



LOVE OUR COLLEGES

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LOVE OUR COLLEGES

#LoveOurColleges

FEWEEK

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FE WEEK

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COLLEGES WEEK: THE ULTIMATE CELEBRATION

CATH MURRAY
 @CATHMURRAY_

Colleges change lives. As we've been gathering the material for this supplement this week, the *FE Week* team have been hearing stories from learners around the country, such as Grace, who is registered blind, but has been supported in her teacher training by Grimsby Institute's use of the latest learning technology. Or Kieran, who has used Portsmouth College's social action strategy to start a business and raise funds to support young people being bullied at school (see p. 14).

Employers such as Ford, BAE and the NHS have waxed lyrical to us about the mutually beneficial relationships they have with their local colleges, which enable them to recruit the best talent while also giving back to their local community (see p. 6).

Governors have told us what they love most about their role,

and governance advisor Sue Pember shared a wise message about the need to love your principal as well as your college! (see p. 7).

Yet despite all the wonderful benefits of colleges, spending per student in FE has gone from being 50 per cent higher than secondary schools in 1990, to 8 per cent lower today, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies (see pp. 8-9). Which is why students from Brockenhurst College launched a funding petition last week (see p. 15) and thousands marched on parliament this Wednesday, to demand fair funding for FE (see p. 4).

Colleges have sent photos of the events they held this week (see pp. 12-13) and to close the supplement, AoC president David Hughes has a message about what colleges can do to build on the momentum from Colleges Week (see p. 15).

NOCN has changed over the last decade and its evolution reflects the changes affecting the wider FE sector, especially FE colleges. Ten years ago our provision was heavily focused on "Ofqual sector 14" qualifications, such as Skills for Employment, Training and Personal Development. These are still popular and useful for people who want to work but lack the skills and experience. As we enter a period of uncertainty over Brexit and the socioeconomic impacts this may have, such courses may yet prove vital for many to get them working.

NOCN traditionally provided many Functional Skills and ESOL qualifications and it is still very active in these areas, with thousands of learners using NOCN qualifications to boost their knowledge and skills. We also did qualifications back then for Modern Apprenticeships – remember those? They looked very different to the reformed apprenticeship standards with end-point assessment that we know and love, which have much to recommend them but are not quite delivering as they should – maybe the apprenticeships' report card should say "has potential, must try harder"?

NOCN provides many qualifications used in apprenticeship frameworks and it is one of the leading providers of end-point assessments. This has been a major change from qualifications to assessments, requiring a new business model with a focus on employers



GRAHAM HASTING-EVANS

Managing director,
 NOCN Group

HOW FE CAN EVOLVE TO MEET SOCIETY'S NEEDS

at the core of the reforms. This is both a threat and an opportunity for colleges: get it wrong and colleges may find themselves losing out; get it right and working closely with employers can build profitable relationships.

The level at which NOCN works has changed over time; it used to be known for lower-level qualifications, whereas now our focus is on the full range from entry to level seven, supporting learners throughout their careers. Lifelong adult learning is important; getting into the learning habit early can be truly transformative. There has been much talk around the education reforms focusing on level four and five at

the expense of level two and three; we really need all levels. It isn't a case of either/or: all the building blocks have to be in place for a productive society.

Which brings me to productivity. Over the last decade, productivity in the UK has risen at a significantly lower rate than that of other developed economies. We have not recovered as quickly as some since the 2008 crash, and now we are about 30 per cent less productive than the USA, Germany and France. What can we do as a sector to address this? Well, we need the skills to drive a productive society and our FE Colleges can be the productivity skills

powerhouse. NOCN recently published a report (www.nocn.org.uk/productivity-report) with the Learning and Work Institute on this subject, which I recommend to everyone as essential reading.

Related to productivity, digital skills are increasingly a prerequisite for modern workers; within two decades, an estimated 90 per cent of jobs will require digital skills. Learners will increasingly study and become qualified online, probably via their mobile devices. NOCN is exploring how technology such as VR and AI alongside mobile apps and digital services can be applied to provide the knowledge and skills that learners need.

We also need to acknowledge the T-shaped elephant in the room. Technical qualifications may be even more of an upheaval to colleges and awarding organisations than reformed apprenticeships. There is much being discussed at all levels. The risks if the government gets it wrong are significant yet the objective is valid and we support the governments' ambitions – we just need to ensure that what T-levels end up being is what the country really needs to improve productivity, not another white elephant that sucks funding and goodwill from the FE sector.

So now, if the government is serious about improving national productivity through its ambitious educational reforms then it has to invest properly in schools and colleges.

WHAT IS COLLEGES WEEK?



The Love Our Colleges campaign is an opportunity to highlight the brilliant work that goes on in colleges, and the brilliant staff that make it all possible.

It is also an opportunity to call on government for better investment in colleges, and fair pay for college staff.

Over the last decade, colleges have



had to deal with an average 30 per cent funding cut, whilst costs have increased dramatically. This has resulted in a drastic drop in learning opportunities for adults, fewer hours of teaching and support for young people, and teacher pay at less than 80 per cent of that in schools, with support staff seeing no increase in pay for several years. This situation is not sustainable and ultimately impacts upon students, businesses, communities and the wider economy.

That is why unions, students and colleges are coming together, this week, to request fair funding.

Colleges Week is a joint partnership with the Association of Colleges, Unison, the Trades Union Congress, the National Union of Students, AMiE, GMB, the Association of School and College Leaders, the University and College Union and the National Education Union.



PARTNERS



STEVE FRAMPTON

President, Association of Colleges



WE HAVE SHOWN OUR STRENGTH: LET'S BUILD ON THE MOMENTUM

The AoC president is grateful to the staff and students who have helped shine the spotlight on colleges last week, and hopes we can keep up the good work

As a principal of a college for 13 years, I know myself that as a sector, we are often too busy transforming lives to stop and take stock of the impact we're having. We tend to spend even less time shouting about it – we are just too modest. We don't see the incredible as incredible – to us it's just our day to day. That's why Colleges Week and the Love Our Colleges campaign has been so wonderful. Not only has it given us an opportunity to remind the world of what colleges do so well, it has also been an opportunity for us to remind ourselves.

Throughout the week, we've had more media coverage than I can remember, and Wednesday saw the biggest act of mass lobbying our sector has ever seen.

Principals, staff and students met with elected officials inside parliament to discuss the impact of a decade of cuts; while outside, thousands of people marched and delivered a clear message: we need real, sustainable investment in our sector, and we need it now if

we are to fulfil our organisational missions. As well as that, the secretary of state, ministers, shadow ministers and MPs visited their local colleges, posed with "Love Our Colleges" badges and pledged their support. It really was a fantastic testament to what can be achieved when we work together.

We heard lots of supportive words from MPs; the task for us all now is to maintain the pressure to make sure they turn their promises into actions. Keep lobbying, keep talking and keep showing just what colleges do every single day.

Hundreds of activities took place in communities across the country. We could fill this supplement 10 times over, so please forgive me as I won't try to list them all – but know that they were seen, they were appreciated and they've made a difference. Particular highlights for me have been the Never Felt Cuts Like This Before protest song written and performed by more than 200 young people at Chesterfield College, calling on Theresa May to recognise the impact austerity has had and urging her to act; and the wildly popular petition set up by Brockenhurst College students, which at the time of writing had more

than 22,000 signatures. I'm sure you've all sang along with the students and signed and shared the petition. If you've not, I'd urge you to do both, please.

It's been especially heart-warming to see so many of our students throw themselves into the campaign. I'd like to extend a huge thank you

“ Keep lobbying, keep talking and showing just what colleges do

to the National Union of Students, under the leadership of Emily Chapman, vice president for FE, for partnering with us and really galvanising young people into action – we are so very grateful. Ultimately, this fight is for them and for those who follow.

Our brilliant, passionate, talented and dedicated staff are some of the country's unsung heroes, who despite stagnating wages and almost constant cuts and reforms, continue to train and educate over 2.2 million people every year, helping people to achieve their ambitions, big and small. The education unions (UCU, Unison, GMB and NEU) have done sterling work drawing attention to the value our staff bring, and the importance of paying them fairly.

One of the reasons I believe this week has been so successful is because we have focused on impact; we have told our stories positively, but seriously. We have spelled it out that colleges are central to delivering a strong economy, thriving communities and supporting individuals to get on. We've made it clear that a failure to invest in colleges is a failure to invest in our country.

To finish, I want to say thank you – not just for this week, but for all the work that you do every day. What you do matters, and what you do transforms lives. And thanks to all your #LoveOurColleges activity, we're making sure that everybody realises that.

I really am very grateful to you all.

Mass march on parliament to defend colleges

JUDE BURKE
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Thousands of learners, staff and leaders marched on parliament on Wednesday in “the most amazing show by colleges ever” to demand fairer funding, as the centrepiece of Colleges Week.

The march for FE, organised by the University and College Union in partnership with the Association of Colleges, was followed by a packed rally in Parliament Square, during which Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn declared his support for colleges and their “pathway to liberation”.

“It’s a fantastic show. It’s the most amazing show by colleges ever,” said David Hughes, the AoC’s chief executive, as he addressed the crowd.

“We’re here to really shout out about how proud we are about what colleges can achieve, and we are making a noise in parliament, we are sending a message to government,” he said.

“We’re not after handouts. We’re after investment,” he continued.

“Colleges are the best place to invest for our communities, for our young people, for our adults, for our very successful future.”

“I support this demonstration because college education is very, very important,” Mr Corbyn said.

“It’s the pathway to liberation for many of our young people. It’s the pathway for older people to discover new things about themselves, new subjects, new opportunities

and indeed a career change if that’s what they want.

“Stand today for properly funded colleges and properly paid staff. Stand today for the principles of education for all as a right,” he urged.

Earlier, shadow education secretary Angela Rayner said she was “so sorry that this current government doesn’t value the work that you do”.

“They know the cost of everything but the value of nothing,” she said. “We need

This government knows the cost of everything but the value of nothing

investment in our education now.”

Representatives from at least 30 colleges across the country were understood to have taken part in Wednesday’s march in the heart of the capital.

Numbering in their thousands, the protestors headed through Trafalgar Square and down Whitehall, cheering, chanting and



Jeremy Corbyn addresses the crowd, flanked by Angela Rayner

bearing placards demanding more funding for colleges.

There were large contingents from Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College and New City College, both of which closed their campuses to allow staff and students to take part.

Gerry McDonald, group principal of New City College, told *FE Week* its four campuses in Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Redbridge and Epping Forest were closed “to get as many people as possible, to really get the message across that FE has got to have its funding sorted out for the long-term future of the country”.

“We’ve done the lobbying. We’ve spoken to civil servants and politicians for a long time, and we feel now we need to do something a bit more dramatic like today, and make a bit more of a fuss about it,” he said.

Karen Redhead, principal of EHWLC, said her leadership team had “taken the decision to close so that students and staff can take part in this very positive lobby that celebrates everything that is fantastic about FE colleges”.



A group from Leeds City College had spent six hours on a coach to be at Wednesday’s march.

Among their number was Ivola Dombay, a GCSE English teacher at the college, who said she was motivated by funding cuts that meant she was teaching overcrowded classes.

“We’ve barely got enough chairs for them to sit on. We haven’t got enough teachers,” she said.

As well as the march on parliament, college leaders, staff and students have been lobbying MPs to plead the case for more funding for FE.

Throughout the week, colleges across the country are putting on their own events and “inviting the local community to celebrate the impact that colleges have”, an AoC spokesperson said.

Colleges Week was prompted by the Department for Education’s decision to fund a 3.5 per cent pay rise for schoolteachers while ignoring college lecturers – an announcement that left AoC boss David Hughes “angry” and “frustrated”.

“The issue is we are in a very tight funding financial constraint position with government so we have to make a lot more noise and get a lot more students, staff, parents, employers, stakeholders, partners to advocate for colleges,” he told *FE Week* in August.



NORWICH T-LEVEL PIONEER WELCOMES DAMIAN HINDS



JUDE BURKE
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Education secretary Damian Hinds was able to see for himself the great work that colleges do during a visit to City College Norwich ahead of Colleges Week.

He proudly sported a #LoveOurColleges badge as he toured the college – one of a select few chosen to pilot T-levels from 2020 – on October 12.

Corrienne Peasgood, City College Norwich’s principal, said it was a “pleasure and a privilege” to welcome Mr Hinds to the college.

“This was a fantastic opportunity for our students and staff to tell their stories and it was wonderful to see Mr Hinds engaging with our students, who were able to share their individual journeys and aspirations with someone who will directly influence the country’s future education policies,” she said.

“It has been fantastic to meet and speak with inspiring college leaders and teachers, students and businesses across Norwich about how we can improve opportunities for young people in the region,” Mr Hinds said.

He said he was “really impressed to see the... collaborative work colleges and employers are undertaking” to ensure that children and young people “have the chances and choices to fulfil their potential”.

During his visit Mr Hinds spoke to students and teaching staff as he visited classes in digital, construction and childcare, the subject areas in which the college will be delivering the new courses.

This included dropping in on a level three diploma in childcare and education lesson, where he chatted to students about their courses and their ambitions.

Mr Hinds also met with senior leaders, including

Ms Peasgood, deputy principal Jerry White and vice principal Julia Buckland, to talk about challenges facing the sector, such as funding.

Alongside this, they discussed the Taking Teaching Further programme, which City College Norwich is part of, that will see industry experts trained up to teach in the FE and skills sector.

Later in his visit Mr Hinds met with the board of the Norwich Opportunity Area, one of 12 areas ranked as social mobility “cold spots” where the government is working to boost children and young people’s attainment.



ANNE MILTON TALKS T-LEVELS IN OLDHAM

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS
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Skills minister Anne Milton paid a visit to a sixth-form college that is set to help deliver the first wave of T-levels as events continued around the country to mark Colleges Week.

Attending Oldham Sixth Form College on Thursday, Ms Milton met with learners and discussed the introduction of the new technical qualifications and the post-16 landscape, as well as pressures on the sector.

Speaking at the college, Ms Milton said: “It’s always tough out there for funding and I know post-16 education has got funding pressures.

“I think it’s tough for young people; there a lot of choices out there. I think there has always been an assumption that you either go to university or go into a job if you aren’t clever enough to go to university.

“My job is to make sure that there are good technical routes or vocational routes, in apprenticeships or T-levels,

so that people can have another choice because that’s what employers want.”

Oldham Sixth Form College has been selected as one of the 52 providers to deliver the first wave of T-levels from 2020. The initial three pathways to be taught will focus on construction, digital and education, and childcare.

Jayne Clarke, principal of Oldham Sixth Form College, said: “We welcomed the opportunity to meet with the minister to talk about our involvement in the T-level pilot and key issues in the 16-18 sector, in particular our concerns about funding.

“A small group of students talked to the minister about the importance of having a range of options leading to university- and degree-level apprenticeships.”

Addressing college leaders in her FE Week column last week, Ms Milton said she was “very aware” of the funding pressures they face.

She said: “I will take every opportunity to always highlight the fantastic work that you do – in the words of this week’s slogan, I will “Love Our Colleges”.



Anne Milton on her visit at Oldham Sixth Form College

The employers building partnerships with colleges



Apprentices from the NHS Foundation Trust are inducted at Exeter College

A TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NHS

The Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust has been working in partnership with Exeter College on a range of courses, particularly in levels three and five leadership and management standards to upskill its workforce. The trust also takes on apprentices and works with BTEC students from the college.

Lianne Onslow, learning and development manager at the trust, said: “We are very lucky to have an outstanding college on our doorstep. The partnership between us has been really strong.

“With Exeter College, the key thing that stood out was that they recognised our learners would be different to their normal 16-18 apprentices. It feels like they have really thought about what we need, and created an apprenticeship programme for us.

“It’s such a mutually beneficial relationship. It really feels like they are members of the team.”



An apprentice at Ford Engineering

APPRENTICES HELP FORD GET UP TO SPEED

Ford Engineering Group and Gateshead College have a long-standing relationship, and recently joined forces to deliver a six-month traineeship to equip young people with the skills needed to begin an apprenticeship in the engineering sector.

Geoff Ford, chairman of Ford Engineering, said teaming up with Gateshead College gave the company “the best chance of recruiting fresh young talent with the skills, knowledge and experience that can take our business forward.

“Through the traineeship we’ve managed to widen our competency in several key areas, particularly in the application of digital technology in engineering projects. It has also allowed us to think outside the box a bit more, to find new and more efficient ways of doing things.

“If there’s one regret I have, it’s that we didn’t launch the academy sooner. It’s a great way of giving something back to the local community and helping Ford Engineering and the wider manufacturing sector to keep ahead of the game.”



A groundbreaking ceremony at Pinewood Studios attended by Jeremy Wright MP, Pinewood representatives and apprentices

A FUTURE IN FILM

Buckinghamshire College Group has built a strong relationship with the internationally renowned Pinewood Studios Group, ranging from diplomas in studio management to apprenticeships in decorating, plastering and plumbing.

Andrew Smith, corporate affairs director at Pinewood Studios, said it was a “simple and effective relationship” that helps to train up employees in skills that are “very important for the running of our studios”.

“It’s great to support a local college,” he added. “It’s been very beneficial.

“They identify the best apprentices for us and do the training. All of our apprentices are full-time employees.

“It is a good college, and we are very happy to support them.”

A MATCH MADE IN DEVON

South West Water/Bournemouth Water had a strong partnership with South Devon College even before the levy was introduced, but customer training and quality manager Lucy Langmaid said the levy was a great opportunity to upskill their staff in team leadership, sales and customer service.

“The key thing over the last few years is their understanding of the needs of our business and the fact they are in constant communication with us,” she said.

“For us, it’s not about getting numbers on the course. It’s easy to enrol on a course, but what’s important is supporting that person on their journey.

“It’s been a really positive relationship with the college. You don’t go into these things thinking it will always be perfect and smooth sailing, but it’s a bit like a marriage! You work together and keep going forward, and we have become really strong together.”



Apprentices from South West Water / Bournemouth Water



BAE apprentice

FLYING HIGH WITH BAE

BAE Systems works with colleges around the country, including Blackpool and the Fylde College and Furness College. The company has 2,000 apprentices in learning every year in a range of engineering and business disciplines.

Peter Caney, head of early careers and skills at BAE, said: “We work closely with the colleges to design bespoke programmes that maximise the learning experience, offering a blended approach and delivery of the best of both worlds to our apprentices.

“As a company we deliver strong technical capability and workplace experience, while the colleges we partner with bring academic knowledge and vocational skills we are not able to deliver ourselves.

“The colleges provide us with valuable input to help us create apprenticeships that support the new standards.”

WHY I LOVE BEING A COLLEGE GOVERNOR



ANDREW BAIRD

Chair of governors, East Surrey College

I have been a governor of East Surrey College since 2008, becoming chair in 2016 after chairing the finance and resources committee for seven years.

It probably took me a couple of years to work out what I had got involved in!

As one learns, a college is an extremely complex business, operating in an environment where it is essential that one stays aware of external influences to ensure that the college is remaining relevant to its stakeholders.

The most recent example of this is the impact of the change in the apprenticeship funding.

I find being a college governor an enormously satisfying role, becoming more so as one takes up the opportunities to get involved in the college and its students through learning walks, performance reviews, award ceremonies and attending public events.

All in all, being a college governor continues to be a terrific way to leverage one's business experience into "giving something back"!



CAROLE STOTT MBE

Chair of governors, Bath College

Being chair of governors at a college is fulfilling in many ways, the most obvious being witnessing the impact on students' lives. Their time at college is so critical: at a time of major transition it can set them on a path to a fulfilling career and a life as an engaged citizen. For adults too, the experience is often transformational.

FE staff are dedicated, hardworking and striving to do their best for their students. They are great people to work with on this shared endeavour.

Like all colleges, Bath works with hundreds of businesses who rely on us for their trained workforce. Helping the college to build local partnerships is a very rewarding part of the role.

Of course being a governor and a chair means you must like a challenge – and in my 20 years' experience, the financial challenges have never been greater. I know that all our governors at Bath College are wholly committed to this endeavour because they support the vitally important role the college plays in our community, and I'm sure that governors across the country echo this sentiment.



STEPHEN HOWLETT CBE

DL, Chair of London South East Colleges

I owe a huge amount to FE, as it gave me the educational breakthrough I needed. It is very important to me to help give other people this same opportunity.

I love seeing young people from all walks of life and abilities developing their confidence and skills, enabling them to make a contribution to their communities and their country.

I owe a huge amount to FE

I am particularly inspired by the work my college does to support students with special educational needs. Being part of this year's student awards ceremony was a highlight for me.

Going forward, I am keen for us to further develop our training for "jobs of the future" – for example, training more people in modern methods of construction.

I enjoy every visit I make to our college and get a real buzz from being part of the LSEC family.



JANET MORGAN

Chair of governors, Derby College

Steering the college's strategic direction and being responsible for its financial health is even more important than ever in these challenging times.

Our governing body includes representatives from businesses and organisations, as well as a staff and student member. Everyone brings an area of expertise that is vital for scrutiny and support – effectively as the college's "critical friend".

As a governor and subsequently chair of the Corporation, I increasingly appreciate what a valuable role the college has in our communities and particularly the contribution it makes to the local economy.

The highlight of the academic year is our Peak Awards where we celebrate the successes of our students and staff. It is rewarding to hear how much the students have achieved and the opportunities the college has provided them for the next stage of their lives.

I am proud to be part of an organisation that can make such a difference to the lives of our young people and mature students alike.



MARK WHITE OBE

DL, Chair, Stockton Riverside College Group

I am very proud to be the chair of the Stockton Riverside College Group.

I spent many years employed in the higher education sector and I very much enjoyed my career, however I have found the role of being a governor of an FE college both incredibly fulfilling and hugely rewarding.

Governing a college is concerned with being accountable for the performance of a crucial local, regional and in some cases national asset - the community's college. Being a governor is about supporting and challenging the principal and senior leaders - to ensure that the college is meeting student needs; that it is a responsive to demand, and a high-performing partner to employers and local government and, in our case, a vibrant combined authority; and, crucially, that it has the financial sustainability to do all those things well.

When the board, the senior team and the staff get it right governors should feel a huge sense of pride in their custodianship of their college.

As we celebrate colleges across England in Colleges' Week we also celebrate the huge contribution of governors throughout our sector.

SUE PEMBER

Governance advisor



GOVERNORS: DON'T JUST LOVE YOUR COLLEGE - LOVE YOUR PRINCIPAL!

Supporting your college is not only holding people to account – it's also about mentoring and supporting the senior team, especially the principal, says Sue Pember

The governance role in FE colleges is wide ranging, covering everything from determining the mission to ensuring educational standards. It is a brilliant and satisfying role where you are part of an organisation that helps young people and adults improve their life chances.

In recent years, much of the emphasis on governance has been about how governors can be more effective at holding the principal and senior leaders to account. With so many colleges getting into financial difficulty, you can understand why government ministers have concentrated on that narrative. However, we must not forget the other side of the

role which is about mentoring, supporting and praising senior teams, especially the principal.

A principal's role can be a lonely one, especially if he/she does not have the support and trust of governors, particularly the chair of governors. Chairs can be an important resource for a principal; they should be sounding boards helping to work out solutions together and determining whether a problem is really as bad as it feels. But so often, I see principals shouldering all the issues by themselves and keeping their governors at arm's length, with chairs not making the time to ask what's up and then listening. FE is tough at the moment - it's overly complicated and there's not enough funding to do a good job. This has led to good senior staff being in short supply, so we need to cherish them, help them become resilient and grow confident

in their role. So, when a problem surfaces (and there will always be problems), don't let the first response of governors be "why didn't we know about this earlier?" and start

Is the next person really going to be so much better?

apportioning blame. Shouldn't governors take a step back and look into their relationship with the senior team and ask the question - why didn't they trust us enough to tell us?

I am seeing too many knee-jerk reactions when a problem arises, with governors jumping to the so called "solution" of moving someone on instead of a "let's work together to solve it" approach. Ask the question - "is the next person in really going to be so much better?"

This brings me to another role for governors - that of advocacy. Love your college and tell your network how good it is and take some of the endless stakeholder engagement burden away from your executive.

Being a college governor is one of the best experiences ever - you are shaping the lives of thousands of students and staff. It is a privilege and often a humbling experience, but it is one of many parts. Let's spend this year on a nurturing and supportive role and start caring for the wellbeing of our hard-pressed senior staff.

WHAT'S GOING ON V

THE FIGURES SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

The base rate for 16–19 funding has remained at £4000 per student per year since 2013–14 – when the new national funding formula was introduced.

In the same time, inflation has risen by almost 9 per cent.

The Department for Education has responded to calls for more cash by claiming it has “protected the base level of funding for 16 to 19-year-olds until 2020”.

What this actually means is they have put a cash-terms freeze in the national base rate, equivalent to real-terms cuts of £356 per student between 2013–14 and 2017–18.

With this in mind, here is your handy pull-out-and-keep guide to 16–19 funding in further education – so you have the facts at hand as and when you need them.



Funding p
aged 16–18

BIGG

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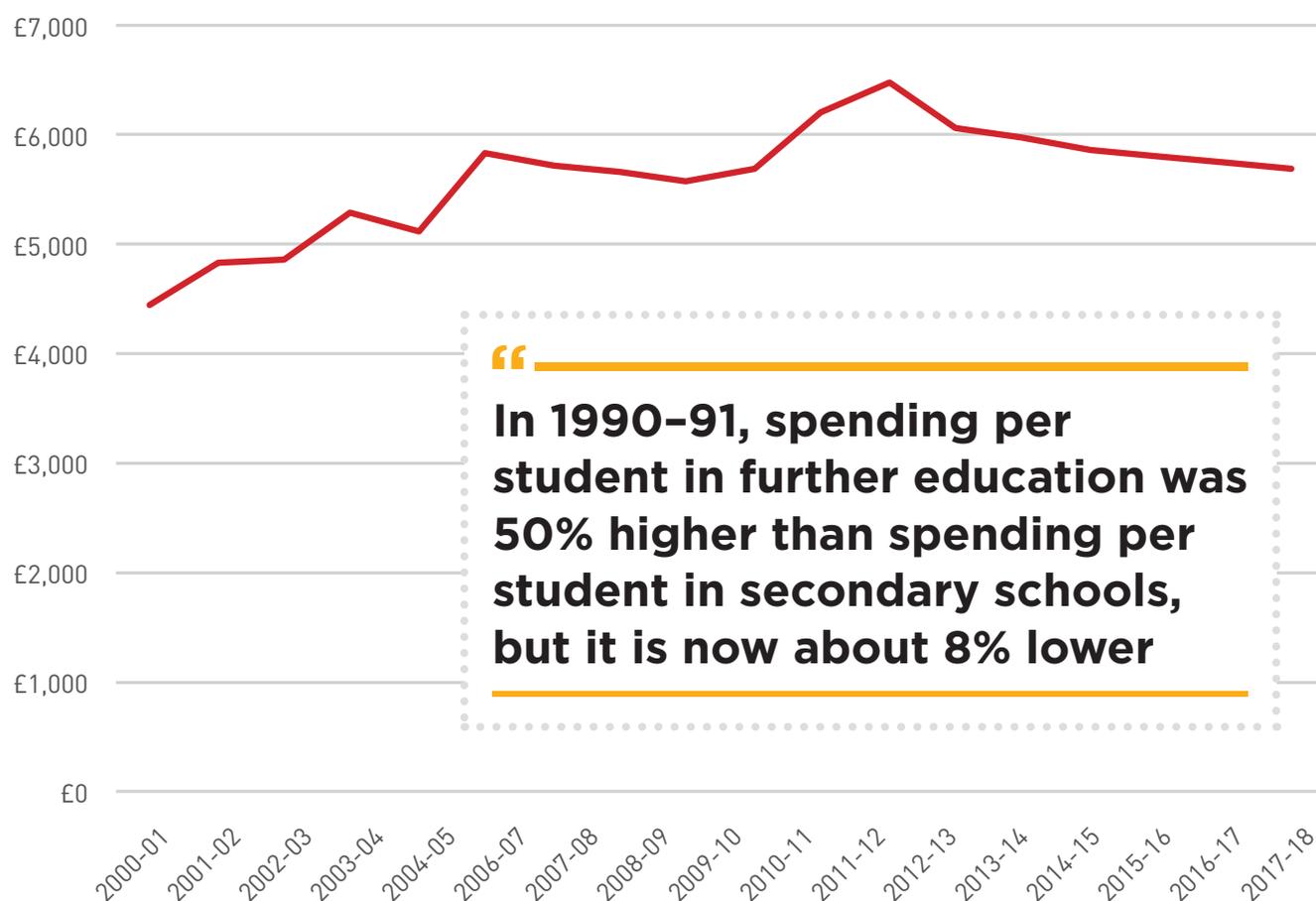
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HOW HAS 16-18 FUNDING CHANGED?

An independent report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies estimated that 16–18 spending per student in FE and sixth-form colleges fell by around 12 per cent in real terms between 2011–12 and 2017–18.

It also calculated that spending per student in FE is now about 8 per cent lower than in secondary schools.

Spend per FTE student in 16–18 further education and school sixth forms



“ In 1990–91, spending per student in further education was 50% higher than spending per student in secondary schools, but it is now about 8% lower

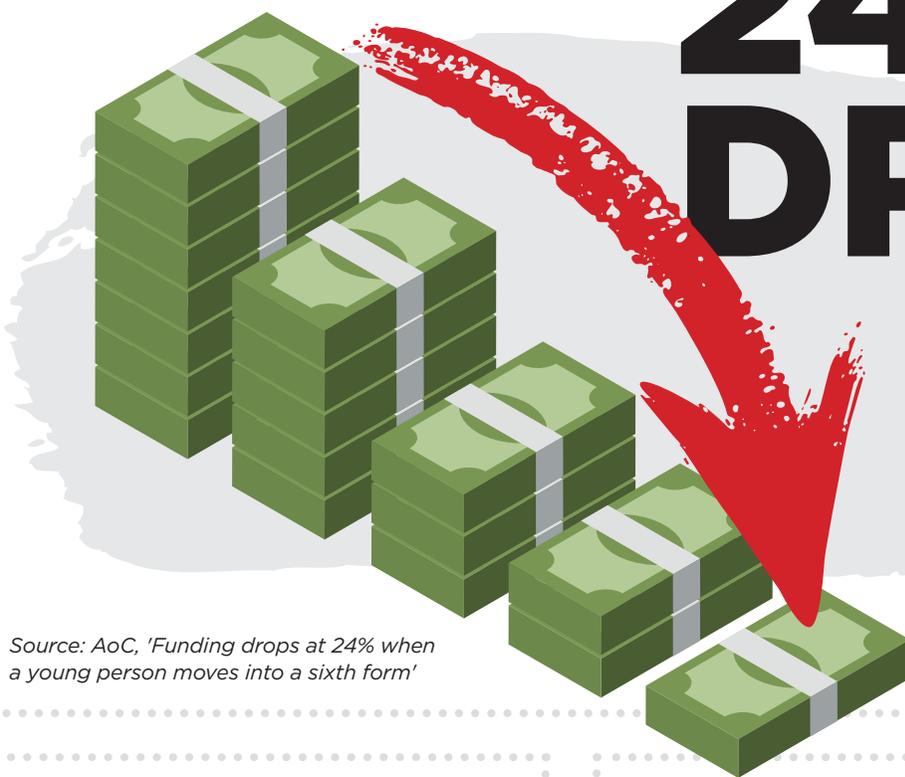


WITH 16-19 FUNDING?

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Source: 2018 Annual Report on Education Spending in England, The Institute for Fiscal Studies

Funding drop from year 11 to sixth form



Source: AoC, 'Funding drops at 24% when a young person moves into a sixth form'

24% DROP

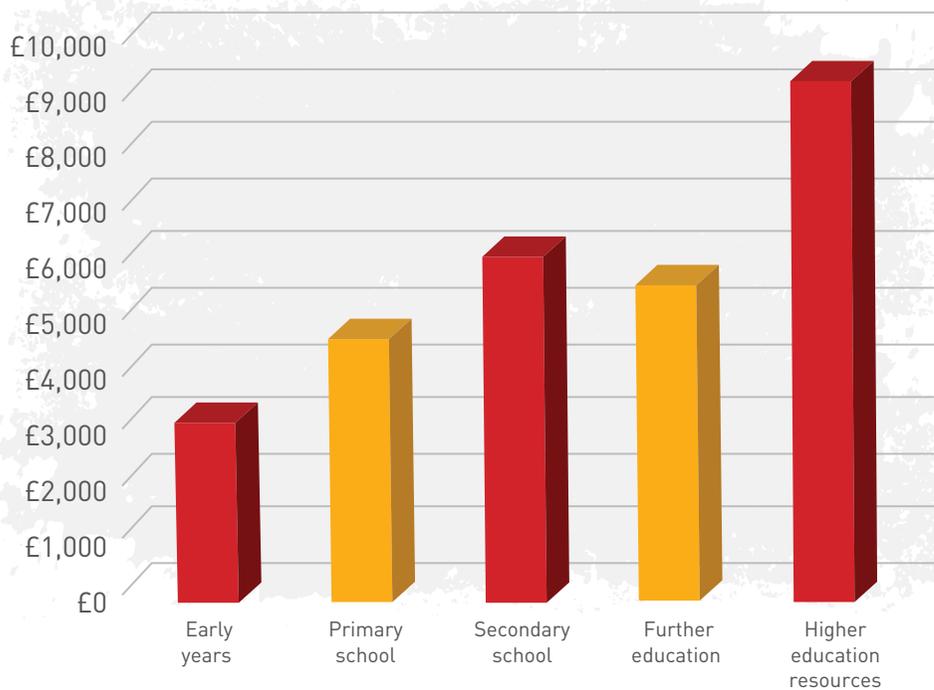
There are no official figures on funding per student at different ages but AoC has calculated the drop at 24%.

Average funding nationally per year 11 pupil: £6,693

Average funding nationally per year 12 pupil: £5,118

How does FE compare to other phases?

In 2016-17, further education funding averaged £5,698.43 per student, compared to £6,210.35 at secondary (11-16) and £9,395.60 in higher education.



Source: 2018 Annual Report on Education Spending in England, The Institute for Fiscal Studies

What about the extra funding for T-levels?



The Department for Education is keen to point out that it has committed extra money to help prepare for T-levels – over £400 million per year by 2022.

Only a small proportion of 16-19 students will be taking T-levels, however – namely those who perform well at GCSE but choose to pursue the alternative technical route to A-levels. The extra cash will not be able to be spent on those studying below level three, for example.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies has calculated the T-levels funding as about an extra £600 per student in further education in 2021-22.

However, they also found that:

- The new money for T-levels and the proposed cuts to the rest of the FE college budget offset each other almost exactly, so spending per student will be largely held constant in real terms between 2017-18 and 2019-20.
- Most of the extra money for T-levels is focused on delivering extra teaching hours, so is unlikely to ease the resource challenges on the sector.

Source: 2018 Annual Report on Education Spending in England, The Institute for Fiscal Studies



LOVE OUR COLLEGES

FE WEEK



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EVENTS FROM COLLEGES

Having a visual impact

The Manchester College kick-started Colleges Week with a special roadshow to champion inclusion and diversity within the visual effects industry – a “key growth sector” for the Greater Manchester area.

The ACCESS:VFX event for 11- to 18-year-olds was held at the college’s Openshaw campus on Monday to promote social inclusion and job opportunities within this creative and digital industry.

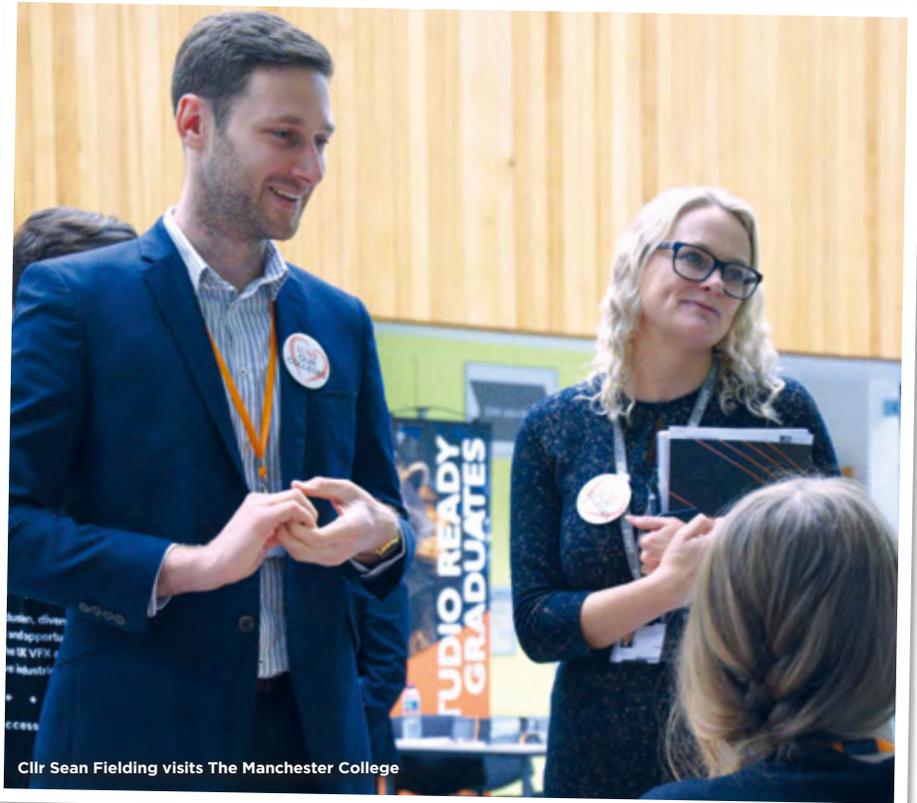
It also showcased how colleges are central to inclusive economic prosperity and social fairness – a key theme for College Week.

More than 100 students from surrounding area attended, as did Councillor Sean Fielding, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority’s lead for education, employment and skills.

He said he was “delighted” to be at the college, where he’d “heard some great stories about how the college is widening participation for young people across the city region and really attracting young people into the key growth area of visual effects and digital and creative industries,” he said.

“I can’t tell you how delighted we are to invite Cllr Sean Fielding here today and ACCESS:VFX, to launch Love Our Colleges week,” said Lisa O’Loughlin, The Manchester College’s principal.

“Further education colleges like ours are an essential part of the national education system. Whether it’s through top-class technical education, basic skills or lifelong learning, we help people of all ages and backgrounds to make the most of their talents and ambitions.”



Cllr Sean Fielding visits The Manchester College

Idris Elba and Shaun Escoffery honour Barking College

R&B singer, songwriter and The Lion King musical star Shaun Escoffery got behind the “Love Our Colleges” campaign by recording a video with his alma mater.

The performer studied performing arts at Barking and Dagenham College in the 1990s, where he became good friends with fellow student Idris Elba.

In a video recorded by Shaun this week, he says: “Going to college is a wonderful thing... Going to Barking College really expanded my horizons.

“It gave me great opportunities and made me see the world in a real sense. The lecturers were wonderful and gave me real encouragement while studying there.

“It was a pivotal part of my education. I heavily endorse ‘Love Our Colleges’.”

To add to the celebrity support, Barking and Dagenham College this week tweeted a video from last year of Hollywood actor Idris Elba explaining why he’ll be laying a commemorative paving stone outside the college.

The superstar was honoured at the MOBO Awards for achievements in the arts and contribution to British culture with the Paving the Way award.

The award sees recipients pay tribute to the area and place that inspired them in their chosen career paths. They are given a commemorative paving stone, which will be laid at a place of their choosing – Elba chose Barking and Dagenham College.

During an ITV Evening News interview in December, he said: “I’m putting [the stone] outside my college because education is the key to almost everything in life... Without my education I wouldn’t be here today.

“So, I wanted to put that stone there to lead people to thinking: ‘You know what? I might go to college and learn a new skill and move forward.’ So that’s why I am putting it there.”



Shaun Escoffery sends his support from the studio

Open doors at North Lindsey

North Lindsey College organised for their students to have their picture taken outside the college holding “I love my college” signs with principal Mick Lochran to kick off Colleges Week.

The college is also throwing open its doors to the public to highlight all the great things that happen within a local college.

“The picture was taken to highlight the event we are holding and our students’ support for everything we do at North Lindsey College,” said a college spokesperson.

Its open event on Thursday evening will allow prospective students to get an insight into what’s on offer – and even try out a few things themselves.

It’s aimed at both year 11 students and adult learners, and around 1,000 people are expected to attend.

The entire campus will be open for visitors to explore, with each curriculum area showcasing the best they have to offer.

This will include Halloween crafts in childcare, flambéing in catering, steel dragon cutting in engineering, dissection in biology, and talks in the travel department with former students

sharing their experiences in the industry.

External organisations including the Army and British Transport Police will also be there to show that college is not just about gaining a qualification – it’s a route to a rewarding career.

Commenting on why an event like Colleges Week is needed, Mr Lochran said: “Colleges are central to raising aspiration and social mobility, providing school leavers, adult learners and apprentices with the technical skills, knowledge to fulfil their potential.

“The long-term real reduction in funding is impacting on the ability of colleges to continue to support their communities, and while this will impact on the most vulnerable young people in our communities, it will also miss the opportunity to make real progress in closing the productivity gap, which is of national concern.”



North Lindsey College students with principal Mick Lochran

S AROUND THE COUNTRY

Singing for their supper

Staff and learners at Chesterfield College have been sharing their love of colleges this week through the medium of song.

More than 40 performing art students and over 100 staff members got together to record We've never known cuts like this before, their own unique take on the classic I've never known love like this before by Stephanie Mills.

It was driven by the college's principal, Julie Richards – herself a former learner at the college – who rewrote the song to highlight colleges and the funding pressures they're under.

She worked with one of college's directors, David Malone, and the performing arts students to arrange the production, which was filmed by a start-up creative business, Defeye Creative, based on the college's campus.

It was filmed during a lunch break the week before Colleges Week. Staff were told it was taking place, and invited to attend and show

their support the cause – which they did, in droves!

"I really enjoyed being part of this song," said Georgie McGregor, a level three BTEC performing arts student at the college.

"It was great to be able to have a chance to voice my and many other student's opinions about what challenges further education is going through," she said.

Ms Richards studied at the college as a teenager and said it "changed my life".

"This college has been serving Chesterfield and the surrounding area for over 140 years and I know it will have had an impact on the lives of so many other local people," she said.



Chesterfield College's music video

Walsall shows its love

How much do Walsall College learners love their college? You can see for yourself on their Love Wall!

Learners have been adding post-it notes to the wall, which has been touring all the college's campuses since it was launched on Monday, to share their feelings about college.

The wall was dreamed up by the college's marketing team as a way to showcase the positive impact FE has on students – from making new friends to developing the skills they need to find work.

The response it's had has helped the college to learn more about what learners value most, such as the safe learning

environment and state-of-the-art facilities.

Some of the quotes could even make their way into future marketing materials, so that prospective learners can see what the college has to offer.

"The wall has been a success, with many students sharing what being at the college means to them," said Jatinder Sharma, Walsall College's principal.

"Students are at the heart of everything we do at the college," he said.

"We are proud to be supporting the 'Love Our Colleges Week' campaign, which is an opportunity to showcase the incredible work that goes on within all colleges," he added.



The Walsall College love wall

Gloucestershire and Bristol show what they're made of

What better way to demonstrate where college can take you than at the region's biggest careers event?

Ambitions 2018 was jointly hosted by South Gloucestershire and Stroud College and City of Bristol College to kick off Colleges Week in the south west.

More than 4,000 visitors, including pupils and parents, got the chance to see where their ambitions could take them, with 120 exhibitors including employers, training providers, colleges and universities.

A 'Love our Colleges' booth was set up by the entrance, covered in college facts and fair funding information.

Visitors showed their support by wearing 'Love our Colleges' stickers and voting whether colleges deserved the same funding as schools.

The verdict was overwhelming – just one person voted no, and everyone else voted yes.

"Ambitions presents the perfect opportunity to show the positive effect colleges have within the region," said Sara-Jane Watkins, principal at SGS College.

"SGS is delighted to be working with City of Bristol College to host and deliver this year's event," she said.

The "practical information and guidance" on offer at the event will "give



Love our Colleges booth at the Ambitions 2018 careers fair

many young students a head start into dynamic and rewarding career choices they may never have thought of before".

The college is "absolutely committed" to Colleges Week, Ms Watkins said.

"We are at risk, as a nation, of failing young people and not giving them the skills needed for the country to compete internationally," she said.

"This failure is due to the lack of investment in the college sector."



Pupils learn about art pathways at the careers fair

Rising culinary star owes his success to technical education

BILLY CAMDEN
BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

A talented entrepreneur has been cooking up a storm ever since he embarked on a professional cookery course at Gateshead College six years ago.

Aidan Jackson's experience acted as a springboard to a thriving business venture, and he now runs a quirky café serving quality, locally sourced food and beverages.

Chris Toon, deputy principal at Gateshead College, said the 22-year-old is a "shining example of what can be achieved through talent, hard work and a good education".

Aidan developed a keen interest in food during his childhood and completed a professional cookery and patisserie course at Gateshead College straight after his GCSEs.

He learnt how to make complex pastry products while acquiring extensive knowledge of food service, food hygiene and workplace health and safety.

After leaving college in 2014, Aidan worked in several local eateries including an Italian restaurant and bistro, where he honed his culinary talents before gaining the confidence to



Aidan in his Kitchen

go solo and open Aidan's Kitchen.

Set in a "relaxed environment with a contemporary twist", the café sells food ranging from a traditional full English breakfast to harissa-spiced tomato and pepper stew, smashed avocado with red chillies, and grilled chorizo and halloumi flatbread.

Aidan is quick to highlight his education as a key catalyst for launching his business.

"The Gateshead College courses gave me the skills and confidence I needed to work in the industry," he said.

"The tutors really helped and encouraged me to pursue my ambitions"

Mr Toon said: "It's vital to keep pushing the message that technical education is just as important as academic qualifications.

"In Aidan's case, the vocational skills he acquired have helped him to fulfil his dreams."

working her way through level two and three teacher-training courses before studying for a degree in counselling.

The 29-year-old has, for the most part, found the work tough.

"I'm registered blind, which obviously impacts my ability to read textbooks and other resources, and I was diagnosed with diabetes at six years old and that requires constant management," Grace explained.

"I never want to be held back by my disability, but these issues made it tough for me at the start of my course."

However, recently her teachers have incorporated new technology into her classes, designed to help people with reduced sight.

Grace now uses an artificial-intelligence app called SeeingAI, which describes nearby objects and words. She also uses an Office 365 suite called Immersive Reader, which allows Word documents to be read aloud.

"It's such a small thing but it makes a huge difference to me when I'm doing my work or researching for my assignments," Grace said.

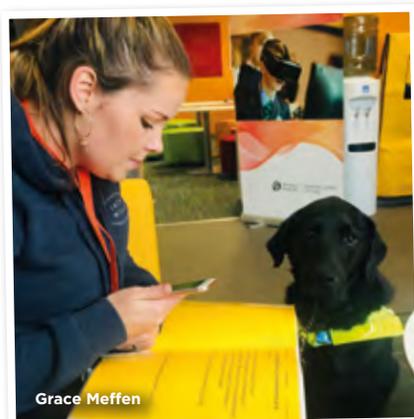
"I now don't have to worry that I'm missing out on learning because of my disability. I can get the same experience and level of teaching as the sighted people in my class," she added.

AI vision of the future for blind learners

BILLY CAMDEN
BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

A blind student who has historically struggled to keep up with her studies has credited her college's investment in technology with completely turning around her learning experience.

Grace Meffen has been at the Grimsby Institute ever since 2015,



Grace Meffen

Portsmouth students lead social-action initiatives

BILLY CAMDEN
BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

A student who was bullied at school has used his college's social-action strategy to start a business and raise funds to support young people going through the same tough experience he had. Kieran O'Toole, an 18-year-old studying A-levels at Portsmouth College, launched his own social enterprise in 2016 called Rock Clothing.

He uses the profits raised through this "ethical clothing brand" to run anti-bullying workshops himself in primary and secondary schools.

So far he's reached "over 3,000" young people.

"I have always used my spare time volunteering because I enjoy giving back to my community and social action did just that; it allowed me to give something back," Kieran said.

"When I was at secondary school, I experienced bullying and felt like I had no support because I didn't speak to anyone. I choose to run anti-bullying workshops to give young people the support and advice that I didn't get."

"Social action has always been a part of my life," he added. "I feel like it is one of the main factors that has shaped the person I am today."

Kieran, who studies maths, photography and geography, was given the opportunity to launch his own social enterprise thanks to Portsmouth College's social-action strategy.

It has a number of initiatives available to "empower students to lead on issues they care about inside the college, in the community, nationally and globally", according to Hayden Taylor, the managing director of youth-led social enterprise Unloc, which works with the college.

In 2015, Portsmouth College launched an "E6 programme" – a "six-strand initiative made up of courses, training and experiences that focus on developing



A model wearing Kieran's Rock Clothing brand



Kieran O'Toole



Byron Homer

student's soft skills in preparation for life after college".

Students pick an "E6" option alongside their academic studies, choosing from enterprise, employability, experience, extension, exercise or explore.

Social-action opportunities through these programmes include developing their own college-community projects, social enterprises, and cross-border projects working within communities in other European countries.

"Our social-action strategy ensures that young people feel empowered to make a difference, whilst also connecting them to the local community," said Mr Taylor, who is a former student of Portsmouth College himself.

"As a college, this is incredibly important to us and is part of our vision for holistic and impactful education."

Portsmouth College's student union is about to start launching a range of social action projects, too.

Byron Homer, the union's deputy president, who is studying A-levels in 3D design and architecture, physics and maths, said they're preparing to launch campaigns to introduce unisex toilets, fit new water fountains and build a bus shelter opposite the college.

"Currently our goal is to make student life at college easier by coming up with solutions for problems we have identified during our first year at college and implementing these through the range of social-action projects," the 17-year-old said.

THE POLITICS STUDENTS' FUNDING PETITION

JUDE BURKE
JUDE@FEWEEK.CO.UK

A parliamentary petition calling for more funding for colleges has had more than 39,000 signatures in just over a week, which is pretty incredible for something that started out as an extracurricular college class project.

The petition, which urges the government to “urgently increase college funding to sustainable levels”, was launched on October 10 by a group of learners studying politics A-level at Brockenhurst College.

FE Week reported on it the day it



Politics students from Brockenhurst College

launched, and it's been widely circulated across social media and heavily promoted by the Association of Colleges.

The petition was started by a group of seven learners, two of whom, Charlotte Jones and Hannah Powis, told *FE Week* they were inspired by their politics teacher.

“Our teacher has talked to us previously about the way in which we are funded as students, and we decided as a group we wanted to do something about the inequality,” said Charlotte.

The class had covered political participation as part of their A-level studies, Charlotte said, so starting the

petition was a way for them to put what they'd learned into practice.

“All we want is equality, and I think that's fair to ask,” she said.

“If we all had equal funding it would be a fair playing field, and everyone would be on the same level.”

Hannah said the group



was motivated by a desire to promote “investment into the education system because it is so important for the future of our country and our economy”.

“We all felt so passionately about it because we've seen it affect us and affect our fellow students,” Hannah said.

According to the petition: “A decade of almost continuous cuts and constant reforms have led to a significant reduction in the resources available for teaching and support for sixth formers in schools and colleges; potentially restricted course

choice; fewer adults in learning; pressures on staff pay and workload; a growing population that is not able to acquire the skills the UK needs to secure prosperity post-Brexit.”

Having far surpassed the 10,000 signature mark that guarantees a government response, the petitioners have not yet heard from them.

Will the petition attain the all-important 100,000 signatures, meaning that it will be considered for debate in parliament? Let's hope so!

DAVID HUGHES

Chief executive, Association of Colleges



TAKING ACTION TOGETHER IS POWERFUL - WE SHOULD DO IT MORE OFTEN

Colleges Week has been a powerful reminder of the strength of shared endeavour. Let's do this more often, says David Hughes

The one word which kept leaping to the front of my mind in a drizzle-soaked Westminster on Wednesday was pride. The pride of every single one of the 3,000 marchers about the college they lead, work in or study at; and the pride of members of parliament who came out to join us to show their support.

Pride is not an emotion we often feel comfortable portraying, probably because it can so often be interpreted as arrogance. But for a day in Westminster, it was the overwhelming emotion that everyone seemed to share.

I was proud in many ways. Of the team at AoC who have worked so hard for the last 6 weeks to make #LoveOurColleges such a success. Of the partnership we have built with the staff unions and with the National Union of Students. Of every college for the work they have done to support and promote the campaign; being at the march, showcasing great student stories, gaining local and national media, engaging students in meetings

with MPs and all sorts of other activities.

I think I was proudest, though, about the unity of purpose and voice which shone through the grey clouds. A voice which didn't fail to portray the creativity, energy and pride which our sector should be better known for. I lost count of the number of students I spoke to who had never been to London before, participated in a march, entered Parliament, met their local MP. The experience of doing that is immense and once again it is colleges who have helped them achieve that.

So what? What impact has it all had? Was it just an isolated 'good day out' for everyone? Will it make any difference at all? Good questions and it is always important to know how to build on the partnerships and the momentum of events like this. There are many layers to the impact of the week, all important which are worth recognising.

This week has helped build new relationships - between leaders and staff, students and their colleges, colleges and their MPs and other local supporters. It has helped colleges to think through their positioning in their localities - what they stand for, what social, cultural and economic impact they

make, how they explain their purpose and mission.

We've also seen and shown how working

“ We were noticed in mainstream media for a positive message

together we are a powerful force and can have a strong voice. The media coverage was of a different order to the norm - even though we could still do more, we were noticed in mainstream media for a positive message about how much colleges do and the impacts

they have.

People from all over the sector who have participated in activities this week will have realised just how important and cathartic it is to act, to make a stance, to show pride, to showcase the best of colleges. For too long we have been respectfully and quietly making our case and been frustrated at not being listened to; this week has reminded all of us that we can and should act, together, to actively and loudly make our case. We #LoveOurColleges because they are great institutions, doing amazing things, often against the odds. Being in a community of peers saying that loudly is simply a good feeling and we should do it more often.

Finally, I am certain that we were noticed and I am certain that being noticed matters. Our profile and our power need to increase, and by continuing to campaign together it will. This might have been the first colleges week (for a long time at least) but I have a feeling that it won't be the last. I hope that everyone who has got involved this week feels more powerful and more optimistic and I know that next time we will make even more of an impact.

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