

Alun Davies AM
Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language

25 May 2017

Dear Alun,

Youth work/ services in Wales

Thank you for your engagement with the Children, Young People and Education Committee following the publication of our report into **Youth Work in Wales**. I am pleased that the Committee has been able to shape your thinking on this issue and we look forward to continuing to work with you in this way. As you will recall from our discussions on this issue, the Committee has a clear view that enabling all young people in Wales to have access to quality youth services is crucial.

To assist the Committee with its ongoing scrutiny, we would be grateful if you could provide us with the following information:

- You have committed to a refresh of the statutory guidance 'Extending Entitlement' and in your Plenary statement of 4 April 2017 you said there will be consultation on this in autumn 2017 following the review by Margaret Jervis MBE. Could you please explain the interrelation with the review of the 'National Youth Work Strategy for Wales'? The current strategy is due to end in 2018. Will a new strategy be in place before then and before the launch of the new statutory guidance in summer 2018?
- The Committee has been made aware of the commissioned work underway by Glyndwr University on the review of the National Youth Work Strategy for Wales. I am pleased to see progress taking place on this but I am concerned about what appears to be a narrow window of consultation taking place with stakeholder organisations (3 May -15 May). Whilst the aim is to include representative bodies in the research, some within the third sector may not have the appropriate resources to respond in adequate time. I am



sure you will agree that the review will need to reach out to a wider range of voices to be an appropriately informed strategy.

- In your response to the Committee’s report you informed Members a detailed action plan for implementation of the National Youth Work Strategy would be developed and published by the end of March 2017. Would you be able to provide the Committee with an update on progress, including a copy of this plan?
- The Committee would welcome an update on how many local authorities have undertaken ‘sufficiency assessments’. Could you also provide information on whether you are satisfied that these have led to a comprehensive over-view of the current provision available to young people provided through the voluntary and statutory sectors?
- The Committee had significant concerns that youth services would be vulnerable to financial uncertainty if local authorities are not subject to clear guidance and accountability on how the Revenue Support Grant should be spent to support youth services. Could you provide an update on the review of youth work funding streams that you outlined in your response to the Committee?
- It is unclear how the Extending Entitlement guidance will be delivered in the face of financial uncertainty. Will the National Voluntary Youth Organisation grant continue beyond the current financial year and at the same level? Will the criteria remain the same? If changes are planned to the criteria then what are they?
- In your statement on 4 April 2017, you announced that an independently chaired national youth support service board would be established to advise on the review of ‘Extending Entitlement’ and the implementation of the Committee’s recommendations. Could you please explain what you mean by ‘youth support’ and how this relates to its remit on youth work? Could you provide an update on the makeup of the board and how young people will be involved in its work and informing the future direction of youth work?
- During the course of the Committee’s Inquiry, it heard that there have been a number of Welsh Government evaluations and reviews relating to different elements of the youth work sector. Whilst robust evaluation and timely reviews are of course essential, it also has the potential to create added pressure. It is therefore essential that all parties are clear about the purpose of such evaluations and that there is a strategic approach to co-ordinating and taking forward the findings of such reviews.

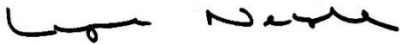


– Can you assure us that the Welsh Government is taking a strategic approach to the various evaluations and reviews, both those completed and those currently underway?

The Committee's report asked that you provide an update on several of its recommendations by the end of June 2017 and we look forward to receiving this in due course.

I look forward to your response on this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Lynne Neagle AC / AM

Cadeirydd / Chair

