



Mick Antoniw AM
Chair
Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee
National Assembly for Wales

SeneddCLA@Assembly.Wales

12 October 2018

Dear Mick

Thank you for your letter of 8 October seeking an explanation as to why responses to the consultation exercise for doctoral loan support, or a summary of those responses, did not appear in the Explanatory Memorandum of the Education (Student Loans) (Repayment) (Amendment) (No.3) Regulations 2018 and why a summary was then published after the regulations were made.

Student support in the form of loans is, from academic year 2018/19, available from the Welsh Ministers for, amongst others, students who are ordinarily resident in Wales and who are starting doctoral degree programmes. The Education (Postgraduate Doctoral Degree Loans) (Wales) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018/656) (“the Loans Regulations”) were made on 23 May 2018 and came into force on 25 June 2018.

The Education (Student Loans) (Repayment) (Amendment) (No.3) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018/810) (“the Repayment Regulations”), which were made on 2 July 2018 and came into force on 28 July 2018, provide for the repayment of those new doctoral degree loans.

The Welsh Government consulted on the policy for the doctoral degree loan support, including the basis on which such loans would be repaid, between 8 December 2017 and 2 March 2018. The Explanatory Memorandum which accompanied the Loans Regulations set out the list of stakeholders invited to respond to the consultation exercise, those who did respond and a summary of those responses. That Explanatory Memorandum also explained that the final policy remained largely unchanged from the policy as set out in the consultation paper.

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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.

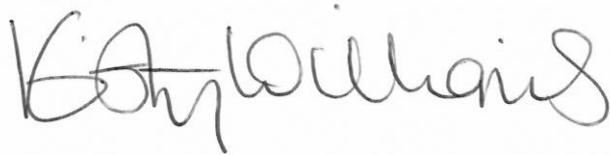
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The Welsh Government acknowledges that, despite the close connection between the Loans Regulations and the Repayment Regulations and the single consultation exercise undertaken which preceded the making of both sets of regulations, the Explanatory Memorandum to the Repayment Regulations should have included greater detail in relation to that consultation exercise.

The Welsh Government aims to publish a summary of responses as soon as is reasonably practical. Both the Loans Regulations and the Repayment Regulations were made against very tight timescales to ensure that appropriate legislation was in place such that students ordinarily resident in Wales were able to access doctoral degree loan support for the 2018 academic year. The UK Government was making similar support available to students ordinarily resident in England and the Welsh Government considered it an urgent requirement to ensure that Welsh students were not disadvantaged. Whilst a summary of the consultation exercise was included in the Explanatory Memorandum to the Loans Regulations, the Welsh Government accepts that it would have been preferable to publish a detailed summary of the consultation responses sooner.

I trust this satisfies your query.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', written in a cursive style.

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education