

28 November 2014

Smith Commission recommendations don't go far enough to support the college sector

Shona Struthers, Chief Executive, Colleges Scotland said:

“It is a significant achievement that an agreement to devolve greater powers to Scotland has been reached and we commend all parties for working together on this in what has been a very short timeframe for reform.

“However, we are disappointed that the recommendations do not go far enough to meet the needs of the college sector to support economic growth in Scotland.

“There is little scope within the welfare proposals to effectively tackle inequalities and in particular the ‘benefits trap’ that many students and potential students find themselves in that prevents them from coming to college to learn new skills and get a job without losing their housing benefits.

“Immigration policy is another key area that has been overlooked within the proposals as we had hoped that additional powers would allow the Scottish Government to re-introduce the post-study work visas that were abolished by the UK Government in 2012. These visas attracted overseas students thus enriching the college experience for all and retained skilled graduates who contributed to our economy.

“We watch with interest to see how the Smith Commission proposals will be taken forward and urge all parties to continue to work together to find alternative solutions to the issues that colleges and learners face”.

ENDS