



Andrew Ranger

Member of Parliament for Wrexham

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Tel: 0207 219 0359

Ms Mary Hockaday
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12/01/2026

Dear Ms Hockaday,

I am getting in touch regarding recent reports in the media that you have approved a 'targeted recruitment strategy' that will approach a set of independent schools to improve the 'quality' of students that apply to your college.

As a Member of Parliament, I am proud to support efforts to enhance social mobility in Britain, working with organisations such as the 93% Club and the Class in the Act campaign and the Sutton Trust who are doing such vital work in this space.

In Cambridge's history, students from privately educated backgrounds have been overwhelmingly overrepresented of the student population, despite constituting only 7% of the population. I welcome and recognise efforts across the University to improve access and outreach initiatives, and to ensure that recruitment and selection processes give due consideration to the range of backgrounds that students are applying from. I know that these changes have been instrumental in constructing equitable conditions for all applicants.

In light of these positive trends across the University, I am dismayed by the language included in a recent policy memo. The argument that we must not "ignore or marginalise this pool of applicants", in reference to students attending elite independent schools across the UK, "risks overlooking potential offer holders who are exceptionally well qualified". The irony is not lost that this is precisely the exclusion that many state-educated applicants have experienced at the hands of the University for generations.

One of my greatest concerns is how this language will affect current students at the University and prospective students in their decision to apply. The idea that widening participation efforts have diluted the quality of students at Cambridge is a common myth that many students from

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underprivileged backgrounds encounter and are weaponised against them. I am saddened to hear these narratives being further legitimised.

Last year, the 93% Club conducted the largest ever survey of state-school students. The results showed that 94% of respondents believe that university culture caters to the wealthy and 87% of respondents perceived there to be a divide between state educated and privately educated students on campus. Should you go ahead with the strategy, it will only strengthen such beliefs. I hope that taking this into account, you will look at the immediate reversal of this decision and will increase efforts going forward to support those from low-income backgrounds applying to your college.

I look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrew Ranger".

Andrew Ranger

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