

Leighton Andrews AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-325
Ein cyf/Our ref LA/05437/11

William Powell AM
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

13 July 2011

Dear William,

P-04-325 Funding for People with a Learning Disability to Access Mainstream Post-16 Education

Thank you for your letter of 29 June regarding a petition submitted by Mencap Cymru urging the Welsh Government to increase funding to enable people with a learning disability to access mainstream education. I shall take this into consideration as part of the forthcoming Resource Assessment Exercise. You also requested further details on the level of funding available to support people with learning difficulties in mainstream education.

I am committed to ensuring that as many young people as possible have the opportunity to maximise their potential. In addition to funding post-16 provision in special schools, sixth form placements for learners with SEN in out-of-county schools and colleges, and bespoke further education provision, the Welsh Government also makes additional funding available to assist post-16 providers make their mainstream provision accessible.

In the financial year 2011-12 local authorities received an indicative allocation for 16-19 SEN in mainstream provision in schools of £4.45m, which is not ring-fenced and which can be allocated according to where need is greatest. In the academic year 2010/11, further education colleges received a supplementary funding allocation of £6.32m, which contributes to the cost of the additional learning support necessary to make mainstream further education provision accessible to all disabled learners over the age of 16. Also in 2010/11, £77k was allocated, on the basis of claims from work based learning providers, for additional learning support arising from the needs of disabled learners.

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Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

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November 2010 saw the publication of a report by the Task and Finish Group I established to consider and make recommendations on future arrangements for funding post-16 additional learning needs in schools and further education. I accepted all the recommendations made in that Group's report, which pointed to the need for greater consistency of approach across Wales, regional collaboration, more attention to value for money in the commissioning process and better planning. A Development and Implementation Group with wide ranging stakeholder representation is taking forward these recommendations and in June this group received a presentation from Mencap Cymru.

You also mention your support for the work that the Welsh Government is undertaking to consider the reform of the existing system of statementing for children and young people with SEN. One of the four pilot projects established to consider a range of alternatives to the current system, has been investigating the quality assurance of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision. The aim of this pilot is to develop a framework and associated processes that will allow schools to evaluate their provision for pupils with ALN and will also enable local authorities to regularly monitor and evaluate the quality of provision. The pilot scheme's framework for self-evaluation will include individual outcomes, best practice in educating pupils with ALN, and value for money. We recognise that some aspects of the quality assurance system for schools may need to be adjusted for the post-16 context. All four pilots are scheduled to end this month and an evaluation report will follow at the start of 2012.

Yours sincerely


Leighton Andrews AC / AM

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