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Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1430
Ein cyf/Our ref LN/05450/24

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
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June 2024

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 23 May regarding Petition P-06-1430 which calls upon the Welsh Government to support deaf children by making a financial commitment to restoring Teacher of the Deaf numbers.

I am committed to delivering for children and young people in Wales. Having the right support in place at the right time is essential to ensuring children and young people, including deaf children, can access and enjoy learning and reach their potential. This is the aim of our Curriculum and Additional Learning Needs (ALN) reforms which are supported by a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing.

The Curriculum for Wales is designed to break down barriers for all learners, giving teachers more flexibility to best meet the individual needs of each child, and the ALN statutory framework ensures additional learning provision for ALN learners is planned and protected. Both these reforms are supported by a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing.

Skilled education practitioners are crucial to the success of our reforms. Teachers of the Deaf and other specialists are an essential part of this workforce, providing schools, teachers, learners with hearing impairments and their families with a range of professional support and advice. It is important that the education workforce has the right balance of knowledge, skills and expertise to ensure that all learners, including those with hearing impairments, have access to support that is appropriate to their needs.

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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 ALN Act requires local authorities to keep their arrangements for ALN under review and this includes the specialist workforce. The ALN Code for Wales identifies Teachers of the Deaf as among those whom the local authority might consult to obtain views on emerging and patterns of need, the suitability of skills and expertise available in the workforce to support learners with hearing impairment, and to contribute to decisions on the sufficiency of arrangements and reasonable steps needed to remedy insufficiencies in provision for children and young people with hearing impairment.

Whilst the responsibility for workforce planning of local specialist ALN services lies with local authorities, the Welsh Government is committed to developing the skills of the education workforce, including teachers of deaf children, to provide effective support in the classroom. This is why in 2018 as part of our ALN Transformation Programme, we distributed nearly £300,000 over three years to local authorities in Wales to support the post-graduate training of local authority-based specialist and advisory teachers of learners with sensory impairment. This included training for Teachers of the Deaf and training in British Sign Language (BSL).

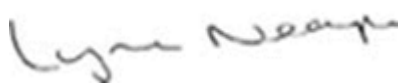
The Welsh Government continues to invest significantly in ALN. In the 2024-25 budget we protected the core local government settlement, which funds schools, and the additional investment of over £56 million on ALN implementation and ALN provision in both pre and post 16 education. We have increased resources in schools to implement the ALN system and lead whole-school strategies to embed inclusive education. The funding we have made available for ALN provision in the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG) can be used for the professional training of specialist teachers, including Teachers of the Deaf, where this addresses additional pressures.

We have published [guides](#) on effective interventions for learners with sensory impairments in education settings, and in addition to developing a [national ALN professional learning pathway](#) to support ALNCoS and other practitioners develop their skills to support all learners with ALN. We have worked with the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) to develop an e-learning unit on '[supporting deaf learners](#)'. This unit is part of a collection aimed at supporting practitioners to enhance their knowledge and understanding of different types of learning difficulties or disabilities. To help raise awareness we are developing a campaign to promote the collection of learning available to the sector, and highlight the role of teachers of the deaf in our ALN bulletin.

Parents play a crucial role in helping their child to achieve their potential and this is recognised in the ALN Code for Wales. When carrying out their responsibilities under the ALN Act schools, local authorities and others have a duty to involve and support parents as well as children and young people. The ALN Code includes information on considerations when involving and supporting parents.

We are determined to create an inclusive education system and remain committed to working with the sector to help them understand and respond to the needs of all learners, including deaf children and their families.

Yours sincerely



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