

Ruth Hatton
Deputy Committee Clerk
Proposed Additional Learning Needs LCO Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Monday 24th September 2007

Dear Ms Hatton

I am writing on behalf of the membership of **All Wales People First**. We are an organisation bringing together local People First Self advocacy groups from all 22 counties in Wales. All Wales People First is the united voice of self-advocacy groups and all people with learning disabilities in Wales.

All Wales People First:

- collects people's news and views
- shares information
- finds out what is going on around the country
- finds out what is important in people's lives
- campaigns to improve the lives of people with learning disabilities
- puts people in touch with each other from all over Wales
- helps groups to be in touch with the National Assembly for Wales
- supports self-advocacy groups to get going and keep going

We are pleased to have the opportunity to respond to this consultation. We fully support the Assembly's move to gain these new powers and look forward to working with you as you finalise the legislation and develop a Welsh solution that will enable people with learning disabilities the full range of opportunities that mainstream society has.

Answers to Questions

1. Would the terms of the proposed Order allow for the implementation of the policy agenda on additional learning needs by means of Measures? If not how would the proposed Order need to be re-drafted and why?



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We feel that it is important that the Welsh Assembly takes on responsibility for developing special education in Wales. This will give the opportunity for us to work more closely with you to produce Assembly Measures which enable young people with a learning disability to fully realise their potential through education at all levels.

Our members wrote a very challenging manifesto before the Welsh Assembly Elections. The manifesto clearly states our hopes for education for people with learning disabilities in Wales. I have copied the manifesto section below.

We have the right to personal growth.

The WAG should make sure that by the end of 2007 every child under 5 with learning disabilities can take part - with the support they need - in the same play and learning opportunities as other children.

The WAG should make sure that from 1 September 2008 every child with learning disabilities starting school can benefit - with the support they need - from the same schools as other children.

The WAG should make sure that from 1 September 2008 every school leaver who wants to can take up - with the support they need - the same college courses as other students.

Our membership have made it clear through the manifesto that they see mainstream education alongside their peers as the greatest opportunity to develop their skills and life experience that will enable them to go onto achieve all that they want from life; whether that be from continuing education, employment or socially.

We are confident the terms of the proposed Order would allow Wales to use Assembly Measures to develop a system of opportunity, personal enhancement and equality in Wales.

2. Is it appropriate for the proposed Order to cover all persons? If not, how should the proposed Order be re-drafted and why?

We believe that the Order should cover all persons. Access to education and training should not be limited to young people. After all, many young people with additional education needs are let down and need educational opportunity later in life. The drafting as it stands is therefore appropriate.

3. Is the definition of disability in the proposed Order appropriate? If not, how should the definition be re-drafted and why?

The definition of disability is broad enough to cover people with learning disabilities.

4. Are the terms of the proposed Order drafted appropriately, too narrowly or too broadly? If necessary, how should the proposed Order be re-drafted and why?

We are happy with the Order as drafted.

In conclusion, we would like to stress that it is important that the Committee considers directly the voices and views of people with disabilities during its deliberations. The operation of All Wales People First based on a self-advocacy principle means we are able to support people with learning disabilities – including young people – to **provide oral evidence directly to your Committee**. We would therefore very much welcome the opportunity to address you directly during the coming months.

All Wales People First wishes you every success in your ground-breaking work and hopes we can contribute further to your crucial work.

Yours sincerely,



PP. Chair members committee
All Wales People First