

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-860
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/02719/18

David John Rowlands AM
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19 December 2018

Dear David

Thank you for your letter dated 4th December, in which you request my views on the issues raised in *Petition P-95-860 Make Curriculum for Life Lessons Compulsory*. Specifically you refer to the issues it raises such as finance, sex and relationships, politics and basic living skills.

Existing curriculum

Sex and Relationships Education

Personal and Social Development, Well-being and Cultural Diversity is one of the areas of learning in the Foundation Phase for learners aged 3-7. Children learn about themselves, their relationships with other children and adults both within and beyond the family. Personal and Social Education (PSE) forms part of the curriculum for all registered pupils aged 7 to 16 in maintained schools. It prepares learners to be personally and socially effective by providing learning experiences in which they can develop and apply skills, explore personal attitudes and values, and acquire appropriate knowledge and understanding. The PSE framework is intended to help schools in planning their PSE programme to ensure a broad, balanced and holistic approach. Schools have the flexibility to select appropriate topics from the PSE framework as contexts for learning. It is the responsibility of schools to plan and deliver a broad, balanced programme to meet the needs of their learners. Schools can work with specialist organisations on aspects of PSE provision.

Financial Education

The PSE Framework allows learners to develop an understanding of the role and importance of money. This allows learners to understand their role and responsibilities as

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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.

consumers and to cultivate a financial capability which enables them to make effective economic judgements and decisions. At Key Stage 2, learners are given opportunities to understand the importance of looking after their money and the benefits of regular saving. At Key Stage 3, learners are given opportunities to understand the economic and ethical consequences of personal financial decision-making as a consumer, considering schemes such as Fairtrade. At Key Stage 4, learners are given opportunities to learn about their rights as consumers and their responsibilities in terms of managing a budget, the importance of planning for their financial futures and how to access financial advice. Finally, at post-16, learners are given opportunities to evaluate financial advice, take personal responsibility for financial planning and manage personal finances effectively. Financial education is not just taught through PSE; it has been part of the school curriculum in Wales since 2008 and through the 'Manage money' element, has been a statutory requirement in the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) for 5 to 14 year-olds since September 2013.

Politics

There are opportunities for learners to explore politics in the current curriculum through the Welsh Baccalaureate and PSE. The 'Active Citizenship' theme within PSE allows learners to develop their knowledge on politics, employment and their rights in a democratic society which reflects the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. They also develop a practical understanding of their rights and of the links between political decisions and their own lives.

New curriculum

The new curriculum has four purposes at its heart and these purposes are the starting point for all decisions on the content and experiences developed as part of the new curriculum and assessment arrangements. They are designed to underpin all teaching and learning in Wales.

The purposes of the curriculum in Wales are that children and young people should develop as:

- Ambitious, capable learners ready to learn throughout their lives
- Enterprising, creative contributors ready to play a full part in life and work
- Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- Healthy confident individuals ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

The new curriculum will provide wide and authentic opportunities for specific topics that you mention.

Relationships and Sexuality Education

Relationships and Sexuality Education will be a part of the new curriculum for ages 3-16. This is in response to recommendations by the SRE Expert Panel chaired by Professor Emma Renold from Cardiff University which published their recommendations in December 2017.

RSE in the new curriculum is being developed within an inter-disciplinary and whole school approach, as recommended by the expert panel. Pioneer schools, who are developing the new curriculum for Wales, have been working with experts (including Professor Renold) to embed learning regarding RSE within the breadth of the new curriculum.

Financial Literacy

Finance, or financial literacy, is addressed in more than one AoLE. One of the four purposes of the new curriculum is to support learners to be healthy confident individuals who have the skills and knowledge to manage everyday life as independently as they can. *Successful Futures* discusses the importance of financial capability within the Mathematics and Numeracy AoLE, emphasising the importance of learners: “*gaining the knowledge and skills to manage personal finance now and in the future*”. Financial literacy also has relevance for the Health and Well-being and Humanities AoLEs. As such, elements of financial literacy will sit across multiple AoLEs supporting a cross disciplinary and holistic approach.

Politics

Having an understanding about politics is fundamental to becoming ‘ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world’ The Humanities Area of Learning and Experience aims to give learners an understanding of historical, geographical, political, economic and societal issues and provides opportunities to develop and engage in informed discussions about ethics, beliefs, religion and spirituality.

Life skills

The new curriculum also recognises the importance of ensuring that children and young people develop a range of ‘wider skills’ considered necessary for modern life and work. One of the recommendations from *Successful Futures* states that ‘...wider skills should be embedded within the Areas of Learning and Experience’ It stresses that wider skills should be taught from the start of schooling rather than Year 10 as is the case presently. These wider skills comprise:-

- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Planning and organising
- Creativity and innovation
- Personal effectiveness

Preparing learners for the world of work is an important element of the new curriculum. All pioneer groups are considering the manner in which their AoLE can support the aim of learners becoming ‘enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work.’

In broad terms, the following principles have been agreed:

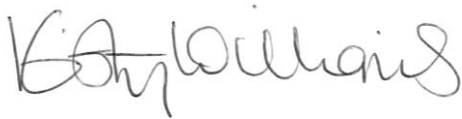
- Health and Well-being AoLE to address the reference made to ‘work-related learning and experience’ in *Successful Futures* in terms of life skills e.g. resilience, grit, curiosity. There will also naturally be overlap with other AoLEs.
- Every AoLE should draw on opportunities to make links between their What Matters statements and the world of work. This will be done through effective embedding of the wider skills and cross-curriculum responsibilities and by drawing attention to key knowledge, skills and experiences essential to develop careers related to the AoLE.
- Additional guidance will be needed for schools to deliver this element appropriately. There are certain aspects of Careers and the World of Work that goes beyond what will be delivered through the AoLE e.g. career and academic choices, work experience, careers advice etc.

A White Paper will be published early in the new year seeking views on the legislative proposals to support the new curriculum and assessment arrangements. These proposals will support the recommendations set out in *Successful Futures* that all learners should receive a broad and balanced curriculum designed to meet the four purposes, encapsulating the notion of entitlement to receive education and experiences across all the six Areas of Learning and Experience throughout the period of statutory education. Beyond this, *Successful Futures* has challenged us to re-think our approach to the curriculum, it makes it clear that a high degree of prescription and detail at a national level

inhibits “*the flow and progression in children and young people’s learning and progression*”. As such, we need to ensure that the new curriculum does not provide a comprehensive list of detailed content which would quickly become complicated and overcrowded. The curriculum must allow professionals the flexibility to choose the specific content which meets the needs of their learners in their specific context. Likewise, this flexibility will allow professionals the autonomy to consider issues such as those that have been raised here.

We will be engaging with young people during the feedback and co-construction process.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kirsty Williams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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