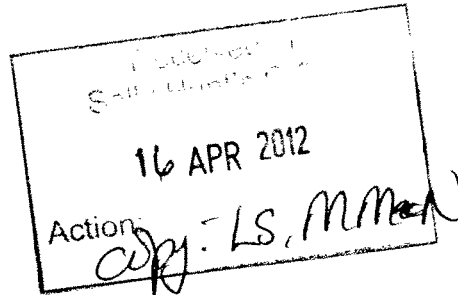


**John Hayes MP**

Minister of State for Further Education, Skills  
and Lifelong Learning



Sally Hunt  
General Secretary  
University and College Union  
Carlow Street  
London  
NW1 7LH

Our ref: 289973

Your ref:

11 April 2012

Dear Sally,

Thank you for your letter of 23 March, regarding A4e contract awards for London and East of England prisons.

You mention that you have written similarly to Geoff Russell at the Skills Funding Agency (the Agency) and you acknowledge that the issues you raise about the prison education procurement are for him as Chief Executive of the Agency. I can not intervene, as you suggest, in the Agency's process for awarding the contracts to commence in August.

I have, however, been clear all along, including in response to a number of Parliamentary Questions, that it is vital that I and my Ministerial colleagues, Parliament, the Agency, learners, teaching staff – your members – and the taxpayer can each have confidence in the way public funds are spent. The Agency has stated publicly that it has not entered into any formal or binding agreements with preferred bidders for the current round of prison learning contracts ("OLASS 4"), and that, should events indicate that A4e is not an appropriate provider, the Agency will refrain from contracting with them.

Yours sincerely,

Senior Private Secretary  
**JOHN HAYES**