

**28 January 2010**

### **Lib Dems reveal Scotland's colleges are closing their doors**

The Scottish Liberal Democrats have today published figures showing that many colleges are turning away four times as many applicants as last year.

At First Minister's Questions, Tavish Scott challenged Alex Salmond to make next week's Budget respond to this growing challenge.

Commenting, Jim Tolson MSP for Dunfermline West said: "There has been a dramatic increase this year in the number of people turned away from Scotland's colleges because there aren't enough places. Many colleges are turning away four times as many applicants as last year and some colleges have had to reject people for the very first time.

In Scotland, thousands of young people are being turned away from colleges! Unfortunately, Carnegie College is top of the Scottish list, turning away 800% more applicants in 2009 than in 2008. I've spoken to Professor Bill McIntosh, Principal of the college regarding the high numbers of applicants being turned away. Carnegie College is already dealing with greatly increased numbers of applicants and is already 106% over capacity. They are already planning to increase the capacity for the next intake and are looking for more support from the Government.

Young people's career plans are being hit twice. With record unemployment they can't get a job and now they can't get a college place either. Unemployment is still going up in Scotland. The number of young people claiming jobseekers' allowance has gone up 35% in the last year. We are the only part of Britain where the claimant count is still rising.

**Ends**