September Guarantee

I am delighted to tell you that DCSF is announcing today that 94.2% of 16 olds have said that they intend to continue in learning and have been made an offer to do so under the September Guarantee. In addition, 79.7% of 17 year olds who had previously undertaken one-year or short courses, or who were not in education, employment or training, were also made an offer. We have liaised with your Press Office and are issuing a Press Notice today, a copy of which is attached.

I want to express my thanks to you and your teams in the National Office and locally, as well as to Colleges and training providers themselves, for the contribution you have made to this achievement by ensuring that sufficient and suitable provision is available to meet young people’s needs.

This result is evidence of the strong progress that we are making towards our ambition for all young people to continue in education or training until at least the age of 18, gaining the skills and experiences they need to succeed in further study and the world of work. This is all the more important given the historic passage of the Education and Skills Act that will raise the age of participation to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015.

I am sure that you will agree that there is more to do to support every young person to participate. Figures provided by each local authority area are attached, and you will see that they show a wide variation in performance, particularly at age 17. You will want to use the figures attached to discuss with partners what more can be done next year.

department for children, schools and families
I am pleased that LSC colleagues are helping my officials to review delivery in 2008 and consider further improvements for 2009. There was a wide variation in local performance this year, and I do want to see this tackled next year.

Another challenge that I am particularly aware of is the need to make more Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning opportunities available to meet demand from both 16 and 17 year olds and I would urge you to do all you can, in conjunction with the National Apprenticeship Service, to bring this about.

Thank you again to you and your colleagues for your support this year.

BEVERLEY HUGHES