Item 10
For Noting

GLASGOW KELVIN COLLEGE

Learning and Teaching Committee – 16 March 2021

Student Support Services Delivery Update

Report by Head of Services to Support Learners

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to give an overview of the continued support available to learners during the Covid pandemic and to highlight the increased numbers of students being supported despite this being mainly an online service as well as outlining benefits of continuing with a blended approach to student support post pandemic.

The team provide a wide range of support to provide information and appropriate learner centred support which will aid, develop and encourage all learners to fulfil their academic and personal potential, whilst benefiting from college life.

In March 2020 we moved quickly to delivery of services online at the point of lockdown and continued to support learners throughout their remaining time at college. Learners engaging with services over this period stated that without the ongoing support and regular contact from advisers they would have struggled to continue to engage with college and to manage with the stresses which lockdown had brought.

2. Update on Services to Support Learners Session 20/21

During the ongoing Covid restrictions most activity has taken place on line with learners, however, the team also provided a limited in campus service from August 2020 to December 2020, when restrictions allowed, for drop in from learners who had classes in campus. This limited service available was based on campus activity, student numbers and risk assessment for staff in campus, but allowed for those in campus to have a central point of support if required.

During the current COVID restrictions, the team has seamlessly moved to a model of fully remote online support, regularly advertising methods of communication and referral to students and staff. However, the team is ready to provide a reduced in campus support when restrictions allow.

Different methods of communicating and advertising support have been used and the team regularly send out information on the MYKelvin App, a new video to outline range of services was produced and shared on college platforms.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=963jue5fDas

Learners can also self-refer online via the website or intranet. Alternatively, they can drop in or contact one of our Team at any of our four campuses when Covid restrictions allow, our in

campus offices remained opened whenever student have been in campus. Tutors are also encouraged to refer if they feel, after discussion with the learner, that a need should be explored and supported. Once a need has been identified, the team will communicate with relevant learners to organise and implement suitable support strategies.

Learners accessing support in 2020/21

Disability Disclosure

The college encourages all of our learners to disclose any disabilities, difficulties or barriers as early as application and enrolment. Following on from this, learners who make an early disclosure are contacted before starting courses to fill in our 'Tell us About Your Needs' questionnaire. The next step is for advisers to contact learners to carry out a Needs Assessment, this work has continued in session 2020/21 during Covid Restrictions and the team are engaging with increased numbers of learners than previous year.

	Session 2019/2020	**Session 2020/2021**
Learners declaring disability or support Need during application & enrolment	**735**	**1,035**
Questionnaires returned requesting support	**228**	**334**
Needs assessments completed January	**347**	**372**

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During the recent application process for January courses, 23 learners disclosed a disability. Each learner has been contacted to be informed of our services. Full Needs Assessments will be carried out with any learner who is keen to have formal additional support put in place.

Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

DSA is a non means-tested allowance. Students can use it to cover extra costs or expenses that they incur while they are studying, which arise because of their disability. The DSA is made up of three allowances: the large items allowance, the small items allowance and the Non-Medical Personal Help allowance (NMPH). Our Learner Support Advisers are qualified to carry out DSA assessments for students and make recommendations to SAAS. Each assessment and report takes around 9 hours per student. 26 assessments have been completed with an additional 16 currently in progress.

Annual income generated for college from SAAS from the completion of DSA assessments is around 15k.

Counselling Service

The college counselling service is run by two qualified counsellors and a small team of trainee student counsellors on placement. Both Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Person-Centred counselling are available. This service commenced in March 2020 using additional funding from SFC to provide counselling in colleges.

At present due to the global pandemic, the counselling team are offering counselling sessions via video chat. On-campus sessions can be available on request where essential, appropriate and possible within Covid restrictions. Each session will last for roughly 50 minutes; students will usually meet with the counsellor weekly for up to 8 sessions.

So far in session 20/21 there have been 135 referrals.

After dialogue with teaching staff we are currently working towards providing a group work service for welfare. This will look at providing less intense support to students in areas related to mental health.

UCAS Support

For this academic session, UCAS events were delivered only via Microsoft Teams live events. Sessions were made available to all students and were exceptionally well attended with engagement levels exceeding previous years on campus events. There have been more applicants supported through UCAs than previous year.

	Session 2019/2020	**Session 2020/21**
Total UCAS Applications	502 (166 SWAP and 336 GKC)	528 (168 SWAP and 360 GKC)
One to One personal Statement Support	80	147

Similar to the attendance at UCAS Teams support sessions, there has been an increase in the number of students being formally supported during the application process in comparison to last year's figures.

Action for Children Partnership

Care Experienced learners were also encouraged to alert the college of their circumstances at enrolment stage. 343 learners indicated that they were care experienced on application. These learners were contacted by email alerting them of support available. Learners who indicated that they may require support met with our Action for Children worker to discuss their needs. Early intervention was priority this to ensure support was in place prior to the student beginning their course. 33 learners are currently receiving 'intense' support and 28 learners receiving 'light touch' support. Any students starting January course who disclose that they are care experienced will be contacted and offered support prior to the start of their course.

In partnership with Action for Children we offer tailored one to one support to care experienced students in each of the Glasgow Kelvin College campuses. The Action for Children STAY worker can provide support in many areas, including assisting with any barriers to engagement, budgeting support, advice with time management issues and support with mental health.

We also work in conjunction with Action for Children on a Glasgow City Council and SDS initiative, which aims to see school leavers in Glasgow supported to stay in positive destinations. The Action for Children mentor has engaged with 40 learners referred by

Glasgow City Council. However, she is currently engaging with 29, with 11 moving on to positive destinations elsewhere. She is also in the process of engaging with schools regarding January referrals.

Student Support Funding

The team administer funds for discretionary, childcare and part time travel awards, this support has been delivered online to all learners for session 20/21, with some additional support for our ESOL and SFL groups completing forms.

Support Fund	**Awards**
Childcare	176
General Hardship	187
Part Time Travel	105
Laptop	198
Emergency	11
Disability (Educational Psychologist)	8
Total	**685**

To date 685 awards have been provided from the Support Funds. As well as the usual awards for Childcare, General Hardship, approximately 200 students were awarded financial support from the Support Funds for the cost of a laptop.

Additional Funds have been received recently from SFC to support learners facing financial difficulties as a result of Covid. The team are currently working through spends of these funds to support as many students as possible within the eligibility criteria.

3. Planning for 2021/22 Service Delivery

Delivering services online to learners has been positive and we have continued to be able to offer all services to all learners at point of need and evidence shows that number of learners engaging in support in many key areas has in fact increased. This has been unexpected for services who provide a very front line face to face service and had never offered any online provision before Covid restrictions.

Some of the unexpected benefits on delivering services online are:

- No need for additional travel, we don't like to take students out of class, so often they come in on days off, the option to meet us online on day off has reduced the numbers of missed appointments

- Much easier to take breaks or revisit a conversation with a learner. We used to feel obliged to do everything within an hour so students didn't have to come back. Easier to break and revisit a conversation at another suitable point.
- Learners who maybe would feel intimidated to cross the threshold of a busy office are more able to approach us initially on line.
- Learners who previously found mixing/travel difficult (maybe have anxiety or on the spectrum) can access in their environment on their terms.
- Generally affording people the choice/flexibility of how they engage, can only be positive and inclusive for all.
- Staff also have more flexibility in Diary/Working approach.

Although we can already see some benefits for online delivery models we must also take into account that this session learners have not been in campus and had the choice, often popping into an n office for a quick bit of Guidance and support is what a learners requires.

The best solution for future Service delivery would be a hybrid or 'Blended' approach to student services allowing for all learners to access and receive support in the best way to meet their needs, Covid has given us the opportunity to try things we may not have tried before and the lessons learned will inform our service delivery in the future.

4. Resource Implications

There are no direct resource implication in this report

5. Equalities

Additional online services would offer more choice/flexibility and be more inclusive and campus drop-in service in would still be available. Any Student Support service delivery changes would include use of an EQIA.

6. Risk and Assurance

This report provides assurance that the College is providing high quality and accessible student support services.

7. Recommendations

Members are recommended to note the contents of the report.

8. Further Information

Further information on the report is available from Monica McKerlie, Head of Services to Support Learners, mmckerlie@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk.

Glasgow Kelvin College
MM
08/03/2021