



Ein cyf/Our ref MA-VG-0207-20

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

23 January 2020

Dear Lynne,

I refer to your request to provide information in respect of action points raised at the Children Young People & Education Committee Draft Budget session on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020. Please find below my response in relation to those issues which fall under my remit as Minister for Health and Social Services.

**An update on the Welsh Government's findings from its exploratory work with the Future Generations Commissioner's Office to explore Social Impact Bonds as an outcomes-based investment model to reduce entry into care for Looked after Children, once that work is completed**

We will seek to appoint a suitable organisation to take this forward. As stated in my evidence, so far we have been working with the company Social Finance but depending on the arrangements we may need to seek procurement advice before finalising any contractual details. We would need to identify suitable and willing local government partners to trial the scheme.

Finally, it would then be necessary to undergo a selection process for the providers of finance and the third sector organisations who would deliver the service, which would be provided to the participating local authorities. The work of these third sector partners should generate savings for local authorities who can then repay the finance providers. Once the funding is repaid, the authorities will be able to utilise the savings to fund other services. The Welsh model will differ as the Welsh Government realises that there is a degree of risk, which may mean that not of the potential benefits are generated. In this case, the Welsh Government is willing to act as an underwriter of the scheme – this means the risk is not borne by the participating local authorities.

The participating local authorities will need to identify the desired outcomes for the looked after children services they operate and to work with all the other parties to develop meaningful measures so that we know what success, or failure, looks like. We will need to ensure that authorities fully understand what factors are driving the financial pressures and outcomes, which we are seeing. We also need to ensure that the courses of action

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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.

proposed will be likely to impact on these drivers – we need to accept that this is a complex problem, and that this complexity is allowed for and a flexible approach adopted.

**Confirmation of where exactly in this year’s Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment there is detail about the “clear consideration of the impact of budgetary decisions on children’s rights” referred to in the Welsh Government’s written evidence for this session**

As part of the budget process, we have a responsibility to consider our decisions through a number of lenses to understand their impact. We continue to take an integrated approach which enables us to understand the impact of decisions on different groups of people and areas such as the environment more effectively, with the consideration of Children’s rights remaining an integral part of our budget process.

Examples of the considerations of the impacts on children can be found in the following paragraphs of the SIIA; 32, 33, 48, 53, 59-61, 65, 68-93, 96-97, 104-105, 109-111, 115, 121-127 and 158.

**A list of projects that are receiving funding under the childcare offer for co-located Foundation Phase and Childcare Offer provision**

The Childcare Offer Capital Grant aims to support the childcare sector across Wales, increasing capacity and ensuring there are sufficient places to enable settings to deliver the Childcare Offer. Under the scheme we have provided each local authority with funding to deliver a Small Grant Scheme within their area, along with funding towards over 150 larger schemes. While decisions on allocations under the Small Grants Scheme are for individual local authorities, the larger schemes were assessed at a national level.

The Childcare Offer Capital Small Grant Scheme has a funding limit to childcare providers of between £5,000 and £10,000 per financial year, based on the number of children registered. Funding can be offered for various capital works that may be needed, such as:

- General refurbishment, including painting, replacing carpets, etc.;
- Improving the outdoor play facilities of a setting, such as replacing the outdoor play surface or providing a canopy;
- Replacing / repairing fixtures and fittings such as toilets, kitchen facilities, windows and doors;
- Replacing worn equipment / furniture / toys which could potentially pose a health and safety risk. So for example a rusted outdoor climbing frame, broken or badly worn furniture, which could cause splinters; or a well-used and tatty changing table, which can no longer be hygienically cleaned;
- IT equipment provided it can be clearly shown that there is a need in order to deliver Childcare Offer places, this could include laptops and printers;
- Adaptations to the setting to improve access;
- The provision of bespoke equipment / furniture which will enable a provider to accommodate a child with additional learning needs;
- Purchasing equipment which will enable the setting to accommodate 3 and 4 year olds; and
- Toward the purchase of a minibus which would be used to transport children between the childcare and education elements of the Offer. Leasing costs are not

eligible for funding and neither are running costs such as insurance, petrol and servicing.

The larger schemes vary in size and complexity. Some involve the refurbishment of existing settings to enable them to expand and deliver services to more children. Some involve the provision of new and dedicated childcare provision on school sites to enable the co-location of both elements of the Offer. A full list of the capital grants awarded by Local Authority area is attached as an annex to this letter.

**A copy of the letter issued to Play Wales outlining the remit associated with its funding in the last financial year, and an indication of what will be expected to be delivered from the funding it is allocated in the Draft Budget 2020-21**

You have also asked for some additional information regarding the funding of £360,000 allocated to Play Wales within the draft budget for 2020-21.

As the first country in the world to enshrine the right to play in legislation, Wales is considered a world leader in this arena. The funding provided to Play Wales enables them to support Welsh Government, local authorities and play organisations to plan and deliver better play opportunities for children. It also enables us to share our experiences and learn from those of other countries given the international standing Play Wales holds.

In this regard, our funding of Play Wales replicates the approach taken with a number of other organisations including the Cwlwm Consortium, which provides expert advice and support on a range of matters relating to childcare, and Children in Wales. The involvement of expert partners is a key part of collaboratively developing integrated policies and programmes.

The funding provided to Play Wales specifically enables them to deliver against four core objectives which are critical to the delivery of high quality play experiences:

- work with individuals, organisations and networks to inform the development of policy and matters related to children's play in Wales.
- promote the value of children's play in Wales through the provision of timely and current information to their stakeholders.
- provide specialist knowledge and advice regarding all issues about and affecting children's play.
- contribute to the professional development of the play and playwork workforce in Wales.

The grant offer letter for 2020-21 will be issued after the final budget is agreed. The signed grant offer letter for 2019-20 can be found in the link below. We do not expect any major differences to the grant offer letter for 2020-21.

<https://documents.hf.wales.gov.uk/id:A25749272/document/versions/published>

An up to date copy of the Play Wales Operational Plan for 2018-2020 can be found at:

<https://documents.hf.wales.gov.uk/id:A28695206/document/versions/published>

**Further details of the purposes for which the Welsh Government has allocated £2.3 million in its Draft Budget 2020-21 to local authorities for adoption services, and further detail about its response to concerns raised by Adoption UK Wales about the impact on support services of its unsuccessful bid for Sustainable Social Services Third Sector Grant funding for 2020-21**

- The £2.3 million investment is being used to transform the adoption support 'offer' in Wales and is also being creatively used to match fund other resources to ensure widest reach. It is intended that this 'Core Offer' will:
  - - equip adoptive families at the start and support their early days to encourage healthy and confident families;
    - provide effective information, advice or support as and when families need it and in a timely way so any issues that arise are less likely to escalate into more serious issues; and
    - provide ongoing support or easy re-entry to services where it is needed.
- New and Innovative services are being developed through this funding, many in partnership with the Welsh Voluntary Adoption Agencies for example TESSA, Adopting Together and Connected (a service for adopted children and young people).
- TESSA (Therapy, Education & Support Services in Adoption), a UK wide Lottery funded service is being rolled out across Wales; utilising match funding from this investment to provide wider reach in Wales. Based on delivery through paid parent-partners (experienced and trained adopters) it incorporates an expert psychology assessment and a 6 week course (based on a successful service provided by one Health Board in Wales), plus access to other recommended support services. It remains low cost, early take up is good and is being academically evaluated. When it is fully functional it will provide a services to circa 200 adoptive families in Wales at any one time. The services started taking referrals in November and 18 families are already accessing it.
- The 'Connected' service is the only specialist resource for adopted children and young people in Wales (replaced Talk Adoption). The investment is being used to ensure that it is available in all parts of Wales and also complemented by an advice and Information service provided for adopted C&YP in similar ways to that for non-adopted C&YP and a young adopted adults ambassador scheme provides mechanisms for consultation engagement and promotion of adoption. A similar match funding model is being used to ensure widest reach. 100 C&YP were offered transfer to new service and 70 C&YP currently registered and receiving service while it is grown. A national development officer has been appointed as have 4 out 5 regional officers. Scoping for national adopted C&YP advice and information offer has commenced and the young adopted adult ambassador scheme commenced with 3 recruited so far.
- The investment is also being used to change and improve practice across Wales. NAS has commissioned AFA Cymru to work with the sector to develop new best practice approaches to the following:
  - - placing children and providing early support (including Adopting Together);
    - contact which is effectively facilitated by regional services / agencies;
    - adoption support assessment, planning and review for all children; and
    - working with birth parents incl. links to Reflect projects.
- alongside this services are piloting different these approaches to inform the new guidance which is already impacting on children and families

- Circa 25 families supported in regions that developed the new approach to placement and early support plus 7 children placed to date through the Adopting Together Service
  - 80+ people attended event held in collaboration with Voices from Care, Cardiff University and Children's Legal Centre in June 2019. in relation to Contact and letterbox contact plans for circa 2,300 children are being reviewed / service improved
  - 50 birth families supported to date by the new resources.
- The investment is also being utilised to embed the new approach to Life Journey work - 4 out of 5 regions have appointed new Life Journey Work coordinators with 154 children receiving life journey materials at matching and 147 children receiving complete life journey materials at 2<sup>nd</sup> adoption review so far this year.
  - A proportion of the investment is also being used in two regions to support awareness raising about adoption, training and development of staff in social care and partners agencies so that there is an improved range of therapeutic interventions available to support adopted children and families.
  - There is also a proportion of the investment being used to support the NAS priority of recruiting more adopters.
  - The intention as we move forward is primarily to continue use of the resources as outlined above. Much of it has been invested in capacity to deliver more services and deliver them consistently across Wales. In particular in relation to Adoption Support this is part of an overall strategic plan to implement the NAs Adoption Support Framework which will become the 'Core Offer'. However inevitably linked or new priorities will emerge and we will be seeking to be creative and flexible to use the resources to meet these as we go forward.

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Officials met with Adoption UK on 13th January to discuss the impact on their service delivery of being unsuccessful in their application for the Sustainable Social Services Third Sector Grant funding from 2020 onwards. This was a positive meeting and as a next step, officials have requested a detailed business case from Adoption UK Cymru which will set out the services for which funding is being requested. A detailed discussion of the business case will then take place between Adoption UK and officials very soon. The proposals will then be submitted quickly to ministers for further consideration

Yours sincerely,



**Vaughan Gething AC/AM**

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services