



**Gillian Keegan MP**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Apprenticeships and Skills  
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15 July 2020

Catherine Burn  
Interim Chair of Governors  
RNN Group  
Rotherham College  
Eastwood Building  
Eastwood Lane  
Rotherham  
S65 1EG

Dear Catherine,

I am writing following the intervention assessment of RNN Group by the Further Education (FE) Commissioner's team on 5 December 2019. This assessment was triggered by two earlier diagnostic assessment visits by the FE Commissioner's team in July and November 2019, which had identified significant financial, quality and governance concerns at the college.

It is clear from the FE Commissioner's report that following earlier mergers, ineffective governance at RNN Group had overseen significant decline across many areas, including financial health, quality of provision and student enrolment. The further weakening of governance following the resignations of the chair and vice-chair, and a high number of recent vacancies on the board, has also placed the college in a vulnerable position.

I understand that some improvements to college governance have since been made, including your own appointment and that of an interim clerk and several new governors. I encourage you to continue implementing the FE Commissioner's recommendations to further improve quality of governance at the college.

I am particularly concerned by the report of significant financial risks currently facing the college. I appreciate that efforts have been made to restore financial stability through the implementation of a radical recovery plan. However, given the financial challenges facing

the college, I urge you to increase your pace and focus towards securing financial sustainability. To this end, I am in full agreement with the FE Commissioner's recommendations that the board and senior team continue to closely and carefully monitor cashflow and the implementation of the college's recovery plan.

Following RNN Group's most recent full Ofsted inspection in March of last year, I was disappointed to learn that, despite incremental improvements to provision quality, there had been insufficient scrutiny of the college's self-assessment review and inadequate monitoring of the quality improvement plan's implementation. The board must focus on validating the college's quality improvement activities, with particular focus on apprenticeships, to ensure that provision is serving the needs of its learners and the wider community.

I have accepted all the recommendations of the FE Commissioner and a copy of the assessment is provided with this letter. This document and my letter will be published on gov.uk.

Please confirm within three weeks to the FE Commissioner ([FE.Commissioner@education.gov.uk](mailto:FE.Commissioner@education.gov.uk)) what actions you are taking to address all of the recommendations and your timetable for doing so.

A copy of this letter and the summary report have been sent to all the following local MPs, whose constituencies include individual college sites, to inform them of the FE Commissioner's findings:

- |                           |                      |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| • Sarah Champion MP       | Rotherham            |
| • Brendan Clarke-Smith MP | Bassetlaw            |
| • Rt Hon John Healey MP   | Wentworth and Dearne |
| • Alexander Stafford MP   | Rother Valley        |

Yours sincerely,



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