

### **Committee Recommendation 1:**

The Minister should review the National Strategy and refresh the statutory guidance in consultation with stakeholders and young people. A detailed action plan for implementation, including timescales, must be developed alongside a new

### **Accepted by Welsh Government**

#### **Welsh Government Response**

##### **We have:**

- Commissioned Wrexham Glyndwr University, Cardiff Metropolitan University, and Susanne Rauprich OBE, to review the impact of the National Youth Work Strategy. A final report has been received and is being prepared for publication. This work was informed by stakeholders and young people.
- Commissioned Margaret Jervis, MBE DL, to review Extending Entitlement. A final report has been submitted and is being prepared for publication. This work was informed by stakeholders and young people.
- Commissioned the Youth Work Reference Group (YWRG), who represent the youth work sector, providing advice to Welsh Government, to review Margaret's recommendations and propose a way forward.

##### **We will:**

- Immediately begin development of a new, aspirational Youth Work Strategy.
- Ensure a long term vision is built into the strategy, with detailed annual planning, self-evaluation, and review.
- Co-construct the strategy with young people and stakeholders at all levels in the system.
- Publish Margaret's Review, the 'Review of the Impact of the Youth Work Strategy', and associated reviews of grant funding Embed lessons learned, including from the Committee's Inquiry, alongside wider evidence in Wales, the UK and beyond.
- Firmly ground our approaches in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Wellbeing for Future Generations Act.
- Re-establish a Youth Work Offer/Charter at the centre of the new strategy.
- Include consideration of 'sufficiency of provision', and the role of other bodies such as service providers, regulators, local authorities, and Welsh Government in ensuring rigorous accountability.
- Develop our approaches in the context and ethos of Extending Entitlement, with a view toward considering the status of existing statutory guidance, once the strategic approach for securing youth work has been developed in partnership with stakeholders.
- Establish an Interim Youth Work Board to support the development of the strategy, evaluate approaches for deploying resources, represent the voice of the sector, and provide advice to Welsh Government.
- Publish a timeline setting out how/when this will be delivered.

## Stakeholder Response to Recommendation 1:

**Review of the National Youth Work Strategy for Wales:** The review of the National Youth Work Strategy for Wales is a welcome development. The research report helpfully highlights the important role youth work plays in the lives of children and young people and provides a useful stock-take of the key issues that will need to be given consideration when deciding the future direction of youth work in Wales; namely, recognising the importance of open-access youth work, the need to involve stakeholders in setting the profession's strategic direction, the need to raise the strategic profile of youth work across Wales and the need to improve the way quality and outcomes are measured against a backdrop of diminishing resources and financial austerity. I welcome the recommendations of the report and encourage Welsh Government to take account of these when setting out a future strategy for youth work in Wales.

**Review of Extending Entitlement:** The review of 'Extending Entitlement' provides a welcome analysis of Welsh Government's early policy vision for young people and youth support across Wales. The report gives a particularly useful focus to youth work and clearly marks out its distinction to wider youth support services. While the review sets out a number of helpful recommendations for the youth work sector, I am disappointed that its scope did not investigate strengthening the legislative basis for youth work in Wales nor did it fully consider the relevance of Extending Entitlement – Directions and Guidance in the contemporary policy context. In my response to the Committee's original inquiry, I highlighted the need for the Directions and Guidance to be updated in the context of newer legislative requirements issued under the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011, the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. It is my view that its limited scope meant that the review was unable to fully articulate youth work's contribution to policy changes and any refresh to statutory guidance will need to consider this.

**Developing a long-term and strategic vision for Wales:** The current national strategy comes to an end this year and I am pleased Welsh Government remains committed to working with partners to co-construct a new, long-term and aspirational strategy for youth work in Wales. It is my expectation that any future strategy should be developed in line with the obligations laid down by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and be guided by the Principles and Purposes of Youth Work. My *The Right Way* publication provides a principled and practical framework that could also be used to shape the strategy development. The strategy should value the breadth of youth work's modality and should (in the context of education and sustainable development) clearly articulate the crucial role it plays in supporting children and young people to learn about, access and claim their rights. In doing so, recognition should be given to the unique role youth work has in preventing problems and intervening early to stop them from getting worse. Therefore, any future strategy should be sufficiently funded and should seek to redress the imbalance currently diverting resources away from open access youth work provision.

Given the broad and voluntary nature of provision across Wales, it is difficult to fully prescribe and pre-determine the outcomes that should be achieved through professional youth work. Many of these outcomes (some of which may not be immediately measurable, if at all) are determined inside the individual relationship between youth workers and young people. Instead, a future strategy should be focused on driving up the quality and availability of professional youth work provision across Wales; recognising professional youth work

as part of the universal offer of education across Wales and placing a greater emphasis on reflection and planning for improvement as part of a self-improving system.

**Any other relevant issues arising since the publication of the Committee's report:**

**Committee Recommendation 2:**

The Minister should hold urgent discussions with the Ministerial Youth Work Reference Group to address the concerns from within the sector about a lack of engagement from Welsh Government.

**Accepted by Welsh Government**

**Welsh Government Response**

**We have:**

- Held urgent discussions at Ministerial level with the Youth Work Reference Group.
- Refreshed the remit of the group and begun extending their membership.
- Recognised the key role they play in supporting both the sector and Welsh Government in delivering and implementing policy.
- Tasked them with considering the draft report produced by Margaret Jervis, MBE DL.
- Drawn on their expertise and knowledge to inform the development of the new curriculum for Wales.
- Received positive feedback from the Youth Work Reference Group on this new approach.

**We will:**

- Continue to use the Youth Work Reference Group strategically, with regular engagement from Welsh Government to inform developing approaches.
- Commission them to begin work in supporting Welsh Government to develop a new Youth Work Strategy for Wales.
- Ensure alignment with the proposed Interim Youth Work Board, both in its development and when operational.

**Stakeholder Response to Recommendation 2:**

Recent Youth Work Reference Group (YWRG) meetings have shown encouraging signs that Welsh Government is committed to developing youth work policy in a more inclusive and co-constructive way. While members have yet to meet the Minister, I feel confident that officials recognise the Group's expertise and are providing appropriate feedback. While most of the tasks listed above have either been achieved or are currently underway, involvement in developing the new curriculum for Wales is questionable. Members have received a presentation about the curriculum reform process however there have been very few opportunities for the YWRG to have meaningful and sustained dialogue in developing the new curriculum. The Committee will be aware that I have raised a number of concerns surrounding the

curriculum reform process; calling for improvements in young people's participation and for improved join-up between education and mental health services. It is my view that the personal, social and civic education offered through universal youth work could bridge this gap and uniquely enables the profession to act as a gateway to more specialist services. I will continue to work with Welsh Government to address this.

**Any other relevant issues arising since the publication of the Committee's report:**

**Committee Recommendation 3:**

There should be a clear and meaningful route for young people to be equal partners in developing youth services in Wales. This should be developed by the Minister, stakeholders and young people.

**Accepted by Welsh Government**

**Welsh Government Response**

**We have:**

- Ensured young people were engaged with and consulted as part of the 'Review of the Impact of the Youth Work Strategy'.
- Ensured young people were engaged with and consulted as part of Margaret Jervis' review of Extending Entitlement.
- Commissioned Children in Wales to undertake a focused piece of work with young people to inform Margaret's work.
- Undertaken discussions with the Youth Work Reference Group to explore how young people can inform the development of a new, aspirational Youth Work Strategy for Wales.

**We will:**

- Involve young people in the co-construction of the new Youth Work Strategy for Wales.
- Consider and articulate the role they will play in the design, delivery and monitoring of youth services within the new Strategy.
- Develop an engagement plan, in partnership with young people and stakeholders, to ensure this recommendation continues to be fully met going forward.

**Stakeholder Response to Recommendation 3:**

The pursuit of participation, social justice and democracy is a core aim of youth work in Wales. It means that the types of interaction and outcomes are often decided by young people themselves. I am confident that young people are involved in planning, running and evaluating youth work activity. However, this is often at the individual service level. While there are some examples of local authority youth forums being enabled to engage with their elected members and local cabinet, there are very few opportunities available for young people to be routinely involved in the strategic planning and evaluation of youth work services at the local/national level.

**Any other relevant issues arising since the publication of the Committee's report:**

**Committee Recommendation 4:**

The Minister should introduce a national model for Youth Work, encompassing statutory and voluntary provision. The Minister should report to this Committee on progress within 6 months of the publication of this report.

**Accepted by Welsh Government**

**Welsh Government Response**

**We have:**

- Commissioned Margaret Jervis to undertake a review of Extending Entitlement, which included giving consideration to a 'national model' encompassing statutory and voluntary provision.
- Commissioned a Review of the Impact of the National Youth Work Strategy which makes recommendations on a way forward.
- Reflected on these findings, which propose potential 'models' for delivery in the future.

**We will:**

- Immediately begin development of a new, aspirational Youth Work Strategy, including consideration of an appropriate delivery model.
- Appoint an Interim Youth Work Board, whose remit will include supporting the development and implementation of a new strategy, and providing advice on appropriate delivery mechanisms.
- Expand the remit and membership of the Youth Work Reference Group, extending an invitation to strategic, local authority representatives, ensuring the new strategy balances aspirations and ability to deliver in the current context.
- Ensure the views of both statutory and voluntary provision are heard as part of its development.

**Stakeholder Response to Recommendation 4:**

**A National Model for Youth Work:** I am not opposed to a 'national model' for youth work in Wales but details remain unclear about how this might work in practice. While I would welcome a national body to oversee the strategic implementation of professional youth work across Wales, practice delivery should remain youth-led and be rooted in the lives of local communities. Instead of being a national delivery mechanism, a national body for youth work could have a role similar to that of an Education Consortium; seeking to raise the professional profile of youth work, promote self-evaluation and good practice, and to drive sustained improvements in quality and leadership to improve outcomes for children and young people.

**Any other relevant issues arising since the publication of the Committee's report:**

### **Committee Recommendation 5:**

The Minister should report back to the Committee within 6 months of the publication of this report on how he intends to assess the extent to which his commitment to universal, open access provision, in English and Welsh, is being delivered.

### **Accepted in Principle by Welsh Government**

### **Welsh Government Response**

#### **We have:**

- Reported back to the Committee and acknowledged that the youth work landscape is changing in the context of a challenging financial climate.
- Accepted the role that 'Sufficiency Assessments' could play in assessing the extent to which universal, open access provision, in English and Welsh, is being delivered.
- Begun exploring the role that 'Sufficiency Assessments' will play going forward.

#### **We will:**

- Incorporate the notion of 'sufficiency of provision' and its assessment into the new Youth Work Strategy for Wales.
- Restate our commitment to the role youth work can play in supporting young people to use and develop their Welsh language skills.
- Engage with young people in the development of the new strategy to develop a current understanding of their needs in relation to the type of youth services they wish to access, in the language of their choice.

### **Stakeholder Response to Recommendation 5:**

I have previously called for the introduction of Youth Work Sufficiency Assessments so I welcome Committee Recommendation 7. The introduction of an assessment process could help to develop a fuller understanding of youth work provision across both statutory and voluntary sectors and could help identify whether or not these services are appropriately resourced to deliver positive outcomes for children and young people across Wales. Although such assessments would not guarantee improved outcomes for young people, they would provide a positive contribution in a similar manner to existing Play Sufficiency Assessments. Underpinned by a new Youth Work Strategy, these assessments would support local authorities and their partners to more effectively coordinate "*the maximum extent of their available resources*" (Article 4 of the UNCRC) to furthering children's rights and to meeting the statutory duties issued under Section 123 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000, Section 25 of the Children Act 2004 and Section 3 of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

It is my view that youth work sufficiency assessments should:

- Involve young people in assessing sufficiency of youth work provision;

- To help to establish a baseline of youth work provision;
- Identify gaps in information, provision, service delivery and policy implementation relating to youth work;
- Support the establishment of evidence to give an indication of progress made in relation to youth work sufficiency;
- Highlight the contribution that youth work can make to the development and delivery of local wellbeing plans as required by Section 39 of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015;
- Highlight opportunities for appropriate collaboration and identify ways of addressing issues relating to partnership working;
- Identify appropriate mechanisms to improve the levels of awareness and knowledge of youth work amongst decision-makers and partners;
- Establish a monitoring system which will involve and improve communication between professions;
- Identify good practice examples; and
- Identify actions for a 'securing youth work sufficiency action plan'.

**Any other relevant issues arising since the publication of the Committee's report:**

**Committee Recommendation 6:**

Within 6 months of the publication of this report, the Minister should commission an exercise to map voluntary Youth Work provision across Wales. The exercise should be refreshed periodically.

**Accepted in Principle by Welsh Government**

**Welsh Government Response**

**We have:**

- Reflected on the mapping of voluntary youth work provision undertaken by CWVYS (2015) in relation to the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework, and Cordis Bright (2016).
- Reported back to Committee that a national mapping exercise may not be appropriate given the rapidly changing context on the ground as services change and adapt.
- Stated our commitment to the concept of 'sufficiency of provision' and its assessment, in planning, delivering, and monitoring youth services.

**We will:**

- Incorporate the notion of 'sufficiency of provision' and its assessment into the new Youth Work Strategy for Wales. To ensure agility in an evolving landscape, any assessment should give consideration to both statutory and voluntary provision at a local, rather than national level.

**Stakeholder Response to Recommendation 6:**

With the loss of the requirement for Children and Young People's Partnerships and Plans through the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, it is difficult to see how a robust mapping of youth work provision across the local and voluntary sectors would be carried out. Without a statutory minimum youth work offer, and with the rapidly changing landscape of youth work available to young people, it is likely that any mapping would quickly become outdated.

It is my view that a statutory minimum youth work offer, that is supported by the development of a Youth Work Sufficiency Assessment, would help to develop an ongoing and fuller understanding of youth work provision available to young people and could support improved collaboration across the statutory and voluntary sectors.

**Any other relevant issues arising since the publication of the Committee's report:****Committee Recommendation 7:**

The Minister should ensure that Youth Work Sufficiency Assessments are undertaken by local authorities as part of their population needs assessments and report back to the Committee on progress within 6 months of the publication of this report.

**Accepted in Principle by Welsh Government****Welsh Government Response****We have:**

- Accepted the potential role of 'Sufficiency Assessments' in the planning, delivery and monitoring of youth service provision.
- Set up a working group in November 2017 to ascertain how these might work in Wales, learning from approaches taken forward in the Play sector.
- Determined that there is a requirement for an assessment to ensure services being provided within a local authority area are needed, of the required quality, and delivered by the most relevant organisation.
- Explored what an assessment might look like and concluded that, in the absence of a new, long term Youth Work Strategy and vision, that takes us beyond 2018, it is not possible to finalise an approach for immediate implementation.

**We will:**

- Incorporate the notion of 'sufficiency of provision' and its assessment into the new Youth Work Strategy for Wales.
- Co-construct its design in partnership with young people and stakeholders.
- Secure agreement across the sector to the use of Sufficiency Assessments in the planning, delivery, and monitoring of youth service provision as part of the new strategy.



**Stakeholder Response to Recommendation 7:**

While I recognise that there is currently no legislative basis for Youth Work Sufficiency Assessments, I welcome the Committee's Recommendation and Welsh Government's commitment to their introduction. I also agree with Welsh Government's assertion that the development of a sufficiency assessment process is dependent on establishing a minimum offer in the future Youth Work Strategy. However, I would like assurances from Welsh Government that sufficiency for youth work would be given the same status as the Childcare Sufficiency and Play Sufficiency assessments.

**Any other relevant issues arising since the publication of the Committee's report:****Committee Recommendation 8:**

The Minister should develop an accountability framework for local authorities' use of funds for Youth Work via the revenue support grant. The framework should include sanctions if outcomes are not delivered.

**Accepted in Principle by Welsh Government****Welsh Government Response****We have:**

- Confirmed that the Revenue Support Grant is an un-hypothecated funding stream and can be spent at local authorities' discretion according to their locally identified needs and priorities.
- Confirmed that it is not currently possible to identify how much is spent on youth work, due to the pooling of budgets across services at a local level, nor to prescribe an amount.
- Reviewed our existing grant funding streams to consider how they might better support the desired outcomes of youth work and youth support services.
- Begun implementing changes to grant funding mechanisms, ensuring a greater focus on impact, rather than output.
- Explored an outcomes framework for youth work in the context of the current strategy.

**We will:**

- Publish the reviews of the Youth Work Grants.
- Continue to learn from them by keeping them under regular review.
- Establish an Interim Youth Work Board to support the development of a new Youth Work Strategy, and advise on approaches for deploying resources appropriately, including any unintended consequences.
- Secure agreement across the sector to the use of 'Sufficiency Assessments' in the planning, delivery, and monitoring of youth service provision as part of a new strategy. This will include consideration of their role in a new accountability framework for youth services across local authority and voluntary provision.

**Stakeholder Response to Recommendation 8:**

Founded upon the principles of voluntary engagement and participation, youth work is uniquely positioned to listen to the voices of young people, support their rights and facilitate change. Fundamentally, youth work is a profession led by young people and its practice outcomes are determined inside the voluntary relationship between youth workers and young people. As such, it would be unfair to place financial sanctions on local authorities based on outcomes pre-determined by Welsh Government. This kind of funding arrangement would fly in the face of youth work's principle of subsidiarity and may exacerbate the current imbalance between universal and targeted youth work. Instead, local authority funding should be ring-fenced and recognise the inherent contribution professional youth work makes to the lives of children and young people. Rather than seeking to generate evidence to satisfy a set of prescribed outcomes, financial accountability should encourage local authorities to drive up the availability and quality of both universal and targeted youth work provision. This could be based on the minimum offer set out by the Youth Work Charter for Wales, implementation of the Quality Mark and service-user experience.

**Any other relevant issues arising since the publication of the Committee's report:****Committee Recommendation 9:**

The Minister should explore the potential continuation of Erasmus+ funding, should the UK Government decide not to do so.

**Accepted in Principle by Welsh Government****Welsh Government Response****We have:**

- Confirmed our commitment towards a credible, evidenced based approach towards withdrawal from the EU.

**We will:**

- Continue to advocate for an approach that places Wales' priorities centre stage, while responding to the UK's priorities as a whole.
- Continue dialogue with UK Government counterparts, addressing the role of Erasmus+ funding in the UK context.

**Stakeholder Response to Recommendation 9:**

**Any other relevant issues arising since the publication of the Committee's report:**

**Committee Recommendation 10:**

The Minister should ensure that the statutory and voluntary Youth Work sector play a central role in the process of curriculum reform.

**Accepted by Welsh Government**

**Welsh Government Response**

**We have:**

- Confirmed statutory and voluntary representation on the Education Reform Strategic Stakeholder Group.
- Engaged the Youth Work Reference Group (with representatives from both statutory and voluntary sectors) with the process of Curriculum Reform.

**We will:**

- Continue to ensure appropriate mechanisms for ensuring the statutory and voluntary youth work sector play a central role in the process of curriculum reform.
- Consider and articulate the links and alignment between formal education and youth work in the new Youth Work Strategy for Wales.

**Stakeholder Response to Recommendation 10:**

The Committee will be aware that I have raised a number of concerns surrounding the curriculum reform process; calling for improvements in young people's participation and for improved join-up between education and mental health services. It is my view that the personal, social and civic education offered through universal youth work could bridge this gap and could act as a gateway to more specialist services. While representation from the youth work sector has been brokered to sit on the Education's Strategic Stakeholders Group, it remains unclear as to what level of influence it is afforded and how views are taken into account. There continues to be a lack of infrastructure in place for Welsh Government to systematically involve stakeholders in the development of curriculum reform.

**Any other relevant issues arising since the publication of the Committee's report:**