



All Local Authority Leaders
and Chief Executives

9 October 2015

Dear Leader and Chief Executive

The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 places a statutory duty on your authority to undertake assessments of the travel needs of learners in your area.

This statutory duty includes undertaking risk assessments of walked routes to school. In making assessments of travel needs, your authority must pay particular attention to the needs of the most vulnerable learners who have physical and cognitive impairments or who are 'looked after'.

You have a duty to make suitable travel arrangements for learners based on age and distance criteria. Where your travel arrangements require children to walk to and from pick up points for learner transport, you must ensure that both the walked route and the learner transport itself are suitable. Such transport arrangements must be safe, not take unreasonable time and not cause unreasonable stress.

In June 2014, I published new risk assessment guidance for walked routes to school which extended the criteria by which walked routes are judged to be unsafe. Mechanisms were also put in place by which learners could express their views on the safety of walked routes between home and school. In June this year, my Officials sought information from each authority so that they could examine the first year of operating the new regime.

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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.

I am dismayed to learn that seven local authorities have not completed any risk assessments, and of those that have undertaken risk assessments, only eight have consulted with children and young people. It is clear that in some cases, local authorities have not undertaken the risk assessments as a matter of routine but only in response to specific approaches from parents and carers.

Please be reminded of your duties as a local authority in this regard. As a matter of urgency, I would like you to set out what measures you will be putting in place to ensure that your authority complies with the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in this respect.

I am clear that the safety of learners on the home to school route is of paramount importance.

Edwina Mant