9 January 2015

Mr James Johnston
The Clerk
Finance Committee
Scottish Parliament:
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Ref: SS/VKI
Direct: 01786 892104

Dear Mr Johnston

British Sign Language (Scotland) Bill

Colleges Scotland is the membership body for all the colleges in Scotland and is the representative voice for the sector, ensuring that its views are heard and interests represented. Colleges Scotland welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Financial Memorandum associated with the British Sign Language (Scotland) Bill (“the BSL Bill”).

The colleges throughout Scotland are committed to an increase in opportunity and accessibility to all people through appropriate policy and funding in recognition that some students will require additional learning support. Colleges Scotland is currently consulting with our members on the policy intentions of the BSL Bill and we will engage with the Education and Culture Committee as appropriate on the policy issues. However, the Finance Committee will want to note that whilst the requirement is to produce a plan only, the publication of such a plan will almost certainly increase public expectation that would require additional funds in future years.

The estimated funding level for colleges as outlined in the Financial Memorandum at Table 4 for the production and publication of an initial plan would appear adequate. However, funding for regular reviews and updates of the plan during future Parliamentary cycles will need monitoring to ensure the funding keeps pace with the requirements. This is particularly important as the funding highlighted in the Financial Memorandum is in relation to a time period beyond the current Parliamentary session and the Spending Review.

I trust these comments are helpful in your deliberations, but if you require any further information please contact my office via telephone 01786 892104 or email shona.struthers@collegesscotland.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely

Shona Struthers
Chief Executive

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