

## Minister for Higher Education, Further Education and Veterans submission of 3 October 2023

### PE2044/A: Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to reinstate the £26 million pledged to colleges in the 2023/24 budget

The Scottish Government is committed to the long-term success of colleges, and we continue to invest nearly £2 billion a year on Scotland's universities and colleges, despite the most difficult public spending environment since devolution.

While I understand the disappointment on the need to take the £26 million saving, we have maintained the college sector's core teaching funding allocation, which is the same as in 2022-23. The £26 million funding was intended to enable strategic change in the sector and was not part of the core teaching funding allocations for colleges. In 2023-24, we also increased college estate funding.

There is also now greater flexibility in the funding provided to colleges, and with the sector and the Scottish Funding Council, we continue to explore further flexibilities, while supporting colleges to deliver for their students. This approach recognises that colleges are responsible for their own operational decisions and are best placed to respond flexibly to emerging challenges.

As part of the programme for government and following on from the publication of the Purpose and Principles for Post-School Education, Research and Skills, the Scottish Government is committed to developing a new funding model for post-school education, which continues free tuition and improves the parity of living cost support on offer for those wishing to study part time or flexibly. We will be working with a range of partners and stakeholders in developing the approach.

More generally, I am committed to progressing the reforms across post school education that I have outlined in the Purpose and Principles, and I look forward to updating the committee on progress in the months ahead.

Graeme Dey MSP

