

Agenda – Children, Young People and Education Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 5 – Tŷ Hywel

Meeting date: 2 May 2018

Meeting time: 09.15

For further information contact:

Llinos Madeley

Committee Clerk

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Private Pre-meeting

(09:15 – 09:30)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(09:30)

2 Provision of textbooks and learning resources for pupils – Video

(09:30 – 09:40)

3 Provision of textbooks and learning resources for pupils – evidence session

(09:45 – 11:00)

(Pages 1 – 29)

Gareth Pierce, Chief Executive – WJEC

Mike Ebbsworth, Assistant Director Educational Support – WJEC

Philip Blaker, Chief Executive – Qualifications Wales

Emyr George, Associate Director General Qualifications

Attached Documents:

Research Brief

CYPE(5)-13-15 – Paper 1 – WJEC

CYPE(5)-13-15 – Paper 2 – Qualifications Wales

CYPE(5)-13-18 – Paper 3 – Supporting Documents and Consultation

Responses



4 Paper(s) to note

(11:00)

4.1 Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Education – University Superannuation Scheme (USS)

(Pages 30 – 31)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-13-18 – Paper to note 1

4.2 Additional information from Estyn following the meeting on 14 March 2018

(Pages 32 – 42)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-13-18 – Paper to note 2

4.3 Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Education – regarding the support for minority ethnic, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners

(Pages 43 – 47)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-13-18 – Paper to note 3

4.4 Quarterly update on the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) transformation programme from the Cabinet Secretary for Education

(Pages 48 – 53)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-13-18 – Paper to note 4

4.5 Letter to the Llywydd on Resourcing for Brexit Scrutiny

(Page 54)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-13-18 – Paper to note 5

4.6 Letter from Qualifications Wales on its Review of the Skills Challenge Certificate

(Pages 55 – 57)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-13-18 – Paper to note 6

4.7 Letter from the Chair of the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee on the Childcare Offer

(Pages 58 – 59)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-13-18 – Paper to note 7

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

(11:00)

Break

(11:00 – 11:15)

6 Committee Forward Work Programme – Strategic planning session

(11:15 – 12:30)

Document is Restricted



Provision of Educational Resources to Support Qualifications

This paper is prepared in the context of discussion at the meeting of the Children, Young People and Education Committee on 2 May 2018.

1. Locus for an awarding body in relationships with textbook providers

WJEC is not a textbook publisher but we do seek to nurture the interest of publishers in order to ensure that suitable textbooks are available to support our qualifications.

When a publisher shows an interest, our relationship is based on guidance which have their origins in the regulatory field. Therefore, rather than having a relationship based on a commercial agreement, it is a process based on “endorsement” that is in place.

Within that endorsement process, WJEC and the publisher will agree a timeline for reading an outline of the material and for reading the second proof that includes all diagrams/indexes etc.. This is not equivalent to having a detailed agreement in place between WJEC and the publisher for the whole authoring and production process and therefore if the publisher encounters difficulty in terms of adhering to the timeline then WJEC has no contractual powers to intervene.

Although this is the current situation, as its origins are in the regulatory regime for “three country qualifications” it is not necessarily the case that this is the best arrangement in relation to providing resources in two languages in the context of curriculum and qualifications developments that are specific to Wales.

In addition to this, for Welsh-medium versions of textbooks, WJEC provides a service that supports publishers in the process of providing these volumes (specifically through the provision of a full editorial service and arranging the translation process). We receive funding support from the Welsh Government for this aspect of work.

2. Range of educational resources provided by WJEC

Although we are not a publisher, WJEC’s mission includes “*producing resources and development opportunities of quality that meet the lifelong learning needs of students and their teachers*”. In order to do this efficiently, and in order to support the increasing use of digital resources for teaching and learning purposes, we place an emphasis on providing a wide range of digital resources that are available free of charge via WJEC’s public website.

For a specific qualification, the specification and specimen assessment materials are the only resources we need to provide for regulatory purposes. But our range of digital resources for learning is much broader than this, including a substantial “Guidance for Teaching” and a range of individual resources, especially for those parts of a specification that are new.

3. Origin and nature of difficulties in relation to GCE Religious Studies

In general, the main factor causing difficulty for publishers in terms of their timetable for moving ahead with their work is the regulatory timeline for approving qualifications, in particular the amount of time available before the start of teaching. This has been a stumbling block for several subjects within the reform timeline that was drawn up by the Welsh Government towards the end of the period when it was the regulator for qualifications in Wales (that timeline being very similar to that used for reform of qualifications in England).

However, in relation to textbooks for GCSE and A level Religious Studies, it seems that additional factors have had an effect on the two publishers that have been undertaking this work.

One of the key problems is the dependence on a small number of authors, to the extent that the same authors were leading on resources for the AS units (year 12) and for the A2 units (year 13). The work on the AS units was late being started because of the accreditation timetable, and there was a need for those to be completed before starting the work on the A2 units. Ideally, 18-24 months should be allowed for the process of producing printed resources of quality, especially when there are fundamental changes to a specification so that less dependence can be placed on adapting previously available resources.

4. The scope of what we provide digitally for GCE Religious Studies

GCE Religious Studies also happens to be one of the subjects for which we have made the largest investment in digital resources.

Our ***Guidance for Teaching*** (153 pages) is itself amongst the most substantial that we have ever produced, providing very substantial details about the requirements. Two examples of this are provided at **Annexe 1** to this paper. The Guidance also provides an extensive listing of useful reference books and websites for each theme.

As the textbook provider has designed its plan based in the units of the course, there are some units with so few candidates that provision of a textbook would not be viable. In those cases, digital provision is absolutely necessary.

To accompany the Guidance for Teaching, we also provide a ***Glossary of Key Terms*** (36 pages) which provides substantial detail for the less familiar terms, as is exemplified at **Annexe 2**.

In terms of individual digital resources for GCE Religious Studies, there are substantial units for Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam a Sikhism, Crefydd a Moeseg ac Athroniaeth Crefydd a hefyd unedau ar y themau penodol canlynol: Intuitionsim, Emotivism, Naturalism, Utilitarianism, Situation ethics, Aquinas' Natural Law, Divine command theory, Ethical egoism, Virtue theory, Arguments for God's existence, Religious Experience, the Problem of evil and suffering. It should be emphasised that each of these is more than an individual resource but is a collection of relevant resources for the theme.

We also place emphasis within our resources on Assessment Objective 2 (analysis and evaluation) which carries two thirds of the weighting at the A2 level (year 13) within the reformed specification. Emphasis on this Assessment Objective is not typically provided within textbooks (which tend to concentrate on content) and we have therefore also provided exemplars of responses to Assessment Objectives 1 and 2.

5. Looking forward

Looking forward to a period when there will be a need to provide resources that are increasingly specific to the requirements of Wales, we have through discussion with stakeholders identified two strands of work that would be useful to progress, i.e. (i) nurturing the interest of publishers in Wales and (ii) researching the actual usage of resources (across a spectrum that reaches from interactive digital to textbooks).

Welsh Government has indicated that it is able to consider the provision of an element of funding support for these two intentions, and therefore the following steps are underway:

- (i) We have outlined a programme for discussion seminars with publishers, i.e.
 - the demand: background and nature of the next developments in relation to curriculum and qualifications, the demand for resources, range of media (from digital to print), position in terms of terminology and language register for different age groups,
 - challenges of responding to demand – the challenge of authoring, parallel production in two languages, use of translation technology, nurturing skills and stabilising capacity, dealing with copyright, blend between print and digital,
 - business models – possibilities in terms of the nature of grant aid, nature of contracts, distribution of work across a period of time, support from WJEC, support from Welsh Books Council,

- (ii) We have invited tenders for research work (closing date 24 April), with the intention of identifying what use is made of resources provided to support teaching and learning in Key Stages 3, 4, and 5. We wish to understand current usage of resources so that we plan purposefully for the future taking into account style, availability, print/digital balance, flexibility, etc. Specifically, there is a need to research:
 - the use made of various kinds of resources in the classroom and beyond
 - the factors which influence the use of resources, e.g. fitness for purpose, content, language register, style, medium (digital/print), cost.The resources will include Welsh medium and English medium educational resources.

Gareth Pierce
Chief Executive, WJEC

April 2018

Examples from the “Guidance for Teaching” document

Theme 1: New Testament literature – Parables

This theme provides candidates with an introduction to the literary genre of parables that are found in the New Testament gospels. Three parables (the prodigal son, the great banquet, the sower) are to be studied in depth.

1A. Parables – types and characteristics

This section focuses on the types and characteristics of New Testament parables. It is recognised that different scholars have classified parables in a variety of ways. Candidates are expected to be familiar with John Dominic Crossan's classification of parables four main types (riddle parables, example parables, attack parables, challenge parables). These four types are explained in his book *The Power of Parable: How fiction by Jesus became fiction about Jesus*. It is expected that candidates will apply this classification to the three set text parables. Candidates can if they wish, refer to other New Testament parables, but this is not a requirement of the specification. Candidates will also be expected to identify the main literary characteristics of New Testament parables and exemplify from the set texts.

1B. Parables – purposes and interpretations

Section B introduces candidates to the main purposes and interpretations of New Testament parables, applying these studies to the three set text parables. It is expected that candidates will be aware of Robert H. Stein's contribution to this area (*An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus*). An important understanding of the purpose of parables is in Mark 4:10-12 and it is expected that candidates should be able to make reference to this. Candidates should have an understanding of methods of interpretation including the extent to which the parables should be seen as allegories. Candidates should be familiar with the view that parables have undergone change in meaning from that which Jesus meant originally when he uttered the parable to his listeners in the first century, through changes in the oral period, to the interpretation that the gospel writers gave the parables. In addition, candidates should be aware of the developments in religious language in the philosophy of religion that have influenced and been influenced by the study of parables.

1C. Close study of New Testament texts (parables)

This section requires candidates to consider aspects of the set text parables, including their historical origins (e.g. the extent to which the parables are original to Jesus and reflect the life and customs of first century Palestine); their structure (e.g. form of the parable and its key characters); and possible theological messages of the parables (e.g. what they teach about the Kingdom of God).

Candidates should carefully consider the issues for analysis and evaluation that arise out of the AO1 content, including those listed in the final row of each page of the specification.

Unit 3 Buddhism Theme 2

2A. Historical development of Buddhism in Japan

Candidates should be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of: the development of key Buddhist traditions in Japan - Zen, Pure Land and Nichiren - with particular reference to their central practices. The koan is a paradoxical statement used as a practice in Zen traditions designed to make the mind despair of logic and take a leap into an intuitive understanding of reality. The nembutsu (going for refuge in Amida/Amitabha Budha) in Pure Land traditions is an expression of thanks to Amida for providing the conditions for enlightenment after death in the Pure Land, because enlightenment (in contrast to Zen belief) is not achievable through self-power. The daimoku is a mantra used in Nichiren traditions which expresses the taking of refuge in the name of the Lotus Sutra, the central sutra of Nichiren Buddhism.

2B. Responses to the challenges from science

Candidates will explore presentations of Buddhism as avoiding 'blind faith' and emphasising the realisation of truth in experience (with reference to the Kalama Sutta v.9 & 10 <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an03/an03.065.soma.html> Thera Soma translation). They will contrast these with Asian Buddhist worldviews populated with a diversity of beings and realms (for example six realms or rebirth, popular beliefs in spirits and hungry ghosts (pretas). Taken as a whole, Buddhism contains teachings which seem to emphasise rationalism, and also to contain teachings about a multiverse richly populated with diverse spiritual beings with supernatural powers. Candidates will also explore the Dalai Lama's positive assessment of the value of science, exemplified in his founding of the Mind and Life Institute <https://www.mindandlife.org/>.

2C. Responses to the challenges from secularisation

Candidates should explore Buddhism's frequent presentation in the West as a secular philosophy, with reference to Stephen Batchelor (a Buddhist Atheist) and his presentation of Buddhism as a rational philosophy and way of life. They should consider the extent to which Batchelor's view of Buddhism is a distortion to suit a Western world view. They might refer in general terms to the following texts: Batchelor, S. (1998). *Buddhism Without Beliefs: A Contemporary Guide to Awakening* (Riverhead Books), Batchelor, S. (2011) *Confession of a Buddhist Atheist* (Spiegel & Grau), Batchelor, S. (2015) *After Buddhism: Rethinking the Dharma for a Secular Age* (Yale University Press). Candidates should engage critically with Batchelor's presentation of Buddhism. To contrast with Batchelor they may consider another the approach of another Western teacher, David Brazier, who claims Buddhism is a religion. Brazier, D. (2014). *Buddhism is a Religion: You Can Believe It* (Woodsmoke Press).

Examples from the “Glossary of Terms” document

Abidhamma pitaka	The third section of the Pali Canon, containing learned commentaries on the teachings.
Amaravati	Theravada Monastery of the Thai Forest Tradition in Hertfordshire, run by the English Sangha Trust.
Amida	The Buddha of infinite light and life, devotion to whom ensures rebirth in his pure land after death; he is the main buddha revered by the Pure Land School.
Amitabha (Skt)	As Amida – above. Also one of the five dhyani buddhas.
arhat (Skt) arahant (P)	‘Worthy’. In Theravada Buddhism, the highest state attainable.
atman (Skt)	The eternal soul in Hinduism
bhavachakra	The Tibetan wheel of life, sometimes called the ‘Wheel of Samsara’.
Bodhi Tree	The devotional name given to the pipal/banyan/fig tree under which tradition states Siddhartha became enlightened.
Bon	Indigenous Tibetan religion
buddha-nature	In Mahayana Buddhism, the underlying state of all things, therefore the potential of all beings.
Buddhist Society	Founded in 1924 by Christmas Humphreys, the Society is a UK Charity founded to publish and make known the principles of Buddhism
Chithurst	Branch of Amaravati Monastery.
concept	Something conceived in the mind; a thought or notion.
daimoku	The practice of chanting ‘namu myoho renge kyo’ (I take refuge in the Lotus Sutra) performed by Nichiren Buddhists.
Dalai Lama	Spiritual and political leader of the Tibetan people, in exile. The Dalai Lama is a ‘tulku’ (preserver of a particular lineage) of the Gelug tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, and is considered to be a manifestation of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva. The present Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is the fourteenth. ‘Dalai’ means ocean of wisdom, and a lama is a teacher.
Ekayana (Skt)	Literally ‘one way’. A theme of the Lotus Sutra which promotes the bodhisattva path to enlightenment.
enlightenment for all	A principle expounded in the Lotus Sutra and recognised in many forms of Mahayana Buddhism that there are no monastic pre-requisites for the attainment of enlightenment.
gohonzon	‘Object of worship’: the inscription of the daimoku.



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

By email: Lynne.Neagle@assembly.wales

20 April 2018

Dear Lynne

Provision of textbooks and learning resources for pupils

Thank you for inviting us to speak to the Committee about the availability of teaching and learning resources.

We have already provided some background on this matter in our earlier letter to you dated 13 March 2018. In it, we explained that the provision of textbooks and most other educational resources sit outside our regulatory remit. We also described how we require awarding bodies to use the comparable outcomes approach when awarding new qualifications for the first time.

This letter gives additional background information to help the Committee prepare for the forthcoming session on 2 May 2018.

Regulating resources for teaching and learning

Awarding bodies offer a range of services that are regulated by us, including designing qualifications, delivering assessments, and dealing with complaints and appeals. Awarding bodies must clearly describe what will be assessed within the specification for a qualification and exemplify what the assessments will entail in the sample assessment materials. The provision of supplementary teaching and learning resources falls largely outside the scope of our regulation.



When considering GCSEs and A levels for approval, we scrutinise the specifications for each qualification and the sample assessment materials. As part of this process we check that each specification makes clear what students are expected to know, understand and do, and that the sample assessments are valid and appropriate.

Subjects assessed at GCSE and A level are generally well established and supported by a wealth of existing teaching and learning resources. Where a qualification specifies that a specific set work will be assessed (such as a literary text, a piece of music, or a film) we check as part of the approval process whether these are easily available. Where an entirely new aspect of content is introduced to a specification, we seek assurance that sufficient teaching and learning resources will be available to support its study. In some instances, we have used grant funding to support the production of new materials, for example to support the introducing of new themes in reformed Modern Foreign Language qualifications and different focus areas in Design and Technology. The resources produced with our financial support are available bilingually and free of charge.

We do not require awarding bodies to provide bespoke learning resources specifically tailored to each specification. However, awarding bodies will often choose to produce additional materials to support teachers and learners. Where this is the case, we require awarding bodies to ensure that such supporting materials do not compromise the security and integrity of assessments. Our interest is limited, however, to safeguarding the qualifications we regulate; we do not regulate the teaching and learning resources themselves.

Our policy is to increase the availability of Welsh medium qualifications. We offer grant funding to awarding bodies to help meet the cost of making their qualifications available bilingually. The grant can be used to help with translating relevant teaching and learning resources, as well as assessment materials.

Assessing the use and availability of teaching and learning resources

We are looking more broadly at the question of what resources teachers and learners find useful. This is likely to vary across different subjects and possibly across different types of learning environment and teaching styles. As we develop our understanding, we will consider the implications for our work; particularly in relation to planning for future qualifications reform.

Factors affecting exam performance

The availability and quality of teaching and learning resources is one of many factors that can impact on the performance of a learner in an exam. Other factors include:

- How prepared the learner is for the examination both in terms of the teaching received and their own revision
- A learner's interest in the subject and motivation, for instance whether a student has chosen a subject, or sees it as relevant to their future
- Support and encouragement from family members and others

- Chance factors affecting a candidate’s experiences on the day of assessment, such as changes in personal circumstances, or simply whether the topics covered in the exam match those the candidate has best prepared for.

There are also factors that can affect the overall results of a school or college in a subject from one year to the next, particularly where the number of students entered is quite low.

These can include:

- Availability of teaching staff
- The combined potential of a given year’s cohort
- The familiarity of teachers with the qualification and how they have adapted to any changes to them.

When looking at the national results for a given qualification, it is not possible to isolate and quantify the effect that each of these different factors will have had on the overall picture. However, if one or more of these factors were to have a significant impact on performance, we might expect to see this reflected in results.

Given the committee’s previously expressed concerns about the new Religious Studies AS and A level, we take a closer look below at results for this subject.

Qualification outcomes for AS and A level Religious Studies

It is worth noting the following points when looking at AS and A level Religious Studies:

- Religious Studies was reformed as a Wales-only AS and A level for first teaching from September 2016. WJEC is the only awarding body that offers these qualifications.
- The new Religious Studies AS qualification was awarded for the first time in summer 2017 and the new A level will be awarded for the first time in summer 2018.
- There is no textbook available on the market, either in English or Welsh, that is specifically tailored to the new Wales-only specifications offered by WJEC.
- WJEC offers a range of bilingual, digital teaching and learning resources to support these qualifications on its website for no additional fee.
- Textbooks are available to support some of the new Religious Studies AS and A level specifications offered in England, with some covering a whole specification and others focussing on specific topics. These are only available in English.

Table 1: AS level results for Religious Studies, 2015 to 2017¹

AS level subject	Year	Number sat	Cumulative percentages by grade					
			A	B	C	D	E	U
Religious Studies	2017	1,984	18.8	41.4	62.9	81.1	92.1	100.0
	2016	2,446	15.3	37.9	62.0	79.4	90.3	100.0
	2015	2,535	16.1	41.6	66.1	82.2	92.0	100.0

Source: JCQ A, AS and AEA summer examination results

¹ Source: JCQ A, AS and AEA summer examination results <https://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results/a-levels>

Table 1 shows the grade distributions achieved in the first award of the reformed Religious Studies AS level in 2017, compared to results achieved in the legacy² qualification in 2015 and 2016.

There were 462 fewer candidates sitting the reformed Religious Studies AS level in 2017 compared to the legacy qualification in 2016. The proportion of candidates achieving a grade of C or above rose from 62.0 per cent in 2016 to 62.9 per cent in 2017. 18.8 per cent of candidates achieved a grade of A in 2017 for the reformed AS level compared to 15.3 per cent in 2016 for the legacy qualification. Overall, while remaining broadly stable, the results for the new specification went up slightly in 2017 when compared to 2016.

Table 2: A level results for Religious Studies, 2016 and 2017³

A level subject	Year	Number sat	Cumulative percentages by grade						
			A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Religious Studies	2017	1,735	3.2	18.6	49.2	77.3	92.3	98.0	100.0
	2016	1,892	3.6	18.6	51.7	79.2	93.8	98.2	100.0

Source: JCQ A, AS and AEA summer examination results

Table 2 shows the grade distributions achieved in the legacy Religious Studies A level in 2016 and 2017. The new Religious Studies A level will be awarded for the first time in summer 2018. There has been stability in the proportion of candidates achieving A*-A and A*-E in this period, although there was an 8% reduction in the size of the entry in 2017.

In the absence of any evidence of large changes in entry patterns or performance at A level, we would expect to see a similar stability in the A level results this summer compared to results in the legacy A level.

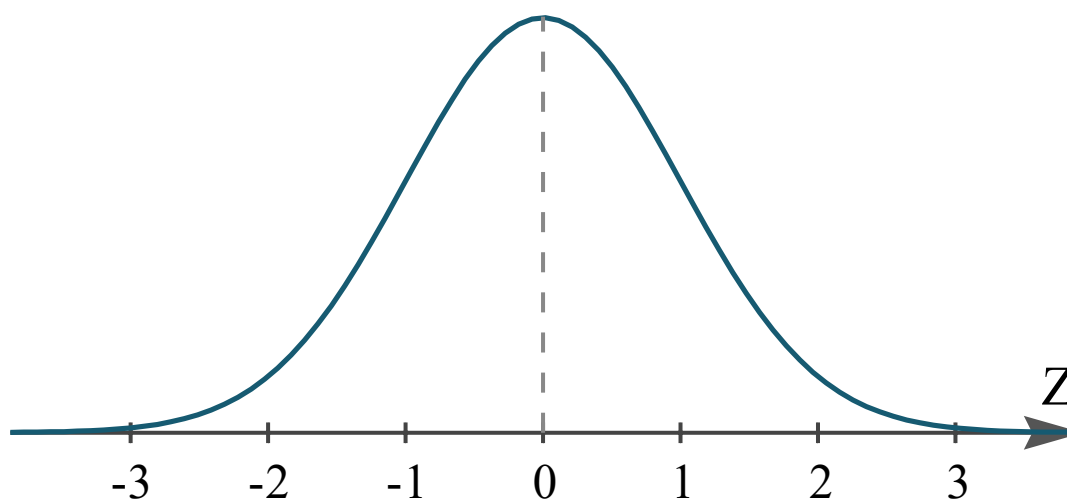
Outcomes by centre

During the summer series we monitor the variation in centre-level performance in reformed AS and A levels compared to the previous summer series. We would expect to see performance across all centres to vary in a way that would approximate a standard normal distribution (as shown in the chart below). This would mean that most centres would achieve results similar to the previous year and a smaller number of centres would do better or worse.

² Legacy qualifications is how we refer to previous specifications that have been replaced with newer versions.

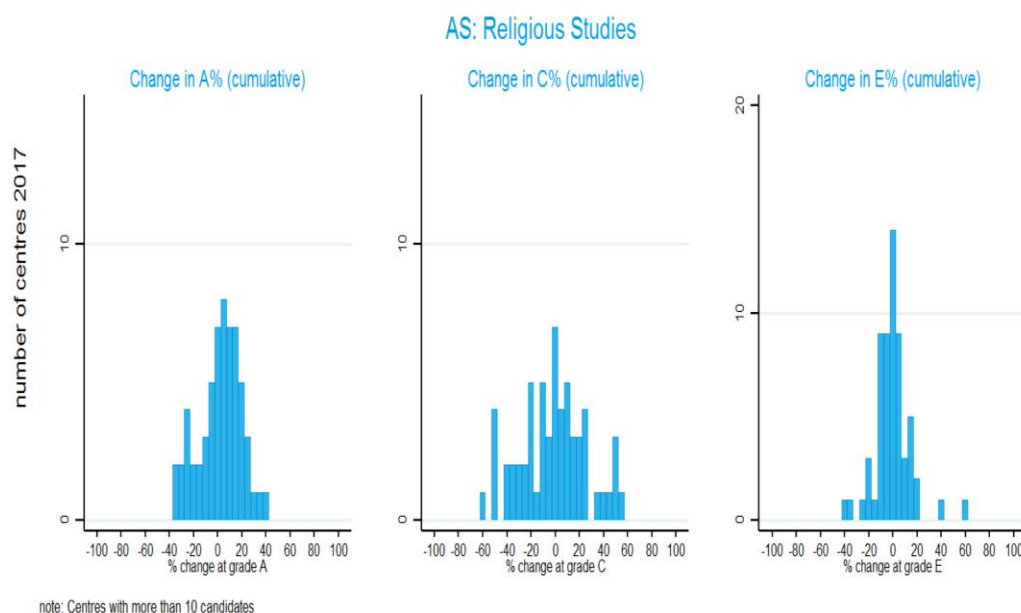
³ Source: JCQ A, AS and AEA summer examination results <https://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results/a-levels>

Standard normal distribution



For each exam series, WJEC provide us with histograms showing, for centres with 10 or more entries, the percentage change in results at grades A, C and E. Centres with no change in the proportion of their candidates achieving those grades would appear in the middle of the plot. Centres that increased the proportion of their candidates achieving that grade would be shown to the right of the centre point, with centres reducing the proportion to the left of the centre point.

The plots below show the distributions for AS Religious Studies, comparing results for the first award of the reformed qualification against the last award of the legacy qualification. 107 centres had candidates entered at both points in time, each with 13 candidates entered on average in summer 2017.



The variation in centre-level performance over time is broadly normal and in line with what we would expect to see. The majority of centres achieved approximately the same results,

with a smaller number of centres doing better or worse. If the number of centres and candidates entering these qualifications in Wales was larger, we might see distributions that would be even closer to a standard normal distribution in shape.

We will continue to monitor centre level results during the summer 2018 series. We expect the centre level plots for the new Religious Studies A level to look similar to those observed in Summer 2017 when the new AS qualification was first awarded.

We hope that you find this additional information useful in preparation for the Committee session on 2 May.

Yours sincerely



Ann Evans
Chair



Philip Blaker
Chief Executive

Provision of textbooks and learning resources for pupils

Consultation Responses

- [Cabinet Secretary for Education](#)
- [Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr](#) (Submitted in Welsh only)
- [Regional Education Consortia](#)
- [Estyn](#)
- [NASUWT](#)
- [NAHT Cymru](#)
- [UCAC](#) (Submitted in Welsh only)

Agenda Item 4.1

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Our Ref: MA-P-KW-1268-18

Lynne Neagle AC
Chair
Children, Young People and Education Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
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13 April 2018

Dear Lynne

Thank you for your letter of 27 March on behalf of the Children, Young People and Education Committee. You raise a number of points in relation to the ongoing dispute concerning the University Superannuation Scheme (USS), which I have addressed below.

Impact of the proposed USS changes on the number and quality of staff who would remain in Wales following any such changes.

It is important to note that the USS is a UK-wide pension scheme and that this is, therefore, a UK-wide dispute. Although it affects individual Welsh institutions and their staff, the issues being debated are of relevance across the wider HE sector in Wales and beyond. In addition, pension arrangements are a matter for individual employees and their employer. As such, it is not possible for the Welsh Government to attempt to second guess how the proposed changes might affect individual staff and their decisions regarding employment at particular institutions.

The direct impact on Welsh students and those studying in Wales of any consequential reduction in staff numbers and/or quality.

I am aware that the industrial action taken by University and College Union (UNCU) has had, in some instances, an impact on students. However, I understand that institutions in Wales are actively engaged in preparing contingency plans to minimise the impact on the student experience. I am concerned about the impact on students and I am pleased that UCU has encouraged its members to prioritise the rescheduling of teaching in order to minimise any disruption.

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0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru
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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 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.

As I have noted above, this is a UK-wide issue. It is not possible at this stage to gauge the potential longer-term impact on the Welsh economy. You will know that I am a strong advocate for the civic and cultural, as well as economic role, played by higher education in Wales, and will continue to promote and support these activities.

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.

These are matters for the USS and the Pensions Regulator and it would not be appropriate for me to attempt to respond on these points.

Finally, your letter urges me to *'convene as a matter of urgency a meeting of relevant individuals, including Wales's Vice Chancellors, to seek a resolution as soon as possible'*.

As autonomous bodies, HE institutions are responsible for employment matters, including pensions. However, I and my officials have had a number of discussions and meetings in recent weeks with sector representatives, both the unions and employers. I encourage all parties to continue their discussions on securing agreement on a solution.

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

Agenda Item 4.2

CYPE(5)-13-15 - Paper to note 2

Actions from giving oral evidence to the Children, Young People and Education Committee on 14th March 2018 – in regard to Inquiry on Targeted Funding and HMCI Annual Report

Session re Inquiry on Targeted Funding:

- 1. A note on examples of schools that have made considerable progress in narrowing the attainment gap between eFSM and non FSM pupils, and an explanation of what you would regard as making considerable progress in narrowing the gap.**

Given the considerable differences in contexts of individual schools across Wales, it is difficult to quantify considerable progress in narrowing the gap. For example, the sizes of schools vary considerably meaning that the percentage value of individual pupils can have a notable impact on overall data. In addition, there are schools with particularly high proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and those with very few learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. Overall, disadvantaged learners need considerable support to match the performance of other learners at every stage of learning. Schools that do very well in reducing the attainment gap tend to focus on meeting the needs of individual learners from disadvantaged backgrounds particularly well. These needs often go beyond academic needs alone. This impacts positively on overall school performance and results in a reduced performance gap. Pupil performance data at foundation phase and key stages 2 and 3 has not always been reliable enough to ensure that a school's own measure of the performance gap is accurate or to ensure that schools with robust assessment arrangements are comparing their outcomes with a reliable pool of national data. Estyn focuses primarily on whether schools meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils successfully and on whether these learners make the progress and achieve the standards they are capable of in learning and wellbeing.

The examples below are from two secondary schools with externally verified data that confirms their success in narrowing the attainment gap. In both these schools, there is strong teaching and provision for literacy and numeracy. Leaders in both schools have been particularly effective in establishing extremely strong cultures based on high aspirations and sustained improvement.

Fitzalan High School

At key stage 3, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals achieving the core subject indicator has improved over the last three years and is well above the national average for this group of pupils. At key stage 4, in all indicators, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above national averages for these pupils. Attendance rates are exceptionally high. They have been consistently well above modelled outcomes for the last five years and place the school in the top quarter of similar schools throughout this period. The attendance

rates of pupils eligible for free school meals are significantly above the national average for this group of pupils.

Provision in key stage 3 meets statutory requirements and builds well on previous learning. The school provides an extensive range of subject options at key stage 4 and in the sixth form, including a wide variety of vocational qualifications. It is highly effective in responding flexibly to pupils' needs and interests to provide a curriculum that is tailored to each individual. The school provides high quality provision to support those pupils at risk of disengagement. This has a very positive impact on the outcomes of these pupils.

Cefn Hengoed Community School

Around 41% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average of 17.4%. About 60% of pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas in Wales.

Pupils eligible for free school meals achieve remarkably high standards when compared with similar schools and national averages. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals is considerably higher than the averages for the family of schools and Wales.

2. A note on examples of effective uses of the PDG on looked after children or adopted children, and also on any ineffective uses.

Estyn's main source of evidence in relation to the use of the PDG for looked after or adopted children comes from Raising the attainment, achievement and aspiration of children who are looked after - a best practice report, (Estyn, July 2016). A link to the full report is available [here](#). It is important to remember that this is a best practice report rather than an evaluation of the quality and impact of provision across Wales.

The best practice report's findings are based on inspection evidence; engagement with groups of looked after learners and visits to a selected group of primary, secondary and special schools identified as having effective practice. The report also draws upon evidence from local education authorities and the four regional consortia.

- Nearly all schools visited as part of this report have used the PDG/LAC well to support children who are looked after.
- Until April 2015, the component of the pupil deprivation grant for looked after children (PDG/LAC) was allocated to schools. The local authority had a central role in ensuring that the funds were used in line with the terms and conditions of the grant.
- Many schools were clear on how the grant was to be used. Their local authorities had provided a useful summary for them. All schools were able to

demonstrate how they had used the grant specifically to benefit children who were looked after.

- There are many examples where schools have used the PDG/LAC to meet the academic and emotional needs of children who are looked after better. This was often done through additional support staff, extra tuition, and access to enrichment activities, specialist equipment and other resources. These schools used the grant well and the majority supplemented the PDG/LAC with other grants or the core budget of the school. In nearly all cases this allowed greater access to the curriculum, including enrichment activities, and in many cases led to improved outcomes for children who are looked after.
- A few schools have used PDG/LAC funding to provide specific equipment and resources for pupils. One school bought a sewing machine for use by a pupil who was following a GCSE course in textiles. Other schools purchased computer equipment where this was not available or through the foster care placement. These schools plan well for the use of the grant and can demonstrate the impact on pupils' standards.
- In a few schools, the grant has been used to pay for private tuition for pupils, particularly older pupils studying for external examinations. In addition, the grant has been used to part-fund residential and cultural activities including school trips abroad. These approaches help to ensure that children who are looked after are included in experiences available to other pupils.
- A very few schools use the PDG/LAC to develop whole-school training for staff. This includes training in attachment, mindfulness and effective coaching models.
- Brynteg Comprehensive School in Bridgend has used the PDG/LAC grant very effectively. The school uses meetings with other professionals and foster carers to identify how the grant can be best used to support children who are looked after.

Case study: Brynteg Comprehensive School – using the pupil deprivation grant for looked after children. (This case study highlights the use of the pupil deprivation grant prior to the grant being administered by the regional consortium).

Context

Brynteg is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive and is one of the largest secondary schools in Wales with 1,603 pupils on roll, with 434 in the sixth form. Currently there are 30 children who are looked after in the school. The majority of these are in key stage 3, with just over a quarter in key stage 4 and the remainder in the sixth form. Half of the children who are looked after are on the special educational needs register.

The school has high expectations for all its pupils. The social, emotional and physical wellbeing of all pupils is at the heart of the school. It understands that only when pupils are secure in their environment will they learn and flourish.

Strategy

The school aims to use the PDG/LAC to secure better outcomes for pupils.

Actions

The school has used the PDG/LAC to provide additional support and resources for pupils, to widen their cultural experiences and to develop whole-school approaches to working with foster carers. Decisions on how to use the pupil deprivation grant on an individual basis are made in conjunction with pupils, their foster carers and any requests from professional partners. Careful consideration is given as to how the grant will improve pupils' social, emotional or physical wellbeing and ensure that they keep healthy and safe and participate as fully as possible in school life.

Providing additional support:

- Many pupils have received laptops, allowing them to access on-line curriculum materials to complement the work they do in school. In addition, pupils are able to develop their research skills and apply this to homework or coursework projects.
- Extra tuition, particularly in English and mathematics, has developed pupils' understanding in these subjects.
- The school supports pupils' literacy and numeracy skills by funding boot camps, which give targeted support to individuals. They also provide extra-curricular revision packages in mathematics and English. Children who are looked after attend these activities during registration, after school and during school holidays. The PDG/LAC has been used to fund transport to enable the pupils to stay after school and to be taken home safely.
- The majority of pupils also benefited from the purchase of revision materials, subject guides and equipment for subject areas such as art and physical education.
- A sewing machine and materials have been purchased. These enabled pupils to complete their textiles coursework. As a result, they were not disadvantaged by the lack of access to appropriate equipment at home.

Widening the cultural experience of children who are looked after:

- The school uses the PDG/LAC to fund educational visits, including overseas learning experiences.
- There are a considerable opportunities for out-of-school learning at the school. A range of clubs, sporting opportunities, visits, special events, and links with the community and other extra-curricular activities are available to children who are looked after. Many children are involved in at least one club. The school sets targets in pupils' PEPs to access out-of-school learning.

Working with foster carers:

- The 'Helping Hands' programme was established to support parents or carers of the most vulnerable pupils to develop their skills in areas that will be useful to the pupils' needs.

- The Reading Café provides a space where carers can work alongside their children and support them in guided group reading. This helps to build relationships while improving literacy and numeracy skills.
- Links have also been developed with the local library, which supports this group of learners. This is also part of a wider school 'Parent Partnership Programme', which engages parents and carers in school life, giving them an understanding of the approaches used to teach literacy and numeracy.

Outcomes

- Due to the support and the wide range of opportunities provided, children who are looked after have equal access to learning experiences. These experiences equip the pupils with valuable social and life skills.
- Pupils enjoy school and have opportunities to participate fully in school life. At 95%, the attendance of children who are looked after is higher than the average for all other pupils.
- There have been no permanent exclusions of children who are looked after in the last three years and the number of fixed-term exclusions is very low.
- Through cultural experiences, pupils gain a better understanding of different communities and they develop their wider knowledge and understanding.
- Over time, pupils become more confident. Their sense of worth and self-esteem grow.
- At key stage 3, many pupils achieved the expected level for their age in the core subjects. All pupils at GCSE achieved the level 1 and level 2 indicators.
- The purchase of additional resources, as well as a bespoke timetable, supported one pupil to achieve an A grade for the practical element of their GCSE design technology course.
- At the end of Year 7, an achievement evening is held, where a number of awards are given. These celebrate the successes of children who are looked after. Over the last four years, children who are looked after have had their achievements recognised. They have received various awards, including the Spirit of Brynteg award, a sponsored citizenship award and school council, skills and Spelling Bee Champions awards.

The report also identified that:

- In Greenfield Special School in Merthyr Tydfil, the LACE co-ordinator was effective in monitoring the resources and provision provided by the PDG/LAC funding last year. Pupils' social workers and foster carers also contributed to reviewing the impact of the use of the PDG/LAC. However, the involvement of foster carers in planning for the use of the grant is not a common feature across schools in Wales.
- Very few independent special schools receive the pupil deprivation grant. Most local authorities consider that the funding provided for placements covers all aspects of provision for the pupils. Where PDG/LAC funding has

been made available, a minority of schools have used this to provide increased access to community and cultural activities such as theatre trips.

- Since April 2015, regional education consortia are responsible for the PDG/LAC funding. Consortia were required to produce spending plans that clearly outlined how the grant would be used within the consortia and the expected benefits for children who are looked after. Each of the consortia produced a spending plan that outlines its broad principles. All have improving outcomes in literacy and numeracy for children who are looked after as their top priorities. Additional priorities include early intervention, tracking individual pupil progress and support for school staff through increased training opportunities.
- There is considerable variation in the level of detail in consortia plans. The rationale for priorities is not always clear. Actions that need to be taken are sometimes vague and often relate to processes rather than the expected benefits or outcomes for children who are looked after. Costings against priority areas are not provided in half of the spending plans. In addition, there is a lack of clarity about how monies are delegated to schools or how schools can access the grant to support the specific needs of individual pupils. This uncertainty puts additional pressures on schools, particularly where they are maintaining a level of service that was previously funded through the PDG/LAC.
- The regional consortia were not well placed to determine how to use the PDG/LAC. They lacked expertise in this area, failed to consult widely enough with expert practitioners to gain a broader insight into the challenges, and did not use all available data to inform their plans. In addition, the timescale they were given to produce meaningful spending plans was too short.
- Regional consortia do not have a good enough understanding of where there is good or effective practice either within their own local authorities or further afield. As a result, they exclude practices that are effective and are unsure whether the approaches included in their plans will be successful.
- As a result, many schools are unaware of the region's strategy and what this means for them. This has created a degree of uncertainty and many schools are unsure whether they will be able to maintain the enhanced level of curriculum and support that they provide for children who are looked after.

Estyn has limited evidence of the impact of the use of PDG funding on outcomes for looked after learners since the publication of this report, for the academic year 2016-17. It is important to note that Estyn does not report on standards or progress of particularly small groups of learners (normally 5 or less) to avoid the identification of individual learners.

- 3. The Chief Inspector referred to data from Year 6 pupils looking at value added, during the discussion of tracking and more able learners – anything you can provide on this would be useful.**

Overall, too few schools use the PDG to support more able learners to achieve their full potential. It is much more common for schools to target pupils to reach the expected outcomes and levels, for example through intervention strategies for literacy and numeracy. In the thematic report '**Supporting more able and talented pupils. How best to challenge and nurture more able and talented pupils: Key stages 2 to 4**' [here](#), (Estyn, March 2018), inspectors identified that:

In key stage 2:

Pupils who are eligible for free school meals achieve consistently less well than their peers in key stage 2 and key stage 3. Since 2012, the gap has increased slightly in all of the core subjects at key stage 2 and is wider for all subjects at key stage 3 than at key stage 2 (Welsh Government, 2017f & 2017g).

The increases in pupils' outcomes at the higher than expected levels at key stages 2 and 3 over time continue to raise questions about the reliability and validity of teacher assessments, particularly whether there is too much emphasis on teacher assessments for accountability purposes rather than accurate assessment to improve learning.

In key stage 4

More able pupils eligible for free school meals do not perform as well as other pupils who are more able. The gap in performance in the percentage of pupils gaining five A* to A grades has been around 15% for the past three years (Welsh Government, 2017c). Pupils in Welsh-medium schools achieve better than pupils in English-medium schools. This is due in part to Welsh medium schools having lower levels of pupils eligible for free school meals (Welsh Government, 2017c).

National Tests

National test data indicates that pupils eligible for free school meals are much less likely to attain a standardised score of >115 in any of the national tests. A link to the Welsh Government statistics website is <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/national-reading-numeracy-tests-entitlement-free-school-meals/?lang=en>

Questions not covered in either session

- 1. Which aspects of Schools Challenge Cymru could/should be applied more generally to school improvement now that the programme has ended? Does Estyn have any role in the Welsh Government's stated intention to learn lessons from Schools Challenge Cymru and apply them to school improvement across the board?**

The need to co-ordinate support for schools

A majority of SCC schools benefited from the co-ordinated support facilitated by the Accelerated Improvement Boards. A range of partners were represented on the board and provided support to the school and regularly reviewed progress.

The recognition that a minority of schools require bespoke intervention

The programme recognised that a minority of schools needed more extensive and bespoke assistance and resources to support improvement and that the secondary sector faced different and sometimes more complex challenges to improve leadership, provision and standards

The importance of evaluation

Extensive professional support and training helped to ensure that there was greater consistency in the quality of evaluations and analyses.

Estyn recognises the need to co-ordinate support for schools and local authorities, therefore in the latter part of the 2010-2016 inspection cycle, as part of our link inspector work with local authorities, we developed an “improvement conference” approach to help local authorities to improve aspects of their work that were weak and causing concern.

The aim of the improvement conferences is for inspectors to seek assurance from senior officers and members that the authority and its consortium understands and takes shared responsibility for the issues that are resulting in poor performance.

During the conference, we check that the authority has coherent plans to improve, has sufficient resources to implement its plans and has rigorous processes in place to monitor and evaluate their impact. The implementation of the plans is then monitored by the local authority link inspectors during their visits to the local authorities.

During 2016 and 2017 we held pilot improvement conferences in three local authorities, Pembrokeshire, Powys and Wrexham. We invited the key senior officers, elected members and partners to meet to explore the specific areas of their work that were causing concern. In all three pilot conferences, secondary performance was an issue identified as needing to be improved.

At the end of each conference, we were assured that the local authorities understood the reasons behind the weak performance of their secondary schools and that they were taking appropriate action to rectify the situation. For example, the senior leaders in Pembrokeshire authority changed the challenge adviser for nearly all of its eight secondary schools to provide more effective support and challenge. The council also agreed a proposal to reorganise secondary education in Haverfordwest, where the two secondary schools were in special measures.

During 2018, Estyn will revisit each of these local authorities to review the progress that they have made since the original improvement conference. Each authority will be expected to evidence what actions it has taken to address its issues and, more importantly, what impact these actions have had to date on learners. Estyn will write to the chief executive of each authority following the 2018 improvement conference to set out our views on their progress.

Estyn's cycle of local government education service inspections begins in September 2018, and the local authorities involved in improvement conferences will be inspected in full. A full inspection will take place approximately one year after the publication of the letter to the chief executive following the 2018 improvement conference.

Later this term, we plan to pilot improvement conferences for schools causing concern.

2. How effectively are the four regional consortia and 22 local authorities contributing to the 'closing the attainment gap' agenda and the successful use of the PDG?

We can be confident that in almost all schools, the PDG is spent on activities aimed at improving outcomes for targeted (eligible) learners. All the consortia promote the use of PDG in line with evidence of what works. All the consortia have appropriate processes to check that schools' spend plans are compliant.

It is much harder to be confident about the actual impact of the PDG, primarily because it is difficult to determine cause and effect when there are so many other variables that contribute to learners' outcomes. It would be too crude to evaluate the impact of PDG from an analysis of annual outcomes for eFSM learners across consortia.

There has been a tendency in schools to focus PDG on short-time interventions to boost test or examination results at the end of key stage 2 or key stage 4 rather than investing the funding in ways that support sustainable improvements in the quality of teaching and the quality of support for learners.

The Education Endowment Foundation's latest report on the attainment gap notes:

There does not appear to be a direct relationship between increased school funding and increased pupil attainment – what matters most is how schools can effectively and efficiently use the resources they have (both financial and human) for maximum impact. (p2, executive summary)

In Wales there is a strong correlation between schools where learners from deprived backgrounds perform well and schools that perform well overall as a result of good teaching and good leadership.

It is also important that providers don't chase accountability measures where this is not in the best interests of the learner. It is better that a learner misses a particular indicator but has a successful transition into further education, employment and training than being trained to jump through an accountability measure hoop but has no appropriate pathway at 16.

3. In the past, Estyn has been quite critical of the extent to which the consortia focus on particular groups of pupils and track outcomes, for example vulnerable learners and more able learners. What is Estyn's updated assessment of how well consortia are doing this now? (From Estyn's inspections of each consortia in 2015/16.)

Although monitoring and tracking the progress and achievements of vulnerable learners is an established part of the work of schools and colleges, the overall statutory responsibility for these learners rests with the local authority. Local authorities commission regional consortia to support this aspect of their work.

The consortia all have suitable systems in place to enable them to track the performance of particular groups, and these systems have all improved since Estyn first visited the consortia. It would be very easy for the consortia to answer a question about the performance of a particular group of pupils, assuming that performance referred to a national performance indicator. Tracking and the evaluation of outcomes tends to be based mainly or wholly on national performance indicators. However, these measures are not always the most helpful measures for evaluating the progress of particular groups, especially where it is important to take full account of their outcomes in previous key stages, their particular needs and circumstances and of their next steps or destinations. Consortia and local authorities together need to make better use of other information when evaluating the outcomes of some groups of pupils where it is too crude to make assumptions from national performance indicators.

Most local authorities commission the consortia to provide support and challenge to schools through the work of the challenge advisors. Part of this role is to question the provision for vulnerable learners alongside that of their peers. Since the initial introduction of the PDG, the regional consortia have developed a better understanding of the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals than was previously the case. They have a suitable understanding of who their disadvantaged learners are and challenge schools about the outcomes of this group, for instance during challenge advisor visits. Generally, they also have appropriate arrangements to ensure that school's use PDG funding appropriately for its intended recipients but do not consistently evaluate impact of the expenditure on improving pupils' outcomes and wellbeing. The regional consortia now have officers with responsibility for improving outcomes for eFSM but it is too early to evaluate their impact

Most local authorities track the progress of LAC learners centrally and have secure processes to monitor their progress through LAC co-ordinators or achievement leaders. The tracking of a few learners who are placed out of county is less secure.

Overall, regions, local authorities and schools do not place a high enough priority on supporting more able disadvantaged learners to reach their potential.

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-P/KW/1398/18

Lynne Neagle AM
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17 April 2018

Dear Lynne

Thank you for your letter dated 14 March following the Committee's consideration of my February update regarding the support for minority ethnic, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners.

You raise a number of specific questions which I have addressed below:

- **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?**

The publication of *Education in Wales: Our national mission* sets out how we will raise standards, reduce the attainment gap and deliver an education system that is a source of national pride and confidence. It is our action plan for school education for the period 2017-21.

Our national mission, as supported by regional consortia business plans, identifies the shared responsibility and clarifies roles for delivery of our national priorities across the three tier education system in Wales, including the Welsh Government, regional consortia, Local Authorities, Estyn and schools.

Local Authorities are responsible for schools funding as is set out in law and they must ensure appropriate education provision is available for all learners. That is why after 10 years of additional grant funding to try and to test systems and approaches, minority ethnic, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learner support is now a core provision.

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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.

Welsh Government has taken difficult decisions, including reducing the education budget in order to maximise the funding to Local Government to support front line schools delivery. The prioritisation of funding to Local Government has significantly improved the position of the Settlement from the original planning assumptions authorities were expecting, to a 0.2% increase overall in 2018-19. This is outlined in the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services' letter to the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee in November. Local Government understands the change in position from planning assumptions to Draft and Final Budget and Settlement and I welcome the assurances from Local Government that Authorities will continue to prioritise support for these groups of learners.

Each Local Authority is subject to scrutiny and inspection and answerable to its electorate, to Estyn, and to the Wales Audit Office. I have regular meetings with the WLGA Leader and with ADEW through which I engage on my priorities for education.

Each year we collect and publish information on the educational performance of these groups of learners, many of whom outperform the Wales averages; we will continue to do this and I am confident the checks and balances are in the system and that we can continue to monitor progress moving forwards.

- **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?**

In my previous update to the Committee I recognised the evidence presented to the Committee was wide-ranging, varied and in parts contradictory. In this context, Estyn's evidence suggested little change in the delivery of these Local Authority services when the funding arrangements changed from the previous targeted grants to the EIG.

In publishing *Education in Wales: Our national mission*, and as outlined above, I am confident working in partnership with schools, regional consortia and Local Authorities, we can continue to monitor the progress of these groups of learners.

- **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?**

I confirmed in my update in February that the Welsh Government has been mindful during our budget process of the requirements on Welsh Ministers under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and to have due regard to the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. A strategic integrated impact assessment was undertaken and published along with the Draft Budget. <http://gov.wales/funding/budget/draft-budget-2018-19/?lang=en> We suggested that Authorities would also wish to undertake assessments in the context of their own budget setting processes. In the Welsh Government's Draft Budget we clearly outline that:

“each Local Authority is an autonomous, democratically-elected body, which is accountable to its electorate for the decisions it makes. Authorities have a series of statutory duties and functions and powers to provide a range of other functions and services. Each Authority must ensure that it undertakes appropriate impact assessments of any policies it implements funded through the local government settlement”.

This is important as, along with the responsibilities in law to fund schools, it is the decisions at Local Authority level which directly influence how Authorities support schools and learners, recognising these are Local Authority support services. The assessment undertaken by my officials therefore must recognise that whilst overall budget decisions impact on our service providers and the way services are delivered, the statutory responsibility and final decision rests with our delivery partners, which in this case are our Local Authorities in Wales.

- **How did the Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) and Equality Impact Assessment influence the Welsh Government's decisions when taking this decision?**

The Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment undertaken as part of the Draft Budget considered the overall budget position and the constraints under which the Welsh Government's budget is influenced through the continued UK Government commitment to austerity. As part of the budget process we took a whole-Government approach to prioritise funding to Local Government for front line schools and social services delivery.

As part of the Draft Budget process, I outlined my priorities for schools to Local Government to seek to ensure our national priorities are embedded in their planning. I welcomed the assurances Local Government provided that they would continue to prioritise support for these groups of learners, prioritise front line schools delivery, and continue to support regional school improvement arrangements.

I was mindful in my decision to reduce the EIG budget to safeguard our investment in the Foundation Phase, which accounts for a majority element of the EIG, and to manage the changes across the other areas supported through the EIG.

In agreeing £22.2 million from the EIG to support the prioritisation for Local Government over the next two years, there will be challenges across both years for all areas outside of the Foundation Phase. I am however mitigating the impact on the support for minority ethnic achievement and the education of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners in 2018-19 through an additional investment of £7.5 million.

Movement of funding

- **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?)**

I have been clear that the change in funding arrangements for minority ethnic, Gypsy Roma and Traveller learners is not a grant transfer. The budget information shows there is no formal grant transfer. The previous Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant and the Specific Grant for the Education of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners ended in March 2015. The EIG budget has been reduced to release resources to support the prioritisation of funding for Local Government. The reduction to the EIG budget in 2018-19 is £13.1 million as part of the prioritisation to Local Government as I confirmed to the Committee during the Committee's scrutiny of the Draft Budget. In total, the Education MEG has contributed £33 million over 2018-19 and 2019-20 to the prioritisation to Local Government for front line schools and social care service delivery.

- **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 it is being apportioned?**

Responding to calls from Local Authorities and the WLGA, I asked my officials to examine how Local Authorities were affected due to the changes of funding and the different ways the EIG and RSG are distributed, recognising there is no formal grant transfer. The WLGA did not submit a breakdown of how authorities believed they were affected. Welsh Government estimated figures showed there were particular challenges for Cardiff, Swansea and Newport.

I can therefore confirm that the £5 million will be distributed between Cardiff, Swansea and Newport.

- **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.*)**

In prioritising funding to Local Government for front line schools and social care delivery, we must recognise the significant improvement between the original planning assumptions for the Local Government Settlement and the final overall 0.2% cash increase to the Settlement.

In terms of critical mass, in 2014 Welsh Government was clear that the then arrangements were not sustainable and that Local Authorities needed to work together to be able to manage the pressures, both financial and in any population increases, in future. This has been slow to develop, despite delivering the funding through the regional EIG arrangements. I have therefore made available an additional £2.5 million in 2018-19 to support the transition to a regional delivery approach for support services. We will work closely with Local Authorities and the Welsh Local Government Association to monitor the outcomes arising from this investment.

- **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?**

We will direct the funding to Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham as the main demographic hub authorities for these groups of learners within each region. I expect these four authorities to work closely with all local authorities in their region regarding future arrangements to support these groups of learners. Discussions are currently underway with the four Local Authority Chief Executives concerning the proposed formula for distributing this funding and I intend to meet with the Chair of ADEW shortly to discuss this further.

- **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*)?**

I intend to distribute the funding through the four largest urban authorities as the main demographic hubs for these groups of learners in each region, which, as stated above, includes Wrexham.

- **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.*)**

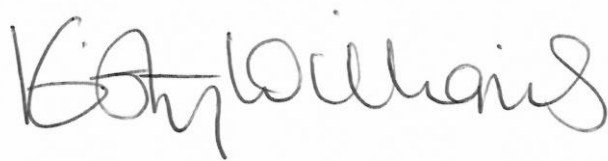
The £7.5 million in 2018-19 is additional. The Settlement is unencumbered and there is no formal grant transfer relating to the EIG. However, this is a significant improvement when comparing planning assumptions to Draft and Final Budget and Settlement. The EIG budget has contributed to this improved position, and our £7.5 million investment is in addition to the EIG budget and the Settlement agreed for 2018-19.

- **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?**

This investment is for 2018-19 only. I have written to the WLGA Leader confirming my intention to consider this as part of the budget process for 2019-20.

I hope this information reassures you that measures are in place to ensure that our Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic learners continue to receive the support they need to achieve their potential.

Yours sincerely



Kirsty Williams AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA-(P)-KW/0660/18

Lynne Neagle AM
Chair
Children, Young People and Education Committee
National Assembly for Wales
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18 April 2018

Dear Lynne

This letter is the third quarterly update on the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) transformation programme.

1. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

In my previous quarterly update I noted that the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill had been passed by the Assembly. I am now pleased to say that the Bill gained Royal Assent on 24 January 2018 and is now the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 ('the Act').

This is a key milestone on this journey of transformation, creating the legislative framework needed to improve the planning and delivery of additional learning provision, but now the real challenge of implementation begins.

There is now a huge programme of work to be taken forward by my officials to develop the draft subordinate legislation to give effect to the more than thirty regulation-making powers in the Act, as well as extensive work to review, revise and in some areas draft entirely new sections of the ALN Code. As you are aware, during the scrutiny of the Bill we made a number of commitments to use the Code to provide detailed guidance on a range of aspects of the new system. This will be the manual for practitioners and services responsible for delivering the new legislative framework, and it is vital that we get it right.

To that end, I have asked my officials to ensure that we engage with stakeholders from across sectors to ensure their views, expertise and experiences help shape the new system. The Code will be subject to a full public consultation in due course, but my officials

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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.

will also be undertaking targeted engagement, including through relevant expert groups, to inform the development of the draft Code over the coming months.

This kind of targeted stakeholder engagement has already begun in relation to refining our thinking on the detailed implementation guidance we intend to publish to support services to plan and manage their transition to the new system. My officials have been working with the Education Reform Strategic Stakeholder Group, as well as with sector-specific groups such as the association of special school headteachers and Cwllwm, an umbrella body for non-maintained early years providers, to test our thinking at an early stage.

2. Implementation/ transition support

2.1. ALN transformation leads

Today I issued a written statement announcing details of the five ALN transformation leads following an open, competitive recruitment process. Four of the transformation leads will operate regionally, on the education consortia footprint, and one of the leads will work as a further education lead on a national basis. The five leads are:

- Margaret Davies, formerly an Estyn inspector will be working in the North Wales region;
- Huw Davies another former Estyn inspector will be working in the West Wales region;
- Liz Jones, a former Principal Educational Psychologist from Blaenau Gwent, will remain working in Central South;
- Tracey Pead will stay in South East Wales after formerly heading up Pupil Support for Torfaen County Borough Council; and
- Chris Denham will take on the role as the further education transformation lead having previously worked for Coleg Gwent leading on ALN.

I had the pleasure of recently meeting our transformation leads and am confident that the wealth of experience and expertise that they will bring to the roles will be a valuable asset to driving forward this crucial agenda.

Each of the regional transformation leads have been tasked with developing an implementation plan for their region, and the further education transformation lead will develop an implementation plan for the further education sector. These plans will set out the agreed actions required to ensure the necessary practices and processes are in place prior to roll-out of the Act.

They will be developed in collaboration with the key statutory bodies in the region who have duties under the Act. It will be based on an analysis of the evidence of their level of readiness for implementation of key aspects of the new system, to be developed through readiness self-assessments and discussions facilitated by the transformation leads.

The work of the transformation leads will be supported by ALN Transformation Grants, which will be allocated to each of the regional transformation leads on a formula basis; this will allow each of the regions to target the money as identified in their regional implementation plan. This is in line with the Committee's fourth recommendation in its Stage 1 report on the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill:

Recommendation 4: The Committee recommends that the process for distributing grants should be well considered with a view to minimising bureaucracy, whilst ensuring value for money.

2.2. ALN Innovation Grants and Expert Groups

Regional, multi-agency projects funded through the two-year pre-legislative ALN Innovation Grant drew to a close at the end of March. The relevant expert groups will soon review the innovation projects to evaluate good practice and share any lessons learnt across Wales.

The ALN Health Expert Group continues to support the development of guidance on the statutory requirements on health boards under the Act. The group is currently redrafting the job description for the role of the Designated Educational Clinical Lead Officer (DECLO) which will be informed by both the group's membership and from a project initiated in Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to explore how the role may operate in practice.

2.3. ALN baseline assessment

As part of the evaluation of the impact of the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Act 2018, the Welsh Government has commissioned research to establish a baseline assessment of the impact of the current SEN system. The research consists of a survey of organisations involved in the SEN system. In addition, four case studies are being undertaken to provide detailed data. The survey has been completed and a paper on interim findings is currently being prepared, prior to the full report being drafted. The case studies are progressing well with around a third of the interviews having been undertaken.

3. Workforce development

In December I allocated £352,000 over the next two financial years to support the postgraduate training of local authority-based specialist and advisory teachers of learners with visual impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) and multi-sensory impairment (MSI). This funding may also be used to facilitate training in Braille and British Sign Language for local authority-based specialist staff. Regional bids for this funding have now been received and are under consideration.

In order to ensure a continued supply of Educational Psychologists, we fund Cardiff University's Doctorate in Educational Psychology (DEdPsy) professional training programme. Negotiations with the University about arrangements from 2019-20 are underway.

Suitably qualified Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinators (ALNCos) are critical to the effective operation of the new system. Engagement with key stakeholders has helped shape our policy regarding the skills and training requirements needed to deliver this role. I have agreed for a significant amount of the funding allocated for implementation of the ALN transformation programme to be invested into the delivery of training of this important sector of the education workforce.

4. Awareness raising

The ALN transformation leads will be my champions on the front-line, and have already begun meeting key stakeholders and developing networks. They will be reporting any issues or concerns out there that I need to be aware of, so that we can put in place the right support to ensure that services are equipped and ready to deliver the new system when the time comes. It's vital that we get this right, so that learners can access the benefits of the new system as seamlessly as possible.

4.1. ALN implementation training materials

Since January, Eliesha Cymru have been scoping the content of the ALN implementation training materials by engaging with the Welsh Government, our training expert group, the ALN transformation leads and third sector representatives. Using feedback from the various sessions they have now started to develop the on-line training programme.

4.2. Welsh Language resources

A group has been set up to support the development of ALN screening and assessment resources in the medium of Welsh. The group consists of a range of education practitioners who support children and young people with ALN. The group is currently in the process of determining what ALN screening and assessment resources are required in the medium of Welsh.


4.3. Rapid evidence assessments

Rapid evidence assessments and accessible guides on effective interventions to support children and young people with a range of ALN are being undertaken. The rapid evidence assessments of interventions to support children and young people with ADHD and ASD have been completed and are being prepared for publication. The guides on effective interventions to support children and young people with ASD and ADHD are nearing completion.

In addition, the rapid evidence assessments on effective interventions to support children and young people with hearing impairments, visual impairments and multi-sensory impairments are progressing well and draft reports are currently being prepared.

I am copying this letter to the Chairs of the Finance Committee and the Constitutional Affairs and Legislative Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Kirsty Williams AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education

CC Simon Thomas AM, Finance Committee Chair SeneddFinance@assembly.wales
& Mick Antoniw AM Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee Chair
SeneddCLA@assembly.wales



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Additional Learning Needs Transformation Leads**

DATE **18 April 2018**

BY **Kirsty Williams, Cabinet Secretary for Education**

This Government is committed to delivering a fully inclusive education system, where children and young people are inspired, motivated and supported to reach their potential.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) transformation is a key aspect of our overall programme of education reform, as set out in 'Education in Wales: Our National Mission'. On 12 December 2017 the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill was unanimously passed by the National Assembly for Wales and went on to become an Act after gaining Royal Assent on 24 January 2018. This is a key milestone on this journey of transformation but now the real challenge of implementation begins.

I have given careful consideration to how best we support delivery partners to not only implement the new ALN system but also bring about the cultural change needed to fulfil the duties set out in the Act.

Today I am announcing details of five ALN transformation leads following an open, competitive recruitment process. Four of the transformation leads will operate regionally, on the education consortia footprint, and one of the leads will work as a further education transformation lead on a national basis. The details are as follows:

- Margaret Davies, formerly an Estyn inspector will be working in the North Wales region;
- Huw Davies another former Estyn inspector will be working in the West Wales region;
- Liz Jones, a former Principal Educational Psychologist from Blaenau Gwent, will remain working in Central South;
- Tracey Pead; will stay in South East Wales after formerly heading up Pupil Support for Torfaen County Borough Council; and
- Chris Denham will take on the role as the further education transformation lead having worked for Coleg Gwent leading on ALN.

These posts will play a critical role in our overall implementation strategy by ensuring services are supported and prepared to deliver the new ALN system.

They will provide support and challenge to local authorities, schools, early years settings and further education institutions, they will also play a coordinating role in the roll-out of implementation training on the Act, awareness-raising and facilitating improvements in multi-agency working.

I expect to see the transformation leads sharing that knowledge and working together as a team to ensure that services are equipped and ready to deliver the new system when the time comes. It's vital that we get this right, so that learners can access the benefits of the new system as seamlessly as possible.

Each of the regional transformation leads have been tasked with developing an implementation plan for their region, and the further education transformation lead will develop an implementation plan for the further education sector. These plans will set out the agreed actions required to ensure the necessary practices and processes are in place prior to roll-out of the Act.

They will be developed in collaboration with the key statutory bodies in the region who have duties under the Act. It will be based on an analysis of the evidence of their level of readiness for implementation of key aspects of the new system, to be developed through readiness self-assessments and discussions facilitated by the transformation leads.

The work of the transformation leads will be supported by ALN Transformation Grants, which will be allocated to each of the regional transformation leads on a formula basis; this will allow each of the regions to target the money as identified in their regional implementation plan.

To ensure that services and practitioners have clarity about how we expect them to move from one statutory system to another, we will be publishing a detailed implementation guide this summer to explain the timescales for the roll-out of individual development plans (IDPs) to each cohort of learners in the phased approach.

That said, until the Act comes into force, local authorities must ensure that they continue to comply with the duties placed upon them by the Education Act 1996 and the SEN Code of Practice for Wales.

Agenda Item 4.5

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

National Assembly for Wales
Children, Young People and Education Committee

Elin Jones, AM
Llywydd
National Assembly for Wales

23 April 2018

Dear Elin

Resourcing for Brexit scrutiny

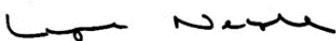
Thank you for your letter of 16 March regarding the likely workload for the Children, Young People and Education Committee resulting from Brexit. The Committee considered this at its meeting on 18 April.

The Committee has agreed undertake an initial inquiry on the Impact of Brexit on Higher and Further Education, which will run during summer 2018. This inquiry will be accommodated within the Committee's existing programme and staffing resources.

Alongside this, the Committee will continue to mainstream Brexit-related matters into its general, policy and legislative scrutiny, pursuing relevant areas as and when they arise. At this stage we do not anticipate this work displacing other key activity nor leaving Members or the Committee lacking capacity.

Any additional CYPE-specific Brexit related work could displace other areas of work and require additional Member and staff capacity. Such areas might include subordinate legislation, legislative consent motions, UK Frameworks, and Orders in Council or the impact on devolved areas of future trade or EU-UK relationships on areas within the Committee's remit. Given the uncertainty relating to these areas, the Committee would reserve judgement at this stage but in the meantime we would not wish to see a reduction in the Committee's meeting time and/or supporting resources.

Yours sincerely



Lynne Neagle AC / AM
Cadeirydd / Chair





Ms Lynne Neagle AM
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Email: lynne.neagle@assembly.wales

24 April 2018

Dear Lynne

Last year, we commissioned a review of the design and assessment model of the Skills Challenge Certificate and its place within the Welsh Baccalaureate.

Today, we are publishing a report detailing its findings and recommendations together with a short overview explaining how we will address those recommendations. We enclose copies of both documents with this letter.

The purpose of the review was to examine the intended design of the new Skills Challenge Certificate as well as how it is working in practice. The research included a critical analysis of the design and assessment model of the Skills Challenge Certificate alongside a series of discussions with teaching staff and students from schools and colleges across Wales.

The review concludes that the Welsh Baccalaureate and the Skills Challenge Certificate serve a valuable purpose in helping learners to develop skills that are beneficial to their future. It strongly supports retaining the Skills Challenge Certificate and developing it further by building on its strengths and reducing its complexity.

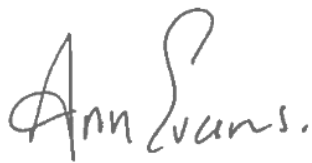
The report makes eight recommendations for us to consider, some of which focus on the current delivery of the Skills Challenge Certificate, whilst the others suggest how, in the future, the design and assessment of the Skills Challenge Certificate could be simplified.

To help us consider how the recommendations could be put into practice, we will establish a working group. To test and refine any proposals made by the group, we will use a panel of stakeholders, including teachers, lecturers, students, employers and universities.

As a new and innovative qualification within a redesigned Welsh Bacalaureate, it was expected the Skills Challenge Certificate would continue to evolve over time. The findings from this research help to set the direction for a considered process of review and refinement to ensure that the qualification continues to help students develop the skills they need to succeed.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this work and its implications for the future, we would be very happy to do so.

Yours sincerely



Ann Evans
Chair



Philip Blaker
Chief Executive

Agenda Item 4.7

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru

Y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb, Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau

National Assembly for Wales

Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

Lynne Neagle AM

Chair, Children and Young People and Education
Committee

26 April 2018

Dear Lynne

Committee inquiry into pregnancy, maternity and work

The Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee is currently undertaking an inquiry into pregnancy, maternity and work. As part of this inquiry, we are considering whether the Welsh Government's new childcare offer is matched with targeted support for mothers to enter or return to work. Given that the childcare offer falls within the remit of the Children, Young People and Education Committee, I wanted to draw your attention to our work in this area.

The [public consultation](#) to inform our inquiry has now come to an end. We are in the process of taking oral evidence from a range of witnesses and have sessions scheduled with relevant Ministers, including the Minister for Children and Social Care, on 9 and 23 May 2018.

I am aware that your Committee has recently begun its scrutiny of the Childcare Funding (Wales) Bill and is due to report at the beginning of July 2018. While we have yet to agree a timeline for the publication of our inquiry report, we will be happy to share with you any emerging issues which may be of interest to you in your scrutiny of the Bill.



Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru

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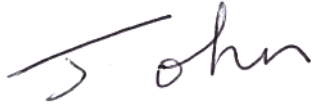
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Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John". The letters are cursive and connected.

John Griffiths AM
Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

