



All Local Authority Leaders
and Chief Executives

28 July 2014

Dear Leaders and Chief Executives

I am writing to follow up matters relating to the provision of free learner travel. I have received a large amount of correspondence on this issue and a number of issues were raised with me during a short debate in Plenary on 9 July.

Assembly Members highlighted a number of matters that I agreed to give further consideration to including:

- Distance to school limits
- Parental choice in relation language and faith
- Provision for children and young people with Additional Learning Needs
- Post-16 provision

I have given careful consideration to the issues raised to ensure that the current legislation is consistent with the Welsh Government's duties in relation to equality, the Welsh language and children's rights. Having considered the matters raised, I am satisfied that the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 is consistent with these wider duties. On this basis I do not intend bringing forward any changes to the legislation at this time, but I have an open mind on the case for change and will continue to give careful consideration to the policy issues raised in any future policy development and the scope to further promote equality and children's rights in future.

We all recognise that Local Authorities face difficult choices in managing reducing budgets and maintaining services. However, it is crucial that decisions on which services to retain and which to change or remove are informed by meaningful impact assessments.

I expect Local Authorities proposing changes to learner travel provision to undertake the necessary impact assessments of their proposals and to ensure that their final decisions on service provision are informed by those assessments.

I am copying this letter to the Minister for Local Government and Government Business and the Minister for Education and Skills.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. M.', is located in the upper left quadrant of the page. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small mark at the end.