

P-05-861 Make political education a compulsory element of the new national curriculum, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 17.02.20

I welcome and commend the work that the Welsh Youth Parliament has done and thoroughly agree with the report it has produced.

In my view, the report echoes much of what my own research has found.

Yet so far, in my view, none of the resolutions seem to go far enough, as nothing provides a concrete provision for a political education to be provided. The government could and should do more to ensure that it is now offered in schools. Perhaps this could come in the form of a compulsory school visit to the Assembly for those in year 11 or even the creation of a specific organisation who would provide this education to schools. Until such a provision is created, I believe that it will remain a neglected aspect of skill-based learning.

Too often we choose to prioritise exam results over skill-based learning and with this pressure often placed on teachers, they will adhere to a curriculum. Ensuring that political education is part of this curriculum is the only way to ensure that we are teaching children and young people who to participate in the world around them.

As I have outlined in past documents, there are numerous reasons why now is the crucial moment for such a change to be made.

I believe that providing a political education will impact on the following:

- Help to provide young people with analytical skills and allowing them to be critical of extremist ideologies and fake news.
- Help to engage and politicise young people from all political stances.
- Ensure that we are producing young people who are capable of becoming politicians themselves, hence ensuring that politics looks increasingly like the public it is trying to serve.

As the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020 formally introduced votes for 16, this is now a pressing issue and it's no longer acceptable to offer a vague promise about the provision for political education. The choice to introduce votes at 16 offers Wales with a unique chance to lead the way and to engage a generation of young people before they become jaded with life and disenfranchised.

Many young people will come from families that have already lost faith in the political system and if we don't catch their attention before they leave school, we risk losing their interest forever. A democracy is reliant upon the public participating and if people don't vote, the entire system is faulty.

The Welsh Assembly has taken a huge leap forward in choosing to legalise votes for 16 but to do this without sufficient education is an opportunity that we won't get a second chance

at. In a world that suggests to young people that their voices don't matter, we have to show them that they do.