

Huw Irranca-Davies AC/AM  
Y Gweinidog Gofal Cymdeithasol a Phlant  
Minister for Children and Social Care



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA/P/HID/0847/18

Lynne Neagle AM  
Chair,  
Children, Young People and Education Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1 NA

12 March 2018

Dear Lynne

I am writing in response to your letter dated 14 February in which you enclosed some correspondence that outlined concerns about the availability of Families First funding for projects supporting families with children with disabilities or additional learning needs.

In your letter you included a number of specific questions, which I shall address in order:

Work my department undertook to assess the potential impact of the April 2017 Families First Guidance on children, including children who have disabilities or additional learning needs

The revised Families First Programme Guidance was developed in collaboration with key stakeholders and delivery partners, including: local Families First Coordinators; local authority service leads; third sector delivery partners and key Welsh Government policy leads. Prior to the development of the guidance, a three year programme of evaluation was undertaken followed by a consultation exercise with local Families First Coordinators to consider whether the programme needed to be refined to improve service delivery for families. As part of that process it was identified that the criteria for the commissioning of services which are provided through the Disability Focus element of the programme should not be altered as evaluation evidence showed the benefit of these services to families with children who have disabilities or additional learning needs.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

[Gohebiaeth.Huw.Irranca-Davies@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Huw.Irranca-Davies@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Huw.Irranca-Davies@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Huw.Irranca-Davies@gov.wales)

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.

How decisions relating to the continuation or otherwise of Families First projects and their impact on children, including children who have disabilities or additional learning needs are monitored

The delivery of the Families First programme takes place at a local level and services in each area are commissioned in response to identified local needs. Each local authority is required to undertake a population needs assessment and commission services which meet the identified needs of their local community. Each local authority must then submit a Delivery Plan to the Welsh Government outlining what these needs are and what services are being commissioned to address them. Each Delivery Plan is scrutinised by a panel of key officials who consider whether the proposed services are likely to a) meet the identified needs of the community and b) are compliant with the Families First Programme Guidance.

Outline the projects supporting families with children who have disabilities or additional needs that are no longer receiving Families First support, and whether these projects are continuing via other funding means (and if so, by what means)

Responsibility for the commissioning, and de-commissioning of services is a matter for each individual local authority and, as such, there is no requirement for this information to be collected centrally.

Outline the steps which are being taken to mitigate the impact of local authority decisions to end Families First funding on children, including children who have disabilities or additional learning needs

Each local authority receives a grant allocation for the delivery of the Families First programme. The budget for the Families First programme has not changed over the last two years and remains at just under £38m for 2018-19. This means local authorities have the same level of funding available to them for the delivery of services to families and children, including children who have disabilities or additional needs. Should a local authority decide to de-commission a service, it is the responsibility of that authority to ensure any potential impacts on service users are monitored and handled appropriately.

With regard to the specific issue outlined in the correspondence you attached with your letter, it is my understanding that, although some contracts which provide services for families with children with disabilities will not be renewed from 31 March 2018, a number of new services are being commissioned to maintain support for families from 1 April 2018. I understand these services are being commissioned as part of a wider, overarching strategy aimed at improving the effectiveness and accessibility of service for families affected by disability and have been developed following extensive consultation with both service providers and services users across Cardiff.



**Huw Irranca-Davies AC/AM**

Y Gweinidog Gofal Cymdeithasol a Phlant  
Minister for Children and Social Care