



Ministry  
of Justice

Rory Stewart OBE MP  
Minister of State for Justice

Professor Tom Schuller  
The Foundry  
17 Oval Way  
London  
SE11 5RR

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*Dear Professor Schuller*

### NATIONAL CAREERS SERVICE IN CUSTODY CONTRACT


Thank you for your letter of 16 January and your previous correspondence of the 11 January, and for taking the time to share your concerns regarding the department's decision not to extend the National Careers Service in Custody contract when it reaches its end on 31 March 2018.

The decision to ask the Department for Education not to extend the National Careers Service contract in custody for a further six months was not taken lightly. We recognise the hard work and commitment of many National Careers Service staff and the support they have given prisoners.

As you will be aware, Dame Sally Coates noted in her 2016 review of Prison Education that the National Careers Service was delivering a service in an increasingly crowded environment, with multiple employment advice and support services operating in custody and through the gate. The review also noted prisoners were regularly being asked the same questions by different providers. The Work and Pensions committee in their review of support for ex-offenders (2016) highlighted the need to improve join up between learning and skills and employment advice and support services operating in prison and through the gate.

Our desire therefore is to put in place an alternative approach to the commissioning and delivery of information, advice and guidance that will encourage joined up delivery of learning and employment guidance and support. This will look to support the prisoner from the beginning of their sentence and throughout their journey. We will continue to work closely with the experienced OLASS providers, the DWP work coaches and the Community Rehabilitation Companies to provide a range of employment support and guidance services for prisoners while we take forward these reforms.

I understand that my predecessor arranged for the Prisoner Learning Alliance to bring their expertise to the development of new prison education policy more formally, and we would welcome your constructive engagement and advice on this issue as we progress at pace. I thank you again for taking the time to write, and look forward to our working closely together in the future as we develop a system that ensures education in every prison can meet the needs of their learners, and that every prisoner can thrive both in prison, and through the gate on their release.

*RAF wls*  


RORY STEWART MP