

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Gwaith Ieuenctid – gwaith dilynol | Youth Work – Follow up

YW(2) 04

Ymateb gan: Grwp Prif Swyddogion Ieuenctid (Cymru)

Response from: Principal Youth Officers' Group (Wales)

### **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 strategy.

**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:**

**The review of the National Strategy was published at the annual WG Youth Work Conference on 21<sup>st</sup> March, so the PYOG has not yet had chance to fully digest or discuss this but it appears to be quite thorough in its process and content and direct in its findings, insomuch as it has presented an honest summary.**

**The current strategy was launched at a conference in 2014 in North Wales – there was little involvement of the sector in its development, delegates attending the conference were not provided with sight of it beforehand (a web-link was presented briefly as part of the Ministerial address), nor hard copies during, yet work-shops were held during the day to discuss its merits (or otherwise). Unfortunately, this set a tone which reflected the strategy itself (to quote the evaluation report, it was “not as forward thinking as it could have been”). Whilst having a welcome focus on open access Youth Work (as well as targeted provision), the strategy also lacked any discernible targets and accountability – whereas the previous (and first National Strategy for Wales) included actions and clear lines of accountability for each part of the sector.**

**The announcement of a review of Extending Entitlement during the Youth Work Inquiry was quite a surprise to the sector – whilst Youth Work is a crucial component of the Youth Support Services offer and was in scope for the Inquiry, Extending Entitlement is the Directions and Guidance for Youth Support Services (a much wider ‘offer’ for young people delivered by a much broader range of contributing organisations reflecting requirements in the Learning & Skills Act, 2000). The recently published work by Margaret Jervis, rather than reviewing Youth Support Services, has presented a much clearer focus on Youth Work, which is more in line with the scope of the Inquiry and is acting as a useful platform for taking the Youth Service (the framework by which Youth Work is delivered) forward.**

**It is important to also note at this point that, whilst welcoming of the Committee’s inquiry, the sector has been somewhat disappointed in regard to its scope. As the inquiry has developed, it has focussed in on some types of Youth Work provision (particularly community based, open-access provision) at the expense of Youth Work in other settings e.g. school-based. Youth Work is very much a blended offer of targeted and open access provision.**

**Whilst at the embryonic stages of developing a new National Youth Work Strategy, by utilising the findings of the evaluation of the current strategy, the PYOG very much welcomes a more long-term approach to a new strategy. This will provide the sector with a long-term vision with (as has been suggested) annual or bi-annual action plans, so that progress can be monitored and changes made as necessary along this journey. In order to do so, the sector somehow needs to take stock of its current capacity – given the impact of austerity on the sector, it is quite a different environment than that of four or five years ago with the level of provision having**

decreased, as well as taken a different shape.

In order to make a new strategy as relevant as possible, another crucial element is involving young people in its development – from the start! Whilst consultation is carried out on an ongoing basis at local level, we need to consider what young people are telling us about what they want from Youth Work and the Youth Service e.g. are they still requiring Youth Clubs and, if yes, what do they expect them to look like? Also, the role of communities in funding/providing for young people as community constituents. Another important consideration is the quality and quantity of professionally qualified Youth Workers entering the field and their ability to enjoy career progression on a par with others e.g. teachers and Social Workers. Whilst challenging, a new Strategy needs to be deliverable and, in order for this to happen, needs to be realistic as to what the sector can deliver on.

Whilst the main strategic platform for the sector, it has been felt for some time that the Youth Work Reference Group has not always been used in this way (i.e. as a point of reference), rather it has been somewhat confused by a plethora of work-streams which were not instigated by its membership, rather being ‘presented’ at late notice and with little/no consultation. As a result, the group had become (at worst) dysfunctional and (at best) had lost its sense of direction.

Recent meetings have seen a refreshing change in approach, with a more open, inclusive and consultative dialogue which is showing promising signs of developing an environment where co-construction can take place. The group’s knowledge and expertise is being recognised and, whilst members have yet to meet with the ‘new’ Minister, WG officials are taking advice forward and feeding back to the group. Also, whilst a not insubstantial task, progress is being made around rationalising the numerous pieces of work which had been generated previously.

The recent national Youth Work Conference marked a first attempt to engage with the sector on what a new strategy could and should look like but a comprehensive engagement plan now needs to be developed so that the new strategy takes shape based on meaningful engagement with all stakeholders. The interim Youth Work Board has yet to take shape and it is not yet known what status/teeth this will have, what its membership will look like and indeed what its relationship with the YWRG will be as/when in position. However, the sector does have a timeline in relation to this and other important pieces of work.

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

The status and profile of Youth Work has suffered over the last 10 years or so. Following the closure of the Wales Youth Agency whereby the staff (circa 12) were taken into Welsh Government and operated strategically as a Branch, over time this has reduced to a team of four with a continued reduction in profile, to a team within a Branch, so there is some work to be done here. However, as of April this year, Youth Workers are required to register with the Education Workforce Council (EWC) and, as such, have parity alongside other education professionals (teachers, FE staff and Work Based Learning). Whilst there is still a long way to go in relation to the understanding of Youth Work and its contribution via an educative approach (e.g. although Youth Clubs, table tennis and pool have their place, the ‘offer’ is much

more comprehensive than this and is an environment where young people can be nurtured and progress through learning in non-formal and informal learning environments), this is seen as a positive move. The sector continues to struggle to be fully understood in relation to its contribution to education in Wales and, in particular to the development of the new curriculum. Although many principles of Youth Work are prominent throughout Successful Futures, opportunities to help shape a new curriculum for Wales are few and far between. The PYOG would welcome tangible opportunities to do so.

In relation to an improving profile for the Youth Work, the sector is also currently responding to a WG consultation to include Youth Work representation on the EWC Council.

#### **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:**

Some of the response to this Recommendation is also covered in Recommendation 1. However, to reflect on this, although against a wider backdrop of a reducing sector, there are positive signs in relation to strategic developments (as reflected in the WG response above).

The review by Margaret Jervis, although welcome, also provided additional confusion due to the original scope of the report not being clearly defined. The

expectation was that the report would comment on Extending Entitlement, whereas the reality was that it was a commentary on the status of Youth Work in Wales. This confusion though stimulated debate within the Reference Group about its future role and has contributed to the group beginning to refine its purpose and a refocus on Youth Work. The WG has the full support of the PYOG, which continues to work closely with the Youth Work Strategy Branch, as well as providing representation on the YWRG.

One area which has not seen a great improvement however is that of curriculum reform. Whilst Youth Work has a great deal to offer the new approach which Successful Futures recommends, the Youth Work sector remains largely conspicuous by its absence in shaping this.

Although the Youth Work Reference Group has received a presentation from the WG Curriculum Development Team on the Health & Wellbeing Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) and there are a few representatives from the sector on the Education Stakeholder Group, there is no meaningful dialogue or platforms for influencing developments – it is uncertain as to the sense of direction and level of influence which the Stakeholder Group is having and Youth Work is one voice amongst many on this group. The sector continues to seek opportunities to engage at both national level e.g. the PYOG ran a seminar (attended by the WG Director of Education) in September 2017 and local level e.g. via the pioneer schools work but this continues to prove a challenge. Also, the Engaging Children & Young People sub-group has not met for well over a year.

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

Apart from the YWRG meetings, the sector has for some time seen only sporadic formal engagement from the Youth Work Team (before it the Youth Work Branch) and would welcome more opportunities to discuss mutual opportunities and challenges, which could also include a less formal dialogue, which can contribute to better shared understanding of priorities and drivers.

The PYOG and CWVYS have on a number of occasions in recent times offered the field's support for central government's efforts to promote and develop Youth Work in Wales by engaging with the Team. Whilst recognising that this is a two-way process and that different parts of the sector will discuss matters on which there will not always be consensus (the foundation of a strong democratic process), a more frequent and open dialogue can only promote better relationships and therefore a stronger voice for the sector.

This also involves engaging with all parts of Wales – recent developments and events have seen a particular focus on Cardiff, which is not always an easy option for colleagues from other parts of Wales as it can require a considerable commitment of time and resource, particularly if involving young people. Whilst recognising that Cardiff is the capital city and that some occasions might demand greater impact by being held there, PYOG members from across Wales are keen to develop closer working relationships with members of the WG's Youth Work Team.

**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 Jarvis' 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 Youth Service has a long tradition of positive engagement with young people in a relationship which is quite unique, insomuch as the young person does so voluntarily and the power in that relationship lies with the young person, therefore the young person drives both the quality of provision (s/he can walk away should they choose) and shapes it through their participation and influence. There is a constant cycle of monitoring and evaluation and feedback. In contrast, when young people attend school, they do so knowing that (in the main) they must conform to a curriculum (a prescribed course of study) and that opportunities to shape this are more limited. Whilst both approaches are important, they are different.**

**As such, whilst far from being complacent about its ability to do so, this is a sector which requires no encouragement, training or preparation in working alongside young people to elicit and articulate their needs, desires and wants. It is a sector primed and ready to work with WG and young people in shaping strategies and services to ensure they meet their needs. There are many opportunities and platforms/fora for doing so. Whilst more formal processes of engagement are often useful, the sector (voluntary and statutory Youth Work organisations and young people) should be the main vehicle for this process.**

**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:**

**Whilst the PYOG is not opposed to a 'national model' in principle, it must be borne in mind (in line with previous comments) that Youth Work is also based on subsidiarity (ownership and decision making by those closest to Youth Work delivery in their local area). This is not in contradiction to young people being Welsh, European and World citizens but that needs will differ (sometimes quite dramatically so) from one area to the next, so therefore provision (to meet these needs) e.g. where there is an older demographic, the types of provision and opening hours will differ from a younger demand. Also, in order to meet demand an inner city provision may need to be different from a rural provision.**

**A national 'vision' for Youth Work in Wales, with some kind of framework to offer a level of consistency of 'offer' is important but this needs the necessary level of in-built flexibility so that the principle of subsidiarity can be maintained.**

**As previously mentioned in this response, whilst both the voluntary and statutory sectors are committed to working together, it is important that some kind of mapping exercise (locally and nationally) is carried out, so that any national approach is challenging, yes but also achievable. Equally, a definition of what is**

meant by 'voluntary' must be clear, especially in light of the confusion that has been caused by the EWC developments about who should and should not register across sectors.

**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:**

**Whilst not opposed in principle to the development of some kind of sufficiency assessment, it is unclear as to what the 'driver' for these might be. The Childcare Sufficiency and Play Sufficiency processes and reports are rooted in legislation, so there is a statutory requirement on local authorities to produce these. In the absence of such a 'lever', apart from being in the interest of transparency, it is unclear as to what requirements can be placed on Youth Work organisations to produce sufficiency reports.**

**This aside, the PYOG commits to playing its part in any moves to develop sufficiency assessments. What the Childcare and Play Sufficiency Assessments have provided in some areas is greater accountability at both local and national levels, thereby raising their status. This might be seen as a positive for Youth Work and by carrying out a sufficiency assessment it can provide a platform on which to develop and design contemporary youth services provision, although it should not be so bureaucratic that it impacts on service delivery.**

**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:**

**In the evidence session attended by the PYOG and CWVYS during the Inquiry, one of the lines of questioning by the Committee was around mapping of provision. Although this process goes on at local level, it is perhaps not as consistent or as comprehensive as it has been in recent times (e.g. in the times of Children & Young Peoples’ Partnerships, when an audit of need and an audit of provision was required as part of the Children & Young People’s Plan).**

**The PYOG agrees with the assertion that the sector is going through an unprecedented period of rapid change and that, as a result, any mapping may become redundant the moment it is completed/published. However, as things are changing so rapidly, there is currently not an accurate picture across Wales as to the level of provision available e.g. the recent WG Youth Work conference saw young people calling for services to be available for them “in my square mile”. Whilst this may be unrealistic, it is clear that the situation is changing so quickly that, what might be in place one week may be at threat or have disappeared the next. Although the detail of what might be included in sufficiency assessments has yet to be articulated, this may be one way of evidencing levels of provision. In line with previous comments, it can be problematic developing a strategy if the knowledge of ability to deliver on this is not comprehensive. The annual audit of Local Authority Youth Services does provide an overview of what is available to young people delivered by the statutory Youth Services.**

**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:**

Although the PYOG agrees in principle to the proposal of sufficiency assessments, there are a number of questions around the status and requirements, as well as content of what these may be. Although some members of the PYOG contributed to the discussion in November, 2017, the group would welcome further involvement going forward - if local authorities are to be required to write sufficiency assessments, it would be prudent to ensure that PYOG members are not only familiar with developments but are also contributing to this process. Evidence from Play and Childcare Sufficiency Assessments is that they are time consuming; therefore, there are resource implications to consider, especially in the development of the first tranche of assessments. Welsh Government provided financial support in the development of the initial Play and Childcare Sufficiency Assessments and this would be essential for Youth Sufficiency Assessments to ensure that resources for delivery are not diverted towards mapping or development of 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:**

**The PYOG welcomes a clearer focus on impact in relation to grant funding and is keen to work with WG officials in relation to how this will look in practice.**

**As the Minister recognises, Youth Work funding in local authorities is part of the RSG and, as such, is spent at local level based on and determined by the needs of local populations.**

**Without yet being aware of any detail, it is apparent throughout the Welsh Government's responses that sufficiency assessments are seen as an important element of future assessment and planning. It is also becoming clearer that a Youth Work Board will have some kind of role and influence on WG grant funded work across Wales. What is unclear though is what (if any) powers this Board will have in relation to this. The funding picture for Youth Work across Wales is a complex one, in that a number of grants accessed by Youth Work organisations in Wales are not issued by WG and there is little consistency in relation to who is drawing down what, from whom and how much. The WG Youth Work audit will provide some**

information in this regard but some local authority and voluntary sector (which doesn't currently report on the audit) organisations are funded from sources outside of central government (sometimes as joint beneficiaries).

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

Local authority Youth Services, as with all other public sector organisations, continue to go through a very difficult period of funding readjustments linked to austerity. Restructures of services, often resulting in further loss of staff and resources, continue to be commonplace. As local authorities continue to respond as best they can in the context of reducing funding, it is inevitable that all services face very difficult decisions. Regrettably, when this impacts on young people, the impact of this may not be seen fully for some time to come. In the face of these immense challenges, the sector continues to be durable and innovative and remains positive. However, there is always a point of no return and the sector edges closer towards this, at a time when young people need the input of Youth Work more than ever.

#### **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:**

Wales is currently identified as a priority country for Erasmus+ funding and, whilst funding finding its way to Wales is increasing, there is more to be done on promoting its benefits to the youth sector. There seems to be a pattern whereby organisations who are successful in drawing down Erasmus+ funding do so more than once but others have either not considered it or experience barriers to doing so and do not follow through.

However, where it is being accessed, young people and staff gain a huge amount from it and the PYOG fully supports the Committee's recommendation to explore the potential for continued Erasmus+ funding.

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

The WLGA Lifelong Learning Policy Officer (Youth), who acts as a support for the PYOG, has recently been invited to attend the Erasmus+ National (UK) Evaluation Committee. It is hoped that this will lead to a closer relationship between local government and Erasmus+, whereby local authorities can learn more about the opportunities presented.

#### **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:**

**Successful Futures** has been warmly welcomed by the Youth Service as a forward-looking document proposing to implement a new way of educating children and young people in schools in Wales so that they are equipped to respond to life in a new world and digital age. Through its core is a methodology akin to good Youth Work (Health & Wellbeing, Expressive Arts, Experiential Learning, empowering, rights driven, learners directly influencing decisions on curriculum and pedagogy etc). However, whilst the Youth Service is very keen to work with the formal education sector (schools) both on this and considering the role which Youth Work can play in the delivery of the curriculum, Youth Work continues to be peripheral to discussions. Although the sector has representation on the Stakeholder Group, which meets a few times a year, it is not clear as to what level of influence this group has. Involvement at local level (Pioneer schools) is very limited and non-existent in some areas and there are real concerns that the chance for any proper involvement and influence is quickly passing.

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