

Jane Hutt AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyllid
Minister for Finance



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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William Powell AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
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Dear William,

I am writing in response to your recent letters to the Minister for Education and Skills, the Minister for Health and Social Services, and I about a petition your Committee has received from Aled Davies regarding the Regional SEN Transition into Employment Initiative (Real Opportunities project). The project is currently being supported through the 2007–2013 European Structural Fund programmes and I am responding as these programmes fall within my Ministerial portfolio.

I wrote to Mr Davies on 28 July noting that I am pleased that European Structural Funds has supported such a successful project, which has helped him and the lives of over 1,760 young people and their families in Wales.

The project started in September 2010 and was initially due to finish on 30 September 2013, but was later extended by the Welsh European Funding Office to September 2014. I understand that Caerphilly County Borough Council, the lead project sponsor, had requested an additional extension which would have required additional EU funding, but unfortunately, due to current ESF programme 2007–2013 commitment levels, WEFO was unable to agree to this request.

I am pleased, however, that the new European Structural Funds programmes 2014–2020, which are currently being negotiated with the European Commission, include dedicated investment priorities to support youth employment and attainment in Wales as these are high priorities for the Welsh Government.

WEFO recognises the achievements of the Regional SEN project and is keen to see the activity continue. It has therefore encouraged Caerphilly Council to explore opportunities for funding within these new programmes and to submit a new project proposal to help progress discussions as quickly as possible.

*Your sincerely,
Jane*

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