

Consultation on Welsh Government guidance 'Supporting learners with healthcare needs'

Response from: Individual

Thank for your email. Here are my thoughts on the revised guidance document for the management of medical conditions at school.

whether you consider the Welsh Government's new statutory guidance 'Supporting learners with healthcare needs' meets the calls received in evidence to the Committee to place the healthcare guidance in Wales on a statutory footing;

I feel that the term 'statutory guidance' is an oxymoron..... *statutory* clearly means *legal* and *guidance* means *helpful suggestions*. The 2 don't go together and cause confusion. The position must be clarified beyond doubt. Providing adequate and suitable support to pupils with medical conditions is either a legal duty for schools or it's voluntary.....the guidance is littered with *shoulds* and references to support being of a *voluntary nature*.

Whilst the document reads better than the 2010 version it remains contradictory. Eg section 4 'unacceptable practice' - all the statements are valid yet as the document is guidance only these points cannot be enforced and therefore do not afford pupils with the protection they deserve.

Additionally some elements of the document read very subjectively. Eg. the footnote for the introduction refers to education settings needing to offer '*good reason*' to justify non-compliance with the guidance. A *good reason* is arguably very subjective in nature.

- your early assessment on whether 'Supporting learners with healthcare needs' would sufficiently meet the healthcare needs of learners in Wales, and if not how the Bill could be used to help achieve this; and

It feels like the ALN bill is the only route available to ensure the rights of pupils with medical needs can be protected in law. Furthermore by introducing an amendment to the ALN, the actions and expectations of teaching staff will also be clarified. This will be of huge benefit to school staff who often find themselves in a grey area, whereby a member of staff is willing to offer a pupil support yet their unions are telling them not to get involved and if they go against union advice it will invalidate their protection.

- your views on when a full assessment of 'Supporting learners with healthcare needs' could be undertaken to effectively assess its level of success.

I am questioning how this revised document is being advertised to interested parties within education and health settings and to parents/carers of children for whom this guidance is intended to support. It is clear that only through an effective awareness campaign of this revised document that a

robust assessment can take place. There are approximately only 12 weeks remaining of this current academic year and the suggestion of a review of the document taking place in September will not give sufficient time for an assessment to be valid.