

Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP
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Dear Claire,

Thank you for the opportunity to take questions from the Economy and Fair Work Committee at the Conveners' Group meeting on 28 September. As you will recall, I undertook to provide further information in relation to two of your questions, concerning the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) and Scottish Government investment in employability support.

I note that you recently wrote separately to the Deputy First Minister in relation to the first of these topics, delivery plans for NSET Programmes, and that he replied to you on 29 September in response to your question.

In relation to Scottish Government investment in employability support, the £53 million saving set out by the Deputy First Minister was intended as additional funding. However, I appreciate that stakeholders may be concerned following the announcement of a reduction in additional funding for this financial year. As the Minister for Just Transition, Employment and Fair Work informed the Economy and Fair Work Committee in his letter of 23 September, the impact of these savings decisions is that we will be unable to move forward with planned additional activity within employability to enhance available support for parents this year.

Parents will, however, continue to be supported as a priority group. For 2022-23, we have already allocated up to £59.43 million to be delivered through our No One Left Behind approach, which includes delivery of the Parental Employability Support Fund. For future years, the Resource Spending Review set out plans for year on year increases in employability and training spending. Decisions will be set out in our annual Budget later this year.

We will continue to work with Local Authorities and delivery partners to monitor the reach of services to inform the impact of funding and future delivery, in order to further strengthen our approach to the design and delivery of employability services for parents.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jez Lodge".A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nicola Sturgeon".

NICOLA STURGEON