

CYPE(5)-30-18 - Paper to note 1

Dear Cabinet Secretary

We are Neath Port Talbot Youth Council and are writing to you to express our concerns regarding how the Education Improvement Grant will affect the Minority Ethnic Services (MEAS) and also the Traveller Education Service (TES).

Being a youth council we see it as our duty to ensure all young people within Neath Port Talbot are supported and included in every way we can. We would appreciate it if you could take the liberty to explain why the funding for these learners is now included in one grant which serves disadvantaged learners across Wales.

We beseech that it is vital to encourage and support minority groups in our area as much as we can. We believe that these two groups need additional funding due to their cultural and additional learning/support needs. We also believe the funding should be increased not decreased if the attainment levels of these learners are to be fully realised.

We are also enquiring if a Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) has been carried out and if not, we would be grateful to hear why not.

We believe that in order to efficiently delve into this issue and our request, it would be an excellent opportunity to meet with you in person to discuss the Education Improvement Grant and hopefully benefit everyone involved.

We'd like to thank you for taking the time to read this letter and allowing us to air our concerns and hope to hear from you soon.

Many thanks
Neath Port Talbot Youth Council



Alice



ABrouk

Flannigan

ES

Stewart

BT

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref DC/KW/01710/18

NPT Youth Council
Tirmorfa Centre
Marine Drive
Sandfields
Port Talbot
SA12 7NN

18 July 2018

Dear Neath Port Talbot Youth Council

Thank you for your recent letter sent to me via Carolyn Wellington, about funding cuts to the Education Improvement Grant.

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 Government to support our minority ethnic, Gypsy Roma and Traveller learners. Over that time Local Authorities have tried and tested arrangements and we fully recognise and appreciate the vast expertise and experience 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. This is not sustainable in the long term and I believe these services should be mainstreamed and prioritised.

However, 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 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, recognising that transitioning the service to one which is core provision and sustainable for the long term takes time.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400
Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales

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.

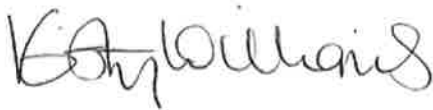
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The position will be reviewed for 2019-20 as part of the Welsh Government 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.

The Welsh Government took 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 for 2018-19. A copy can be found at the following web page <http://gov.wales/funding/budget/draft-budget-2018-19/?lang=en>.

I hope this information is helpful in addressing your concerns.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams'.

Kirsty Williams AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education

cc Carolyn Wellington

Dear Cabinet Secretary

Thank you for your response to our letter and taking the time to read it.

It is unfortunate you are unable to attend one of our meetings it would have been great to meet you and discuss matters face to face rather than via email.

We would like to request further clarification to the Children's Rights impact Assessment as the link you attached was regarding budget and spending.

We are very keen on viewing this document (CRIA) as we are concerned about the minority ethnic groups along with the Gypsy Traveller groups.

We have also written to Sally Holland Children's Commissioner for Wales asking her to champion us on this issue.

Yours sincerely

Neath Port Talbot Youth Council

Dear Children's Commissioner

We are Neath Port Talbot Youth Council and are writing to you to express our concerns regarding how the Education Improvement Grant will affect the Minority ethnic Services (MEAS) and also the Traveller Education Service (TES).

Being a youth council we see it as our duty to ensure all young people within Neath Port Talbot are supported and included in every way we can. We feel we deserve an explanation as to why the funding for these learners is now included in one grant which serves disadvantaged learners across Wales measured by free school meals. We have already taken action by writing to Kirsty Williams, Cabinet secretary of Education expressing how we feel that the rights of minority ethnic, Gypsy Roma and traveller learners aren't being respected due to the Education Improvement Grant as we feel they should be getting extra support as racial groups.

The response we received was disappointing as she didn't address the issues we presented. For example, we enquired about the Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) but there was no mention of it in her response.

We are writing to ask you to champion us on this issue and we would be very grateful if your Policy Officers would thoroughly review the Education Improvement Grant and feedback to us.

We would like to thank you for taking the time to read this letter and allowing us to air our concerns and hope to hear from you soon

Many thanks

Neath Port Talbot Youth Council.

Please find correspondence to and from the Cabinet Secretary attached

Comisiynydd Plant Cymru Children's Commissioner for Wales

Sally Holland

By e-mail only

To: Neath Port Talbot Youth Council

28 September 2018

Dear Neath Port Talbot Youth Council,

Thank you for your letter and for sharing the correspondence between you and the Cabinet Secretary for Education.

I would share your concerns regarding the grant funding for minority ethnic and gypsy and traveller children. I have met children from gypsy and traveller communities and also from refugee backgrounds who have been supported to succeed in school through this funding.

Earlier this year I also wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Education to express my concerns about the removal of the Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant (MEAG) in the last budget, and I spoke out in the media about the issue. Others, like the Leader of the Welsh Local Government Association also spoke out about their concerns. This led to the £8.7 million that the Cabinet Secretary referred to in her reply to you, but I remain concerned about the long term plans around this.

Members of the Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Committee in the National Assembly for Wales are also very concerned about this issue. They completed an inquiry into the Education Improvement Grant in 2017 and made a number of recommendations to the Welsh Government, for them to review and evaluate the arrangement in place to support these groups of learners. The Government accepted these recommendations and committed to reviewing the EIG in its third year (2017-18). The Committee's report and the Government response can be found at the following link

<http://senedd.assembly.wales/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=16200>

The CYPE Committee has also been very concerned about grants that seem to quietly disappear from the Welsh Government's budget, such as support for the cost of school uniforms as well as the MEAG. The Committee has asked Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers to send them detailed breakdowns of all of their budget lines for this year's budget figures, so that any reductions or cuts can be identified and questions can then be asked before final decisions are taken.

The Committee and I also agree with you that a Children's Rights Impact Assessment should be undertaken for the budget. Although I understand that the Government sometimes has to make difficult decisions around finances, it is important that they are accountable to the people affected by those decisions and are able to show how the decision was made. I cannot understand how decisions can be taken around grants to specific groups of children without considering the impact this may have on those children. I have also asked the Government to complete a CRIA for budget decisions this year and I have met with the Cabinet Secretary for Finance to discuss this.

The next draft budget is due to be published on 2nd October by the Welsh Government, and a more detailed document will follow towards the end of that month. On 15th November 2018 there will be a session of the CYPE Committee together with the Finance Committee and the Local Government and Equalities Committee to look specifically at impact assessments and the budget process. I have been invited to give evidence to

this Committee and your letter and the concerns raised within this will be helpful evidence about these ongoing issues.

I will be in touch to find out whether I or a member of my team can meet you before this session so that I can hear more about your views on this matter.

My policy team will be looking in detail at the budget when it is published and we will be responding to this in detail. In the meantime however I would like to send your correspondence to the CYPE Committee for their information, together with my reply. Would you be happy for me to do so?

I have also copied this reply to the Cabinet Secretary for Education as you had notified her that you would be writing to me.

I would just like to finish this letter by noting that today in the United Nations young people from all over the world are talking about their role as being human rights defenders. By drawing attention to this issue you are contributing to the work of defending children's human rights to non-discrimination and to an education that helps them be the best they can be.

Thanks for writing to me.

Yours sincerely,

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

Sally Holland
Children's Commissioner for Wales

cc. Cabinet Secretary for Education
