



Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/01876/17

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk

6 June 2017

Dear

Thank you for your further letter of 24 May regarding petition P-05-748 School Buses for School Children.

The statutory distances are set out in the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 ("the Measure"). Local authorities are responsible for the operational delivery of learner travel in their area and may choose to provide transport to those learners who live closer than two miles for primary school children or three miles for secondary school children. However, this is at each authority's discretion and local authorities may charge parents for such provision. The Measure provides the greatest eligibility across Great Britain. In England and Scotland learners are provided transport for pupils who live more than 2 miles (if they are under 8 years of age) and 3 miles (if they are over 8 years of age).

The Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance ("Operational Guidance") are subject to ongoing review as a matter of course. The Operational Guidance was last substantially reviewed in 2014 and children and young people were consulted as part of that process.

The Safety on Learner Transport (Wales) Measure 2011 gives Welsh Ministers powers to introduce specific safety standards for dedicated school transport. This includes the option to introduce specific driver training, CCTV, escorts and compulsory risk assessment. In October 2014, it became compulsory to have seat belts on dedicated home to school buses.

The safety, health and well-being of learners is kept under review, whether they travel by dedicated school transport, public transport, active travel or by private modes of transport. Local authorities are already equipped with powers to provide dedicated learner transport to all children. It should be noted that the costs to local authorities of doing so will be substantial, potentially doubling the cost of providing learner transport in Wales with many parents unable or unwilling to meet these costs if the cost was passed on to them. I would

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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.

not wish to place unsustainable burdens on the local authorities' finances or on families in Wales.

Additionally, dedicated learner transport provision is not necessarily the most appropriate form of transport for all learners. Learners who are able to travel to education by walking or cycling benefit from the improved mental and physical well-being that flows from travelling actively. Learners, particularly older children, who travel by public transport are developing valuable life skills, such as being able to make a journey independently and behave appropriately in society. The current policy and legislation supports learners to gain these benefits, while maintaining a high level of regard for their safety, their well-being and their physical and educational needs.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken', with a stylized flourish above the letters.

Ken Skates AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a'r Seilwaith
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure