

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-707
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/06009/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
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3 November 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 25 October, regarding whether the Welsh Government intends to address the issues of autism in initial teacher education (ITE), through the forthcoming Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill.

The Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language has responsibility for the ALN and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill. He has previously announced his intention to introduce the Bill into the National Assembly before this year's Christmas recess.

The Welsh Government recently considered the inclusion of specific provisions for autism within the Bill and concluded that this would not be appropriate given the Bill's intended scope and the stage it has reached in its development. Instead, we have committed to the consideration of future legislation on autism, once we are in a position to assess the impact of changes introduced by the Social Services and Well-being Act and the refreshed Autistic Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan for Wales.

Earlier this year, the Welsh Government launched the Learning with Autism Programme for primary schools, which raises awareness across the whole school community. In collaboration with WLGA, we are now extending the Learning with Autism Training Programme into Secondary schools and Further Education. This will increase our ability to recognise signs of autism at an earlier age.

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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.

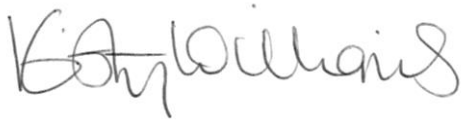
As you will be aware from my previous correspondence, we are reforming the way in which ITE is delivered in Wales. On 20 September, I made an oral statement setting out my priorities for ITE reform. A copy of the full statement is accessible at the link below.

<http://www.assembly.wales/en/bus-home/pages/rop.aspx?meetingid=3990&language=en&assembly=5&c=Record%20of%20Proceedings&keyword=ITE>

Consultation on the draft accreditation criteria for ITE programmes in Wales, and proposals for an enhanced role for the Education Workforce Council, is open until 14 November.

<https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/initial-teacher-education-accreditation>

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams'.

Kirsty Williams AC/AM

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Cabinet Secretary for Education