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Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP
Secretary of State
Department for Education
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NASUWT

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Dear Gillian

Funding for Sixth Form Colleges

There is a crisis in funding for Sixth Form Colleges.

The annual report on education spending in England published last December by the Institute for Fiscal Studies concluded that 'colleges and sixth forms are in a particularly difficult position, both now and in the future', as recent funding increases will only partially reverse the large cuts which took place up to 2020.

Sixth Form Colleges and 16-18 Further Education providers have seen a real terms cut in spending per student of 14% between 2010-11 and 2019-20, and despite recent additional funding in the 2019 and 2021 spending reviews, college spending per student in 2024-5 will still be around 5% below 2010-11 levels. This crisis has been further exacerbated by the current high inflation, increased cost of living and energy costs, as well as the challenges of COVID recovery; and a predicted increase in student numbers. Student numbers are projected to rise by 10% between 2021 and 2024, which will result in 100,000 extra students by 2024 or 200,000 extra by 2030.

It is clear that this sector has been underfunded for some considerable time, which is leading to a recruitment and retention crisis. The impact of the cost of living crisis and real terms cuts in pay and investment are taking their toll on Sixth Form College Teachers. This year a survey of NASUWT members in Sixth Form Colleges reported that over 95% of our members are concerned about their financial situation. The Sixth Form College Association Annual Report 2022 states that Sixth Form Colleges are experiencing the recruitment and retention issues found in schools.

We know that you will agree that securing the highest quality education and support for young people in every Sixth Form College is critical to the future of our country. We urge the government to significantly increase the funding of this sector as soon as possible, before the current situation worsens and in order to plan ahead for the increasing numbers of students in this sector.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Patrick Roach
General Secretary

cc: Graham Baird, Sixth Form Colleges Association