



Department
for Education

Department for Education
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www.gov.uk/contact-dfe

14 August 2026

Malcolm Cowgill
Chair of the Corporation
TEC Partnership
Grimsby Institute
Nuns Corner
Grimsby
North East Lincolnshire
DN34 5BQ

By email: [REDACTED]

Dear Malcolm,

QUALITY NOTICE TO IMPROVE - TEC PARTNERSHIP

This letter and its schedules constitute a notice to improve (Ntl) under the [DfE education and skills agreements and accountability agreements: 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK](#) for colleges and in line with published [college oversight, improvement and intervention policy](#). It sets out in the attached schedule the reason for intervention and additional conditions of funding that TEC Partnership is required to comply with in order that DfE can continue to fund the college. These conditions are additional to those in the funding agreements (accountability agreement and conditions of funding).

Schedule 1 attached sets out the action required under this Ntl.

This letter is issued because TEC Partnership has been assessed as 'safeguarding not met' by Ofsted following an inspection between 5 - 8 May 2026. The college has also been assessed as 'needs attention' in the areas set out in the table below.

The report published on 3 August 2026 lists the inspection gradings as follows:

Provider level

Leadership and governance	Inclusion	Contribution to meeting skills needs	Safeguarding
Needs attention	Expected standard	Expected standard	Not met

Provision-type level

	Curriculum, teaching and training	Achievement	Participation and development
Education and training for young people	Expected standard	Needs attention	Needs attention
Adult provision	Expected standard	Expected standard	Expected standard
Apprenticeships	Expected standard	Needs attention	Expected standard
High needs provision	Expected standard	Needs attention	Needs attention

The overall effectiveness at previous full inspection in September 2023 was requires improvement.

The outcome of this latest inspection means that TEC Partnership is in **intervention**.

Referral to the Further Education (FE) Commissioner

As provided by the [College oversight](#) policy, this Ntl brings TEC Partnership into scope for referral to the FE Commissioner for an independent assessment of the college, and the capacity and capability of its leadership and management and governing body to bring about the required changes and improvements.

Once the FE Commissioner's team have undertaken this assessment, we reserve the right to vary the terms of the Ntl to reflect any recommendations made. These recommendations would be included in a reissued Ntl. The FE Commissioner's office will contact you regarding the arrangements for the assessment.

DfE may consider this Ntl when determining any eligibility for growth funding and it may also affect your ability to be successful in tendering for other funds, the relicensing of the Institute of Technology, and other competitive tendering processes for new provision.

Monitoring

DfE will continue to closely monitor progress made towards meeting these conditions through regular meetings, led by the FE Commissioner's team. We will work with you and wider agencies to secure the best outcome for learners.

In line with our published policy, we do not want colleges to remain in intervention for longer than is necessary and will assess when TEC Partnership has made the necessary progress for this Ntl to be lifted.

Compliance

Compliance, in respect of the additional conditions of funding set out in this Ntl, is safeguarding graded as met.

If on re-inspection, Ofsted judges TEC Partnership to continue to have safeguarding not met the college will have failed to comply with the additional conditions.

If on re-inspection DfE considers that the college has failed to make sustained improvement or is otherwise failing to meet the Ntl conditions this will result in non-compliance and DfE pursuing one or more of a range of options outlined in, or incorporated into, the funding agreements. This may include the use of further education statutory intervention powers as set out in section 56A of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.

In all cases, the removal of the additional conditions will occur when TEC Partnership receives a letter from DfE indicating that the additional conditions have been met.

Complaints

If you consider that DfE has acted unreasonably or not followed a proper procedure in issuing the additional conditions, you can make a complaint - [Complaints procedure](#).

Publication

DfE publishes all NtIs on GOV.UK.

When the DfE places a college in intervention and issues a Ntl, the FE Commissioner will always undertake an independent assessment of the college's capability and capacity to make the required changes and improvements. The summary report will be published on GOV.UK.

You will also be required to publish the summary report on your website within 14 days of it being issued and retain it on the website until the Ntl is lifted.

Reviews

DfE will regularly review this Ntl with you. It is likely that the Ntl will be revised, at least annually to ensure the terms and conditions remain relevant. DfE reserves the right to revise at any point should circumstances significantly change.

Action required

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter and the schedule below by writing to me within 5 working days of the date of this letter.

This Ntl is being copied to Ofsted, your local authority, Office for students, and the FE Commissioner.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Ford
Deputy Director, Andrew Ford
HE and FE Improvement and Intervention Division
Regional Performance Directorate

Cc: Ann Hardy, Chief Executive, TEC Partnership
Ofsted **[REDACTED]**
Ellen Thinnesen, FE Commissioner
Office for Students **[REDACTED]**
Jennifer Steel, Service Director of Education, Inclusion and Integration, North East
Lincolnshire Council

Schedule 1: Ofsted quality

The DfE is issuing a Notice to Improve as a consequence of TEC Partnership being assessed by Ofsted as safeguarding not met in the published report dated 5 May 2026, this has resulted in the college being placed in intervention.

The summary of your Ofsted grading is as set out in the table below.

Provider level

Leadership and governance	Inclusion	Contribution to meeting skills needs	Safeguarding
Needs attention	Expected standard	Expected standard	Not met

Provision-type level

	Curriculum, teaching and training	Achievement	Participation and development
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Adult provision	Expected standard	Expected standard	Expected standard
Apprenticeships	Expected standard	Needs attention	Expected standard
High needs provision	Expected standard	Needs attention	Needs attention

Previous inspection

The overall effectiveness at previous full inspection in September 2023	Grade: requires improvement.
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This schedule sets out the additional funding conditions that apply as part of the intervention.

Timescales

The additional conditions outlined within this schedule must be addressed during the period up to re-inspection.

Monitoring and progress

All conditions will be reviewed at monitoring meetings which will be led by the FE Commissioner's team. The frequency of these meetings will be confirmed by DfE.

In addition, in the event, that the college fails to make sufficient improvement or if there is downgrading at any inspection by Ofsted, DfE reserves the right to take further action if deemed necessary.

Specific conditions

1. The college must work with the FE Commissioner and their team to undertake an independent assessment of the college, and its capability and capacity to make the required changes and improvements. This will include supplying all necessary information to the FE Commissioner or their team by the agreed deadlines so the assessment can be made.
2. Following FE Commissioner independent assessment, the college governors and leadership team must work with the FE Commissioner's team to develop a Single Improvement Plan (SIP). All other relevant action plans will underpin the SIP.
3. The college must work with the FE Commissioner team to strengthen its post-inspection improvement plan (PIAP) and to address the issues identified through the Ofsted inspection and ensure that safeguarding requirements are fully met by the time of the next inspection. The plan should include:
 - a. details of the actions that will be taken in response to the inspection findings, including how and when each action will be delivered
 - b. clear success measures and milestones to monitor progress
 - c. named individuals accountable for delivery and implementation and arrangements for monitoring progress
4. The strengthened PIAP must be submitted to the Deputy FE Commissioner by 30 September 2026.
5. The post-inspection improvement plan (PIAP) will inform the college's Single Improvement Plan (SIP). The SIP will be further developed following the FE Commissioner intervention assessment visit on 5-7 October 2026 and will incorporate any recommendations arising from both the FE Commissioner improvement visit and the intervention assessment.
6. The SIP will need to detail specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely (SMART) activities and milestones. It could cover but not be limited to:
 - a. identified risks and issues and how these will be managed so that the delivery and quality of education provision is improved

- b. how and when the actions will be achieved, measured (identifying activity milestones) and who is accountable for delivery, implementation, and progress
 - c. student number projections and staff planning assumptions, and a detailed sensitivity analysis on these assumptions
 - d. articulate how governors will ensure delivery of the plan and how they will monitor progress of the actions within the plan and hold the leadership accountable
 - e. demonstrate how college staff will be engaged in implementation
7. The college must share a strengthened draft SIP with the Deputy FE Commissioner who, along with the FEC team, will review and assess whether the proposed activities will secure the college's improvement.
 8. The SIP should then be approved and finalised by the college corporation governing body after the Deputy FE Commissioner's comments have been received by the college, by no later than 20 November 2026. The Deputy FE Commissioner will provide a SIP template to use.
 9. The college must provide evidence that the SIP has been approved by the governing body. The governing body should review the frequency and arrangements with which it and/or its committees monitor implementation of the actions in the SIP to ensure effective oversight of progress.
 10. The FE Commissioner's team will monitor progress against the SIP and as part of the college improvement and other related plans to ensure that sufficient progress is being made and that agreed milestones are being met.
 11. The college must attend regular meetings which will be led by the FE Commissioner and team. Attendees should include, as a minimum, the Accounting Officer (CEO/Principal) and the chair or other governors to represent the board of the corporation. The meetings will focus on the college's progression against the milestones in the plan. The college will also be expected to provide information to demonstrate proper oversight and timely implementation of the plan. The FE Commissioner's team will determine the regularity of, and arrange these meetings, and your first point of contact is **[REDACTED]**
 12. The college should continue to seek support from the FE Commissioner through the DfE intensive support programmes. This may include engagement by the Accounting Officer (Principal/CEO) with a National Leader of Further Education. In addition, the Chair of governors should continue to engage with National Leaders of Governance for Further Education.

13. The college must seek DfE approval before entering into an electric vehicle salary sacrifice (EVSS) scheme. Colleges can do this by following the [Electric vehicle salary sacrifice guidance for academy trusts and colleges](#) and links to submitting a transactions approval request form.
14. The DfE must receive papers for governing body meetings and all committees until it is satisfied that there is sufficient oversight and challenge or until the college achieves an improved inspection rating.
15. The college will receive monitoring inspections from Ofsted. The college must invite a representative of the FE Commissioner's team to attend monitoring inspection feedback meetings. DfE will consider the outcome of monitoring inspections as evidence of progress being made and reserves the right to take further action if the college fails to demonstrate improvement.
16. This Ntl may be revised and updated subsequent to the date of issue to reflect progress and any change in circumstances including, following the FE Commissioner's intervention report and recommendations. It may also be revised and updated following and subsequent to any FE Commissioner-led monitoring meeting and resulting recommendations. DfE will also formally review this Ntl with you, at least annually, to ensure it remains appropriate and current.
17. If, in DfE's view, the college fails to take the necessary actions (in whole or part) or if evidence of progress is not appropriate or not available, it may take further action. This may include the use of further education statutory intervention powers as set out in section 56A of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.
18. The FE Commissioner will determine when the college has made sufficient progress for the Ntl to be lifted. The oversight policy requires a college to demonstrate sustained improvement against the SIP and to have fully met the conditions of funding set out in the Notice to Improve, and once this has been met, the college will usually be moved into Post Intervention Monitoring and Support (PIMS).