

Julie James AS/MS
Y Cwnsler Cyffredinol a'r Gweinidog Cyflawni
Counsel General and Minister for Delivery



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref CG/00012/26

Penny Young
Interim Chair
UK Statistics Authority

chair@statistics.gov.uk

26 March 2026

Dear Penny Young,

I am writing in response to your letter of 12 March, concerning the Welsh Government's monitoring of progress against our target of creating 100,000 apprenticeships in this Senedd term.

Of course, we recognise the importance of the appropriate and transparent use of statistics. Clear and timely reporting of progress to the people of Wales is a key part of the accountability that drives our approach to government.

In your letter, you refer to the 'well established' quality starts measure. It is important to remember that statistics on both quality starts and total starts have been used over a long period of time to demonstrate trends in apprenticeship starts. Both measures are subject to the same statistical assurance and can be considered to be robust. They both highlight important elements in the delivery of the apprenticeship programme.

In the interests of openness and transparency, Ministers in this Government routinely refer to both measures when updating the Senedd on progress.

At the end of each Senedd term, we report on progress against the apprenticeships target. The time lag for the publication of official statistics means that we need to draw on a range of available data. Measuring the total number of starts better reflects whether we have met our Programme for Government commitment to create 100,000 apprenticeships. This reflected the fact that it was the number of apprenticeships offered that we directly control and acknowledged that there are a range of factors which determine whether the apprenticeship continues beyond eight weeks and indeed whether it is eventually completed, none of which detract from the achievement of the person entering into the apprenticeship. I do not accept that we were cherry picking which measure we used, since

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

we continue to refer to both published measures and only one of the reported measures actually shows whether or not we have done what we set out in our manifesto commitments as set out in our programme for government.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie James". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie James AS/MS

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