



Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref SF/LA/6176/11
Christine Chapman AM
Chair
Children and Young People
Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

2 November 2011

Jean Augustine,

At my attendance at the Children and Young People Committee on 19 October, I agreed to write to provide further information on local authority spending on nursery education.

All local authorities have a statutory duty to make available a free part-time Foundation Phase place for all children from the term following their third birthday. Funding to support local authorities in meeting this duty is provided through the Local Government Revenue Settlement.

In order to distribute the resources provided through the settlement, in line with authorities' need to spend to deliver a standard level of service, the distribution formula reflects the drivers of spend for the range of different services covered.

The funding for the Foundation Phase is included in the 'Nursery and primary school teaching and other services' Indicator Based Assessment (IBA) for the 2011-12 financial year. This IBA also covers other spending on delivery of nursery and primary school teaching and overall showed a settlement share of £957.6m.

The ability of unitary authorities to set their own spending priorities remains an important part of the Welsh Revenue Support Grant (RSG) distribution system. Therefore, the service IBA is not intended for use in determining individual authorities' budgeted expenditure on particular services.

Local authorities also receive a specific grant to support the implementation of the Foundation Phase across the whole 3 to 7 age range. This grant is used for four purposes:

- Employment of classroom assistants;
- Employment of a Foundation Phase Training and Support Officer;
- Delivery of Foundation Phase training programmes; and
- Qualified teacher support of the funded non-maintained settings delivering the Foundation Phase.

In the 2011-12 financial year a total grant of £89m was distributed to local authorities using the same formula as that for the 'Nursery and primary school teaching and other services'.

I trust that this provides you with the clarification requested by the Committee on 19 October.

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

Leighton Andrews AC / AM

Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills