



Damian Hinds MP
Secretary of State for Education
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London

6 December 2018

Dear Damian,

I am writing to you about staff pay in colleges but I wanted to start by congratulating and thanking you on your speech today in which you make far-reaching proposals on technical education.

Your acknowledgement that snobbery in society has led to technical education and colleges being undervalued is obviously very welcome indeed. As you rightly say, "colleges will play an essential part in delivering the modern Industrial Strategy... They will be our key national infrastructure for technical education." I am excited by the vision you and your department are starting to paint and the role colleges will play in that.

I am, though, very concerned about staff pay. Yesterday, on behalf of FE colleges, AoC had to make an interim pay award offer of only 1% to staff whose pay lags schools by over 20%. Every college leader wants to be able to pay a fair salary to their staff but most will struggle to even be able to pay 1%. We know that the small number of colleges in a position to pay more will do so because they want to be able to reward, recruit and retain the best people to deliver the high quality education and technical skills that we all want. The majority will not be able to afford to do that.

I have written to you before about this urging you to make a pay grant so that colleges are able to at least match the schools pay award of up to 3.5%. I fully appreciate how tight budgets are, but we know that our recommendation on pay will lead to an escalation in industrial action by college staff. Nobody wants that to happen because of the potential disruption to students.

AoC, college leaders and staff are standing beside you in wanting a stronger, high quality post-18 technical education system which delivers for everyone. The work that colleges do with 700,000 16 to 18 year olds supports the majority of young people to make the transition into adult life and their needs are paramount to both of us. Without

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decent pay, though, colleges are increasingly finding it difficult to recruit and retain the best teachers and people with relevant industrial experience.

I would simply ask again if you could consider an urgent pay grant for college staff.

Yours sincerely

David Hughes
Chief Executive