

Board of Management

Audit & Assurance Committee

Date of Meeting	3 March 2026
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Agenda Item	5.2.3
Subject of Paper	Fair Work Practices
FOISA Status	Disclosable
Primary Contact	David Archibald, Henderson Loggie
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Action	For Discussion

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. The Committee is asked to consider and discuss the report and the management responses to the Internal Audit Recommendations.

2. Consultation

- 2.1. The Lead Auditor has consulted with the Executive Owner, the College Lead, and the Compliance Auditor.

3. Key Insights

- 3.1. The Internal Audit for Fair Work Practices has identified one Priority 2 recommendation and one Priority 3 recommendation from the fieldwork, which have management responses.

4. Impact and Implications

4.1. Internal Audit provides an objective insight into the efficiency of operations, evaluation of risks, and organisational controls.

Appendix 1: Internal Audit Report – Fair Work Practices

City of Glasgow College

Fair Work Practices

Internal Audit report No: 2026/03

Draft issued: 17 February 2026

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Final issued: 24 February 2026



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Level of Assurance

In addition to the grading of individual recommendations in the action plan, audit findings are assessed and graded on an overall basis to denote the level of assurance that can be taken from the report. Risk and materiality levels are considered in the assessment and grading process as well as the general quality of the procedures in place.

Gradings are defined as follows:

Good	System meets control objectives.
Satisfactory	System meets control objectives with some weaknesses present.
Requires improvement	System has weaknesses that could prevent it achieving control objectives.
Unacceptable	System cannot meet control objectives.

Action Grades

Priority 1	Issue subjecting the organisation to material risk and which requires to be brought to the attention of management and the Audit and Assurance Committee.
Priority 2	Issue subjecting the organisation to significant risk and which should be addressed by management.
Priority 3	Matters subjecting the organisation to minor risk or which, if addressed, will enhance efficiency and effectiveness.



Management Summary

Overall Level of Assurance

Satisfactory

System meets control objectives with some weaknesses present.

Risk Assessment

This review focused on the controls in place to mitigate the following risks on the City of Glasgow College ('the College') Strategic Risk Register as at February 2026 although it was noted that, at its meeting on 18 February 2026, the People and Culture Committee requested a detailed review of these strategic risks:

- SR 10 – Failure to attract, engage and retain suitable staff (Net score, 16 – High risk);
- SR 12 – Negative impact of statutory compliance failure (Net score 10 – Medium risk); and
- SR 17 – Negative impact of industrial action (Net score 5 – Low risk).

Background

As part of the Internal Audit programme at the College for 2025/26 we carried out a review of the systems in place in relation to Fair Work Practices. The Audit Needs Assessment identified this as an area where risk can arise and where Internal Audit can assist in providing assurances that the related control environment is operating effectively, ensuring risk is maintained at an acceptable level.

Scope, Objectives and Overall Findings

The Scottish Government's Fair Work policy aims to improve the working lives of people in Scotland and boost economic growth.

The Fair Work Convention acts as an independent advisory body to Scottish Ministers. The Convention's 'Fair Work Framework' (FWF) underpins the Scottish Government's Fair Work policy and approach. It outlines what employers can do to build fairer working practices into their organisations.

Scope, Objectives and Overall Findings (Continued)

There are five dimensions in the framework:

- security – secure jobs with fair pay and conditions;
- opportunity – for workers to progress;
- fulfilment – supporting workers and creating a sense of community;
- respect – recognising the value and contributions of all workers; and
- effective voice – giving workers the chance to speak out and be listened to.

Each dimension describes how organisations can:

- generate benefits for workers, organisations, and society;
- balance the rights and responsibilities of employers and workers; and
- take gradual, incremental steps towards a fairer working environment.

This audit will consider the adequacy and effectiveness of policies and procedures for ensuring the College's compliance with fair work practices.

The table below notes each separate objective for this review and records the results:

Objective	Findings			
The objective of our audit was to obtain reasonable assurance that:	Level of Assurance	1	2	3
		No. of Agreed Actions		
1. There are appropriate formal policies and procedures in place supporting the fair work dimensions in place at the College and the responsibilities of key staff in administering these.	Requires Improvement	0	1	1
2. Appropriate training is in place for line managers to ensure that they have a sufficient understanding of these policies and dimensions of fair work.	Good	0	0	1
3. The College has assessed the application of its fair work practices and their alignment with the required / expected approach.	Good	0	0	0
4. The College has appropriate monitoring arrangements in place and reporting mechanisms to the Executive Team and the Board regarding fair work practices.	Good	0	0	0
Overall Level of Assurance	Satisfactory	0	1	1
		System meets control objectives with some weaknesses present.		

Audit Approach

The College's policies and procedures were reviewed, and interviews were conducted with the Vice Principal People and Culture and other senior managers. Focus groups with managers and staff discussed how the College's approach supports the delivery of the FWF. We also held a separate meeting with local branch representatives from EIS/FELA. Unison were invited to the meeting, to provide a support staff perspective, but did not attend. The audit examined current policies, procedures, management information, and assurance processes that support the College's implementation of the FWF.

Summary of Main Findings

Strengths

- The College encourages open communication through complaints procedures, whistleblowing, and collaboration with Trade Union (TU) representatives. Staff concerns can be raised via grievance policies or TU representatives.
- Three yearly staff surveys are undertaken, these inform action plans to improve issues highlighted, with progress reports submitted to the People and Culture Committee and the Board of Management.
- The College's People and Culture Strategy aims to embed Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) as a core value, with all staff receiving mandatory EDI training.
- The College as required within the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) also publishes regular reports on equality outcomes, pay gaps, and mainstreaming outcomes.
- Staff have access to career development discussions as part of the annual MYPDR reviews, with all staff encouraged to pursue ongoing personal development, which is supported by the College's Organisational Development (OD) Strategy.
- For the Academic staff, the College's Lecturers Training Academy, supports them to meet the General Teaching Council (GTC) Scotland's mandatory training and Continuing Professional Development (CDP) requirements.
- All staff contracts follow national agreements, ensuring consistent grading, salary scales, and conditions of service.
- The College is a living wage employer that reviews pay rates annually and engages in meaningful consultation with TUs regarding any contract changes.
- The College maintains a secure and supportive environment through policies on bullying, harassment, lone working, and health and safety. It also provides dedicated wellbeing resources for staff, including a Wellbeing Officer, support hub, mental health programmes, and training.
- New staff complete compulsory induction training on core FWF policies, with completion tracked by line managers.
- Assurance is in place to confirm compliance with FWF requirements, including reporting for PSED requirements to both the People and Culture Committee and Board of Management.
- In our view, based on the evidence obtained during this audit, the College has demonstrated a wide range of activity designed to meet the FWF and its five dimensions, and these have been embedded into its policies and procedures, culture, and operational approach.

Weaknesses

- In our discussions with EIS / FELA it was their strong perception that they have residual concerns over the way in which the LNC operates and therefore the way in which senior management interact around the Fair Work principles within the LNC.
- Other than the staff survey, which is undertaken on a three-yearly cycle, there is no robust process in place to capture the "staff voice" for all staff across the College, in between these reviews.

Acknowledgments

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff at City of Glasgow College who helped us during the course of our review.

Main Findings and Action Plan

Objective 1 - There are appropriate formal policies and procedures in place supporting the fair work dimensions in place at the College and the responsibilities of key staff in administering these.

To facilitate the implementation of the Fair Work Framework (FWF) across the College, an approach has been developed to ensure it is integrated into operational activities as part of standard business practice. This commitment is demonstrated through the measures in place to achieve the FWF five dimensions, as detailed below.

Effective Voice

The College encourages staff engagement through structured channels such as complaints procedures, whistleblowing, and collaboration with Trade Union (TU) representatives, who negotiate within the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) framework. A formal dispute resolution process supports these discussions. The College promotes open communication, as outlined in its People and Culture Strategy 2021–30, emphasising fair work principles. Staff can raise concerns via grievance policies, TU representatives, or whistleblowing. In addition, the College also provides regular updates on College wide issues to staff, through the Principal's briefings.

The College recognises academic and administrative TUs and negotiates locally in line with the National Recognition and Procedure Agreement (NRPA). TU representatives also sit on the College Board of Management. In addition, both academic and support staff have representation on the Board, as well as its standing committees.

As part of our review we examined the Memorandum of Agreement and Understanding, which is the recognition and procedures agreement between the Board of Management of City of Glasgow College and the educational Institute of Scotland / Further Education Lecturers Association (City of Glasgow College Branch). This memorandum document has been in place since the vesting date for the College. It contains an equality and diversity statement as follows:

“The new College will promote diversity, uphold equality of opportunity and tackle social exclusion. The College will respond to the needs of learners, staff and other stakeholders irrespective of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, sexual orientation, marital / civil partnership status or pregnancy / maternity. The new College will be a diverse community and the College will value this variety and the benefits it brings to the working and learning environment”.

The Scope of Recognition section of the Memorandum of Agreement and Understanding states that:

“This agreement is intended to provide formal recognition between the parties for the determination and negotiation of:

- a. Terms and Conditions of employment.*
- b. College procedures for addressing matters of discipline and grievance.*
- c. Facilities for Trade Union officials and Trade Union Learning Representatives. Please refer to attached Appendix 1 for the Learning Agreement.*
- d. Health and Safety”.*

Objective 1 - There are appropriate formal policies and procedures in place supporting the fair work dimensions in place at the College and the responsibilities of key staff in administering these (Continued).

Effective Voice (Continued)

As part of our discussions with EIS / FELA we were advised that they have residual concerns over the way in which the Local Negotiating Committee (LNC) operates and therefore the way in which senior management interact around the Fair Work principles within the LNC. We raised these concerns with the Depute Principal, who Chairs the LNC, and the Vice Principal People and Corporate Support. We were advised that concerted efforts had been made during the tenure of the Depute Principal as Chair of the LNC to work collaboratively with trade unions and to improve relationships. Both the Depute Principal and the Vice Principal People and Corporate Support confirmed their commitment to listening to the concerns of EIS / FELA regarding trade union concerns around Fair Work principles, but stressed the need for data-backed, empirical evidence to support any concerns flagged by trade unions through LNC, in order to allow a full understanding of the nature of the concerns raised, in order to allow meaningful discussions to take place with EIS / FELA, via LNC, to resolve any issues raised. Therefore, we have raised a recommendation below to address the issues flagged by EIS / FEL.

Staff surveys are undertaken on a three-year cycle, with the most recent survey conducted in March 2023 and the next survey scheduled for March 2026. Survey results are analysed and disseminated to all staff, informing the development of targeted action plans. Progress on these initiatives is routinely reported to the People and Culture Committee as a standing agenda item.

Opportunity

The College's commitment to fair work is contained within its People and Culture Strategy. The importance of, and commitment to, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) are reflected within the College's EDI and Dignity at Work Guidance. The College provides mandatory EDI training for all staff, detailing required behaviours and equality of opportunity for all. Quarterly compliance reports on EDI training are provided to the People and Culture Committee.

The College, in line with all other public sector bodies, publishes updates every two years and reviews and refreshes its Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirements every four years. During 2025 it reported on the following:

- Equality Mainstreaming Report;
- Progress report on Equality Outcomes;
- Pay Gap Report incorporating a new Equal Pay Statement; and
- Equality Outcomes Framework.

In addition, the College's recruitment and selection process is designed to be transparent, equitable, and compliant with statutory requirements, reinforced by comprehensive training, both for external recruitment and internal promotion opportunities. Staff can discuss career development during the MYPDR process, access training, and progress through defined skills frameworks. The College supports staff growth, with dedicated training policies, budgets, and programs for professional and personal development. Additionally, while national agreements define teaching job roles, a process exists for job evaluation and regrading if staff believe their roles have changed significantly and now meet criteria for a higher pay grade.

Objective 1 - There are appropriate formal policies and procedures in place supporting the fair work dimensions in place at the College and the responsibilities of key staff in administering these (Continued).

Opportunity (Continued)

In 2024, EIS / FELA commissioned a Workload Survey, which we were advised demonstrated that lecturers have increased workload and decreased job satisfaction, which impacts on staff health and wellbeing. The results of this survey have been shared with College senior management, who declined to comment on the outcomes of this research unless assurances could be provided by EIS / FELA that the findings are accurate, representative, and robust. College senior management advised that they have not been provided with assurances from EIS / FELA on the Workload Survey. EIS / FELA stated that staff who are chronically overworked have less time for CPD to enhance their skills and have reduced opportunities for career progression. It was also highlighted by EIS / FELA that this applies disproportionality to those with disabilities and caring responsibilities.

Security

Standard contracts for all teaching roles follow national agreements set by College Employers Scotland (CES) and the NJNC, with input from TUs. These agreements determine grading, salary scales, hours, condition of service and annual changes to pay and conditions. This ensures that salary progression is consistent, fair and available for all employees, and that the College engages and undertakes meaningful consultations with TUs when considering any potential changes to contracts or terms and conditions.

The College is a living wage employer, reviewing pay rates annually to ensure alignment with NJNC agreements and compliance with living wage requirements.

EIS / FELA highlighted concerns around workload for teaching staff and the impact of recurring voluntary severance on staff morale and staff retention. However, it is our view that this represents the cumulative impact of the historical restructuring exercises and voluntary severance schemes which have been implemented by the College in response to the challenging financial position faced by the whole FE sector in Scotland. Whilst this doesn't negate the impact on the staff currently working in the College, this is not a situation which is unique to City of Glasgow College.

Fulfilment

All new staff go through an induction process, designed to provide essential knowledge of the College and their job roles. The College's Organisational Development (OD) Team supports personal and professional growth by fostering development through both internal and external training courses, alongside comprehensive eLearning, and digital resources. Academic staff must complete annual mandatory training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to comply with the General Teaching Council (GTC) Scotland standards. All College employees are encouraged to pursue personal development and use the MYPDR process to identify relevant training needs.

Respect

The College also has a Wellbeing Officer who helps to implement health and wellbeing initiatives, including a Wellbeing Support Hub, health and wellbeing training, fitness and leisure activities, mental health first aid programmes, a resilience and empowerment program, and a stress management toolkit. Guidance and support are accessible through established mechanisms, including awareness campaigns and intervention procedures. The establishment of a Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Working Group and a student-centred GBV module is currently under development. All staff members have been provided with L.I.S.T.E.N. and Safeguarding training. A code of conduct is in place which details the required staff standards of behaviour and the consequences if they are breached.

Objective 1 - There are appropriate formal policies and procedures in place supporting the fair work dimensions in place at the College and the responsibilities of key staff in administering these. (continued)

Respect (Continued)

In our discussions with EIS / FELA they made reference to a Staff Wellbeing Survey, which was commissioned by the College and was conducted by external consultants in March 2024. This survey report was obtained by EIS / FELA in December 2024, following a Freedom of Information request. We were advised by EIS / FELA that this report highlighted a decline in staff health and wellbeing, less motivation, feelings of not being valued and trusted, and less commitment to the organisation. We clarified with the Depute Principal and the Vice Principal People and Corporate Support that this report required to be heavily redacted given the level of personally identifiable information it contained. We were also advised that a similar Staff Wellbeing Survey will be repeated in academic year 2026/27, and we received assurances that the high level outcomes from the report will be presented to LNC.

Fair Work Practices

Objective 1 - There are appropriate formal policies and procedures in place supporting the fair work dimensions in place at the College and the responsibilities of key staff in administering these (Continued).

Observation	Risk	Recommendation	Management Response
As highlighted above, in our discussions with EIS / FELA we were advised that they have residual concerns over the way in which the LNC operates and therefore the way in which senior management interact around the Fair Work principles within the LNC. In an effort to address the current impasse we confirmed the senior management appetite to engage with the trade unions to understand a) their concerns around the way the LNC operates, in relation to addressing EIS / FELA concerns around Fair Work principles and b) to discuss how the trade unions would propose to address any concerns around Fair Work principles.	There is a risk that the local negotiating committee does not provide an effective forum for collaboration to improve Fair Work Practices in the College.	R1 - In an effort to improve the current way in which the Local Negotiating Committee is operating, and to move towards improved collaborative working, we would encourage College senior management to engage with EIS / FELA to allow them to put forward a) a list of issues where EIS / FELA feel that there is scope for improvement in achieving Fair Work principles, which is supported by data and empirical evidence and b) clear proposals from EIS / FELA on the proposed changes required to address their concerns. This should provide enhanced clarity on the issues and the proposed EIS /FELA remediations, to allow a focused future discussion at LNC to enhance fair work practices within the College.	a) As the Chair of LNC the Depute Principal will ask EIS / FELA to provide a list of concerns with supporting evidence / data where LNC could be improved to enhance the Fair Work Principles. b) As the Chair of LNC the Depute Principal will ask EIS / FELA to provide clear proposals for changes to the LNC to help address their concerns. To be actioned by: Depute Principal No later than: 3 June 2026
			Grade 2



Objective 1 - There are appropriate formal policies and procedures in place supporting the fair work dimensions in place at the College and the responsibilities of key staff in administering these (Continued).

Observation	Risk	Recommendation	Management Response
It is evident that the College has a number of formal measures in place to capture staff views and concerns including: • Meetings with TU officials; • Use of Whistleblowing process; • Complaints process; • Independent Staff Wellbeing Surveys; • Regular team meetings; • All Managers' meetings; • Team meetings; and • Board of Management and its standing committees. However, other than the staff survey, which is undertaken on a three-yearly cycle, there is no robust process in place to capture the "staff voice" in between these reviews. Although the above measures do provide staff engagement and feedback routes, outside of these formal approaches there is no structured process in place to capture and evaluate staff views, opinions, and feedback.	Staff perspectives are not fully captured or considered.	R2 - The College should consider creating a Staff Council or similar group, to supplement the work of LNC, in order to gather and address staff feedback (from trade union members and non-trade union members) between the three-yearly staff survey cycles.	A proposal for a Staff Council to be introduced within the College to complement both the LNC and SSNC, without eroding or replacing formal negotiation / consultation forums will be presented to SMT. To be actioned by: Vice Principal People & Corporate Support No later than: 30 August 2026
			Grade 3

Objective 2 - Appropriate training is in place for line managers to ensure that they have a sufficient understanding of these policies and dimensions of fair work.

When staff join the College, they are introduced to the policies and procedures that underpin the delivery of Fair Work practices and the five associated dimensions as part of their induction process. This includes elements of compulsory training, covering the following key areas of the FWF:

- Health and Safety policies and procedures;
- EDI;
- Safeguarding; and
- Sexual Harassment Awareness.

These training elements are integral to the College's delivery of the five dimensions of the FWF. As part of the probationary process, all new staff are required to complete this training, with successful completion monitored and confirmed by their respective line managers. Furthermore, as part of the process, individual development and training opportunities are discussed and new staff are introduced to the MYPDR process, with its objectives and benefits for individuals outlined.

Ongoing job support and training development

The College implemented the MYPDR process in the 2024/25 academic year as a structured annual personal staff review designed to identify training and development needs, thereby supporting individual's personal and professional growth. It is currently optional, but participation by staff within the College is growing. Teams, Departments and Faculties are responsible for creating training plans and coordinating with OD for delivery. While there is no formal College Training Needs Assessment, MYPDR completion helps determine training requirements for Teams, Departments and Faculties.

Lecturers must complete CPD and use the Professional Development Accreditation system to meet the GTC Scotland standards. Staff are also required to comply with the College's Code of Conduct as a condition of their employment. The OD team reviews development requests, identifies training needs, and organises demand-led sessions via the Lecturers Training Academy or external providers. A monthly OD newsletter lists training options. For specialised roles such as health and safety, required eLearn refreshers are assigned and tracked, with managers notified of non-compliance.

In addition to the available training, the College runs open days and conferences with academic and support staff, giving the OD team the opportunity to meet with staff and advertise the range of OD and training opportunities available.

Objective 2 - Appropriate training is in place for line managers to ensure that they have a sufficient understanding of these policies and dimensions of fair work (Continued)

Performance Reporting

Performance updates within the OD report are provided at all People and Culture Committee meetings. These reports detail:

- Number of CPD events / topics offered by OD, the number of sessions and total attendance;
- Compliance rates with compulsory training;
- Number of CPD requests received;
- Number of new training and development opportunities; and
- Number of staff who have completed the MYPDR process.

These updates highlight both the demand and provision of further staff development and training opportunities within the College, as well as compliance levels with mandatory training.

Staff Input

Staff views on the OD process and available training opportunities are discussed within the three-year Staff Engagement Surveys and feedback is also provided for the classroom training courses on the content and delivery.



Objective 3 - The College has assessed the application of its Fair Work Practices and their alignment with the required / expected approach.

The Fair Work Convention outlines the desired approach to be taken by workplaces through its five dimensions, which define good practice. However, there is currently no independent method to assess or accredit how well organisations apply this framework. At present, the only requirements to report compliance in Fair Work is contained within the SFC's Annual Accounts Direction for Colleges (2024/25), which requests details of how colleges comply with these requirements.

Apart from this, there is no national criteria to benchmark or accredit these requirements (similar to an ISO Process). While the Fair Work Convention provides guidance, it does not assess or accredit organisations application of these requirements.

Therefore, with no available measurement in place, we are not able to benchmark how successfully the College applies the FWF. Our assessment of the five dimensions is based on available information and evidence obtained from this audit that has been assessed against the five Fair Work Dimensions outlined within the 2016 Fair Work Framework.

It is clear from our discussion with management and EIS / FELA that there are differing views on the extent to which the College aligns with Fair Work Practices. While we have highlighted above, under each of the fair work practices, all the work which has been taken forward within the College to ensure compliance with the required / expected approach, we have been presented a different picture by EIS / FELA, which highlights their concerns around the way in which Fair Work Practices are being applied in the College.

Objective 4 - The College has appropriate monitoring arrangements in place and reporting mechanisms to the Executive Team and the Board regarding fair work practices.

While there is no single report confirming how the College can demonstrate compliance with the FWF principles and its five dimensions, there are a number of reports to both the Board of Management and the People and Culture Committee that do provide assurance in a number of key areas including:

Board of Management:

- Annual assurance reporting as part of the SFC direction for the Annual report and accounts;
- Public Sector Equality Duty reporting including:
 - Pay Gender Gap Reporting;
 - Annual Mainstreaming and Equality outcomes reporting;
- Staff Survey results and progress reporting;
- Approval of the People and Culture Strategy; and
- Approval of the Equality Outcome Framework.

People and Culture Committee:

- Regular update reports on EDI matters including completed EIAs;
- Staff Turnover rates update;
- Absence level updates;
- Occupational health updates;
- Liaison with TU;
- Fair work update;
- Wellbeing update;
- Training reports;
- MYPDR compliance rates; and
- OD including training and CPD updates.

Within the HR Metrics report submitted to the People and Culture Committee, an update on the FWF is now included as a standing agenda item. These elements provide a degree of ongoing assurance concerning the implementation and application of the Fair Work Practices and its five dimensions within the College.

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