



GOVERNMENT WHIPS' OFFICE
HOUSE OF LORDS
LONDON SW1A 0PW

Telephone 020 7219 3131

www.lordswhips.org.uk

holgovernmentwhips@parliament.uk

LORD PARKINSON OF WHITLEY BAY

020 7219 3778

14 July 2020

Dear Ros,

During the debate on 2 July 2020 on the Higher Education (Fee Limits and Student Support) (England) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020, I promised to write to you in order to respond to the questions you raised.

You asked about the process of bidding for the 10,000 additional places in excess of the student number control. You also asked who is assessing condition B1 about course design, or condition B4 about qualifications holding value over time, given the changes to the economy and teaching methods that may result from the coronavirus pandemic. Conditions B1 and B4 are ongoing conditions of registration and, as such, are monitored and enforced by the regulator, the Office for Students. However, for the purpose of bids for the additional 10,000 places, the Department for Education considered whether bidding providers were subject to any specific conditions related to conditions B1-B5 at the time of their application.

Secondly, you asked whether there is an appeals process for institutions which feel unfairly treated, to raise timely concerns. As I explained in the debate, the Department has considered – and will continue to consider – representations from providers in relation to the student number control policy and processes on a case-by-case basis.

Thirdly, you asked how the Government assesses the impact of using student loan data, which omit those who apply late. The Government will be considering these data after the two main start dates in the academic year and at a point when the vast majority of students will have applied for student finance. When monitoring student number controls, comparable data sets will be used.

Fourthly, you indicated your concerns about the possible impact on students from widening participation categories, and asked whether the Government would consider exempting small and specialist providers. The methodology and scope for the application of student number controls has already been set out. However, set out during the debate, the Government wants to ensure that university places are available to everyone who is qualified by ability and attainment to pursue them and who wish to do so. We expect that higher education providers will continue to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds to take their part in higher education, and officials at the Department for Education are working with the sector to identify what steps may be necessary to help them do so.

Finally, you asked whether the Government might consider exempting the smallest specialist higher education institutions. It will not, but the exemptions which have been agreed can be

found in the published guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-number-controls>

Many thanks for your contribution to the debate and for raising these matters; I hope this response has been useful, and will place a copy in the library of the House for other Noble Lords to consult as well.

With best wishes,



Parkinson of Whitley Bay

LORD PARKINSON OF WHITLEY BAY

The Baroness Altmann CBE
House of Lords