### OBJECTIVE
Following conversations with line managers and HR managers at a number of Colleges, it became clear that after the recent amalgamations there was interest in having staff acquire skills in conflict prevention which could then be shared across the Colleges, so reducing the need to employ outside specialists. At the same time, with tight budgets, the potential to agree one of more common courses would enable colleges to combine small budgets to gain better value than would be possible on their own.

### RESPONSE BASE
28 people were contacted across all the colleges, the majority in HR but also some in line management positions and we had a 61% response.

### SKILL OPTIONS
4 outline courses were proposed with a 5th free area for any suggestions. These were based on recent conversations with groups of managers at various colleges and universities. We asked respondents to rank them from 1 to 5 in order of preference (1 being most preferred)

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<th>Option</th>
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| **Option 1**: Holding Difficult Conversations  
Skills and techniques of holding potentially difficult conversations with staff around their behaviours, performance or other areas of concern. This covers the role of the manager, the ground rules for the conversation, the stages of the meeting, language & questioning techniques, gaining and recording agreement. | |
| **Option 2**: Nipping Conflict in the Bud  
Skills & techniques of facilitating a conversation between colleagues who have a disagreement so that it does not escalate into a conflict. This covers the role of the facilitator, the ground rules for the meeting, the stages of the meeting, language & questioning techniques, gaining and communicating agreement if appropriate. | |
| **Option 3**: Guiding Teams through Change  
Skills & techniques of building and maintaining a team at peak effectiveness. Covers agreeing team goals, building trust, managing conflict around issues not people, gaining buy in to agreed plans, measuring results and being accountable. | |
| **Option 4**: Mediation  
An introduction to the Skills & techniques of a mediator; Theoretical underpinning; Role of the Mediator; Values & codes of conduct; Motivational Interviewing; Active Listening; Principled Negotiating ; Gaining agreement ; follow through with individual parties. | |
| **Option 5**: Any other areas of “people management” that would be of value | |

### RESULTS
Options 1 & 2 were almost equally Ranked 1 or 2 in 77% and 82% of responses respectively. Both were seen as preventative skills and subsequent discussions suggested that the reason for their almost equal ranking was that they represented to Line Managers skills they were most interested in acquiring, while HR managers ranked them highly because they would like to see Line Managers acquiring these skills.

Option 3 was ranked much lower (4 or 5) by almost everyone and seen as a specialist skill that might be appropriate for specific colleges, but not across the board.

Option 4 was seen as a valuable internal skill resource by a majority (60%). However it was seen as less of a priority (ranked 3rd) than the preventative skills in Options 1 & 2.