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Higher Education cannot become a privilege of the fortunate

A call by university vice-chancellors for tuition fees to more than double should be rejected, Keighley and Ilkley Conservative Parliamentary Candidate Kris Hopkins has said.

A report published today by Universities UK, which represents vice-chancellors, said that fees should rise by to up to £7,000 a year. Currently universities can charge up to £3,000 annually.

The study also revealed that such a fee increase would leave an average graduate in 2016 with £32,400 worth of debt after three years of study.

Cllr Hopkins said he was strongly opposed to the proposals which, he said, would deprive many young people from middle and lower income families in Keighley and Ilkley of the chance of entering higher education.

“There is little doubt that this proposal, should it be accepted, will lead to many fewer students from less than privileged backgrounds enrolling in higher education,” he commented. “Such a situation would be a national disaster.”

“At a time when our economy is facing its most serious crisis for generations, we should be encouraging our most talented individuals to go to university to gain the skills our country needs if it is to compete globally.

“Instead of that, we risk allowing higher education to become a privilege of the fortunate and that simply cannot be allowed to happen.

“As someone from a relatively modest background myself who did have the chance to go to university and later become a lecturer, I owe it to others in similar positions in Keighley and Ilkley to stand up for them. That is exactly what I intend to do.”

ENDS