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Title: Education Panel - Skills for Jobs White Paper

Executive Summary

At the London Assembly Education Panel meeting on 10 March 2021, the Panel resolved:

That authority be delegated to the Chair, in consultation with party Group Lead Members, to agree any output from the discussion.

Following consultation with party Group Lead members, Jennette Arnold OBE AM, the Chair of the Education Panel, agreed the Panel's letter to the Secretary of State for Education, The Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP, as an output to the Q&A on 'Adult Education Budget'. The letter is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Decision

That the letter to the Secretary of State for Education be agreed, as attached at **Appendix 1**.

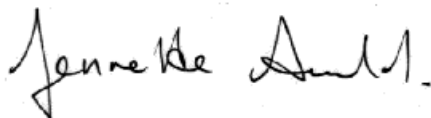
Assembly Member

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature

Date 07/04/2021



Printed Name

Jennette Arnold OBE AM

Decision by an Assembly Member under Delegated Authority

Notes:

1. The Lead Officer should prepare this form for signature by relevant Members of the Assembly to record any instance where the Member proposes to take action under a specific delegated authority. The purpose of the form is to record the advice received from officers, and the decision made.
2. **The 'background' section (below) should be used to include an indication as to whether the information contained in / referred to in this Form should be considered as exempt under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA), or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). If so, the specimen Annexe (attached below) should be used. If this form does deal with exempt information, you must submit both parts of this form for approval together.**

Background and proposed next steps:

At the London Assembly Education Panel meeting on 10 March 2021, the Panel resolved:

That authority be delegated to the Chair, in consultation with party Group Lead Members, to agree any output from the discussion.

Following consultation with party Group Lead members, Jennette Arnold OBE AM, the Chair of the Education Panel, agreed the Panel's letter to the Secretary of State for Education, The Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP, as an output to the Q&A on 'Adult Education Budget'. The letter is attached as **Appendix 1**.

A copy of the letter will be reported back to the Education Panel at its next formal meeting.

Confirmation that appropriate delegated authority exists for this decision

Signed by Committee

Services

Date 17/03/21

L.ODANYE

Print Name: Lamide Odanye

Tel: x1307

Financial implications NOT REQUIRED

NOTE: Finance comments and signature are required only where there are financial implications arising or the potential for financial implications.

Signed by Finance

N/A

DateN/a.....

Print Name

N/A

Tel:N/a.....

Legal implications

The Chair of the Education Panel has the power to make the decision set out in this report.

Signed by Legal



Date 18 March 2021

Print Name

Emma Strain, Monitoring Officer

Tel: X 4399

Supporting detail/List of Consultees:

Tony Arbour AM and David Kurten AM.

Public Access to Information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the FoIA, or the EIR and will be made available on the GLA Website, usually within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** this form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

Part 1 – Deferral**Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO**

Until what date: (a date is required if deferring)

Part 2 – Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA or EIR should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form - NO**Lead Officer/Author**

Signed

Daniel Tattersall

Date

17/03/21

Print Name

Daniel Tattersall

Tel:

07783 05825

Job Title

Senior Policy Advisor

Countersigned by
Executive Director

E. Williams

Date
18.03.2021

Print Name

.....
Ed Williams

Tel: X4399



Jennette Arnold OBE AM
Chair of the Education Panel

Gavin Williamson
Secretary of State for Education
(Sent by email)

17 March 2021

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to you on behalf of the London Assembly Education Panel to share findings from our recent meeting, where we discussed the Adult Education Budget and future reforms to further education. On 10 March 2021, the Panel heard from expert witnesses about the challenges faced by further education providers due to COVID-19, and also focused on the future of adult education in London in the context of the reforms proposed to post-16 education by the Department for Education's (DfE) Skills for Jobs White Paper.

The Panel heard from: Andrew Gower (Principal, Morley College), Asfa Sohail (Principal, Lewisham College), Mary Vine-Morris (London Area Director and National Lead Employment, Association of Colleges), Jules Pipe (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills, GLA) and Michelle Cuomo-Boorer (Assistant Director - Skills & Employment, GLA).

The Panel welcomes the White Paper, and the focus on further education that it brings from the Government. As Mary Vine-Morris (London Area Director and National Lead Employment, Association of Colleges) said, "we genuinely absolutely welcome the recognition of the role that colleges can play and that further education can play more generally in the world of the skills for jobs". There are, however, five issues that the Panel would like to make you aware of, following our discussion.

Investment

The proposed reforms must be backed by sufficient investment. In previous investigations, the Panel has heard that further education funding has reduced significantly over previous years. An increase in investment is needed to ensure that sufficient learning opportunities are available and providers have sufficient capacity to meet the needs of learners who are otherwise at risk of being turned away.

Structures

The Skills for Jobs White Paper proposes reforms to education structures that sit alongside the structures currently in place in London. The Panel is keen to emphasise that the proposed reforms must be complementary to the adult education responsibilities that have been devolved to London.

Digital learning

In light of the pandemic, there has been a great deal of disruption across the education sector at all levels. For adult education providers, the pandemic has meant a reduced or different kind of offer of support for learners and the need to digitally upskill or re-skill themselves. COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of digital learning, with many providers having to scale up or repurpose their resources to deliver courses online. This also shone a light on digital exclusion and digital poverty amongst learners, an issue that was present before the crisis.

The Panel heard that there could be a greater emphasis on digital learning for the future in the White Paper, especially given the challenge that moving courses online has posed for providers in the last year. Andrew Gower (Principal, Morley College) told us that “with digital matters being much more present for us in life and in work, all things digital will continue to be important. So, too, is some innovation funding or some sort of developmental support for colleges to somehow crystallise the developments that we have rapidly put in place”. Digital skills present great opportunities, not only for the learner but also for the economy as a whole and it is important that this is recognised in legislative reform.

Lifelong Loan Entitlement

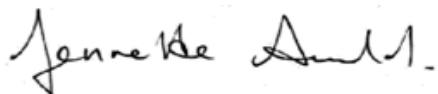
The Panel recognises that the White Paper proposes to implement the Lifelong Loan Entitlement from 2025, which would provide learners with the equivalent of four years’ worth of post-18 education to use over their lifetime. This funding would be available for modules at higher technical and degree levels regardless of whether courses are provided in colleges or universities. The Panel heard that it would be advantageous for learners if the Lifelong Loan Entitlement was brought in earlier than 2025, as providers are currently experiencing a significantly reduced number of learners engaging in part-time higher education as the funding to support them is currently not available.

SEND learners

‘Putting employers at the heart of post-16 skills’ is embedded within the proposed reforms to further education. Learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) require continued support to acquire skills. The Panel recognises that DfE says it will ensure that people with SEND continue to gain direct work-related skills alongside maths and English to increase their employability. As the reforms include an increased focus on involving employers, the Panel believes there is a need to assist employers in supporting SEND learners, alongside the education reforms proposed in the White Paper. As Asfa Sohail (Principal, Lewisham College) told the Panel, “we would appreciate it if we could have some national initiative or local initiative where we can start to upskill employers”.

I hope that you will take the issues we raise into account as the Government develops its proposals for reforming further education. If you would like to engage with the Panel further on these matters, please copy your response to the Panel's Committee Assistant, Lamide Odanye, lamide.odanye@london.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennette Arnold". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and 'A'.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM
Chair of the Education Panel