



**Lord Agnew Kt DL**

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the School System  
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Baroness Blackstone  
House of Lords  
London  
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Dear Lady Blackstone,

16th July 2019

During Baroness Bull's Oral Question on 24 June asking what assessment Government has made of the role for further education colleges in the delivery of the Industrial Strategy, you asked why cuts to Further Education had been made in the first place, and I promised to respond in writing

In the economic climate of the time difficult decisions about funding had to be taken by the Coalition government and the further education sector had to work with a more limited budget. Further detail on the position for adult skills funding is given in *Further Education - New Horizon: Investing in Skills for Sustainable Growth*. Similar decisions had to be taken with regard to 16 to 19 funding, although in 2015 we were able to announce protection of the base rate of funding for 16 to 19 year olds until 2020. We subsequently announced in the 2017 spring budget additional funding rising to £500m for the delivery of the new T Levels for 16 to 19 year olds.

We recognise the pressures that FE funding is under and acknowledge that funding has not kept up with costs. We are looking at this carefully ahead of the next spending review and are considering how effective our funding and regulatory structures are in supporting providers to deliver excellent provision for young people and adults. We have been working with the sector to ensure the system can support sustainable, high quality education, and effective recruitment and retention of teachers and leaders.

We welcome the publication of the Independent Panel Report: Post 18 Review of Education and Funding published on 30 May 2019 and will continue to engage with stakeholders to deliver a post-18 system that is joined up and supported by a funding system that works for students and tax payers. Government will consider the Panel's recommendations carefully and will conclude the review at the Spending Review. The Government has not yet taken decisions with regards to the recommendations put forward.

I hope this answer has been useful and will place a copy in the house libraries.

  
THEODORE AGNEW