

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau
Minister for Local Government and Communities



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-361
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/06830/12

William Powell AM
Chair Petition's committee
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27 August 2012

Thank you for your letter dated 6 August 2012 to Leighton Andrews AM, the Minister for Education and Skills, regarding the petition from students at Llandrillo College requesting a free Arriva bus pass to travel to and from College. I am replying as home to college transport falls within my portfolio.

The Welsh Government is committed to assisting students from low-income families with the costs associated with study. In addition to the Education Maintenance Allowance and the Assembly Learning Grant, the Welsh Government provides support for those students facing hardship through the Financial Contingency Fund.

It was with great interest that I read the students' proposals for funding the free Arriva bus pass scheme.

I am greatly impressed by the details set out in the students' proposed scheme. However, I take the view that the proposed scheme would not be workable from the practical point of view due to the lack of quantitative and qualitative information, such as an estimation of the costs of administering the scheme; full consideration of all the potential variations which could affect affordability; and comprehensive consultation with the body of students who are in receipt of the Educational Maintenance Allowance to allow for a full assessment of the impact of the scheme upon them.

Regrettably, the Welsh Government is not able to take forward or fund a scheme that would provide free travel for students and learners aged between 16-25 due to the tighter budgetary constraints to which we are subject and the background of competing demands which have to be taken into account.

However, given the clear merits of the students' proposals, I would advise that the students concerned raise the matter with the relevant local authorities, the College and commercial operators to establish whether it is feasible for a free Arriva bus pass to be provided.

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

Carl Sargeant AC / AM

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