

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



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA/P/KW/0941/17

Lynne Neagle AM  
Chair - Children, Young People and Education Committee  
National Assembly for Wales

21<sup>st</sup> April 2017

Dear Lynne,

I would like to thank the Children, Young People and Education Committee for undertaking an Inquiry into Teacher's Professional Learning and Education.

I would also like to thank you for your letter dated 11 April which highlights some of your additional considerations following my attendance at CYPE Committee on 5 April.

Based on recent evidence from Estyn and OECD, I am confident that our professional learning reform journey in Wales is already on track. Our vision for professional learning is progressing at pace, with enhanced digital professional learning support available by September 2017 and a fully integrated national approach by September 2018. We are moving rapidly from a model where professional learning was mostly delivered away from the school setting to a collaborative, practitioner-led experience which is embedded in classroom practice. Over the next five years, I am committed to developing a national approach to career-long professional learning that builds capacity from ITE and is embedded in the self-improving school system and evidence-based research. Actively engaging in professional learning is a primary responsibility of all educational practitioners to develop individual and collective expertise and ensure consistency of excellence in our teaching profession.

My responses to the questions outlined in your letter are detailed below:

**Are you confident that all teachers in Wales will have access to the training they need to deliver on the Welsh Government's policy initiatives by 2021? How will delivery be ensured? Has there been any analysis of the how much this will cost?**

I welcome the positive commentary within the recent OECD report reflecting the progress that has already been made in the 'various measures taken to support the professional learning of teachers.' The report also duly acknowledged the increase in school to school collaboration and participation in networks. Resonating with the OECD recommendations, the development of a high quality teaching profession and continuing to deliver high quality national professional learning across all career stages is at the forefront of our education

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

[Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales](mailto: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.

reform agenda. Delivery of major system reform, such as that set out in A Curriculum for Wales, can only happen if we have a system, and a workforce, that delivers a transformed curriculum for every learner in every classroom. This is a major ongoing piece of work, and we will continue to review the profession's capacity to deliver.

During 2016-17, I initially awarded £1.44m to support professional learning pioneer schools in designing and developing the National Approach to Professional Learning focused on fast track, professional learning priorities including digital, leadership and assessment for learning. In September, I awarded an additional £2.25m to enhance professional learning funding streams and strengthen consortia delivery capacity. In December, I awarded an additional £1.3m allocation to enable consortia to undertake a range of support activities including strengthening cluster working to share professional learning developments and support the iterative development process.

Comparable funding levels will be awarded during 2017-18, with enhanced funding for professional learning pioneer schools to support their integration into the AOLE working groups and also to support the development of schools as learning organisations. In addition, I have committed an additional £100 million over the Assembly term to drive up school standards, which includes enhanced funding to support the transition to a self improving system and to specifically support Welsh and Digital professional learning developments. I will also award EIG funding to ensure that finance is not an impediment to professional learning.

Future funding priorities beyond 2017-18 will need to be determined in light of emerging professional learning priorities, specifically linked to Qualified for Life 2 and the Strand 3 AOLE Working Groups.

**Are you committed to the Regional Consortia model of delivering professional development? What do you see as its main benefits? How will consistency of provision and access be ensured across the Consortia.**

The two key drivers behind establishing the regional model were:

- a large critical mass of effective schools with the entire range of excellent provision available in each region
- a new system built on international research and evidence facilitated by the regions, but delivered largely by successful current practitioners.

Both these changes have been increasingly embedded since 2014, and continue to be developed. New professional learning is planned and delivered in accordance with the locally identified needs of schools. Regions ensure that national education priorities are placed in a regional context.

Through our National Model for School Improvement, regional consortia can monitor and evaluate professional learning whilst allowing for national challenge and review according to a planned programme. I need confidence regarding the consistency of approach and personally attend the autumn challenge and review events in all four regional consortia, giving me and my officials an opportunity to challenge and be challenged on our work in this area.

Welsh Government is in discussion with Estyn to commission a national thematic review focused on the quality of emerging professional learning provision to equip practitioners to

embed the new curriculum. To continually review the quality and impact of professional learning provision developed in partnership with pioneers, regional consortia have commissioned a range of internal/external evaluations including thematic reviews of pioneer engagement and cluster working, professional learning impact assessments and an internal evaluation of professional learning hubs.

This has provided a firm foundation to go to the next step and develop a collaborative national approach to professional learning. This new approach was strongly endorsed by OECD in their recent review.

**Can you provide more detail on the Regional Professional Learning Action Plans and the National Successful Futures Implementation Plan? What will they contain? How will they be resourced? How will they relate to each other when in operation?**

Regional action plans were submitted by the four consortia regions to draw down funding to support the Pioneer Schools Network and Professional Learning Grant for 2017-18. The plans detail professional learning programmes currently available across the career development pathway milestones and work streams to develop enhanced professional learning provision in partnership with the pioneer schools. Revised regional plans have recently been submitted by consortia to claim professional learning funding allocations for the Spring Term 2017. The same monitoring and reporting requirements will underpin consortia grant funding awarded during the 2017-18 financial year.

The National Successful Futures Implementation proposal outlined a detailed structure for realising the recommendations of the Donaldson Review. Work led by the Successful Futures Programme Team will support the transition to a tiered delivery approach, with Welsh Government and Consortia delivery plans developed in parallel.

Regional action plans are the mechanism to monitor and report on expenditure of consortia grant funding for pioneer schools and professional learning capacity building funding. Plans for 2017-18 are currently under development. The Successful Futures Implementation Proposal is a wider reaching plan, focused on delivery. The tier 2 elements of the plan are currently being further developed by Welsh Government to co-deliver our Successful Futures commitments in partnership with regional consortia.

**Do you expect there to be any increase in costs once the national offer is available in July 2018? If so, could you provide further information on this?**

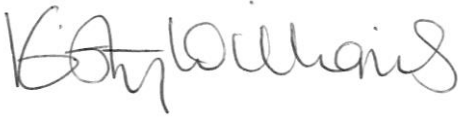
Between now and 2018 we will build on the collaboration model for professional development. We have clear plans for developments in curriculum, teaching, leadership and wellbeing. Schools will, with the support of regions establish individual and whole schools professional learning needs.

We are working closely with the OECD on a major programme “schools as learning organisations” to embed this approach.

Our approach to the use of the outlined £100m and resources relating to the implementation of the new curriculum (MEG) will provide additional funding in this area. However, we will be expecting schools to be using resources currently being deployed on more traditional forms of training and development.

In terms of costs, we are in a challenging period for the public purse. An effective national approach, learning from each other and using effective research must all play their part in building an efficient and effective approach to Professional Learning.

Yours sincerely

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

**Kirsty Williams AC/AM**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg

Cabinet Secretary for Education