



Skills Funding Agency

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Paul Martin
Chief Executive
Wandsworth Borough Council
The Town Hall
Wandsworth High Street
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23 April 2015

Dear Mr Martin

As Chief Executive of the Skills Funding Agency in the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, I am writing to inform you of the government's view of the position of Wandsworth Borough Council Lifelong Learning Service in light of the Further Education (FE) Commissioner's recent review, and the next steps that will be taken to secure improvement.

As you are aware, in light of the inadequate grading following the Ofsted inspection of Wandsworth Borough Council, Lifelong Learning Service in December 2014, the Minister for Skills, asked the FE Commissioner, Dr David Collins, to carry out a short, sharp assessment. The assessment of Wandsworth Borough Council Lifelong Learning Service was conducted between 24 and 26 February 2015.

I have now considered the FE Commissioner's assessment, and I accept all the recommendations he makes. A summary of the assessment and the recommendations is provided with this letter. The summary and my letter to you will be published on www.gov.uk in May, following the general election.

Whilst I acknowledge the commitment of Wandsworth Borough Council to apprenticeships and adult and community learning I agree with the FE Commissioner's conclusion that the linkage between the local authority's priorities for skills and employment and the curriculum planning for adult and community learning and apprenticeships needs to be significantly strengthened. I also share his views that it would be helpful for the local authority to review its decision to accelerate apprenticeship growth through sub-contractors operating outside of London and should withdraw from areas where success rates are low.

I understand there has been significant change to the Lifelong Learning team in Wandsworth, with many role and responsibilities still unclear. I am sure you will rapidly want to clarify the roles and responsibilities within this team, including the Head of Service. This clarification should enable Wandsworth to further develop the Post

Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) to increase the pace of improvement and to provide clear evidence of review, intervention and follow up actions, with a priority emphasis on apprenticeship success rates. To improve scrutiny, Wandsworth should also identify an appropriate forum to ensure the objective and independent monitoring and evaluation of the service provision which includes the timely implementation of the revised PIAP.

The SFA and an FE Adviser will monitor the implementation of your revised Post Inspection Action Plan through case conferences, with a follow-up review undertaken within three months.

If you have any questions about the FE Commissioner's assessment or this letter please contact Harminder Matharu,SFA, harminder.matharu@sfa.bis.gov.uk , in the first instance.

I am copying this letter to Councillor Ravi Govindia, Leader of Wandsworth Borough Council.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Lauener', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Peter Lauener
Chief Executive