

**Monday, 25 January 2022**

## **Colleges exceed key Scottish Government target for students**

Scotland's colleges have exceeded a key government target for delivering learning to students despite the Covid-19 pandemic.

Figures from the Scottish Funding Council's annual statistics report which were released today (March 25) showed that colleges delivered the full-time equivalent of teaching to 117,914 students in 2020/21, beating the Scottish Government's target by 1,645.

The numbers also revealed that more than one fifth (21.5%) of 18-19 year olds attended college full-time, up from 20.9% in 2019-20. In addition, the proportion of all school leavers noted as attending a further education establishment rose from 27.3% to 28.1%.

Liz Connolly, Principal at West College Scotland and Lead Principal for Covid Recovery welcomed the figures. She said: "It's testament to the innovation and resilience within the sector that we have exceeded expectations despite the challenges of the pandemic.

"It was particularly pleasing to see so many young people and school leavers attending college which they clearly see as a first-choice destination to equip them with the skills needed for the modern workplace where they will be key to leading the economic recovery."

However, the SFC statistic also recorded an overall fall in headcount and enrolment numbers by 10.8% and 8.1% respectively at colleges.

Ms Connolly said: "There was a significant fall in short-term courses and those delivering non-recognised qualifications. Much of this was certainly due to the pandemic where the focus of students very much turned to gaining skills and qualifications which would lead directly to employment.

"However, I would hope that in the next academic year which starts in August we see a resurgence in those shorter and non-recognised qualification courses. Many of these provide a grounding in a vocational subject or act as a pathway back in to vocational learning for people with no or very few qualifications, which is vital given the financial pressure households are under, and the need for Scotland's economy to recover."

Colleges Scotland chief executive Shona Struthers added: "The fact that our colleges exceeded what were ambitious government targets in the middle of a pandemic is something we take great pride in. World-class skills and learning experiences are what our students deserve and expect and we're pleased so many students have chosen college in a really difficult period of disruption."

### **Note to editors:**

View the full copy of the [Scottish Funding Council statistics report](#).

### **ENDS**

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