee confirmed with the Chair that the conduct of this governance meeting provided evidence of the Governing Body’s commitments as set out at HR14 25-26 above.</p>
<b>HR12 25-26</b>	<p><b>Date of next meetings for the Governance Programme 2025-26:</b></p> <p>10 March 2026</p>

*The open session of the meeting ended at 16:35 pm.*

Governing Body Attendance Report and Governing Body Member Assessment 2025-26	
Participation at HR14 25-26 Human Resources Committee 12 November 2025	
In-person at TQ Boardroom	via MS Teams
Lauren McAteer	Michele Corkey
Damian Duffy	Sheena McKinney
Sinead Sharpe	Rose Byrne

Actions

Item	Action	Lead
<b>HR20 25-26</b>	<b>FE Sector HR Working Group (HRWG) –</b> Agenda item at future meetings	DPC
<b>HR21 25-26</b>	<b>Annual Metrics Report, headlines and analysis.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A further in-depth look at absenteeism and practical steps that might address absences. DPC advised that a deep dive analysis into sick absence was delivered at HRC in Sept. Not due for further deep dive analysis at this point in time.</li> <li>➤ Details from the first point of contact to the resolution of cases. HHR to consider how best to report.</li> <li>➤ Given the volume of part-time staff information in terms of, FT, PT and FTEs HHR advised that this forms part of normal quarterly metrics reporting.</li> <li>➤ Include diversity data into the cultural Audit. Will be considered as part of scoping of this project.</li> </ul>	DPC

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Lauren McAteer  
Chair of Human Resources

Date: 10 March 2026