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Anne Milton
Department of Education
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
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18th January 2018

Dear Anne,

I am writing to you as Skills Minister about the deepening concerns as to the impact on both apprentices, skills providers and employers of the compulsory liquidation of Carillion.

In PMQ's yesterday my colleague Catherine McKinnell raised the apprenticeships issue with the Prime Minister, who however underlined this matter specifically was being dealt with by you – hence my writing now.

Because of the diverse and labyrinthine nature of Carillion's activities these have the possibility of spreading even wider than reported presently. As FE Week has pointed out using Government's own statistics, Carillion had 610 apprentices, all but 30 of them 16-18 – on level two in construction building framework.

While the swift action of CITB in agreeing to take on the training of Carillion apprentices is welcome, there are in the interim immediate questions about those young people learning skills at training centres run by Carillion. The reports today of dozens of young apprentices doing carpentry, bricklaying, painting and decorating, been turned away from one such centre in Sittingbourne in Kent are alarming. What steps are your officials and the ESFA taking to establish what is happening at other centres?

Carillion of course and their pyramid of companies set up under them cover many more areas than just construction – where apprentices and apprenticeships may be affected. The rail sector is particularly prominent – and it's disturbing that DfT has so far given no guarantees about the future not just of workers but also apprentices employed on many of the improvement and electrification schemes ongoing countrywide, including substantial numbers in the North-West electrification and other schemes – which affect my constituency in Blackpool and others.

What steps are you and DfE taking to underline this issue with DfT and what estimate have you made of the numbers of apprenticeships at risk?

The FSB have already expressed their concern that many small providers in the supply-chain to Carillion's activities may be in financial jeopardy because of the collapse. This will in turn impact also on training providers and colleges working in tandem with SME's. What are you and your officials doing to assess the potential hit that they and the skills sector could suffer as a result and what contingencies are you putting in place for this?

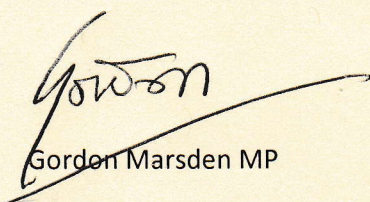


There will be many questions and lessons to be learnt about the events leading up to Carillion's collapse in the weeks ahead. It is crucial that in terms of the funding packages or other support that the Government needs to put in place, the claims of apprentices, apprenticeships, employers, colleges and skills providers loom large.

I trust and hope you and your Department will be robust in fighting that corner – and share with the stakeholders the priorities you are seeking to achieve in those support packages.

I look forward to your urgent reply.

Yours



Gordon Marsden MP