

CYPE(5)-25-19 - Paper to note 3

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

National Assembly for Wales

Children, Young People and Education Committee

Chris Llewelyn
Chief Executive
Welsh Local Government Association

18 September 2019

Dear Chris

Childcare Funding (Wales) Act 2019

We are writing to request information from the WLGA following a letter sent to us on 13th August 2019 by the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services which stated that work had been 'suspended' between Welsh Government and HMRC on the Childcare Offer 'for the time being'. (see attached)

You will be aware that during this Committee's scrutiny of the Childcare Funding (Wales) Act 2019, your written evidence welcomed both 'the way in which WG has worked closely with the Early Implementer Local Authorities to develop the arrangements for the operation of the Childcare Offer in Wales' and 'the ongoing commitment by WG to learning the lessons from early implementation'.

The Explanatory Memorandum for the Childcare Funding Act said that the 'end result' of this legislation would be 'one consistent, national online application and eligibility checking system' and that 'this should help avoid a situation in Wales where all local authorities approach the task of eligibility checking in a different way'.

At that time then Deputy Minister also told us that in terms of the 'administration of the scheme, there is a real preference to get to an all-Wales national approach that will take away the complexity and bureaucracy. He also told us that 'the feedback that we have had from the early implementers over the bureaucracy and the complexity of the current system, and that has been very strong to say, 'We do not want to provide it in this way on an ongoing basis [...]'. In particular there was also an emphasis on the need to remove the administration from local authorities given 'many of these families being in quite complex situations.



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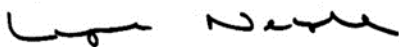
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We would therefore be grateful to hear the views of local authorities in respect of:

- the Welsh Government's decision to 'suspend' the work with HMRC and continue with each local authority administering the scheme individually
- what, if anything, has changed since May 2018 which has led to local authorities changing their views on what we understood to be the bureaucracy and complexity associated with the current system
- whether local authorities are now confident that they can efficiently process all the cases they need to including the most complex
- what assessment has been made of the risks associated with continuing with the current system and how these will be mitigated

We will be raising these issues with the current Deputy Minister during a security session on 2 October 2019 and would therefore be grateful to receive your response by **26 September 2019**.

Yours sincerely



Lynne Neagle AM
Chair

Cc Julie Morgan, Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services

