

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) 08

Ymateb gan: Youth Cymru

Response from: Youth Cymru

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.
- 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.

Stakeholder Response to Recommendation 1:

Youth Cymru is a member of the European Confederation of Youth Clubs. At a recent ECYC General Assembly meeting in Brussels discussion with European partners highlighted the extent to which Wales is leading the way in providing strategic guidance for youth work. Our European colleagues place many of the structures, practices and principles already existing in Wales on their "wish lists" – essentially Wales should pride itself on being an island of excellent youth work practice. We support the valuable contributions provided by the research, reports and recommendations carried out to date and recognise that much has been done to provided valuable insight into the effectiveness of these strategies and policies – we are keen to see Youth Work in Wales further strengthened and developed.

We welcome the development of a new, aspirational Youth Work Strategy. We believe the Strategy should be aligned with the 'Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes' and include a clear articulation of the role, principles and practices of youth work. Historical and ongoing confusion regarding the practice of youth work could be unpicked and made transparent by this new strategy, in this way create more insight and clarity into how services are developed and delivered. We are aware that there is the potential for a lack of clarity around the role of youth work, and for terms such as 'youth service', 'youth services' and 'youth work' to be used interchangeably and this confusion lead to ongoing challenges and confusion.

We strongly believe that the Strategy should be constructed in partnership with young people (reflecting the diversity of ages, locations, demographics and experiences) and with the youth work sector, ensuring the engagement of youth workers and volunteers working at all levels – not limited to those who have achieved 'qualified' and 'registered' status.

We welcome the recommendation in 'Our Future: A Review of Extending Entitlement' that the Strategy sets out a long-term vision for youth work in Wales. We believe that the Strategy should include strategic guidance, while recognising there cannot be a 'one size fits all' approach to youth work, and that the Strategy to be effective should recognise and support the need for innovation, creativity and a dynamic response to the needs of young people.

Our support of a new aspirational longer-term Youth Work Strategy is based on our understanding that it would provide more consistency and continuity for the sector. We would extend this proposal for a longer-term approach to strategic guidance to include the provision of longer term grant funding. We stress the importance of ensuring the strategy provides more long-term direction and that funding firmly

underpins this. Ensuring resources are available to support the sector is essential in assuring the sectors ability to make positive practice responses to strategic aims. Short term planning fundamentally undermines the ethos that underpins a youth work approach preventing the establishment of the long-term relationships needed to maintain the preventative, protective role youth work can play in supporting young people.

We agree that the Strategy should include annual planning, self-evaluation and review and that the Strategy should be clearly aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Well-being of Future Generations Act. We see the value in building a long-term vision into the strategy, however would seek assurance that this process of monitoring and evaluation does not lead to onerous required reporting mechanisms for a sector that is already stretch to breaking point – drawing important time and resources away from where they are most needed – on the ground, faced to face with young people.

In principle we support the re-establishment a Youth Work Offer/Charter at the centre of the new strategy, it would provide young people accessing those services with clarity on the quality of the provision, whilst also enabling an organisation a succinct bench mark to measure their practice against. Our concerns centre again around the extent to which this Offer/Charter could become onerous and tokenistic, which we see as a real danger unless youth workers are fully aware of the value to their services and “buy” into the benefits it could bring. Given that youth work provision across Wales is diverse and different, striking a balance between recognising the diversity of youth work practice in Wales, whilst also recognising the underlying principles of good youth work practice would need careful consideration when creating the Charter. Links and integration into to the existing Quality Mark should be a priority to avoid duplication and to create seamless quality assurance structures. With respect to the Quality Mark, it has provided vital structure and support ensuring the ongoing development of quality youth services in Wales. This mark shouldn’t remain static and stagnant and requires regular development to ensure it remains proactive in supporting quality youth service provision. For example, the development and integration of young people into the assessment process.

We would support the consideration of a sufficiency provision and a joined up integrated approach to accountability. We advocate other sectoral examples are examined and evaluated to provide insight into value of a “sufficiency provision” particularly with regards to how this will assure quality of services and provision. We wish to highlight the importance of a sufficiency provision being adequately resources and integrated to other relevant strategies, policies and procedures. It is vital that this sufficiency process is developed and implemented in a way that ensures evolving structures, needs and gaps in provision that can over time continue to meet ever changing contextual need. To assure meaningful provision it is vital that we embed ongoing consultation with young people, youth workers and practitioners working on the ground to ensure that services being provided are meeting dynamic and consistently changing needs.

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 Jarvis, 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:

We value the work of the Youth Work Reference Group and would advocate they remain central to the process of developing and informing approaches, however we would stress the importance of ensuring they are fully representing the perspective of the youth sector. Lack of clarity and communication across the sector regarding their membership, aims and purpose would seem to undermine their effectiveness and inhibit their potential to give meaningful direction and representation to youth work in Wales.

With regards to ensuring alignment with the proposed Interim Youth Work Board, both in its development and future operations primarily we would advocate that more work is undertaken to provide clarity and transparency regarding its role, membership and proposed processes and mechanisms for consultation, value and relationship with the sector. We argue that it is vital that this board as well as providing continuity of engagement is refreshed by new as yet unheard representation including placing an emphasis on hearing the voices of young people.

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:

It is vital that young people have a clear and meaningful route to be equal partners in developing youth services in Wales and that consultation and engagement processes are genuine and not merely tokenistic.

This is aligned with young people's rights under Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, under the Children's Rights Measure 2011.

It is important that young people with a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences are actively supported to be equal partners in the development of youth services, including those with experience of youth justice, those not currently in education, employment or training, young carers, BAME young people, LGBT+ young people and those with disabilities.

Young people regularly tell us of their frustration of feeling they are not listened to and 'youth participation' being limited to a small, already engaged group of young people. There needs to be a consistent and embedded approach to youth participation and engagement across Welsh Government youth work policy and strategy, including the development of the new Strategy, the Youth Work Reference Group and the delivery and assessment process for the Youth Work Quality Mark.

Recognising young people as equal partners who are engaged on an ongoing basis in the design, delivery and monitoring of youth services is vital. We know there are many examples where young people are only involved in initial consultation and are not part

of, or even informed, of the progression and delivery of a new initiative. This can lead to 'consultation fatigue', disillusionment, a lack of trust and potential future disengagement.

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:

Youth Cymru strongly welcomes the assertion that a new aspirational Youth Work Strategy is implemented and developed. We in principle support and acknowledge that there could be value in including an appropriate delivery model.

However, we have concerns that such a model runs the risk of being overly proscriptive and potentially restrictive and detrimental to creativity and innovation. The statutory and voluntary youth sector is a diverse and its strength and effectiveness relies in the ability of different sectorial organisations to adapt and respond to changing needs. An appropriate delivery model would need to balance the varying needs of sector organisations with the need to apply overarching quality assuring youth work standards, principles and processes.

An interim youth work board is welcomed and it is hoped that this will ensure efficient and effective development and implementation that is reflective of the voices and

needs of the different and diverse sectorial practitioner and organisations. More clarity regarding the role of this group and who it can be accessed would be welcomed by the sector.

We welcome the expansion of the membership of the Youth Work References Group – see our previous comments in Recommendations 2. Further inclusion of the voluntary sector and statutory sector would be welcomed, we would also advocate that young people’s perspective and voice is strengthened as well as enabling the grassroot youth facing practitioner’s engagement and involvement.

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:

We would support the consideration of a sufficiency provision and a possible assessment process. We advocate other sectorial examples are examined and evaluated to provide insight into value of a “sufficiency provision” particularly with regards to how this will assure quality of services and provision. As stated in Recommendation 1 we would wish to highlight the importance of a sufficiency provision being adequately resources and integrated to other relevant strategies, policies and procedures. It is vital that this sufficiency process is developed and implemented in a way that ensures evolving structure, needs and gaps in provision that can meeting ever changing contextual need. To assure meaningful provision it is vital that we embed ongoing consultation with young people, youth workers and practitioners working on the ground to ensure that services being provided are

meeting dynamic and consistently meeting changing needs. Finally, we would like assurance that this provision is developed in a meaningful, integrated and structurally supportive way to avoid it running the risk of becoming a structural barrier that inhibits youth work from using their scarce resource to effectively engage with young people at a grass roots level.

We value the recognition of the role youth work can play in supporting young people to use and develop their Welsh language skills and we strongly support the need for young people to be engaged 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. We would advocate that thought is given to issues experienced, often by the voluntary sector, when accessing funding from grant giving organisations unfamiliar with the Wales and its bilingual context, experience across the sector suggests that grant applicants in Wales can in some cases can experience disadvantage.

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:

We would support incorporating the notion of "sufficiency provision" and its assessment into the Youth Work Strategy for Wales. See our comments on Recommendation 1 where we advocate that other sectoral examples are examined and

evaluated to provide insight into value of a “sufficiency provision” as well as to identify learning on how their application can assure benefit.

We would wish to highlight the importance of a sufficiency provision being adequately resourced and integrated to other relevant strategies, policies and procedures. It is vital that this sufficiency process is developed and implemented in a way that ensures evolving structure, needs and gaps in provision that can meet ever changing contextual need. To assure meaningful provision it is vital that we embed ongoing consultation with young people, youth workers and practitioners working on the ground to ensure that services being provided are meeting dynamic and consistently changing needs.

We would like to highlight that, for example, a voluntary sector youth organisation will be responding to the diverse needs of a variety of funders who will have their own agenda, aims and hence practice requirement. This provides this sector with vital insight into this evolving landscape and requires them to be dynamic and resourceful in how they provide quality youth services. In developing this “sufficiency of provision” it would be vital to ensure it represents the varied contexts that exist within the third sector.

With reference to this evolving landscape we would suggest that changes have occurred in terms of voluntary sector provision and that mapping should become a regular ongoing process that reflects recent and future changes in provision in the voluntary and statutory sector.

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:

We would support the consideration of a sufficiency provision and a possible assessment process. As stated in Recommendation 1 we would wish to highlight the importance of a sufficiency provision being adequately resourced and integrated to other relevant strategies, policies and procedures. It is vital that this sufficiency process is developed and implemented in a way that ensures evolving structure, needs and gaps in provision that can meeting ever changing contextual need. To assure meaningful provision it is vital that we embed ongoing consultation with young people, youth workers and practitioners working on the ground to ensure that services being provided are meeting dynamic and consistently changing needs. Finally, we would like assurance that this provision is developed in a meaningful, integrated and structurally supportive way to avoid it running the risk of becoming a structural barrier that inhibits youth work from using scarce resource to effectively engage with young people at a grass level way.

We would be interested to hear proposals regarding how Sufficiency Assessments in planning, delivery and monitoring of youth service provision will integrate the third sector and the youth work provision that is provided and resourced by a disparate group of funding providers.

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:

We welcome the development of an accountability framework for local authorities’ use of funds and see value in publishing reviews of Youth Work Grants. We have interest in how these reviews would serve to benefit the youth work experience of young people and would advocate an approach that ensures “reviews” are a meaningful, developmentally positive process.

Learning and sharing learning from regular reviews should we believe be fundamental to development, growth and progression across the sector. Evaluation and monitoring of provision provides an excellent framework for continued learning. Our concerns centre around how this ethos and culture of learning is promoted and supported across such a changing and varied landscape of practice. The voluntary and statutory sector are arguably only beginning to develop shared practice relationships and work is still to be done to ensure this fledgling partnership approach continues to develop. In this respect securing agreements across the sector of the use of “Sufficiency Assessments” in planning, delivery and monitoring of youth service provision, though clearly a very positive aspiration could be challenging in the current practice context. We support the sufficiency assessment specifically in relation to the issues regarding indicative funds provided for local authorities through the Revenue Support Grant. A strong argument exists asserting the potential for sufficiency statement to be an integral tool to bring about the “ring-fencing” of budgets ensuring youth services are protected consistently across Wales in all local authorities. We see this a vital move toward protecting youth service provide across Wales.

Any accountability framework would need to ensure local authorities had the ability to be dynamic and responsive to the evolving needs of young people, it must be noted that there is a need to provide guidance and accountability, while ensuring that innovation and creativity are not stifled or restricted.

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:

Youth Cymru, along with many of our member organisations across Wales, have benefited from Erasmus+ funding. Our recent project brought together young people from across the UK and Ireland with members of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly to discuss the issues affecting young people from across the five nations. Erasmus+ benefits the sector through additional resources, networks, cultural exchange and the sharing of good practice across Europe.

We know from our membership of the European Confederation of Youth Clubs (ECYC) that youth work policy in Wales is envied by youth workers and organisations across Wales. However, without the opportunities for collaboration and partnerships which Erasmus+ provides, it is possible that the unique position of youth work in Wales will be overlooked by Europe.

We are keen to see strengthened relationships between youth work in Wales and European partners, enabling cultural exchange and the dissemination and sharing of good practice, including in 'new' areas such as radicalisation and online hate speech. We support the recommendation that the potential continuation of Erasmus+ funding should be explored and that any approach should place Wales priorities, and the priorities of young people, centre stage.

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:

Youth Cymru values the representation of statutory and voluntary organisations on the Education Reform and Strategic Stakeholders Group and acknowledge the importance and benefit of their engagement with the process of curriculum reform. We would advocate that this representation is further extended to include additional youth work representatives drawn from the voluntary and statutory sector.

We welcome the proposal to continue to ensure appropriate mechanisms for the statutory and voluntary youth work sector to play a central role in the process of curriculum reform. It is important, and we would advocate that these mechanisms are made more transparent providing more clarity and information to the youth sector, specifically providing opportunities to enable further and future contributions.

Strengthened lines of communication would enhance the work currently being carried out to ensure statutory and voluntary youth work play a central role in curriculum reform ensuring practitioner perspectives are fully acknowledged and integrated.

We are concerned that the perspectives of youth workers on the ground, who have essential and valuable grassroots insights and contributions to make are not aware of the work of the Education Reform Strategic Stakeholders Group nor enabled to engage with the process of curriculum reform – they are placed on the periphery rather than taking a central role.

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