



Ein cyf/Our ref: KW/03386/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

20 July 2020

Dear Janet,

Further to my letter of 30 June, my officials have now been able to consider the information from Mr Mike Charles in more detail. The following points are therefore the key issues in response to the points raised in the original letter:

- The guidance documents quoted in the original letter are out of date - [policy](#) and associated technical guidance documents for [Careers Wales](#) and [specialist FE establishments](#) were updated in February 2020;
- There seems to be some confusion that may arise from a misinterpretation of the policy with regards to requests for an extension to an agreed programme of study and requests for an additional programme of study. In order to provide clarity, I thought it would be useful if I confirm that, a request for an extension of study will be made to enable a young person to complete their agreed programme of study; an additional programme of study is to undertake provision over and above what the young person has completed;
- The Welsh Government has commissioned Careers Wales to undertake section 140 assessments on behalf of Welsh Ministers and there may be a small number of cases, where due to exceptional circumstances an educational psychologist would need to be secured. The specific reasons are provided within paragraph 76 of the policy;
- It may not always be the case that the impact of coronavirus would mean a young person is unable to complete their agreed programme of study. Each young person's access to education during the lockdown, their ongoing educational needs, the

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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.

progress they have already made through their programme of study, and their personal circumstances, will differ. Our policy and associated technical guidance documents already allows for requests to be made to extend a young person's agreed programme of study in the event they are unlikely to complete within the agreed time. In some cases this could occur as a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic. As I mentioned in my previous response, to date, four requests for an extension to an agreed programme of study have been submitted, which include reasons relating to the impact of COVID-19. These requests have been considered on their own merit and have been approved in line with the policy. As has always been the case, any requests to extend a young person's placement beyond the programme's original agreed end date is considered on a case-by-case basis.

- The guidance currently does not specify or detail all of the exceptional circumstances that may be a reason to request an extension to an agreed programme of study. This is because each individual's case will be different and we do not want to limit the potential scope for the submission of the request;

In light of the coronavirus pandemic, the Welsh Government has published advice relating to extension requests via our [guidance for safeguarding and vulnerable children and young people](#). We have also produced a frequently asked questions document which has been issued to all specialist FE establishments we have a funding agreement with, which reiterates the advice regarding extension requests. Furthermore, my officials are in regular dialog with Natspec, the group representing specialist FE establishments across Wales and England, where a number of matters relating to the impact of coronavirus have been discussed, including the position with regard to applications for extension requests.

Yours sincerely,

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

Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education