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**Rt Hon Anne Milton MP**  
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Your ref: Council-Learner Loan-20171213

*Dear Dr Wilkins*

*20th February 2018*

Thank you very much for your letter of 19 December 2017, about Oldham Council's Resolution on the Advanced Learner Loan Motion of 13 December 2017. I am sorry for the delay in responding to your letter.

The department is examining the reasons for the current take-up trends of Advanced Learner Loans. We will continue, with our delivery partners, to provide support to colleges and training providers to improve awareness and understanding of Advanced Learner Loans.

The budget for Advanced Learner Loans is agreed with HM Treasury on an annual basis. It is important to note that to date, in each year that the Loans have been available, funding has been available to meet learner demand even though not all of the budget has been spent. Learners can obtain an Advanced Learner Loan to support study at over 700 providers. The latest evaluation of Advanced Learner Loans is looking at the impact of the extension to those aged 19-23, and to Level 5 and Level 6 provision. It will provide the department with further evidence of how the offer supports adults from different backgrounds and ages.

In the interest of learners and the economy, the focus of these Loans is on technical qualifications that support clear routes into and through employment, and progression to higher-level skills. They are a vital component of our social mobility agenda, offering opportunities to reskill and retrain.

Thank you for sharing the Council's resolution with me.

*Dr Anne Milton*

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