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My officials have conveyed to you my decision to no longer fund workforce development activity through the Children’s Workforce Development Council, to remove the NDPB status and to bring ongoing core activities into my Department. I have asked my officials to work closely with yours on a transition plan, setting out the timing for the transfer of functions and responsibilities. My expectation is that all such transfers will be completed by 2012. As part of this transition, it will be important to continue the work you are doing to secure employers’ engagement in workforce development.

As you are aware there is a commitment in the Coalition’s Programme for Government to reduce the number and cost of Arms Length Bodies and to ensure that central government departments are directly accountable. In this tough spending climate, it is essential that we reduce spending at the centre and target our efforts where they are most needed. I do believe that the NDPB model is no longer the most efficient and accountable way of meeting our aims.

I appreciate this news will come as a disappointment to you and all of those working in the Council and I want to reassure everyone concerned that my decision in no way reflects on the quality of CWDC’s work. On the contrary, I know that CWDC has made a significant contribution in leading workforce reform and improving life chances for children and young people throughout the country.

I very much appreciate what the Children’s Workforce Development Council has achieved since it was created in 2005. The Council should be proud of its work over the past five years and the significant progress that has been made.
CWDC has played a very important role in the development of the children, young people and families workforce in a number of areas - particularly in embedding integrated working and refreshing the common core of skills and knowledge for the workforce; delivery of the parenting support programme; the central role you have played in the development and delivery of the Social Work Reform Programme and in helping to build a high quality, diverse workforce of highly skilled early years practitioners as well as your role in the reform of a more skilled, competent and integrated young people’s workforce. I also recognise the successful and strong working relationships you have worked hard to forge with the other workforce NDPBs and other partners.

None of this would have been possible without the hard work, energy and dedication of all the people who work at the Council and for this I am most grateful. Please convey my thanks to all staff and reassure them that my Department will be working closely with CWDC Senior Managers to ensure the coming period is handled sensitively.

I am asking my officials to work closely with yours to produce a detailed transition plan which ensures that current remit activities and essential business is maintained. I would also like to ensure that, where possible, resources and expertise that have been developed remain accessible to the sector, to benefit the workforce and fulfill our commitment to value for money. We are still considering detailed allocations of funding following the Spending Review, and I will write again regarding the implications for CWDC’s programmes.

I understand this will be a very difficult time for all CWDC staff and for Jane Haywood and her Senior Management Team. I would like to put on record my personal thanks for the professional and dedicated way in which you, Jane and the Board have led the Council, and I trust that you will lead it in a similar manner in the transitional period ahead. In particular, I would like to record my gratitude to Jane for her impeccable leadership, professionalism and exceptionally effective approach to planning, which will position the Council well for the forthcoming challenges.

Yours, in gratitude,

MICHAEL GOVE