

College Sector of The Future
MSP Cross Party Reference Group
Meeting 1: 24 June 2026
Publication Date: 4 August 2026

Attendees

Gavin Donoghue, Colleges Scotland
Callum Chomczuk, College Employers Scotland
Jen Johnston, Colleges Scotland

Duncan Dunlop MSP, Scottish Liberal Democrats
Meghan Gallagher MSP, Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party
David Kirkwood MSP, Reform UK
Laura Moodie MSP, Scottish Green Party
Jenny Young MSP, Scottish Labour Party

Cameron Garrett, Scottish Green Party (meeting organiser)

Meeting

Gavin provided welcome and introductions and then presented on the CSoTF workstream origins, the workstream design through three Pillars, and next steps. There was then discussion on the following topics:

Geographical boundaries for Pillar 2 Workshops.

These are proposed to follow REPs in the main.

Timescales for implementation.

This will depend on how ambitious the proposals are but would aim for some implementation in AY 27/28.

The position and importance of college learners in this process and the importance viewing it through that lens.

Learners are at the heart of the workstream, will be participants, and have been raised in previous meetings with partners.

Current risks to financial viability of colleges.

The 26/27 Budget has prevented the immediate risk of insolvency that had been highlighted for 11 colleges in advance of the draft Budget, but some colleges may require liquidity support in the short-medium term.

Is there transformation money available.

The additional £70m announced in the Budget for AY 2026/27 includes transformation funding with the exact amount still TBC as adjustments between FY and AY budgets.

Cross-portfolio funding as colleges deliver in areas such as health, housing and economy.

This has been an ask of Colleges Scotland over many years and that in 26/27 Budget sector received cross-portfolio funding for RISE/TAF/FWDF.

Complexity of system and need for broader transformation, not just from colleges.

Any options would likely have requirements on all three parties (colleges/SFC/SG) if they were to be truly transformational.

It was additionally noted that colleges are places of hope and opportunity for students and the broader community, and ongoing engagement with trade unions on the workstream.

Gavin closed the meeting by stating there was an open line on communication about the process, and that there will be further meetings.

Actions

Feedback requested on draft ToR.

Confirmation that there will be a minimum of a further two meetings of the Group.

Close