



Social Mobility
Commission

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By email

The Rt Hon. Sajid Javid MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
1 Horse Guards Road
Westminster
London
SW1A 2HQ

21st August 2019

Dear Chancellor,

RE: Funding for Further Education

This week thousands of school children will be celebrating their triumphs at GCSE and looking forward to sixth form and university. Those that prefer a vocational route or need to retake critical exams may well turn instead to colleges of Further Education.

These institutions, which provide such a crucial lever for social mobility, often get overlooked when resources are allocated. Both you and the Prime Minister have recently pledged your support for further education, and I would urge you to honour that promise as you finalise next month's spending statement.

There is class-based segregation in the English education system. At 16, disadvantaged young people are much more likely than their affluent peers to go into FE, where resources are at a critically low level. FE funding has fallen 12 per cent since 2010 and this is affecting poorer students most. In England twice as many disadvantaged students are studying in FE colleges as in sixth forms and cuts in staff and support services are hitting them hardest.

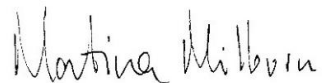
The Social Mobility Commission made a number of recommendations in the State of the Nation 2018/19 to help those from poorer backgrounds have equal opportunities in education and in work. We appeal to you now to implement them.

First, we want the Government to significantly increase spending for all those aged 16-19. To deliver the additional support needed, this could require an increase to the base rate of up to 22 per cent. We hope you will also back our proposal to introduce a Student Premium for disadvantaged pupils aged 16 - 19. We need to ensure that data can be shared automatically between schools and 16-19 institutions so disadvantaged students are identified and can be supported.

In a post-Brexit era, this country will need to rely increasingly on those with technical and vocational skills. Europe already devotes more resources on adult skills and training than we do and Britain needs to catch up quickly.

We would urge you to use the spending settlement to boost spending for those aged 16-19. In particular, it is vital that the 790,000 disadvantaged students in FE colleges are no longer overlooked. They must be given an equal chance to succeed in life.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martina Milburn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

Dame Martina Milburn

CC: Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP, Secretary of State for Education