

Major upgrades to restore pride in England's run-down colleges

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£307 million to repair and maintain colleges in all regions of England to fix leaking roofs, broken windows and worn-out facilities, delivering national renewal

Young people across England will see major upgrades to their colleges, as the government invests £307 million to turn the page on years of neglect.

From repairing leaky roofs and fixing broken windows to updating worn-out heating systems, all 175 colleges will benefit. Each one will receive individual allocations in the summer, ranging from £6,000 for smaller institutions to £7 million for large college groups for the next academic year. Colleges will be given the flexibility to decide how the funding is spent, so it can be directed where it is needed most.

These upgrades will restore pride in England's colleges and break down barriers to opportunity for students, with fewer disruptions to lessons, more comfortable learning environments, and better spaces for students to focus and succeed. Modernised colleges will be key to delivering on the Prime Minister's target for two-thirds of young people to be taking a gold standard apprenticeship, higher training or heading to university by the age of 25.

The fund has been boosted by £5 million since last year, when it was introduced in response to colleges calling for a reliable annual allocation to plan and maintain their estates. It is part of a £1.7 billion investment from the government's Industrial Strategy for colleges to modernise buildings by 2030.

Skills Minister Jacqui Smith said:

The young people in these colleges are the engineers, bricklayers and designers of the future, and they and the dedicated staff teaching them deserve the best possible environment to learn and succeed.

This £307 million investment will repair and modernise facilities across all 175 colleges in England, giving young people the spaces they need to build the skills they need for good careers, helping to drive economic growth.

Cheshire College South & West used its allocation last year to move towards decarbonising all of their campuses, as well as making improvements to ventilation systems and the Crewe campus reception.

Helen Nellist, Deputy Principal of Cheshire College South & West, said:

We're very grateful for this funding, which has allowed us to make significant improvements across the college.

The redesign of our reception area has strengthened the safeguarding of learners by

improving visibility and access control, and we've also been able to refurbish key facilities such as toilets and changing rooms. Additional upgrades to lighting, energy efficiency and ventilation have improved safety, comfort and sustainability.

This investment is making a real difference for our learners, staff and visitors.

Julian Gravatt, Deputy Chief Executive, Association of Colleges, said:

This funding for college estates is sorely needed, and we are pleased to see that every single FE college will benefit, and crucially, that individual colleges will be able to decide how the money is spent.

It follows the announcement of £570 million to increase capacity in colleges to train the next generation of skilled workers.

More widely, the government's ambitious Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper set out plans to unlock opportunity for young people and drive growth for the country by improving the quality of further education. This includes the introduction of structured professional development for further education teachers and an expectation that colleges deliver at least 100 hours of face-to-face English and maths teaching for those who haven't passed those GCSEs.

It also announced the creation of V Levels as a brand new vocational pathway to provide clearer, stronger options for young people, allowing them to mix and match academic and vocational subjects and setting them up for the jobs of tomorrow.

Funding will be distributed to colleges in due course.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-upgrades-to-restore-pride-in-englands-run-down-colleges>