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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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26 January 2026

Dear Buffy

Thank you for your letter of 9 December regarding our work to take forward the recommendations made by the Interim Youth Work Board in their final report – “Time to deliver for young people in Wales”. I am proud of our ongoing support for the youth work sector as well as the progress made to date in response to the Interim Board’s recommendations aimed at developing a sustainable delivery model for youth work in Wales. I would like to acknowledge the constructive and valuable engagement that representatives across the youth work sector continue to provide as we take this work forward.

I will address the key points raised in your letter in sequence.

- 1. How does the proposed definition of youth work align with the aspirations for a sustainable model of youth work delivery as set out in “Time to deliver for young people in Wales”? What steps will be taken to ensure that the definition reflects the sector’s vision and addresses the concerns highlighted through the consultation process?**

Our draft statutory framework for youth work published for consultation in autumn 2024 included a definition of youth work. The purpose of this definition was to ensure clarity and consistency as part of the duty that we propose to place on all local authorities to secure the delivery of youth work – either directly through their own local authority-led provision, or through their work with partners. It is vital that a definition of this kind distinguishes youth work from other activities for young people. Without a clear and robust definition, we cannot hold local authorities accountable for the provision of a youth work service. As set out in the summary of responses to our consultation, there were a range of views on the proposed definition. Careful work has been undertaken since that point to look in detail at this aspect of the framework to consider how best to achieve our aims as well as address the concerns

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

raised. This has included detailed engagement with representatives from the voluntary sector, including CWVYS.

2. While the sector welcomes the creation of a national body for youth work, concerns have been raised about a perceived top-down approach. How will the Welsh Government ensure that the new body operates as a genuine partnership model, working collaboratively with CWVYS, WLGA and other stakeholders?

I am eager to ensure this national body elevates youth work, supports and enables collaboration, innovation and excellence across the youth work sector and between youth work and other partners, and ultimately enhances the youth work offer for young people across Wales. I am also eager to ensure that it does not stifle or cut across the way in which youth work is so adept at responding to the needs of young people. However, I would like to emphasise that no decision has yet been made on the role and remit of a national body for youth work in Wales. A delivery board which includes representatives from CWVYS, WLGA and other key partners has been established to work in collaboration with Welsh Government to shape this national body as well as informing how others across the sector feed into its development and implementation. This delivery board has already met twice, and a key focus for its discussions to date has included how to engage with young people and the youth work sector more widely. The Terms of Reference and minutes from the first meeting will be published shortly on the Welsh Government's website. I look forward to hearing more about their work and advice to help drive this work forward.

3. We note that the full consultation responses have not been published, can the Welsh Government provide details of the changes it intends to make to the final statutory framework, specifically those informed by consultation responses? Can the full consultation responses be provided to aid transparency?

All consultation responses have been carefully considered as part of our work to refine the statutory framework for youth work. The final phases of this work will conclude over the weeks ahead, with the final framework due for publication by April 2026. Further details on how consultation responses have informed the final framework will be provided at that point. I have also asked my officials to arrange for all consultation responses to be made available online, to help address the concerns raised in your letter regarding the transparency of this phase of the work.

4. If the new framework is to proceed largely unchanged from that outlined in last year's consultation, how will the Welsh Government address concerns raised with us that these proposals: risk creating barriers for voluntary organisations, potentially impose 'unrealistic' qualification requirements, and lack sufficient clarity and flexibility to ensure consistent implementation across Wales?

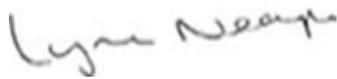
As noted above, great care has been taken to ensure we look in detail at the responses received to our consultation on a draft statutory framework for youth work. The refined framework will take account of these responses, as well as the careful and constructive engagement with stakeholders undertaken over recent months. Further support is also being put in place to help address the barriers identified by voluntary organisations, including focused action to support workforce capacity and expertise within voluntary organisations. Once again, I would like to acknowledge the positive and constructive discussions with partners, including CWVYS, which have enabled us to work together to explore how the framework is centred around a collaborative approach to the planning and delivery of youth work.

- 5. Given that it will be nearly ten years since the Committee's original inquiry by the end of this Senedd term, what is the timeline for implementing this very important next phase of youth work policy? How will progress be monitored and reported to ensure accountability?**

As noted in my statement on 1 December, the final statutory framework is due to be published by April 2026, with the first five-year youth work strategic plans commencing in April 2027. Detailed work is underway in partnership with the National Body for Youth Work Delivery Board to develop a comprehensive timeline for the establishment of that organisation.

Once again, I would like to thank all those who have engaged in this important work.

Yours sincerely,



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