

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

**Children, Young People  
and Education Committee**

Philip Blaker  
Chief Executive  
Qualifications Wales

**Senedd Cymru**

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20 October 2025

## **Re: Implementation of Education Reforms**

Dear Philip,

As you are aware over the Sixth Senedd we have been monitoring the implementation of two major education Acts passed in the last Senedd; the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 and the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018. Each year the Committee has carried out a check-in, which has involved formal evidence sessions as well as visiting schools in Wales to understand how these reforms are being implemented in practice.

During the Autumn term the Committee is carrying out its fourth and final check-in. As part of this work, we have heard some concerns about the new 'Made for Wales' Geography GCSE, now being taught from this academic year for first awarding in 2027.

We have heard concerns that the specification of WJEC's new GCSE Geography no longer includes plate tectonics or ecosystems in its content. Although there is coverage of this content in the current science specifications, it is through a science lens rather than through a geographic lens. This will mean no (or little) consideration of the human impacts on, and management of, ecosystems, or the human inequality of tectonic impacts and responses to potential hazards.

Tectonics is compulsory content at A Level, both at AS and A2, while ecosystems is an optional unit at A2. Without the prior learning experienced by their peers studying other GCSE specifications, some teachers fear that this puts Welsh learners taking the Made for Wales WJEC GCSE at a disadvantage.

Also we would be keen to know, if there is any intention in Wales of introducing a Natural History GCSE similar to one being developed in England.

We are of course aware of the different roles of Qualifications Wales and WJEC in developing qualifications. We are writing similarly to WJEC as it is their qualification and they have produced the specification, in line with the approval criteria set by Qualifications Wales. We also understand that WJEC's specification was approved by yourselves as the regulator. We are keen to have both your perspectives on this matter.

We would appreciate a response by 28 November. We look forward to receiving your response.

We have copied in the Cabinet Secretary for Education for her information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Buffy Williams', enclosed within a faint, hand-drawn oval border.

Buffy Williams MS

Chair

Children, Young People and Education Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English

Cc: Lynne Neagle MS, Cabinet Secretary for Education