

Carl Sargeant AM
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay

8 August 2016

Budget Scrutiny

Dear Cabinet Secretary

In advance of the Committee's scrutiny of the Welsh Government's budget, the Committee would be grateful if you could provide information on the following issues to assist it in its scrutiny work.

The Committee would like to invite you to attend its meeting on **2 November** between 09.30 and 11.00 for a session focussed on scrutiny of the draft budget.

To assist the Committee in its work, I would be grateful if you could provide the information requested in this letter by **24 October**.

Detail of allocations

The Committee requests:

- A breakdown of the 2017–18 Communities and Children (C&C) MEG allocations (as relevant to children and young people) by Spending Programme Area, Action and Budget Expenditure Line (BEL);
- Final out-turns for 2015–16 and forecast out-turns for 2016–17;
- Indicative 2018–19 C&C MEG allocations;
- Commentary on each of the Actions within the C&C MEG as relevant to children and young people, including an analysis and explanation of changes between the Draft Budget 2017–18 and the First Supplementary Budget (June 2016).



Children's rights and equalities

The Committee requests:

- A copy of the Child's Rights Impact Assessment which informed the total Draft Budget 2017–18;
- Details of what changes, if any, which were made to initial allocations within the Draft Budget 2017–18 as a result of the Child's Rights Impact Assessment;
- A copy of the Child's Rights Impact Assessment undertaken to inform the allocations in the C&C MEG within the Draft Budget 2017–18;
- Details of what changes, if any, which were made to allocations within the C&C MEG as a result of the Child's Rights Impact Assessment;
- Information on how equalities, sustainability, and the Welsh language have been considered in budget allocations and any examples where such considerations have directly influenced budget allocations or altered initial proposals.

Other information

The Committee also requests:

- The outcomes of any discussions with the Minister for Social Services and Public Health regarding common priorities and what impact, if any, on budget allocations within either portfolio.
- Information on how the delivery of the child and young person commitments in the C&C portfolio and their associated outcomes are monitored and evaluated to demonstrate **value for money**;
- Details of specific policies or programmes within the C&C MEG (as relevant to children and young people) that are intended to be **preventative** and how the value for money and cost benefits of such programmes are evaluated;
- Information on allocations (and their location) in the C&C portfolio to provide for **legislation which has the potential to impact in the financial year 2017–18** as relevant to children and young people, including specific reference to the planned legislation relating to the removal of the defence of Reasonable Chastisement;
- Implications of the **EU referendum result** on the C&C MEG as relevant to children and how the Department will manage any predicted impact.

Specific areas

Flying Start

- Allocations for 2017–18 disaggregated to the four Flying Start entitlements;



- Details of how value for money in respect of the outcomes for children has been assessed for the Flying Start allocations for 2017–18;
- The projected cost per child of the childcare offer (and of each session per child) based on the allocations in the 2017–18 Draft Budget;
- Whether the take up of the language and play entitlement continues to be defined as the number of parents who attended the first session and therefore how value for money is assessed in respect of the allocations in the 2017–18 Draft Budget.

Childcare

- Details of allocations for the childcare commitment of 30 hours free childcare a week for the working parents of three and four year olds, 48 weeks of the year, including the pathfinder projects which are intended to commence by the end of 2017;
- Information on the factors which have been taken into account in deciding allocations for other childcare policy and programmes;

Other support for families

- Allocations and commentary in respect of the Families First Programme;
- Allocations and commentary in respect of the provision of Family Information Services;
- Allocations and commentary in respect of parenting support.

Children and Families Organisational Grant

- Commentary on the allocations to the projects now funded under the five priority areas, including any increase or decreases in allocations for 2017–18 compared to the allocations specified in the original grant agreements.

Child Poverty

- What factors have influenced the child poverty allocations in the Draft Budget 2017–18?

Children's and young people's rights and entitlements

- What factors have influenced the children's rights allocations in the Draft Budget 2017–18?

Children's Commissioner for Wales

- Commentary on which issues informed the allocation of expenditure for the office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales;



- How the allocation takes into account the potential impact of implementing the recommendations of the Review of the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales;

Advocacy

- Commentary on the transfer in of £1.06 million into the C&C MEG from the Health and Social Services MEG in respect of the Advocacy Fund, as referred to in the First Supplementary Budget of June 2016;

Play Policy

- Commentary and any indicative allocations for 2017-18, including reference to allocations to Play Wales.

CAFCASS

- Allocations and commentary in respect of CAFCASS

Adoption, fostering and looked after children

Allocations and commentary for adoption, fostering and looked after children. Clarification on any transfers made from the 'children's social services' action within the Health & Social Care MEG to the C&C MEG for Welsh Government allocations for adoption, fostering and looked after children. If there are no transfers, are there allocations from within the H&S MEG?

With many thanks for assisting us in our scrutiny work.

Regards



Lynne Neagle AC / AM
Cadeirydd / Chair

