

Our Ref/Ein Cyf:

ST/NA/JD

Your Ref/Eich Cyf:

Date/Dyddiad:

16th April 2013

Please ask for/Gofynnwch am:

Naomi Alleyne

Direct line/Llinell uniongyrchol:

029 2046 8660

Email/Ebost:

naomi.alleyne@wlga.gov.uk



WLGA • CLILC

Mr William Powell AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Dear Mr Powell

Armed Forces Recruitment in Schools

Thank you for your letter dated 20th February 2013 seeking views on the petition urging the Welsh Government to recommend that the armed forces should not go into schools to recruit. The WLGA is submitting this response in reply to your letter.

The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) represents the 22 local authorities in Wales, and the three national park authorities and the three fire and rescue authorities are associate members. The Association seeks to provide representation to local authorities within an emerging policy framework that satisfies the key priorities of our members and delivers a broad range of services that add value to Welsh local government and the communities they serve.

It is our understanding that local authorities in Wales do not take a particular stance on the Armed Forces visiting schools to recruit. It is generally the responsibility of the school and governing body in each local authority area to decide whether they want to invite the Armed Forces to visit their school, not only in relation to highlighting opportunities for careers in the armed forces but also in relation to building relationships with local communities. As such, the WLGA is not in a position to comment specifically on the questions set out in the consultation letter however we would like to make some general comments for consideration as part of your deliberations on the petition:

- The Armed Forces do not only visit school settings to engage with young people. This engagement may take place across a number of educational settings, including pupil referral units (PRU's), alternative education programmes, colleges of Further Education and Youth Service settings.

Steve Thomas CBE
Chief Executive
Prif Weithredwr

Welsh Local Government
Association
Local Government House
Drake Walk
CARDIFF CF10 4LG
Tel: 029 2046 8600

Cymdeithas Llywodraeth
Leol Cymru
Tŷ Llywodraeth Leol
Rhodfa Drake
CAERDYDD CF10 4LG
Ffôn: 029 2046 8600

www.wlga.gov.uk

- The engagement of young people with the Armed Forces may help some young people with self esteem and confidence issues, as well as developing resilience and wider skills and may encourage them to take part in healthy (mainly outdoor) activities. This can also include helping them to make informed decisions as to whether they want to join the Armed Forces. It is important that young people should receive objective guidance on joining the Armed Forces. Many young people use the opportunity of visiting Armed Forces to help inform their decisions for a future career.
- Due to ongoing cuts in funding for the armed forces, recruitment is not currently a priority. However, there are a number of positive joint programmes carried out in partnership between schools, local government and other organisations and the Armed Forces for young people. These can include armed forces personnel returning from overseas duties working with young people in schools, communities and specialist training facilities. The main focus of these activities is to provide young people with opportunities to take part in a series of positive experiences and, in some cases, immerse themselves in scenarios and environments they would otherwise not have the opportunity to do i.e. by being taken them beyond their own community (or comfort zone) to parts of Wales they would otherwise not have the chance to visit. This can present challenges and positive learning experiences.

The WLGA would be happy to provide further information on the issues highlighted above if you think that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'S' at the beginning.

Steve Thomas CBE
Chief Executive / Prif Weithredwr