

Julie James AC / AM  
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Sgiliau a Thechnoleg  
Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref: MA-P/JJ/0582/15

William Graham AM  
Chair, Enterprise and Business Committee

12<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Dear William,

### **Report on Employment Opportunities for People Over 50**

Thank you for your letter dated 21 October regarding my recent attendance at the Enterprise and Business Committee to discuss the recommendations from the report on employment opportunities for people over 50. I am glad that members found the session helpful and productive.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that the rationale for accepting in principle a large proportion of the recommendations made by Committee is because I am taking a pragmatic approach to understanding how the recommendations fit with what is already being taken forward through our overarching employment and skills policy.

Over the past year, I have attended Committee meetings to give evidence on the subject of older people in Wales and I fully recognise the issues which have been discussed and later presented within the Committee's report. My most recent meeting with the Older People's Commissioner for Wales was extremely useful and I am confident that we share the same perspective in how best to take forward a number of the recommendations made by the Committee. I am holding a further meeting with the Commissioner next month.

One of the areas I am particularly keen to progress is the issue of labour market intelligence which is also raised within your letter. On this subject, I can confirm that there is no intention to rely on the Older People's Commissioner or the third sector to fill any gaps in existing intelligence. At this stage I am seeking to work with the Older People's Commissioner and the various groups involved to scope what are the gaps in existing intelligence before assessing how best these gaps could be filled. I believe that getting the labour market intelligence right will provide the evidence base on which to inform future policy actions and on which to consider other recommendations made by the Committee.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

On the particular recommendation on taking forward a skills strategy for older people in Wales, I remain of the view that producing separate versions of our policies for different groups could potentially take away from the work which is already underway. A more practical approach, which I intend to implement, is to understand how we better communicate our policies to older people in Wales and how we promote the value of older people within the workforce to employers. As such, I have already agreed to support a communications plan working with the Ageing Well in Wales Expert Advisory Group which is responsible for reviewing opportunities for learning and employment for older people. My officials will work with this group to develop communication channels for promoting the services on offer aimed at engaging older people and employers with training.

Finally, the points you raise about the Apprenticeship Levy and devolution of employment support are duly noted and I welcome the opportunity to come back to Committee next year to discuss how our policy actions are evolving.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie James". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Julie James AC / AM**

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