



Russell George AM
Chair of the Committee for Economy Infrastructure and Skills.

18 November 2016

Dear Russell

During my attendance at Committee on Thursday 3 November I undertook to provide two pieces of further information on funding for the National Occupational Standards framework and a budget breakdown for the employability and skills budgets.

Funding for the National Occupational Standards Framework

Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland consider National Occupational Standards (NOS) to be essential and in need of being maintained. Our funding is part of a tri-lateral arrangement to ensure that we continue to use NOS to underpin our respective skills and apprenticeship systems, backed by employers and key stakeholders across Wales. This is in order to ensure the portability and transferability of occupational competence of learners across regions, nations and sectors. I provide a Grant in Aid funding contribution of £300,000 per annum towards the collective commissioning of NOS by the three Devolved Administrations, which provides the most cost-effective method of supporting NOS activities. If there is a reduction in NOS funding, there will be insufficient capacity to undertake the necessary reviews and developments required to keep the vocational education system up to date. Any reduction would also contravene the existing Memorandum of Understanding and the joint commitment made recently by the Devolved Skills Ministers to continue to support NOS.

Budget allocations for employability programmes

As I mentioned at Committee, work is underway within my portfolio to develop an employability plan setting out the actions government will take to deliver our Taking Wales Forward commitment to reshape employability support. The statement I made on 15 November provided further details on the timetable for developing the employability plan and the themes it will focus on. I remain on course to publish the new plan later this year and as a result of this ongoing work, budget allocations for

individual programmes will not be confirmed until later this financial year. I will provide the Committee with this information as soon as it is available.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'J'.

Julie James AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Sgiliau a Gwyddoniaeth
Minister for Skills and Science