



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Graham Young  
Education and Skills Funding Agency  
Department for Education  
FE Directorate  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Floor 1, Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

6<sup>th</sup> February 2019  
Ref: 001/LC/001/CL

Dear Graham,

As the Member of Parliament for Brighton Pavilion, I'm writing regarding the proposal to recognise Dv8, who are based in my constituency, as a niche provider for learners.

I am aware of Dv8's most recent Ofsted report, and do of course recognise that there are a number of areas where improvement is needed. However, having visited Dv8 in the past, I've seen for myself some of the incredible work they do supporting young people who might struggle to access education via mainstream providers in the city. Recognising Dv8 as a niche provider will reflect their current educational offer, and allow them space to tackle the problems identified, without jeopardising their future sustainability. I fully support the proposal and hope the Education and Skills Funding Agency will (ESFA) agree to it.

Over the last week a number of my constituents have written to me to highlight the vital work Dv8 do to support young people in the city, including a constituent with a 17 year old son who has a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome, receives Personal Independence Payments (PIP), and has an Education Care and Health Plan (EHCP) in place. He struggled in a more mainstream educational setting and she told me that:

"As a parent, I am thrilled and relieved that my son is progressing so well at Dv8 Sussex. I recently attended an Annual Review there for my son's EHCP, and I cannot praise the staff highly enough. They treat my son respectfully as an individual, and they go above and beyond to see that his needs are met. He is happy and settled and achieving at Dv8.

My son can only cope within a small educational setting. He is too vulnerable to attend a large college setting and would not cope. I feel that the closure of small specialist educational placements discriminates against vulnerable young people

Please reply to;

Caroline Lucas MP

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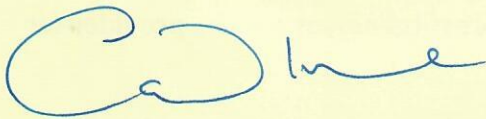
like my son who are unable to cope in a larger setting. I feel strongly, that in our society there should not be a "one size fits all" educational pathway."

I'm aware that Brighton and Hove City Council share my view that Dv8 are an important education provider in the city, catering for learners with more complex needs and offering courses and a learning environment not replicated elsewhere locally. The council are working closely with Dv8 to improve the inadequate Ofsted grading.

The report itself notes that, 'staff focus relentlessly on eliminating barriers to participation for young people who have previously not succeeded in education', and also that, 'learners gain in confidence and most move onto further education when they finish their courses'. This reinforces the important role that Dv8 plays in the city, in particular for young people who have struggled in larger learning environments, and those who might otherwise find themselves NEET.

I hope that the ESFA fully take into account the hugely beneficial work that Dv8 do to support young people in the local community to access, and enjoy, learning and gaining new skills, and that they are recognised as a niche provider accordingly.

Yours sincerely,



Caroline Lucas MP

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