

BLACK FURTHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP GROUP

4 September 2020

Dear supporters and signatories

Update on our open letter to Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson, Prime Minister, RT Hon Gavin Williamson MP, Secretary of State for Education, funders of further education colleges; regulatory bodies & further education membership bodies

With your support, our *Open letter to address systemic racism in further education* was sent on 4 August. It has garnered good interest from the media and generated activity within the sector. The number of signatories is growing daily and today, Friday 5 September, stands at 140. (Please see attached). Early indications are that a number of college senior leadership teams and boards are looking at how they can engage with the BFELG 10 Point Plan internally. It is clear that we all have an amazing opportunity to act now to lay the strong foundations that will bring about sustainable change. We must seize the moment to collectively address the underlying challenges once and for all.

We do feel it is very important to provide you with a summary of developments to date.

The Guardian published an exclusive article on 5 August. Links to this and a selection of other media articles are shown below:

<https://www.theguardian.com/education>

Coverage of the FULL LETTER by FE News:

<https://www.fenews.co.uk/fevoices/52439-addressing-systemic-racism-in-further-education>

Times Educational Supplement: <https://www.tes.com/news/racism-undermines-fe-government-told>

The letter was referenced by Association of Colleges:

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/association-of-colleges_today-the-black-further-education-leadership-activity-6697140551541764096- Uan

We have since been contacted by a number of individuals and organisations, expressing their support and wanting to meet to discuss ways we can work together. Constructive discussions have taken place with the Association of Colleges (AoC), Education and Training Foundation(ETF), Skills & Education Group, search/recruitment companies and others. We have focused our engagement in pursuit of the BFELG 10 Point Plan and are due to meet with a range of other groups

and organisations in the coming weeks. Significant in their silence and disappointingly, we have not had a response from the government.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Dawn Ward CBE, CEO and Principal of Burton and South Derbyshire College for drawing our Open letter to the attention of sector Principals/CEOs many of whom have demonstrated their support by becoming signatories as a result. We are truly appreciative of her sustained personal and professional commitment to anti-racism over time, backed up by actions.

As we consider the next steps in what is turning out to be a fast moving arena and as the BFELG evolves, we are very keen to continue to involve all of you in this important work. We are highly appreciative of the open support you have shown, your commitment and willingness to act. Consequently, building on these, our initial and strong recommendations to all Signatories and Supporters of the BFELG Open letter are as follows:

For college leaders:

- Share our Open Letter with your staff, students, governors and other stakeholders and encourage conversations and dialogue
- Explore, adopt and implement the BFELG 10 Point Plan in your organisation
- Adopt the use of anti-racism terminology

For other leaders

- Share the BFELG Open letter with your staff, networks and encourage conversations and dialogue within your spheres of influence
- Explore, adopt/adapt and implement the BFELG 10 Point Action in your organisation
- Adopt and use anti-racism terminology
- Consider becoming a college governor in your local community
- Consider becoming a mentor to a BFELG member who works in a college

Please connect with us on BfeLG LinkedIn (Black FE Leadership Group), follow us on Twitter @FELeadership or get in touch via this email address blackfeleadershipgroup@gmail.com. Do let us know what you are doing and how the BFELG could support your work. We would like to publicise your activities and innovations for the benefit of all our students, staff and communities and very much look forward to hearing from you.

With our best wishes

Stella Ngozi Mbubaegbu CBE

On behalf of the Black Further Education Leadership Group