

Mr David Willetts, MP
Minister of State for Universities and Science
Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

18th March 2011

Dear David

Funding crisis for careers services in England

I noted with interest your speech at the **Guardian Higher Education Summit**, particularly about university students not having the skills and qualifications employers are looking for.

Perhaps before they get to university they should be receiving high-quality career information, advice and guidance to help them with subject and career choices. But... there are clear challenges with this notwithstanding the Coalition Government's commitment to establish an all-age careers service in England.

As you may know a delegation from the UK Careers Sector Strategic Forum met with John Hayes, and more recently met with Simon Hughes in his role as Government Advocate for Access to Education, about the funding crisis affecting the delivery of career IAG to young people in schools. Given the current closure of Connexions services across the country, estimates show that up to 2 million young people will not receive careers services. This could have a harmful impact on their further and higher education choices, and as I've mentioned to you previously... even though the new HE funding system may well be a "good and fair" deal, its the **£9k sticker price** that may put many young people off from going to uni!

See attached the Briefing Notes we submitted to John and Simon and the notes that we took of the meeting. I know that you still have a strong interest in careers education and guidance and so wish to keep you informed of developments on our side. You will see that in the notes from the meeting with Simon that I refer to there being 90 days to 'save' the careers service. I strongly encourage you to work with Ministerial colleagues to:

- ensure that we can secure the £200 million or so of monies 'allocated' to local authorities for Connexions;
- ensure a transition plan is developed for the transition from the current arrangements to the new all-age service;
- ensure young people and their parents/guardians get the message about how the new student funding for HE works - the BBC findings are rather worrying on this front - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-12767850>

We would welcome the opportunity to brief you and other Ministerial colleagues about these issues.

Best regards



Keith Herrmann
Convenor
UK Careers Sector Strategic Forum

Chair: Sir Martin Harris

Convening Committee: Keith Herrmann (Convenor), Ian Borkett (TUC-unionlearn), Vivienne Brown (Skills Development Scotland), Margaret Dane (AGCAS), Dr Deirdre Hughes (Careers Profession Alliance)
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cc:

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