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Gweinidog y Gymraeg a Dysgu Gydol Oes
Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Simon Thomas AM
Chair, Finance Committee
National Assembly for Wales
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8 March 2017

Dear Simon,

At my evidence session with your Committee on the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill on 8 February, I agreed to provide further information about how the £20 million package of support for Additional Learning Needs will facilitate and support the implementation of the Bill.

It is important to recognise that the funding I announced in February is for the ALN transformation programme as a whole. As such, it is difficult to separate out those activities that focus solely on implementation of the legislative framework. The transformation programme is about ensuring that there is a complete package of support to assist partners to transition to and deliver the new system, and also to improve working practice and relationships in the interim.

To implement the reforms successfully, we need to ensure that agencies are working together effectively, that the workforce is skilled and capable to support learners with additional learning needs, and that all those involved are aware of the changes, their new legal duties, rights and responsibilities, and what they mean for their individual practice, organisational management arrangements and for children, young people and their families.

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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.

To this end, we have developed a programme that includes five key strands:

1. the process of developing the legislative framework, including the Bill, regulations and the new ALN Code;
2. activities to support partners to prepare, plan and manage implementation and transition to the new system;
3. workforce development aimed at three levels: core skills development for all practitioners supporting learners with ALN; advanced skills development through the development of the role of Additional Learning Needs Coordinators (ALNCo); and specialist skills development for local authority-provided specialist support services;
4. awareness-raising activities to engage stakeholders about their new legislative duties, and to explain and promote the system and the rights it confers to children, young people and parents; and
5. supporting policy, including developing resources to help all those in the system understand the evidence for best practice, what can be expected from interventions, the interventions that are likely to be most effective, and the role of professionals to help ensure realistic expectations and effective deployment of resources.

As you will appreciate, this package of activities is closely inter-linked.

The Regulatory Impact Assessment, included in the Explanatory Memorandum published alongside introduction of the Bill in December, focused on an estimate of those costs related to proposed legislative changes to be brought about by the new statutory framework. That is, the activities required to move from one statutory system to another. However, the £20m package of activities that I announced on 7 February will necessarily focus on all the work strands in the transformation programme, which have been developed to support implementation of the new system, including the wholesale change in culture and practice required to ensure its success.

£10.1m of the £20m programme will be drawn from the Cabinet Secretary for Education's additional £100m to raise school standards. This will allow us to provide a greater investment in the workforce development strand of the programme, enabling us to invest in up-skilling ALNCos more quickly and provide high quality continuing professional development to help ensure a highly skilled workforce to support the delivery of the reforms.

The rest of the programme has been designed based on the planning assumption that the Government's ALN budget line is maintained at its current level until 2020-21, recognising that budgets beyond 2017-18 are subject to consideration and

agreement. Final Budget 2017-18, published on 20 December, included a budget of £2.786m in 2017-18 for Additional Learning Needs.

I must stress, therefore, that whilst the £10.1m is confirmed, the remainder of the £20m is subject to future decisions on future year budget allocations. Protecting it will, however, be a priority for me.

Below is an outline of how we anticipate allocating the £20m over the period 2017-18 to 2020-21 to support transformation. This reflects the priorities which have been discussed with a range of key partners through the ALN Strategic Implementation Group (ALN-SIG). Further work to refine the proposals is being taken forward through a number of expert working groups and where appropriate will be subject to wider or more formal consultation and engagement. Therefore, whilst the following information provides a clear indication of our spending intentions, it is subject to change as our work with delivery partners advances.

Implementation/ transition support (£7.62m between 2017-18 and 2020-21)

The implementation and transition support budget includes:

- **ALN Innovation Fund**, supporting projects to develop collaborative, multi-agency approaches to better support learners with ALN.
- **ALN implementation grants** to local authorities, FEIs, health boards, the Tribunal and Estyn to prepare for transition to the new system. The requirements of the grant will include undertaking 'readiness' self-assessments, producing implementation plans and training on the new system.
- **ALN Strategic Implementation Group and Expert Groups**. The ALN-SIG, established in 2016, is helping to develop the detailed transformation programme and support implementation of the Bill. A series of expert groups have been put in place to support the work of the ALN-SIG. These groups are considering specific issues relating to implementation and the operational detail of the new system, including, for example, early years, post-16, transition, continuing professional development, individual development plans, ALNCos and the role of the health service.
- **ALN Strategic Supporters**, who will provide advice, support and challenge to local authorities and other delivery partners in preparing for and managing transition to the new system.

- **Readiness, compliance and impact monitoring.** A programme of research, monitoring and evaluation to assess implementation, the impact of the legislative changes and application of the new Code, ensure that issues are effectively addressed for the benefit of children and young people, and that best practice is being identified and shared across Wales.

Workforce development (£12.047m between 2017-18 and 2020-21)

Workforce development activities are aimed at 3 levels:

- **Core skills development:** to facilitate access to high quality CPD and training for teachers, support staff and other education sector based staff.
- **Advanced skills development:** the Bill will require that each school and FEI has access to an ALNCo with a prescribed level of skills and qualifications. Our aspiration is a Masters-level qualified ALNCo workforce within the next decade. We are currently working with practitioners and universities to develop an outline specification for a suitable qualification. Investment here will enable us to fast track a significant number of professionals through to Post Graduate Certificate or Diploma level, enhancing the knowledge base within schools and FEIs.
- **Specialist skills development:** we are working with the WLGA to create a national workforce planning system for local authority provided specialist services, which takes into account the specific needs of local areas, including language needs and requirements. This will inform the commissioning of training placements on specialist training courses on a sustainable and evidence based basis.

Awareness-raising (£0.265m between 2017-18 and 2020-21)

The awareness-raising and communication work stream includes activities to inform and engage partners about their new legislative duties. It is about explaining and promoting the system and the rights it confers to children, young people and parents. It is also about ensuring the new system operates on the basis of evidence for best practice.

Supporting policy (£0.312m between 2017-18 and 2020-21)

Policy development will underpin the transformations. We will develop and disseminate policy and guidance on a range of issues for practitioners and children, their parents and young people in the current SEN system. This activity will, for

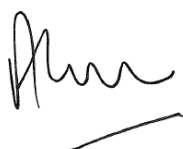
example, facilitate improved understanding of the role of different professionals and improve cross-border and multi-agency working, as well as ensuring there is sufficient resource in place to deliver the programme.

By way of summary, the following table sets out how I expect these work strands to be profiled over the next four financial years:

Workstream	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Total activity costs
Implementation/ transition support	1,875,000	1,650,000	1,940,000	2,155,000	7,620,000
Workforce development	1,295,000	3,602,000	3,650,000	3,500,000	12,047,000
Awareness-raising	45,000	65,000	100,000	55,000	265,000
Supporting policy	171,000	69,000	46,000	26,000	312,000
TOTAL	3,386,000	5,386,000	5,736,000	5,736,000	20,244,000

I am copying this letter to Lynne Neagle AM, Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee.

Yours sincerely



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