

## Board of Management Students, Staff & Equalities Committee

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Wednesday 15 January 2020</b>
<b>Paper No.</b>	<b>SSEC2-I</b>
<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>5.5</b>
<b>Subject of Paper</b>	<b>Student Mental Health and Well Being Action Plan Update December 2019</b> <b>Student Counselling Service Interim Report December 2019</b>
<b>FOISA Status</b>	<b>Disclosable</b>
<b>Primary Contact</b>	<b>Gillian Plunkett   Student Experience Director</b>
<b>Date of production</b>	<b>7 January 2020</b>
<b>Action</b>	<b>For Discussion</b>

### 1. Recommendations

SSEC is asked to discuss progress on the Student Mental Health and Well Being Action Plan Update for December 2019, and the Student Counselling Service Interim Report for December 2019.

### 2. Purpose of Report

Student mental health and well-being continues to be a key priority for the Scottish Government, and the purpose of this report is to update SSEC on activity related to

our Student Mental Health and Well Being Action Plan, our Counselling Service and the recent announcement by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) of additional resource for student counsellors and the requirement for colleges to develop mental health strategies, for both students and staff, as part of their Outcome Agreement.

### **3. Strategic Context**

- 3.1. A key strategic priority for the College is **Strategic Priority 2 - To enable individuals to excel and realise their full potential**, and to achieve this we must continuously review and respond to the diverse and evolving needs of our students, enabling individuals to flourish by developing a healthy, supportive, and collaborative working environment for both students and staff.
- 3.2. In November 2019 the College delivered its inaugural Student Mental Health Conference – [Building Resilience for the Future](#) which was well received by college staff, CitySA and the NUS, and the sector in general. We will continue to raise awareness of student mental health and work collaboratively across all sectors including, education, health and the third sector to find innovative solutions to support student mental health and well-being.
- 3.3. The Ministerial Letter of Guidance to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) for 2018/19 (April 2018), required that colleges and universities work closely with their Students' Associations to develop a Student Mental Health Agreement. Our Student Mental Health Agreement was signed by the Principal and Vice President Diversity and Well Being in May 2019 and can be found [here](#).
- 3.4. The Student Mental Health Agreement works in tandem with the College Student Mental Health and Well Being Action Plan which has 8 objectives and takes a whole college approach to supporting student mental health and well-being. Excellent progress has been made particularly in the development of frontline services to support students but further work is required to train and develop staff and to build inclusive teaching practices across the college. An update on progress can be found at Appendix A.

- 3.5. In November 2019 the SFC announced additional monies for colleges and universities to provide trained counsellors and other mental health support. An update on our counselling service and future developments can be found at Appendix B.
- 3.6. In their publication the SFC also outlined that they expect colleges and universities to support positive mental health for students and staff. SFC expects institutions to have mental health strategies for students and staff, published on their website. This is an Outcome Agreement requirement. A full copy of the SFC publication – Funding for Counsellors 2019/20 can be found [here](#).

#### **4. Impact and Implications**

- 4.1. Following the SFC announcement of additional monies to support frontline student mental health, the college will recruit an additional 2 qualified Student Counsellors to enhance our existing counselling service by March 2020 and we will aim to purchase a digital mental health and wellbeing service such as the Big White Wall which offers safe, anonymous online support available 24/7. The Glasgow Regional Board has confirmed that there are monies available for student counsellors plus a digital platform.
- 4.2. In addition, realignment of existing resource and new resource has already taken place within student services for example: 0.6 FTE of a Student Advisor (2017) is now dedicated to care experienced students; the recent review of Learning Support (2018) has refocused some existing resource (1 FTE) to support mental health and well-being; a new Mental Health Coordinator and additional Student Counsellor were appointed in 2018; and the Glasgow Colleges Regional Board projects Action for Children, the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust and the English as Second or Other Language (ESOL) Register project, have also re focused resource to support vulnerable students.

- 4.3. While the recent announcement by SFC of additional monies for counselling staff is very welcome, the targeting of new and emerging priority groups may have future resource implications or require the further realignment of current service provision.
- 4.4. Failure to meet student needs in relation to mental health could result in reputational damage for the college, while failing to meet the conditions of our Outcome Agreement could result in financial penalties by SFC.

## Appendix A - Student Mental Health and Well Being Action Plan December 2019 Update

The City of Glasgow College Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan has eight key themes aimed at the continuous review and response to the diverse and evolving needs of our students. Our action plan and themes cover not only the development of practical support and investment in frontline services for students, but also takes in to account the whole of college life, with the ambition to improve policies, procedures and systems for students and staff to better support good mental health and wellbeing.

It should also be noted that while this action plan focuses predominantly on mental health and well-being, it also addresses a range of additional support needs, vulnerabilities and situational factors which can impact disproportionately on an individual's mental health and well-being for example being care experienced, homeless or estranged from parents and family.

The following provides information on what has been achieved so far across the eight aims of the action plan and what has still to be done.

### **Aim 1 - Early Identification and Intervention for students who disclose a mental health issue or are referred for support.**

#### **What we have achieved at December 2019.**

- ❖ We have significantly re vamped (May 2019) our pre entry information, advice and guidance on our [website](#) to provide prospective students, their families and carers with information on the services and support that the college can offer to those with additional support needs such as mental ill health.
- ❖ We have developed a new pre entry 'at risk' referral system (Feb 2019) to ensure that students receive a personalised response to support their transition to college. Each student with an additional support need, including mental health, will be offered a pre entry meeting where a Personal Learning Support Plan (PLSP) will be put in place. PLSP summaries are then shared with subject lecturers to ensure that support is available in every class.
- ❖ We have refocused our Learning Support provision to include Learning Support and Development Advisors (June 2018) who will engage with new students throughout the summer months to create PLSPs.

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- ❖ We have named student advisors for students who are care experienced and young carers and these staff members will contact new students at application and/or enrolment stage.
- ❖ Our Mental Health Coordinator (May 2018) meets students with pre-existing mental health issues pre entry and works with their care providers i.e. family and/or NHS, Social Work to ensure that appropriate support is in place at the start of term.
- ❖ We have made completion of the 'next of kin' field at enrolment stage mandatory (August 2018) and provide students with information on why and how we may need to use this information to support them in an emergency.
- ❖ We have reviewed our Get Ready for College Events (May 2019) to support transition and build an inclusive college community. These events provide new students with an opportunity to meet teaching and support staff teams, and current students before the start of the new term.

### **What we will do next.**

- ❖ We will increase our engagement with students through the admissions process, interview stage, post-offer, and at induction to ensure that there are multiple opportunities for students to declare any pre-existing mental health issues and get the help they need as early as possible. (February 2020)
- ❖ We will further develop our range of targeted support measures for students who may face challenges during transition to include international students, widening participation students, LGBTQ+ students and BME students.(August 2020)
- ❖ We will continue to review and improve our Induction and Welcome Events to support transition and build an inclusive college community. (May 2020)
- ❖ We will ensure that support services are visible and easy to access so that students get support before there is a requirement to escalate support. (Ongoing)
- ❖ We will review our attendance monitoring procedures to ensure that students showing poor attendance are routinely contacted (March 2020).

### **Aim 2 - Normalising mental health issues and developing shared values around mental health.**

#### **What we have achieved at December 2019.**

- ❖ We continue to promote the college values and behaviours code to students at point of entry to address issues around bullying, harassment and respect. This was

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enhanced in November 2019 by the launch of Fearless Glasgow an initiative promoting zero tolerance of gender based violence developed and delivered in partnership with Glasgow Caledonian University.

- ❖ We have increased awareness of mental health and wellbeing issues through our social media campaigns, through events and activities around the college which include well-being activities such as Pet Therapy, Mindfulness and Yoga and by raising awareness of key recognition dates throughout the year such as Mental Health Awareness Week, Suicide Prevention Day, National Stress Awareness Day, Eating Disorder Awareness Week and World Bi Polar Week.
- ❖ We work throughout the year with the Media Curriculum Team including Journalism and Radio students to promote mental health related articles in City News and on City Radio.
- ❖ We work with the Students' Association to develop and deliver a wide range of initiatives and activities based on student opinion. Working with CitySA the College was awarded 5 stars by the National Union of Students (NUS) for the 'Healthy Body Healthy Minds' initiative and City of Glasgow College was the only educational institution to receive the coveted 5 stars in 2018/19.
- ❖ We have developed a Student Mental Health Agreement with CitySA (July 2019) and have committed to working with CitySA to listen to our students, tackle the stigma around mental health and build partnerships with other agencies to support our students including the NHS.
- ❖ We have created a Steering Group to assist the CitySA with the delivery of the Student Mental Health Agreement. (November 2018).
- ❖ Dr Anna James delivered 'Building Resilience in Learners' and 'Resilience in Leadership' training for teaching and support staff. (May 2019).
- ❖ We have developed new networks to support male students where data showed lack of engagement with counselling services. We have fortnightly pop up stands from Brothers in Arms and heightened suicide prevention including partnership with the Sailors Society re 'Not on My Watch' posters distributed in classrooms in Riverside.
- ❖ In November 2019 we delivered our inaugural Mental Health Conference with a range of key note speakers from Bristol University, Manchester University and Care Partnership, Glasgow University and Advance HE.

### **What we will do next.**

- ❖ We will use the My Voice platform and student focus groups to gather student views in relation to supporting mental health and well-being in the college.(Ongoing).

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- ❖ We will review and refresh our values and behaviours code to foster a supportive environment and ensure that all students receive the code at point of entry. (May 2020)
- ❖ We will invite all students to participate in an annual wellbeing survey to provide baseline data and opportunities to identify trends and priority areas where interventions are specifically required. (October 2020).
- ❖ We will specifically work with the Faculty of STEM and Nautical Science to tackle the stigma around mental health and stereotyping in the maritime and nautical industry. (April 2020).
- ❖ We will display key messages on screens throughout the college and in classroom noticeboards (March 2020).
- ❖ We will deliver a second national conference focusing on the mental health and well-being of our students (January 2021).

### **Aim 3 - Development of a range of practical supports which are easy to access and responsive to the needs of our students.**

#### **What we have achieved at December 2019.**

- ❖ We offer a counselling service and have increased our dedicated mental health staff by 2 FTE through the appointment of a new professional Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator (July 2018) and an additional qualified full-time Student Counsellor (July 2018). In addition to providing a counselling service these staff will help take forward the student mental health and well-being action plan.
- ❖ We have recruited two student trainee counsellors from Glasgow Caledonian University's (GCU) Postgraduate Doctorate in Counselling Psychology, University of Strathclyde's Postgraduate MSc in Counselling Psychotherapy.
- ❖ We have introduced a student self-referral facility (Jan 2019) to the counselling service which has increased student engagement with the counselling service.
- ❖ We offer students Yoga sessions, an 8 week Mindfulness course and Mindfulness taster sessions, access to the gym and a range of clubs and societies run by the Students' Association, including sports clubs to promote a healthy lifestyle (2018).
- ❖ We maintain a Hardship Fund of £2m to reduce financial pressure on students and those most 'at risk'.



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- ❖ We maintain a Childcare Fund of £1m targeted at lone parents and families on low income.
- ❖ We provide support for sports clubs, societies and volunteering activities that build social connection and support positive wellbeing through the Students' Association.
- ❖ We offer smoking cessation clinics and run campaigns on alcohol and drugs in partnership with the NHS.
- ❖ We have a dedicated care experienced support worker seconded from Action for Children on campus (August 2019) to provide additional support for care experienced young people with complex needs. Our support worker can offer support in the community as well as in the college.
- ❖ CitySA launched a new Wellbeing Society (September 2019) which gives students the opportunity to try different wellbeing activities ranging from mindfulness to art therapy. CitySA were recently awarded a small grant of £250 from NUS Think Positive and will run a further 6 wellbeing workshops.

### **What we will do next:**

- ❖ We aim to recruit a further 2 qualified Student Counsellors to enhance our existing counselling service (By March 2020).
- ❖ We aim to purchase a multi-award winning digital mental health and wellbeing service called the Big White Wall which offers safe, anonymous online support available 24/7. This digital platform offers a range of therapeutic pathways, including peer and professional support and creative self-expression. (By April 2020).
- ❖ We will offer students free soup and homemade bread in January 2020 to alleviate hardship and offer a nourishing meal to our students. This initiative is delivered in conjunction with the CitySA.
- ❖ We will continue to:-
  - invest in student well-being and regularly review the effectiveness of our student services to support the emerging and evolving needs of our students.
  - monitor waiting times for counselling to ensure students get the help they need as quickly as possible.
  - review the case for new services to target gaps in existing provision and regularly review access routes to services.

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- develop more joined-up support for students at key transition points during their studies, and tailor guidance for students as they transition to employment or further study.

- ❖ We will continue to support initiatives to increase our students' physical activity levels.
- ❖ We will provide structures for peer support in the college student accommodation, and via peer mentoring and peer assisted study in Faculties. (November 2020).

### **Aim 4 - Development of CPD, materials, resources and approaches to support the inclusive classroom.**

#### **What we have achieved at December 2019.**

- ❖ To support an inclusive college/classroom we provide a wide range of professional learning support to students with a disclosed mental health issue before the start of term and to those referred in term time. This support may include, alternative assessment arrangements, flexibility in deadlines for reports and assignments, study skill support, loan of equipment, mind mapping software, apps to promote well-being, provision of "time out " cards for students who may experience anxiety or panic attacks and may need to leave a class temporarily and a named contact within learning support who can meet with the student on a regular basis and pre-empt any potential areas of stress.
- ❖ Our student engagement team offer workshops on a class basis on team building, respect, social media awareness and representation. We believe that all students and staff deserve to be treated with respect and raising awareness of acceptable behaviours is an important way of ensuring an inclusive and supportive environment.
- ❖ In June 2019 we undertook a survey of all staff on the inclusive classroom and practices. This information will provide a baseline for future developments related to an inclusive college approach.
- ❖ A Handbook to support Academic Advisors in their guidance role with students has been developed (October 2019).

#### **What we will do next.**

- ❖ We will analyse the results of our baseline survey and take an evidenced based approach to develop a range of initiatives which will support the development of the inclusive college/classroom. (By April 2020).

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- ❖ Working with the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust (CWMT) we will take a strategic approach to the planning and delivery of staff training relating to student mental health and wellbeing, identifying priorities across our whole staff community. An audit of our current student mental health and well-being CPD will be undertaken by the CWMT in January 2020.

### **Aim 5 - Continuous review of college policies, procedures and practices to ensure these consider the impact on students and support student wellbeing.**

#### **What we have achieved at December 2019.**

- ❖ A new emergency contact procedure has been introduced in which students must provide a next of kin contact for the college to use where there are serious concerns about a student's wellbeing.(August 2018).
- ❖ We have developed a Supporting Students in Distress Guide for staff which provides guidance on how to recognise the signs stress, anxiety and mental ill health and what to do to support students.
- ❖ We have reviewed our student attendance procedure and removed financial penalties for poor attendance as this was impacting on student mental health and well-being. (August 2018).
- ❖ We have reviewed our timetabling procedure and provided staggered lunches to reduce overcrowding and queuing in cafes/catering outlets and have improve the general ambience at lunchtimes. (August 2019).
- ❖ We have several working groups currently looking at student assessment and feedback procedures and student induction. (Ongoing)
- ❖ We continue to work with our catering partners Baxter Storey and CitySA to promote healthy food choices through our cafes and catering outlets. (Ongoing)
- ❖ We have introduced a new procedure to allow students to make an audio recording of learning and teaching activities where this will support their learning. (November 2019).

#### **What we will do next:**

- ❖ We will review procedures and practices where students are most vulnerable such as the student disciplinary procedure, assessment and exam procedures and how students are provided with feedback to ensure that student support is offered and that there are no unintended consequences arising from these practices. (June 2020).

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- ❖ We will further review attendance monitoring to ensure that students who are not attending are encouraged to engage with the college and are provided with advice on reengagement with studies or how/when to take a break from studies without detriment to future funding. (March 2020).
- ❖ We will continue to enhance our physical environment to encourage spaces that support well-being and community development. This will include well-being spaces in libraries, social and catering spaces and green spaces. (June 2020)
- ❖ We will review our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures and raise awareness of these throughout the College (February 2020).

### **Aim 6 - Personal and Social Development and Promotion of good mental health and wellbeing across the College.**

#### **What we have achieved at December 2019.**

- ❖ We have engaged with Tree of Knowledge to pilot a 90 minute workshop to 1,500 students over 4 days on the power of positive thinking, mind-sets and resilience as part of the college wide induction programme in August 2019. Follow up material will be provided through MyCity so that students can continue on their journey to empowerment, positivity and creativity.
- ❖ We have included mental health and well-being information in the student induction module and have developed a self-help framework through our 8 Steps to Success information. (August 2019).

#### **What we will do next.**

- ❖ We will use the information from the Tree of Knowledge pilot to develop an online course which directly addresses questions of positive mental health and happiness. This will provide enhanced support for students to develop their academic skills and personal attributes. (June 2020).
- ❖ We will work towards embedding well-being within the curriculum (December 2020).

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### **Aim 7 - Development of a multi-agency and holistic approaches in supporting students at various stages throughout the learner journey.**

#### **What we have achieved at December 2019.**

- ❖ We have developed partnerships with a range of external agencies to aid referrals and expand provision for students with mental health support needs. We are developing new innovative partnerships based on students need such as Time and Space which is a charity providing peer support for mental health carers, and Brothers in Arms a charity focusing on male mental health.
- ❖ We attend a wide range of national and regional working groups and forums on corporate parenting, gender based violence, young carers, lone parents, BME groups, estranged students, veterans and disabilities to ensure that we understand the current and emerging needs of our students and the societal and economic issues that impact on them.
- ❖ We have a cross college Mental Health Action Working Group including members from across the college to aid achievement of the Student Mental Health Action Plan objectives.
- ❖ We have supported the Students' Association to develop a [Student Mental Health Agreement](#) as part of the NUS Think Positive Scotland initiative

#### **What we will do next.**

- ❖ We will continue to work with external partners to improve pathways between the college and local mental health services and help students and staff to navigate these pathways.
- ❖ We will established an Expert Advisory Group to inform our work on student support and wellbeing through collaboration with leading Scottish and UK charities such as Mind, Brother in Arms, Dyslexia Scotland and the National Autistic Society. (September 2020).
- ❖ We will draw learning from national and international best practice as we continue to enhance our services supporting student wellbeing. (June 2020).
- ❖ We will develop a partnership with the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust and through this work develop a network of partner organisations. (June 2020)

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### **Aim 8 - Awareness raising at Board/Senior Management level of the social trends and influences both external and internal that affect student mental health, wellbeing and performance.**

#### **What we have achieved at December 2019.**

- ❖ Our Board of Management and Senior Management Team (SMT) have received an introduction to the mental health issues and developing resilience in students by Dr Anna James.
- ❖ Our Board and SMT were invited to the City of Glasgow College inaugural Mental Health Conference in November 2019 which highlighted some of the key issues and trends affecting student mental health and well-being in the UK currently.
- ❖ The Student Experience Director leads on the delivery of the MHWAP, inclusion and the student voice and provides reports to the Students, Staff and Equalities Committee and Senior Management Team drawing information from a range of data sources.
- ❖ Support has been approved by the Board of Management, Principal and SMT via additional dedicated staffing resource to support student mental health and well-being.
- ❖ We continue to analyse student support services and develop trends, monitoring and evaluation methods, service usage and satisfaction ratings which will inform future service development and delivery.
- ❖ We provide regular reportage on social trends and influences which impact on student mental health and well-being and student performance including, additional learning support needs, protected characteristics these trends to the Board of Management, SMT and various college committees and through our annual report.

#### **What we will do next:**

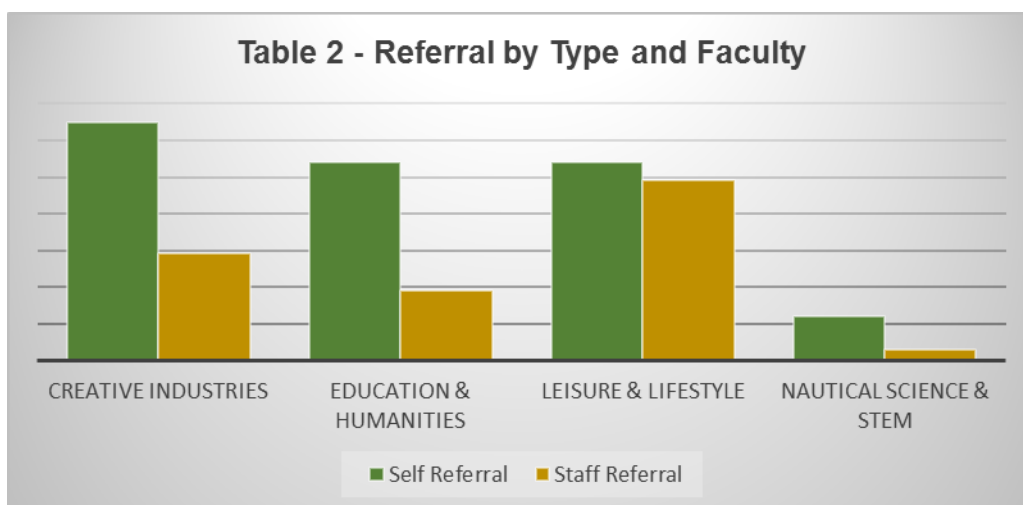
- ❖ We aim to persuade the Scottish Government to commission a baseline survey of all students in universities and colleges in Scotland on their mental health and well-being. Asking students what they see as the key factors in supporting their mental health and well-being, how this can be achieved and how they themselves could contribute could help to shape future student support services. (May 2020).
- ❖ We will embed a consolidated Student Wellbeing Service, which includes the Counselling Service, Student Support and Well Being Service and Learning Support, Student Engagement and the Students' Association. Ongoing.

## Appendix B - Student Counselling Interim Report December 2019

There were 285 referrals (this equates to 248 students as some students were referred more than once) for counselling from August to mid December 2019 and Table 1 shows the pattern of referral/assessment per month. It is anticipated that the full December figure will be slightly lower than the previous months but that the number of referrals in January and February 2020 are likely to be higher.



Table 2 shows student referrals by referral type and Faculty. It is important to record the way in which a student is referred to the counselling service as evidence shows that students are more likely to engage with the counselling service when they self refer. Work has been undertaken to encourage staff to assist students to self refer although staff referral continues to be available.



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Table 3 below provides information on the 248 students referred for counselling by protected characteristic

Sex	Age	Sexual Orientation	Religion	Disability	Ethnicity						
Female	169	16-19	112	Straight	164	None	146	Mental health	37	Scottish	192
Male	78	20-24	71	Gay Man	4	Christian	58	Specific learning disability	28	Other White Background	10
Non Binary	2	24-29	27	Gay Woman	9	Muslim	8	Social /Comm. Issues	11	English	9
		30+	38	Bi Sexual	49	Buddhist	1	Long standing illness	8	British	8
				Other	3	Sikh	1	Physical impairment	5	Polish	7
				Prefer Not to Say	19	Another Religion	11	Deaf	1	Other Asian Background	5
						Prefer not to say	23	Blind or visual impairment	2	Mixed Background	4
								Other impairment	9	Pakistani Scottish/British	3
										Irish	2
										African Scottish/British	2
										Indian Scottish/British	1
										Chinese Scottish/British	1
										Other African Background	1
										Any Other Background	1
										Gypsy/Traveller	1
										Arab Scottish/British	1

- Female students are significantly over represented in the counselling statistics compared with the overall college enrolments.
- The 16-19 year old age group is under represented compared to overall enrolments and other age groups are slightly over represented.
- In terms of sexuality straight students are underrepresented and all other sexualities are over represented with bi sexual students significantly so.
- Religion is similar to the overall college enrolments.
- Disability is over represented at 26% of students referred for counselling having disclosed one or more disabilities at enrolment compared to 17% college wide. Given the nature of the service it is no surprise that mental health has been disclosed by most students referred to counselling. However, in overall college enrolments a specific learning disability – usually dyslexia – is the highest disclosed disability, with mental health second highest in 2019/20.
- There is no significant variation in the ethnicity of those students presenting for counselling and the overall college enrolments
- Students identifying as trans gender are slightly over represented compared to overall enrolments



# Appendix B - Student Counselling Interim Report December 2019

## Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

The SIMD identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivations across Scotland via postcode. Postcodes are divided into 10 deciles with decile 1 representing the 10% (SIMD10) most deprived postcode areas in Scotland. Table 4 below shows that 27% of the students referred for counselling reside in a SIMD10 area which is higher than the college overall SIMD10 figure which is 25%.

**Table 4 – Students Referred for Counselling by SIMD**

Decile	Students	%
1	67	27%
2	31	13%
3	31	13%
4	21	8%
5	26	10%
6	18	7%
7	8	3%
8	17	7%
9	17	7%
10	8	3%
Outside Scotland	4	2%
Totals	248	100%

## Care Experienced

20 students or 8% of group referred for counselling were care experienced students which is slightly higher than the college enrolment figure of 8%.

## Future Developments – Resource

Following the SFC announcement of additional monies to support frontline student mental health, the college will recruit two additional qualified Student Counsellors by March 2020, and we will aim to purchase a digital mental health and wellbeing service such as the Big White Wall by April 2020. We will also develop evidence based outcomes for students receiving counselling using measurement tools that have been validated for assessing counselling outcomes.