

(Email to: SeneddPetitions@Assembly.Wales)

5 August 2020

Dear Janet Finch-Saunders MS,

RE: Petition P-05-932 Education On Food Allergies In Schools & Mandatory EPI PEN Training

Thank you for your letter dated 3rd April 2020 regarding the petition 'Education on food allergies & mandatory EPI PEN training'. The petitioner rightly raises understandable food safety concerns which, if left unmanaged, can result in the most tragic of circumstances.

ADEW recognises the important need for pupils to learn about food allergies and food safety in school. When it comes into force, there are unique opportunities for schools to incorporate this into the Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning and Experience as they design local curricula under the new Curriculum for Wales arrangements.

With regard to staff training, healthcare policies and EPI Pens: All maintained nurseries, mainstream schools, special schools and pupil referral units have a statutory duty to properly support learners' healthcare needs, including those with allergies. These arrangements should be established in line with [Supporting Learners with Healthcare Needs](#). This includes supporting staff training where appropriate. Local authorities are responsible for monitoring effective implementation and you will be aware that we have already given assurances to the Minister for Education that appropriate healthcare needs policies are in place.

The Welsh Government published [Guidance on the use of emergency adrenaline auto-injectors in schools in Wales](#) in October 2017. Although non-statutory, it contains helpful emergency information and advice on how schools can respond to allergy signs, anaphylaxis, how to use Adrenaline Auto-Injectors (AAIs) and how to record incidents.

Schools are not required to hold spare AAIs for emergency use - this is a discretionary power enabling schools to do so if they so wish. If a school decides to hold a spare AAI, then they should produce a policy on its use. This policy needs to be developed in line with both guidance documents listed above. A spare AAI can be used if the pupil's prescribed AAI is not available, for example because it is broken or expired, and should only be administered to a pupil known to be at risk of anaphylaxis:

- whose own prescribed AAI cannot be administered correctly, without delay; and
- where consent has been given by the parent or where appropriate the pupil.

Any AAI held by a school should be considered a spare or back-up device and not a replacement for a pupil's own AAI.

The Petitions Committee may also be interested to know that the WLGA have recently recruited a National Dietitian for Special Diets in Schools. Initially, she is further developing guidance and resources for managing special food requirements in schools, focusing on those that may not require an Individual Healthcare Plan (e.g. mild allergies, intolerances, modified dining environment, vegan). In the longer term, she will be reviewing training provisions for catering and school staff in Wales and may develop bespoke training resources, covering broader issues than epi-pen administration.

Yours sincerely,

Karen Evans

Chair of ADEW