Colleges and Covid-19 Summer 2020

AoC summer survey

July 2020

Colleges and Covid-19 - AoC Summer Survey 2020

The Association of Colleges (AoC) represents 95% of the 244 colleges in England incorporated under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and has several associate members.

This was a follow up survey to the one published in early May on the profound impact of Covid-19 on colleges, staff and students. Following the closure of colleges to all but the most vulnerable students, teaching and learning moved online from 23 March.

In May and June, the Government began publishing guidance on summer assessment 2020, gradual reopening in mid-June/July and preparations for the new academic year in September.

The results of the first survey helped AoC capture the national picture and provided evidence for discussion with Government. This survey, issued on 26 June 2020, aims to do the same, with a greater focus on the challenges of preparations for a more comprehensive reopening in September.

Responses

109 member colleges responded (45% of total).

Type	Number of responses	Number of colleges in England	Percent within type
General further education college	91	168	54%
Sixth form college	6	51	12%
Specialist college	12	25	48%
Total England	**109**	**244**	**45%**
Academy (Sixth form college conversions)	1		
Other*	4		
Total survey responses	**114**		

* Channel Island, Independent Specialist Colleges, Scotland, School Academy

Region	Number of responses	Number of colleges in region	Percent within region
Eastern region	12	23	52%
East Midlands	7	15	47%
Greater London	10	34	29%
North East	7	14	50%
North West	24	42	57%
South East	12	39	31%
South West	11	24	46%
West Midlands	13	25	52%
Yorkshire and the Humber	13	28	46%
Total England**	**109**	**244**	**45%**

** Excludes Academy and 'Other' type of provider

Summary findings

- In many colleges all or most students under 19 have continued their learning remotely in the summer term with more than half of planned learning hours being delivered remotely.
- Most of the colleges report that teaching staff were confident in delivering remote learning.

- High quality digital resources are most available for Maths, Computing and IT, Business and Health and Social Care.
- The vast majority of colleges have plans in place to enrol students online and will offer online college induction in September.
- Many colleges have evidence of increased student hardship and report that their bursary / hardship funds are under more pressure as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic requiring an average of an additional £300,000 per college.
- Over half of colleges report that their existing and additional bursary funding from DfE has not enabled them to purchase laptops and/or connectivity to support all their disadvantaged learners.
- Three out of four colleges would need additional resources to support the provision of free college meal vouchers to current eligible students over the summer.
- Four out of five colleges anticipate major transport difficulties around September re-opening.
- The vast majority of colleges report additional demand for mental health and wellbeing services for students during the Covid-19 pandemic and have put additional mental health and wellbeing support in place for their students.
- Just under half of colleges are planning to make redundancies by the end of the autumn term 2020 and a fifth will have made redundancies by September 2020.

This report summarises the survey findings in five main sections:

- **Teaching and learning in the summer term 2020**
- **Remote enrolment, induction and monitoring**
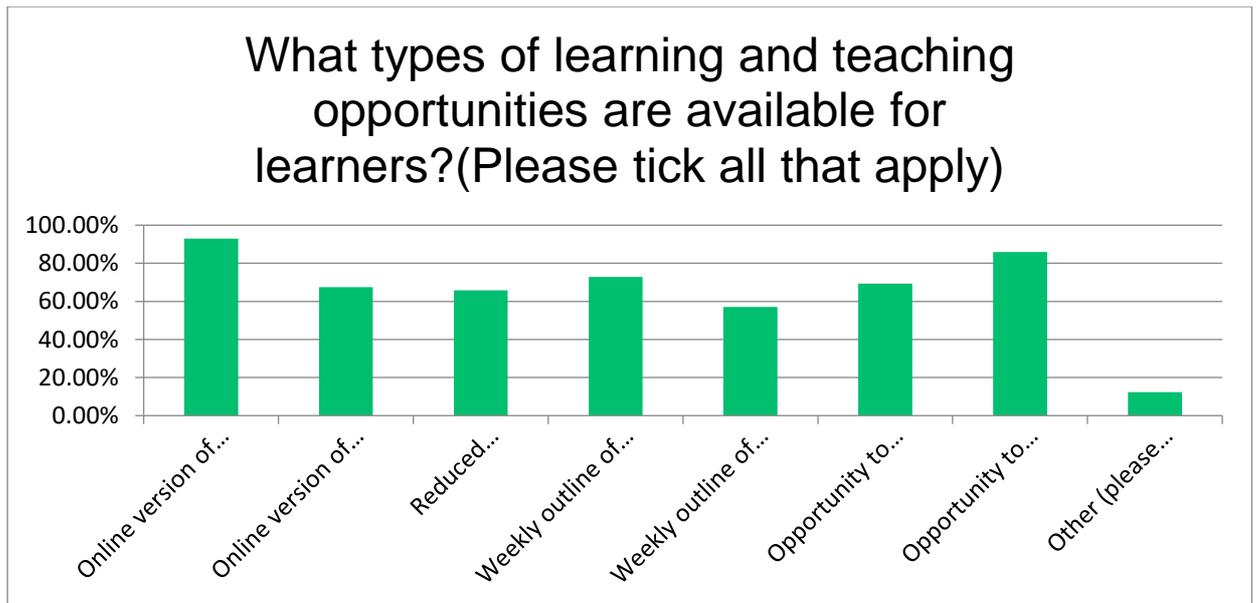- **Transport**
- **Mental Health**
- **Redundancies**

Teaching and learning in the summer term 2020

1. **90%** of colleges considered that all or the majority of students under 19 have continued their learning remotely in the summer term. For students over 19, the proportion was 74%. (q.4)

2. **88%** of colleges estimated that half or more of planned learning hours were being delivered remotely for students under 19. 60% of colleges estimated that 75% or more planned learning hours were being delivered remotely. (q.5)

3. **74%** of colleges considered that all or most timetabled lessons or tutor-led activity was being undertaken remotely. (q.6)

For learners aged under 19, what proportion of timetabled lessons/ tutor led activity has continued during the stay at home period?
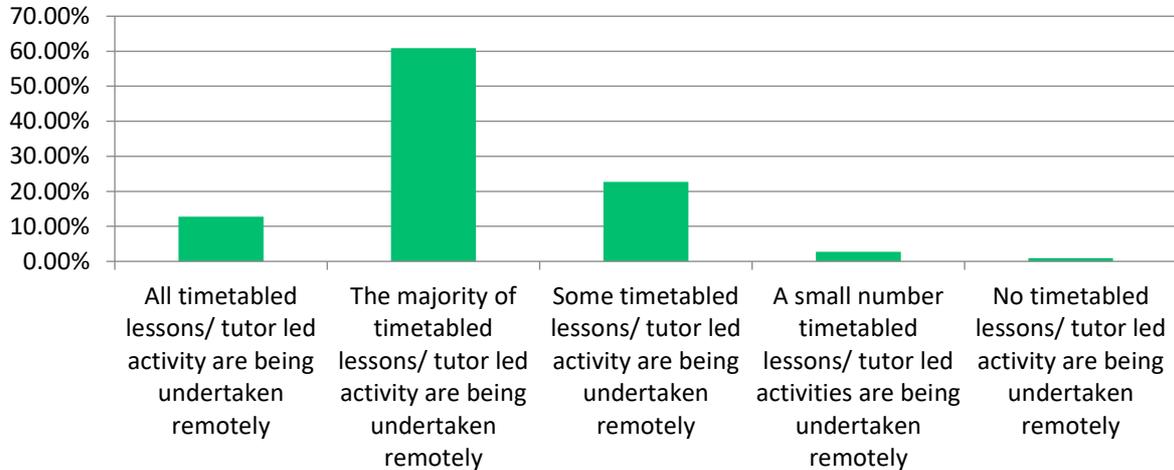
4. Colleges are offering students a range of different teaching and learning opportunities including:
   o Timetabled live video lessons: **93%** of colleges.
   o Opportunity to book short sessions with tutors for personalised support: **86%** of colleges.
   o Activities and assessments set weekly for students to complete in their own time: **73%** of colleges.
   o Opportunities to work collaboratively with peers online: **69%** of colleges
   o Timetabled pre-recorded lessons: **68%** of colleges.
   o Reduced timetable and shorter lessons to support independent study: **66%** of colleges.
   o Activities and assessments set weekly for students to complete via a structured timetable: **57%** of colleges. (q.7)

What types of learning and teaching opportunities are available for learners?(Please tick all that apply)

A bar chart showing percentages for different categories. The y-axis ranges from 0.00% to 100.00% in 20% increments. The x-axis categories are: Online version of..., Online version of..., Reduced..., Weekly outline of..., Weekly outline of..., Opportunity to..., Opportunity to..., Other (please...

Approximate values: Online version of... (~92%), Online version of... (~67%), Reduced... (~65%), Weekly outline of... (~72%), Weekly outline of... (~57%), Opportunity to... (~69%), Opportunity to... (~85%), Other (please... (~12%)

5. Colleges reported that teaching staff were very or moderately confident in delivering remote learning: using a digital platform (**98%** of colleges), by post or email (**92%** of colleges), directing students to specific apps or websites (**89%** of colleges), streaming in real time (**78%** of colleges). (q.8)
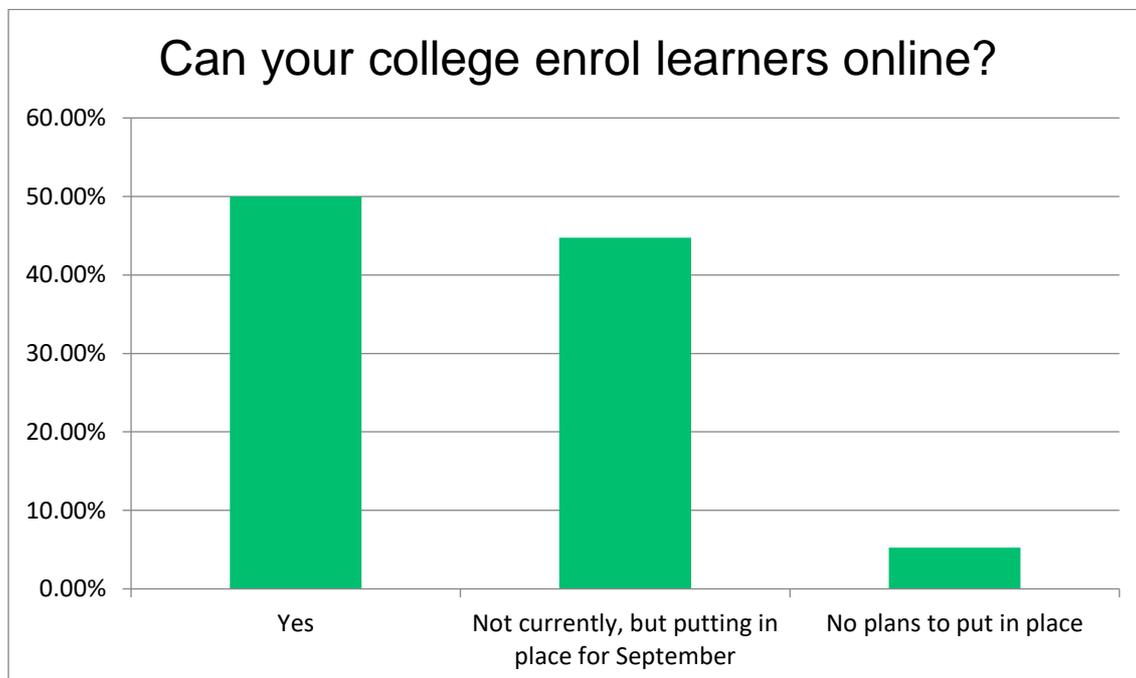
6. More than 50% of colleges considered that they had access to sufficient high quality and engaging digital resources and content in the following subjects/ curriculum areas: Maths (**76%** of colleges), Computing and IT (**76%** of colleges), Business (**73%** of colleges), Health and social care (**71%** of colleges), Early years and childcare, Sport and public services, Engineering and motor vehicle, Hair and beauty, Travel and tourism, Media and arts, English and ESOL, Employability and SEND delivery.

7. Less than 50% of colleges considered that they had access to sufficient high quality and engaging digital resources and content in the following subjects/ curriculum areas: Animal Care (31% of colleges), A Levels (36% of colleges), Construction, Hospitality and catering, Travel and tourism. (q.9)

8. Where colleges did not consider that they had access to sufficient high quality and engaging digital resources, the most common reasons were: Insufficient interactivity (**58%** of responses), inability to develop in-house digital resources (**52%** of responses), inability to find suitable digital content or insufficient formative assessment (45% of responses) and inadequate curriculum coverage (42% of responses). (q.10)

## Remote enrolment, induction and monitoring

9. **95**% of colleges have plans in place to enrol students online and 50% of colleges already had online enrolment in place. (q.11)

Can your college enrol learners online?

A bar chart showing three categories. "Yes" at approximately 50.00%, "Not currently, but putting in place for September" at approximately 45.00%, and "No plans to put in place" at approximately 5.00%. The y-axis ranges from 0.00% to 60.00% in 10.00% increments.

10. **84%** of college induction in September will be available online, 88% of colleges will provide guidance with online learning, 80% will include a virtual campus tour, 77% will include a video introduction to tutors and 68% will include an online opportunity to get to know other students. (q.12)

11. Colleges monitor a range of aspects of online learning: Number of log ins (81% of colleges), Assessment (79% of colleges), Registration (68% of colleges), Length of study time on platform (58% of colleges) and Duration of interaction with tutor (46% of colleges). (q.13)

12. **52%** of colleges are confident that they can evidence delivery of planned hours undertaken online or remotely and 39% are not certain. (q.14)

Student hardship

13. **88%** of colleges have evidence of increased student hardship. (q.15)

14. **90%** of colleges report that their bursary / hardship funds are under more pressure as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. (q.16)

15. **56%** of colleges reported that their existing and additional bursary funding from DfE has not enabled them to purchase laptops and/or connectivity (dongles) to support all their disadvantaged learners. (q.17)

16. The level of additional resource needed to meet this need ranged from £20,000 to £2,000,000 with an average of £300,000 per college. (q.18)
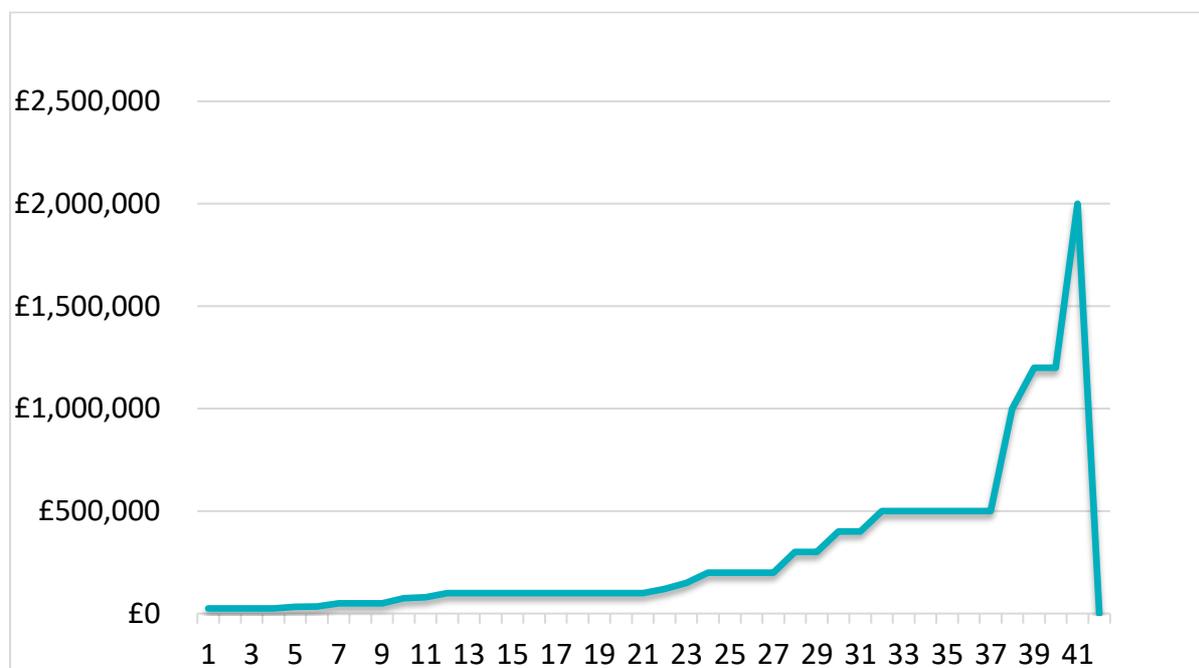
17. **78%** of colleges would need additional resources to support the provision of free college meal vouchers to current eligible students over the summer holiday period. (q.19)

Comments on student hardship:
- Support from government is not on a level playing field with schools.
- We are providing meal vouchers over the summer, but we can't really afford to do this.
- Digital poverty is a major concern and pressure.
- Access to a laptop without broadband is of limited use.

- Laptop bursaries are wholly insufficient to meet demand.
- Free transport would make a huge difference to learners.
- Removal of the oyster for travel will increase pressure on young people.
- Bursary allocation has been reduced for next year.

Transport

18. **82%** of colleges anticipate major transport difficulties around September re-opening. These included: Inadequacy of public transport, given social distancing (92% of colleges), SEN student transport (50% of colleges), Insufficiency of college provided transport (38% of colleges), Traffic congestion (24% of colleges), Costs (60% of colleges) (q.21/22)
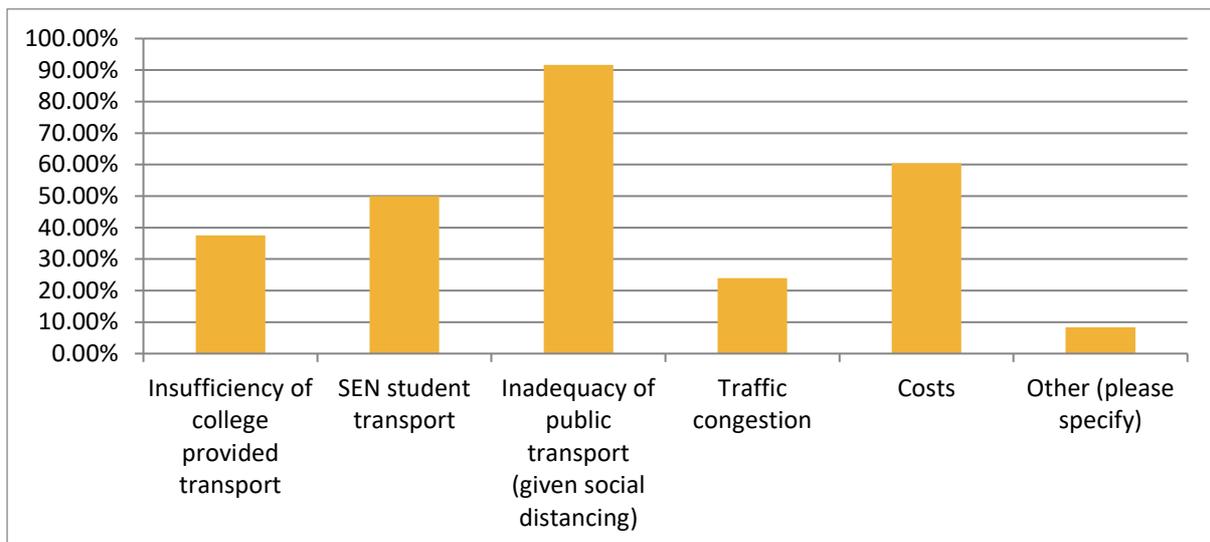
Comments on Transport
- Some public transport routes being cancelled.
- Local authorities not sharing transport plans.
- Social distancing on buses will limit the number of students that we can get back to college.
- No city centre parking at college.
- Insufficient bursary funds to meet need.
- Loss of oyster card cannot be covered.
- Staff and students are nervous to travel on public transport

What one thing could central or local government do to help?
- Funding support so the college can run private bus schemes and cycle schemes.
- Increase frequency of metro and bus routes.
- Re-instate oyster cards.
- 16 – 19 travel entitlement.

- Free parking.
- Boris bike style schemes.
- Clear guidance on social distancing on public transport.
- We will have to significantly reduce the number of students on site to manage related transport issues and maintain bubbles.
- Increase frequency of services.
- Urgently review bursary scheme.
- Fix digital divide, cheaper and greener.
- Uplift disadvantage funding or area uplift.

Mental Health

19. **94%** of colleges agree that there is an additional demand for mental health and wellbeing services for students during the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown. (q.24)

20. **97%** of colleges have put additional mental health and wellbeing support in place for their students as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown. (q.25)

21. Colleges are supporting students in a range of ways: providing information and signposting to external support organisations (96% of colleges), adapting existing support services to deliver remotely (95% of colleges), providing regular opportunities to discuss wellbeing with staff (91% of colleges), providing guidance about self-care (89% of colleges), providing online skills sessions, e.g. mindfulness, coping strategies (84% of colleges), commissioning new online or telephone support services such as counselling (45% of colleges), providing opportunities for peer support (41% of colleges) (q.26)

Redundancies

22. **46%** of colleges are planning to make redundancies by the end of the autumn term 2020. 21% will have made redundancies by September 2020.

Concerns about re-opening

In relation to September re-opening and social distancing, what are your biggest concerns?
- Use of communal areas such as canteens.
- Ensuring a positive start to the year.
- Student attendance.
- 2nd spike.
- Managing student numbers on site safely.
- Volatility in student numbers.
- Managing student behaviours.
- Staff mental health.

- Transport.
- Managing the contradiction between attendance and social distancing.
- Covering the extra costs of making the college safe.
- Schools keeping year 11's.
- Consistent guidance from government.
- Staff confidence / not wanting to return.
- Managing and affording remote learning.

Association of Colleges - July 2020