

Huw Lewis AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-581  
Ein cyf/Our ref HL/00014/15

William Powell AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

14 January 2015

Dear William

Thank you for your letter dated 30 September on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding Petition P-04-581 from Helen Meyers about the reduction in the Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant (MEAG).

The Welsh Government supports local authorities through the administration of the MEAG, which helps raise the educational attainment of children from minority ethnic backgrounds. The MEAG is provided to reimburse local authorities for eligible expenditure to support children and young people from minority ethnic backgrounds who are learning English, or Welsh, as an additional language and to improve standards of achievement for pupils from minority backgrounds who are under achieving, or at risk of doing so, for reasons other than language acquisition.

I do recognise that pressure on services will continue to grow as the numbers of minority ethnic learners increase, and that there will be a disproportionate impact on some areas of Wales. That is why we need to be considering the focus of the grant and ensuring that funding is directed at areas of need where its impact will be greatest. There are significant pressures on a range of funded programmes and it is right that we look critically at both existing and future budgets. In that context, we must be prepared, collectively, to consider how we might continue to live within the tight financial constraints while delivering better, and more effectively targeted, services to improve outcomes for all learners, including those with more diverse needs.

In 2014-15, the Welsh Government does need to make some reductions in our education funding, whilst continuing to deliver against our commitment to protect schools funding by 1% above the rate of change to the Welsh block. My officials have been working with colleagues in local government to identify how we can best achieve these reductions. I have written to local authority Chief Executives on this matter. One of the areas identified where there has been an impact is the MEAG. However, our approach has been to seek to work with Chief Executives in identifying how additional flexibility around a number of grants might enable authorities and consortia to identify alternative areas to make the required savings to lessen the impact on schools and learners. The proposals I have approved go some way to lessen the impact on schools and learners and the resulting changes will be reflected in the second supplementary Budget. My officials continue to work with officers in Swansea City Council to examine how the savings which are required might be delivered.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Huw Lewis', written in black ink.

**Huw Lewis AC / AM**  
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills