



CYNGOR SIR  
YNYS MÔN  
ISLE OF ANGLESEY  
COUNTY COUNCIL

**CYNGOR GWYNEDD A CHYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN  
GWYNEDD COUNCIL AND ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Cyd-Bwyllgor Anghenion Addysgol Arbennig • Special Educational Needs Joint Committee**

Plas Llanwnda, Stryd y Castell, Caernarfon, Gwynedd. LL55 1SH

☎ 01286 679

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Ein Cyf • Our Ref:

Gofynnwch am • Ask for:

Mr Rhun ap Iorwerth, Aelod Cynulliad Cymru  
27 Stryd yr Eglwys, Llangefni Ynys Môn  
LL77 7DU.  
Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru, Bae Caerdydd  
CF99 1NA.

22/11/13

Dear Rhun ap Iorwerth

**Difficulties of Training Educational Psychologists in Wales**

The Special Educational Needs Joint Committee provide educational psychology services to Anglesey and Gwynedd education authorities, and I write to draw your attention to a **crisis** which has arisen in the profession, and to ask you to do all within your power to help us.

Educational psychologists work with schools and education authorities to ensure they are able to meet the educational needs of all children, especially those with special, or additional, educational needs. It is a statutory service and plays an important role in the process of producing and carrying out the requirements of Statements of Special Educational Needs according to the 1996 Education Act.

The crisis which has arisen is this: recent changes in the way psychologists are trained have led to the situation where it is, to all intents and purposes, impossible for anyone from Wales to obtain a place on a training course.

The training route is this: a first degree in psychology, varied experience including working with children, (which might be, but not necessarily, as a teacher,) and a three-year professional course leading to a doctorate degree.

There are a number of courses in English universities and, until recently, in Cardiff University.

The course in Cardiff closes this year (see attached paper, from the course directors). This was announced on 25/10/13.

It is not practical for would-be psychologists who live, and desire to work as a psychologist afterwards, in Wales to apply to a course in England. This is because, in addition to attending the course for three years, it is a requirement for them afterwards

to work as educational psychologists in an education authority, or in schools, in England. **Working in an education authority in Wales is not considered to be equivalent to working in England - this would not be acceptable to them.**

All this raises serious problems in ensuring a supply of professional psychologists in our schools and authorities in Wales. It is inevitable that a large number of those psychologists who have gone to England to train will decide to stay there in the long term, considering that they are not young people straight from college, because of the requirement for experience before going on a course, and they will have, by the end of the 5 years, posts in England.

The problem is considerably more severe within our own context here in Anglesey and Gwynedd, and is **already truly a crisis**, because of the need to provide a service through the Welsh language.

Historically we have found it difficult to employ psychologists who are fluent in Welsh, and have employed individuals as trainee psychologists, and made arrangements for them to train and then return to the authorities to work. At the moment there are 9 psychologists working for the service, and 9 of these followed this training pattern.

Recently psychologists have left our service and we have been unable to employ qualified psychologists who are Welsh-speaking in their place, despite having advertised nationally twice within the last 8 months.

Annual surveys we have conducted show that the schools appreciate our service, but we are not able to offer equivalent support at the moment, with less regular contact with the schools, and we have employed a psychologist who is a Welsh learner.

**More especially**, we have employed two trainee psychologists who are very experienced and of exceptionally high educational standards, and who are by now ready to apply for a course to start in September 2014. However the course in Cardiff is not now running and they do not wish to go to train in England, and then have to work there for an additional two years. They are fluent Welsh speakers who wish to work in the area.

I sincerely hope that you will be willing to raise this issue in Cardiff, considering the closing of the Cardiff course, and the attitude of universities in England that working in an education authority and schools in Wales is a less valuable experience than working in authorities and schools in England.

Yours sincerely



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Ein Cyf • Our Ref:

Gofynnwch am • Ask for:

Mr Albert Owen AS  
18 Thomas Street, Holyhead, Anglesey  
LL65 8RR  
Houses of Parliament, Westminster, London  
SW1A 2TT

22/11/13

Dear Albert Owen

**Difficulties of Training Educational Psychologists in Wales**

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I sincerely hope that you will be willing to raise this issue in Westminster, **especially considering the attitude of universities in England that working in an education authority and schools in Wales is a less valuable experience than working in authorities and schools in England.**

Yours sincerely