

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

**Children, Young People and
Education Committee**

Lynne Neagle MS
Cabinet Secretary for Education

10 May 2024

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Follow-up from evidence session on 8 May 2024 - Inquiry into education reforms

Dear Lynne,

Thank you again for appearing before Committee on 8 May 2024 to discuss the implementation of the new curriculum and the ALN reforms. We welcomed your constructive and honest engagement with us.

Thank you for your commitment to respond to some additional questions from us in writing. Please see Annex A for a list of questions.

During private discussion following the evidence session, the Committee agreed to publish an interim report on its findings from this inquiry to date. We are hoping to publish this report as quickly as possible to give you every chance to reflect on its findings as you develop your response to the challenges facing the education sector in implementing these two critical reforms. With that in mind, I would be very grateful if you could respond to this letter within a shorter timescale than usual - by 7 June - so that our report can fully take your response into account.

I understand that short response timeframes can be challenging for you and for your officials. As always, if this request causes any undue difficulties please contact the Committee clerks, who can work with your officials to mitigate the pressures on your department while enabling the Committee to report as promptly as possible.

Yours sincerely,



Buffy Williams MS

Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Annex A: Questions for the Cabinet Secretary for Education following the scrutiny session on 8 May 2024

ALN

General

1. In terms of how decisions are made regarding whether an IDP is the responsibility of the local authority rather than the school, can you give an update on how many local authorities, as expected by the ALN Code, have published their set of principles giving the criteria on how they will take such decisions?

Data

2. What are the timelines associated with the work on data you alluded to during the meeting? Specifically, when do you hope to have identified the data that is currently not collected that you believe needs to be, and when do you hope that this data will become available to inform the implementation of the ALN system?

Post-16

3. The general position is that young people are entitled to two years of further education or training post-16 unless there are "reasonable needs for more". However, NatSpec, the umbrella organisation for specialist further education providers, report that there are many cases where young people with ALN are being denied funding to spend longer than two years in further education or training. What does this say about whether the new ALN system is genuinely an age 0-25 system as has been the message all along?

Funding

4. Could you clarify how much has been spent on supporting implementation of the new ALN system to date (prior to 2024-25)? (Your written paper cited £62m revenue and £40m capital as having been spent between 2020 and 2024.) Your paper also stated that £56 million has been allocated for supporting implementation in 2024-25. Why does the amount budgeted in 2024-25 seem considerably higher per annum than the cumulative figure over the three or four-year period 2020 to 2024? Are the figures comparative or does the 2024-25 figure include other ALN budgets such as post-16 that the 2020 to 2024 figure doesn't?

Working with health bodies

5. Please can you confirm whether each of the four DECLOs in post serve individual health boards (rather than being shared across all seven health boards)? If so, are you satisfied that the three health boards who haven't appointed DECLOs are in compliance with section 61 of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018?

New curriculum

6. Progression and assessment stills seems to be the aspect of Curriculum for Wales implementation that schools find most difficult. How conscious are you of that and are you considering providing more detailed guidance on this as Estyn have suggested might be necessary for some schools, despite what has been provided already?



Senedd Cymru
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