

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

County Council
20 July 2023

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor David Selby
Cabinet Member for a More Prosperous Powys

SUBJECT: Question from Colin Olivant

Here in Powys we have great Schools that educate children with Special Needs, however, that is as far as it seems to go. Once children leave these schools options are limited in respect of residential colleges, we have to jump through a lot of hoops and complete endless paperwork just to get a suitable place which is out of County. Have Powys thought about having a residential College like Coleg Elidyr in Llandovery based in Powys where children with Special Educational Needs can attend? This would reduce the stress and strains parents have to be put through when applying and being told sorry it's out of County, this in my opinion limits the further education for SEN children. I understand Powys want their money to stay in Powys but NPTC just do not offer what is needed all the time plus as the title says "Neath Port Talbot" the money is still going out of County.

Response

The decision making for granting a placement at a residential special school/college was made by Welsh Government. The statement of special educational need of a young person would have to cease, a Section 1.40 assessment would be carried out and a learning and skills plan would be created by Careers Wales, and this would need to be submitted to Welsh Government for a decision and approval. The funding was held at a Welsh Government level. Welsh Government would expect that all local colleges had been contacted to enquire about their capacity to meet a young persons need, and additional discussions would be held with a local authorities social care service to deem whether the residential aspect of the provision was necessary. The final decision was not made by the local authority.

As we transition to the new ALN Act* and Code**, the decision making process and funding allocation has been given to the local authority. The funding is distributed on a formula devised by Welsh Government.

Further Education colleges are independently owned, and not part of the Education portfolio in local authorities across Wales, nor in Powys. At this time there are no plans to develop a specialist residential college in Powys. The number of young people that meet the criteria and threshold for a place at a residential specialist college is very small; therefore at this time it would not be cost effective to provide this service internally.

Learners within Powys that have a statement of special educational need or an Individual Development Plan within the new Act and meet the threshold for attending one of our special schools can attend post-16 education in these schools until they are 19 years of age. The Inclusion and Youth Services Team are working with schools to improve the offer at Post-16 for learners with ALN, and this forms a major workstream on the service plan.

Our ALN team are available to give further help and assistance should it be needed.

*Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018

**Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales (2021)