Department for Education

Department for Education
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Great Smith Street
London, SW1P 3BT

www.gov.uk/contact-dfe

18 November 2026

David Wright
Chair
Boston College
Skirbeck Road
Boston
PE21 6JF

By email only

Dear David,

Boston College - Notice to Improve: Financial health and financial management and other controls

This letter and its schedules constitute a **revised notice to improve (NtI)** under the Department for Education (DfE) education and skills agreements and accountability agreements: 2026 to 2027 and in line with the DfE's published college oversight, improvement and intervention policy.

It sets out in the attached schedules the reason for intervention and additional conditions of funding that Boston College is required to comply with in order that the DfE can continue to fund the college. These conditions are additional to those in your funding/accountability agreement.

In line with published College oversight, improvement and intervention policy, the FE Commissioner's (FEC) team has undertaken an intervention assessment. As a result, we are revising the previous NtI issued on 16 April 2026 to reflect their recommendations. The changes include that due to the nature and implications of our concerns, the college is placed in Supervised College Status. The requirements of this status are included within schedule 1 below. The full set of FEC recommendations are included in an additional schedule 2, which is also below.

Boston College remains in intervention for financial health related to serious cashflow pressures and for financial management and other controls relating to failing to adhere to a legal or regulatory requirement.

The DfE may consider this NtI when determining any eligibility for growth funding and it may also affect the college's ability to be successful in tendering for other funds, and other competitive processes for new provision.

Referral to the FE Commissioner

In line with DfE's college oversight, improvement, and intervention policy, the NtI issued on 16 April 2026 referred Boston College to the Further Education Commissioner (FEC) for an assessment of the college. This assessment took place on 12 and 13 May 2026. The FEC team looked at the capacity and capability of its leadership, management and governing body to bring about the required changes and improvements. The recommendations from the assessment are set out in schedule 2 below.

Monitoring

DfE will continue to closely monitor progress made towards meeting these conditions through regular meetings, led by the FEC 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 Boston College has made the necessary progress for this NtI to be lifted.

Compliance

Compliance in respect of the additional conditions of funding set out in schedules 1 and 2 of this NtI includes achieving all targets in the college's Single Improvement Plan (SIP).

If Boston College does not comply with the additional conditions within the specified time period, DfE will pursue 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 Boston College receives a letter from the DfE indicating that the additional conditions have been met.

Publication

This NtI and the summary report of the FEC team's intervention assessment 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 NtI is lifted.

Reviews

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

Action required

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter and the schedule below by emailing me at [REDACTED] within five working days of the date of this letter.

This NtI is being copied to Ofsted, your local authority, Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority (GLCCA), Office for Students and the FE Commissioner.

Yours sincerely,

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

Cc: Lynette Leith, CEO/principal
Ellen Thinnesen, Further Education Commissioner
Andrew Crookham, Chief Executive, Lincolnshire County Council
Clare Hughes, Interim Strategic Lead for Employment and Skills, GLCCA
Ofsted
Office for Students

SCHEDULE 1: ADDITIONAL FUNDING CONDITIONS

The DfE is issuing an NtI as a consequence of Boston College being in intervention for financial health related to serious cashflow pressures and for financial management and other controls relating to failing to adhere to a legal or regulatory requirement.

This schedule sets out the additional funding conditions that apply as part of the intervention, in addition to the recommendations set out in schedule 2.

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.

Specific conditions

1. As the college has been placed in Supervised College Status, it will be subject to enhanced supervision. This will be carried out by the FEC team and includes, but is not limited to:

    - attending board and strategy events, and other committee meetings as deemed appropriate.
    - receiving agendas and all board papers, both confidential and non-confidential.

    The FEC and her regional deputy lead should be consulted upon:

    - the appointment of any senior staff
    - the appointment of governors
    - significant financial transactions in excess of £50k (reported on a rolling 2-month forward look) including any new, amended or terminated lender arrangements.
    - significant asset disposals or developments and the use of any capital receipts from those disposals
    - any plans for structural change
    - any decision which would have a material impact upon the college

2. The college continues to work with the FEC and her team, including on the intervention stocktake assessment visit on 24 November 2026, which will assess the college's progress in making the necessary improvements. This will include supplying all necessary information to the FEC or her team by the agreed deadline/s so the assessment can be made.

3. The college leadership team should continue to implement its SIP. The governing body and its committees should monitor this implementation to ensure effective oversight of progress.

4. The FEC team will monitor progress against the SIP and as part of this college improvement and other related plans to ensure that sufficient progress is being made and that agreed milestones are being met.

5. The College's Accounting Officer (CEO) raised the seriousness of the college's financial position with the DfE, and, together with the Governing Body, should continue to progress the work underway to address cashflow pressures, including the implementation of an in-year cost-saving plan that has already been developed.

6. The college should continue to seek support from the FEC through the DfE intensive support programmes. This includes engagement by the Accounting Officer (CEO) with a National Leader of Further Education.

7. 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 (principal) and the chair or other governors to represent the governing body i.e. chairs of appropriate committees. The meetings will focus on the college's progression against the milestones in the plan. The college will be expected to provide information to demonstrate proper oversight and timely implementation of the plan. The FEC team will determine the regularity of, and arrange these meetings, and your first point of contact is [REDACTED].

8. The college should continue to undertake a regular review of potential cashflow requirements, and the college is required to supply DfE with monthly management accounts including a 13-month rolling cashflow forecast, reconciled to your bank, by the end of the third week of the following month to which they relate.

9. DfE reserves the right to request that the college procures and pays for an external independent review of its financial, management and governance control environment, with a duty of care to the DfE and the scope of the work to be agreed with the DfE.

10. 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.

11. This NtI may be revised and updated after the date of issue to reflect progress and/or any change in circumstances. The DfE will formally review this NtI with you, at least annually, to ensure it remains appropriate and current.

12. If, in DfE's view, the college fails to take the necessary actions (in whole or part) within the timescales set out, or if evidence of progress is not appropriate or not available, the DfE

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.

13. The FEC will determine when the college has made sufficient progress for the NtI to be lifted and the college will then usually be moved into Post Intervention Monitoring and Support (PIMS). The oversight policy requires a college to demonstrate sustained improvement against their SIP and to have fully met the conditions of funding set out in this NtI.

SCHEDULE 2: FE COMMISSIONER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

We acknowledge the progress achieved to date in meeting certain conditions and implementing some of the recommendations. However, continued and demonstrable improvement remains essential to ensure full compliance.

Recommendation 1: Future chairing of the Board of Corporation must be reviewed directly with the Deputy Further Education Commissioner, and steps for improvement agreed and implemented. This may include support from a National Leader of Governance (NLG), if appropriate

When: By July 2026
Action owner: Chair of the Board

Recommendation 2: Search and Governance (S&G) committee must immediately step up and take responsibility for facilitating the recruitment of a new board chair, a S&G chair, governors and a qualified governance professional, and refresh the composition and impact of all committees.

When: By October 2026
Action owner: Chair, governance professional and CEO/principal

Recommendation 3: The board should commission an External Board Review (EBR). The resulting governance improvement plan must include succession planning, attendance, governor participation and visibility. The plan needs to include adequate induction for new governors and include improved Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and external networking opportunities for all members.

When: By December 2026
Action owner: Chair, governance professional and CEO/principal

Recommendation 4: The board of governors must review and take steps to strengthen the scope and expertise of the current senior postholder structure. They must ensure job descriptions are clear regarding who is accountable to governors for statutory safeguards and the decisions that affect for example funding, estates, safety, quality and compliance. Personal targets which should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART), should align with this.

When: By October 2026
Action owner: Chair of the Board

Recommendation 5: An effective and purposeful triumvirate between the CEO/principal, chair and governance professional should be established, with the support of an FEC appointed NLG.

When: By October 2026
Action owner: Chair, governance professional and CEO/principal

Recommendation 6: Governors should scrutinise and challenge the process of curriculum planning and self-assessment and ensure that the college's annual accountability statement includes qualitative targets linked to Labour Market Information (LMI).

When: By November 2026
Action owner: Chair of the board

Recommendation 7: The College must continue to implement at pace the recommendations contained within the 2026 Curriculum Efficiency Financial Stability Support (CEFSS) report and deliver the current financial strategy.

When: By November 2026
Action owner: CEO/principal

Recommendation 8: The college is escalated into supervised college status.

Action Owner: FE Commissioner

Recommendation 9: Consider a future Structure and Prospects Appraisal (SPA) including a review of wider area provision to assess longer term viability.

Action owner: The Regional Performance Team and FE Commissioner

The FEC team will support the development of the college's Single Improvement Plan (SIP) within the next two months and conduct an intervention assessment stocktake no later than November 2026 to review progress.