

Kirsty Williams AC/AM  
Y Gweinidog Addysg  
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-860  
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/06231/19

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5 June 2019

Dear Janet

Thank you for your letter of 24 May, following on from earlier correspondence regarding the Petitions Committee's consideration of petition (P-05-861) making political education a compulsory element of the new curriculum.

I will respond separately to each of the specific questions you have raised:

**i. For an interim solution to be put in place, either through the current PSE curriculum or the Welsh Baccalaureate, which ensures that additional emphasis is placed upon political education for current pupils who may have the opportunity to vote after the age of 16 from 2021;**

Welsh Government and the Assembly Commission are legislating to ensure that young people who are 16 and 17 will be able to vote in the Assembly election in 2021 and local government elections in 2022. We believe young people should have the right to vote for

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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.

the first time when they are likely to be still living at home in a stable environment. We anticipate this will establish a lifelong habit of participating in democratic decisions. The Welsh Government will introduce educational material for those who are newly enfranchised along with communication strategies to raise awareness. The intention is to ensure politically neutral material and teacher support is available for schools by September 2020, well before 16 and 17 year olds will vote for the first time. As part the communication work around this issue I will be writing to schools to make them aware of these resources and highlight the opportunities to cover political education within PSE and the Welsh Baccalaureate.

This will be accompanied by a registration information campaign which will be followed by encouragement to get out and vote nearer to the elections in question. The Welsh Government will work closely with stakeholders throughout this process including the Assembly Commission and with local authorities. A co-ordinated approach will be important as there are already many local authorities carrying out democratic awareness raising activities with young people and the Assembly's Education Service provides free tailored education programmes for schools and colleges and an education outreach service. The aim is to involve young people in the work of the Assembly and encourage them to get involved in the democratic process.

The Welsh Government is also commissioning research to inform strategies for engaging with newly enfranchised groups about their democratic rights and to promote voter participation and engagement. A number of key stakeholders and partners will have a role to play in the delivery of resources and awareness raising to newly enfranchised groups. Welsh Government officials will work closely with key partners, including the Assembly Commission, to ensure consistency of messages and to avoid duplication.

**ii. For consideration to be given to other ways young people can access information in relation to political participation outside of the school curriculum, for example through youth work settings:**


Youth work already has a key role to play in the political development of young people. In fact, young people's political development is explicit in both 'Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes' and the 'Youth Work National Occupational Standards'. These require youth workers to, for example, know and understand the democratic process, roles of tiers of government, and the nature and aims of political parties, in order to effectively encourage and support young people to become informed and engaged citizens. Further, youth work supports young people to understand their rights, while also facilitating access to relevant advice, information, support and guidance. Youth work, therefore, is well placed to support young people to access information in relation to political participation outside of the school curriculum.

Later this month we will publish our new Youth Work Strategy for Wales. Co-developed with young people and the youth work sector, it will articulate an ambitious programme of work that will strengthen the youth work offer to all young people in Wales, and develop evidence to improve our approaches in the future. In support of these aims we have made more than £10m in funding available in 2019/20.

In 2018, the National Assembly for Wales established the Welsh Youth Parliament which gives Wales' young people between 11 and 18 a completely new way to make themselves heard at a national level. It empowers them to raise awareness of, and debate the issues important to young people in Wales. By participating in issue based politics, young people get to experience first-hand how politics works and the direct effect it can have on their lives. Throughout 2018, young people in Wales were able to register to vote in the first ever Welsh Youth Parliament elections, with nearly 24,000 registering. In November 2018, there

was a three week election period where those registered voted online for who they wanted to represent them.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kirsty Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K".

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