

**Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc
ac Addysg**

**Children, Young People
and Education Committee**

Jeremy Miles MS
Minister for Education and Welsh Language

9 October 2023

Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024-25

Dear Jeremy,

As last year, we would like written information to support our scrutiny of the Welsh Government's Draft Budget 2024-25. The annex to this letter sets out in detail the information that we would like to receive.

I would be grateful to receive the written information no later than 19 December 2023. I note that the Welsh Government intends to publish the Draft Budget on 19 December 2023. While we usually ask for the written information a few days after the publication of the draft budget, due to the planned publication date of the draft budget, we are asking for this information on the same day. To help alleviate some of the issues in preparing the written evidence and provide you with the maximum time possible to prepare the submission we are issuing our request earlier in the autumn term. Please contact my clerks if you are concerned about meeting our proposed deadline in light of the budget timetable.

Given the shared interest across committees in some of the areas listed in the annex to this letter, I have copied in the chairs of the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee and the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Jayne Bryant MS

Chair

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Annex A: Request to the Minister for Education and Welsh Language regarding the CYPE Committee's Draft Budget scrutiny 2024-25

Cross-cutting areas

Transparency of budget presentation

As in previous years, we request a clear, transparent explanation of changes to the overall Education and Welsh Language MEG in 2024-25, from 2023-24, including both a comparison with the actual budget in addition to any revised baseline which is used. We would also appreciate a summary of the key changes between 2023-24 and 2024-25.

If a revised baseline is used, we request a breakdown of amounts which have been removed from or added to the 2023-24 budget and an explanation in each case of why it is deemed appropriate to use the revised baseline rather than the actual budget set in 2023-24 for comparisons.

For significant changes to budget lines, we request an explanation of whether money is being taken from/returned to central reserves or allocated from/to other budget lines either within or outside the MEG.

Commentary on Actions and detail of Budget Expenditure Line (BEL) allocations

We request commentary on each of the Actions within the 2024-25 Education and Welsh Language MEG, including an analysis and explanation of significant changes since the 2023-24 First Supplementary Budget (June 2023). In the past, this has been provided in an annex – last year it was Annex B.

We also request a breakdown of the 2024-25 Education and Welsh Language MEG by Action, and Budget Expenditure Line (BEL), with Final Budget 2023-24 allocations, First Supplementary Budget 2023-24 allocations, forecast 2023-24 outturns, and 2022-23 final outturns all included. If indicative budgets are being set beyond 2024-25, we request details of those as well.

If the Welsh Government uses a revised baseline budget for comparative purposes, we request that the actual 2023-24 First Supplementary Budget allocations are also presented alongside 2024-25 draft budget allocations as well as an explanation of the reasons for the re-calculation of the baseline (as mentioned earlier).

Education priorities and other strategic priorities

Information on how the Education and Welsh Language MEG aligns with, and is prioritised according to, the Welsh Government's relevant priorities and key objectives, including:

- An updated assessment from the Minister on the extent to which he believes the Education and Welsh Language MEG contains the resources necessary to deliver Welsh Government priorities and key objectives,
- Information on any ongoing negotiations with the Minister for Finance and Local Government to maximise the level of resources available for education, including funding for schools' core budgets through the Local Government Settlement.
- Details of how allocations to and within the Education and Welsh Language MEG align with the Programme for Government and the Co-operation Agreement.
- Whether, and if so how, the Minister intends to target resources at addressing any cross-cutting themes or priorities across the MEG as a whole, for example any remaining activity to recover from the pandemic, the cost of living, tackling the negative impact of disadvantage on learners' outcomes, the Welsh language, giving effect to children's rights and supporting learners with their physical, emotional and mental health.

Children's rights and other cross-cutting considerations

In line with assessing whether 'due regard' has been given to article 4 of the UNCRC and the Welsh Government's duties under the Rights of the Child and Young Persons (Wales) Measure the Committee, we request:

- The overall Children's Rights Impact Assessment for this draft Education and Welsh Language MEG for 2024-25, which sets out how children's rights are put into effect in these budget allocations, with reference to specific articles in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as relevant.
- If a specific CRIA has not been undertaken, the reasons for this.
- A copy of any alternative integrated impact assessment as well as assurances that this assessment demonstrates that the duty of "due regard" to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child has been exercised.
- Details and/or examples of any changes made to initial allocations within the Education and Welsh Language MEG following considerations of children's rights, equalities, sustainability, the Welsh language, or the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 as a result of impact assessments, or where these assessments have had a direct influence on the setting of budgets.

Costs of legislation

- Details of allocations within the 2024-25 budget intended for the implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 and associated qualifications reform.
- Details of allocations for implementing the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and the wider ALN Transformation Programme.
- Details of allocations within the 2024-25 budget intended for the implementation of the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022.
- Information on the financial impact of any relevant UK Parliament legislation.
- Financial implications in 2024-25 of any relevant subordinate legislation.

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

- Information on any remaining impact of the pandemic on the Education and Welsh Language MEG in 2023-24 and any ongoing implications in 2024-25, including an update on budget arrangements for meeting these, for example whether the “Recruit, Recover, Raise Standards (RRRS)” programme is continuing in 2024-25..
- Details and breakdown of the funding allocated for the education sector’s response to the pandemic, in 2022-23, plus any allocation in 2024-25 (essentially an update to paragraphs 1.6.5-1.6.6 of last year’s paper).

Impact of Brexit

- An update on whether there are any specific financial implications for the 2024-25 Education and Welsh Language MEG from the UK’s withdrawal from the EU, and any allocations made to mitigate these.

Impact of cost of living pressures on delivery of education services

- An update on the implications of cost of living pressures and high energy prices on the operational delivery of education institutions – across early years, schools, colleges, universities and training providers.

Budget monitoring and the current financial context

- Information on the processes in place for monitoring budgets throughout the year, identifying potential deficits and surpluses, and taking remedial action or allocating additional funds to cover any shortfalls, particularly in light of the pandemic.

- The implications for the Education and Welsh Language MEG of the issues referred to in the First Minister’s statement of 9 August 2023 and reports of savings needing to be made in this financial year.
- Details of any changes to the 2023-24 Education and Welsh Language MEG that are already anticipated in the Second Supplementary Budget.
- The implications for the Education and Welsh Language MEG of the UK Government’s Autumn Statement 2023.

Specific areas

Funding for school budgets

- An explanation of how the Welsh Government has prioritised funding for schools in the 2024-25 Draft Budget (in both the Finance and Local Government MEG and the Education and Welsh Language MEG) and taken account of the Sibieta review of school spending in its approach to setting this budget.
- An update on any work the Welsh Government is carrying out to consider amendments to the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010.
- The Minister’s perspective on the level of school budget reserves, in the context of the 31 March 2023 data due to be published in late October 2023.

Funding for school improvement

- An explanation of how the Draft Budget 2024-25 supports school improvement and raising standards of education.
- Details of the Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG) allocations in 2023-24, broken down by objective and/or funding description (or whichever headings are appropriate) – essentially an update to Annex D of last year’s paper.
- Details of how much RCSIG was paid to each consortium and/or local authority in 2023-24.
- Information on the Education Improvement Grant element of the RCSIG and the review that was underway when the budget was discussed last year.

The cost of living and reducing the impact of deprivation on educational outcomes

- Information on how resources within the Education and Welsh Language MEG are being used to meet the Welsh Government’s long-term commitment to reduce the impact of deprivation on educational outcomes.
- A breakdown of the “Tackling barriers to attainment” BEL for the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) and the School Essentials Grant and an update of how eligibility for these is assessed, given the main qualifying criteria (eligibility for free school meals) is moving to universal provision in primary schools.
- Information on how resources within the Education and Welsh Language MEG are being used to support learners in post-16 education with the impact of cost of living pressures, and to address the impact of deprivation on outcomes (including, for example, through additional hardship funding for providers, or through existing student support funding such as the Education Maintenance Allowance).
- The costs of the expansion of free school meals in 2023-24, 2024-25 and future years, and an update on the schedule for extending FSM throughout all primary school age groups.
- A further breakdown of the funding provided to local authorities in 2023-24 for the universal provision of free school meals (UPFSM) and for 2024-25 if known.
- Any other funding within the Education and Welsh Language MEG for initiatives to tackle the cost of living and the deprivation/attainment negative correlation, for example school holiday enrichment/summer of fun/food and fun projects, including an explanation of how these projects and funding streams relate to each other

Education workforce

- Details of budget allocations to finance Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and professional learning for current teachers, including in light of the ongoing implementation of education reforms.
- Information on funding provided by the Welsh Government to the Education Workforce Council.
- Details of any budget provision for meeting the costs of the teachers’ pay award for academic year 2023/24 including a breakdown between the 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial years and the respective mechanisms used (whether direct grant or incorporated into the local government settlement).
- Information on any funding to support policy regarding the supply teaching workforce.

Curriculum reform

- Information on funding to support the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales, including professional learning for the workforce.

Emotional and mental health of children and young people

- Budget provision from the Education and Welsh Language MEG in 2024-25 for the whole-school/system approach to emotional and mental health.
- Details of funding from the Health and Social Services MEG to complement work in schools on this area.
- Information on any budget provision to support the emotional and mental health of young people in post-16 education.
- Budget provision for the action plan and wider response to tackle peer on peer sexual harassment among learners.

Pupil absence

- Information on any specific budget provision to address rates of pupil absence or an identification of which budget lines support such work more generally.

Sport and physical activity

- Information on how the Education and Welsh Language MEG supports the provision of sport and physical activity for children and young people, whether inside or outside school, and how this relates to any funding in the Health and Social Services MEG such as for Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales.

Support for Minority Ethnic and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners

- Details of funding to support the education of Minority Ethnic and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners in 2024-25 and how this is being distributed (whether this is still part of the Education Improvement Grant).

Additional Learning Needs

- An updated assessment of the pressures facing local authorities, schools, and colleges in delivering current SEN/ALN provision, the impact of additional funding in previous years and whether further additional funding will be provided in 2024-25.

- Information on funding provision for the implementation of the 2018 Act, including an updated assessment of whether the ALN reforms are proving to be cost-neutral.
- The latest position on funding for the training of educational psychologists in Wales and the grant funding arrangement with Cardiff University.

Estyn

- Details of Estyn's core budget allocation for 2024-25 from the Finance and Local Government MEG and details of any additional funding from the Education and Welsh Language MEG for Estyn's role in education reforms.

Qualifications

- Details of funding allocated to Qualifications Wales in 2024-25 and details of any additional funding for its work on qualifications reform in the context of the new Curriculum for Wales.

Welsh-medium education

- Details of budget provision to support the Welsh Government's policies for Welsh-medium education, including proposed legislative reform and the education sector's role in meeting the Cymraeg 2050 target of one million Welsh speakers.
- Information on funding allocated for enhancing the Welsh in education workforce..

Early years education and childcare

- Whether the funding arrangements in place in previous years to support the harmonisation of funding rates in early years education and childcare continued in 2023-24 and are continuing in 2024-25.
- Details of any other funding from the Education and Welsh Language MEG to support the non-maintained sector's delivery of early years education and the Curriculum for Wales (recognising that childcare is not in this Minister's portfolio).

Youth work

- Details of how the 2024-25 Education and Welsh Language MEG supports statutory and voluntary youth services and budget provision for meeting the Programme for Government commitments in respect of strengthening youth services.
- Details of how the 2024-25 Education and Welsh Language MEG supports the Youth Work Strategy for Wales and the work of the Implementation Board.

Offender learning

- Information on budget provision in 2024-25 and any changes to how this will be spent compared to previous years.

Further education, sixth forms and adult community learning

- Details of the complete 2023-24 allocations to further education colleges, to include the amounts of all components of the allocation (i.e. full-time, part-time, part-time allowance, deprivation, sparsity and Welsh-medium allowances, maintenance allowance and the Adult Learning Wales adjustment).
- Details of any hypothecated funding to further education institutions or Sixth Forms beyond their usual core grants.
- Details of any funding provided in the 2024-25 budget for achieving pay parity and/or to meet any pay award to further education institutions and Sixth Forms, including an explanation as to the sufficiency of the funding to meet in full any agreed pay award / pay equivalency over the period of this budget.
- The allocation for Adult Community Learning .
- The complete 2022-23 and 2023-24 programme values used in the calculation of FE and Sixth Form funding.

Higher education, and post-16 student financial support

- Details of the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) allocation, including details of any hypothecated funding, or funding which is intended for specific activities including mental health and student well-being.
- Details of any 2024-25 allocation intended for the delivery of degree apprenticeships and if it is intended to be used to recruit new apprentices or to teach out existing apprentices.
- Details of any capital funding to be made available to CTER, including any conditions to be placed on it by the Welsh Government.
- Details of any contingencies / reserves / non-allocated funds within any of the 2024-25 tertiary education related BELs, including the BELs within the post-16 Learner Support Action; details of how the funds are / can be deployed; and details of any deployment of them during 2023-24.
- **Grants:** A table showing the 2022-23 outturn, and forecast expenditure over the following four years (broken down by students studying in Wales and elsewhere in the UK) for:

- Full-time undergraduate (FTUG) Tuition Fee Grant
- FTUG Maintenance Grant
- Part-time undergraduate (PTUG) Tuition Fee Grant
- PTUG Maintenance Grant
- Masters Finance grant element
- Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)
- Welsh Government Learning Grant (Further Education) (WGLG(FE))
- **Loans provision:** A table showing the 2022-23 outturn, and forecast loan outlay over the following four years (broken down by students studying in Wales and elsewhere in the UK) for:
 - FTUG tuition fee and maintenance loan outlay and Resource Accounting and Budgeting (RAB) charge
 - PTUG tuition fee and maintenance loan outlay and RAB charge
 - Masters Finance loan element outlay and RAB charge
 - Doctoral loan outlay and RAB charge.

Other post-16 education provision

- Details of Personal Learning Account funding
- Details of the Welsh in Education budget including any allocation for the Coleg Cenedlaethol.
- Details of funding for the International Learning Exchange Programme (Taith).

Young Person's Guarantee

- Details of budget provision from the Education and Welsh Language MEG which contributes to the Young Person's Guarantee and how this relates to funding from the Economy MEG.

Capital funding for school and college infrastructure

- Information on budget provision for the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme and progress of the programme to date, including expenditure and numbers of projects completed/approved to date, broken down by Band A and Band B.
- An updated assessment of the implications of the increases to energy prices and the cost of living for the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme, including any impact on the progress and costs of projects.
- The financial implications from the Welsh Government's carbon net zero policies and how this affects the 2024-25 draft budget.

Capital funding for childcare

- Information on capital funding from the Education and Welsh Language MEG for the Childcare Offer and Flying Start programme, including the impact of revised eligibility and entitlement.

Capital funding for the Community Focused Schools initiative

- Information on budget provision for the Community Hubs and Community Learning Centres grant and an update on progress in increasing the community focused nature of education estates and adapting premises for community use.