

Carl Sargeant AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gymunedau a Phlant
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref : MA/P/CS/5677/16

Lynne Neagle, AM
Chair – CYPE Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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31st August 2016

Dear Lynne

Thank you for inviting me to attend Committee on 13th July to discuss my forthcoming priorities. I promised to write to you regarding two issues:

- An update on timescales for the publication of the 10 year early years and childcare workforce plan.
- A note on the publication of Children's rights impact assessments (CRIA's).

The 10 year workforce plan for Early Years, Childcare and Play

The Welsh Government developed its draft 10 year workforce plan in the latter part of 2014. The draft plan set out our goals for the early years, childcare and play workforce and how we intended to support the delivery of our ambition.

There have been a number of new policy developments which need to be strategically aligned with the ambitions set out in the draft plan. One of these is the Qualifications Wales recent review into the current vocational qualifications for the sector. I have asked my officials to consider how best to take forward their recommendations and this work will need to feature in the final 10 year workforce plan.

My officials are currently working through the policy and financial implications of developing the final plan and I will be able to provide the Committee with an update on timeframes once this work has been completed.

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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.

As I mentioned at Committee, we have developed the new European Structural Fund - Progress for Success programme. The programme will provide support to existing practitioners to up skill in recognised sector qualifications at Levels 2 to 6. The first phase of this project covering Levels 2 to 3 was launched on 1st August. This will see the start of delivering against a key aspiration of the workforce plan by increasing the skills of the early years and childcare workforce as well as being vitally important in assisting to deliver on the new 30 hours free childcare offer.

Children's Rights Impact Assessments (CRIA's)

I attach a separate note on the key aspects of the publication process for your information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Carl Sargeant', written in a cursive style.

Carl Sargeant AC/AM

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CRIA publication

- In May 2014, all Ministers agreed to make CRIAs publicly available. This was widely welcomed by Members and stakeholders when the Children's Scheme was approved by the National Assembly for Wales.
- CRIA documents relating to legislation are published on the Welsh Government website. This is also the case for subordinate legislation which includes, for example, regulations made under primary legislation.
- For non-legislative decisions, all completed CRIAs are listed in a Newsletter which is issued on a quarterly basis. It provides links to all published CRIAs during the quarter and lists the titles of all those CRIAs which are available on request. Officials are currently preparing CRIA Newsletter number 6 for publication.
- The question of when to publish CRIAs has been a critical element in implementing the revised Children's Rights Scheme. The guidance provided in the Scheme provides assistance on the timing of publication and suggests Ministers incorporate the CRIA into consultation processes and encourage engagement on the initial assessment of impact.
- It is important the policy is not prescriptive and does not constrain the ability of Ministers to effectively utilise the CRIA process in a flexible way to best effect.
- CRIAs have been published at various stages of different pieces of work, for example, consultation stage; in legislation at Explanatory Memorandum; or alongside final published Strategies and Action Plans.
- Our Children's Rights Scheme promotes transparency and accountability. Therefore, if there are concerns regarding either a CRIA on a specific issue, there are mechanisms for challenge. The CRIA publication policy in particular enables this and so if the CRIA is not available as a matter of course, they can be requested.

Driving the CRIA process

- Developing the Compliance Report has provided a valuable opportunity to consider how far we have come, and to reflect on the progress made in implementing the Measure. The Compliance Report has also provided a focus for identifying possible areas which will merit further attention. In being transparent and open about compliance with our Children's Rights Scheme, the previous Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty led a plenary debate on the Compliance Report in June last year.
- The next Compliance report is due to be published in January 2018.
- The Welsh Government commissioned an independent evaluation of the Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) process last year. It was undertaken by the Wales Observatory on Human Rights of Children and Young People. My officials are currently working on implementing the recommendations made in the evaluation report to drive forward the CRIA process.

