



2022-0021907ABPO

**Alex Burghart MP**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills

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Caroline Lucas MP

By email: [caroline.lucas.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:caroline.lucas.mp@parliament.uk)

Your ref: ML.AC.N0083.CM.7.6.22

28 June 2022

Dear Caroline,

Thank you for your email of 7 June, addressed to the Secretary of State, on behalf of Greater Brighton Metropolitan College and other colleges, about the funding pressures faced by further education (FE) colleges as they enter annual pay negotiations. I am replying as the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills.

I fully appreciate the current increase in costs being experienced by both colleges and their staff, and that those negotiations will be challenging. Inflationary pressures driven by global events are impacting the costs faced by all sectors of the economy, including FE, as well as impacting on the overall cost of living for staff.

Throughout this Parliament, we have sought to substantially increase investment in post-16 education, increasing overall funding for the sector with an extra £1.6 billion for 16-19 education in 2024-25 compared with 2021-22. I do recognise that this funding has come with stretching deliverables to transform our technical education offer, including T Levels, the Multiply programme, and extra provision to support education recovery to enable learners to catch up from the pandemic. I appreciate that colleges still face a very tight financial position in considering pay offers.

Brilliant teachers are the most important component of delivering high quality education. We have already worked closely with the Association of Colleges (AoC) on important reforms to improve recruitment and retention and I recognise the seriousness of the current challenges the sector is facing in recruiting and retaining staff.

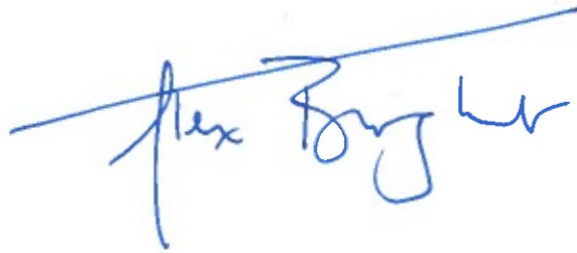
Your letter highlights a range of areas where further flexibilities have been requested to ensure that our overall priorities can continue to be delivered. This is an area in which we are keen to work with the AoC, both on the specifics that have been raised but also in the context of the ongoing funding and accountability work where we are due to publish a second consultation.

I hope you will appreciate that there are no easy choices here, and it is important we continue to deliver against our vital commitments around reform and education recovery.

I recognise the positive spirit in which the proposals set out in your email have been put forward, and I have asked departmental officials to meet with David Hughes of the AoC, particularly to consider how we can continue to support teacher recruitment and retention over this spending review period, including in areas where the labour market is most competitive.

Thank you for writing on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Alex Burghart", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and stylized.

**Alex Burghart MP**  
**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills**