

# MARK FLETCHER MP NEWSLETTER



## Special Edition: Post-16 Education Returns to Bolsover



*Dear Resident,*

I hope you and your family are well. I have interrupted my summer schedule of being out and about across our beautiful constituency to let you know some AMAZING news for our area! I am absolutely delighted to announce that The Bolsover School's Sixth Form application has been SUCCESSFUL - meaning post-16 education is returning to Bolsover!

This is a MASSIVE win for our area, and I am genuinely delighted for young people across our constituency who will now have access to a good quality post-16 education locally.

The new sixth form building will be located in Bolsover and be easily accessible for children living in villages across the north of the constituency, including the neighbouring towns of Shirebrook and Clowne.

This is something I have been working on since being elected in 2019, whether that's meeting with stakeholders, liaising with The Bolsover School, raising the issue in Parliament multiple times, including at Prime Ministers Questions, holding numerous meetings with Ministers and officials at the Department for Education, and discussing it directly with the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Education.

Children growing up in communities across Bolsover will now have improved life chances because of the Government's support and I could not be prouder of Matt Hall, Headteacher at The Bolsover School, and all those involved who have helped make this project a success. I look forward to working with them over the coming months to deliver this potentially life changing project for young people across the Bolsover Constituency.

If you would like to receive regular updates from my office on this project please email [mark.fletcher.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:mark.fletcher.mp@parliament.uk)

Finally, I just wanted to say a massive thank you to residents who have written to me, signed my petition, or provided data on travel times/costs to neighbouring provisions, you have played a massive part in helping to deliver

post-16 education to our community.

I got involved in politics to make a difference, to help create opportunities to those who are forgotten, to give a voice to those who are unheard, and to provide life chances to everyone no matter where you grew up or what has happened to you in your past, so I am incredibly proud to have played a role in returning post-16 education to the Bolsover Constituency.

I hope you found this edition of the newsletter interesting and hopefully as exciting as I do!

Best wishes,

Mark

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**Matt Hall, Headteacher at The Bolsover School**

*"To be able to provide our students with progression route to accessible, local post-16 provision will undoubtedly go a long way to raising the aspirations of all students who attend the Bolsover School for years to come"*

**Andrew Burns, Chief Executive, Redhill Academy Trust**

*"We are thrilled to have secured our free school bid to establish a modern and ambitious post-16 centre in Bolsover.*

*This will provide exciting educational opportunities for young people in the area and help raise aspirations across the community for years to come.*

*We now look forward to working with all our partners to turn our plans into reality."*



**Gillian Keegan MP, Secretary of State for Education**

*"Mark has led the charge for a sixth form in Bolsover. No one has campaigned harder to bring more education provision to their constituency, and I'm so pleased that the sixth form is now coming"*

**Cllr Alex Dale, Cabinet Member for Education at Derbyshire County Council**

*"This is amazing news for Bolsover and the surrounding area. Huge congratulations to Redhill Academy Trust and The Bolsover School on their successful application and a massive thank you to Mark Fletcher MP for spearheading this vital campaign.*

*This will make such a difference for young people in the area, raising aspirations and providing high quality post-16 education in the heart of the constituency for generations to come."*

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### **Prime Ministers Question's**

In March 2022, I was pleased to have opportunity to raise the matter of the lack of post-16 education within the Bolsover constituency at Prime Minister's Questions in the House of Commons. I raised my concerns that young people in the constituency have to travel long distances at considerable cost to access their education. The Prime Minister assured me of a meeting with the Education Secretary to discuss how we can right this wrong for the young people of the Bolsover constituency and give them the education that they deserve.

[Watch my PMQ](#)

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### **Hosting a Westminster Hall Debate on Post-16 Education**

In March this year, I put forward my case for post-16 education in Bolsover to Education Minister, Robert Halfon MP. Levelling up is vital to my constituents, which means investment in housing, infrastructure and high-skilled jobs, and ensuring that we have a skilled population, underpinned by an ambition to capitalise on the opportunities available to them.

I welcomed the Government's ongoing plans to do that, but if we want to ensure that Bolsover has the long-term prospects necessary to create a real shift towards a brighter future, the key will be improving educational opportunities for the current and next generations of students. Three main factors are driving the need for a new post-16 education provider in Bolsover: the lack of existing provisions within a reasonable distance; the over-subscription of existing schools; and the lack of choice for students wanting to pursue an academic form of education. It is right that young people in Bolsover should have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

[Watch](#)

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### **Meeting with the Secretary of State for Education to discuss the Bolsover Sixth Form bid**

Back in February, I met with The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP, Secretary of State for Education to make the case for Bolsover's bid for a new post-16 education centre.

The Redhill Academy Trust (RHAT), which runs The Bolsover School, submitted an application to the Department of Education to open an age 16-19 mainstream free school in Bolsover. The application had been submitted in line with the aims of the Government's White Paper which identified Derbyshire as an Education Investment Area. The bid proposes to set up a new post-16 centre in Bolsover with an academic focus.

I promised to keep pushing for our young people to have better access to the education they deserve.



### **Presenting my report on post-16 education**

Last year, I presented my report on post-16 education to the then Secretary of State for Education. The report outlined that despite provision in neighbouring constituencies being closely located they are still costly and difficult to access for the vast majority of pupils - who mainly rely on public transport. The report concluded that 10 out of the 13 major settlements in the north of the constituency would all be better served by a Sixth Form in Bolsover, including those attending the two neighbouring secondary schools Heritage High School in Clowne and Shirebrook Academy.

From the Bolsover School alone, 70% of students attend Chesterfield College or West Nottinghamshire College, which primarily focus on vocational courses rather than academic, and the lack of direct, reliable, and speedy bus services (most students will spend between 30-60 minutes travelling)

severely restricts accessibility for the vast majority of students who reside in the north of the Bolsover Constituency.

By having a static site in Bolsover with a direct affiliation to the Bolsover School, as well as being within 15 minutes travel time for students attending Heritage High School and Shirebrook Academy, the proposal is well placed to address the failings of previous attempts to establish post-16 provision, whilst capitalising on the opportunities the current circumstances provide and without negatively impacting existing settings that offer more vocational courses.

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### **Education Questions on Behalf of a Bolsover Resident**

In May 2022, I received a letter from one of my constituents who lives in Bolsover expressing their concern over the lack of post-16 education within our constituency, the lack of choice and restrictive costs of travelling further afield to find the desired qualification and training opportunities. I raised the matter in Education Questions with the Secretary of State.

[Watch](#)

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## Sixth Form Petition

In January, I submitted our post-16 education petition to the Department for Education as evidence to support the Bolsover Sixth Form application, which had hundreds of signatures from residents across the constituency.

I just wanted to write and say a massive THANK YOU to everyone who signed my petition - your support has played a massive part in delivering this life changing project for our local community.

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### Speaking to BBC Radio Sheffield about my Sixth Form Campaign

In 2021, I spoke to BBC Radio Sheffield about my campaign to return post-16 education to the Bolsover Constituency. Please listen by clicking the link below:

[Listen](#)

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