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Gweinidog y Gymraeg a Dysgu Gydol Oes
Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref MAP/ARD/0213/17

Lynne Neagle AM
Chair of the Committee
Children, Young People & Education Committee

6 February 2017

Dear Lynne,

Thank you for your letter of 12 January regarding funding arrangements for the Council for Wales Voluntary Youth Organisation (CWVYS) and the role of CVCs in sharing good practice in youth work and providing a link between the statutory and voluntary sector.

It is unfortunate the Committee continue to feel I have not addressed all its questions. It was my clear intention to both answer the questions and to go further by providing the Committee with additional information with which to contextualise those answers.

I indicated, during my appearance before the Committee in October, that I had been following the Committee's inquiry closely and that I was considering my position as a consequence of the evidence that the Committee had received. As a part of this consideration I felt that it may be appropriate to explore a different approach to securing representation and support for the sector on 19 October 2016. The current or future funding arrangements with CWVYS was not discussed with the Youth Work Reference Group, or the wider sector in advance of this decision as this would not have been appropriate to discuss the funding of any particular organisation with others.

My officials meet with CWVYS on a regular basis. There were a number of specific engagements with CWVYS in the run up to the decision to change the funding approach. On 17 December 2015 my officials met with the Chief Executive and the Chair of CWVYS to agree their grant objectives for 2016/17. At this meeting officials discussed the very real possibility that core funding might not continue from April 2017. During the meeting it was also agreed that their work plan for the 2016/17 grant would include a new objective on ways to become a sustainable organisation. An official also met with the Chair of CWVYS on 14 March 2016 where funding and sustainability, governance and skills within the organisation were discussed.

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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.

Our third sector code of practice states that we must give third sector organisations a minimum of three months notice prior to the expiry of an existing funding agreement. It is also good practice to inform the funding recipient as soon as the decision is confirmed. Poor handling aside, my officials wanted to provide CWVYS with as much notice as possible of the decision.

The Welsh Government is required to evaluate funding programmes at least every 3-5 years. In reviewing this particular funding programme I took into consideration the original purpose of the funding which was to contribute towards CWVYS' core costs to enable them, amongst other things, to be representative and have effective relations with the voluntary youth service sector. An important consideration is the need to ensure as broad a representation as possible. CWVYS' 2016/17 six month monitoring form showed that they had 90 members. I do not believe this to be sufficiently representative of the sector.

The Trinity Saint David report identified a number of gaps, including a lack of consistency in the support for the voluntary sector across Wales and a lack of awareness among local voluntary organisations about where and how youth work policy is developed.

Regarding the point you raise concerning CVCs I can reassure you that no decision has been made and I am continuing to explore options for the most appropriate arrangements for supporting the voluntary youth work sector. I had referenced the Trinity report to highlight that a one size fits all approach is not working and that national and local organisations identified that they have different ways of working which require different types of support.

As you acknowledge in your letter I have since agreed to provide grant funding to CWVYS for 2017/18. As with any grant, there are terms and conditions attached to the funding. The funding objectives are developed in partnership with CWVYS. This year, as last, one such agreed objective is focussed on using the funding to help CWVYS to become a sustainable organisation. CWVYS will develop a work-plan based on their 2017/18 funding objectives. My officials will continue to meet and work with CWVYS throughout the year to monitor progress against their objectives.

The current funding arrangements are for one year only and I reserve the right to make further changes if my policy approach demands a different approach.

I hope the above information sufficiently answers your outstanding questions. You may be interested to know that, in considering the Committee's report and recommendations, I have asked my officials to engage with the Youth Work Reference Group in order that I may take their views into account.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alun', with a horizontal line underneath.

Alun Davies AC/AM

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