

Kirsty Williams AM
Cabinet Secretary for Education
Welsh Government

14 May 2018

Dear Kirsty,

Education Improvement Grant (EIG): Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic learners

Thank you for your letter of 17 April 2018 providing responses to the Committee's questions relating to funding arrangements for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic, learners.

In light of the information you have provided, the Committee wishes to register its disappointment that your letter appears to confirm that:

- the £13.1 million within the EIG for supporting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic, learners has been removed, transferred to the Welsh Government's central reserves, and made available via the RSG for schools with no requirement for it to be spent on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic, learners specifically;
- barring the £7.5 million allocated for transitional support in 2018-19, local authorities will be expected to fund support for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic, learners from local government resources with no additional or commensurate incoming transfer; and
- the one-off transitional support for 2018-19 will predominantly focus on urban authorities, based on a Welsh Government (rather than local-authority led) assessment of need – we remain concerned that other local authority areas with smaller concentrations of these groups of learners may continue to struggle.

The Committee remains particularly concerned about the above points given the findings of its [inquiry into the Education Improvement Grant: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic Children](#) and what the Committee believes is a departure from your initial positive response to the resulting [report](#).

As you are aware from our draft budget report and subsequent correspondence, we also remain concerned about the transparency with which information about budget

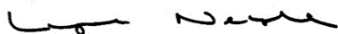


decisions is presented publicly. We will write separately to both the Finance Committee and the Welsh Government shortly to register our general concerns about the transparency with which information of this kind is presented. We will outline our preferred approach for future draft budgets to help enable committees to undertake constructive financial scrutiny and fulfil effectively their core function of holding the Welsh Government to account for its budget plans and subsequent expenditure.

In the meantime, and in relation to the EIG and funding arrangements for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic, learners specifically, we note that confusion is likely to arise from:

- your statement in your letter of 17 April that the £7.5 million transitional support in 2018-19 is “additional” - *the Committee struggles to understand how this can be “additional”, as opposed to replacement funding/transitional compensation (by our calculations, there is an overall £5.6 million “loss” once the removal of the £13.1 million from the EIG has been considered alongside the allocation of £7.5 million transitional support); and*
- your confirmation that the £13.1 million has not been transferred into the RSG - *the Committee believes this blurs the distinction you drew during scrutiny of the draft budget between the £2 million “reduction” to the EIG in 2018-19 and the “removal” over two years of £22.2 million to be “made available” in the RSG (£13.1 million in 2018-19), making scrutiny and understanding of decisions of this nature even more difficult for Members, local government and the wider public alike.*

Yours sincerely



Lynne Neagle AM
Chair

Cc.

Mark Drakeford AM, Cabinet Secretary for Finance

John Griffiths AM, Chair, Equalities, Local Government and Communities Committee

