

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-932
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/00254/20
Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
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19 February 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 7 February regarding Petition P-05-932 'Education on food allergies in schools and mandatory epi-pen training' from Archie's Allergies.

Following its meeting on 21 January, the Petitions Committee asked the following questions which I will respond to in turn.

- clarification on how the implementation of the Supporting Learners with Healthcare Needs guidance is monitored;
- to ensure that the petitioner and other people with lived experience are consulted when reviewing the approach to allergies and immunology from a health perspective, and;
- propose that officials meet with the petitioner to discuss the current support for children with allergies in schools.

I am committed to ensuring that all learners with healthcare needs have the appropriate support in place to access a high standard of education and reach their full potential. The [Supporting Learners with Healthcare Needs](#) statutory guidance requires all maintained nurseries, primary, secondary and special schools, and pupil referral units (PRUs) to properly support their learners with healthcare conditions, including those with allergies.

Following publication of this guidance in 2017, I wrote to all maintained schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) to reiterate the requirement to read the statutory guidance and implement a healthcare needs policy at the earliest opportunity. I also wrote to all health boards, emphasising the need for collaborative working to support learners with healthcare

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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.

needs. I have made my expectations clear that learners are to be supported as set out in the guidance, and that healthcare needs policies are required to be readily available to parents and learners.

Local authorities are responsible for monitoring effective implementation of the guidance within their education settings. All local authorities have provided the Welsh Government with assurances that their healthcare needs policies are in place and they are providing schools with information and support.

Estyn's guidance for inspectors on safeguarding in schools and pupil referral units includes information on the 'Supporting Learners with Healthcare Needs' guidance. This ensures inspectors have a point of reference should a healthcare question arise from a school inspection.

From a health perspective, our approach to allergies and immunology is being reviewed and a meeting has taken place with the Deputy Chief Medical Officer and specialists to discuss a range of issues, which has included raising awareness of allergies. Further engagement will take place with our stakeholders on this matter and officials will consult with the [petitioner](#), and other people with lived experience, on any work that we take forward on allergies and immunology.

The legal duty to provide suitable education and support to all learners rests with local authorities and schools. We are of the view that these organisations are better placed than Welsh Government officials to discuss with the petitioner the support they make available to learners with allergies. The contact details for local authorities are available on the Welsh Government [website](#).

I hope this information assures you of my ongoing commitment to ensuring learners with healthcare needs are able to access quality education and achieve their full potential.

Yours sincerely,

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

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