

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref MA(P)KW/2555/18

17 July 2018

Dear Lynne

Thank you for your letter dated 6 July asking for the information I agreed to provide during the recent general scrutiny session.

Support for Minority Ethnic and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners

I would like to take this opportunity to clarify remarks made in Committee; the Government took an integrated approach to our impact assessments and a Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment of the high-level spending decisions was undertaken as part of the outline draft budget for 2018-19.

I have shared this with you previously but for ease of reference a copy can be found at the following web page <http://gov.wales/funding/budget/draft-budget-2018-19/?lang=en>.

This means that there was not an individual Children's Right Impact Assessment undertaken in relation to the changes to the funding arrangements within the Education Improvement Grant for minority ethnic and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners.

In terms of support for this group of learners, I have continued to listen to the concerns raised by various stakeholders about the impact of the changes to funding arrangements; and I have responded by agreeing £8.7 million this financial year to support all local authorities.

I have been very clear, however, that support for these groups of learners must be part of 'core' local education services. Particularly in these times of increasing financial challenge and constraint, we have to consider different ways of providing the services that are so important to our young people and wider society. I have received assurances from the WLGA that local government will continue to prioritise the support for these groups of learners. I have welcomed those assurances and fully expect local government to stand by them.

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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.

The funding that I have agreed for this year recognises that transitioning the service to one which is more sustainable for the long term takes time. A further £8.7 million to all 22 local authorities in 2019-20 has been earmarked to support the continuing development of a sustainable model, which I expect to take effect from April 2020.

This funding will be conditional on evidence of working progress towards more sustainable models of delivery. We are working with local government colleagues to consider potential models for the future. To kick start this process my officials are meeting later this month with the local authority Education Directors from the four authorities with the highest population of these groups of learners. A full suite of impact assessments are being prepared as part of this development process and will be shared in due course.

We do not hold local authority level information on traveller education services. Different service delivery models are in place across the country; understanding the operation of these models and their potential for sustainability, including the extent to which they are delivered at a regional, local authority or school level, will form part of our work with local government over the coming months to prepare for April 2020.

Infant Class Sizes

I agreed to provide a note on the business cases submitted by local authorities for the £16 million revenue element of the funding to reduce infant class sizes and how these compared to the amounts allocated.

Revenue element of the funding

The revenue element of the funding was distributed to local authorities on a formula basis combining the Nursery and Primary School Teaching and Other Services Indicator Based Assessment element of the Standard Spending Assessment and the number of infant classes of 29 and over in each local authority. A breakdown of local authority allocations is attached at Annex 1. Although these are shown broken down by year authorities were advised that there was flexibility, recognising the time needed to appoint additional teachers and/or create additional classrooms. There were therefore asked to profile their anticipated expenditure over the four years of the programme. These have been set out in Annex 2.

Local authority business cases were required to evidence how their proposals met the fundamental aim of reducing infant class sizes in schools that meet the target criteria; this being infant classes of 29 or over in schools that demonstrate at least one, or a combination of:

- Significant levels of free school meals;
- Below average outcomes and where a school is judged to be red or amber
- Significant levels of special educational and additional learning needs.
- Significant levels of where Welsh/English is not the first language.

They were required to provide a range of supporting information and data in relation to the schools targeted along with anticipated outcomes.

All 22 local authorities submitted business cases targeting those schools most in need, within the overall cohort of schools within their area that meet the target criteria and taking account of the finite allocation of funding made available. To date proposals approved will result in over 80 teachers being appointed in schools across Wales. Some local authorities have advised that they will target further schools within their overall allocation, so the number of teachers appointed is likely to increase, although these proposals will be subject to Welsh Government approval.

Payment of grant is subject to Welsh Government Grant Centre of Excellence terms and conditions of grant. Payment is made termly in arrears based on actual costs and subject to satisfactory progress reports. Local authorities anticipate full spend. Any underspend will be redirected to education priorities.

Capital Element.

I also agreed to provide a note on the breakdown of the allocation of the £20 million Capital element of the funding. All 22 local authorities were invited to bid for the £20 million available, where reducing infant classes in schools that meet the target criteria above is dependent on the creation of additional classrooms. 17 local authorities submitted bids totalling over £17 m. The bids were a mixture of proposed extensions to existing school buildings, internal adaptations or remodelling. The cost of individual proposals varied depending on the extent of the work involved.

Bids are being assessed in line with 21st Century Schools' principles. I will be issuing a written statement at the start of the new school year in September along with a breakdown of the Capital element of the funding agreed to each of the 17 local authorities and details of schools benefitting.

Class Size data

You have also asked for figures on the number of infant classes containing more than 25 pupils at present and how many pupils are in those classes and the corresponding position after the duration of the lifetime of this policy (this Assembly term).

The latest PLASC data for January 2017 indicates that there were 2,507 classes (59.6%) containing more than 25 pupils in Wales. 72,454 pupils (67.3%) were in classes containing more than 25 pupils.

It is not possible to predict how many pupils will be in classes of more than 25 at the end of this Assembly term. Whilst we can project pupil numbers at a Wales level we can't do so for individual schools. Local school reorganisation and any action to tackle surplus places will affect class sizes and we can't predict these that far into the future. We continue to monitor PLASC data on class sizes closely on an annual basis. However, as we move forward with our class size reduction investment, I expect to report on a reduction in both average infant class size and the number of infant classes with more than 29 pupils. I look forward to sharing this data at the appropriate time.

New Curriculum

Successful Futures strikes a balance between enabling teachers to use their professionalism and creativity to respond to the needs of learners, and ensuring that those aspects of the curriculum deemed to be essential are given legislative force.

My officials have identified areas that will require primary legislation to enable the recommendations, as well as the wider commitments made in Our National Mission. The intention is that the new legislative framework reflects recommendations 63 and 64 in *Successful Futures* and its focus will be around enabling, among others, the following actions included in Our National Mission:

- Deliver a transformational new curriculum to embed the four purposes and ensure that all are focused on higher standards of literacy and numeracy and ensuring our young people are more digitally and bilingually competent; and
- Developing and delivering new frameworks for Assessment, and also Evaluation and Improvement, to support the realisation of the four purposes of education;.

I intend to consult early in 2019 on the underpinning policy proposals for the new curriculum, assessment and evaluation arrangements, which will also inform the new legislative framework. The consultation will include a draft of the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) and a young person's version of the consultation.

I have noted your wish to be updated on any aspects of the progress of Curriculum Reform. I have asked my officials to ensure you and the Committee members are included in the Dysg special circulation list and I would also invite you to 'follow' the Curriculum for Wales blog at <https://curriculumforwales.gov.wales/> which will provide you with regular updates and access to the stakeholder newsletters.

Supply Teaching

We have introduced a direct employment school-based supply cluster pilot. The arrangements to evaluate the pilot are underway to determine whether this approach offers schools a sustainable, feasible model that could be developed by schools and local authorities as employers more widely.

We are also currently working alongside colleagues in the National Procurement Service and their local authority client group to ensure that any future arrangement for sourcing education agency workers is current and fit for purpose, and meets the Government's principles for fair work and high educational standards.

Separately but as a complementary development (and as mentioned on 28 June), we are actively exploring the introduction of a quality assurance standard that agencies wishing to supply workers to schools in Wales would need to meet.

The employer function for teachers within a particular school depends on the category and status of the school concerned and the local management arrangements in place. Local authorities must secure an efficient education system and that a sufficient number of primary and secondary school places are available to meet the needs of the people in its area. The local authority also plays a key role in financing schools and allocating budgets to schools accordingly and is involved in the governance of individual schools including appointing governor members to the school governing body.

Governing bodies have particular responsibilities for recruiting, selecting, employing and managing staff. The extensive responsibilities placed on governing bodies arise from the Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005 and the Staffing of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

The governing body has responsibilities under employment legislation and must ensure that sufficient, suitably qualified staff are employed or engaged to work at the school. The governing body will determine the staff structure for the school, the number of teacher and support staff posts, their grade and responsibilities. Governing bodies are also responsible for making temporary staffing appointments including how best to meet their staff absence cover needs.

On the point raised about the evidence of the greater use of supply teachers in deprived areas no direct comparison work has been undertaken. The Welsh Government publishes annually data on sickness absence at local authority level - a link to the statistical release is

attached here: <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/teachers-and-support-staff/Teacher-Sickness-Absence>. The next update is due to be released on 25 July 2018. However, it is worth noting that supply teachers are often engaged to cover planned staff absence for those undertaking professional learning and school to school working in addition to cover for unplanned sickness absence.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', is centered on the page. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Kirsty' written in a more compact, stylized manner compared to the last name 'Williams'.

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**Breakdown of local authority allocations of £16 million revenue element
of the Reducing Infant Class Sizes grant**

Local Authority	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	Allocation £
Anglesey	38,313	57,470	95,782	114,939	£306,504
Blaenau Gwent	42,264	63,395	105,659	126,790	£338,108
Bridgend	93,430	140,144	233,574	280,288	£747,436
Caerphilly	120,247	180,372	300,620	360,743	£961,983
Cardiff	261,971	392,956	654,927	785,912	£2,095,766
Carmarthenshire	108,811	163,217	272,028	326,434	£870,490
Ceredigion	35,516	53,273	88,789	106,547	£284,125
Conwy	64,032	96,048	160,080	192,096	£512,256
Denbighshire	60,821	91,232	152,053	182,464	£486,569
Flintshire	99,572	149,358	248,930	298,716	£796,576
Gwynedd	66,340	99,510	165,851	199,021	£530,722
Merthyr Tydfil	37,942	56,912	94,854	113,825	£303,532
Monmouthshire	53,298	79,947	133,245	159,894	£426,384
Neath Port Talbot	85,869	128,803	214,672	257,607	£686,951
Newport	113,615	170,423	284,038	340,846	£908,923
Pembrokeshire	71,172	106,758	177,929	213,515	£569,373
Powys	67,582	101,372	168,954	202,745	£540,652
Rhondda Cynon Taf	173,113	259,670	432,783	519,339	£1,384,904
Swansea	150,365	225,548	375,913	451,096	£1,202,923
Torfaen	70,750	106,126	176,875	212,251	£566,002
Vale of Glamorgan	90,302	135,453	225,755	270,906	£722,417
Wrexham	94,676	142,013	236,689	284,026	£755,404
Total	2,000,000	3,000,000	5,000,000	6,000,000	16,000,000

Reducing Infant Class Sizes

Breakdown of distribution of indicative Revenue Allocations

The following allocations were provided to local authorities, however, they were asked to profile their expenditure over the lifetime of the grant. We recognised that local authorities would require different levels of revenue at different periods of the grant, especially where revenue proposals were dependent on the capital element. Budgets will be carefully monitored during the reporting process to ensure suitable funding is available within budget

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					£16m