

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-821
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/01455/18

David John Rowlands AM
Chair - Petitions committee.
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

12 June 2018

Dear David

Thank you for your letter of 15 May asking for my views in relation to petition P-05-821 which the Petitions Committee has received from UNISON Neath Port Talbot, about funding for ethnic minority, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners.

The Welsh Government has a clear and long-standing commitment to schools funding, and I am fully committed to reducing inequalities and ensuring all learners are able to achieve their potential and thrive in a learning environment which supports their needs. This is at the heart of our plan of action for education, *Education in Wales: Our national mission*.

For more than a decade the Welsh Government has provided targeted additional grant funding to Local Authorities to support these groups of learners. Over that time Authorities have tried and tested arrangements and we fully recognise and appreciate the vast experience and expertise that exists in our schools and in those Local Authority services.

It is clear to me that this kind of support should not continue to be seen as additional. That is not sustainable in the long term and I believe these services should be mainstreamed and prioritised.

I have received assurances from the Welsh Local Government Association that frontline school delivery will continue to be prioritised, including support for our ethnic minority, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners. I welcome these assurances and fully expect local Authorities to stand by them.

I have continued to listen to the concerns raised by various stakeholders about the impact of the changes to funding arrangements to support these groups of learners. These are

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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.

challenging times and I have had to make some difficult decisions, but I have agreed funding of up to £8.7million this financial year to support all Local Authorities. This is in recognition that transitioning the service to one which is core provision and sustainable for the long term takes time.

The position will be reviewed for 2019-20 as part of the draft budget. It is however my intention to provide a further £8.7million to all 22 Local Authorities in 2019-20, to support the continuing development of a sustainable model from April 2020-21. This funding will be conditional on evidence of working progress towards more sustainable models of delivery. My officials wrote to all Chief Executives on Friday 18 May 2018 with their funding allocations for 2018-19.

The Welsh Government has taken an integrated approach to our impact assessment and a Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment of the high-level spending decisions was undertaken as part of the outline draft budget 2018-19.

I hope this information is helpful to the Committee in its consideration of the petition.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', written in a cursive style.

Kirsty Williams AC/AM

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