



Adam Price

Aelod Cynulliad dros Ddwyrain Caerfyddin a Dinefwr  
Assembly Member for Carmarthen East and Dinefwr

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales  
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Alun Davies AM  
Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language  
Welsh Government  
5th Floor  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

Our ref: CE9976RL

14 March 2017

Dear

**Securing provision for Young People with learning disabilities at specialist further education establishments.**

I contact you after being visited by representatives of Coleg Elidyr within my constituency raising concerns following your statement on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 2017 on the above issue.

I am advised that Parents of young people with learning difficulties and organisations working with these young people are concerned that this revised policy and guidance jeopardises young people's rights to further education provision that is fit for purpose and equitable to the opportunities available for their non-disabled peers. Representatives of the college feel that reference to the interests of the individual learner and their fair treatment is absent from the draft technical guidance that accompanies the new policy and which was distributed to Specialist Colleges in November 2016. I am further advised that draft guidance was sent to Careers Wales advisors in relation to the implementation of the revised policy. I am informed Welsh Government has not published this policy guidance which is of concern to specialist organisations working in this field.

My constituents state that there is clear inequality within the quality assurance monitoring of mainstream Further Education Colleges provision for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities provision and that of specialist providers. The Independent Living Skills provision within mainstream FE colleges are not inspected with anything like the rigor of specialist colleges and no overall judgement is made on ILS provision in mainstream FE. This therefore begs the question of how young people, parents and careers advisors can make a judgement on the suitability of mainstream FE College to meet their needs.

A further concern is that the policy and associated guidance has an over-emphasis on accredited learning. This seems contrary to the Estyn Thematic report (2016) commissioned by the Welsh Government. Within this report Estyn are clear that Independent Specialist Colleges should move away from a reliance on accredited learning.

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The College is concerned at the lack of emphasis by the Welsh Government on the quality of provision as a consideration in the securing of further education placements for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. Coleg Elidyr believe that this does little to incentivise providers whether from mainstream or specialist further education colleges to continue to develop educational practice in support of understanding how individuals learning difficulties and disabilities impact upon individuals' ability to learning, progress and maximise life chances.

Whilst the policy is pushing for an inclusive agenda, my constituents are not confident that Local Authority colleges are specialised to deal with students with additional learning needs. Coleg Elidyr focus on Independence and Life Skills and not merely qualifications. This is why the college feel it is important for students, parents and carers to be fully aware of the choices available to them for their further education.

I would be grateful for your comments on the above and am sure that you value the feedback from Coleg Elidyr on this policy.

Yours sincerely,

**Adam Price AM / AC**

**Dwyrain Caerfyddin a Dinefwr/Carmarthen East and Dinefwr**

Cc Lynne Neagle AM, Chair of Children, Young People and Education committee.

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