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Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM
Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PET-03-187
Ein cyf/Our ref MB DFM 0989 09

Sandy Mewies AM
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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CF99 1NA

25 November 2009

Dee Sandy

Further to my letter of 28 September, I am sending you an updated response to the position regarding the use of debit and credit cards in paying the Severn toll.

On 18 November Assembly Government Transport officials attended a Severn Bridge liaison meeting with English counterparts and Bridge operatives at which it was confirmed the Department for Transport has proposed the necessary amendments to the secondary legislation to permit debit and credit card payments at the Severn Crossings. It is anticipated that introduction will be in the latter half of 2010.

*Jon
Ieuan*

Ieuan Wyn Jones
Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for the Economy and Transport

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Jane Hutt AC/AM

**Y Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau
Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills**



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PET-03-204
Ein cyf/Our ref JH/06668/09

Val Lloyd AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
Cardiff Bay
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18 November 2009

Dear Val,

Thank you for your letter on 25th September on behalf of the Petitions Committee concerning public accountability and consultation in higher education. I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

You have specifically requested details of the level of public consultation required for changes to higher education institutions; and the mechanisms that exist for ensuring quality assurance and accountability in the higher education sector.

Public consultation

Higher Education Institutions

All Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the UK are autonomous bodies, responsible for their own academic and administrative affairs, including the management of their structures and methods of course delivery.

The higher education sector in Wales consists of institutions established by charter, institutions conducted by higher education corporations and institutions designated to receive funding to provide higher education. The governance of each institution is set out in their Charter and Statutes, Instruments and Articles of Government, or Memorandum and Articles of Government. Changes to the governance of HEIs will normally require the approval of the Privy Council. Under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 (the FHEA 1992), if HEIs wish to apply for university title or change of name they must apply to the Privy Council. When making an application to the Privy Council for university title and/or a change of name, the Privy Council expect any institution to undertake consultation with the results of the consultation used to support their application.

HEIs may also have to consult either because of a specific statutory requirement to do so or because of an HEI's internal governance arrangements requires consultation before particular decisions are made. For certain purposes HEIs may be regarded as public bodies and accordingly subject to the usual public law principles.

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Higher Education and Funding Council (HEFCW)

HEFCW has responsibility for administering the funds made available to it by the Welsh Assembly Government for the provision of education and the undertaking of research by HEIs in Wales in accordance with Section 65 of the FHEA 1992. The Welsh Assembly Government can, under Section 68 of the FHEA, impose general conditions on the funds it makes available to HEFCW except in so far as it relates to a particular institution or institutions or particular courses of study or programmes of research. HEFCW also develop specific policies in a range of areas. HEFCW consults with the HE sector in Wales and, occasionally, with other interested parties in order to get a wide range of views to feed into policies that affect HEIs. These consultations are publically available on HEFCW's website. Section 66 FHEA 1992 requires HEFCW to consult on the terms and conditions it proposes to impose on funding made to HEIs. The obligation to consult is to those HEI's as appear to the Council to be concerned with the proposals. In addition, as a public body, HEFCW are required by general public law principles to consult on changes to existing policies or on proposed new policy.

Assembly Government

Any changes that affect HEIs that are introduced by the Assembly Government, such as changes to legislative statute on the governance arrangements for HEIs, have to follow standard Assembly Government guidelines on consultation. The Assembly Government has duties under the Government of Wales Act 2006 (GOWA 2006) to work in partnership; they include Local Government, the Third Sector, and the Business Sector. The Welsh Ministers Business Scheme sets out how they intend to take into account the interests of the Business Sector and Trades Unions (Section 75 of the GoWA 2006).

The Assembly Government also has a duty to make a Regulatory Impact Assessment Code (Section 76 of GOWA 2006). This must set out the Assembly Government's policy on assessing the likely costs and benefits of compliance with subordinate legislation made by it (rules, regulations, orders etc made under Acts of Parliament or Assembly Measures), and the Assembly Government's policy on consulting in connection with those assessments. The current Code says that the Assembly Government will carry out proper and appropriate consultation with those who are likely to be affected by the legislation, and those who have an interest in its overall impact. As well as this, statute can impose a specific requirement to consult.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (s49A) requires the Assembly Government, in carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need to encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.

Quality assurance and accountability

HEFCW has a statutory obligation under section 70 of FHEA 1992 to ensure that provision is made for assessing the quality of education provided in institutions where HEFCW provide, or are considering providing, financial support. Section 70 FHEA 1992 also requires HEFCW to secure that provision is made for assessing the quality of institutions who it funds and to establish a committee known as "Quality Assessment Committee" to advise them on the discharge of their duty. This role is undertaken by HEFCW's Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee .

Since the establishment of the Quality Assurance Agency for HE (QAA) in 1997, HEFCW has operated an Annual Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Agency. The QAA's mission is to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of HE qualifications and to

inform and encourage continuous improvement in the management of the quality of HE. Through this agreement the HEFCW has been able to meet its statutory obligation under section 70 of the FHEA 1992. This is operated in several ways:

- through institutional assurance review carried out by HEFCW; and
- through Institutional Review carried out by the QAA.

Institutional assurance review

HEFCW's institutional assurance service is responsible for carrying out institutional assurance reviews in HEIs and other related work to evaluate the internal control, risk management and governance arrangements at the HEIs which HEFCW fund. This work is carried out to provide assurance to HEFCW's Council, and to the Chief Executive as accounting officer, on the adequacy and effectiveness of those arrangements.

HEFCW set out the requirements for HEIs accountability and audit arrangements in an Audit Code of Practice. HEIs' compliance with the mandatory requirements of the Audit Code of Practice is a requirement of the Financial Memorandum between HEFCW and HEIs in Wales. It is therefore a condition of the annual grant HEFCW give to HEIs in Wales.

Institutional Review

The providers of HE have the primary responsibility for protecting the academic standards and quality of their awards. The key purpose of the Institutional Review is to satisfy the public interest that HEIs in Wales provide awards and qualifications of acceptable quality and appropriate academic standard. The process should also maintain comparability of outcomes in Wales with other countries of the UK. Institutional review is an evidence-based process carried out through peer review.

Institutional review balances the need for publicly credible, independent and rigorous scrutiny of institutions with the recognition that the institutions themselves are best placed to provide stakeholders with valid, reliable and up-to-date information about the academic standards of their awards and the quality of their educational provision. Institutional review encourages institutions to be self-evaluative, and is therefore a process that, in itself, offers opportunities for enhancement of institutional management of standards and quality. At the centre of the process is an emphasis on students and their learning opportunities. The current review cycle in Wales is operated within the context of a 'rolling programme', from 2009-10 whereby all institutions are reviewed within six years.

Other quality assessments

Quality assessments are also carried out when institutions apply for governance changes such as taught degree awarding powers (TDAPS) and research degree awarding powers (RDAPs), and also university title. The power to grant degrees and university title is reserved to the Privy Council under sections 76 and 77 of the FHEA 1992 respectively. In considering applications for such powers, the Privy Council seeks advice from the appropriate territorial Minister with HE responsibilities. Ministers maintain criteria against which applications are considered. For England and Wales applications are considered under criteria approved by Ministers on 1st September 2004. The Assembly Government seek the advice of the QAA as to whether the institution has met the criteria. As part of the application for applying for university title, Assembly policy officials are required to provide the Privy Council with assurances that an institution has good governance. The Assembly has an agreement with HEFCW that they will provide us with this information.

Best wishes,

June

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Ms Val Lloyd
Chair, Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
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CF99 1NA

25 NOV 2009

Dear Ms Lloyd,

C57

24 November 2009

Petition P-03-207 Support for the unemployed in Monmouth

Thank you very much for your letter of 16 November (received here on 18 November) regarding this petition.

You will be aware that a good deal of correspondence has passed between representatives from Monmouth and Jobcentre Plus about this matter over time.

We do fully understand the concerns of the petitioners. We have sought to address these concerns by explaining our position and making clear how our service provided to Monmouth is consistent with that offered throughout Great Britain, for those people living in the more rural areas.

The additional funds that the Government allocated to Jobcentre Plus has been used by and large to expand our ability to deal with the very large increase of customers on our existing sites and obtain additional IT equipment etc. We have not opened new or reopened old Jobcentres anywhere.

The specific incident mentioned in Cllr Dewhurst's letter regarding the experience of customers in Abergavenny will be further investigated by me.

Turning to the service provided in the One Stop Shop. We are due to meet this week with Jenny Lewis, of Monmouthshire CC, very shortly to discuss the use of the customer access phone.

We also regularly review how the service is working out for Monmouth residents who use the Coleford Jobcentre. Coleford Jobcentre is much closer to Monmouth than Abergavenny. Our customers are made aware that they can use Coleford and many do.

I hope that this reply satisfies the Committees requirements. Please contact me if you require anything further.

Yours Sincerely

Ian H Williams
District Manager

Ian H Williams



Jane Hutt AC/AM

**Y Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau
Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills**



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Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref JH/06685/09

Val Lloyd AM
Chair of the Petitions
Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

14⁵ October 2009

Dear Val,

Thank you for your letter on 30th September seeking information following the Petition Committee's consideration of a petition on *Prohibition of Political Events in Schools*. I am very happy to respond to the Committee's request. The paper attached sets out the position on the specific points raised.

Best wishes,

Jane

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Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills

Response to issues raised by the Petition Committee

Introduction

As a result of the Petitions Committees consideration of a petition on *Prohibition of Political Events in Schools* on 22 September the following information was requested from the Minister for Children, Education Life Long Learning and Skill

1. How is political engagement currently managed in schools

2. How should it be managed in future?

It is the responsibility of the LA, headteacher and governing body of the school to ensure that learners receive a broad, balanced curriculum that is appropriate to the age of the learners. They must not allow the teacher to promote one-sided political views when teaching any subject. Teachers must present different views in a balanced way where political issues are covered.

The legal framework for this is set out in Sections 406-407 of the Education Act 1996 ("the 1996 Act").

Section 406 of the 1996 Act places a duty on LEAs, governing bodies and heads to forbid partisan political activities by junior pupils (12 years of age and younger) at maintained schools, or the promotion of partisan views in teaching. Where the activities take place otherwise than at a maintained school that duty applies only where arrangements for junior pupils to take part in such activities are made any member of the school staff (in his or her capacity as such), or anyone acting on behalf of the school or of a member of the school's staff (in his or her capacity as such).

Section 407 of the 1996 Act places a duty on the same bodies and persons to ensure to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to secure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils at a maintained school, or taking part of extra curricular activities, that they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views.

Together these provisions set the framework for what can happen in schools. Political issues can therefore be discussed but must be treated in a balanced way with opposing views made clear.

This arrangement appears to work well and there are no plans to make any changes.

3. What progress is being made on meeting the recommendations of the Second Local Government and Public Services Committee Report on Electoral Arrangements in Wales specifically those relating to engaging young people?

The Committee published its report on "Electoral Arrangements in Wales" in December 2006. This addressed a number of recommendations to the Elections Planning Group. This group which is led by Welsh Assembly Officials acts as a forum for discussion on electoral procedures and for addressing potential problems. In addition it provides a strategic oversight in the preparation of elections and the sharing of best practice. The Elections Planning Group has no statutory functions but continues to facilitate discussion and the promotion of best practice in the areas of democratic engagement amongst stakeholders.

The Electoral Commission promotes electoral registration and the compiling and maintaining of the electoral register. They offer support and assistance to returning officers through the performance standard framework. They have also produced a Democracy Cookbook, a resource aimed at providing practical information to young people on how democracy works. Local Authorities have also adopted a number of initiatives to engage with young people in their area such as youth forums.

4. The part political engagement plays in PSE lessons

The curriculum in Wales provides opportunities for schools to develop the political literacy of young people. The approach is focused on developing active citizenship as an integral component of Personal and social education (PSE), a statutory part of the curriculum for learners aged 5 to 16 in Wales. It is the responsibility of schools to plan and deliver broad, balanced PSE to meet the specific needs of all learners. The PSE Framework is the key document which schools and colleges in Wales should use to review, develop and plan PSE provision for 7-to-19 year olds. A key aim of the PSE framework is to:

- *empower pupils to participate in their schools and communities as active responsible citizens and to develop a global perspective*

The PSE guidance website provides the following explanation of political literacy for learning providers:

Political literacy is about helping young people become politically aware and effective. It is about giving them the ability to interpret issues and events politically and as such is a complex mix of skills, values and knowledge.

For young people political literacy involves:

- *knowing how decisions are made in society – locally, nationally and internationally*
- *being familiar with a range of basic political concepts*
- *recognising one's right to participate in the democratic process*
- *differentiating between the policies of the main political parties*
- *developing a personal set of political values and having the skills and confidence to apply them in practice.*

Advice about the teaching of sensitive issues in PSE including the need to avoid political indoctrination in schools is also provided on the PSE Guidance website. For more details visit:

www.wales.gov.uk/personalsocialandeducation

The PSE framework specifically identifies opportunities for learners to develop a practical understanding of their rights and of the links between political decisions and their own lives. Schools are provided with a clear context for developing the 'political literacy' of learners and their understanding of the democratic process in Wales and beyond.

For example learners aged 11 to 14 years should be given opportunities to understand:

- their rights, *e.g. the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and entitlements, *e.g. Extending Entitlement*
- their responsibilities as young citizens in Wales
- the principles of democracy in Wales, the UK and the EU
- how representatives, *e.g. School Councils, Youth Forums, Funky Dragon, Councillors, AMs, MPs, MEPs*, are elected and understand their roles
- how young people can have their views listened to and influence decision-making.

Learners aged 14 to 16 years should be given opportunities to understand:

- how political systems work locally, nationally and internationally, *e.g. the European Union, the UN*
- the main features of the major political parties in Wales
- the opportunities for young people to participate in decision-making, both locally and nationally
- the importance of participating in democratic elections and the links between political decisions and their own lives.

Finally, learners aged 16 -19 years should be given opportunities to understand:

- the electoral procedures, processes and powers of local, national, European and international political systems

- the main policies of the major UK political parties
- the role of Europe within the constitutional government of the UK
- the opportunities to participate in the democratic process locally, nationally and internationally.

Additionally, learners aged 14-19 years-old should have opportunities for active engagement in understanding the political, social, economic and cultural aspects of Wales as part of the world as whole. This study of Wales, Europe and the World is part of their 14-19 Learning Core entitlement.

Political awareness is also a requirement for those young people who are studying for the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification.

Edwina Hart AM OStJ MBE

Y Gweinidog dros Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

Our ref: EH/06844/09

Your ref: PET-03-219

Val Lloyd AM
Chair
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3 November 2009

Dear Val

Thank you for your letter dated 26 October on behalf of the Petitions Committee about statutory regulations governing the provision of pharmaceutical services in Wales.

The provision of pharmaceutical services is subject to the NHS (Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 1992 / 662 which have been amended by the NHS (Pharmaceutical Services) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2005 / 1013 (W.67) and the NHS (Pharmaceutical Services) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2009 / 1491 (W.144).

The Pharmacy Task and Finish Group is reviewing the provision of pharmacy services in Wales. Its final recommendations are aimed at improving the efficiency, effectiveness and value for money of pharmacy services in Wales. The Group has recently reported their interim findings to me in an 'Emerging Themes' report which is available on the Health of Wales Information Service (HOWIS) website (www.wales.nhs.uk/pharmacycontract).

I am expecting the final report from the Task and Finish Group in December and have specifically asked them to develop their proposals relating to the location of pharmacies and the regulation which is currently applied, which I will of course consider.

[Handwritten signature]

EDW

Gwenda Thomas AC/AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog dros Wasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Social Services



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Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PET-03-236
Ein cyf/Our ref GT/05278/09

Val Lloyd AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
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18th November 2009

Dear Val,

Petition – Charter for Grandchildren

You wrote to Jane Hutt and Brian Gibbons on 26 October on behalf of the Petitions Committee seeking Ministers views on the request from Grandparents Apart Wales to adopt the Charter for Grandchildren. I am replying as lead Minister for the safeguarding, and the welfare of children.

Unfortunately, the petitioners did not include a copy of the Charter. My officials have therefore spoken with the Committee Clerk and confirmed that the Charter is that published by the Scottish Executive. For clarity, I have attached an electronic copy as an annex to this letter.

The Charter for Grandchildren reflects a number of the key principles upon which our policies for children and young people are founded. There is a close correlation between the expectations set out in the Charter and the principles within the Welsh Assembly Government's Seven Core Aims such as participation, advocacy and equality, and enshrined within our policies and programmes.

I note the Charter in Scotland is adopted under on voluntary good practice principles. The National Assembly Petitions Committee has sought Ministers' position on the proposal that the Charter be made mandatory for professional workers who are employed in the welfare of children in Wales.

Whilst we respect the principle aims of the Charter and recognise the invaluable role grandparents have in the development, support and care of children and young people, I am not convinced of the added value the Charter would bring. In particular, if it was to be mandatory requirement in Wales.

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The duties and responsibilities on professionals concerned with safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people exist across a range of legislation and statutory guidance. The principle law is, as the Committee will be aware, The Children Act 1989 which sets out clear duties on the rights of the child and members of the families including the role of grandparents.

Although the Charter may be helpful in informing the rights of grandparents it may have the effect of complicating and confusing matters rather than enhancing current arrangements. Furthermore, the duties imposed by the Charter, if it were to be mandatory, may bring into conflict existing law in the Children Act 1989, the Human Rights Act and other legislation. It would also extend to reserved matters such as decisions taken by the family courts where the Welsh Assembly Government has no powers.

You will therefore appreciate the difficulties and possible unintended consequences if the Welsh Assembly Government to adopt the Charter for Wales.

I can however, assure the Committee, that the Welsh Assembly Government values and will continue to ensure the rights of grandparents in terms of their contact, care, education and broader development of their grandchildren's welfare are fully recognised and supported across all our policies and programmes for children and young people. For example:-

- reflecting the role played by grandparents within forthcoming guidance on the role of intergenerational approaches in strengthening the family; and
- legislating that placements with extended family or friends are given preference, where that is appropriate.

I trust that the Committee will find this helpful.

Yours sincerely



Gwenda Thomas AC/AM

Jane Davidson AC/AM

**Y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynaliadwyedd a Thai
Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing**



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref JD/06212/09

Val Lloyd AM
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11 November 2009

Dear Val,

Thank you for your letter of 28 October 2009 about a petition submitted by Carmarthenshire residents in relation to the transfer of private drainage systems in Wales.

On 22 February 2007, the Welsh Assembly Government announced an 'in principle' decision to transfer private sewers and lateral drains into the ownership of sewerage undertakers whose area of supply is wholly or mainly in Wales.

A further announcement was made on 25 July 2007, that the Welsh Assembly Government had taken the next step toward transferring private sewers and lateral drains into the ownership of sewerage undertakers by issuing a consultation paper on implementation options.

The consultation paper, which was issued jointly with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), discussed options and sought views on how best to take forward the proposed transfer of private sewers into the ownership of the sewerage undertakers, including whether the transfer should be phased.

The response to that consultation was given careful consideration and on 31 March 2009, the Welsh Assembly Government launched the Strategic Policy Position Statement on Water. The Statement sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's core principles and policies on a number of key areas relating to water in Wales, including the transfer of private sewers.

As outlined in the Statement, in the first instance we want to ensure that new sewers are built to an adoptable standard and we are working with the UK Government and other stakeholders to achieve this.

The Statement also sets out our intention to pursue the development of Regulations in 2011 that will facilitate the transfer of private sewers. We plan to undertake a consultation exercise on the Regulations once they are drafted early next year.

Transferring the ownership of private sewers to water and sewerage companies will help relieve the burden on individual householders but the work on these sewers will still need to

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be planned and undertaken and the costs of this work will still need to be met. Water companies will need to raise these funds through the normal route of price reviews of customer bills. It is difficult to ascertain exact costs due to the uncertainty surrounding the extent and condition of private sewers and lateral drains. Ofwat has estimated the costs of transfer and, as a result, has also estimated the bill impact as a range of £4 - £12 annually. This is currently estimated to be around 7.5 pence to 23 pence a week.

Because of the way water responsibilities have been devolved to Welsh Ministers, ultimately our approach towards any transfer will only apply in the Dwr Cymru Welsh Water operating area. This will inevitably mean that areas including Cheshire, Shropshire and Herefordshire (operated by Dwr Cymru Welsh Water) would be affected by our chosen approach and areas of Powys (operated by Severn Trent Water) would be affected by the approach taken by Defra. For this reason we are working very closely with Defra.

We are also working with Dwr Cymru Welsh Water and other key stakeholders to take forward the transfer of private drainage systems in Wales. On 30 June 2009, the Welsh Assembly Government, supported by Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, held a Private Drainage Systems workshop aimed at clarifying our policy position in relation to the transfer of private sewers, developing closer links with key stakeholders and beginning a data sharing exercise. The event was attended by 19 organisations and was well received.

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water is currently attempting to identify the resources necessary to undertake an initial data collection exercise. They aim to begin this exercise in 2010 and will be contacting all key stakeholders to discuss arrangements and any local hurdles to the data sharing process.

Affordability of water and sewerage bills is a key concern of the Welsh Assembly Government and we intend to give full consideration to all the evidence available to adopt the most appropriate mechanism for the transfer of ownership to help individual householders while protecting the generality of customers.

Yours,



Jane Davidson AM

Y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynaliadwyedd a Thai
Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing

Jane Hutt AC/AM

**Y Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau
Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills**



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Eich cyf/Your ref
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Val Lloyd AM
Chair, Petitions Committee,
National Assembly for Wales,
Cardiff Bay,
CF99 1NA.

15 November 2009

Dear Val,

Thank you for your letter of 3 November outlining the details of a petition received by the Committee from the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Unit at St Julian's School in Newport, in which the pupils have asked the Welsh Assembly Government to consider protecting the provision of special education within mainstream schools in Wales.

Officials have spoken with the Head of SEN and Inclusion at Newport City Council, who has confirmed that the SEN Unit at St Julian's School continues to provide high quality support for all pupils currently placed there and that there are no plans to close it or any of the other units attached to mainstream schools in Newport.

More generally, our current policy in terms of the provision of special education services for pupils with SEN has not changed for almost 10 years. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 delivered a strengthened right to a mainstream education for children and young people with SEN. The Act amended the Education Act 1996 and transformed the statutory framework into a positive endorsement of inclusion. The Act also enabled more children and young people with SEN to be included within mainstream education, and clearly signalled that where parents or carers want a mainstream education for their child, everything possible should be done to provide it. All of the above is supported by the SEN Code of Practice 2002, which is all about removing the barriers to participation and learning and the key principle that children and young people with SEN should have their needs met.

As Minister, I remain totally committed to the whole inclusion agenda and can confirm that the Welsh Assembly Government will continue to work with and support local authorities to ensure appropriate SEN provision is in place both in mainstream and special school settings.

Best wishes,

Jane

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Y Gwir Anrh/Rt Hon Rhodri Morgan AC/AM
Prif Weinidog Cymru/First Minister for Wales



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PET-03-262
Ein cyf/Our ref FM/06021/09

Val Lloyd AM
97 Pleasant Street,
Morrison,
Swansea,
SA6 6HJ.

20th November 2009

Dear Val

I am writing in response to your letter of 3rd November 2009, on behalf of the Petitions Committee asking for my views on the establishment of a Peace Institute for Wales and whether the establishment of such an institute may be possible in the future.

I recognise that Peace Studies requires an interdisciplinary approach, but I have reached the conclusion that the creation of a new centre for peace studies is not necessarily the best way of using the limited resources available to us. In the first instance, due to the scale of this project, I would expect to see work taken forward in seeking out the empirical evidence base for such a centre before further consideration is given to this proposal.

It may well serve Wales better to develop a programme of relevant research that would be able to draw on expertise from across the higher education sector in Wales. This has proved successful for Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research Data (WISERD) which focuses on social science based research, which is a collaboration involving Cardiff, Bangor, Aberystwyth, Glamorgan and Swansea Universities. If this is not considered a feasible way forward, it may be that consideration should be given to the more economically viable option of being part of a UK wide centre or hub on this occasion.

Yours
Rhodri

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