

**Thursday, 29 July 2021**

**Comment on average expenditure figures in Scottish educational settings**

By Andy Witty, Director of Sector Policy

Yesterday the Scottish Government, in [response to a parliamentary question](#) from Michael Marra MSP, produced some interesting figures showing the per-head spend across the whole of the Scottish education system.

From pre-5 nursery through to college and university, the average expenditure per place for each education level shows at a glance the spend and I would argue investment at each level of the system.

In real terms at 2020-21 prices, college spending per head starts at £4,754 per place in 2010-11, dips to its lowest point of 2014-15 at £3,879, and rises again to 2019-20 levels at £4,321. Since 2010-11 then, spending per place on a college student has dropped by 9.1%. It is clear that upwards movement in funding, although not to 2010-11 levels, started when colleges were restructured in 2014 into the organisations we know today, and Colleges Scotland came into existence in 2015, with the ability to advocate for more investment into colleges and our students. Since this low point of per-head funding, colleges have seen an increase of 11.4% in average expenditure per place.

For other settings, there's a very varied picture: Preschool since 2010-11 has risen by 71.2%, primary school is down 1.7%, secondary school up very slightly at 0.4%, and colleges are down 9.1%. Spend per head at universities is down by 9.4%. While the pre-school leap in spend per place can likely be explained by the push to close the attainment gap for 3-5 year olds and vulnerable 2-year-olds, it's more difficult to understand why further and higher education spend levels aren't at least matching investment from almost a decade ago.

Colleges Scotland as the membership organisation for all of Scotland's colleges firmly believe that our students deserve world class teaching, excellent facilities, and up-to-the-minute resources in their classrooms, workshops and training suites. Colleges create the workforce needed now and are training the workforce of the future, upskilling and reskilling older learners, and providing a first choice for education and qualifications for learners of any age. We are working to challenge this investment level every day – our learners deserve the very best experience at college and resources need to be there to ensure that their requirements are met and their expectations exceeded. Hundreds of millions of pounds have been invested by Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Council into college provision, which has been needed and welcome, but our students deserve at the very least parity of funding with other educational settings. Colleges Scotland will continue to relentlessly advocate to close this gap.

**ENDS**

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