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Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref -
Ein cyf/Our ref

19 November 2020

Dear Lynne Neagle MS

Children, Young People and Education Committee –the impact of Covid-19 on remote teaching and learning

Thank you for your letter raising queries regarding the use of the Accelerating Learning Programme funding.

As you are aware on the 8 July, I announced an additional £29m funding to recruit, recover and raise standards in Welsh schools in response to the impact created by the pandemic. The funding is being targeted at years 7,11,12,13 as well as disadvantaged and vulnerable learners of all ages. The support packages provided at school level will include a variety of approaches including personalised learning programmes, extra coaching and mentoring of learners and additional time and resources and will be dependant entirely on local need.

My officials have provided Local Authorities and Schools guidance on how best to make use of the funding.

<https://gov.wales/recruit-recover-raise-standards-accelerating-learning-programme>

In response to queries received over use of the funding, my officials have also developed a set of frequently asked questions (FAQs) published alongside the principles document. These resources and the “sharing our experiences” playlists available on our Hwb site (<https://hwb.gov.wales/distance-learning/sharing-our-experiences>) are intended to support schools in their decisions making for the funding.

We have tried to be very clear within the guidance about the important principles guiding this funding. Firstly, that Head Teachers will decide which groups and individuals will get support from the programme; and secondly that we do not want to place restrictions on Head Teachers in how they go about appointing and deploying this new capacity. We are however clear that the purpose of this funding is to create and release additional human capacity in our schools. We have also been clear that recruitment is a matter for schools, governing bodies and LAs and will be handled at a local level.

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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.

You requested in your letter details of how many new posts have been created as part of this scheme and what monitoring is underway in respect of the funding. We currently do not have a complete set of data on the numbers of teachers and other staff recruited. We are however working with local authorities to understand how schools and LAs are deploying this additional capacity and the nature of the support they are creating.

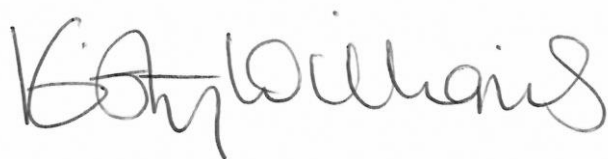
Some monitoring returns have been received from LAs, outlining their progress in recruiting to roles and deploying capacity to support learners and more returns are expected in the coming days. We continue to work with LAs to understand how additional capacity is being created by schools and to support the variety of ways schools are utilising the grant.

We are aware of a number of innovative approaches that schools are employing that are not simply accounted for by an additional teacher or teaching assistant. These include online learning support and tutoring for exam years, third party provision for vulnerable learners, and bringing in support workers to support online learning, where a support worker may be an additional adult in a live-streamed class.

As a Government, we have also worked with the Education Workforce Council (EWC) to promote the programme. EWC worked with us to ensure eligible registered practitioners were made aware of the opportunities that the scheme could provide. During September, over 14,000 emails were issued to eligible registrants and they were provided with a link to an 'expression of interest' (EOI) form on the EWC website. Over 2,300 individuals submitted a form to the EWC. Those EOIs have now been collated and the data and details passed on to the relevant Local Authorities to help them in matching interest in the scheme to possible personnel.

Like you, I am committed to ensuring that this money is being used by local authorities as intended; to create additional teaching posts, support the needs of learners, and mitigate the impact of loss of teaching time. As such we are committed to continuing to work with local authorities to support the scheme and its uptake.

Yours sincerely

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

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