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Our ref: MC2021/76539

12 October 2021

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Dear Councillor Laing

Thank you for your letter of 20 September to the Secretary of State on behalf of the Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Plymouth City Council about the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Kickstart Scheme. I am replying to you as the Minister for Employment.

I write to you with the latest update and I hope that you will find the following comments to be helpful.

I would firstly like to thank you for all the work that Plymouth City Council has done to support local employers to participate in the DWP Kickstart Scheme. I recognise the huge difference that this has made to both the career prospects of young people and to businesses in Plymouth.

I can confirm that we will continue supporting young people into Kickstart jobs to 31 March 2022. This means that young people at risk of long-term unemployment will continue to be able to start Kickstart jobs until the end of March next year - giving them access to employment support and work experience through employers up and down the country.

The window for new applications to the Kickstart Scheme from employers and variations from Gateway Organisations will close on 17 December 2021. No further applications will be considered after this date.

Since the DWP Kickstart Scheme launched in September 2020, employers up and down the country have created superb jobs for young people who have been hardest hit by the economic impact of the pandemic.

Employers and Gateway Organisations have displayed great enthusiasm to get involved with the Scheme and demonstrated their commitment to making it a success. As of 22 September, there have been over 295,000 jobs approved by the DWP for the Kickstart Scheme with more being approved every day.

We know this can be a challenging time for many businesses, but as we look ahead to a brighter future, we are encouraging employers to invest in the next generation of talent and join the DWP Kickstart Scheme.

DWP Kickstart Scheme Gateway Organisations are and continue to be important to the success of the DWP Kickstart Scheme because they often have connections to the local community. Their support will help us to ensure that as many employers as possible are aware of the opportunity to participate in the DWP Kickstart Scheme and can have support to be involved if they wish.

In addition, in enabling more small employers and sole traders to be able to access the DWP Kickstart Scheme we can make sure that the young person has the ability to get involved in jobs across a broad range of sectors.

We have recently improved the assessment process to allow us to consider an application in full to make a decision more quickly, which in turn should lead to more rapid employment outcomes for young people. We have also continued to improve and expand our guidance to make sure that employers know what we are looking for when assessing applications, for example, producing multimedia products that provide tips for making a successful application. This guidance is available on the Government website at: <https://kickstart.campaign.gov.uk/>.

As of 8 April, we now have over 900 approved DWP Kickstart Scheme Gateway Organisations, many offering strong support to young people as well as employers. Local Authorities and Chambers of Commerce from right across Great Britain have signed up to act as DWP Kickstart Gateway Organisations and are free to collect applications in a way that aligns with any local plans.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mims', written in a cursive style.

**Mims Davies MP**

**Minister for Employment**