

Rt Hon Anne Milton MP

Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills
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Irene Lucas CBE
Chief Executive
Sunderland City Metropolitan Borough Council
Civic Centre
Burdon Road
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8th May 2018

Dear Irene

I am writing to inform you of the Government's view of the position of Sunderland City Metropolitan Borough Council's apprenticeships and family, adult and community learning provision following the recent review by the Further Education (FE) Commissioner's team and the steps that need to be taken to secure the necessary improvement.

As you are aware, the FE Commissioner's assessment was triggered by an overall 'Inadequate' Ofsted Inspection in January 2018. The assessment took place between 21st and 22nd March 2018.

I am pleased to note that the assessment found that considerable work has been undertaken in addressing the weaknesses identified in the Ofsted inspection, including in relation to safeguarding. It is important that new policies and procedures are successfully integrated with those of subcontractors to ensure effective implementation.

I understand elected members and the council's senior leadership team are open to the Commissioner's proposal of establishing an adult and community learning board to improve governance arrangements. The board will lead, monitor and challenge leaders and managers, holding them to account for the performance of the service, as well as supporting and advising them.

I acknowledge the council is due to be removed from the register of apprenticeship training providers and this will mean further growth of apprenticeship provision will not be able to proceed in the short and medium term. In light of this, I therefore support the Commissioner's recommendation for the council to restrict its activities to family, adults and community learning provision.

This document and my letter will be published on www.gov.uk. If you have any questions about the Commissioner's assessment, please contact the Commissioner directly at FE.Commissioner@education.gov.uk

I am copying this letter to MPs: Julie Elliott, Bridget Phillipson and Sharon Hodgson.

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