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## Shoreham: Brighton City Airport school FTA Global closes

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BUSINESS



FTA Global school at Brighton City Airport, run by Sean Jacob, has closed (*Image: Sussex News and Pictures*)



**Rv Andrew Gardner**

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A prestigious flight school which has been training pilots for nearly 20 years has gone bust, leaving students with massive debts and no qualifications.

Future pilots at the FTA Global school at Brighton City Airport at Shoreham were told their training will not continue due to the company's financial difficulties.

The trainees, who have spent close to £100,000 to qualify as pilots, were sent an email by boss Sean Jacob informing them that the school had closed last night.



Grounded planes at the airport (*Image: Sussex News and Pictures*)

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The **business** has been experiencing recent financial difficulties, with Mr Jacob saying he had "nothing left to give".

Up to 160 students at the school have had their hopes and dreams shattered after being told their training flights would never take off again.

These include the son of 56-year-old Stephen Butler, from Sussex, who said he paid £87,000 for his son to become a commercial pilot.

"It's the money he inherited from his nan. It's what he has wanted to do since he was a little boy.

"The Civil Aviation Authority needs to take some responsibility."



Concerned parents gathered in a meeting room in the hangar (*Image: Sussex News and Pictures*)

A heated meeting was held inside the hangar at **Brighton** City Airport this morning with bosses, students and their parents, some of whom are facing financial ruin.

Around 60 angry parents told the meeting how they had pulled out all the stops to finance

# The Argus



Sean Jacob outside the hangar (*Image: Sussex News and Pictures*)

# The Argus

boxes this morning.

FTA Global attracts students from across Europe aiming to kick-start their careers in aviation. One student said he and his partner had invested £80,000 towards the course he started in September last year, with another saying they had been saving for over ten years.

Morgan Oliviero, 22 from Italy, said he had lost £4,000.

He said: "My classmates have lost more than £40,000 each. We only got an email last night with no warning. He knew he needed £1.5 million to just keep the school going, and it is disgraceful that he has been able to do this.

"There are students in tears."

But in a letter sent to students at the school, Mr Jacob wrote: "Flying Time Limited is not in a position to make any immediate refunds."

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Administrators are yet to be appointed after Mr Jacob said he was unable to find anyone "prepared to invest directly into Flying Time Limited or buy the company out of administration."

A spokeswoman for Brighton City Airport said: "We are sad to see a respected commercial organisation go this way.

"Covid had a huge impact on the aviation sector and its effects are still being felt."

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