



PRESS RELEASE

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SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES WELCOMES NATIONAL CRACK DOWN ON BOGUS COLLEGES

Scotland's Colleges has welcomed a report, released today by the Commons Home Affairs Committee, which encourages a crack down on bogus colleges in the UK, and sets out a series of recommendations on how this can be done.

The report states that the number of foreign nationals who may have already entered the UK on fraudulently-obtained student visas could be in the tens of thousands.

Insufficient quality assurance procedures on the part of the former Department for Innovations, Universities and Skills have allowed bogus colleges to bring in these foreign students. The UK Border Agency has recognised the deficiencies of the system, and has introduced a more rigorous regulation of educational establishments sponsoring student visas. However, the Commons Home Affairs Committee says it "remains cautious about the UK Border Agency's ability to deal with this issue, and will continue to monitor sponsorship arrangements."

In particular, the Committee is deeply concerned that advance notice of inspection visits by the UK Border Agency has been given in up to 85% of cases, a situation it says is unacceptable and does not instil confidence in the rigour of the inspection regime in combating bogus colleges. The report states that the UK Border Agency should ensure that sufficient resources are provided to allow for rigorous and, crucially, unannounced inspections.

Chris Travis, Chief Executive of Scotland's Colleges, stated; "We have been campaigning for a number of years to shut down bogus colleges and give our sector greater protection in law. Its simply great news that the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee has recognised the problem and recommended the Government takes swift action. I will be writing to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation & Skills Lord Mandelson calling on him to implement the committee's recommendations in full and without delay. Only by doing this can the future reputations of all legitimate colleges in Scotland be safeguarded."

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For more information, contact:

Sarah Wright, Halogen Communications, (T) 0131 202 0120 (F) 0131 225 3757 (E)

sarahw@halogencom.com