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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Lynne Neagle AM
Chair
Children, Young People and Education Committee
National Assembly for Wales

15 February 2018

Dear Lynne,

Thank you for your letter of 18 January concerning the Children, Young People and Education Committee's follow up into its Youth Work Inquiry. I too welcomed meeting with you in November and am grateful to you for setting out the Committee's proposed approach. I further welcome the Committee's commitment to ongoing scrutiny of the findings of this inquiry, which helps ensure both the profile of youth work and the development of robust policy to support its delivery.

I am pleased to be able to provide a full update on progress made against the Committee's recommendations and, having now had the opportunity reflect on a range of evidence, set out my proposals for taking forward an ambitious programme of work. The table attached at Annex A captures in detail both progress made and next steps. However, in summary, and in response to specific updates requested in your letter, I am able to provide the following:

'Extending Entitlement' and the National Youth Work Strategy, and establishing the National Youth Support Service Board

The former Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language asked Margaret Jervis, MBE DL, to review Extending Entitlement and, in so doing, make recommendations on a way forward for youth work in Wales. Margaret has completed her work, which she did in partnership with young people and stakeholders from across the sector, and submitted a report to me. The report contains nine recommendations and my officials, with the support of the Youth Work Reference Group, have already begun exploring how the principles identified by Margaret can be embedded into practice going forward. What is clear to me from Margaret's work is that, while it was undertaken in the context and ethos of Extending Entitlement, which has implications for a wide network of diverse youth support services, it deals primarily with securing a renewed, strategic approach to youth work. It is here, therefore, that I intend to focus our initial efforts.

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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.

It is not my intention to initiate an immediate refresh of the statutory guidance. We must first establish a strategic approach to securing youth work in Wales which, in my view, has a vital role to play in securing outcomes for our young people. A review of the current Youth Work Strategy has been undertaken by Wrexham Glyndwr University, Cardiff Metropolitan University, and Susanne Rauprich OBE, and the findings are clear: achievements were made but there were too many missed opportunities. I intend to publish their report in due course as it provides vital learning as we embark on our next steps: the development of a new Youth Work Strategy for Wales.

As set out in Annex A I have asked my officials, in partnership with the Youth Work Reference Group, to immediately begin scoping out the development of this new strategy. It will be co-constructed with young people and the sector and set out the steps required to deliver on a long-term vision for youth work in Wales. In delivering this long term vision it must remain sufficiently agile as to allow it to respond to changing social and economic landscapes, it will therefore be subjected to detailed annual planning and review. I will be asking my officials to provide me with regular updates of progress and will continue to keep a close interest in this work to ensure its timely delivery.

A draft timeline for securing the delivery of this new strategy is included at the end of Annex A. However, I am committed to listening to the views of both young people and the sector, including the advice of the Youth Work Reference Group. With that in mind the strategy's development will be an iterative process, responding to emerging evidence and adapting as appropriate. The draft timeline also sets out proposed timescales for appointing to an Interim Board for Youth Work. The former Minister for Lifelong Learning committed to a Youth Support Services Board and I intend to deliver on this wider remit in the longer term. However, as I have set out, it is my intention to first secure a strategic approach to youth work in Wales. The Board, therefore, will be appointed in an interim capacity in the first instance and will be asked to prioritise youth work. They will do this in the context of the wider network of youth support services and, in so doing, begin considering the need, and possible remit, of a future board or body with responsibility for this larger spectrum of services.

Youth Work Sufficiency Assessments

In response to this specific recommendation officials set up a working group with representation from the statutory and voluntary sectors. Their aim was to further explore the potential value of sufficiency assessments for youth work in more depth. The group determined that:

- a single overarching national strategic document needs to be in place that states the policy direction for youth work in Wales, and that a section of this overarching strategy should describe what a “sufficient” Youth Work Service is;
- there must be a set of Standards linked to this overarching strategic document, and that these would be the specific benchmarks for sufficiency; and
- until these are in place, sufficiency assessments for youth work should not be introduced.

I remain committed to the concept of sufficiency assessments in the context of youth work. However, reflecting on the group's determinations, it is clear they must be meaningful and not simply an additional layer of bureaucracy. They will, therefore, be planned, developed, implemented and reviewed in partnership with young people and the statutory and voluntary sectors. This must be carried out during the development of our new Youth Work Strategy for Wales to ensure alignment. The aim of the assessments should be developmental in nature i.e. where are we now, where do we need to get to, and how will we get there. They should, therefore, support honest self-evaluation and robust, partnership planning.

The development of an accountability framework for local authorities' use of funds for youth work via the revenue support grant

My predecessor confirmed that the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) is an un-hypothecated funding stream that can be spent at local authorities' discretion and according to their local needs/priorities. In practice, it would be difficult to unpick the levels of RSG specifically allocated for youth work delivery. This is because funding streams are often combined to deliver projects, and resources are allocated in a manner to support the agility of a range of services working with young people. There is also the issue of 'sufficiency of provision', of which there is currently no collectively agreed definition. As I have set out, I have asked my officials to work with young people and youth work stakeholders to develop a long term strategy for youth work. As part of this approach I will be asking them to come to a collective agreement on what constitutes sufficient youth work provision for young people. With that in place, the new strategy will identify the steps required at all levels of the system to deliver this provision, as well as defining appropriate accountability arrangements.

Securing access to Erasmus+

I am personally aware of the benefits and opportunities available to Wales through its access to Erasmus+ and will continue to advocate for an approach that places our priorities centre stage. We continue to press the UK Government for ongoing participation in Erasmus+, and other EU Programmes of particular importance to Wales, after the UK exits the European Union.

In summary, I welcome the opportunity to update you on progress made against the Committee's recommendations and the added value that this scrutiny process brings. I will shortly be making an announcement outlining the steps identified in this letter and providing more detail. Further to this, I look forward to receiving an update on your planned consultation work with youth work stakeholders at the appropriate point in time.

Yours sincerely



Eluned Morgan AC/AM
Gweinidog y Gymraeg a Dysgu Gydol Oes
Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning

Annex A

	Committee Recommendation	Accepted/ accepted in principle	Current position.
1	<p>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.</p>	Accepted	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

	Committee Recommendation	Accepted/ accepted in principle	Current position.
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
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	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

	Committee Recommendation	Accepted/ accepted in principle	Current position.
			<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
3	<p>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.</p>	Accepted	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

	Committee Recommendation	Accepted/ accepted in principle	Current position.
			be fully met going forward.
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	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
5	The Minister should report back to the Committee within 6 months of the publication of this report on how	Accepted in Principle	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reported back to the Committee and acknowledged that the

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	he intends to assess the extent to which his commitment to universal, open access provision, in English and Welsh, is being delivered		<p>youth work landscape is changing in the context of a challenging financial climate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
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	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

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			<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
7	<p>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.</p>	<p>Accepted in Principle</p>	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

	Committee Recommendation	Accepted/ accepted in principle	Current position.
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	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

	Committee Recommendation	Accepted/ accepted in principle	Current position.
9	The Minister should explore the potential continuation of Erasmus+ funding, should the UK Government decide not to do so.	Accepted in principle	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmed our commitment towards a credible, evidenced based approach towards withdrawal from the EU. <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
10	The Minister should ensure that the statutory and voluntary Youth Work sector play a central role in the process of curriculum reform.	Accepted	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

Annex A

Draft Timeline

	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Events		Youth Work Conference			Youth Work Week Youth Work Awards						New Youth Work Strategy Launch
Publications		Publish review work undertaken, including the grants and the current Youth Work Strategy 2014-2018									Publish New Youth Work Strategy
Interim Board		Publish recruitment for Chair of the Interim Youth Work Board			Appoint Chair of Interim Youth Work Board	Identify Membership of Interim Board	Appoint Members of Interim Board				
New Youth Work Strategy	Scoping [Youth Work Reference Group]	Reflecting on evidence [Youth Work Reference Group] Initial engagement with young people and the sector	Stakeholder and policy mapping	Co-construction of new Youth Work Strategy for Wales. To be developed in partnership with young people and stakeholders.					Draft strategy completed	Strategy finalised	Launch