

P-05-962 An emergency amendment to extend age of entitlement to additional educational support from 25 to 26 and to define within Government guidance the Covid 19 pandemic as an exceptional circumstance

This petition was submitted by Mike Charles having collected a total of 537 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call upon the Welsh Assembly to direct our Government to urgently amend the Learning and Skills Act to allow for funding within specialist colleges to be extended from the age of 25 to 26 for those affected by the Covid19 pandemic and to urgently scrap or amend its guidance document no: 221/2017 November 2017 so that the Covid19 crisis is defined as an exceptional circumstance.

Additional Information

The ALN Act 2018 will in time change the law but young people with complex needs cannot wait. Decisions about how long they may be supported in specialist colleges are being made today. Vital time is being lost by schools and colleges which may have closed or may be operating in a very limited way. For those with complex needs their critical access to learning resources are restricted. People with complex needs often learn from being out in the environment to develop critical life independence and employability skills. Outside is a classroom yet this is now being heavily restricted. Covid19 is altering this ability to learn in a material way.

Many parents and young people are fearful that this is one year open to them out of the 2 maximum. Although the guidance allows for exceptional circumstances it is interpreted in practice as limiting provision to two years and does not define adequately what would amount to an exceptional circumstance. The law however only allows for support up to 25 and this needs to urgently change to give those affected during this pandemic another chance. A chance for another less interrupted year.

This will otherwise manifest into skills being lost and consequent greater reliance on the state. That is not desirable for so many reasons not least the

fact that the loss of critical skills will be devastating for the individual involved.

We call upon our Government to help those most vulnerable. To support them for what they may have lost and give them another chance. A chance for an opportunity not to be missed. For many it is a difference between a life of dependence and independence.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cardiff South and Penarth
- South Wales Central