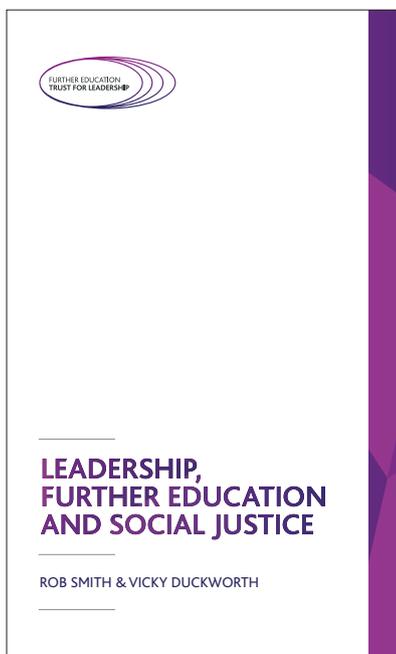


Putting social justice at the heart of our mission

New FETL report considers how further education leadership can promote social justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Most further education colleges see their work as contributing to social justice but how is this put into practice and what does outstanding provision with social justice at its heart look like? These are the key questions asked in a new report from Rob Smith, of Birmingham City University, and Vicky Duckworth, of Edge Hill University, funded and published by the Further Education Trust for Leadership.

Leadership, Further Education and Social Justice looks in detail at how colleges are meeting the needs of their communities, and what factors help or hinder them in ensuring that the demands of social justice are addressed in their work.

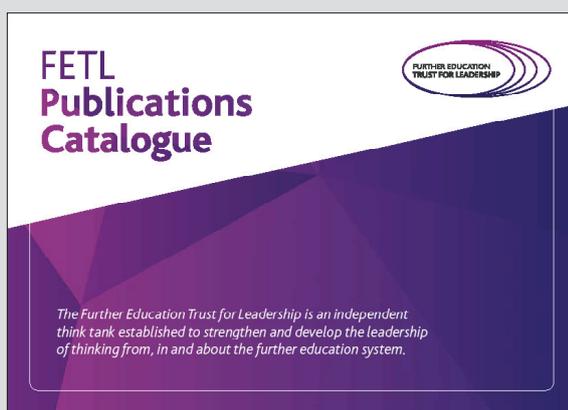
The report looks in depth at the work of three colleges – Fircroft College, City Lit and Hopwood hall Colleges – and considers how leaders, at all levels, have retained a commitment to social justice in the context of budget cuts, policy churn and rigorous accountability. It draws on these case studies to develop a number of recommendations to 'harness the sector's potential contribution to social justice'.

FETL President Dame Ruth Silver said: 'Further education is a challenging sector in which to lead. Leaders must learn to negotiate and thrive in an environment in which expectations are high, funding scarce and accountability rigorous and sometimes heavy-handed. In addition, they are overburdened with central demands and regulation, and hampered by acute policy turbulence and ministerial misapprehension ... Despite these pressures, sector leaders, in the majority of cases, remain highly committed to the values of the sector and demonstrate remarkable determination in delivering against them.'

This is the background for the present study, which the Further Education Trust for Leadership has been pleased to fund. The authors consider in-depth the social justice dimension of the further education mission, and ask how leaders – at all levels – are reflecting this in their work and how they might be supported in doing more and better work in this area. They conclude their report with a number of recommendations for policy development ... There is renewed interest in the sector, and, as the authors hint, a “new direction of travel” may be emerging. I very much hope this report will inform it.’

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