

**Dyddiad /Date:**  
**Gofynnwch am/Please ask for:**  
**Llinell uniongyrchol/Direct line:**  
**Ebost/Email:**

01 September 2020  
Sharon Davies  
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Janet Finch-Saunders, AM  
Chair of the Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

Dear Ms Finch-Saunders,



## **P-05-920 School Budgeting for ALN**

Thank you for your letter of 16 December to the WLGA about the above petition and may I apologise sincerely for the delay in responding.

In terms of the process by which local authorities make funding available for learners with ALN in their area, the Committee has already had the benefit of a letter from the Education Minister and a Senedd research service briefing to help with its deliberations. I would also draw your attention to Section 2 of an earlier research service briefing on school funding (August 2018)<sup>1</sup> which sets out in some detail the process by which local authorities set their respective Local Authority, Schools and Individual Schools Budgets under the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010. Each of these budgets will contain an element of funding for ALN, determined according to local needs and priorities, within the legislative framework.

The above budget-setting process will not change when the ALN Act 2018 comes into force, so local authorities will continue to retain some funding centrally for ALN (within their LA and Schools Budgets), with the majority of funding delegated to schools (the ISB) to make the day-to-day decisions about the provision of support for learners with ALN through statutory Individual Development Plans (IDPs).

The petition itself calls for more Welsh Government funding to go to schools to support pupils with ALN. Committee members will be aware that the WLGA does not support specific grant funding for any local services and holds to the principle that they should be funded through the annual Revenue Support Grant (RSG).

That said, the WLGA and local authorities share the petitioner's concerns about funding for implementing the ALN Act and wider ALN Transformation Programme. The introduction under the ALN Act of statutory IDPs for all children and young people 0-25 years with ALN, the much wider appeal rights available than currently and the lack in the Act of an explicit duty on health boards to meet the costs of relevant therapeutic health interventions for learners with ALN, could result in additional costs to authorities and schools over and above the £20m funding the Welsh Government has made available 2017-18 to the end of the Senedd term. Those concerns have been expressed on numerous occasions, most recently to the 2018 Senedd CYP&E Committee School Funding Inquiry (extract from joint WLGA/ADEW written evidence attached) and are shared by many others, including the CYP&E Committee itself.

Dr Chris Llewelyn  
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<sup>1</sup> <https://senedd.wales/Research%20Documents/18-047/18-47-Web-English.pdf>

**Croesawn ohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg a byddwn yn ymateb i ohebiaeth yn yr un iaith.  
Ni fydd defnyddio'r naill iaith na'r llall yn arwain at oedi.**

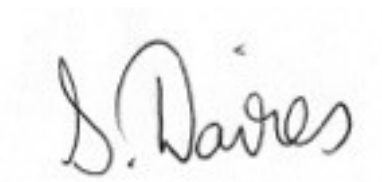
We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English and will respond to correspondence in the same language.  
Use of either language will not lead to a delay.

The WLGA welcomes Welsh Government's recognition that local authorities face significant pressures in supporting children and young people with ALN by making available an additional £8m of grant available this financial year.<sup>2</sup> The WLGA hopes that this funding will continue into future years and would urge the Welsh Government to transfer it into the RSG from 2021-22.

Funding to support learners with ALN to achieve their potential has to be set in the context of funding for education as a whole in Wales. All local authorities are committed to providing a high-quality education for all their learners and will continue to give education services top priority when setting budgets, but they can only work within available resources. The fact is that the local government funding 'cake' has had to be sliced ever more thinly during many years of austerity, while the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on local government finances is yet to be seen. The WLGA hopes that the review work commissioned by the Welsh Government from Luke Sibieta in response to Recommendation 1 in the CYP&E Committee's 2019 School Funding in Wales report will indeed address the central issue of 'how much funding is actually required to fund schools sufficiently in Wales'.

I hope this is helpful to the Committee's deliberations.

**Yn gywir / Yours sincerely**



Sharon Davies

**Pennaeth Addysg  
Head of Education**

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<sup>2</sup> <https://gov.wales/ps8m-boost-support-young-people-additional-learning-needs>

## ANNEX A

Extract from the joint WLGA/ADEW evidence to the CYP&E Committee's 2018 School Funding Inquiry (relates to the financial year 2018-19):

"Data shows the number of pupils with SEN has increased year-on-year since 2015 and since 2012 there has been an increase of over 2,000 learners identified as having SEN. There has been a year on year cash increase in spend on SEN with a gradual increase in spend on special schools with core and mainstream funding staying more or less the same in cash terms. Local authority spend on supporting pupils with SEN has grown year-on-year and in 2018-19 there was an increase of £8.8m or 2.4% as compared to the previous year. Spend per pupil across Wales has increased from £789 in 2015-16 to £844 in 2018-19: an increase of £55 per pupil. Centrally held funding has reduced from 30% of the total funding in 2014-15 to 27% in the current year. Funding allocated to Special Schools has increased from 24% of the total funding in 2014-15 to 27% in the current year."

"With the introduction of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 there will be considerable demand on staff time for extensive professional development and upskilling in preparation for the implementation of the new Code of Practice. There will be a requirement to train staff at all levels as well as more intensive training and development for Additional Learning Needs Coordinators. Although there will be common national training packages, these will need to be delivered locally by local authorities and/or schools who will need appropriate time and resources to ensure effective roll-out. With the extension of the statutory age range from 0 to 25, and transfer of responsibility of Post-16 specialist placements to Local authorities there could be additional costs in meeting the needs of learners with additional learning needs."

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