



**Baroness Berridge of the Vale of Catmose**

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Lord Storey  
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Dear Mike

I am writing to you following the Oral Statement Repeat on the Skills for Jobs white paper on Tuesday 26 January.

The role of the Further Education Commissioner and his team is to work with colleges to improve the quality of education for learners, strengthen financial resilience, improve the quality of leadership and reduce the risk of colleges requiring interventions. The Commissioner and his team will undertake formal intervention activities where serious weaknesses and risk of failure have been identified. They may consider estates issues as part of their work with colleges, but they do not oversee or support the FE estate as a whole.

On Universal Credit entitlements, people can take part in eight weeks of full-time learning and maintain their entitlement to benefit to assist their search for work. There is no restriction on part-time learning that supports a journey towards employment for claimants in the intensive worksearch group of Universal Credit. For people who have particular vulnerabilities and are at risk of long-term unemployment, that period of training can be longer.

Our reforms will increase the number of people with crucial higher technical qualifications, that will help boost productivity and give them better earning prospects. Research shows men with a higher technical (level 4) qualification earn on average £5,100 more at age 30 than those with a degree (level 6). For women achieving a higher technical (level 5) qualification, the difference is £2,700.

I will place a copy of this letter in the House Libraries.

**ELIZABETH BERRIDGE**

**PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE**