

Unloc Expands Entrepreneurship Network in Further Education



(L-R, Jo Trump, Principal at Hills Road Sixth Form College, Hayden Taylor, Managing Director at Unloc)

Social enterprise, *Unloc*, is to launch an alliance with two of the UK's leading Sixth Form Colleges in order to further support entrepreneurship and innovation in further education. The network will now include high-flying Hills Road Sixth Form College (Cambridge) and innovative Alton Sixth Form College (Alton), in addition to Portsmouth College.

Unloc's Managing Director, Hayden Taylor stated; "The initiative is to further push entrepreneurship as a genuine career pathway so education is more than a stepping stone to university."

This means building on employability and entrepreneurship skills essential to the growth of the UK economy.

“This is essential”, commented *Ryan Waters, Unloc Enterprise Academy Lead*; “as 5.4 million SMEs form the backbone of the UK economy. The importance of these 99.7% of businesses will only increase in near future”.

The core of the programme for partner colleges is providing learning opportunities for their students and local secondary school students to learn about starting their own business and take part in a number of high profile aspiration-building events. Partner colleges will become local champions for this agenda; bringing students, organisations and businesses together to push this agenda forward. In addition, the network will enable partner colleges to share best practice and knowledge, with Unloc operating as the facilitator.

The expansion into Alton, Hampshire and Cambridge is symbolic of the current progress being made by Unloc and its Enterprise Academy; previously a Solent based organisation, it is now expanding its operations across the UK.

The exceptional quality of provision provided by Unloc’s partner colleges also shows the growing commitment to entrepreneurship as a career pathway in UK education. Hills Road Sixth Form College is currently one of the top performing sixth form colleges in the whole of the UK and Alton College is another exceptional educational institution.

By adding the knowledge and general excellence of the two colleges to the Unloc network, we hope to push entrepreneurship as a career option more than ever before.

Jo Trump, Principal at Hills Road Sixth Form College commented “We are delighted to welcome the Unloc team to Hills Road from September when they will start working alongside our students to encourage them to think big and pursue their business ideas. Unloc specialise in

developing the entrepreneurs of the future and we are excited about the possibilities that lie ahead for enterprise education both at Hills Road and in partnership with local businesses.”

Sara Russell, Principal at Alton College said: ‘We are really excited to be part of Unloc’s new initiative to work more closely with further education institutions. Inspiring students to develop workplace habits is part of life at Alton College. Our experienced, specialist staff support our students to succeed every step of the way, providing a perfect bridge from school to higher education or employment. The collaboration will provide an extension of this and opportunity for us to strengthen our excellent links with local employers.

Steve Frampton, Principal at Portsmouth College said: “Our students have benefitted enormously from working with this innovative and student centred partner, who have been brilliant to work with as a college. Unloc have the skills, knowledge and experience to add value to all those colleges that aspire to improve the quality of their enrichment provision for their students. We are very fortunate to have them on board on our exciting journey, and the whole college is gaining from their innovative approach, mutual shared values, drive and energy”.

Notes to the Editor:

The Unloc Enterprise Academy is a programme to enable schools and colleges to inspire, motivate and develop the enterprising mindsets of their young people. We passionately believe in enabling young people to develop their own skills through setting up and testing their own businesses. Personal development is at the heart of everything Unloc does and this programme embodies that ethos. We work with over 5000 young people each year in the Academy and are growing our reach significantly year-on- year.

