

£5.4 million to help colleges upskill the country

Colleges across the country will soon benefit from a cash injection to boost standards so more people can access high quality education and training and get the skills they need to progress, Apprenticeships and Skills Minister Gillian Keegan announced today (23 July).

[20 applications](#) have been successful and will receive a total of £5.4 million from the College Collaboration Fund (CCF) between them.

The fund, [which builds on the strengths of the Strategic College Improvement Fund](#), will see groups of colleges collaborating to share good practice, knowledge and experience to drive up the standard of education and training on offer to their local communities. This will include specific support to develop high quality digital content to provide improved remote and blended learning, to make sure students affected by coronavirus can catch-up on lost learning hours and also to prevent young people from becoming NEET (not in education employment or training).

Gillian Keegan, Apprenticeships and Skills Minister said:

I'm delighted to announce the 20 applications that have been successful in securing funding from the College Collaboration Fund.

Now more than ever, it's vital that colleges can support their students to gain the skills they need to progress and employers and our economy need to grow. This fund will help colleges work together, to develop cutting edge digital approaches to online learning, to overcome new challenges and continue to deliver high quality education and training for the communities they serve.

The past few months have been a challenging time for the sector, but they have gone above and beyond to support their students. This additional funding will help to support further collaborative work as we move forward. I look forward to hearing more about their progress and wish them all the best.

David Corke, Association of Colleges' Director of Education & Skills Policy said:

The fund is very welcome in the context of the pandemic and the need for the college sector to navigate unprecedented rates of change to every aspect of their work has never been more important. The grants will help support collaboration and the sharing of innovative good practice in the college sector. Importantly, developing digital content, providing catch up support, engaging

vulnerable learners and addressing mental health and wellbeing will all be vital ways colleges will use this money to support students to transition into college or their next academic year.

The fund will play an important role alongside [the Government's National Leaders of Further Education programme](#), which is also designed to help boost standards throughout the further education sector. The programme sees a team of high-performing college leaders working together to share knowledge and expertise to provide specialist help to colleges across the country that need support to improve.

In response to [an independent review carried out by Dame Mary Ney](#), which looked at how the Government monitors colleges' finances and financial management, the Department for Education recently set out proposals to strengthen relationships with colleges and promote better planning to make sure communities get the skills they need. The CCF will support this work by enabling the sector to take ownership and help develop a culture of learning and sector led improvement.

The announcement follows the [Education Secretary's FE speech](#) where he pledged to publish a White Paper this autumn that will set out plans to build a high quality further education system that will provide the skills that individuals, employers and the economy need to grow.