

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

10<sup>th</sup> November 2020

LONDON SW1A 0AA

*Dear Constance,*

**RE: THE UNION LEARNING FUND (ULF).**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns regarding the Union Learning Fund; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

Funding for the ULF will cease in March 2021 with capital redirected elsewhere to support investment in skills and further education. I think it is right that Ministers regularly review how skills and training are funded, to make sure taxpayers' money is invested as efficiently as possible and I can assure you that every penny of the funding provided will be reinvested into further education, skills and retraining.

Ministers are committed to 'levelling up' across the whole of the UK and have emphasised the importance of skills and training to the fulfilment of this ambition. The Prime Minister recently set out a series of reforms to ensure everyone can get the skills they need. These reforms will be backed by continued investment in college buildings and facilities – including over £1.5 billion in capital funding to ensure the further education estate is fit for purpose.

One of the key reforms will be the introduction of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee. Under the guarantee, adults without an A-Level or equivalent qualification will be offered a free, fully funded college course at a time and location of their choice. The economy has incurred substantial change as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic and I am pleased that Ministers have responded by developing a long-term skills plan to ensure that as work changes, people can retrain, upskill and find new, well-paid jobs.

Moreover, a new online learning platform has also been launched to help people upskill during the pandemic. The 'Skills Toolkit' will provide free digital and numeracy courses to boost job prospects at this challenging time and places particular emphasis on the skills that businesses need. Extensive guidance is also available online via the National Careers Service website to help individuals find free online learning courses across a variety of disciplines. This can be found here:  
<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/find-a-course/where-to-find-free-online-learning>.

I hope that the above has reassured you of the Government's commitment to, and continued investment in skills, training and development, especially as our economy bounces back from the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*With best wishes,*

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**  
**CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**