

Ken Skates AM
Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Infrastructure

5 July 2017

Dear Ken,

Learner Travel in Wales

The Children, Young People and Education Committee recently considered its forward work programme. Members of the Committee have indicated an interest in examining the development of learner travel in Wales, particularly issues around compliance of local authorities to undertake hazardous route assessments for walking routes to pick up points.

The Committee has received evidence suggesting that there may be differences in the way that local authorities are interpreting learner travel legislation and guidance in the way that hazardous routes are assessed, particularly in relation to walking routes from home to transport pick-up points.

Section 2 of the *Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008* places a duty on a local authority to assess the travel needs of learners under the age of 19 and the Learner Travel Operational Guidance lists a number of things that a local authority is also required to have regard to in assessing learner's travel needs. This includes 'the nature of the route that the learner is expected to take between home and the places where they receive education or training.'

In the Fourth Assembly, the former Minister for Minister for Economy, Science and Transport informed the Assembly:

"Where travel arrangements made by local authorities require children to walk to and from pick up points for learner transport, they must ensure that both the walked route and the learner transport itself are suitable; such transport arrangements must be safe, not take unreasonable time and not cause unreasonable stress."¹

The Minister in her letter to Members, indicated she had written to each local authority to remind them of their duties and seek assurances that they were compliant with their duties.

¹Letter from Minister for Minister for Economy, Science and Transport, **9 October 2015**



It would assist the Committee in its work if you could provide us with information on the following:

- The status of each local authority in complying with their duties to learners;
- Any outcomes from the previous Minister's correspondence with each local authority; and
- If there is still non-compliance in local authorities, what action is the Welsh Government taking to ensure they meet their duties. On this point, information related to specific authorities would be welcomed.

For information, the Committee has also written to today to the Children's Commissioner for Wales, the WLGA and the National Association of Head Teachers seeking their views on this matter.

I very much look forward to hearing from you and I hope we will be able to welcome you to the Committee in the near future.

Yours sincerely



Lynne Neagle AC / AM
Cadeirydd / Chair

