



Education & Skills Funding Agency

Education and Skills Funding Agency
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www.education.gov.uk/efa-enquiry-form

9 November 2017

Ms J Singleton
Interim Principal
St Mary's Sixth Form College
Shear Brow
Blackburn
BB1 8DX

Dear Jenny

On 27 February 2017, the Education Funding Agency issued a Notice to Improve (Ntl) for Financial Health to St Mary's Sixth Form College.

This letter adds a new Schedule to the Ntl in line with clause 5.5.1 of the college's Funding Agreement between the Secretary of State for Education acting through the ESFA on behalf of the Crown.

It sets out additional conditions of funding that St Mary's Sixth Form College is required to comply with in order that the ESFA can continue to fund. The conditions set out in the schedules of this Ntl are in addition to the conditions of funding set out in the Funding Agreement.

- I am issuing this schedule to confirm the recommendations of the FE Commissioner's assessment of the college.

The Interim Principal, as the current Accounting Officer of the college, or the Chair of the Corporation, should acknowledge receipt by writing to me, copied to Head of Intervention Stephen Jones, Stephen7.jones@education.gov.uk within 10 working days of the receipt of this letter.

Publication

From 1 August 2017, and in accordance with the funding agreement, ESFA will be publishing all Notices on Gov.uk and your original Notice has already been published. An update will be made to reflect this additional schedule.

This letter and additional schedule is copied to Ofsted and the FE Commissioner.

Yours sincerely



Paul Williamson
Director, Northern England

Cc:

Nick McNeil, Chair of governors at St Mary's SFC

Jos Parsons, Ofsted

Richard Atkins, FE Commissioner

Notice to Improve: Schedule 2

Title: FE Commissioner Recommendations

Reason for issue

The FE Commissioner has assessed the position of the college in line with the government's intervention policy set out in *Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills*. The outcomes were confirmed in the Minister's letter to you 17 July 2017, and have been published in a Further Education Commissioner Assessment Summary on <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-commissioner-intervention-reports> This schedule sets out the actions required of you, with effect from receipt of this letter, in response to recommendations made by the FE Commissioner.

Action Required

Concern	Action	Timescale
The FE Commissioner's recommendations	<p>Develop a comprehensive implementation plan, which addresses the FE Commissioner's recommendations as confirmed in the Minister's letter of 17 July 2017</p> <p>The implementation plan must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• explicitly address the recommendations, setting out your overall strategy, approach and planned actions for implementation• be endorsed by your governing body• assure ESFA that you are planning appropriate actions to bring about significant and sustained improvements in line with the recommendations• include clear milestones for assessing progress, and how progress will be measured and when <p><i>FE Commissioner Recommendations</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A commissioner-led comprehensive options review, working closely with college leaders and governors, to be undertaken as soon as possible to support the identification of long term strategic options for the corporation to consider in autumn 2017.2. The college senior management team produce and implement an effective financial recovery plan immediately, that has been approved by the governing body and ESFA.3. The college continues to explore and develop plans with Liverpool Hope University, and give	Draft to be submitted to the ESFA by 25 September 2017 Final version by 20 December 2017

	<p><i>consideration to other supporting structural options, such as joining a multi-academy trust.</i></p> <p><i>4. The governing body to closely monitor progress with financial recovery and oversee the college's monthly updates to the ESFA.</i></p> <p><i>5. The college undertakes a curriculum review to restructure and strengthen the financial viability of the college's provision, including developing a contingency plan if student numbers fall in 2017/18.</i></p> <p><i>6. The college to continue to address the weaknesses identified in the Ofsted inspection to ensure that existing learners receive the best possible education and to ensure that their interests are protected going forward.</i></p> <p><i>7. The interim principal and a working party of governors undertake a review of the roles and structure of the senior team to ensure that the leadership & management of the college is efficiently and cost-effectively organised.</i></p> <p><i>8. The governors appoint a full time principal and deputy principal to take forward the leadership of the college.</i></p> <p><i>9. The governing body commissions a national leader of governance to conduct an independent external review of governance, including arrangements for chairing and supporting the board, and ensuring the right capacity and capability is available to oversee the implementation of the recommendations in this report.</i></p>	
Governance arrangements are in place for monitoring progress against the implementation plan.	Agree arrangements for Monthly Case Conferences with ESFA to monitor progress of the implementation plan.	Monthly, dates to be agreed with the ESFA
FE Commissioner Stocktake Assessment(s)	FE Commissioner or his adviser will undertake stocktake assessments to confirm progress against recommendations	Dates to be confirmed by FE Commissioner's office

Support for Actions and Monitoring of Progress

Regular case conferences including stakeholders will continue to be scheduled by the ESFA to monitor progress against the Notice, including measures and timescales for completion of all schedules of the Ntl. The ESFA will organise and chair the case conferences. Where appropriate, the case conferences may also be attended by the FE Commissioner or his FE Advisers. The college must ensure the appropriate senior staff are available for the ESFA case conferences.