

7 July 2021



**A Message from Stephen Howlett, CBE, DL,  
Chair London South East Colleges and London & South East Education Group**

Dear Colleagues

The last eighteen months have been an extraordinary and unparalleled time for us all. It has demonstrated the important role public services play in supporting the health and wellbeing of local communities and how FE Colleges are integral anchor institutions. This has also demonstrated the importance of education in the broadest terms and across the education landscape and the importance of the work you all do. The FE sector in particular, has demonstrated its agility and responsiveness and as a result has started to receive some of the recognition it deserves, with the Government putting it centre stage, in terms of the national economic recovery plans. It is envisaged that the Post 16 Skills Bill currently moving through Parliament on its ascent into law, will continue this focus and facilitate FE to develop the world class skilled workforce of the future.

Despite the limitations and restrictions of the pandemic, 2020/21 has been very good year for the College, with a number of national accolades and awards. Most recently the three **TES Awards for Overall FE Provider of the Year, Contribution to the Local Community** and **FE College of the Year**. In addition, earlier in the year we were awarded the **Social Value Public Sector Leadership Award**, recognising our strategic work as a social enterprise and the first FE provider to win such an award. Finally we are incredibly proud of our **Group Principal and CEO, Dr Sam Parrett**, who was awarded a CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) for Services to Education in the Queen's 2021 Birthday Honours list.

This is also the year that LSEC was recognised nationally for the FE Foodbank Friday initiative that spurred 30 plus colleges across the county to join us in supporting food poverty. We also led another initiative in the Sector, launching our ten-year **EDI Grant Programme** to support and prioritise community projects addressing racial inequality, and more recently have just launched **Good For Me Good For Fe** movement, to promote the benefits of volunteering and generate social value. Individually, staff have excelled, both personally and professionally and I am extremely proud of these amazing endeavours. The Staff Awards last month recognised and celebrated all our STARS within the staffing body.

The Board has also seen some changes with the appointment of new College and Group Board Governors and a new Vice Chair. Our LSEC Corporation continues to comprise a diverse mix of skills, experience, ethnicities and backgrounds, that has an ethos, understanding and empathy for the enormous difference the College makes to so many lives economically and socially. Collectively as a Board we endeavour to make transparent and ethical decisions on the future direction of the organisation and support the Executive in the navigating the strategic direction of the College and the Group. You can read more about the work of the **College Corporation** and the **Group Board**, their composition and members, [here](#). The Board are extremely proud and grateful for the enormous work and dedication that you have demonstrated in supporting the wellbeing and interests of our students, each other and our communities, throughout these difficult and challenging times.

As we now head towards the summer break and the unlocking of the country from this pandemic, the Board would like to extend its heartfelt thanks and gratitude and to wish you an extremely well-deserved break and summer holiday. We know that this will not be the usual or normal summer holidays that we have come to enjoy, however we hope that you will be able to enjoy some rest and relaxation and spend some valuable time with family and friends in these new normal times, whilst adhering to public health recommendations.

Wishing you a safe, healthy and restful summer break and look forward to seeing you in September 2021.

Yours sincerely

**Stephen Howlett, CBE, DL**

**Chair, London South East Colleges & London & South East Education Group**

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