



2020-0060661GKPO

Gillian Keegan MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Apprenticeships and Skills

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Jan Ellis
Chief Executive, Career Development Institute
By email: jan.ellis@thecdi.net

02 February 2021

Dear Ms Ellis

Thank you so much for your letter of 22 October about your concerns around the funding arrangements for the National Careers Service. I am sorry for the delay in responding to you.

I agree that careers advice and guidance is more important now than ever, which is why the Chancellor announced an additional £32 million for the National Careers Service (NCS) in July.

The NCS is available to anyone in England over the age of 13. People can access professional careers advice via the NCS website at: tinyurl.com/YXKLQAAE. The Service in the community is focussed on supporting those who would most benefit from intensive careers advice and guidance. These generally fall into one of six priority groups. We expect there will be a significant increase in demand within these groups from rising unemployment as a result of COVID-19, and we must ensure that resources continue to be focused where they are most needed.

The NCS website includes help to understand skills, information on how to find work or apprenticeships, identify skills gaps and other learning opportunities. There is support with interview techniques and specific content including understanding the working world during this time. This can be supported further by speaking to an adviser via telephone or web chat. The telephone support is provided by qualified careers advisers who are based in their local community and have knowledge of the local labour market.

The NCS contracts are funded based on outcomes payments. The contractors earn their funding by achieving outcomes for customers and the funding covers all the costs of delivering the Service.

Between April 2020 and October 2020, the Service was repurposed to include additional support focused on immediate areas of need, including support for pupils, parents, and carers, building local and national partnerships, and supporting furloughed workers amongst others.

The government is committed to ensuring that no person is left behind following COVID-19, and I thought it would be helpful to give you information about the targeted Plan for Jobs. As part of the Plan and the challenges posed to economic and working priorities, outcome payments were increased where a job or learning outcome has been achieved (for people in both the priority and non-priority groups). This commenced in October 2020 and will remain in place until the end of March 2021. Contractors have welcomed these increased payments which will help them to build capacity as they recruit and train more advisers. The Plan comprises:

- Kickstart Scheme – £2 billion fund to create hundreds of thousands of high quality six-month work placements aimed at those aged 16-24 who are on Universal Credit and are deemed to be at risk of long-term unemployment
- An additional £32 million funding for the NCS over the next two years so that 269,000 more people in England can receive personalised advice on training and work
- High quality traineeships for young people – an additional £111 million this year for traineeships in England, to fund high quality work placements and training for 16-24 year olds
- Payments for employers who hire new apprentices – a new payment of £2,000 to employers in England for each new apprentice they hire aged under 25, and a £1,500 payment for each new apprentice they hire aged 25 and over, from 1st August 2020 to 31st January 2021.
- High value courses for school and college leavers – £101 million for the 2020-21 academic year to give all 18-19 year olds in England the opportunity to study targeted high value Level 2 and 3 courses when employment opportunities are not available to them
- Expanded Youth Offer – an increase in the intensive support offered by DWP across the UK to young jobseekers, to including all those aged 18-24 in the Intensive Work Search group in Universal Credit
- £895 million to enhance work search support by doubling the number of work coaches in Jobcentre Plus before the end of the financial year across the UK
- Expansion of the Work and Health Programme – up to £95 million this year to expand the scope of the Work and Health Programme across the UK to introduce additional voluntary support in the autumn for those on benefits that have been unemployed for more than three months
- £40 million to fund private sector capacity to introduce a job finding support service across the UK in the autumn. This online, one-to-one service will help those who have been unemployed for less than three months to improve their chances of finding employment
- An increase of £150 million in funding for the Flexible Support Fund; and

- New funding for sector-based work academies – an additional £17 million this year to triple the number of sector-based work academy placements in England in order to provide vocational training and guaranteed interviews for more people, helping them gain the skills needed for the jobs available in their local area.

The NCS has always had constructive collaborative arrangements with DWP at local and national level. Careers advisers add value to a range of activities, from joint webinars and presentations tailored to specific audience needs (ranging from youth hubs, youth mentoring circles, specific support for those not in education, employment or training, joint presentations, sector based work academies and virtual job fairs), as well as supporting employers with skills needs analyses and tailoring careers advice and guidance for older workers.

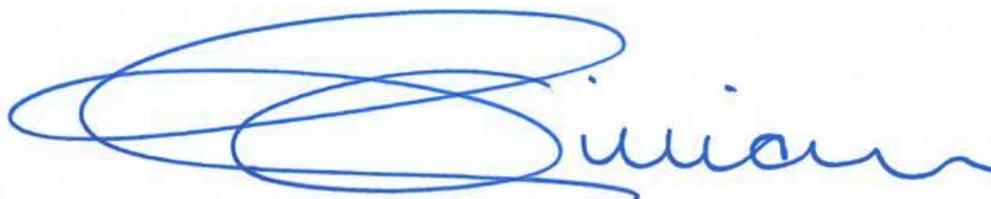
The NCS continues to work closely with DWP across the broad range of support programmes to provide the best tailored support for customers. Throughout, work coaches can point to the National Careers Service website or telephone support for those customers who are most likely to need light touch careers support. They can also refer those who need more in-depth careers advice or guidance to a careers adviser.

We will keep this package of support under review and assess its impact.

Finally, thank you for your kind invitation to meet and to discuss this matter further. One of my officials will be in touch to set up a meeting in the coming weeks.

Thank you for writing on this important matter. I would be grateful if you would share my response with your co-signatories.

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