

# The Lord Taylor of Holbeach CBE



*Government Whips Office*

*House of Lords*

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*Dear Francis.*

Thank you for your contribution to the House of Lords debate on active citizenship, which took place on 18 November. You raised some very important issues around foster parents and social workers.

Towards the end of your speech you made the following remarks:

"I conclude by praising the Government's development of a social work first programme along the lines of the highly successful Teach First programme of the noble Lord, Lord Wei. I would be most grateful if the Minister could write to me with details of the progress in this initiative. I look forward to the Minister's response."

I understand that you were referring to the Step Up to Social Work programme, which is being funded by the Department for Education and administered by the Children's Workforce Development Council. This is a practice-led training programme targeting high-calibre career changers who wish to begin a career in social work. Candidates are given work-based initial training through employment with a Local Authority training consortium. The aim is to provide a closer match between training and practice, addressing concerns about relevance of initial training and the suitability of newly qualified social workers to practice. The programme includes scope for accelerated qualification through recognition of prior learning and experience.

The programme is accredited and quality assured by Salford and Manchester Metropolitan Universities and has been through the General Social Care Council's accreditation process. It therefore meets all the same requirements as "traditional" training courses in terms of curriculum, breadth of knowledge and experience, standards and academic rigour.

There are 43 Local Authorities working together as eight regional provider consortia across the country for the first cohort of nearly 200 students who started in September 2010.

The initiative has proved popular with participating Local Authorities who have welcomed the opportunity to control and shape initial education, and to take the lead in recruitment. They have also reported satisfaction with the quality of candidates who have emerged through the national recruitment and selection programme.

There is also significant appetite from potential participants. More than 10 applications were received per place in the first cohort and over 2000 have expressed an interest in participating in any future intakes.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the House library.

With best wishes.

Jan S. Taylor

John

**LORD TAYLOR OF HOLBEACH**