

Title: P-05-932 Education On Food Allergies In Schools & Mandatory EPI PEN Training

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 21 Ionawr 2020
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Petition title: Education On Food Allergies In Schools & Mandatory EPI PEN Training

Text of petition:

There is currently no law in place anywhere in the UK that offers education on food allergies in schools from primary age and up.

We want to change that! Offering educational sessions in schools will benefit children at risk of anaphylaxis. It will help others to understand food allergies, a medical condition that unless you know someone with this disease you wouldn't be aware of the side effects it carries.

We hope introducing educational sessions on food allergies will also break the stigma around them, eliminate bullying and offer more support to children living with this disease.

All it takes it one touch or one bite and without administering an epi pen you could be faced with a very tragic situation.

Introducing mandatory epi pen training will also eliminate the worry for families living with food allergies. Teachers and school staff will know the vital signs of an allergic reaction meaning anaphylaxis can be spotted sooner.

Archie's Allergies is a new charity offering support, advice and information on the importance of being allergy aware.

CURRENT PROVISION FOR LEARNERS' HEALTHCARE NEEDS

The letter from the Minister for Education sets out the measures already in place regarding education, awareness and provision regarding food allergies and the use of Adrenaline Auto-Injectors (AAIs), a common brand being an 'Epi-Pen'.

These include:

- **General duties on local authorities and schools under the Education Act 1996 and Education Act 2002;**



- **Statutory guidance on Supporting Learners with Healthcare Needs** (2017);
- **Guidance on the use of Emergency AAI in Schools in Wales** (2017);
- The EU Food Information for Consumers Regulation requiring **information to be available on ingredients** of food and drink served in school.

The Welsh Government is reviewing the Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2013 and revising the statutory guidance on this for schools, which was issued in 2014. The Welsh Government is also reviewing its approach to allergies and immunology from a health perspective and says it will be engaging with the Anaphylaxis Campaign and Allergy UK.

Supporting Learners with Healthcare Needs statutory guidance

The Supporting Learners with Healthcare Needs statutory guidance, issued in 2017, provides advice to local authorities and governing bodies on meeting their duties towards learners with healthcare needs. The previous version of the guidance (2010) was non-statutory and **placing the revised guidance on a statutory footing was seen as a significant step forwards**. This occurred during the Assembly's scrutiny of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Bill with which the relationship with healthcare needs was discussed in some detail.

The guidance states that school staff should understand their role in supporting learners with healthcare needs and **appropriate training should be provided**. Individual staff may take on a role in assisting or supervising the administration of medicines, although this role is entirely voluntary. Staff members must receive sufficient and suitable training and achieve the necessary level of competence before they take on the responsibility.

Guidance on the use of Emergency AAI in Schools in Wales

A change in UK Parliament legislation in October 2017 means **that schools are able to purchase an AAI for use in emergencies**, without the need for a prescription. AAIs contain a single fixed dose of adrenaline (sometimes called epinephrine) and are the recommended first line treatment for anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is a severe and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction, often happening within minutes but sometimes after hours. It occurs because the body's immune system reacts inappropriately to a substance it wrongly perceives as a threat.

Adrenaline treats the symptoms and further release of chemicals causing anaphylaxis. AAIs are potentially life-saving devices and enable the administration of adrenaline by non-healthcare professionals e.g. staff, family, first aiders. Delays in giving adrenaline are a common finding in fatal reactions.

The Welsh Government's guidance states that 'holding a spare AAI for emergencies could potentially save a child or young person's life and provide parents with greater peace of mind'. The guidance also advises parents that an emergency AAI should never be relied upon instead of their child's own AAI, in case the nursery or school does not have an emergency AAI.

TEACHING ABOUT HEALTHCARE NEEDS

Current Personal and Social Education (PSE)

PSE is a statutory curriculum requirement and forms part of the basic curriculum for all registered pupils at maintained schools who are of compulsory school age. Decisions on the precise content and model of delivery of a school PSE programme lie with head teachers and their governors, working with local authorities and other local partners.

Schools use the non-statutory PSE framework (2008) to review and develop their PSE programmes. Teachers, headteachers and governing bodies of required maintained schools, colleges and other learning providers should base their personal and social education provision on this document.

To **‘equip learners to lead safe, healthy lives’** is one of the aims of PSE. The Minister’s letter says schools may invite organisations to present to their pupils on a range of issues including food allergies. She also says the Welsh Government acknowledge that life-saving skills and emergency first aid procedures are important for everyone to learn.

New Curriculum for Wales

The Welsh Government, together with ‘Pioneer Schools’, has developed a new ‘Curriculum for Wales’, following the Successful Futures review by Professor Graham Donaldson in 2015.

The new curriculum will be built around four purposes and six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE), one of which is Health and Well-being. The Welsh Government published the draft Curriculum for Wales in April 2019 and following a feedback exercise is now refining it ahead of its publication in January 2020. The Minister for Education is due to make a statement in Plenary on 28 January regarding the new curriculum.

The new Curriculum for Wales is due to be introduced from **September 2022** on a phased basis. It will initially be taught in primary school and Year 7 before rolling into Year 8 in 2023/24 and so on as these pupils progress through school until they reach Year 11 in 2026/27.

‘Health and Well-being’ is one of the six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE) in the new curriculum. The draft Health and Well-being AoLE is available on the Welsh Government’s website.

The Welsh Government has emphasised that the new Curriculum for Wales is **purpose-driven** rather than simply defined by its content. There are therefore no ‘programmes of study’ and there will be comparatively less prescription of what must be taught than in the current curriculum.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.