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11 January 2011

D Cllr Box

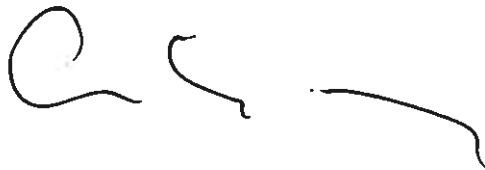
Thank you for your letters of 16 December 2010 to myself and the Minister of State for Business and Enterprise regarding local authorities and the European Social Fund. Please accept this letter as a reply on both our behalves.

I welcome your proposal to open discussions between the Local Government Association (LGA) and officials in the Department's European Social Fund (ESF) Division. Indeed, this has already been agreed in principle between our respective officials. Although the ESF is a national programme and needs to reflect and complement the Government's employment and skills priorities, it is important that the delivery of ESF funded provision does reflect local needs and circumstances. Local Authorities and other local partners have a key role to play in making sure that these local needs are taken into account.

The discussions and emerging recommendations will need to take into account the constraints on staff resources so that any arrangements that are developed are effective and efficient.

I am sure that the discussions will be positive, so please do go ahead and arrange the meeting as set out in your letter.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Chris Grayling', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP
Minister for Employment