

Agenda – Children, Young People and Education Committee

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| Meeting Venue: | For further information contact: |
| Committee Room 1 – The Senedd | Llinos Madeley |
| Meeting date: 18 April 2018 | Committee Clerk |
| Meeting time: 09.15 | 0300 200 6565 |
| | SeneddCYPE@assembly.wales |

Private Pre-meeting

(09:15 – 09:30)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(09:30)

2 Minister for Children and Social Care – Session on the Welsh Government Childcare offer

(09:30 – 10:30)

(Pages 1 – 23)

Welsh Government

Huw Irranca-Davies AM, Minister for Children and Social Care

Jo-Anne Daniels, Director for Communities and Tackling Poverty

Owain Lloyd, Deputy Director for Childcare, Play and Early Years

Attached Documents:

Research Brief

CYPE(5)-11-18 – Paper 1 – Welsh Government Childcare Offer for Wales



3 Paper(s) to note

3.1 Letter from the Chair to the Cabinet Secretary for Education – Funding for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic learners

(Pages 24 – 30)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-11-18 – Paper to note 1

3.2 Letter to the Chair from Councillor Rob Jones (Leader of Neath Port Talbot Council) regarding the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller and Minority Ethnic learner provision

(Pages 31 – 32)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-11-18 – Paper to note 2

3.3 Inquiry into Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes – Further information from EAS following meeting on 8 March

(Page 33)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-11-18 – Paper to note 3

3.4 Inquiry into Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes – Further information from ERW following meeting on 8 March

(Pages 34 – 35)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-11-18 – Paper to note 4

3.5 Committee Correspondence regarding the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS)

(Pages 36 – 39)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-11-18 – Paper to note 5

CYPE(5)-11-18 – Paper to note 6

3.6 Letter from the Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning – Quality of work-based learning (WBL) in Wales

(Pages 40 – 42)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-11-18 – Paper to note 7

3.7 Letter to Cabinet Secretary for Education – Ending of the School Uniform Grant from 2018-19

(Pages 43 – 45)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5) -11-18 – Paper to note 8

3.8 Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Education – Further information following meeting on 22 March

(Pages 46 – 56)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5) -11-18 – Paper to note 9

3.9 Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Education – implementation of the Foundation Phase Curriculum

(Pages 57 – 60)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5) -11-18 – Paper to note 10

3.10 Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Education – Availability of text books

(Pages 61 – 62)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-11-18 – Paper to note 11

4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the remainder of the meeting.

(10:30)

5 Childcare Funding (Wales) Bill – Consideration of the approach

(10:45 – 11:00)

Private paper

6 Inquiry into Targeted Funding to Improve Educational Outcomes – Consideration of Key Issues

(11:00 – 12:00)

(Pages 63 – 77)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-11-18 – Paper 3

7 Resourcing for Brexit scrutiny – Consideration of the letter from the Llywydd

(12:00 – 12:15)

(Pages 78 – 79)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-11-18 – Paper 4

Document is Restricted

Children, Young People and Education Committee

From: Welsh Government
Date: 18 April 2018
Venue: Senedd Cardiff Bay
Title: Childcare Offer for Wales

Background

The Childcare Offer will provide working parents with 30 hours of Government-funded early education and childcare for their 3 and 4 year olds for up to 48 weeks a year. The early education element of the offer is the existing universal entitlement, available under the Foundation Phase Nursery (FPN) provision. The childcare element of the offer is specifically designed to help parents to undertake paid work and forms part of the wider programme of support for employment which is set out in the Welsh Government's five-year strategic plan *Taking Wales Forward*. Details of eligibility are at Annex 1.

The evidence is clear that well-paid work is the best route out of poverty¹ and the greatest protection against poverty. There is also growing recognition that, even where adults are supported into employment, they may go from being in "out of work poverty" to being in "in-work poverty"². In Wales, the majority of children in relative income poverty live in a household where at least one person is working³. The offer will help tackle in-work poverty by supporting parents into full-time employment, supporting people working part-time to work more hours, supporting second earners into work and allowing working families to keep more of their pay for other purposes..

While the Public Policy Institute for Wales report in 2016 argued that the policy "*would not have substantial impacts on net income, poverty or work behaviour for families with children*"⁴, other research suggests otherwise. For example, the OECD *Starting Strong 2017* report found that "*affordable and quality early education and care with an adequate number of hours per week can contribute to increased participation of women in the labour force*" and that "*the relationship between mothers' labour market participation and enrolment rates in formal childcare is strong*"⁵.

Delivery of the Offer

We started testing the offer in seven Early Implementer Local Authorities (EILAs) in September 2017. These are Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Flintshire, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Swansea and Gwynedd and Anglesey, who are working on a joint trial. The offer is available across the whole of Blaenau Gwent and up until recently in certain pilot areas of the other authorities.

¹ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2016) UK poverty: Causes, costs and solutions. Full report available at: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-causes-costs-and-solutions>

² MacInnes T, Aldridge H, Bushe S, Kenway P and Tinson A (2013) *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

³ Children in Wales (2014) Child and family poverty in Wales: A snapshot of key issues raised by families <https://www.childreninwales.org.uk/.../children-and-families-in-poverty-in-Wales.pdf>

⁴ Public Policy Institute Wales (2015) *Childcare Policy Options for Wales*

⁵ OECD (2017) *Starting Strong 2017: Key OECD Indicators on Early Childhood Education and Care*

A child becomes eligible for the childcare element of the offer from the term after their third birthday, in line with the arrangements for early education. Entitlement is capped at 30 hours per week, with the amount of childcare varying between EILAs. For example, if an EILA offers 10 hours of early education, 20 hours of childcare are available. Whilst parents are not obliged to take up both elements of the offer they cannot substitute education for childcare or vice versa.

Guidance was provided to the EILAs in June 2017. Amongst other things this states that for the purposes of early implementation:

- the parent and child must live within a pilot area;
- the entitlement is to 30 hours of early education and childcare in the 39 weeks of school term-time and 30 hours of childcare for 9 weeks in the school holidays;
- no changes have been made to the way the early education element of the offer is delivered, with each of the EILAs continuing to allocate places;
- any childcare provider can deliver the childcare element of the offer, if they wish to do so, as long as they are registered with and inspected by the Care Inspectorate Wales (or Ofsted if they are in England);
- there are no restrictions on the hours or days of the week when parents may use the childcare element of the offer; and
- parents can use a maximum of two childcare settings a day in addition to their early education provider.

The guidance also contains details on the payment rate for the offer and how EILAs can deliver the offer.

Experiences from Early Education, Flying Start and the English childcare offer suggested that not all eligible parents would apply for the offer, with demand led programmes taking time to fully establish themselves. As a consequence, we did not set specific targets for take-up, with the focus instead on early testing of the offer to understand how it works for parents and providers and learning the lessons from early implementation prior to national roll out.

Progress of Early Implementation

To date, the EILAs have received over 2,400 applications for the childcare element of the offer, with over 2,000 children receiving funded childcare. Whilst just six months in to early implementation, we have seen that interest and take-up varies between the EILAs. Not all eligible parents have applied, some parents who have applied have subsequently chosen not to take up their funded childcare, and others are not using the full amount available to them. Early comments to EILAs include parents:

- not being aware of, or understanding the details of, the offer;
- being unwilling to move children from the care of family and friends;
- deciding not to move children from childcare settings not delivering the offer;
- not using their full entitlement as they combine the funded childcare with other informal care such as that from friends and family.

Further research to understand parental behaviour is planned as part of the evaluation of the pilots. In addition, we will be undertaking more research into the drivers which underpin parents' choices regarding whether or not to use childcare, and the type of childcare they select. This will help us to support the childcare sector to adapt and become more sustainable prior to full roll-out, and refine models on likely take-up levels.

Childcare Providers and Early Implementation

The decision to allow all childcare providers registered with and inspected by CIW to deliver the offer during early implementation, even if they are located outside of a pilot area, was taken both to minimise the impact on the sector and allow us to test market conditions. We did not want to force parents to choose from a limited number of providers, whose location might not suit their requirements, or risk the sustainability of providers outside pilot areas.

Feedback to date has been that this was the right approach; with parents valuing the choice this gives them over whether to use childcare close to home or work. Parents also value the ability to co-locate siblings. Feedback from our EILAs on this approach has also been positive, particularly around the flexibility of cross-border provision.

However, the requirement for registration and inspection, which is important in ensuring the overall quality of the care provided and the safety of the children, has meant that providers covered by the CIW Voluntary Approval Scheme, such as nannies, are not able to deliver the offer. This requirement also means that childcare under the offer has to be provided in line with the governing legislation. The Child Minding and Day Care Exceptions (Wales) Order 2010 clearly states that a childminder does not act as a childminder in respect of a child who is a relative. The Order was amended in 2016, but no changes were made to that specific provision.

A review of our position on who can and cannot provide childcare under the offer, and all of the conditions above, will take place before full roll-out.

Providers are paid £4.50 per hour for the childcare element of the offer. In setting the rate we assessed the impact against the rates providers currently charge, as per information provided to CIW through their Self Assessment of Service. This is a single funding rate across all seven early implementer local authorities, ensuring clarity and consistency of the childcare offer for every parent and provider. However, in recognition of the different services offered by different childcare providers, this rate does not cover costs associated with the provision of food or the transportation of children. Providers may charge up to £7.50 per day for food and snacks, and fair rates for transport and consumables such as nappies and wipes. No additional top-up fees are permitted.

Feedback from providers on the rate of £4.50 has been broadly positive, and the flexibility to charge for food and transport in line with their business model and the services they provide has also been welcomed.

Payments in respect of the early education element of the offer remain a matter for local authorities. The Welsh Government provides funding for this mostly through the Local Government Settlement (revenue support grant), with some additional funding through the Education Improvement Grant to support staff to learner ratios. We are currently reviewing the rates paid by local authorities for early education in light of comments from providers.

EILA Processes

Each EILA is currently processing applications for the offer within their pilot areas and confirming eligibility. Some have introduced an online eligibility checker which filters out the majority of ineligible parents; some have wholly online application systems; and some require hard-copy applications that can be downloaded from their websites. All require some form of documentation from parents to evidence eligibility, though in most cases this can be scanned and submitted electronically.

All seven EILAs commented on the level of administration required in the lessons learned exercise conducted in January 2018. This has been greater than envisaged, with a significant administrative burden experienced both in terms of initial assessments, and conducting spot checks at reconfirmation points. These findings have already contributed to thinking on the approach to processing applications and confirming eligibility at the point of national roll out.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Early Implementation

Early implementation is subject to a robust independent evaluation. ARAD and NatCen have been commissioned to undertake the evaluation of the first year of early implementation, with an option to extend their contract to cover the second year. The evaluation report on year one will be submitted in October 2018.

The main aims of the evaluation are to determine:

- how effectively the offer is being delivered to children and parents in the early implementer areas and provide lessons to inform future delivery;
- the impact that the offer is having on parental employability, wellbeing and disposable income (linked to poverty) – likely to be limited in the first year;
- the impact of the offer on the childcare sector, looking at the affect on different types of childcare providers, changes to business practices and the effect of intervention on the childcare market.

The evaluation will consider both the process and impact of the childcare offer in the first year. The process evaluation will look at delivery and alignment of the offer with other policies and activities along with identifying any unintended consequences. The impact evaluation will look at the impact of the offer on employment choices, income and wealth. There is a specific requirement to consider the impact of the offer on access to and demand for Welsh-medium childcare during the period of early implementation.

Alongside the evaluation we have a programme of monitoring in relation to the offer, with EILAs required to submit monthly and termly data. The monitoring data is

supporting the management of the programme and will feed into the independent evaluation.

Expansion of Early Implementation

National roll-out of the offer is scheduled for September 2020. However, it is our intention to expand our programme of early implementation at regular intervals, and to make the offer available in at least part of each local authority across Wales ahead of the national roll-out in September 2020. This approach will enable more families to benefit from the funded childcare, allow the childcare sector the time it needs to expand sustainably, and enable us to test the offer in a range of local markets across Wales.

To support this expansion the Welsh Government budget includes £25m in 2018-19 and £45m in 2019-20. Details of the expansion of our early implementation programme, including specific locations, will be announced later in the spring, subject to agreement with individual local authorities. New authorities will begin delivery from September 2018.

Progress towards National Roll-out

Current estimates suggest that we could expect around 40,000 children to be eligible for the offer across Wales in each year. Given the administrative burden currently being experienced by EILAs, and a desire to avoid a number of different approaches to assessments, we have decided it would be preferable to introduce a single, national system for the assessment of applications. Alongside the development of this system, we also need to undertake more work with the childcare sector to improve its capacity and readiness.

National Application System

The Welsh Government will be bringing forward legislation shortly to facilitate the sharing of data pertinent to the development of a national application and eligibility checking system in respect of the offer. It is our intention that this will be a primarily online system, although it will also be possible for applications to be made offline, with a dedicated telephone helpline available. Further information will be available at the point of introduction.

Engagement with Parents and Childcare Providers

The #TalkChildcare Campaign was launched in August 2016, with the intention of engaging with parents and providers on the offer for Wales. Phase 1 of the campaign aimed to:

- understand the current challenges parents and providers face when accessing or delivering childcare;
- understand what steps may need to be taken to ensure the offer is as accessible as possible; and
- understand what's important to parents and providers about the offer.

Through the first phase of our #TalkChildcare campaign we engaged with over 6,500 parents and providers. The responses from this phase provided rich data on the views of parents and providers, which were used to inform decisions ahead of the early implementation of the offer from September 2017 and will help further develop the childcare offer in the coming months and years.

We have recently embarked on the second phase of our #TalkChildcare engagement campaign, in which we will engage with childcare providers specifically so they can give us their views on the offer.

Capacity of the Childcare Sector

In 2016 we worked with CIW and the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods (WISERD) to look at the capacity of the childcare sector across Wales⁶. The analysis used CIW data on provider locations mapped against ONS mid year population estimates.

The report showed that there is currently insufficient childcare available should all eligible children across Wales want to access the offer. However, the report only shows potential and estimated demand. There may be a number of factors contributing to the cold spots of childcare provision nationally, and further work is needed to understand the parental behaviours that contribute to these factors and to gain a clearer understanding of actual demand for formal childcare.

In 2016 we also commissioned Alma Economics to undertake a review of the childcare sector in Wales⁷. Looking at the sector's growth over recent years and its potential to expand, the report found that:

“The sector has grown in recent years, and it has the potential to expand further. While many of the providers we surveyed (particularly childminders) stressed there were both obstacles and risks to expansion, sector participants overall felt they would be able to meet increased demand given sufficient time to make the required adjustments (i.e. recruiting new staff, upgrading premises)”.

Welsh-Medium Childcare

One of the guiding principles of the Offer is that all working parents should be able to access their entitlement in line with their preferences and the needs of their family. This includes the ability to access Welsh-medium childcare. We want to work with our partners to develop practical solutions to barriers parents may face in accessing the childcare they need to be able to work, including ensuring sufficiency of Welsh-medium and bilingual childcare.

The offer links closely to the aspirations of *Cymraeg 2050 – A million Welsh Speakers*⁸, our Welsh language strategy. The Welsh Government's vision is to see the Welsh language thrive, with an increase in the number of people who both speak

⁶ <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/childcare-capacity-wales/?lang=en>

⁷ <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/review-childcare-sector/?lang=en>

⁸ <http://gov.wales/topics/welshlanguage/welsh-language-strategy-and-policies/cymraeg-2050-welsh-language-strategy/?lang=en>

and use the language in their daily lives. The early education and childcare sector has a significant role to play in this context, and Cymraeg 2050 states:

“The long-term aim for our early years provision is to reach a position where children under five have had sufficient contact with the Welsh language to be able to start on their journey towards fluency.”

The strategy goes on to identify ten transformational changes that need to take place if the targets are to be achieved. The first of these is centred around expanding Welsh-medium early years provision, opening 150 new nursery groups over the next decade to facilitate a seamless transition into Welsh-medium education.

There is currently insufficient reliable evidence on the availability of Welsh-medium or bilingual childcare provision across Wales⁹ to determine whether or not there is capacity to meet this commitment. However, the Childcare Sufficiency Assessments produced by local authorities and feedback from the EILAs all report there is not enough Welsh-medium childcare provision, except in some parts of North West Wales. This is supported by comments from parents within the #TalkChildcare campaign.

Recognising the challenge, Cymraeg 2050’s work programme for 2017-21 includes targets to:

- deliver the Childcare Offer across Wales, providing more government-funded Welsh-medium childcare places and strengthening Welsh-medium provision, building on the intelligence gained through the early implementation of the Offer from September 2017;
- continue to support existing Welsh-medium childcare provision, helping providers expand and become sustainable, as well as support an expansion by 40 nursery groups, targeting areas where work on the Childcare Offer shows there is limited provision at present.

However, supply is only part of the answer and if we are to ensure investment in new settings is appropriately directed, we also need to understand current and future demand. We do not have robust data on how many eligible working parents of three and four year olds would prefer to access Welsh-medium childcare. Some findings were reported in the National Survey 2016-17 and this will be looked at again in the National Survey 2018-19.

Work is currently underway to build a clearer picture of parental demand for Welsh-medium childcare using the findings of the National Survey and local authority monitoring data. There is also a specific requirement to consider the impact of the offer on access to, and demand for, Welsh-medium childcare during the early implementation.

⁹ <http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/documents/s69349/Paper%205.pdf>

Support for the Sector

Our evidence tells us there are many challenges facing the childcare sector in the current economic climate, and that there is a need to invest in building capacity and capability across the sector to support providers to grow and operate sustainably. In recognising these challenges we have prioritised support for the sector. Our 10 year Childcare, Play and Early Years workforce and Economic Action Plans (published in December 2017), set out the actions we will take in this Assembly term to assist the sector to build the capacity and capability needed to support full roll out of the childcare offer and support wider economic growth.

In driving our ambition forward, we are currently working on the development of business support and skills assistance. We have already committed £100,000 over the financial years of 2018-19 and 2019-20 to support those childcare providers participating in the early implementer pilots and for those seeking to expand or start up a business in order to take advantage of the new opportunities provided by the childcare offer. To support the £100,000 business grant funding and assist childcare providers to balance their operating costs, we have from 1 April this year increased the amount of Small Business Rate Relief for the sector from £12,000 to £20,500 and will be exploring what additional support we can provide including consideration of the Barclay Review on Business Rates undertaken in Scotland in 2017.

Alongside this work we are working with our partners to introduce a new suite of qualifications for the sector focused on raising standards and skills and supporting our ambition to up skill and professionalise the sector. The qualifications will be introduced in September 2019 covering levels 2-5. Funding to support delivery of the new qualifications will be supported by our Apprenticeship programme. Under the Apprenticeship programme we will continue to prioritise support for the sector starting at the current entry level 2 and encouraging progression to higher levels.

Our Progress for Success (PfS) programme (supported by European Social Fund) provides training support to practitioners over 25 and enables them to up skill across levels 2-3. By October 2018, the programme will have supported at least 950 practitioners across Wales to up skill. Building on the achievements of PfS, we are preparing a business case to WEFO to potentially extend the Operation until 2023. This will provide opportunities for the existing early years, childcare and play workforce to increase and broaden their knowledge and skills. The package of support we are proposing will compliment and enhance the provision that is already available via Apprenticeships and other skills programmes.

Our partners are key to achieving and delivering our ambition. We will be providing CWLWM the childcare consortium representing the 5 leading childcare organisations in Wales with funding of £1.6 m in 2018-19 to help support the early years, childcare and playwork sector in Wales. This will include providing support to develop and implement the childcare offer; supporting children with Special Educational Needs and Additional Learning Needs; developing the use of Welsh across the sector and contributing to our planned review of the National Minimum Standards for Regulating Childcare.

Annual Costs

We have only been piloting the offer in seven local authorities since last September. It is therefore very early into the implementation of the offer to come up with a definitive estimate of the annual cost of the childcare offer once it has been fully rolled out across Wales in 2020-21. There are a range of factors that will influence the costs, including the number of children born in any year, the number eligible to receive and who subsequently take up the offer, and the numbers of hours of childcare a family may choose to access.

The current revenue budget profile for the Offer is:

- 2017-18 - £10m
- 2018-19 - £25m
- 2019-20 - £45m

National roll-out will take place in 2020-21 which is outside of the current budget round. However, ahead of this we are undertaking modelling on a range of assumptions. These include:

- Likely number of eligible children across Wales;
- Likely take-up rate by eligible parents;
- Likely number of hours of overall entitlement used; and
- Likely national rate for the funded childcare provision.

Emerging findings from early implementation suggest that not all eligible parents will take-up the offer, but rates vary between EILAs. We have only limited data on the average numbers of the overall entitlement to funded childcare, but this suggests that where parents access the offer, they do not use all of the hours they are entitled to. More time and data will be required to refine estimates and provide a firmer view on the potential range of full annual costs when the offer is fully implemented.

Eligibility for the Childcare Offer

Working parents will be eligible for the childcare element of the Offer:

- where both parents are working or where the sole parent is working in lone parent families;
- where each parent is earning, on average, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage (NMW) or national living wage (NLW);
- for self-employed parents and parents on zero hours contracts, providing their average earnings meet the minimum earnings criteria over a 3 month period;
- from the term after the child's third birthday until the September after their fourth birthday.

No upper earnings cap was in place for the first year of early implementation. From the second year of early implementation onwards, if at least one parent in a household earns £100,000 or more a year, that family will not be eligible to take up the additional hours of childcare provided through the Offer.

Recognising that there are many types of family groupings and their situations and circumstances can sometimes be complex, the funding will be available in other exceptional circumstances:

- where both parents are employed (and earning the equivalent of at least 16 hours at NLW or NMW per week) but one or both parents are temporarily away from the workplace on parental, maternity, paternity or adoption leave;
- where both parents are employed (and earning the equivalent of at least 16 hours at NLW or NMW per week) but one or both parents are temporarily away from the workplace on statutory sick pay;
- where one parent is employed (and earning the equivalent of at least 16 hours at NLW or NMW per week) and one parent is disabled or incapacitated based on receipt of specific benefits or has substantial caring responsibilities based on specific benefits received for caring – this enables and supports one of the parents in that family to work. This includes families where one parent meets the eligibility criteria and the other parent is in receipt of one of the following benefits:
 - Incapacity benefit
 - Carers allowance
 - Severe disablement allowance
 - Employment and support allowance
- where a parent is newly self-employed, and within the initial start up period of their business. Parents will need to register their business with HMRC and provide evidence that they are self employed in order to qualify;
- for kinship carers, where they meet the definition of a working parent;
- for Looked After Children placed in foster care where the foster carer meets all of the wider eligibility criteria, and where it is in-line with the child's care plan. Foster caring allowance can be used as evidence of earnings to meet our minimum earnings requirement.

CYPE(5)-11-18 – Paper to note 1
Agenda Item 3.1

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

National Assembly for Wales
Children, Young People and Education Committee

Kirsty Williams AM
Cabinet Secretary for Education
Welsh Government

14 March 2018

Dear Kirsty

Thank you for your update, received 28 February 2018, on your response to the Committee's Recommendation 7 in its report on the Welsh Government 2018–19 draft budget.

Your response appears to confirm that funding to support the educational outcomes of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic learners is indeed being removed from the Educational Improvement Grant (EIG) and is to be provided from the un-hypothecated Revenue Support Grant (RSG). The Committee noted your update at its meeting of 8 March 2018 and decided to write to you to raise a number of points on this matter.

These points relate to first, the decision to fund this area of provision from the RSG rather than the EIG, and secondly, the mechanism for moving this funding from the EIG to the RSG.

Decision to further de-hypothecate funding for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic learners

As you are aware from the Committee's *Education Improvement Grant: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic Children*, we are concerned about the impact the amalgamation of former ring-fenced grants into the EIG from 2015–16 has had on these groups of pupils. The Committee concluded from the evidence it received that, following the merging of the previous individual grants into the un-



hypothecated EIG, there was a lack of monitoring of how funding is being used to support the educational outcomes of these learners and a lack of evaluation of the impact it is having.

You accepted a number of recommendations aimed at improving the monitoring and evaluation of the EIG, specifically in relation to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic learners. For example, you committed to strengthening the outcomes framework for the EIG, accepting in principle a recommendation that such a framework should make far more specific reference to the intended outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic learners. In the Plenary debate on 3 May 2017 you said:

One of the recommendations I am particularly very strongly in agreement with, and that is that the current education performance framework is not sufficiently robust. It simply is not, and there was no hiding from that during the committee sessions. (...)

It [the Committee's 'valuable report'] has strengthened my arm in being able to galvanise action within the department, especially with regard to monitoring.

However, it appears this 'more robust outcomes framework' will in the future have no benefits for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic learners, as a result of the decision to remove the relevant funding from the EIG. When the Committee recommended you consider whether the introduction of the Education Improvement Grant has improved outcomes for these groups of learners and keep the funding model under review during this Assembly, we did not envisage that one year later this funding would be de-hypothecated further and local authorities expected to find it from the RSG.

Whilst the Committee recognises that there has been a Welsh Government-wide approach of 'reprioritising' local government funding through a shift away from



specific grants towards the RSG, we are disappointed with this decision and believe it goes against the direction of travel set out in your response to our inquiry.

We note that one of the purposes of the reprioritisation of local government funding is to protect frontline school budgets. However, as discussed further on in this letter, it is not apparent to us how the Welsh Government has made available in the RSG the £13 million removed from the EIG. We would therefore be grateful for further information in response to the following questions:

- **How does the Welsh Government plan to monitor and evaluate the outcomes from funding in the RSG to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic learners?**
- **How will the Welsh Government act on the Committee's recommendations, which you accepted, in terms of the impact and outcomes of the EIG on these groups of learners, now the funding sits outside the EIG?**
- **Can you provide the Committee with a copy of the Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) and Equality Impact Assessment, undertaken by the Welsh Government before making the decision to change the way funding for these groups of learners is provided?**
- **How did the Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) and Equality Impact Assessment influence the Welsh Government's decisions when taking this decision?**

Movement of funding from the EIG to the RSG

In addition to the Committee's concerns about the decision to further de-hypothecate the funding for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic learners, we are particularly concerned about ensuring transparency in the exact way this money is moving to the RSG.



The Local Government Settlement for 2018–19 (Excel Table 9) shows that the value of the EIG is reducing by £15 million from £133 in 2017–18 to £118 million in 2018–19. During draft budget scrutiny, you informed the Committee that £2 million of this is an actual reduction, while £13 million is being ‘removed’ from the EIG and ‘made available’ to local authorities through the RSG. However, it is not clear how this is contained in the RSG for 2018–19 as it is not listed amongst the grant transfers in Table 8 of the Settlement.

You stated in your most recent update to the Committee that ‘this’ (we assume the removal from the EIG of the £13 million) does not constitute a grant transfer and is therefore not subject to the same processes and distributional considerations. We understand that the usual process when grant funding transfers to the RSG is for the Distribution Sub Group to recommend how this is undertaken. An example is that a new Indicator Based Assessment (IBA) may be added to the information published as part of the Local Government Settlement to demonstrate notionally how the RSG has been calculated. This has happened in the case of a number of grants transferred in 2018–19, including the Social Workforce Grant, the Welsh Independent Living Grant and the Waste element of the Single Revenue Grant. This does not appear to be the case with the movement of the element of the EIG which supports Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic education.

This causes considerable concern to the Committee. Whilst it is clear that the £13 million has been removed from the EIG, it is unclear whether this money will be transferred to the RSG and if it is, what the mechanism for this will be. Your paper to the Committee on the draft budget (page 39) stated that a ‘reduction’ to the EIG of £13.145 million in 2018–19 was financing a transfer to central reserves.

The Committee is aware that there are some concerns amongst local government that it risks being short-changed, i.e. expected to continue providing these services from RSG allocations but with no visible or obvious addition to that RSG



funding. As was highlighted during draft budget scrutiny (the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services' letter to the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee dated 13 November 2017), the schools element of the Aggregate External Finance has increased by only £1.5 million (0.1%) between 2017–18 and 2018–19.

Furthermore, the Committee is concerned that, without the requisite funding, local authorities may not continue providing these services to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic learners or they may scale them back significantly.

The Committee notes that the Welsh Government is providing £5 million from reserves for 2018–19 to 'alleviate the impact on [Wales'] main urban authorities', and a further £2.5 million in 2018–19 to facilitate regional approaches to supporting these groups of learners. You state that this funding is 'additional' but it is unclear what this is additional to, given a lack of clarity over whether or not the money removed from the EIG is now in the RSG or in the Welsh Government's reserves.

We would be grateful if you could provide further information in response to the following questions:

- Can you provide further clarity on whether the £13.1 million is being transferred to the RSG and the mechanism by which this is happening? *(You state in your update that 'this' is not a grant transfer but can you confirm what 'this' means in this context?)*
- Can you confirm whether the £5 million you have allocated in 2018–19 for urban authorities is only available to Cardiff, Newport and Swansea and how is it being apportioned?
- What arrangements are in place to finance other local authorities' provision where they have Gypsy, Roma and Traveller or Minority Ethnic Learners? *(Whilst Cardiff, Newport and Swansea might have the largest concentrations*



of these groups of learners, other local authorities also provide services to these learners. It is arguably more challenging and proportionately costly to ensure quality services in areas without a 'critical mass' of learners.)

- Can you provide details of how the £2.5 million allocated in 2018–19 to facilitate regional approaches will be apportioned between the four regions?
- Can you confirm that Wrexham will be the lead authority in the North Wales region (and if it is not receiving part of the £5 million, the reasons for that decision)?
- Are the £5 million and £2.5 million allocations in addition to the £13.1 million which the Welsh Government says has been made available within the RSG or does it actually constitute a £5.6 million reduction from the current level of funding? *(The Committee believes it is important to clarify this as you made a distinction during draft budget scrutiny between the £2 million 'reduction' to the EIG in 2018–19 and the 'removal' of the £13.1 million to be 'made available' in the RSG.)*
- Are the £5 million and £2.5 million allocations a one-off in 2018–19? What support will be provided on a recurring basis to fund this area of provision?

The Committee looks forward to receiving your response to the points raised in this letter, including the specific questions highlighted. We would appreciate an early response given the proximity to the new financial year.

Yours sincerely



Lynne Neagle AC / AM
Cadeirydd / Chair





Date *Dyddiad* 19th March 2018
Direct line *Rhif ffôn* 01639 763309
Email *Ebost* leader@npt.gov.uk
Contact *Cyswllt*
Your ref *Eich cyf*
Our ref *Ein cyf* RGJ.AP

Lynne Neagle AM
Chair
Children, Young People and Education Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA
(By Email)
SeneddCYPE@assembly.wales

Dear Ms Neagle,

I have seen a copy of your letter dated 14 March to the Cabinet Secretary for Education concerning the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller and Minority Ethnic learner provision.

This Council fully supports your request for further information as set out at various points in your letter in bold type. We are particularly concerned at the apparent absence of a Child Rights Impact Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment from the Welsh Government. We have seen neither.

I suspect that we might have to agree to differ on the merits of de-hypothecation of specific grants; but that is not the real issue here. At the time of writing, the simple fact is that all of this adds up to a major cut in support for learners in these categories which actually threatens the future of the entire provision. To give you some local context here, it represents a 74% cut in the funding compared to 2017/18 or an 86% cut if one excludes the funding our own schools are prepared to put into these services at their own discretion. Nearly all of this funding is used to employ dedicated support staff and its removal would certainly result in job losses.

Against this background, this Council's Cabinet will be taking a report next month on how to plug some of the gap; but I think it is inevitable that the service will be significantly reduced and whatever we do, will represent a partial one year fix only. It seems to me that we will

have little choice but to review the future of the entire service going forward as it cannot be sustained on the basis of this level of budget reductions. We are aware of some rather vague ideas of a regional arrangement based around the four authorities who will be receiving direct, but reduced, support (Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham); but again we have no clear idea as to how this is going to work in practice or whether it is practical at all.

Thus I believe your letter - and the specific questions you have put to the Cabinet Secretary - are very timely indeed. In my view, it is extremely regrettable that most/all local authorities are left in this position a matter of a couple of weeks before the new financial year commences.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Debbie Wilcox, the Leader and Education spokesperson of the WLGA.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr R G Jones
Leader of Council

Leader's Office
Arwinydd Y Cyngor

Rob Jones
Leader's Office
Civic Centre, Port Talbot. SA13 1PJ
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Rob Jones
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Ffôn 01639 763309

Key Stage 4 Results Summary 2017 - Final SSSPs

Science Analysis



| LAEstab | FSM % 2017 | School | Cohort Number | % Science 1 (GCSEs only) | | % L2 Science 1 | | GCSE Only Difference 2016-2017 | L2 Difference 2016-2017 | Retained or Increased Vocational Provision (1 year) | Moved to GCSE OnLY | 80%+ Pupils moved to GCSE | |
|---------------|------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|------|----------------|------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--|---------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| | | | | 2016 | 2017 | 2016 | 2017 | | | | | | |
| EAS | 18.5 | EAS - South East Wales | 6,010 | 45.7 | 54.3 | 76.7 | 72.0 | | -4.7 | | | | |
| | | Wales | 31,379 | | | 82.4 | 75.6 | | -6.8 | | | | |
| Blaenau Gwent | 6775501 | 24.8 | Abertillery Learning Community | 110 | 35.3 | 23.6 | 36.8 | 89.1 | -11.7 | 52.3 | Y | | |
| | 6775401 | 22.9 | Brynmawr Foundation | 138 | 35.0 | 40.6 | 88.3 | 40.6 | 5.5 | -47.7 | | Y | |
| | 6775500 | 21.1 | Ebbw Fawr Learning Community | 200 | 34.5 | 30.0 | 47.6 | 75.0 | -4.5 | 27.4 | Y | | |
| | 6774061 | 21.4 | Tredegar Comprehensive | 138 | 41.8 | 64.5 | 96.3 | 64.5 | 22.7 | -31.8 | | Y | |
| Caerphilly | 6764093 | 21.3 | Bedwas High | 117 | 47.1 | 50.4 | 81.4 | 76.1 | 3.4 | -5.3 | Y | | |
| | 6764046 | 19.3 | Blackwood Comprehensive | 190 | 57.4 | 64.7 | 75.6 | 64.7 | 7.4 | -10.9 | | Y | |
| | 6765400 | 23.0 | Cwmcarn High | 92 | 23.8 | 48.9 | 98.1 | 48.9 | 25.1 | -49.2 | | Y | |
| | 6764073 | 24.0 | Heolddu Comprehensive | 114 | 40.2 | 36.0 | 91.0 | 59.6 | -4.2 | -31.3 | Y | | |
| | 6764104 | 18.8 | Islwyn High | 233 | 45.7 | 55.4 | 85.7 | 55.4 | 9.6 | -30.3 | | Y | |
| | 6764075 | 20.4 | Lewis School Pengam | 131 | 38.8 | 47.3 | 90.5 | 47.3 | 8.6 | -43.1 | | Y | |
| | 6764077 | 20.0 | Lewis Girls' Comprehensive | 125 | 53.0 | 73.6 | 87.9 | 73.6 | 20.6 | -14.3 | | Y | |
| | 6764031 | 14.3 | Newbridge School | 174 | 55.6 | 56.9 | 92.9 | 94.8 | 1.3 | 1.9 | Y | | |
| | 6764090 | 34.3 | Rhymney Comprehensive | 149 | 23.6 | 19.5 | 85.8 | 76.5 | -4.2 | -9.3 | Y | | |
| | 6764068 | 24.8 | Risca Community Comprehensive | 66 | 28.4 | 48.5 | 86.5 | 48.5 | 20.1 | -38.0 | | Y | |
| | 6764065 | 24.6 | St Cenydd Comprehensive | 187 | 41.9 | 43.9 | 73.1 | 82.9 | 1.9 | 9.8 | Y | | |
| | 6764070 | 18.2 | St Martin's Comprehensive | 161 | 47.4 | 67.1 | 93.4 | 88.8 | 19.6 | -4.6 | Y | | |
| | 6764103 | 13.9 | Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymini | 204 | 65.4 | 73.5 | 65.4 | 73.5 | 8.1 | 8.1 | | Y | |
| Monmouthshire | 6794066 | 9.8 | Caldicot School | 201 | 65.6 | 76.1 | 84.2 | 76.6 | 10.5 | -7.5 | | Y | |
| | 6794065 | 11.0 | Chepstow Comprehensive | 129 | 48.3 | 59.7 | 91.6 | 73.6 | 11.4 | -18.0 | | Y | |
| | 6794064 | 10.8 | King Henry VIII Comprehensive | 146 | 64.1 | 79.5 | 94.1 | 84.2 | 15.3 | -9.9 | | Y | |
| | 6794060 | 8.4 | Monmouth Comprehensive | 254 | 70.5 | 73.2 | 84.0 | 83.9 | 2.7 | -0.2 | | Y | |
| Newport | 6804030 | 6.4 | Bassaleg School | 248 | 51.7 | 79.8 | 97.1 | 86.7 | 28.2 | -10.4 | | Y | |
| | 6804059 | 5.2 | Caerleon Comprehensive | 246 | 80.9 | 87.0 | 86.7 | 87.0 | 6.1 | 0.3 | | Y | |
| | 6804021 | 33.3 | Llanwern High | 138 | 23.4 | 38.4 | 23.4 | 38.4 | 15.0 | 15.0 | | Y | |
| | 6804026 | 31.3 | Llisbury High | 130 | 15.8 | 39.2 | 89.3 | 39.2 | 23.4 | -50.0 | | Y | |
| | 6804025 | 20.5 | Newport High | 187 | 32.3 | 42.2 | 44.3 | 67.4 | 10.0 | 23.1 | Y | | |
| | 6804602 | 11.7 | St Joseph's RC High | 221 | 57.5 | 62.4 | 72.6 | 97.7 | 4.9 | 25.2 | Y | | |
| | 6804003 | 19.3 | St Julian's School | 243 | 35.3 | 38.3 | 49.4 | 69.5 | 2.9 | 20.1 | Y | | |
| 6804020 | 27.3 | The John Frost School | 162 | 42.6 | 49.4 | 85.6 | 94.4 | 6.8 | 8.8 | Y | | | |
| Torfaen | 6784070 | 27.3 | Abersychan School | 150 | 26.1 | 40.7 | 67.3 | 88.7 | 14.6 | 21.4 | Y | | |
| | 6784051 | 12.7 | Croesyceiliog School | 274 | 55.5 | 51.8 | 89.1 | 51.8 | -3.6 | -37.2 | | Y | |
| | 6784076 | 21.5 | Cwmbran High | 218 | 44.6 | 52.8 | 87.8 | 92.7 | 8.2 | 4.9 | Y | | |
| | 6784603 | 6.9 | St Alban's RC High | 166 | 38.3 | 47.0 | 85.8 | 84.3 | 8.7 | -1.5 | Y | | |
| | 6784072 | 17.0 | West Monmouth School | 121 | 37.1 | 47.9 | 86.7 | 47.9 | 10.9 | -38.8 | | Y | |
| 6784075 | 12.7 | Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw | 128 | 60.4 | 62.5 | 79.9 | 78.9 | 2.1 | -0.9 | Y | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | Average Change 2016-2017 | 8.9 | -26.3 | -21.8 |
| | | | | | | | | | | Retained or Increased Vocational Provision (1 year) | Moved to GCSE OnLY | 80%+ Pupils moved to GCSE | |

Summary

- 1 For schools that moved over 80% or more of their pupils to GCSE provision the average change from 2016 to 2016 on the L2 Science 1 measure was -21.8%
- 2 For schools that moved entirely to GCSE provision the average change from 2016 to 2016 on the L2 Science 1 measure was -26.3%
- 3 For schools that retained or increased their vocational provision (which will not currently be an option in 2018), the average increase was +8.9%

Agenda Item 3.4

Copy 5 of paper to note 4

ERW's response to the follow up actions that arose from the 8th March meeting.

- The Committee would welcome a note on the issue of the content of one of the questions on an English paper, regarding the pros and cons of fair trade and the impact this had on results really suffered.

Below you will find a response from Ian Altman, our Strategic Lead for Secondary Support, who marked the exam paper in question:

“Essentially 60 of the 80 marks were linked to Fairtrade.

The reading section /40 required no prior knowledge of the topic although it could be argued that those pupils from more affluent homes may have understood some of the inference better. The paper is untiered so the challenge for WJEC is to find texts with the readability for G grade pupils and the challenge for A* pupils.

The first writing task /20 was to write a letter to your school regarding their decision to use Fairtrade goods in the school canteen. The reading texts provided some of the information that pupils could tap into to support their answers. However, I did feel that those pupils from homes where there would be discussions around Fairtrade v Value for money, ethical v commercial etc. would be in a beneficial position. The evidence is, at best, anecdotal though but it may have meant that pupils from deprived backgrounds may have been disadvantaged on this writing task. I encountered a number of incomplete and ‘not attempted’ answers here but this was partly down to stamina/timing”

I am reasonably confident that the nature of the topic was a barrier to pupils writing extended, cohesive responses in some cases and that some of these pupils would have been those from disadvantaged homes, eFSM etc.

- Please provide examples of where input of challenge advisers has changed the way a school uses it's PDG allocation or when the consortia had had to consider recovering PDG which had been inappropriately spent.

Our Leader of Learning for PDG is relatively new in post and a large part of his work moving forward will be to meet with Challenge Advisers and discuss the use of PDG grant in their schools in a detailed manner, and to work alongside them to plan for effective expenditure that can demonstrate impact. In their initial research, no schools have had their PDG grant money clawed back, but there are instances where expenditure has been changed – one school initially planned to pay for free bus passes for eFSM pupils but then withdrew that element of the spending plan after no clear impact could be demonstrated from this use of the funding.

Agenda Item 3.5

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

National Assembly for Wales
Children, Young People and Education Committee

Carwyn Jones AM, First Minister

Kirsty Williams AM, Cabinet Secretary for Education

Ken Skates AM, Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport

27 March 2018

Dear First Minister and Cabinet Secretaries,

The Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS)

On 21 March 2018, members of the Children, Young People and Education Committee who were able to attend at short notice met with academics and representatives of the University and College Union. The meeting was held to discuss the implications of the proposed changes to the pre-1992 universities' pension scheme, the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS), for Wales. I attach information shared with the Committee by those who met with us.

As a Committee we are very concerned about the anticipated impact of the proposed changes on a number of areas, not least:

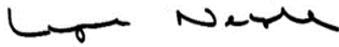
- the number and quality of staff who would remain in Wales following any such changes;
- the direct impact on Welsh students and those studying in Wales of any consequential reduction in staff numbers and/or quality; and
- the overall impact of both of the above points on the wider Welsh economy, given the crucial economic role played by higher education on Wales's domestic and international position.

Furthermore, we are concerned about the apparent deficiencies in the governance arrangements in place to establish university staff views on the proposed changes to the scheme, and the way in which universities' risk tolerance has been considered by the Pensions Regulator.



Given the significant impact the proposed changes to the USS could have on students, the higher education sector and the wider economy in Wales, we urge you convene as a matter of urgency a meeting of relevant individuals, including Wales's Vice Chancellors, to seek a resolution as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely



Lynne Neagle AM

Chair

Cc Russell George AM, Chair, Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee,
National Assembly for Wales.



Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

National Assembly for Wales
Children, Young People and Education Committee

Professor Elizabeth Treasure
Professor John G. Hughes
Professor Cara Carmichael Aitchison
Professor Colin Riordan
Professor Maria Hinfelaar
Peter Horrocks
Professor Richard B Davies
Professor Julie Lydon
Professor Medwin Hughes

27 March 2018

Dear Vice Chancellors,

The Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS)

On 21 March 2018 members of the Children, Young People and Education Committee who were able to attend at short notice met with academics and representatives of the University and College Union. The meeting was held to discuss the implications of the proposed changes to the pre-1992 universities' pension scheme, the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS), for Wales. I attach information shared with the Committee by those who met with us.

As a Committee we are very concerned about the anticipated impact of the proposed changes on a number of areas, not least:

- the number and quality of staff who would remain in Wales following any such changes;
- the direct impact on Welsh students and those studying in Wales of any consequential reduction in staff numbers and/or quality; and
- the overall impact of both of the above points on the wider Welsh economy, given the crucial economic role played by higher education on Wales's domestic and international position.



Furthermore, we are concerned about the apparent deficiencies in the governance arrangements in place to establish university staff views on the proposed changes to the scheme, and the way in which universities' risk tolerance has been considered by the Pensions Regulator.

Given the significant impact the proposed changes to the USS could have on students, the higher education sector and the wider economy in Wales, we urge you to seek a resolution as a matter of urgency. We have written in similar terms to the Welsh Government's First Minister, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure.

Yours sincerely



Lynne Neagle AM
Chair

Cc Russell George AM, Chair, Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee,
National Assembly for Wales.

Professor Julie Lydon, Chair, Universities Wales



Agenda Item 3.6

Eluned Morgan AM
Gweinidog y Gymraeg a Dysgu Gydol Oes
Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref MA-P/EM/1181/18

Lynne Neagle AM
Chair, Children, Young People and Education Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

5 April 2018

Dear Lynne,

Thank you for your letter of 19 March regarding the quality of work-based learning (WBL) in Wales. You mentioned some issues highlighted in recent Estyn inspections of WBL, relating to leadership and learner outcomes.

We are committed to ensuring that all Welsh Government funded provision meets high standards of quality, and like you I was concerned to see the shortcomings highlighted in Estyn's annual report. I have outlined the action we are taking below.

Monitoring of WBL providers' performance

You may be aware that WBL provision is managed under a contractual relationship with performance and delivery monitored on an ongoing basis. As part of our contract management processes, we occasionally identify issues with a learning provider's performance and will work with that provider to ensure necessary improvements are made.

The Welsh Government is contractually able to terminate a WBL provider's contract with no more than 60 days' notice, and will not hesitate to do so if it believes that a provider is unable to remedy inadequate performance within an acceptable timeframe. However, we are committed to giving all providers the opportunity and time to improve before taking such a step. We believe that this gives a degree of stability which is in learners' and employers' best interests.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Eluned.Morgan@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Eluned.Morgan@gov.wales

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.

An Estyn inspection that judges the performance of a WBL provider as 'Unsatisfactory' or 'Adequate' is not something that is taken lightly. Post-inspection, all providers are required to submit a robust action plan to WG, detailing how they will address each of Estyn's recommendations. Officials then meet with Estyn and the provider to discuss the efficacy of the plan. This meeting will result in one of two outcomes:

- Where it is felt that the plan is relevant, sufficiently far reaching and above all achievable, officials will allow the provider to continue with its contract under strict monitoring conditions. However, the provider is made aware that its contract may be terminated at any time if it is unable to evidence sufficient and timely improvements in performance. This would include a second 'Unsatisfactory' judgement following re-inspection by Estyn.
- Where the plan appears to fall short of what is required to improve performance, or it is clear that improvements cannot be made quickly enough, a provider will be notified of the intention to terminate its contract.

Of the three WBL providers that were inspected in 2016/17, officials already had concerns in relation to some elements of their performance and had already been working with them to address these issues. However, we were not sighted on all of the areas identified by Estyn as these could only reasonably be identified via a thorough inspection process.

Inspections are carried out over a seven-year cycle and so, inevitably, each year's inspection schedule will look at a sample of three or four providers. We do not believe that the providers inspected by Estyn in 2016/17 are representative of the wider WBL network. Of the 19 directly contracted providers, we currently only have concerns about four providers; three of which were inspected this year and the other was inspected in 2016 and judged 'Adequate'.

During the current 2017/18 inspection cycle, Estyn have inspected two further WBL providers. Both providers have received positive inspection results.

Learner outcomes

Your letter also mentioned learners' progress and completion rates. The main performance measure we use for apprenticeships is 'framework success': the percentage of all learners who complete and attain the full framework of qualifications that makes up their apprenticeship programme. We have maintained apprenticeship success rates of more than 80% for several years and I do not consider this to be an area of concern.

I am aware that Estyn inspections look in depth at learner outcomes and, in particular, at how long it takes learners to complete their programmes. The Welsh Government does not routinely use this 'timely completion' measure for a number of reasons: we recognise that individuals learn at different paces and with different degrees of pressure at work, and we expect learning providers to be flexible in supporting learners to achieve their goals, even if this takes longer in some cases than others. It is also worth noting that the available data relies on learning providers' own estimates of expected end dates for learning programmes, rather than an objective analysis of how long it 'should' take an individual learner to achieve. My officials do, however, monitor timely completion and will challenge providers if it is apparent that a large proportion of learners are taking longer than expected to complete their qualifications.

Support for quality improvement in the WBL sector

We have also introduced a wider programme of work to support improvement in the WBL sector. This is led by the National Training Federation for Wales (NTfW), the representative body for the sector. In 2016 we introduced a Head of Quality post in the NTfW for the first time, funded by the Welsh Government through the European Social Fund. The postholder, Kelly Edwards, started in May 2016 and we have recently extended her post until May 2021.

Kelly's role is to support and challenge the WBL sector to improve the quality of delivery. She has initiated a wide-ranging programme which includes a Quality Managers' network, an annual Teaching, Learning and Assessment programme, and a series of professional learning events for leaders and practitioners. These cover areas such as digital learning, giving learners effective feedback, coaching and assessment for learning. This is the first time the WBL sector has had a co-ordinated programme of support, and feedback to date has been extremely positive. Alongside this, we are actively promoting best practice through the Apprenticeship Awards and the VQ Awards, both of which have categories to recognise excellent tutors and assessors.

On a more general point, you will be aware that we are developing proposals to establish a new Tertiary Education and Research Commission for Wales, which would have responsibility for planning, funding and quality across the post-compulsory education and training sector, including WBL. The intention is that the Commission will have overall statutory responsibility for both quality assurance and enhancement, giving it a more explicit role in driving improvements. The next stage of consultation will be launched shortly, and we will be seeking stakeholders' views on how the new Commission can best support workforce and leadership development in all sectors.

I hope this response reassures you that we are actively working to ensure high standards of delivery across the whole WBL sector, with a view to ensuring that all learning provision matches the instances of good and excellent practice that already exist.

Yours sincerely



Eluned Morgan AC/AM

Gweinidog y Gymraeg a Dysgu Gydol Oes
Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning

cc Russell George AM
Chair, Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

National Assembly for Wales
Children, Young People and Education Committee

Kirsty Williams AM
Cabinet Secretary for Education

13 April 2018

Dear Kirsty,

School Uniform Grant

I write regarding the ending of the School Uniform Grant from 2018–19, which has provided up to £105 per child eligible for free school meals (eFSM) as they enter Year 7.

The Committee is concerned that this might lead to a loss of important financial support to families on low incomes in purchasing school uniforms. In light of our concerns, we would be grateful if you could confirm the following:

1. Whether the Welsh Government expects local authorities to continue operating a school uniform grant scheme.
2. Whether the £700,000 annual funding has been moved to the local government Revenue Support Grant (RSG) or to central reserves (i.e. is it simply being cut?).
3. That a Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) and Equality Impact Assessment were undertaken by the Welsh Government before deciding to end the School Uniform Grant, and how those assessments influenced the Welsh Government's decision.



We are unconvinced by the rationale provided for this change, namely that prices of school uniforms have reduced significantly and therefore eligible families no longer need this financial support. Without hypothecated funding, it is not clear to us how families of eFSM pupils will still be able to access assistance in meeting the costs of new uniforms during the transition from primary to secondary school.

The Committee is aware that, in the 2018–19 budget setting round, there has been a Welsh Government-wide approach of de-hypothecating local authority funding and movement of a number of funding streams into the RSG. You will be aware from our letter dated 14 March 2018, and previous representations, of our concerns about this approach in the specific case of funding for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic learners. We have also raised several questions about the transparency with which movements of funding from specific grants into the RSG are being undertaken.

We have similar concerns about the School Uniform Grant. From the published budget documentation, the reduction in funding for the School Uniform Grant appears to be part of a reduction in 2018–19 to the budget line which finances the Education Improvement Grant (EIG). As with the removal of funding from the EIG, it is not clear where this money has gone as it is not documented in the local government settlement as a transfer into the RSG, unlike other hypothecated grants which have ended. There are therefore some commonalities in our concerns about these two issues.

In light of this, we would be grateful if you could confirm the following:

4. Whether the Welsh Government expects local authorities to provide financial support from their RSG allocations to eligible families for purchasing school uniforms.



5. Whether this constitutes a grant transfer (and, if so, why it is not documented as such in the 2018–19 Local Government Settlement).
6. If the £700,000 funding for helping eligible families purchase school uniforms is now contained within the RSG, what mechanism exists to demonstrate the movement of the funding and subsequent monitoring of its use for this purpose.

The Committee looks forward to receiving your response to the points raised in this letter, including the specific questions highlighted in points 1 to 6.

Yours sincerely,



Lynne Neagle AM

Chair

Cc Mark Drakeford AM, Cabinet Secretary for Finance



Agenda Item 3.8

Kirsty Williams AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA-P/KW/00880/18

Lynne Neagle AM
Chair, Children, Young People and Education Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

11 April 2017

Dear Lynne,

I am writing to provide you with the additional information you requested further to my recent appearance before the Committee as part of its inquiry into targeted funding to improve educational outcomes.

You asked how many staff transferred from Schools Challenge Cymru (SCC) to the consortia and into what sort of roles. I understand that in CSC six SCC advisers were retained as Accelerated Progress Leads and one as a Leadership Programmes Consultant. In both ERW and EAS, two SCC advisers were retained as Challenge Advisers. Whilst no SCC staff were initially retained in GWE, one has since been commissioned to provide mentoring and coaching support for teaching and learning.

We talked during the Committee session about the engagement the Government has had with Professor Mel Ainscow since March 2017 and I agreed to provide further detail on this. Senior officials, including Steve Davies and the former Director General of Education and Public Services Group, met with Professor Ainscow in March 2017. Subsequent to this, Professor Ainscow sent my officials an outline of lessons learned from SCC. There was a subsequent exchange of emails between my officials and Professor Ainscow in June 2017 about the SCC evaluation. Professor Ainscow then attended the SCC celebration event, which was held in July 2017 and attended by a number of my senior officials.

The walking bus approach I mentioned at Committee was actually at Pembroke Dock school. It's one of many examples of how PDG is being used innovatively to tackle attendance issues.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales

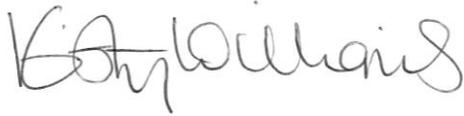
Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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.

Finally, I have attached the Local Authority level allocations since 2012.

I trust that this is helpful and look forward to receiving the Committee's report in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams'.

Kirsty Williams AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education

PDG ALLOCATIONS 2012-13

*See also notes below

| | PDG | Nos | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Ynys Mon | £643,050.00 | 1429 | |
| Gwynedd | £904,050.00 | 2009 | |
| Conwy | £1,012,950.00 | 2251 | |
| Denbighshire | £1,073,250.00 | 2385 | |
| Flintshire | £1,236,150.00 | 2747 | |
| Wrexham | £1,288,800.00 | 2864 | |
| North* | £6,158,250.00 | 13685 | *for info - LA grant in 2012-13 |
| Powys | £765,900.00 | 41362 | |
| Ceredigion | £458,100.00 | 37904 | |
| Pembrokeshire | £1,160,100.00 | 35518 | |
| Carmarthenshire | £1,690,200.00 | 37052 | |
| Swansea | £2,670,750.00 | 37591 | |
| Neath Port Talbot | £1,799,100.00 | 34359 | |
| South West* | £8,544,150.00 | 223786 | *for info - LA grant in 2012-13 |
| Bridgend | £1,556,100.00 | 3458 | |
| Vale | £1,073,700.00 | 2386 | |
| RCT | £3,382,650.00 | 7517 | |
| Merthyr | £810,000.00 | 1800 | |
| Caerphilly** | £2,484,000.00 | 5520 | |
| Central South* | £9,306,450.00 | 20681 | *for info - LA grant in 2012-13 |
| Cardiff** | £4,072,950.00 | 9051 | |
| Blaenau | £1,052,550.00 | 2339 | |
| Torfaen | £1,029,600.00 | 2288 | |
| Monmouth | £506,250.00 | 1125 | |
| Newport | £1,762,650.00 | 3917 | |
| South East* | £8,424,000.00 | 18720 | *for info - LA grant in 2012-13 |
| | | | |
| All Wales | £32,432,850.00 | | |

Notes

PDG was £450 per efsm pupil aged 5-15.

PDG and former SEG issued within one offer letter (which specified how much for PDG and how much for SEG).

*Regional totals for info only, grant was issued by LA in 2012-13.

**Caerphilly was within Central South region until 2013 14

**Cardiff was within South East region until 2013 14

PDG ALLOCATIONS 2013-14

| | | | | Nos | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------|-----|--------|
| | PDG | LAC | Totals | PDG | LAC | Totals |
| Ynys Mon | £609,750.00 | £26,100.00 | £635,850.00 | 1355 | 58 | 1413 |
| Gwynedd | £859,950.00 | £57,150.00 | £917,100.00 | 1911 | 127 | 2038 |
| Conwy | £1,003,050.00 | £54,450.00 | £1,057,500.00 | 2229 | 121 | 2350 |
| Denbighshire | £1,042,650.00 | £44,550.00 | £1,087,200.00 | 2317 | 99 | 2416 |
| Flintshire | £1,251,450.00 | £49,950.00 | £1,301,400.00 | 2781 | 111 | 2892 |
| Wrexham | £1,280,250.00 | £51,750.00 | £1,332,000.00 | 2845 | 115 | 2960 |
| GwE | £6,047,100.00 | £283,500.00 | £6,331,050.00 | | | |
| Powys | £758,250.00 | £52,650.00 | £810,900.00 | 1685 | 117 | |
| Ceredigion | £420,300.00 | £27,000.00 | £447,300.00 | 934 | 60 | |
| Pembrokeshire | £1,122,300.00 | £45,450.00 | £1,167,750.00 | 2494 | 101 | |
| Carmarthenshire | £1,582,200.00 | £81,450.00 | £1,663,650.00 | 3516 | 181 | |
| Swansea | £2,592,000.00 | £163,350.00 | £2,755,350.00 | 5760 | 363 | |
| Neath Port Talbot | £1,777,950.00 | £131,850.00 | £1,909,800.00 | 3951 | 293 | |
| ERW | £8,253,000.00 | £501,750.00 | £8,754,750.00 | | | |
| Bridgend | £1,586,250.00 | £108,450.00 | £1,694,700.00 | 3525 | 241 | |
| Vale | £1,018,800.00 | £58,950.00 | £1,077,750.00 | 2264 | 131 | |
| RCT | £3,268,800.00 | £174,150.00 | £3,442,950.00 | 7264 | 387 | |
| Merthyr | £794,700.00 | £56,250.00 | £850,950.00 | 1766 | 125 | |
| Cardiff | £3,705,750.00 | £162,450.00 | £3,868,200.00 | 8235 | 361 | |
| CSC | £10,374,300.00 | £560,250.00 | £10,934,550.00 | | | |
| Caerphilly | £2,578,950.00 | £90,900.00 | £2,669,850.00 | 5731 | 202 | |
| Blaenau | £1,040,850.00 | £40,500.00 | £1,081,350.00 | 2313 | 90 | |
| Torfaen | £1,086,300.00 | £85,950.00 | £1,172,250.00 | 2414 | 191 | |
| Monmouth | £503,100.00 | £27,450.00 | £530,550.00 | 1118 | 61 | |
| Newport | £1,735,650.00 | £79,200.00 | £1,814,850.00 | 3857 | 176 | |
| EAS | £6,944,850.00 | £324,000.00 | £7,268,850.00 | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| All Wales | £31,619,250.00 | £1,669,500.00 | £33,289,200.00 | | | |

Notes

PDG was £450 per efsm pupil aged 5-15.

PDG and former SEG issued within one offer letter (which specified how much for PDG and how much for SEG).

PDG ALLOCATIONS 2014-15

| | PDG | LAC | Totals |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Ynys Mon | £1,412,802.00 | £48,654.00 | £1,461,456.00 |
| Gwynedd | £1,759,806.00 | £123,012.00 | £1,882,818.00 |
| Conwy | £2,092,122.00 | £95,472.00 | £2,187,594.00 |
| Denbighshire | £2,150,874.00 | £97,308.00 | £2,248,182.00 |
| Flintshire | £2,295,918.00 | £113,832.00 | £2,409,750.00 |
| Wrexham | £2,552,958.00 | £118,422.00 | £2,671,380.00 |
| GwE | £12,264,480.00 | £596,700.00 | £12,861,180.00 |
| Powys | £1,463,292.00 | £100,980.00 | £1,564,272.00 |
| Ceredigion | £838,134.00 | £43,146.00 | £881,280.00 |
| Pembrokeshire | £2,373,948.00 | £90,882.00 | £2,464,830.00 |
| Carmarthenshire | £3,161,592.00 | £171,666.00 | £3,333,258.00 |
| Swansea | £5,227,092.00 | £358,938.00 | £5,586,030.00 |
| Neath Port Talbot | £3,530,628.00 | £287,334.00 | £3,817,962.00 |
| ERW | £16,594,686.00 | £1,052,946.00 | £17,647,632.00 |
| Bridgend | £3,353,454.00 | £235,926.00 | £3,589,380.00 |
| Vale | £2,206,872.00 | £116,586.00 | £2,323,458.00 |
| RCT | £6,614,190.00 | £361,692.00 | £6,975,882.00 |
| Merthyr | £1,550,502.00 | £111,078.00 | £1,661,580.00 |
| Cardiff | £8,220,690.00 | £311,202.00 | £8,531,892.00 |
| CSC | £21,945,708.00 | £1,136,484.00 | £23,082,192.00 |
| Caerphilly | £5,075,622.00 | £179,928.00 | £5,255,550.00 |
| Blaenau | £2,132,514.00 | £79,866.00 | £2,212,380.00 |
| Torfaen | £2,179,332.00 | £186,354.00 | £2,365,686.00 |
| Monmouth | £1,047,438.00 | £46,818.00 | £1,094,256.00 |
| Newport | £3,839,994.00 | £160,650.00 | £4,000,644.00 |
| EAS | £14,274,900.00 | £653,616.00 | £14,928,516.00 |
| | | | |
| All Wales | £65,079,774.00 | £3,439,746.00 | £68,519,520.00 |

Notes

PDG was £918 per efsm pupil aged 5-15.

PDG and former SEG issued within one offer letter (which specified how much for PDG and how much for SEG).

PDG ALLOCATIONS 2015-16

| | PDG | EYPDG | LAC | Totals |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Ynys Mon | £1,456,350.00 | £103,500.00 | £55,650.00 | £1,615,500.00 |
| Gwynedd | £1,865,850.00 | £123,900.00 | £131,250.00 | £2,121,000.00 |
| Conwy | £2,337,300.00 | £144,300.00 | £102,900.00 | £2,584,500.00 |
| Denbighshire | £2,506,350.00 | £139,200.00 | £108,150.00 | £2,753,700.00 |
| Flintshire | £2,694,300.00 | £185,100.00 | £130,200.00 | £3,009,600.00 |
| Wrexham | £2,943,150.00 | £210,900.00 | £133,350.00 | £3,287,400.00 |
| GwE | £13,803,300.00 | £906,900.00 | £661,500.00 | £15,371,700.00 |
| Powys | £1,684,200.00 | £117,300.00 | £118,650.00 | £1,802,850.00 |
| Ceredigion | £926,100.00 | £61,200.00 | £53,550.00 | £979,650.00 |
| Pembrokeshire | £2,632,350.00 | £172,200.00 | £79,800.00 | £2,712,150.00 |
| Carmarthenshire | £3,694,950.00 | £234,000.00 | £183,750.00 | £3,878,700.00 |
| Swansea | £5,768,700.00 | £328,200.00 | £383,250.00 | £6,151,950.00 |
| Neath Port Talbot | £3,995,250.00 | £243,300.00 | £331,800.00 | £4,327,050.00 |
| ERW | £18,701,550.00 | £1,156,200.00 | £1,150,800.00 | £19,852,350.00 |
| Bridgend | £3,740,100.00 | £221,400.00 | £291,900.00 | £4,032,000.00 |
| Vale | £2,506,350.00 | £147,000.00 | £131,250.00 | £2,637,600.00 |
| RCT | £7,272,300.00 | £461,400.00 | £434,700.00 | £7,707,000.00 |
| Merthyr | £1,842,750.00 | £102,300.00 | £126,000.00 | £1,968,750.00 |
| Cardiff | £9,441,600.00 | £654,000.00 | £363,300.00 | £9,804,900.00 |
| CSC | £24,803,100.00 | £1,586,100.00 | £1,347,150.00 | £26,150,250.00 |
| Caerphilly | £5,335,050.00 | £308,400.00 | £195,300.00 | £5,530,350.00 |
| Blaenau | £2,442,300.00 | £157,500.00 | £95,550.00 | £2,537,850.00 |
| Torfaen | £2,411,850.00 | £150,900.00 | £218,400.00 | £2,630,250.00 |
| Monmouth | £1,160,250.00 | £92,700.00 | £71,400.00 | £1,231,650.00 |
| Newport | £4,231,500.00 | £288,300.00 | £180,600.00 | £4,412,100.00 |
| EAS | £15,580,950.00 | £997,800.00 | £761,250.00 | £16,342,200.00 |
| | | | | |
| All Wales | £72,888,900.00 | £4,647,000.00 | £3,920,700.00 | £81,456,600.00 |

PDG was £1,050 per efsm pupil aged 5-15.

PDG ALLOCATIONS 2016-17

| | PDG | EYPDG | LAC | PRUs | Totals |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Ynys Mon | £1,504,200.00 | £98,100.00 | £60,950.00 | | £1,663,250.00 |
| Gwynedd | £2,094,150.00 | £117,900.00 | £138,000.00 | | £2,350,050.00 |
| Conwy | £2,409,250.00 | £136,200.00 | £96,600.00 | | £2,642,050.00 |
| Denbighshire | £2,693,300.00 | £140,100.00 | £109,250.00 | | £2,942,650.00 |
| Flintshire | £3,171,700.00 | £204,900.00 | £154,100.00 | | £3,530,700.00 |
| Wrexham | £3,004,950.00 | £171,000.00 | £112,700.00 | | £3,288,650.00 |
| GwE | £14,877,550.00 | £868,200.00 | £671,600.00 | £108,400.00 | £16,525,750.00 |
| Powys | £1,831,950.00 | £101,100.00 | £106,950.00 | | £2,040,000.00 |
| Ceredigion | £1,006,250.00 | £54,300.00 | £56,350.00 | | £1,116,900.00 |
| Pembrokeshire | £2,580,600.00 | £139,200.00 | £79,350.00 | | £2,799,150.00 |
| Carmarthenshire | £4,241,200.00 | £254,700.00 | £174,800.00 | | £4,670,700.00 |
| Swansea | £6,287,050.00 | £359,700.00 | £347,300.00 | | £6,994,050.00 |
| Neath Port Talbot | £4,532,150.00 | £236,100.00 | £303,600.00 | | £5,071,850.00 |
| ERW | £20,479,200.00 | £1,145,100.00 | £1,068,350.00 | £65,550.00 | £22,758,200.00 |
| Bridgend | £3,964,050.00 | £233,400.00 | £266,800.00 | | £4,464,250.00 |
| Vale | £2,589,800.00 | £151,800.00 | £105,800.00 | | £2,847,400.00 |
| RCT | £7,595,750.00 | £445,200.00 | £425,500.00 | | £8,466,450.00 |
| Merthyr | £1,919,350.00 | £102,300.00 | £119,600.00 | | £2,141,250.00 |
| Cardiff | £10,413,250.00 | £678,600.00 | £385,250.00 | | £11,477,100.00 |
| CSC | £26,482,200.00 | £1,611,300.00 | £1,302,950.00 | £94,300.00 | £29,490,750.00 |
| Caerphilly | £6,005,300.00 | £323,700.00 | £171,350.00 | | £6,500,350.00 |
| Blaenau | £2,555,300.00 | £141,000.00 | £102,350.00 | | £2,798,650.00 |
| Torfaen | £2,569,100.00 | £159,000.00 | £208,150.00 | | £2,936,250.00 |
| Monmouth | £1,216,700.00 | £81,000.00 | £69,000.00 | | £1,366,700.00 |
| Newport | £4,460,850.00 | £258,000.00 | £177,100.00 | | £4,895,950.00 |
| EAS | £16,807,250.00 | £962,700.00 | £727,950.00 | £31,050.00 | £18,528,950.00 |
| | | | | | |
| All Wales | £78,646,200.00 | £4,587,300.00 | £3,770,850.00 | £299,300.00 | £87,303,650.00 |

PDG was £1,150 per efsm pupil aged 5-15.

PDG ALLOCATIONS 2017-18

| | PDG | EYPDG* | PRU/EOTAS | LAC | TOTAL |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Ynys Mon | £ 1,480,050.00 | £ 177,600.00 | £ 10,350.00 | | £ 1,668,000.00 |
| Gwynedd | £ 2,045,850.00 | £ 244,800.00 | £ 20,700.00 | | £ 2,311,350.00 |
| Conwy | £ 2,298,850.00 | £ 279,000.00 | £ 28,750.00 | | £ 2,606,600.00 |
| Denbighshire | £ 2,714,000.00 | £ 290,400.00 | £ 41,400.00 | | £ 3,045,800.00 |
| Flintshire | £ 3,211,950.00 | £ 372,600.00 | £ 81,650.00 | | £ 3,666,200.00 |
| Wrexham | £ 2,973,900.00 | £ 379,800.00 | £ 20,700.00 | | £ 3,374,400.00 |
| GWE | £14,724,600.00 | £1,744,200.00 | £ 203,550.00 | £844,100.00 | £17,516,450.00 |
| Powys | £ 1,771,000.00 | £ 193,200.00 | £ 13,800.00 | | £ 1,978,000.00 |
| Ceredigion | £ 960,250.00 | £ 131,400.00 | £ 14,950.00 | | £ 1,106,600.00 |
| Pembrokeshire | £ 2,548,400.00 | £ 303,600.00 | £ 5,750.00 | | £ 2,857,750.00 |
| Carmarthenshire | £ 4,237,750.00 | £ 508,200.00 | £ 14,950.00 | | £ 4,760,900.00 |
| Swansea | £ 6,184,700.00 | £ 725,400.00 | £ 108,000.00 | | £ 7,018,100.00 |
| Neath Port Talbot | £ 4,524,100.00 | £ 463,800.00 | £ 14,950.00 | | £ 5,002,850.00 |
| ERW | £20,226,200.00 | £2,325,600.00 | £ 172,400.00 | £1,186,800.00 | £23,911,000.00 |
| Bridgend | £ 3,740,950.00 | £ 415,200.00 | £ 25,300.00 | | £ 4,181,450.00 |
| Vale | £ 2,556,450.00 | £ 272,400.00 | £ 50,600.00 | | £ 2,879,450.00 |
| RCT | £ 7,341,600.00 | £ 850,200.00 | £ 83,950.00 | | £ 8,275,750.00 |
| Merthyr | £ 1,791,700.00 | £ 170,400.00 | £ 18,400.00 | | £ 1,980,500.00 |
| Cardiff | £10,353,450.00 | £1,228,200.00 | £ 44,850.00 | | £11,626,500.00 |
| CSC | £25,784,150.00 | £2,936,400.00 | £ 223,100.00 | £1,523,750.00 | £30,467,400.00 |
| Caerphilly | £ 5,891,450.00 | £ 643,200.00 | £ 43,700.00 | | £ 6,578,350.00 |
| Blaenau | £ 2,409,250.00 | £ 261,000.00 | £ 27,600.00 | | £ 2,697,850.00 |
| Torfaen | £ 2,484,000.00 | £ 274,200.00 | £ 2,300.00 | | £ 2,760,500.00 |
| Monmouth | £ 1,228,200.00 | £ 166,200.00 | £ - | | £ 1,394,400.00 |
| Newport | £ 4,313,650.00 | £ 529,800.00 | £ 25,300.00 | | £ 4,868,750.00 |
| EAS | £16,326,550.00 | £1,874,400.00 | £ 98,900.00 | £938,400.00 | £19,238,250.00 |
| All Wales | £77,061,500.00 | £8,880,600.00 | £ 697,950.00 | £4,493,050.00 | £91,133,100.00 |

* See table below for breakdown of EYPDG

EYPDG

| LA/Consortia | EYPDG - Primary | EYPDG - EOTAS | EYPDG - Nursery | Total EYPDG |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Isle of Anglesey | £ 159,000 | £ 18,600 | £ - | £ 177,600 |
| Gwynedd | £ 225,600 | £ 19,200 | £ - | £ 244,800 |
| Conwy | £ 264,000 | £ 15,000 | £ - | £ 279,000 |
| Denbighshire | £ 281,400 | £ 9,000 | £ - | £ 290,400 |
| Flintshire | £ 352,800 | £ 19,800 | £ - | £ 372,600 |
| Wrexham | £ 346,200 | £ 30,000 | £ 3,600 | £ 379,800 |
| GWE | £ 1,629,000 | £ 111,600 | £ 3,600 | £ 1,744,200 |
| Powys | £ 167,400 | £ 25,800 | £ - | £ 193,200 |
| Ceredigion | £ 106,800 | £ 24,600 | £ - | £ 131,400 |
| Pembrokeshire | £ 280,800 | £ 22,800 | £ - | £ 303,600 |
| Carmarthenshire | £ 440,400 | £ 61,200 | £ 6,600 | £ 508,200 |
| Swansea | £ 715,200 | £ 10,200 | £ - | £ 725,400 |
| Neath Port Talbot | £ 448,800 | £ 15,000 | £ - | £ 463,800 |
| ERW | £ 2,159,400 | £ 159,600 | £ 6,600 | £ 2,325,600 |
| Bridgend | £ 408,600 | £ 6,600 | £ - | £ 415,200 |
| Vale | £ 247,800 | £ 7,800 | £ 16,800 | £ 272,400 |
| Rhondda Cynon Taf | £ 809,400 | £ 36,600 | £ 4,200 | £ 850,200 |
| Merthyr Tydfil | £ 161,400 | £ 6,600 | £ 2,400 | £ 170,400 |
| Cardiff | £ 1,065,000 | £ 123,600 | £ 39,600 | £ 1,228,200 |
| Central South | £ 2,692,200 | £ 181,200 | £ 63,000 | £ 2,936,400 |
| Caerphilly | £ 631,800 | £ 11,400 | £ - | £ 643,200 |
| Blaenau Gwent | £ 251,400 | £ 9,600 | £ - | £ 261,000 |
| Torfaen | £ 237,000 | £ 28,800 | £ 8,400 | £ 274,200 |
| Monmouthshire | £ 117,600 | £ 48,600 | £ - | £ 166,200 |
| Newport | £ 458,400 | £ 55,800 | £ 15,600 | £ 529,800 |
| South East | £ 1,696,200 | £ 154,200 | £ 24,000 | £ 1,874,400 |

PDG BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE

BEL 4746

| | 2012-2013 | 2013 2014 | 2014 2015 | 2015 2016 | 2016 2017 |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Initial budget | £32,040,000 | £36,780,000 | £71,246,000 | £82,046,000 | £89,246,000 * |
| Increase/decrease | £393,000 | £2,900,000 | £ - | £ - | £ - |
| Total budget | £32,433,000 | £33,880,000 | £71,246,000 | £82,046,000 | £89,246,000 |
| Grant allocation | £32,432,850 | £33,289,200 | £68,519,520 | £81,456,600 | £87,303,650 |
| Balance | £150 | £590,800 | £2,726,480 | £589,400 | £1,942,350 |

* Budget may have decreased

PDG ALLOCATIONS 2012-13 to 2016-17 and 2012-13 to 2017-18

Consortia totals include regional allocations as noted below and will not therefore equal the total of constituent LA allocations

| | 2012-13 | | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17**** | Total 12-13 to 16-17 | 2017-18**** | Total 12-13 to 17-18 |
|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Ynys Mon | £ 643,050 | Ynys Mon | £ 635,850 | £ 1,461,456 | £ 1,615,500 | £ 1,663,250 | £ 6,019,106 | £ 1,668,000 | £ 7,687,106 |
| Gwynedd | £ 904,050 | Gwynedd | £ 917,100 | £ 1,882,818 | £ 2,121,000 | £ 2,350,050 | £ 8,175,018 | £ 2,311,350 | £ 10,486,368 |
| Conwy | £ 1,012,950 | Conwy | £ 1,057,500 | £ 2,187,594 | £ 2,584,500 | £ 2,642,050 | £ 9,484,594 | £ 2,606,600 | £ 12,091,194 |
| Denbighshire | £ 1,073,250 | Denbighshire | £ 1,087,200 | £ 2,248,182 | £ 2,753,700 | £ 2,942,650 | £ 10,104,982 | £ 3,045,800 | £ 13,150,782 |
| Flintshire | £ 1,236,150 | Flintshire | £ 1,301,400 | £ 2,409,750 | £ 3,009,600 | £ 3,530,700 | £ 11,487,600 | £ 3,666,200 | £ 15,153,800 |
| Wrexham | £ 1,288,800 | Wrexham | £ 1,332,000 | £ 2,671,380 | £ 3,287,400 | £ 3,288,650 | £ 11,868,230 | £ 3,374,400 | £ 15,242,630 |
| North | £ 6,158,250 | North | £ 6,331,050 | £ 12,861,180 | £ 15,371,700 | £ 16,525,750 | £ 57,247,930 | £ 17,516,450 | £ 74,764,380 |
| Powys | £ 765,900 | Powys | £ 810,900 | £ 1,564,272 | £ 1,920,150 | £ 2,040,000 | £ 7,101,222 | £ 1,978,000 | £ 9,079,222 |
| Ceredigion | £ 458,100 | Ceredigion | £ 447,300 | £ 881,280 | £ 1,040,850 | £ 1,116,900 | £ 3,944,430 | £ 1,106,600 | £ 5,051,030 |
| Pembrokeshire | £ 1,160,100 | Pembrokeshire | £ 1,167,750 | £ 2,464,830 | £ 2,884,350 | £ 2,799,150 | £ 10,476,180 | £ 2,857,750 | £ 13,333,930 |
| Carmarthenshire | £ 1,690,200 | Carmarthenshire | £ 1,663,650 | £ 3,333,258 | £ 4,112,700 | £ 4,670,700 | £ 15,470,508 | £ 4,760,900 | £ 20,231,408 |
| Swansea | £ 2,670,750 | Swansea | £ 2,755,350 | £ 5,586,030 | £ 6,480,150 | £ 6,994,050 | £ 24,486,330 | £ 7,018,100 | £ 31,504,430 |
| Neath Port Talbot | £ 1,799,100 | Neath Port Talbot | £ 1,909,800 | £ 3,817,962 | £ 4,570,350 | £ 5,071,850 | £ 17,169,062 | £ 5,002,850 | £ 22,171,912 |
| South West | £ 8,544,150 | South West | £ 8,754,750 | £ 17,647,632 | £ 21,008,550 | £ 22,758,200 | £ 78,713,282 | £ 23,911,000 | £ 102,624,282 |
| Bridgend | £ 1,556,100 | Bridgend | £ 1,694,700 | £ 3,589,380 | £ 4,253,400 | £ 4,464,250 | £ 15,557,830 | £ 4,181,450 | £ 19,739,280 |
| Vale | £ 1,073,700 | Vale | £ 1,077,750 | £ 2,323,458 | £ 2,784,600 | £ 2,847,400 | £ 10,106,908 | £ 2,879,450 | £ 12,986,358 |
| RCT | £ 3,382,650 | RCT | £ 3,442,950 | £ 6,975,882 | £ 8,168,400 | £ 8,466,450 | £ 30,436,332 | £ 8,275,750 | £ 38,712,082 |
| Merthyr | £ 810,000 | Merthyr | £ 850,950 | £ 1,661,580 | £ 2,071,050 | £ 2,141,250 | £ 7,534,830 | £ 1,980,500 | £ 9,515,330 |
| Caerphilly* | £ 2,484,000 | Cardiff | £ 3,868,200 | £ 8,531,892 | £ 10,458,900 | £ 11,477,100 | £ 22,748,500 | £ 11,626,500 | £ 34,375,000 |
| Central South** | £ 9,306,450 | Central South | £ 10,934,550 | £ 23,082,192 | £ 27,736,350 | £ 29,490,750 | £ 100,550,292 | £ 30,467,400 | £ 131,017,692 |
| Cardiff* | £ 4,072,950 | Caerphilly | £ 2,669,850 | £ 5,255,550 | £ 5,838,750 | £ 6,500,350 | £ 38,409,042 | £ 6,578,350 | £ 44,987,392 |
| Blaenau | £ 1,052,550 | Blaenau | £ 1,081,350 | £ 2,212,380 | £ 2,695,350 | £ 2,798,650 | £ 9,840,280 | £ 2,697,850 | £ 12,538,130 |
| Torfaen | £ 1,029,600 | Torfaen | £ 1,172,250 | £ 2,365,686 | £ 2,781,150 | £ 2,936,250 | £ 10,284,936 | £ 2,760,500 | £ 13,045,436 |
| Monmouth | £ 506,250 | Monmouth | £ 530,550 | £ 1,094,256 | £ 1,324,350 | £ 1,366,700 | £ 4,822,106 | £ 1,394,400 | £ 6,216,506 |
| Newport | £ 1,762,650 | Newport | £ 1,814,850 | £ 4,000,644 | £ 4,700,400 | £ 4,895,950 | £ 17,174,494 | £ 4,868,750 | £ 22,043,244 |
| South East*** | £ 8,424,000 | South East | £ 7,268,850 | £ 14,928,516 | £ 17,340,000 | £ 18,528,950 | £ 66,490,316 | £ 19,238,250 | £ 85,728,566 |
| All Wales | £ 32,432,850 | All Wales | £ 33,289,200 | £ 68,519,520 | £ 81,456,600 | £ 87,303,650 | £ 303,001,820 | £ 91,133,100 | £ 394,134,920 |

In 2012-13, allocations were made by local authority.

*From 2013-14, Caerphilly replaced Cardiff in the South East

*From 2013-14, Cardiff replaced Caerphilly in Central South.

PRU allocation 2016-17 by consortia therefore not included within LA amounts

**Central South total includes the 2012 13 allocation for Cardiff, not Caerphilly

*** South East total includes the 2012 13 allocation for Caerphilly not Cardiff

****Consortium totals for 2016 17 included regional allocation for PRUs

****Consortium totals for 2017 18 include regional LA allocations

| | |
|---------|---|
| 2012-13 | PDG was £450 per efsm pupil aged 5-15. |
| 2013-14 | PDG was £450 per efsm pupil aged 5-15. |
| 2014-15 | PDG was £918 per efsm pupil aged 5-15. |
| 2015-16 | PDG was £1,050 per efsm pupil aged 5-15. |
| 2016-17 | PDG was £1,150 per efsm pupil aged 5-15. |
| 2017-18 | PDG was £1,150 per efsm pupil aged 5-15. LAC was £1,150 per eligible pupil |

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref MA/KW/1307/18

Lynne Neagle AM
Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
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SeneddCYPE@Assembly.Wales

11 April 2018

Dear Lynne

Thank you for your letter of 14 March, on behalf of the Children, Young People and Education Committee, about the implementation of the Foundation Phase curriculum.

I very much welcome the interest of the Committee in the delivery of Foundation Phase education. In Wales, we can be extremely proud of the Foundation Phase and its approach to teaching and learning which has been identified by practitioners as a significant strength of current educational practice. I do of course recognise some of the views expressed by Estyn in its evidence to the Committee, and I have had a detailed discussion with the Chief Inspector on the provision of early years education in February.

The Committee has rightly focussed its discussions on areas where we know that further improvements can be made - and we are working hard to address those. But it is reassuring that in its annual report, Estyn reflected broadly on positive improvements that have come about through the pedagogical approach which is fundamental to successful Foundation Phase practice.

As the Committee's discussions with Estyn on 14 March recognised, we are in the middle of major educational reform. It is important in that context we do not look at the delivery of the Foundation Phase in isolation to the broader changes in curriculum and assessment arrangements. Support for the effectiveness of the Foundation Phase was emphasised by Professor Graham Donaldson in his review of curriculum and assessment arrangements and, as I have said, this is one of our key strengths in education.

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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.

The focus that the Foundation Phase brings to early education in ensuring an age appropriate pedagogy has been invaluable. We will ensure that we do not lose that approach in education reform and in ensuring a continuum of education provision exists from 3-16 that takes into account the needs of our very youngest learners.

Our national mission reflects on how learners should benefit from their educational experiences that support them in becoming young adults, and the characteristics we think are important to help us achieve that. This ambitious approach can only be achieved by ensuring that the right support is in place from the time at which children begin their education to ensure that they are encouraged to become lifelong learners. We will be working hard to ensure that the needs of Foundation Phase learners are central in our development of transformational curriculum and assessment arrangements.

While that development work is being progressed, we recognise that we need to focus constructively on how we can consistently embed the fundamental pedagogical approach to ensure that the Foundation Phase is delivered effectively in both schools and non-maintained settings.

As part of our commitment to the Foundation Phase an [independent stocktake](#) was published in 2014 and a three-year [independent evaluation](#) was published in 2016. The reports identified positive evidence that the implementation of the Foundation Phase was associated with improvements in school attendance, literacy, numeracy and an overall improvement in the attainment of all children. In its evidence, Estyn agreed that the introduction of the Foundation Phase can bring significant benefits for learners, and it is encouraging that they recognise the advantages to be gained from an experiential, child led approach to education.

We need to resist any temptation to revert to more traditionally based education approaches and ensure that – especially in Years 1 and 2 – practitioners have the courage and confidence to help support young children in becoming independent learners better engaged with their education.

The recent Estyn report on [Active and Experiential Learning in the Foundation Phase](#) noted that ‘many schools feel pressurised to prepare pupils formally for national reading and numeracy tests, contributing to wide variations in foundation phase practice’. This should not be the case. The tests are for diagnostic use only so that teachers will have information on the reading and numeracy skills of their learners and have a common understanding of strengths and areas for improvement in these skills. They should not impact on how the Foundation Phase is delivered. Welsh Government guidance is clear that schools should not spend time ‘practising’ for the tests. Our communications on the National Tests and on the introduction of the new personalised assessments stress their formative use as tools to support teaching and learning.

Online personalised assessments will be phased in over a three-year period, starting with Numeracy Procedural in academic year 2018/19. In these assessments, the level of challenge will adjust to match the skills of the learner, providing a tailored assessment experience. Schools will be able to use the assessments flexibly, at a time they consider most appropriate to gain an insight into learners’ skills to plan next steps in learning.

The evidence presented to us through our earlier research placed considerable emphasis on the need to improve consistency in the delivery of the Foundation Phase curriculum. Working with stakeholders from both the maintained and non-maintained sectors, we have developed a number of key areas of work to help improve the consistent implementation and share excellent practice. These areas are outlined below:

The Foundation Phase Profile

Informed by evidence, the [Foundation Phase Profile](#) was developed and published in September 2015. The profile has been designed to support assessment of children's learning and development throughout their time in the Foundation Phase, and provides a nationally consistent baseline assessment (at the start of reception year) which aligns with end of phase outcomes and integrates the Literacy and Numeracy Framework.

The profile assesses children's abilities and development in four Areas of Learning:

- Personal and Social Development, Well-being and Cultural Diversity
- Language, Literacy and Communication Skills
- Mathematical Development, and
- Physical Development.

Through the use of observations and formative assessments, the profile supports practitioners to provide a developmentally appropriate holistic curriculum for all children, and should also support the transition of 3 and 4 year old learners in non-maintained settings into school.

Foundation Phase Expert Group

The establishment of a Foundation Phase Expert Group comprising representation from key stakeholders including academia, education services and inspectorates, has helped us shape the successful development of a 10-year strategic plan for the Foundation Phase.

Working with the Expert Group, in November 2016, we published the [Foundation Phase Action Plan](#) which sets out a national approach to continuously improve the way in which the Foundation Phase is implemented and delivered. The plan was developed with a wide group of stakeholders, under the guidance of the Expert Group, and sets out key actions where research has shown us we need to focus.

Foundation Phase Excellence Network

In its discussion on 14 March, the Committee asked about developing and sharing effective practice in the Foundation Phase and how we might ensure that this practice was shared and promoted nationally. To provide support and professional development opportunities for Foundation Phase practitioners we have established a national Foundation Phase Excellence Network (FPEN). The network, supported by a Foundation Phase zone on our Hwb learning platform, will help strengthen the links between schools, settings, the third sector, local authorities, regional consortia and higher education institutions to develop an increased focus on research based professional development for Foundation Phase practitioners at all levels. It will also provide opportunities for collaborative working and sharing of best practice.

Foundation Phase Excellence Network (FPEN) Hwb Zone

The new online community learning zone on [Hwb](#) has been established to facilitate the sharing of information, resources and research between practitioners. The zone hosts 20 new case studies, including three short films which showcase effective practice in Foundation Phase. The case studies have been produced working collaboratively with schools and settings across Wales in five key areas of practice: child development, environment experiences, leadership, pedagogy and Welsh language. I was delighted to launch the network and the zone in Swansea on 28 March and, supported by £1 million of

Welsh Government funding, the network will work collaboratively to share expertise, experience, knowledge and best practice to help improve Foundation Phase practice.

As I have set out in *Our national mission*, I want Wales to have strong and inclusive schools committed to excellent, equity and well-being and a system that is there to support our most disadvantaged learners. This is also true of our youngest learners in the Foundation Phase – in schools and non-maintained settings – and I was delighted to announce recently an increase in the Early Years Pupil Development Grant to £700 per eligible learner – an increase of £400 since 2016/17.

Our national mission is to raise standards, reduce the attainment gap and deliver an education system that is a source of national pride and confidence. To achieve that, we have to focus on all our learners, including our very youngest, and the quality of the education we deliver to each and every one of those learners is crucial to the success of our national mission. We will therefore continue to work with our stakeholders to strengthen Foundation Phase practice to benefit all of our learners as they progress through their journey in education, and beyond.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', written in a cursive style.

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education

Agenda Item 3.10



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref :
Ein cyf/Our ref: MA-P/KW/1239/18

Lynne Neagle AM
Chair of Children, Young People and Education Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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CF99 1NA

13 April 2018

Dear Lynne,

Thank you for your letter of 20 March which raises a number of questions about the provision of text books and learning resources for reformed general qualifications.

May I begin by restating that I am absolutely committed to doing all that I can to ensure that appropriate resources are available to our practitioners and learners, in both Welsh and English and at the same time.

As the regulator, Qualifications Wales is responsible for deciding whether there are sufficient resources available to support the delivery of a qualification but it does not require that those resources are in a specific format. Where there are sample assessment materials, a teacher's guide and additional digital resources available then Qualifications Wales advise me that it may conclude that a textbook is not essential for a new qualification.

WJEC is not required to make sure that textbooks and learning resources are available to support the teaching and learning of its qualifications. Textbooks are produced by commercial publishers that are separate to awarding bodies. WJEC itself is not a publisher of textbooks however publishers do regularly seek WJEC's endorsement of their textbooks. Unfortunately the market for Welsh medium textbooks is limited and often not perceived by them to be commercially viable. Welsh Government has provided WJEC with grant funding to ensure that Welsh versions of textbooks are available.

In the case of subjects where textbooks were not produced in either Welsh or English for the reformed qualifications, WJEC have produced a range of bilingual digital materials which are available free of charge on the resources section of the WJEC's website. Welsh Government has also commissioned additional bilingual and Welsh-medium resources and

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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.

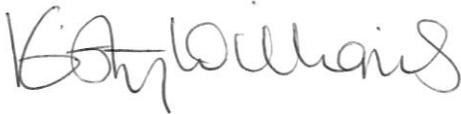
these are available free of charge from the Hwb website. I do appreciate that while textbooks may not be a necessity, learners and teachers feel that they are a valuable resource and have been concerned when they are not available for all subjects or have been delayed.

I have been deeply concerned to hear about delays in the publication of some textbooks, particularly Welsh language versions. As these are produced commercially by specialist educational publishers the Welsh Government has no direct influence over the publication timetables. However, additional funding has been provided to WJEC to enable them to improve the procedures and timescales between Welsh and English versions of textbooks. As a result we have seen instances of the timescales being reduced. For example a GCSE Geography textbook was published within 4 months of the English version being available. Although improvements have been made I want to assure you that I intend to see that every effort is made to improve the situation. This is why I have established a Stakeholder Group to look in detail at the issues, with the aim of advising me on how a new infrastructure can be developed to produce resources to support the new curriculum and qualifications in Wales.

I completely understand that there are concerns about the potential impact on learners of the delays to some text books being made available. As regulator Qualifications Wales is responsible for ensuring that standards are maintained and that learners are not unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged because they are in the first cohort to sit a new qualification.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', written in a cursive style.

Kirsty Williams AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 7

By virtue of paragraph(s) iv of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted