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Dear Luke

Thank you for your letter of 20 November 2020 on behalf of a number of your constituents about the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Kickstart Scheme criteria concerning sole traders and partnerships. I apologise for the delay in replying.

Please pass on my thanks to your constituents for taking the time to raise this issue at your recent round table meeting. I write to you with the latest update and I hope that your constituents will find the following comments to be helpful.

Companies looking to offer roles to fewer than 30 applicants are still able to benefit from the DWP Kickstart Scheme by joining a bid made by a Gateway Organisation.

We have refined our approach to make it easier to allow small employers to participate by developing a Kickstart gateway model to accommodate these. We welcome the involvement of small employers in the DWP Kickstart Scheme. Small employers can apply through our growing number of approved gateways. This includes sole traders, who will often need to apply through a gateway that can provide a PAYE scheme (Gateway Direct). The Federation of Small Businesses in partnership with Adecco Working Ventures is one example of an approved gateway of this type and there are a number of other organisations developing similar plans.

Smaller employers will have support from the Gateway Organisation to create high quality roles and additional support so that young people get the most out of their placement, this also reduces the administrative burden falling on the small employer. The DWP has received significant interest from a wide range of bodies including local authorities, charities and trade/industry bodies looking to become Gateway Organisations.

Once employers have provided their company name, contact details and location the DWP employer team will get in touch within 48 hours to connect them with their local representative.

Gateway Organisations will provide businesses with help and guidance and manage the bidding process on their behalf – making it less labour intensive for small and medium sized employers (SMEs).

Local Authorities and Chambers of Commerce from right across Great Britain have signed up to act as Gateway Organisations and are free to collect bids in a way that aligns with any local plans.

We have published a list of organisations offering to work with smaller employers to participate in the DWP Kickstart Scheme as Gateway Organisations – the current list can be found on the Government website at: [www.gov.uk/guidance/find-someone-to-apply-for-a-kickstart-scheme-grant-on-your-behalf](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/find-someone-to-apply-for-a-kickstart-scheme-grant-on-your-behalf).

If a SME is unable to qualify for Kickstart funding, for example because the job is not additional, they can take advantage of a number of other schemes, such as apprenticeships, available to young people. Local Jobcentres are able to recommend the best schemes available in the area.

People wanting to participate in the DWP Kickstart Scheme should speak to their local Jobcentre Plus office or visit the government website. General information can be found at: [www.gov.uk/kickstart](http://www.gov.uk/kickstart) or on the following web pages:

- to check eligibility to apply for a grant through the Kickstart Scheme: [www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-can-apply-for-a-grant-through-the-kickstart-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-can-apply-for-a-grant-through-the-kickstart-scheme);
- to apply for a grant through the Kickstart Scheme: [www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-grant-through-the-kickstart-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-grant-through-the-kickstart-scheme);
- to check eligibility to apply for a grant as a representative of a group of employers through the Kickstart Scheme: [www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-can-apply-for-a-grant-as-a-representative-of-a-group-of-employers-through-the-kickstart-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-can-apply-for-a-grant-as-a-representative-of-a-group-of-employers-through-the-kickstart-scheme).



**Mims Davies MP**

**Minister for Employment**