



**Gillian Keegan MP**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Apprenticeships and Skills  
Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, Westminster, London, SW1P 3BT  
tel: 0370 000 2288 [www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus)

Lynda Armstrong  
Office Suite KD3 First Floor  
KD Tower  
Cotterells  
Hemel Hempstead  
HP1 1FW

April 2021

Dear Lynda,

**Annual Priorities letter to the ECITB, 2021-22**

The Prime Minister's announcement on the 30 June 2020 underlined his commitment to building infrastructure, building jobs and building healthcare through a bold programme of national renewal, uniting and levelling up the UK. Whilst there is an emphasis on the construction elements within this, it is clear that infrastructure is an essential part of this programme. The ECITB has a vital role in ensuring that our country has the technical skills needed to deliver critical infrastructure and energy projects. This is essential to our economic success as we transition to a low carbon model of growth.

This letter sets out the Government's priorities for the ECITB for this year and is intended to support you in aligning your work with broader reforms. It should be read in conjunction with other policy statements including the Nuclear and Offshore Wind Sector Deals as part of the Industrial Strategy, and our technical education reforms.

As you know, skills policy is a devolved matter. The Devolved Administrations have their own priorities to meet the needs of their economies and distinct skills systems and these will be communicated separately.

The Government has eight key priorities for the ECITB in England for 2021-2022:

1. Continue to support the industry access to skills in light of Covid-19, including through the ECITB's Train to Retain and scholarships programmes. These measures are crucial to retaining young talent in the industry and providing a pipeline of new entrants during and post the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. Support industry to develop the skills it will need to deliver infrastructure investments earmarked over the next decade in the National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline. The ECITB should work closely with the Infrastructure and Projects Authority and other partners to identify, plan and deliver appropriate skills and training interventions across its sectors in line with the latest labour market intelligence.
3. Deliver strategic, cross-industry initiatives to ensure a steady supply of skilled labour for industry employers. The ECITB should drive investment in digitally-enabled training and assessment to future proof skills delivery, including through the Connected Competence digital pilot to standardise training and competency requirements across the site workforce, aiding collaboration and driving efficiency
4. Prepare the workforce for the transition to net zero carbon emissions, including identifying skills needs and developing training interventions to equip learners with the skills and knowledge they will need to deliver decarbonisation projects. The Government commits to engaging closely with ECITB on net zero skills, including through the work of the Green Jobs taskforce in which ECITB is represented.
5. The ECITB should continue to work closely with industry to develop skills solutions to the Industrial Strategy Grand Challenges, and deliver the skills components of relevant sector deals, in particular nuclear and offshore wind.
6. Help the industry to tackle current and future skills issues, with a primary focus on increasing the diversity of their workforce, by delivering skills interventions that actively support employers to increase inclusion and widen participation.
7. Engage with the apprenticeships programme and develop training that best meets their needs, supporting the implementation of the new engineering and manufacturing T levels and the provision of industry placements.
8. Continue to work collaboratively with industry to determine how levy funds can be best used to meet current and future skills needs. This builds on successfully achieving consensus on proposals for the 2020 Levy Order.

You will also want to consider actions for future years, including whether the scope of the ECITB remains relevant to modern industry practices.

My officials will be in contact in coming months to rationalise the timing for issuing future letters so that they align more effectively with your business planning processes and timelines.

We will continue to provide sponsorship support to you, working closely with you to continuously improve the arrangements. This will include, doing what we can to remove any barriers preventing you meeting your objectives such as facilitating engagement with policy teams.

Please continue to use your quarterly strategic performance reviews to keep my officials updated on the delivery of your three-year business plan (2020-23) and implementation of the ECITB Strategy 2020-22.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Business and Industry, Jamie Hepburn MSP, Fiona Hyslop MSP, Julie James AM and the FE Commissioner.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gillian', with a large, stylized flourish above it.

Gillian Keegan MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Apprenticeships and Skills