

Board Meeting

Date of Meeting	Monday 25 March 2019
Paper Title	Report on Regional Conversation on Mental Health and Wellbeing
Agenda Item	14
Paper Number	BM3-0
Responsible Officer	Robin Ashton, GCRB Executive Director
Status	Disclosable
Action	For discussion

1. Report Purpose

- 1.1 To provide a report on a 'Regional Conversation on Mental Health and Wellbeing' event organised by GCRB.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Board is invited to:

- **note** the Regional Conversation on Mental Health and Wellbeing event held by GCRB on February 26, 2019; and
- **request** and update on the further development of the strategic approach to mental health at a future meeting of the GCRB Board

3. Regional Conversation on Mental Health and Wellbeing

- 3.1 A 'Regional Conversation on Mental Health and Wellbeing' event was organised by GCRB on February 26, 2019.
- 3.2 The purpose of the event was to support the development of strategic and operational approaches to supporting good student and staff mental health and wellbeing across the Glasgow College Region.
- 3.3 The event format followed the recent successful event held in September 2018 on Increasing Board Diversity, with keynote speakers and group discussion. Participants included regional and college board members and staff, staff and student representatives, and stakeholders from bodies such as the SFC, Scottish Association for Mental Health, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, and Colleges Scotland.

3.4 Speakers at the Mental Health event were:

- Gareth Allen, Scottish Government, Strategic Lead Higher Education Funding, Governance, and Student Support - Gareth provided an overview of national developments, including the Scottish Government's Ten Year Mental Health Strategy, Government work with NUS Scotland and support for Think Positive, Programme for Government commitments. In addition, Gareth outlined the planned role for a new Student Mental Health and Well-Being Ministerial Working Group.
- Dr Ruth Stocks, NHS Clinical Director for Psychology Services in Greater Glasgow and Clyde - Ruth provided an overview of the factors impacting on Young People's Mental Health, including their life stage, vulnerabilities such as adverse childhood experiences and social factors. Ruth also outlined potential approaches to supporting students, including Addressing stigma and promoting psychological well-being, the positive role of a significant adult, the National Trauma Training Framework and stress management techniques.
- Liam McCabe, National Union of Students Scotland President – Liam provided an overview of NUS Scotland's Think Positive project which is focused on finding ways to support students experiencing mental ill health, tackle stigma and discrimination, and promote wellbeing in colleges and universities. Liam set out his desire for healthy, happy student population across Scotland, that can talk openly and without concern about their mental wellbeing.
- Fiona Robinson, Vice President Glasgow Clyde College Student Association, on behalf of the Glasgow Colleges Regional Student Executive - Fiona provided a summary of results from a recent survey of students from across the three colleges on their views on mental health issues. The survey results highlighted the prominence of stress as a negative factor for student mental health, alongside the perceived lack of time to deal appropriately with mental health issues.

3.5 Group discussions considered the challenges and opportunities to achieving the GCRB Board's vision of a joined-up and high-quality mental health and well-being service for students and staff, alongside discussing how collaborative working could deliver a greater impact.

3.6 Common themes across the group discussions included:

- The college region should take a proactive approach which focuses on prevention and building resilience, developing the skills of staff and learners to effectively tackle mental health issues.
- We need a mapping exercise of mental health and well-being services for both students and staff. This will give a greater understanding of current services available and to support more coherent and collaborative future delivery/development.
- Counselling alone is not the answer and we need to develop services and approaches that are multi-dimensional. We need a whole systems approach, not just across the

colleges, but with partners such as the NHS to deliver a coherent, joined up and efficient service.

- Lack of resources is an issue and this often leads to insufficient time for college staff to support students. There are also concerns regarding expectations on the role and expertise of college staff in this area, and how to improve the link with health professionals.
- There can be cultural challenges for young males, BME groups or specific religions about accessing counselling so we need to work with external organisations to better understand these areas.
- The focus on improving services for students should be balanced with effective and supportive services for college staff.

3.7 Further collaborative work will be undertaken to develop more fully GCRB's strategic approach to supporting mental health and wellbeing. This will include continuing partnership working with Scottish Government and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, and take account of the Scottish Funding Council's requirement for the development of college strategies on mental health and wellbeing.

4. Risk Analysis

4.1 This report provides evidence of collaborative activity being undertaken to support the delivery of GCRB's strategic ambitions. It therefore mitigates risks related to the achievement strategic goals and fulfilment of its statutory responsibilities.

5. Equalities Implications

5.1 No equalities implications are identified.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 No legal implications are identified.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 The development of GCRB's strategic approach to supporting mental health and wellbeing will be supported by the GCRB Board's commitment to develop professionally-qualified Mental Health Services leadership capacity across the region. Another paper on the agenda of this meeting proposes that £80,000 is ring fenced to ensure this capacity across the Glasgow College Region to support the development of mental health services both collaboratively across the region's colleges and with stakeholders, and within individual college service delivery. This regional allocation is expected to be complemented by additional SFC funding for counsellors.

8. Strategic Implications

- 8.1** The GCRB Board has committed to the delivery of a joined-up and high-quality mental health and well-being service for students and staff which includes professionally-qualified Mental Health Services leadership capacity and an improved counselling offer.