



# THE WINDSOR FOREST COLLEGES GROUP

## BOARD OF GOVERNORS

### MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATION

Held at Langley College on Wednesday, 11 December 2024

		<u>Meetings Attendance</u>
PRESENT:	Angela Wellings (Chair)	(2 out of 2)
	Jacob Clay	(2 out of 2)
	Tina Coates	(2 out of 2)
	Jo Croft	(2 out of 2)
	Nathan Garat	(2 out of 2)
	Nathan Green	(2 out of 2)
	Anthony Haines	(2 out of 2)
	Rob Lewis	(2 out of 2)
	Gillian May (Group Principal & CEO)	(2 out of 2)
	Janet Robertson	(2 out of 2)
	Signe Sutherland	(2 out of 2)
	Alison Wheatley	(2 out of 2)
APOLOGIES:	Paul Britton	(0 out of 2)
	Louise Fellows	(1 out of 2)
	Sam Foley	(0 out of 2)
	Nathan Peters	(0 out of 1)
	Antonia Spinks	(1 out of 2)
	Ian Thomson	(1 out of 2)
IN ATTENDANCE:	Kiran Virdee	Ex-Governor ( <i>Part</i> )
	Amanda Down	Principal, Sixth Form
	Anne Entwistle	Principal, FE
	Lucy Gill	Group Finance Director
	Karen Griffiths	Group Vice Principal
	Tracy Reeve	Group Director of Governance

### PART I

<u>MINUTE NO.</u>		<u>ACTION</u>
	<b>The meeting started at 5.00pm</b>	
1.	<b><u>Health &amp; Safety Housekeeping</u></b> The Chair (AW) welcomed everyone to Slough and Langley College and reminded the meeting that this would be her last full Board meeting as Chair as she would be retiring from WFCG on 31 December 2024. However, it was noted that AW would still be Chair for the additional online meeting diarised for Friday 20 December. The meeting was also reminded that this would be the last meeting that Janet Robertson was attending as staff governor for BCA as she had reached the end of her second four-year term of office. AW informed the meeting that Kiran Virdee (KV) had resigned as a governor of WFCG in October 2024 as he had started a contract with the Office for Students (OfS) and his role as governor of WFCG had presented a potential conflict of interest (due to the college's HE contract with the OfS). The meeting noted that KV would be joining the meeting later so that governors and staff could thank him for his contribution to governance at WFCG.	

<u>MINUTE NO.</u>		<u>ACTION</u>
2.	<p><b><u>Apologies for Absence</u></b></p> <p>Apologies had been received as detailed above.</p>	
3.	<p><b><u>AOB</u></b></p> <p>There was no urgent other business notified.</p>	
4.	<p><b><u>Declarations of Interest</u></b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
5.	<p><b><u>Minutes of the Previous Meetings held on 9 October 2024</u></b></p> <p>The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 October 2024, having been previously circulated to members, were agreed as a true record and would be taken as signed by the Chair.</p> <p><b>All Members were agreed.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><u>Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meetings held on 9 October 2024</u></i></li> </ul> <p>The Director of Governance presented a report which updated the meeting on the current status of 'matters arising'. All matters were included on the agenda or completed.</p> <p><b><i>The update was NOTED</i></b></p> <p>It was noted that there were no other matters arising.</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>Staff Governors' Report</u></b></p> <p>Each of the Staff Governors gave the meeting a short verbal update.</p> <p>AWH highlighted the new signage recently installed at Slough and Langley College to take forward the rebrand. Parents Evening had been held during the previous week and had gone well. The meeting noted that staff and students had been raising money for the charity Shelter by doing a 10k walk. Students were also raising to help children's charities operating in Gaza. AW also highlighted the International Travel event for students that would take place in 'The Street' tomorrow in liaison with the charity Dream Flight. Staff were also looking forward to the Staff Star Awards that would take place during the last week of term. It was confirmed that the suggestions for working with specific charities came from staff and students.</p> <p>JR confirmed that a number of similar charity events had happened at BCA in the run up to Christmas. Janet thanked the Chair of Governors (AW), the CEO (GM) and the Group Director of Governance (TR) for all their guidance and support during her eight-year tenure as Staff Governor. She asserted the positive impact and changes at BCA that she had seen during her term as governor. AW suggested that the thanks needed to be passed the 'other way' from the Corporation and the College to JR for her consistent support and honesty.</p> <p>JC gave the meeting an update on what was happening at Windsor College. The recent resits for English and maths had been a busy time during November; results would be available in January. Staff and students in the Sixth Form were currently preparing for controlled assessments and BTEC exams so there was a lot going on. Winter Fairs had been held earlier in the day at Windsor with similar charity involvement as the other colleges. The numbers of UCAS applications for progression to HE were a bit slower than in prior years at Windsor College slow but Strode's College was ahead in timing. JC also highlighted the Performing Arts students who were busy with all the Christmas activities.</p> <p>The Chair (AW) thanked the staff governors for their input and asserted the value of Staff Voice for the Corporation.</p> <p><b><i>The Staff Governor Feedback was NOTED</i></b></p>	
7.	<p><b><u>Student Feedback</u></b></p> <p>FE Student Governor (NG) presented an update for the meeting. He raised the need to set up more activities to encourage more interaction between students on the college campus during breaks; this would stop people going offsite during lunch and breaks. It was agreed</p>	

that NG would talk to Principal FE (AE) about his suggestions. The Vice-Chair (RL) informed the meeting that the need for more clubs and societies had also been mentioned during a Student Liaison meeting that he had recently attended.

***The Student Governor Feedback was NOTED***

8. **CEO/ Group Principal's Update: Curriculum Efficiency**

The CEO (GM) presented a new college benchmarking report which had been driven by the availability of new FE Commissioner (FEC) benchmark (BM) data. GM presented the first attempt at the College Group – with data for the four individual colleges – benchmarking itself against the FEC BM for a number of key performance indicators (KPIs). These KPIs included staff utilisation, remission, average group sizes by course level, the Day 42 attrition rate, apprenticeship data, contribution data and financial ratios including EBITDA. GM highlighted that the growth in learner number 2024/25 had been managed with existing group infill but further growth in 2025/26 would require additional groups to be set up in many curriculum areas so would generate additional costs. GM highlighted the strong staff utilisation (98.5% against the BM of 94.9%) but the high figure for remission as a percentage of taught hours (8.35% vs 5.8% BM) needed some remedial action. GM also highlighted the data showing a lower than BM Apprenticeship caseload (30.4 vs BM of 39).

GM highlighted the second table on the report which detailed the number of learners in each of the funding bands for the current year and the two previous years. The number of learners was 251 greater than prior year at 4,650 with 95.74% of those in the top funding band (same time last year was 95.59%). GM reminded the meeting that the top funding band for a full time study programme was 580-640 hours. GM informed the meeting that this new template would be used as a regular report to governors showing performance against BM and recent historical trends. The meeting also noted that the College had volunteered to be included on the pilot for feedback to the FEC Team on the use of the new BM tool.

The meeting commended the new format and governors (AH) applauded the clarity around average group size against the historical data. GM reminded the meeting that as well as the additional 16-19 learners (which could generate additional in-year funding of £850k), the Adult Skills Fund delivery was £93k ahead, GLA delivery was £38.5k ahead of the prior year and budget, and Apprenticeships were £383k ahead of prior year and budget. AH sought, and was given, confirmation that the college was using the DfE online growth calculator. The Group Finance Director (LG) also highlighted that additional ALS income was also a factor and SLT were optimistic that this would amount to £500k growth in-year. The additional High Needs income would more than match this so that any additional in-year funding for 16-19 growth would be put into cash and support a stronger EBITDA.

Governors discussed the attrition rate (4.12% cross-group against the FEC BM of 6.2%) and suggested that this needed to be built into discussion with the Heads of Department as withdrawals countered all the good work that had gone into recruitment; this rate varied widely by college. The higher attrition rate of 8.33% at Slough and Langley College was discussed but it was noted that the BM for London Colleges would be higher than the 'all college' BM of 6.2%; the London rate was nearer to 10%.

The Chair (AW) sought clarity on which colleges were included in the FEC BM shown on the report. GM confirmed that the FEC model allowed for a selection by region, locality, size of college or type of college but the report as presented had used the BM for all colleges. GM informed the meeting that the FEC Team were keen for colleges to set their own comparators and it was agreed that future reports could filter colleges included in the BM based on specific criteria when SLT were looking at particular aspects of performance.

The meeting commended the fact that WFCG was involved in this work at an early stage and would be feeding back as part of the pilot. The meeting suggested a number of specific comparisons the college could use the dashboard for; having distinct college benchmarks; analysis at the R06 data point and to see how WFCG's remission was affected by the number of unqualified teachers across WFCG. Governors agreed that the new dashboard would be a catalyst for useful discussion.

***The Curriculum Efficiency Report was NOTED and RECEIVED.***

**ITEMS FOR DECISION/ APPROVAL**

9. **GOVERNANCE**

9.1 **Board Membership**

The Director of Governance (TR) presented a paper which detailed the Members of the Corporation with cessation dates, and sub-committee membership. Governors were reminded that the current Board membership of TWFCG was determined at 19 members, but the suggestion was that it should be reduced to 18 after the departure of AW; this was the size of the pre-merger WFCG Board.

***It was AGREED that the determined number of the Corporation should be reduced to 18 from 1 January 2025.***

***[Nathan Garat stepped out of the meeting.]***

The meeting noted the Governors' terms of office that would end during 2024:

- ***External Governors.*** TR confirmed that there were two governors who were coming to the end of their second term of office:
  - Angela Wellings (December 2024)
  - Nathan Garat (December 2024)

***Angela Wellings:*** The meeting was reminded that Angela Wellings would be retiring from the Corporation on 31 December 2024.

***Nathan Garat:*** TR informed the meeting that she was bringing a proposal for Nathan Garat (NG) to be re-appointed as a Board Member of TWFCG for a second term of office of four years. Nathan's role on Audit Committee and his detailed knowledge of risk management along with his role as Link Governor for Slough & Langley College made his re-appointment important to the ongoing skill set of the WFCG Corporation.

***It was AGREED that Nathan Garat be reappointed as a Governor of the WFCG Corporation for a second four-year term of office (until 31 December 2028).***

***(All Members were agreed.)***

***[Nathan Garat rejoined the meeting.]***

- ***Staff Governors.*** The meeting noted that current BCA Staff Governor (JR) would be coming to the end of her four-year term of office on 31 December 2024. As previously agreed by the Corporation (9 October 2024) the new designation of Staff Governors would come into effect and the role of a specific Staff Governor for BCA would not continue. TR confirmed that she would go out to recruit a new Teaching Staff Governor (FE) in January 2025.

***NOTED***

9.2 **Election of Chair & Vice-Chair**

The Director of Governance (TR) reminded the meeting that there was a need to elect a new Chair of Governors to take on the role from AW upon her retirement (31 December 2024). TR reminded the meeting that as discussed by the Board in spring and summer 2024 a succession plan had been agreed for Jo Croft to take on the role of Chair of Governors from 1 January 2025. The meeting nominated (SS) and seconded (RL) the appointment of Jo Croft as Chair of the WFCG Corporation.

***It was AGREED that Jo Croft be appointed as Chair of the WFCG Corporation from 1 January 2025 for a two-year term of office (until 31 December 2026).***

***(All Members were agreed.)***

TR informed the meeting that she had not had any nominations to take on the role of Vice-Chair but confirmed that Rob Lewis was willing to continue in the role until his current term of office ended (31 May 2025). The meeting nominated (JC) and seconded (GM) the appointment of Rob Lewis as Vice-Chair of the WFCG Corporation.

***It was AGREED that Rob Lewis be reappointed as Vice-Chair of the WFCG Corporation with immediate effect (until 31 May 2025).***

***(All Members were agreed.)***

**Revised meeting timetable**

The meeting noted the additional December 2024 meetings to facilitate approval of the WFCG Financial Statements 2023/24; Audit Committee (16th) and Board (20th).

**NOTED**

10.

**Risk Register**

The Group Principal (GM) presented the Risk Register for 2024/25 which continued to be reviewed and updated by the Senior Leadership Team. The meeting discussed the highest scoring risks and the updated narrative explaining current mitigation and assurance levels.

- Risk 1 Failure to meet budget forecast (risk score now reduced to 16 'amber' from 20 'red'): Acute risk linked to financial health; the upwards pressure on pay was still a very real concern. GM confirmed that the risk had remained high throughout 2023/24 and was reflected in the year-end position but reminded the meeting that lagged funding and tight control of costs would return the College to a positive EBITDA and financial health in 2024/25. GM confirmed that the financial indicators for the first quarter were on track to meet the year-end forecast. However, GM highlighted that there was no guarantee of lagged funding being available for colleges after 2025/26 for 16-18 and DfE had already confirmed that budgets for adult learning would not be increased. However, the Board agreed that the in-year learner growth and tight cost control now in place supported the risk reduction for this item.
- Risk 2 IT Failure with loss of data for staff or students (risk score raised to 16 'amber'): This key risk was now classified as number two on the Risk Register and Governors were reminded that capital had been ringfenced during 2024/25 for essential IT improvements. The systems upgrades (in IT, HR and Finance) to increase efficiency and resilience had been discussed at recent committee meetings and was now being actioned as a priority.
- Risk 3 Uncertainty and risks associated with emerging national curriculum reforms (risk score remained at 12 'amber'): This key 'acute' risk was being well managed and senior staff continued to be engaged in advisory groups linked to reform. The meeting noted that the recent change of government had caused a pause in future curriculum change; the expected result was that some of the BTECs would not now be defunded as originally planned. It was expected that there might be some scope for applied general vocational qualifications to sit alongside T Levels; the AoC were awaiting confirmation of this before the Christmas break. There would then be a longer period of review across the post 16 landscape - including Higher Education Institutions – before reform was announced. The meeting noted a letter from the Chair of the Education Select Committee dated 4 December to the Minister at DfE asking them to review recent evidence presented to the Select Committee in relation to the proposed qualification reforms at level 3 and below.
- Risk 4 External Safeguarding Risks (risk score remained at 12 'amber'): The meeting was assured that the Executive Team continued to work with all relevant agencies in relation to any safeguarding incidents.
- Risk 5 Poor student outcome data in some curriculum areas results in a challenge to the Good Ofsted rating and the resulting impact on quality and reputation (risk score remained at 12 'amber'): The CEO confirmed that post Ofsted inspection this continued to be a focus for management to ensure consistency across the four campuses. The review of the Strode's College curriculum was noted; the proposed changes in the offer at Strode's had been discussed at Quality & Curriculum Committee on 28 November 2024. The CEO reminded the meeting that a more detailed Curriculum Risk Register was a standing report to the Quality & Curriculum Committee.
- Risk 6 Changes to external funding risk future financial sustainability (risk score remained at 12 'amber'): The CEO reminded the meeting of the pro-active approach to adult education in Slough which was now being driven forward following the rebranding of Slough and Langley College.

***Members NOTED and RECEIVED the updated College Risk Register.***

11.

**Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2023/24**

The Principal Sixth Form (AD) presented a summary of the group SAR. AD confirmed that the College Group had self-assessed as 'Good' for the academic year against Ofsted's framework. The meeting was reminded that college had been inspected in March 2024 by Ofsted and received a grade of 'Good' in all categories and 'Strong' for the College contribution to local, regional and national skills.

Key highlights of the cross college SAR were noted as follows:

- **The Sixth Form (SF) Provision:** Sustained A Level pass rate of 96%, with improved achievement rates.
- **Further Education (FE) Provision:** Improved performance at Slough and Langley College alongside continued high outcomes at BCA.
- **Higher Education (HE):** Outstanding 97% pass rates.
- **Apprenticeships:** Significant improvement in provision, good projected income growth.
- **Key Areas for Improvement 2024/25**
  - Retention rates, particularly in Sixth Form two-year Level 2 and Level 3 courses.
  - High-grade achievements in A Level Maths, Economics and other identified Level 3 (SF) programmes.
  - Achievement rates in Motor Vehicle programmes at Slough and Langley.
  - Progress in English and Maths across all FE provisions.
  - Attendance rates, which remain below expectations group wide.

The meeting received draft SARs 2023/24 and Quality Improvement Plans 2024/25 for the following areas of provision:

- Sixth Form
- Further Education
- Apprenticeships
- Higher Education
- Adult provision
- High Needs provision (SEND)

These had been discussed in detail at the recent Quality & Curriculum (Q&C) Committee meeting and a detailed summary of the strengths and weaknesses identified in each area was included in the minutes from this meeting (included in the meeting papers). The key Areas for Improvement had been included in the individual QIPs.

***The WFCG College SAR 2023/24 and QIP 2024/25 were APPROVED.***

**(All Members were agreed.)**

12.

**Internal Audit Strategy 2024/25**

The meeting noted a paper from the newly appointed internal audit service (IAS) Wylie Bissett; now known as 'wbg'. This paper outlined the final draft of the WFCG internal audit plan for 2024/25 as well as a 3-year Audit Needs Assessment 2024/25 to 2026/27. Governors noted that this audit plan 2024/25 and longer term strategy had been considered by the Audit Committee on 27 November and was being recommended for approval. The Group Finance Director (LG) confirmed that she had met with the team from wbg and the proposals had considered a number of factors, including the College's latest strategic plan and risk register 2024/25, the previous internal audits carried out in the College and the experience of the range of audits and their findings at other Colleges. The meeting noted the planned programme of work for 2024/25 being suggested which was broken into three tranches over the academic year.

***Members NOTED the report and APPROVED the proposed internal audit coverage for WFCG during 2024/25.***

**(All Members were agreed.)**

13.

**TWFCG: External Audit Management Report & 2023/24 Financial Statements**

The Group FD reminded the meeting that due to a delay the Financial Statements and Audit Findings Report were not yet finalised. An additional Audit Committee meeting would be held on Monday 16 December with external auditors MHA in attendance and the final accounts would then be presented to the Board at the additional meeting scheduled for Friday 20 December. LG assured the meeting that senior management had seen a copy of the draft audit findings report and there were no significant issues flagged within it by MHA.

➤ ***'Going Concern' judgement***

LG reminded the meeting this judgement – required to be given from governors to the external auditors - was to ensure that the Corporation was comfortable that college was a going concern for one full year from the date of signing the financial statements. GM informed the meeting that she had now received formal confirmation that the ESFA had waived the covenant breach from 31 July 2024. External auditors MHA were happy with the college's current ratio and the College financial forecast submitted to the ESFA in July 2024. The meeting noted the in-year growth in income for 2024/25 and the possibility of in-year growth funding based on the increased learner numbers; this would be confirmed in February or March 2025.

➤ ***Regularity self-assessment questionnaire (SAQ)***

The meeting was reminded that the Regularity Audit report from MHA would be considered within the Audit Findings Report but the draft version was showing an unqualified regularity opinion. The meeting noted the draft Regularity Audit Self-Assessment questionnaire 2023/24 for TWFCG which had been updated to reflect reclassification into the public sector. The meeting agreed that this document was a useful source of assurance for Governors and a reminder of the checks and balances that needed to be in place.

***The meeting NOTED and APPROVED the WFCG regularity self-assessment questionnaire 2023/24.***

***(All Members were agreed.)***

➤ ***Annual Report of the Audit Committees 2023/24***

The Group Director of Governance (TR) presented the Annual Audit Committee Report 2023/24. The meeting was reminded that the purpose of this report was to provide assurance to the Corporation from the Audit Committee on the adequacy and effectiveness of controls and risk mitigation in place. The meeting was reminded that Annual Audit Committee Report was a mandatory requirement within the Post 16 Joint Audit Code of Practice TR highlighted that this annual audit committee report would be submitted to the ESFA to accompany the financial statements from each of the colleges. The assessment of the auditors would be appended to the Audit Committee Annual Report before it was submitted to the ESFA.

***The meeting RECEIVED the Annual Report of the Audit Committee.***

14. **Finance Directorate Report**

The Group Finance Director (LG) presented the Finance Directorate report.

➤ ***Management Accounts October 2024***

LG presented the first quarter management accounts for 2024-25 for information and assurance. The meeting was pleased to note that the results for Quarter 1 FY25 indicated significant improvement to the group's operating performance; which had been supported by lagged funding from the 16-19 student growth in the previous year. The meeting was reminded that this was on top of circa 240 additional full time 16-19 students in the current academic year (lagged funds to be received in FY26). LG confirmed that the cash balance held at 31 October was £4.123m, which was £59k less than the budget due to the phasing of capital payments and timing of large curriculum payments such as exam fees. Governors were assured that cash days at 31 October 2024 was 29 days which was above the sector minimum benchmark of 25 days and had remained consistently at that level or above for the last seven months.

The meeting was pleased to note that payroll for Q1 FY25 was also being controlled in line with budget. Planned pay increases had been made in the current year and back dated to 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024 but there continued to be a very clear focus on ensuring no creep in staff

costs; all new or replacement posts were only approved after consideration by the Exec Team at their weekly meetings. The meeting was also assured that all non-pay costs continued to be well controlled. Income for the first quarter was in line with the budget with the first quarter performance tracking ahead of the prior year for High Needs and Higher Education, all other income streams remained on budget.

The meeting noted the following summary of performance and took the detailed management accounts as read.

Key Performance Indicator	Quarter 1	Budget
EBITDA	£705 k	£350 k
Cash balance	£4,123 k	£4,182 k
Cash days	29.27 days	26 days
Income	£12,430 k	£12,337 k
Pay costs	£8,662 k	£8,741 k
Pay as % of income	69.7%	70.8%

***The Management Accounts to October 2024 were NOTED and RECEIVED.***

➤ **Annual ESFA Letter confirming Financial Health Grade for TWFCG**

The meeting noted the letter and the accompanying dashboard from the ESFA which confirmed their assessment of the College's financial health after their review of the financial plan 2023/24 to 2025/26. The meeting noted that this confirmed financial health grades of Requires Improvement 2023/24 (same as the self-assessed grade) and Good for 2024/25.

***The ESFA Letter and Dashboard of BCA's Financial Health was NOTED and RECEIVED.***

15. **Academic Report 2024/25**

• ***Performance against KPIs year-to-date***

The meeting noted an update report on performance year-to-date against the College KPIs. The Principals Sixth Form and FE highlighted the following summary data:

- ***16-19 Attendance:*** Current in-year attendance of 89.7% across the group against a target of 90%.
- ***Adult (19+) Attendance:*** Current in-year attendance of 85.6% across the group against the 90% target.
- ***In-year Retention:*** Current retention rate across the group of 97% against the target of 95%
- ***Adult (19+) Retention:*** Current retention rate across the group of 98% against the 95% target

The meeting also noted the data by College site; Principal Sixth Form (AD) confirmed that the lower retention in the Sixth Form reflected the number of two-year courses. AE highlighted that the current underperformance in attendance was partly predicated on how the English and maths data was being incorporated as well as high levels of student sickness; the MIS Team were working on resolving the data issue. Anecdotally AE informed the meeting that the level of staff sickness was also high and this was being monitored via Resources Committee.

***The monitoring report on in-year performance 2024/25 was NOTED.***

16. **Annual Safeguarding Report 2023/24**

The Principal FE (AE) - who was also one of the College Safeguarding leads - presented the Safeguarding Report 2023/24 which provided a comprehensive overview of safeguarding across the college group. The report highlighted the key challenges and initiatives undertaken to ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the WFCG community. The report also contained detailed data on safeguarding as well as mental health and wellbeing for 2023/24 and the current academic year-to-date. The report confirmed that the WFCG had continued to demonstrate a strong commitment to safeguarding and the well-being of students. The



specialist audit conducted in January 2024 had provided positive affirmation and resulted in the College Group receiving "The Leaders in Safeguarding Award". Furthermore, the Ofsted inspection in March 2024 provided external assurance that the safeguarding arrangements in place at WFCG continue to be effective. The College Group had implemented robust systems and processes to meet the needs of students, with dedicated safeguarding, bursary, and additional learning support teams. The meeting was also reminded that Safeguarding was also a key element on the College Risk Register in its own right.

**2023/24 Safeguarding Data:** The meeting was reminded that the CPOMS (Child Protection Online Monitoring System) had been introduced to BCA at the start of 2023/24 ensuring that all four sites now used the same system for recording concerns. This allowed year-on-year trends to be recorded with more accuracy and allows a fast reaction to specific safeguarding events if there is a sudden spike in data. The meeting took the detailed data split by FE and sixth form as read. The 2023/24 data showed that across all four sites the category most reported was mental health concerns (785); this included anxiety, self-harm and suicidal thoughts. This data reflected the national trend which showed that in the last three years, the likelihood of young people having a mental health problem had increased by 50% with 1 in 6 children aged 5-16 likely to have a mental health problem and 17-22 year old women being the group most at risk of developing a mental health problem. The meeting noted the 227 FE referrals to the college counsellor and 119 in Sixth Form during 2023/24.

The 2023/24 data showed that there had been 302 recorded safeguarding concerns reported resulting in 69 referrals being made to external organisations (Children's Social Care: 34, Adult Social Care: 25). The Predominant Safeguarding Concerns had been as follows: child-on-child abuse (93), sexual abuse (30), exploitation (27). The data also showed an increase in Children Looked After (CLA) students, i.e. those in the care of the Local Authority. This was now at 64 due to the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), 46 of which were at Langley College.

The meeting noted that significant work had been undertaken during 2023/24 to ensure that the student safeguarding tutorials were closely linked to the safeguarding data and local risks; this had continued into 2024/25. Student feedback indicated that they felt safe at college and knew who to talk to if they had any issues. The meeting commended the strong student voice feedback which was positive in relation to Safeguarding provision and processes at WFCG. The wide range of staff training in safeguarding related matters was noted by the meeting. Overall, the meeting agreed that it felt assured that the College Group remained committed to supporting the well-being and safety of its students in the face of ongoing challenges.

The in-year data for 2024/25 was discussed and the scale of support being given on safeguarding matters and mental health was commended. The meeting thanked AE for the comprehensive report which provided strong assurance for governors.

***The meeting NOTED and RECEIVED the annual WFCG Safeguarding Report 2023/24.***

- **Safeguarding Policy**

The meeting considered the College Safeguarding Policy which was presented for biennial review. Updates had been made to titular changes of WFCG job roles cited in the policy. It had also been updated to reflect the latest DfE guidance KCSIE 2024 which had been amended to include an improved 'vulnerable adult' focus. The policy now contained a section on Apprentices and Employers. It was noted that this revision had been considered by Quality & Curriculum Committee on 28 November and was being recommended for approval.

***The meeting APPROVED the Safeguarding Policy as presented.***

***(All Members were agreed.)***

17. **Minutes from Resources Committee – 26 November 2024**

In the absence of the Resources Committee Chair, the Director of Governance confirmed that the major matters considered by the meeting had been brought forward to the Board within the current agenda. The minutes from this meeting would be circulated as soon as finalised.

***NOTED***

<u>MINUTE NO.</u>		<u>ACTION</u>
18.	<p><b><u>Minutes from Audit Committee – 27 November 2024</u></b></p> <p>The Chair of the Committee (JC) confirmed that the major matters considered by the meeting had been brought forward to the Board within the current agenda.</p> <p>TR apologised and informed the meeting that the minutes from the meeting were not yet available, they would be circulated as soon as finalised.</p> <p><b>NOTED</b></p>	
19.	<p><b><u>Minutes from Quality &amp; Curriculum Committee – 28 November 2024</u></b></p> <p>The Chair of the Committee (TC) confirmed that the major matters considered by the meeting had been brought forward to the Board within the current agenda including the College Self-Assessment Report 2022/23 and the Quality Improvement Plan 2023/24.</p> <p><b>The minutes were NOTED and RECEIVED.</b></p> <p><i>[Kiran Virdee joined the meeting.]</i></p>	
20.	<p><b><u>Dates and Times of Future Meetings and Events</u></b></p> <p>The dates and times of future meetings were noted.</p> <p>TR confirmed that Corporation meetings were scheduled on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wednesday, 20 March 2024, 5.00pm at Slough and Langley College</li> <li>• Friday, 17 May 2024, 8am to 2pm Strategy Event and meeting (venue TBA)</li> <li>• Wednesday, 3 July 2024, 5.00pm at Slough and Langley College</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTED</b></p>	
21.	<p><b><u>Any Urgent Business</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>'Retiring' governors</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <u>Kiran Virdee</u></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The meeting welcomed KV back and thanked him for his lengthy service as a Governor of Strode's College, East Berks College and WFCG. The meeting wished KV well in his new role with the Office for Students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <u>Janet Robertson</u></li> </ul> <p>As discussed earlier in the meeting that Board thanked JR for her 8-year tenure as the Staff Governor at BCA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <u>Angela Wellings</u></li> </ul> <p>The meeting recorded a vote of thanks to Angela Wellings as it was his last meeting; AW's current term of office as a governor of WFCG (formerly East Berks College, EBC) would cease on 31 December 2024. The CEO and the meeting thanked AW for her considerable input to governance over the last twelve years plus and for her part in the two successful mergers. All Members wished AW well for the future and thanked her for the significant contribution to governance at EBC and WFCG.</p> <p>There was no other urgent business.</p> <p><b>The meeting ended at 7.25pm.</b></p>	

***At this stage of the meeting, it was agreed by all members present that matters of a private and confidential nature were to be discussed and had there been any members of the public present they would have been asked to leave the meeting.***