

News story: Colleges to receive £1.8m to boost to help raise standards

Thirteen colleges across England will receive funding totalling £1.8 million to help drive up standards, Apprenticeships and Skills Minister Anne Milton announced today (Wednesday 20 March).

Successful colleges from the second round of the Strategic College Improvement Fund (SCIF) will receive a total of £1.8 million between them from the overall £15m fund.

The SCIF was launched in June 2018, and 63 colleges across England have been successful in securing funding to work with a high performing 'partnering' college to share their knowledge and expertise to help tackle issues – such as raising the standard of teaching or boosting learner attendance and retention.

Anne Milton, Apprenticeships and Skills Minister said:

Our colleges have a vital role to play in making sure people of all ages and backgrounds get the chance to learn new skills and go on to have successful careers.

The Strategic College Improvement Fund is designed to help support colleges to improve and make sure their students receive the high quality education they deserve.

I'm thrilled to announce the second round of colleges to receive funding from the scheme. We've seen great success so far and I look forward to hearing how they are all progressing.

Teresa Kelly, Deputy FE Commissioner said:

I am really pleased that another group of colleges have been awarded a SCIF grant. The initiative is proving to be very popular across the sector and we are beginning to see the real benefits to students that can result from colleges learning from each other through the development of best practice.

Many colleges have fed back to me that they consider that the SCIF initiative is proving to be so successful as it is harnessing what is best in teaching, learning and assessment and enabling teaching staff to enhance the quality of their practice in a wide variety of settings.

Bill Watkin, Chief Executive, Sixth Form Colleges Association, said:

The Strategic College Improvement Fund has proven to be a well-structured and well-funded programme that has encouraged and facilitated system leadership in the college sector and has enabled colleges to share their strengths and to learn from each other as they continue to raise standards. I hope that this will experience will be repeated and that colleges will continue to benefit from this support in the future.

David Corke, Director of Policy at the Association of Colleges, said:

Colleges have really valued the opportunity to share successful practice through previous rounds of the Strategic College Improvement Fund and this is contributing to driving improvement within our sector. All colleges which identify areas for improvement can benefit from quality improvement peer network and the learning should then be shared widely in the sector.

A [recent report](#) showed the SCIF has been welcomed by the sector, and the SCIF's peer-to-peer support model received overwhelming support from the colleges that took part in the pilot phase. Colleges reported several positives including how the scheme helped them boost the quality of teaching and learning, strengthened their collaborative working approaches, raised aspirations and supported college-wide improvements in culture and leadership.

The fund is playing a vital role alongside the Government's National Leaders of Further Education (NLFEs) programme helping to share best practice and boost standards throughout the further education sector, so more people can access high quality education and training.