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Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref HL/01683/15

September 2015

Dear

Thank you for your email of 21 August about support for postgraduate students and school pupils.

The provision of support for postgraduate study is a priority for the Welsh Government and I have asked Sir Ian Diamond and a panel of experts to consider the issue as part of a wider review into higher education and student finance. The panel will issue its summary of evidence this autumn and its recommendations in 2016.

In the meantime, I am considering the implications of the announcement of a postgraduate support system in England and the options for a similar scheme in Wales. I hope that I will be in a position to make the Welsh Government's position clear in the near future.

Regarding support for our young people, statutory student support for Welsh undergraduate students is the most generous package of any UK administration, notably the tuition fee grant and the partial cancellation of maintenance loan which reduces their debt burden.

You refer to authorities in England spending more per pupil every year than schools in Wales. These figures cannot be substantiated as changes in school structures in England mean that it is no longer possible to produce a meaningful comparison of per pupil school spend with Wales. Aside from the different responsibilities and patterns of spend of schools in England, funding arrangements, especially with the introduction of academies and promotion of free schools, have become complex and lacking in transparency.

In Wales we have been completely transparent and continue to publish figures on an annual basis covering the whole of the maintained sector, including an estimate of per pupil budgets for each local authority and school. However, the Department for Education in England can no longer provide the equivalent data for comparison. The Chief Statistician's update on the matter can be found at the following location: <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/about/user-engagement/chief-statisticians-update/?lang=en>

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