

Directors of Children's Services of Upper Tier Local Authorities

20 July 2010

PL/Jul/12/sb

Dear Colleague

### **Simplifying Funding for 16-19 Education and Training**

I attach a copy of a letter I have just sent to all Chief Executives about the new funding arrangements for 16-19 education and training which were announced by the Secretary of State for Education yesterday.

The Secretary of State has reaffirmed the importance of the local authority role but, as part of a wider set of changes designed to simplify the system, has now asked the YPLA to make payments directly to general Further Education colleges, Sixth Form Colleges and other 16-19 providers.

My letter to Chief Executives sets out the background to this change – and the immediate steps which the YPLA is now taking to put in place payment arrangements for the 2010/11 year. But there are two additional points I wanted to emphasise to Directors of Children's Services, conscious that it was only a couple of weeks ago that John Freeman and I were sharing a platform at your annual conference:

- The first is that this does not make the YPLA either a commissioning or planning body. It is highly significant that the statutory duties for 16-18 year olds rest with local authorities. The phrases that are used in the Secretary of State's letter to describe the LA role as 'identifying gaps, enabling new provision and developing the market' are vital. The YPLA's role is to support you in these functions and we will be working with partners to construct the simplest possible system which enables your role;

- Secondly, I wanted to flag up the importance of another part of the Secretary of State's letter which was about the important role of local authorities in improving arrangements for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. I have always seen this as a significant potential gain of the changes last April, with the focus on joining up pre-16 and with wider local services. I am therefore very pleased that this has been given added emphasis and focus in this announcement.

I look forward to working with you on these new changes and want to reaffirm again my commitment to working closely and constructively with local authority colleagues on the 16-19 agenda.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Lauener', with a long, sweeping flourish at the end.

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