



David Hughes  
Chief Executive

Sir Kevan Collins  
Education Recovery Commissioner

5<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Kevan,

Congratulations on your appointment as Education Recovery Commissioner. I look forward to working with you and supporting your work on lost learning; it is an important and urgent priority for colleges and for the 650,000 people who study in them.

It's clear that the pandemic has affected every one of us, including every child and young person. However, I believe that there are some groups for whom the impact will be more profound and potentially longer lasting. Your remit will encompass all of those continuing in learning after this academic year and reflect the varying circumstances and experiences. I am sure that you will be aware how important it is to focus energy on those who have had particular challenges during lockdowns such as those without access to digital devices and the internet, those with mental health conditions and those who have suffered loss or have been subject to the virus themselves.

I want to urge you though, to also focus on young people leaving education this year. Large numbers of school and college leavers this summer will successfully progress in learning onto higher level and HE courses. Many though will not. Traditionally the latter would progress into apprenticeships or into jobs. Sadly, this year those opportunities will be few and far between and most forecasts are for a large increase in youth unemployment. Because of lost learning and shifts in the labour market, many of this cohort will struggle to access jobs in potential growth sectors without further training.

History shows us that young people who suffer long periods of unemployment in a recession can be held back throughout their lives. My worry is that because of lost learning, this year's leavers are even more likely to suffer unless we act now and over the coming couple of years. There are programmes funded to support, but they lack coherence and as they stand are unlikely to work for large numbers of those who have particularly suffered from lost learning.

Given this challenge, and because it includes a very different group of organisations from your other main focus of those continuing in education, I wanted to propose the establishment of a youth skills recovery task and finish group to work on this area. The group would need to be able to look at both lost learning and the wider labour market

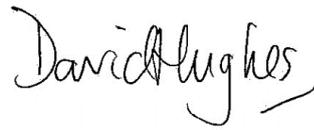
2-5 Stedham Place, London WC1A 1HU

T: 020 7034 9900 E: [enquiries@aoc.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@aoc.co.uk) [www.aoc.co.uk](http://www.aoc.co.uk)  @AoC\_info  Association-of-Colleges

context. I am confident that other stakeholders, including employer organisations, would be happy to contribute to this given the implications for employers and workforce needs in key sectors of the economy.

I look forward to discussing this proposal with you in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Hughes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the name.

David Hughes,  
Chief Executive, Association of Colleges

Cc:  
Rishi Sunak, Chancellor  
Gavin Williamson, Secretary of State for Education  
Susan Acland-Hood, Permanent Secretary