



# Department for Education

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**Rt. Hon. Robert Halfon MP**  
Minister of State for Apprenticeships  
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16<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Dear Mr Jones,

I am writing to inform you of the Government's view of the position of Essex County Council's Adult and Community Learning Service (ACLS) 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 assessment was triggered by an 'Inadequate' Ofsted grading in December 2016. The assessment took place between 21<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017.

Having read the FE Commissioner report, I am pleased to note the Council and its elected members' willingness and commitment to address the areas of concern identified by Ofsted and the recommendations made by the FE Commissioner.

I understand that the issue identified by Ofsted, relating to the Safeguarding of learners has now been addressed. The safety of learners is paramount, and I welcome the Council's commitment to ensuring that all staff delivering Adult and Community Learning are now subject to Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks.

I am pleased to note the intent of you and your senior council team to develop more effective monitoring and strategic leadership. The implementation of a clear Post Inspection Action Plan should enable the ACLS to further improve its safeguarding practices and improve the quality of the service delivered.

The Council has strong financial management of its Adult and Community Learning provision in place. Whilst this is commendable, it is imperative that the focus on financial management does not detract from attention on quality of provision.

I have accepted all of the FE Commissioner's recommendations and a summary of the initial assessment is provided with this letter. This document and my letter will be published on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) in approximately two weeks.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the factual accuracy of the FE Commissioner's assessment, please contact the FE Commissioner ([fe.commissioner@education.gov.uk](mailto:fe.commissioner@education.gov.uk)) in the first instance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Halfon', with a small mark at the end.

**Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP**  
**Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills**