

Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

26 September 2017

Dear Philip,

We are writing to you as the associations that represent schools, colleges, students and governors to set out our serious concerns about the funding of 16-19 education, and to urge you to address these concerns in your forthcoming Budget.

The education of young people is critical to the Government's commitment to improving the skills of the UK population, boosting productivity and improving social mobility. However, funding drops by 21% when a young person reaches the age of 16 and this reduces the number of hours of teaching and support that students can benefit from. Sixth formers in England are now only funded to receive half the tuition time as sixth formers in other leading economies. Access to a full programme of education and support is vital for social mobility - schools and colleges are united in the view that busy students are successful students.

Funding pressures are adversely affecting social mobility. Data from the Department for Education indicates that just 23% of A level students from state schools and colleges progressed to the most selective universities in 2014/15, compared to 65% of students from the independent sector. This gap in progression rates between the state and independent sector has grown by 6 percentage points since 2008/09 and is only partly the result of exam performance. Funding cuts and cost increases mean that state schools and colleges have found it increasingly difficult to provide the range of non-qualification activities that are essential to raising students' aspirations, increasing their confidence and providing social capital. While university trips, coaching for interviews, careers advice and wider enrichment activities (such as music, drama, sport and languages) have been cut in the state sector, they remain the hallmark of the student experience in the independent sector.

The national funding rate for 16 and 17 year olds has been fixed at £4,000 per student since 2013 and has not been adjusted to account for inflationary pressures or cost increases. As a result, there is a wide and ever-growing gap between the funding made available to educate sixth formers and the actual cost of delivering a high quality curriculum. The recent commitment to invest £500 million in T levels is welcome, but will not impact on the vast majority of students who are pursuing academic or applied general qualifications.

Without further investment, there will be further cuts to courses (particularly STEM and languages), class sizes will continue to increase, and school sixth forms in rural areas will simply disappear.

We urge you to support an increase of £200 to the national funding rate in the forthcoming Budget. We estimate this would cost £244 million per year to implement - and could be partly funded by using the underspend in the Department for Education's budget for 16-19 education (that amounted to £135 million in 2014/15 and £132 million in 2015/16). The impact of this investment would be significant and would be used to:

- Improve students' study skills to enhance performance in the sixth form and provide the tools to succeed in higher education and employment.
- Improve students' employability skills to help them flourish in the workplace.
- Improve the careers advice available to students to ensure they make better choices when leaving sixth form education.
- Improve the mental and physical health of students to increase their resilience and aid exam performance.
- Improve the range of enrichment activities available to students to increase their social capital and aid social mobility.

It would also ensure that students have access to the full range of STEM and language courses. The chronic underinvestment in sixth form education is bad for students, bad for our international competitiveness and bad for social mobility. To ensure that schools and colleges can continue to transform the lives of young people we ask that you prioritise this modest increase to the national funding rate in November's Budget.

Yours sincerely



Geoff Barton
ASCL General Secretary



Leora Cruddas
CEO FASNA



Emily Chapman
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(Further Education)



David Hughes
AoC Chief Executive



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Jim Skinner
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Bill Watkin
SFCA Chief Executive

cc.

Rt Hon Liz Truss MP, Chief Secretary to the Treasury

Rt Hon Justine Greening MP, Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities