



Children, Young People and  
Education Committee  
**What type of youth service does  
Wales want?**  
**Report of the inquiry into Youth Work**

---

December 2016



**National Assembly for Wales**  
Children, Young People and Education Committee

The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales, agrees Welsh taxes and holds the Welsh Government to account.

An electronic copy of this report can be found on the National Assembly's website:

**[www.assembly.wales/SeneddCYPE](http://www.assembly.wales/SeneddCYPE)**

Copies of this report can also be obtained in accessible formats including Braille, large print; audio or hard copy from:

**Children, Young People and Education Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA**

Tel: **0300 200 6565**

Email: **[SeneddCYPE@assembly.wales](mailto:SeneddCYPE@assembly.wales)**

Twitter: **[@SeneddCYPE](https://twitter.com/SeneddCYPE)**

**© National Assembly for Wales Commission Copyright 2016**

The text of this document may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium providing that it is reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading or derogatory context. The material must be acknowledged as copyright of the National Assembly for Wales Commission and the title of the document specified.

Children, Young People and  
Education Committee  
**What type of youth service does  
Wales want?**  
**Report of the inquiry into Youth Work**

---

December 2016



**National Assembly for Wales**  
Children, Young People and Education Committee

# Children, Young People and Education Committee

The Committee was established on 28 June 2016 to examine legislation and hold the Welsh Government to account by scrutinising its expenditure, administration and policy matters, encompassing (but not restricted to): the education, health and well-being of the children and young people of Wales, including their social care.

---

## Current Committee membership:



**Lynne Neagle AM (Chair)**  
Welsh Labour  
Torfaen



**Mohammad Asghar AM**  
Welsh Conservative  
South Wales East



**Michelle Brown AM**  
UKIP Wales  
North Wales



**Hefin David AM**  
Welsh Labour  
Caerphilly



**John Griffiths AM**  
Welsh Labour  
Newport East



**Llyr Gruffydd AM**  
Plaid Cymru  
North Wales



**Darren Millar AM**  
Welsh Conservative  
Clwyd West



**Julie Morgan AM**  
Welsh Labour  
Cardiff North

---

## Table of Contents

<b>Executive summary .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>01. Introduction.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>02. What does today’s youth service look like?.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Summary of the Minister’s evidence .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>The Committee’s view.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>03. What role should Welsh Government take?.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Summary of the Minister’s evidence .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>The Committee’s view.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>04. What type of youth service does Wales want?.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Summary of the Minister’s evidence .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>The Committee’s view.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>05. Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Organisations (CWVYS) grant .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Annex A – Oral Evidence .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Annex B – Written Evidence .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Annex C – Inquiry into Youth Work: Stakeholder Event – Wednesday 28 September – Attendees.....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Annex D – Policy background .....</b>	<b>42</b>





## Executive summary

---

“There should be more [youth services] across Wales. Need more money to grow more services - too many being cut by councils. Not all my friends can attend them as they live in the sticks. Youth workers are amazing and they really help us - they are life savers 😊”

### Young person’s response to the Committee’s survey

---

1. Ensuring all young people have access to youth work services is crucial to enable them to reach their full potential. For many young people, involvement in a certain project, or a relationship with a particular youth worker, has been the catalyst to help them develop skills and confidence and make better choices in their lives.
2. In the course of our snapshot inquiry, the Committee heard from more than 1,500 young people. They told us about the value they place on youth work and its importance in their lives. The feedback was clear – when youth work provision disappears from a young person’s life, the impact is considerable.

### What does youth work look like today?

3. Funding pressures have had a serious impact on youth work over recent years. According to the Welsh Government’s Statistical Release, the total amount of budgeted expenditure for youth services by local authorities, including funding through the Revenue Support Grant, has reduced by almost 25% over the last 4 years.<sup>1</sup> Although the statutory youth work sector does have access to other sources of funding, this is the main source.
4. The Committee recognises that such funding pressures are not unique to youth work, but we are concerned about the direct impact this will have on young people. Local authorities have reported a reduction in registered members of youth work provision from 20% of young people in 2013-14 to 17% in 2015-16 – an alarming downward trend.
5. There has been a significant impact on staffing levels, with local authorities reporting the loss of 148 full time equivalent staff across the statutory sector in 2015-16. This constitutes a reduction of almost 20% in staffing capacity in one year alone.
6. The outlook for the voluntary sector is no more optimistic, with the Council for Wales Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS) reporting that 30% of its members do not anticipate being able to continue to exist beyond the next financial year.
7. Over recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis on provision targeted at specific groups of people, such as young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET). Youth work can play an important role in supporting young people who are hard to reach or need specific help. However, we are concerned that targeted provision has

---

<sup>1</sup> This does not include the Isle of Anglesey, which did not collect data for 2013-14 or 2014-15.

been prioritised at the expense of open access provision. A balance needs to be struck - the extension of targeted provision should not be at the expense of open access provision.

**8.** The Committee is concerned that reductions in provision and funding will lead to specific groups of young people, such as deaf young people; looked after young people; ethnic minority young people; Gypsy, Roma and traveller young people; refugee and asylum seeker young people; and disabled young people, being disproportionately affected. Further, we share stakeholders' concerns in relation to youth work and the Welsh language. Young people who wish to access youth work in Welsh should be able to do so – there must be sufficient provision to meet their needs.

**9.** The Committee has serious concerns about the continued reduction in provision and funding for both statutory and voluntary youth work. There needs to be an urgent and radical intervention on the part of the Minister if he is to deliver his ambition of a youth work offer for all young people.

### **What role should Welsh Government take?**

**10.** Welsh Government has a vital role to play in ensuring that there is better alignment between the statutory and voluntary sectors to deliver youth work. The Minister must address the lack of strategic and joint working between the statutory and voluntary sector, which the Committee believes is a significant barrier to delivering a universal youth work offer.

**11.** The Committee believes that an important first step will be a review of the current strategy and a refresh of the existing statutory guidance. We also believe that a detailed action plan is needed to ensure the strategy will be delivered on the ground.

**12.** The Committee notes the concern among stakeholders from both the statutory and voluntary sectors about a lack of leadership and strategic direction from Welsh Government. The Minister disputed this and referred the Committee to the National Youth Work Strategy for Wales and additional funding allocated by Welsh Government for its implementation. The Committee is concerned that the Minister and key stakeholders appear to have such differing views.

**13.** We note that stakeholders across both sectors welcomed a number of other Welsh Government initiatives in principle, such as the Quality Mark and the Charter for Youth Work. Their overriding concern, however, is that there is a lack of a clear action plan and insufficient resources and capacity to implement them on a sustainable basis.

**14.** The Committee was surprised by the Minister's response to criticism from statutory and voluntary stakeholders in relation to engagement with them in the development of policies. Again, that the Minister and key stakeholders hold such opposing views on the involvement and engagement of the sector in the development of youth work policy, such as the strategy, is a cause for concern for this Committee.

**15.** The Committee was also surprised that the Minister's views on the state of youth work and those of the Principal Youth Officer's Group and CWVYS were so different. These



representative bodies are two of the key stakeholders in the statutory and voluntary sectors, respectively. The Minister must ensure he harnesses the expertise and understanding of both these organisations in taking youth work forward. They will prove invaluable in delivering the Minister's commitment to delivering universal access in increasingly difficult circumstances.

### **What type of youth service does Wales want?**

**16.** As we have said, we believe the Minister needs to take a radical approach in order to deliver his commitment to deliver a youth work offer for all young people in Wales. That offer will only be delivered if the services and skills of the voluntary sector are maximised to the full to support and complement statutory provision. Continuing in the same vein, in the face of reductions in funding, capacity and provision, will not deliver the Minister's ambitions.

**17.** The Committee heard compelling evidence in support of the establishment of a national model to drive forward youth work policy and implementation across the statutory and voluntary sector. A national model would enable better collaborative processes, reduce duplication across the sectors, raise the status and profile of youth work, and enable workforce development. Most importantly, it would maximise the available resources for the benefit of young people.

**18.** There was a variety of views from stakeholders about the details of how such a model might work in practice. However, there was unanimous support among stakeholders for a new and radical approach.

**19.** Of course, within a national model, local decisions should continue to drive provision by responding directly to local needs. There would continue to be a role for local authorities and local service boards.

**20.** The Committee believes the argument is persuasive, particularly as better collaboration and a reduction of duplication would, inevitably, lead to better value for money during a period of sustained reduction in funding. We believe Welsh Government should, with the input of stakeholders and young people, explore the costs and benefits of the different types of national model.

**21.** The Committee believes there is a need to better understand levels of provision across both sectors in Wales, through the mapping of provision and sufficiency assessments. The Committee believes that understanding the needs of young people, alongside the existing level of provision, could prove invaluable in developing open access provision.

**22.** In relation to funding, the Committee is concerned by increasing pressures on both the statutory and voluntary sector. Short-term funding for targeted provision from multiple funding streams has also had an impact on the voluntary sector. One of the benefits of a national model could be a more mature commissioning arrangement between local authorities and the voluntary sector. It would also ensure the voluntary sector is an equal partner.

**23.** The Committee notes the Minister’s strong opposition to the hypothecation of funding for youth work within the revenue support grant. The Committee is concerned, however, that there is a lack of accountability for the use of funds nominally allocated to local authorities via the Revenue Support Grant.

**24.** The Minister must ensure that mechanisms are in place for Welsh Government to hold local authorities to account for the use of such funds for youth work. As a step forward, the Committee welcomes the Minister’s commitment to explore the potential of linking a framework of outcomes, to be delivered locally, to funding through the Revenue Support Grant.

**25.** The Committee was concerned to hear comments from the WLGA that called into question the reliability of the Welsh Government’s statistics on the use of funding through the Revenue Support Grant. The Committee welcomes the Minister’s undertaking to discuss this issue with the WLGA.

**26.** The Committee notes the contribution of European funding to youth work in Wales and welcomes the Minister’s commitment to explore the possibility of continuing Erasmus+, should the UK Government decide not to do so. We continue to be concerned, however, about the impact of the potential loss of other sources of funding, such as European Structural Funds.

**27.** In relation to education, the Committee believes that youth work providers should play a full role in the development of the new curriculum. It is clear that stakeholders believe they are not currently involved in this process. The Minister should explore this matter further with the Ministerial Youth Work Reference Group and take the necessary steps to ensure their involvement.

**28.** On the issue of workforce, the Committee notes that, from April 2017, some youth workers will be required to register with the Education Workforce Council. The Committee believes that Welsh Government needs to ensure that the workforce benefits from any development opportunities and professional standards that arise from this policy change.

**29.** In conclusion, the Committee believes the Minister is facing a considerable challenge to deliver his commitment of a universal, open access, bilingual youth work provision. He has access to a workforce in the statutory and voluntary sectors that is passionate and enthusiastic about helping him deliver his commitment. However, there is a need for an urgent and radical change, if both the Minister’s ambition and the needs of young people are to be met.

**The Committee therefore recommends:**

**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. ....Page 24**

**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. ....Page 25**

**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. ....Page 25**

**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. ....Page 34**

**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. ....Page34**

**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. ....Page 34**

**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. ....Page 35**

**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. ....Page 35**

**Recommendation 9. The Minister should explore the potential continuation of Erasmus+ funding, should the UK Government decide not to do so. ....Page 35**

**Recommendation 10. The Minister should ensure that the statutory and voluntary youth work sector play a central role in the process of curriculum reform. ....Page 35**

# CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

## INQUIRY INTO YOUTH SERVICES

The Children, Young People and Education Committee consulted young people aged 11-25 as part of its **Inquiry into Youth Work**. The consultation ran from July to September 2016 and received **1511** responses from young people.



**52%**  
OF YOUNG PEOPLE  
USE A YOUTH SERVICE



**58%**  
OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO  
USE A YOUTH SERVICE  
GO ONCE A WEEK



**49%**  
OF YOUNG PEOPLE NEED  
TRANSPORT TO GET TO  
THEIR YOUTH CLUB

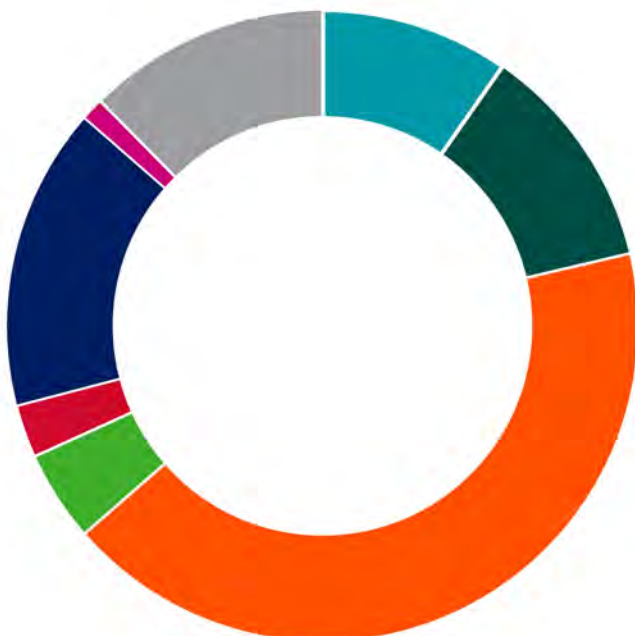


**01%**  
OF YOUNG PEOPLE  
SURVEYED RATED  
THEIR YOUTH  
SERVICE AS POOR



**44%**  
OF YOUNG PEOPLE  
SURVEYED RATED  
THEIR YOUTH SERVICE  
AS EXCELLENT

## CLUBS AND PROJECTS MENTIONED WERE:



- Guides/scouts/cadets **9.69%**
- Sports/performing arts/music **11.63%**
- Young farmers **42.25%**
- Young carers **4.65%**
- Forums and youth councils **2.71%**
- Youth clubs **15.50%**
- The urdd **1.16%**
- Other **12.41%**





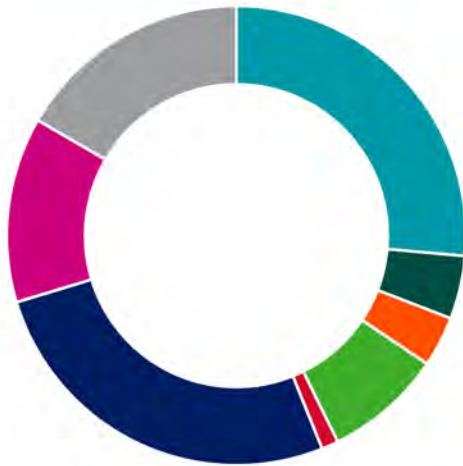
# 57%

OF YOUNG PEOPLE SURVEYED SAID THEY HADN'T SEEN ANY CHANGE IN HOURS OR ACTIVITIES

# 33%

OF YOUNG PEOPLE SURVEYED SAID THEY DON'T USE A YOUTH SERVICE BECAUSE THEY DON'T KNOW OF ANY PROJECTS NEAR THEM

## KEY THEMES WERE:



- Closure and funding issues **26.41%**
- Lack of information and publicity advertising services **4.45%**
- Not enough provision for older children/Young adults **3.56%**
- Rural/community aspect **8.30%**
- Support and counselling **1.19%**
- Positive aspects **26.41%**
- Concerns **13.06%**
- Other **16.62%**

## QUOTES:

### CLOSURE AND FUNDING ISSUES

“The club I used to go to has now been closed. It is annoying that the first thing to be cut are provisions for young people”

### NOT ENOUGH PROVISION FOR OLDER CHILDREN

“Lots of them are more aimed at younger children - there isnt anything for teenagers anymore”

### RURAL/COMMUNITY ASPECT

“There needs to be more available for young people in rural areas, not just urban areas”

### POSITIVE ASPECTS

“I feel like they are really good for people with fewer friends as it gives a chance to make friends”

### NEGATIVE ASPECTS

“The concept of Youth Clubs is outdated - young people need a safe space to spend their time with optional activities - NOT forced fun!”



## 01. Introduction

**30.** In July 2016, The Children, Young People and Education Committee agreed to undertake a “snapshot” inquiry, the aim of which was to review the effectiveness of Welsh Government’s strategy and policies in respect of youth work.

### Terms of reference

- 31.** The Committee was particularly interested in exploring:
- Young people’s access to youth work services;
  - The effectiveness of Welsh Government strategy and policy on youth work;
  - Funding for youth work (Local Authority, Welsh Government, European, Third Sector); and
  - Any other issues considered to be relevant to the Inquiry.

### Our inquiry

**32.** We would like to thank all those who have taken the time to contribute to this inquiry by giving evidence. A list of those who gave oral and written evidence is included in Annex A.

**33.** The Committee is grateful to the voluntary sector stakeholders who contributed to the inquiry through the Committee’s engagement event. A list of the organisations who were represented is included at Annex C.

**34.** The Committee also conducted a survey with young people exploring their views about youth work provision. Over 1500 responses were received and the contribution from young people has informed the Committee’s deliberations and recommendations.

**35.** Further information on the policy background of statutory and voluntary youth work is included at Annex D.

## 02. What does today's youth service look like?

This chapter considers the current landscape for youth services and assesses the extent to which the youth work offer is reaching young people in Wales.

### Reductions in funding and provision

**36.** Many contributors to the inquiry questioned whether the concept of an open-access, universal service is viable, given the significant and cumulative reductions in budgets and provision, and the lack of a detailed and costed action plan for the delivery of the youth work offer.

**37.** According to the Welsh Government's Statistical Release, the total amount of budgeted expenditure on youth services by local authorities, including funding through the Revenue Support Grant, has reduced by almost 25% over the last 4 years.<sup>2</sup> Although the statutory youth work sector does have access to other sources of funding, this is the main source.

**38.** John Rose, a former director of the Wales Youth Agency said that there was a significant body of evidence which suggested that "young people in general have restricted access to locally provided 'youth services' and that in a number of local authorities' access is severely restricted and possibly non-existent".

**39.** Professor Howard Williamson believed the impact of cuts to local authorities' budgets on youth services had been significant and "[...] claims made by some senior officers in local authorities that, despite draconian economic reductions in budgets, they have managed to maintain effective 'youth services', are patently false".<sup>3</sup>

**40.** Of all of the responses, only one expressed a more positive view, with a staff member in one local authority saying there is "currently a good amount of accessible youth clubs for local towns, including smaller towns". However, they did go on to express concern that "smaller youth clubs will be closing within the area".

**41.** Evidence from the voluntary sector suggested that reductions in funding have had a considerable impact, with intensified competition for scarce resource.

### Impact on workforce

**42.** Funding reductions have also had an impact on the capacity of the statutory sector workforce. According to Welsh Government statistics, at March 2016, there were 655 full-time equivalent (FTE) Youth Work management and delivery staff working across local authorities in Wales, compared with 803 at March 2015, meaning that 148 FTE staff were lost in just one year. Unison referred to data it had published in a recent report and expressed serious concerns on this issue:

---

<sup>2</sup> This does not include the Isle of Anglesey, which did not collect the information for 2012-13 or 2013-14.

<sup>3</sup> Dr Howard Williamson, Professor of European Youth Policy; [Written evidence](#) YW 01

---

“Funding for youth services in Wales has reduced by more than £6m across Wales in the 2012-16 period – a significant amount. As a consequence, over 350 youth workers have lost their jobs with a disproportionate number being part-time workers. There has been in excess of 100 youth centre closures in Wales, which is a considerable number in Wales. UK-wide there has been a closure of over 600 youth centres, so within a UK context this also seems disproportionately high.”<sup>4</sup>

---

### **A shift from open access to more targeted provision**

**43.** A key concern to emerge during the Inquiry was a perceived shift from the delivery of a universal, open access provision to one that is targeted at a specific group, such as young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET). Stakeholders suggested that, as a result of financial pressures, local authorities had increasingly prioritised the delivery of targeted provision at the expense of universal provision.

**44.** Wrexham County Borough Council told the Committee:

---

“Whereas the argument for providing universal open-access youth services has been made, especially in relation to the longer-term outcomes, they are now being undermined due to the focus on short-term measurable outcomes e.g. numbers into education, employment and training.”<sup>5</sup>

---

**45.** Ynys Mon Council told the Committee:

---

“While I agree in principle with allocating resources to work with the most vulnerable young people who are not in employment, education or training, or those likely to become NEETs, it would be short-sighted to do so at the expense of scrapping everything else offered by the youth service, ignoring the aspirations of those young people who are doing their best but need a little help to improve their employment opportunities or social skills, or those that need the emotional support offered through the relationship with a youth worker.”<sup>6</sup>

---

### **Access to services by specific groups of young people**

**46.** Contributors to the inquiry expressed concern that the reduction of provision is being felt disproportionately by certain groups of young people. Deaf young people; looked after young people; ethnic minority young people; Gypsy, Roma and traveller young people; refugee and asylum seeker young people; and disabled young people were all described as now less likely to access provision.

---

<sup>4</sup> Unison Cymru | Wales; **Written evidence**, YW 29

<sup>5</sup> Service Manager Prevention and Support, Wrexham County Borough Council; **Written evidence**, YW 09

<sup>6</sup> Cyngor Sir Ynys Môn | Isle of Anglesey Council, **Written evidence**, YW 03

**47.** A number of respondents made reference to provision through the medium of Welsh. The Urdd said that Welsh language provision was inconsistent across local authorities and added that only a small amount of the Revenue Support Grant is spent on Welsh language provision.<sup>7</sup> The Committee was also told that a recent survey of young people by the statutory youth service in the Vale of Glamorgan found that 25% of a large sample of young people wanted to receive youth services through Welsh, but the service cannot recruit sufficient numbers of Welsh speaking youth workers.

**48.** Education and Training Standards Wales told the Committee:

---

“A draft report, commissioned by the Welsh Government and presented to the Youth Work Reference Group earlier this year, pointed out that there are very significant differences in the quality of the contributions made by youth services to the development of the Welsh language. Young people’s access to youth work delivered through the Welsh language is patchy and inconsistent. This is regrettable and inefficient, and arises, in part, from a vacuum in the strategic leadership of youth work in Wales.”<sup>8</sup>

---

## Summary of the Minister’s evidence

**49.** When asked whether he was committed to a universal youth work offer, the Minister said:

---

“We’re committed [...] to a youth work service that is of high quality, that is open access, available across the face of the country, available bilingually, able to respond to people’s needs wherever they live, and a youth work experience that makes a real difference to young people’s lives, whether it’s through the experiences it opens up for them or the support it offers.”<sup>9</sup>

---

**50.** In relation to a perception that there has been a shift from universal to targeted provision, the Minister said:

---

“We recognise that there is specific targeted provision that seeks to look at particular segments of the population. We think that that is a good thing and that it should continue to happen. We’re trying to find the right balance between open access and targeted provision. It can be sometimes challenging. It can be challenging for local government and for voluntary organisations. My feeling remains that local authorities are best placed to interpret how these matters are delivered

---

<sup>7</sup> Urdd Gobaith Cymru; **Written evidence**, YW 28

<sup>8</sup> Education and Training Standards (ETS) Wales; **Written evidence**, YW 07

<sup>9</sup> Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language, **Oral evidence**, 12 October 2016.

on a local needs basis, and that local authorities should—and, I hope, do—prioritise resources based on the needs of the communities that they represent.”<sup>10</sup>

**51.** In written evidence, the Minister confirmed that research had been commissioned on the use of Welsh language:

“Recommendations from this research included the consideration of Welsh language training within youth worker training packages, youth work organisations to utilise digital media, sharing of good practice and partnership working are currently being considered by my officials.”<sup>11</sup>

## The Committee’s view

The Committee welcomes the Minister’s continued commitment to a universal, open access and bilingual service in the form of a “youth work offer” that all young people in Wales can access. However, given the current landscape, it is unclear how viable or sustainable this commitment is.

There has been an increasing emphasis on provision targeted at specific groups of people, such as young people who are NEET, over recent years. To an extent, this can be seen as a recognition of the potential impact of youth work in reaching young people that other services have difficulty in reaching.

The Committee recognises that youth work can play an important role in supporting young people who are hard to reach or need specific help. However, there is concern that targeted provision has been prioritised at the expense of open access provision. A balance needs to be struck - the prioritisation of targeted provision should not lead to a reduction in young people being able to access provision. The Committee is concerned that, currently, the correct balance is not being struck.

The Committee shares stakeholders’ concerns that reductions in provision and funding will lead to specific groups of young people, such as deaf young people; looked after young people; ethnic minority young people; Gypsy, Roma and traveller young people; refugee and asylum seeker young people; and disabled young people, being disproportionately affected.

Further, we share stakeholders’ concerns in relation to youth work and the Welsh language. Young people who wish to access youth work in Welsh should be able to do so – there must be sufficient provision to meet their needs.

---

<sup>10</sup> Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language, **Oral evidence**, 12 October 2016.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*

In conclusion, the Committee has serious concerns about the continued reductions in provision and funding for youth work. There needs to be an urgent and radical intervention on the part of the Minister if he is to deliver his ambitious vision of a truly open access, bilingual provision. He must also address the lack of strategic and joint working between the statutory and voluntary sector, which the Committee believes is a significant barrier to delivering a universal youth work offer.



## 03. What role should Welsh Government take?

This chapter considers the role Welsh Government has taken up to now and the effectiveness of its strategy. The Committee also suggests how Welsh Government's approach should change in future.

### A lack of leadership and strategic direction

**52.** Many respondents suggested that despite the existence of a National Youth Work Strategy and a range of initiatives relevant to youth work, there has been a lack of leadership, strategic direction and vision from Welsh Government. NYAS Cymru said:

“A clear vision for the youth service in Wales is required [...]. The Welsh Government need to bring all strands of policy together – it currently feels fragmented and unclear on the direction of travel with different organisations/bodies being responsible for different aspects of service.”<sup>12</sup>

**53.** YMCA Cardiff referred to a “lack of coherence at local and national level of a longer term vision for the provision of a Welsh youth work service”<sup>13</sup>, and Professor Howard Williamson believed that “leadership, prioritisation and direction from the centre is very poor”<sup>14</sup>.

**54.** Wrexham County Borough Council believed that “Welsh Government would be best placed to help build a consensus between local authority Youth Services and the Third Sector as during the past couple of years, this relationship has weakened”.<sup>15</sup> On this issue, the Children's Commissioner said:

“[...] there is a need for greater and more robust strategic co-ordination in relation to youth work in Wales, in relation to specific youth work policy and strategy [...]”<sup>16</sup>

### A need to review Welsh Government's National Strategy

**55.** Most respondents welcomed the Welsh Government's National Strategy for Youth Work 2014-18 in principle. However, several, including Estyn,<sup>17</sup> believed that it needs to be reviewed, given the significant changes over recent years in the landscape and context in which youth services are now being delivered. YMCA Cardiff said:

---

<sup>12</sup> National Youth Advocacy Service Cymru (National Youth Advocacy Service Cymru (Nyas); **Written evidence**, YW 06

<sup>13</sup> YMCA Cardiff; **Written evidence**, YW 10

<sup>14</sup> Dr Howard Williamson, Professor of European Youth Policy, YW 01

<sup>15</sup> Service Manager Prevention and Support, Wrexham County Borough Council; **Written evidence**, YW 09

<sup>16</sup> Children's Commissioner for Wales; **Written evidence**, YW 25

<sup>17</sup> Estyn; **Written evidence**, YW 12

---

“[...] since this strategy was written, our economic and social climate has changed significantly, and local authorities have been forced to make decisions that do not naturally align with this current strategy. It is therefore out of kilter with the reality of what is occurring on the ground across Wales.”<sup>18</sup>

---

**56.** Many other stakeholders expressed concerns that it is not realistic to believe that the strategy will be implemented, given the current landscape. Education and Training Standards Wales said there is an “absence of a targeted and costed action plan to deliver the National Youth Work Strategy”.<sup>19</sup>

### **Calls for a new statutory duty and an update to existing guidance**

**57.** Several contributors believed that Welsh Government should introduce a statutory duty to provide youth work services. Youth Cymru said:

---

“There is broad agreement that legislation is needed to clearly establish young people’s legal right to receive youth work services, and who is responsible for ensuring those services are provided.”<sup>20</sup>

---

**58.** Other contributors referred to the existing Extending Entitlement guidance, which is intended to underpin youth work provision in Wales, and which was issued in 2002. Stakeholders strongly believed that, given the changes in the sector over the last 14 years, a refresh of the guidance is long overdue. The Children’s Commissioner said the guidance:

---

“[...] does not incorporate or reflect the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011, the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, or the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, nor does it fit with the aims of the new curriculum development.”<sup>21</sup>

---

### **Concerns about the “youth work offer”, the Charter for youth work and the “Quality Mark”**

**59.** Stakeholders were generally supportive of these Welsh Government initiatives in principle. However, there was over-riding concern that it is not realistic to expect them to be delivered.

**60.** Stakeholders said that there was insufficient funding to deliver the “youth work offer”. Professor Howard Williams said:

---

“The aspirations of Welsh Government, for all young people to be able access a ‘youth offer’, provided either by local authorities or voluntary

---

<sup>18</sup> YMCA Cardiff; **Written evidence**, YW 10

<sup>19</sup> Education and Training Standards (ETS) Wales; **Written evidence**, YW 07

<sup>20</sup> Youth Cymru; **Written evidence**, YW 26

<sup>21</sup> Children’s Commissioner for Wales; **Written evidence**, YW 25

sector youth work activity, fall dreadfully short in the context of public sector cuts and intensified competition within the voluntary sector for available funds. [...] it is empty rhetoric completely disconnected from reality.”

---

**61.** The Charter for Youth Work was welcomed by Youth Cymru<sup>22</sup> and the Urdd<sup>23</sup>, but again they believed there was a lack of clarity in relation to how it will be delivered. The Children’s Commissioner went further and described the Charter as something which “does not provide an effective enough framework capable of securing a consistent youth work offer across all parts of Wales”.

**62.** Similarly, many stakeholders welcomed the Quality Mark, but questioned its sustainability, given continuing reductions in funding.

### **The effectiveness and status of the Ministerial “Youth Work Reference Group”**

**63.** The Council for Wales Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS) was unclear about the continuing role of the Reference Group,<sup>24</sup> and the Principal Youth Officer’s Group said the Reference Group is “ineffective as it has not produced any tangible outcomes”.<sup>25</sup>

### **Welsh Government’s lack of engagement with stakeholders**

**64.** Several respondents believed there is a lack of engagement between Welsh Government and key external stakeholders. The Children’s Commissioner called for “greater involvement of the workforce in the development of policy”.<sup>26</sup> The Principal Youth Officer’s Group described this lack of engagement as a missed opportunity and suggested that developing strategies and policies without meaningful input from the sector meant that their impact was likely to be diminished. They went on to say:

---

“There has been far less involvement of the sector and, at times, work and/or documents have been published in circumstances where the sector has not been informed beforehand e.g. the announcement of the development of the National Outcomes Framework by the National Youth Agency, at the National Youth Work Excellence Awards in 2015 and the recent Youth Work Charter, launched at the WG Youth Work Conference in March. Likewise, the current strategy was developed without involvement of the sector.”<sup>27</sup>

---

---

<sup>22</sup> Youth Cymru; **Written evidence**, YW 26

<sup>23</sup> Urdd Gobaith Cymru; **Written evidence**, YW 28

<sup>24</sup> Council For Wales Of Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS); **Written evidence**, YW 08

<sup>25</sup> Wales Principal Youth Officers’ Group (PYOG); **Written evidence**, YW 17

<sup>26</sup> Children’s Commissioner for Wales, **Written evidence**, YW 25

<sup>27</sup> Wales Principal Youth Officers’ Group (PYOG); **Written evidence**, YW 17

## Concerns about a reduction in capacity of Welsh Government's youth work branch

65. Some respondents expressed concerns about a perceived reduction in capacity in Welsh Government's youth work branch. The Principal Youth Officer's Group said "[...] a high turn-over of civil service staff has resulted in a continual need to re-visit the meaning and purpose of youth work at strategic level."<sup>28</sup>

66. There was a further suggestion from stakeholders that there is insufficient cross departmental working within Welsh Government, resulting in a lack of a coherent or joined up approach.

## The Welsh Government's procurement process

67. The Principal Youth Officers Group<sup>29</sup>, CWVYS<sup>30</sup> and Youth Cymru<sup>31</sup> all expressed frustration that consultants from outside Wales have been commissioned by the Welsh Government to undertake work relevant to youth work policy. It was suggested that a lack of understanding of the youth work landscape in Wales often meant that consultants were entirely dependent on the sector for information and analysis, drawing on scarce resources. This approach added little value.

## Summary of the Minister's evidence

68. The Minister described how he sees the role of Welsh Government in relation to youth work provision:

---

"Where you have local provision, the role of Welsh Government is to provide leadership, to provide support and encouragement to enable the exchange of best practice, with excellent case studies of different examples of different ways of working, and as an enabler. [...] I think it's important that Government here understands what its role, a positive role, can be, but as a part of that also understands where it is important to step back as well, and to allow local decision making to take place."<sup>32</sup>

---

69. The Minister disputed that there is a lack of leadership from Welsh Government and said the sector had been fully involved in the development of the National Strategy:

---

"[...] we as a Government have a strategy in place that was established as a result of a significant period and process of engagement and consultation and debate and discussion, so it wasn't a strategy that

---

<sup>28</sup> Wales Principal Youth Officers' Group (PYOG); [Written evidence](#), YW 17

<sup>29</sup> [ibid](#)

<sup>30</sup> Council For Wales Of Voluntary Youth Services (Cwvys); [Written evidence](#), YW 08

<sup>31</sup> Youth Cymru; [Written evidence](#), YW 26

<sup>32</sup> Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language, [Oral evidence](#), 12 October 2016.

was imposed on the sector—it came from the sector, and that, of course, has been established with £2.7 million of additional funding in order to enable that to happen.”<sup>33</sup>

---

**70.** The Minister committed to undertake a review of the strategy and the associated statutory guidance. In correspondence, the Minister said that

“The National Youth Work Strategy is currently being reviewed; findings will be published in Spring 2017. Working closely with stakeholders this will form the basis for development of a new youth work strategy to run from 2018. This piece of work will feed in to our work around refreshing the statutory guidance.”<sup>34</sup>

---

**71.** In reference to the purpose of the quality mark, the Minister said:

“We will ensure that the quality mark, which was developed with the sector—it’s not something that we’re imposing—will allow different organisations to self-assess themselves [...] The role of the wider voluntary structure and voluntary sector is important in pushing up standards and increasing standards and quality as well. So, you do have the structures that we’re establishing from Government, but also the structures that exist within the voluntary sector as well, which, I hope, together, will capture many of the organisations that you are describing.”<sup>35</sup>

---

**72.** Responding to criticisms about a lack of engagement with the sector, the Minister said:

“Can I say that none of those organisations have contacted me since I’ve been appointed to make those criticisms or to make those points? So, if they are making those points to the committee, then, clearly, they’re doing so without reference to the Welsh Government, and without making those points to the Welsh Government. And perhaps, if they are concerned about the actions of the Welsh Government, they should contact the Minister in the Welsh Government, and, clearly, they have not done so.”<sup>36</sup>

---

**73.** In response to a question, the Minister told the Committee there is “no evidence at all” of a reduction in staffing in the Welsh Government department responsible for youth work.

---

<sup>33</sup> Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language, *Oral evidence*, 12 October 2016.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid*

<sup>35</sup> *ibid*

<sup>36</sup> *ibid*

## The Committee's view

Welsh Government has a vital role to play in ensuring that there is better alignment between the statutory and voluntary sectors to deliver youth work. The Minister must address the lack of strategic and joint working between the statutory and voluntary sector, which the Committee believes is a significant barrier to delivering a universal youth work offer.

The Committee believes that an important first step will be a review of the current strategy and a refresh of the existing statutory guidance. We also believe that a detailed action plan is needed to ensure the strategy will be delivered on the ground.

The Committee notes the concern among stakeholders from both the statutory and voluntary sectors about a lack of leadership and strategic direction from Welsh Government. The Minister disputed this and referred the Committee to the National Youth Work Strategy for Wales and additional funding allocated by Welsh Government for its implementation. The Committee is concerned that the Minister and key stakeholders appear to have such differing views.

We note that stakeholders across both sectors welcomed a number of other Welsh Government initiatives in principle, such as the Quality Mark and the Charter for Youth Work. Their overriding concern, however, is that there is a lack of a clear action plan and insufficient resources and capacity to implement them on a sustainable basis.

The Committee was surprised by the Minister's response to criticism from statutory and voluntary stakeholders in relation to engagement with them in the development of policies. Again, that the Minister and key stakeholders hold such opposing views on the involvement and engagement of the sector in the development of youth work policy, such as the strategy, is a cause for concern for this Committee.

The Committee was also surprised that the Minister's views on the state of youth work and those of the Principal Youth Officer's Group and CWVYS were so different. These representative bodies are two of the key stakeholders in the statutory and voluntary sectors, respectively. The Minister must ensure he harnesses the expertise and understanding of both these organisations in taking youth work forward. They will prove invaluable in delivering the Minister's commitment to delivering universal access in increasingly difficult circumstances.

### The Committee's recommendations

**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.



**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.

**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.

## 04. What type of youth service does Wales want?

This chapter considers how Welsh Government’s vision of a universal, open access bilingual service can be achieved, in the light of the significant changes to the youth work landscape in recent years and the perceived lack of leadership and direction from Welsh Government from across the sector.

### Calls to establish a new national body

**74.** Many respondents specifically called for the establishment of a new national body or framework to provide the impetus for a new way of working based on co-ordination of the voluntary and statutory sectors. In its response, the Urdd identified as its main priority the need for Welsh Government to establish such a body.<sup>37</sup> They believed it could offer strategic leadership to the sector and would also have the authority to devise creative solutions that are rooted in Wales.

**75.** NYAS Cymru echoed this view, saying that “greater collaboration is required between the statutory and voluntary sector. [...] Having a National Youth Service Council for Wales would be one of the strengths of ensuring this is achieved; to bring together services; working together for one vision and aim”.<sup>38</sup> The Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS) suggested that such a model would ensure both sectors were more efficient and would be more cost-effective. They said that the body could be funded from “the ‘reclaiming and hypothecation’ of RSG monies”.<sup>39</sup>

### Funding

**76.** As described previously in this report, stakeholders raised serious concerns about whether an open access service is viable, given reductions in funding. The Principal Youth Officers Group (PYOG) said:

“[...] the reduction in funding has posed a serious strain on the delivery of youth services in their originally intended manner of being universal/offering open access provision.”<sup>40</sup>

**77.** An issue raised by almost all respondents was the perceived variation in the amount of Revenue Support Grant allocated by local authorities compared to the notional allocation (the Indicator based Assessment) for youth work services. Education and Training Standards Wales said:

“[...] we are unable to understand the wide variety in Local Authority spending on youth services when compared to the notional figure for youth services set out in each LA’s RSG allocation.”<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Urdd Gobaith Cymru; **Written evidence**, YW 28

<sup>38</sup> National Youth Advocacy Service Cymru (Nyas); **Written evidence**, Yw 06

<sup>39</sup> Council For Wales Of Voluntary Youth Services (Cwvys); **Written evidence**, Yw 08

<sup>40</sup> Wales Principal Youth Officers’ Group (PYOG); **Written evidence**, YW 17

**78.** In response to a question on this issue, the WLGA told the Committee that the information for each local authority’s expenditure, as included in Welsh Government’s statistical release, was not comparable as each authority is structured differently.

**79.** Some respondents questioned whether funding should be hypothecated. NYAS believed so and that local authorities should be more accountable for the amounts they spend on youth services<sup>42</sup>. Other respondents commented on the use by local authorities of funding from other programmes, such as Families First or Communities First to “top up” their allocations to youth services to reach the notional sum identified by Welsh Government. Ynys Mon Council said:

---

“[...] some counties use grants such as Families First or Communities First to employ youth workers or school youth workers, while others feel that the terms of the grant prevent such action, meaning that provision, again, varies considerably from one county to the next.”<sup>43</sup>

---

### **Voluntary sector funding**

---

**80.** Several respondents referred to the reduction in recent years of the funds available to the voluntary sector. This has led not only to a reduction in levels of provision, but a situation where organisations are spending increasing amounts of time chasing scarce funding streams in order to continue to exist. Professor Howard Williamson said:

---

“More time than ever before is spent trying to secure and sustain organisational and project funding than on youth work delivery. All this, together, puts the funding of youth work in a very precarious position.”<sup>44</sup>

---

### **European funding**

---

**81.** Serious concerns were raised about the impact on the sector of the potential removal of European funding, highlighting funding used for youth services in programmes such as Erasmus+ and European Structural funds.

### **A service that responds to the needs of young people**

**82.** Further to concerns about the lack of engagement with stakeholders outlined in previous chapters, several respondents expressed concerns that youth policy and services are developed with little or no involvement from young people. The Children’s Commissioner called for “greater involvement of young people in the development of policy and the delivery of services”.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Education and Training Standards (ETS) Wales; **Written evidence**, YW 07

<sup>42</sup> National Youth Advocacy Service Cymru (NYAS); **Written evidence**, YW 06

<sup>43</sup> Cyngor Sir Ynys Môn | Isle of Anglesey Council, **Written evidence**, YW 03

<sup>44</sup> Dr Howard Williamson, Professor of European Youth Policy, YW 01

<sup>45</sup> Children’s Commissioner for Wales, **Written evidence**, YW 25

**83.** The Principal Youth Officers Group emphasised the importance of involving young people in service development:

---

“It is essential therefore that young people are fully involved in shaping services going forward. Whilst their engagement in national discussions and policy development so far has been very limited, the PYOG makes a plea for young people to be offered a view and be fully involved at every step.”<sup>46</sup>

---

### Service mapping and youth work sufficiency assessments

**84.** The Children’s Commissioner for Wales believed there is a “need to introduce Youth Work Sufficiency assessments as part of a population needs assessment”<sup>47</sup>, a view shared by Wrexham County Borough Council<sup>48</sup>. Youth Cymru said:

---

“[...] consideration could be given to developing the methodology used to establish ‘sufficiency’ with regard to play provision, placing a duty on each local authority to assess the need for youth work provision and to plan for it and ensure it is delivered.”<sup>49</sup>

---

### Youth work and education policies

**85.** A number of contributors to the inquiry believed that youth work can play an important role in relation to education policy. Stakeholders believed the sector should be involved in the development of curriculum reform following the Donaldson review. Education and Training Standards Wales said that the debate on how to implement the reforms “appears to be happening without any youth work input.”<sup>50</sup> The Children’s Commissioner said:

---

“It has been disappointing to see a lack of engagement with wider youth services within the Curriculum Reform work undertaken to date, who I believe have a significant role to play in realised Wales’s Curriculum for Life ambitions.”<sup>51</sup>

---

---

<sup>46</sup> Wales Principal Youth Officers’ Group (PYOG); [Written evidence](#), YW 17

<sup>47</sup> Children’s Commissioner for Wales, [Written evidence](#), YW 25

<sup>48</sup> Service Manager Prevention and Support, Wrexham County Borough Council; [Written evidence](#), YW 09

<sup>49</sup> Youth Cymru; [Written evidence](#), YW 26

<sup>50</sup> Education and Training Standards (ETS) Wales; [Written evidence](#), YW 07

<sup>51</sup> Children’s Commissioner for Wales, [Written evidence](#), YW 25

## Raising the profile of youth work

**86.** Some respondents, including the Principal Youth Officers Group<sup>52</sup>, called for the status of youth work receive a higher profile within Welsh Government. The Education Workforce Council stated that “many within the sector in Wales feel that the profile of the youth work in Wales has lost ground in recent years compared to other sectors such as school teaching and social care”.<sup>53</sup>

## Workforce

**87.** There has been a significant number of job losses from within the sector in recent years. Some respondents expressed concerns that such volatility may dissuade people from pursuing youth work as a career.

**88.** Other contributors emphasised the importance of workforce development. The Boys’ and Girls’ Clubs of Wales<sup>54</sup> said volunteers should be offered basic training so they fully understand the principles of youth work.

**89.** From April 2017, there will be a requirement for some youth workers to be registered with the Education Workforce Council. Education and Training Standards Wales said it is important that youth workers benefit from the registration process.<sup>55</sup> However, Unison expressed concerns that “youth workers will [not] gain the same value from registration as teachers currently do”.<sup>56</sup>

**90.** The Education Workforce Council said:

---

“[...] having made a decision to extend registration to other groups in the workforce beyond school teachers and require them to pay an annual EWC registration fee, it is necessary that government treats all registrant groups equitably in its future workforce planning and policy development. Historically, school teachers have benefitted from professional development opportunities, professional standards and other arrangements that have not been available to youth workers, FE teachers, work based learning practitioners or support staff.”<sup>57</sup>

---

## Common management of information

**91.** A lack of collection of consistent management information was also raised. Estyn told the Committee that the collection of data would enable Welsh Government, local authorities, and youth work managers to assess the suitability of youth work provision to meet young people’s identified and prioritised needs<sup>58</sup>.

---

<sup>52</sup> Wales Principal Youth Officers’ Group (PYOG); [Written evidence](#), YW 17

<sup>53</sup> The Education Workforce Council (EWC); [Written evidence](#), YW 11

<sup>54</sup> Boys’ and Girls’ Clubs of Wales; [Written evidence](#), YW 27

<sup>55</sup> Education and Training Standards (ETS) Wales; [Written evidence](#), YW 07

<sup>56</sup> Unison Cymru | Wales; [Written evidence](#), YW 29

<sup>57</sup> The Education Workforce Council (EWC); [Written evidence](#), YW 11

<sup>58</sup> Estyn; [Written evidence](#), YW 12

## National Outcomes Framework

**92.** The Welsh Government has recently consulted on introducing a National Outcomes Framework for Youth Work with the aim of “seeking clarity about the outcomes”. Youth Cymru said they had concerns about the framework:

---

“The process around the development of a proposed National Outcomes Framework has been flawed, and it seems now that what will emerge is a tool to measure activity, rather than to measure the difference that activity makes. It is not clear whether this will supersede, add to, or be separate from the current data gathering process in which local authorities must participate.”<sup>59</sup>

---

## Summary of the Minister’s evidence

**93.** In reference to stakeholders’ comments in support of a national model or framework, the Minister said:

---

“It certainly isn’t my intention, and it wouldn’t be my wish, and I don’t think it would be the wish of the committee either, to nationalise that service and to seek to deliver it from here. So, there will be differences. One of the themes I’ve picked up from your evidence is the significant difference in provision across the country. To some extent, we need to decide where we want the balance. There’s always that tension, if you like, between a national vision and local delivery.”<sup>60</sup>

---

**94.** The Minister went on to say he would be deciding on a future model for youth work provision in early 2017.

**95.** The Minister set out his position on funding:

---

“Overwhelmingly, my view remains that this is a matter for local government to take these decisions and not a matter for a Minister to intervene in. Local youth services are funded via a number of different sources, mainly the RSG—I think that probably represents about 70 per of the total available. But then you’ve got other funding sources from Welsh Government programmes, from the European structural fund and other sources within, perhaps, local government or elsewhere. So, you’ve got a number of different sources of funding. Taken together, the current estimate for the final financial year for which we have numbers was that £36.6 million was being spent on

---

<sup>59</sup> Youth Cymru; **Written evidence**, YW 26

<sup>60</sup> Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language, **Oral evidence**, 12 October 2016.

youth services across Wales, which is considerably more than the notional figure that you'd see from the RSG that is published.”<sup>61</sup>

---

**96.** The Minister confirmed he would discuss with the WLGA issues around the comparability of local authority data on allocations of funding.

**97.** In response to a question about the possibility of setting outcomes for local authorities as a condition of funding, the Minister said:

“Setting outcomes by local authority area—I’m happy to consider that. Of course, the national strategy has some outcomes that probably aren’t defined in the way that you describe, and certainly aren’t defined on a local authority basis, in terms of the way forward, but perhaps that is something we can discuss when we come back to discuss the strategy guidance. I’m more attracted by the concept of outcomes than I am by hypothecation [...] If we are going to look at a national outcomes framework, then perhaps how we break that down into local areas could be something we could look at.”<sup>62</sup>

---

**98.** The Minister referred to the importance of European Funding to the sector and said he would consider the possibility of the Welsh Government engaging in the Erasmus+ programme:

“Clearly, it’s the UK as a member state in this case, and a UK agency, that continues to manage and deliver the programme across the United Kingdom, but you’re absolutely right in your analysis: you don’t need to be a member of the European Union in order to access these services and I would certainly want to do that.”<sup>63</sup>

---

**99.** The Minister said he would welcome feedback or ideas on how to improve engagement with young people in developing services:

“[...] if the committee has any views on how that can be improved or how we can strengthen that engagement, then I’d very much welcome that. I would particularly welcome any views the committee might have on how we can strengthen the voice of young people and children who may be, at the moment, marginalised, lacking in confidence, from disadvantaged backgrounds, or excluded from services and providers in other ways.”<sup>64</sup>

---

**100.** The Minister referred to understanding of levels and location of provision and said that a mapping exercise was currently being undertaken:

---

<sup>61</sup> Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language, **Oral evidence**, 12 October 2016.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid*

<sup>63</sup> *ibid*

<sup>64</sup> *ibid*



---

“Public provision, statutory provision from local authorities is already a matter of public record and is available both to this committee and to anyone else. And that stands. So, we understand what is delivered and what is available through statutory services. What isn’t so well understood is that delivered through the voluntary sector, through voluntary groups, and it is that element of that that we are currently mapping. It’s that element that we will be reporting on in the next few weeks.”<sup>65</sup>

---

**101.** The Committee subsequently received correspondence from the Minister confirming that the mapping exercise relates only to provision to support young people who are NEET.

**102.** On workforce registration, the Minister said:

---

“I hope that the Education Workforce Council registration process will both strengthen the sector and provide an underpinning, if you like, of the skills available to the sector, and also then increase the status of the sector and of youth workers. I hope that it will then provide the opportunity for a progression, if you like, and a more profound engagement in how we develop youth work and youth workers in the future.”<sup>66</sup>

---

**103.** The Minister also confirmed he would consider extending the remit of the Education Workforce Council to develop professional standards for youth workers in Wales. In response to a question, the Minister said he would also be content for local authorities to consider opening up training opportunities to the voluntary sector.

**104.** In relation to the involvement of the sector in the implementation of curriculum reform, the Minister said:

---

“My understanding is that it’s fully involved in that work. [...] we’re moving into a process, through Donaldson, of having education provided in a more comprehensive and holistic way, and I hope that the youth service and youth work will help deliver that. Certainly, my understanding is that that is already happening.”<sup>67</sup>

---

## The Committee’s view

The Committee believes the Minister needs to take a radical approach in order to deliver his commitment to deliver a genuine youth work offer for all young people in Wales. The youth work offer will only be delivered if the services and skills of the voluntary sector are

---

<sup>65</sup> Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language, **Oral evidence**, 12 October 2016.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid*

<sup>67</sup> *ibid*

maximised to the full to support and complement statutory provision. Continuing in the same vein, in the face of reductions in funding, capacity and provision, will not deliver the Minister's ambitions.

The Committee heard compelling evidence in support of the establishment of a national model to drive forward youth work policy and implementation across the statutory and voluntary sector. A national model would enable better collaborative processes, reduce duplication across the sectors, raise the status and profile of youth work, and enable workforce development. Most importantly, it would maximise the available resources for the benefit of young people.

There was a variety of views from stakeholders about the details of how such a model might work in practice. However, there was unanimous support among stakeholders for a new and radical approach.

Of course, within a national model, local decisions should continue to drive provision by responding directly to local needs. There would continue to be a role for local authorities and local service boards.

The Committee believes the argument is persuasive, particularly as better collaboration and a reduction of duplication would, inevitably, lead to better value for money during a period of sustained reduction in funding. We believe Welsh Government should, with the input of stakeholders and young people, explore the costs and benefits of the different types of national model.

The Committee believes there is a need to better understand levels of provision across both sectors in Wales, through the mapping of provision and sufficiency assessments. The Committee believes that understanding the needs of young people, alongside the existing level of provision, could prove invaluable in developing open access provision.

In relation to funding, the Committee is concerned by increasing pressures on both the statutory and voluntary sector. Short-term funding for targeted provision from multiple funding streams also has an impact on the voluntary sector. One of the benefits of a national model or framework could be a more mature commissioning arrangement between local authorities and the voluntary sector. It would also ensure the voluntary sector is an equal partner.

The Committee notes the Minister's strong opposition to the hypothecation of funding for youth work within the revenue support grant. The Committee is concerned, however, that there is a lack of accountability for the use of funds nominally allocated to local authorities via the Revenue Support Grant.

The Minister must ensure that mechanisms are in place for Welsh Government to hold local authorities to account for the use of such funds for youth work. As a step forward, the Committee welcomes the Minister's commitment to explore the potential of linking a

framework of outcomes, to be delivered locally, to funding through the Revenue Support Grant.

The Committee was concerned to hear comments from the WLGA that called into question the reliability of the Welsh Government's statistics on the use of funding through the Revenue Support Grant. The Committee welcomes the Minister's undertaking to discuss this issue with the WLGA.

The Committee notes the contribution of European funding to youth work in Wales and welcomes the Minister's commitment to explore the possibility of continuing Erasmus+, should the UK Government decide not to do so. The Committee continues to be concerned, however, about the impact of the potential loss of other sources of funding, such as European Structural Funds.

In relation to education, the Committee believes that youth work providers should play a full role in the development of the new curriculum. It is clear that stakeholders believe they are not currently involved in this process. The Minister should explore this matter further with the Ministerial Youth Work Reference Group and take the necessary steps to ensure their involvement.

On the issue of workforce, the Committee notes that, from April 2017, some youth workers will be required to register with the Education Workforce Council. The Committee believes that Welsh Government needs to ensure that the workforce benefits from any development opportunities and professional standards that arise from this policy change.

In conclusion, the Committee believes the Minister is facing a considerable challenge to deliver his commitment of a universal, open access, bilingual youth work provision. He has access to a workforce in the statutory and voluntary sectors that is passionate and enthusiastic about helping him deliver his commitment. However, there is a need for an urgent and radical change, if both the Minister's ambition and the needs of young people are to be met.

### **The Committee's recommendations:**

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**Recommendation 9.** The Minister should explore the potential continuation of Erasmus+ funding, should the UK Government decide not to do so.

**Recommendation 10.** The Minister should ensure that the statutory and voluntary youth work sector play a central role in the process of curriculum reform.

## **05. Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Organisations (CWVYS) grant**

**105.** On 31 October 2016, representatives of CWVYS received correspondence from Welsh Government officials informing them that it had been determined that their grant would come to an end on 31 March 2017. The correspondence was clear that CWVYS would not receive the grant for the financial year 2017-2018.

**106.** On 2 November, the Committee wrote to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to express its concern with these developments and to seek urgent clarification on several matters relating to the decision that CWVYS' grant should not be continued.

**107.** The subsequent exchange of correspondence between the Committee and the Minister is available on the [Committee's website](#).

## Annex A – Oral Evidence

The following witnesses provided oral evidence to the Committee on the dates noted below. Transcripts of all oral evidence sessions can be viewed in full at [Meeting Transcripts](#)

Date	Name and Organisation
6 October 2016	Paul Glaze, Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Service Keith Towler, Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Service Catrin James, Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Service  Dr Chris Llewelyn, Welsh Local Government Association Barbara Howe, Torfaen County Borough Council Jason Haeney, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Tim Opie, Welsh Local Government Association
12 October 2016	Alun Davies AM, Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language Kara Richards, Welsh Government Sam Evans, Welsh Government



## Annex B – Written Evidence

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
YW 01	Dr Howard Williamson, Professor of European Youth Policy
YW 02	Challenge Wales   Wales' Tall Ship
YW 03	Cyngor Sir Ynys Môn   Isle of Anglesey Council
YW 04	Valleys Kids
YW 05	Youth Intervention Service (YIS)
YW 06	National Youth Advocacy Service
YW 07	Education and Training Standards (ETS) Wales
YW 08	Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS)
YW 09	Service Manager Prevention and Support, Wrexham County Borough Council
YW 10	YMCA Cardiff
YW 11	The Education Workforce Council (EWC)
YW 12	Estyn
YW 13	National Deaf Children's Society Cymru (NDCS)
YW 14	Alun Davies, Associate Research Fellow
YW 15	Individual
YW 16	Swansea Young People Services (SYPS)
YW 17	Wales Principal Youth Officers' Group (PYOG) & Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)
YW 18	Connect Cymru
YW 19	Individual
YW 20	Welsh Presbyterian Church
YW 21	Play Wales
YW 22	Children in Wales

YW 23	Youth Offending Team (YOT) Managers Cymru
YW 24	ProMo-Cymru
YW 25	Children's Commissioner for Wales
YW 26	Youth Cymru
YW 27	Boys' and Girls' Clubs of Wales
YW 28	Urdd Gobaith Cymru
YW 29	Unison Cymru   Wales
YW 30	Caerphilly Youth Forum – Abertysswg Youth Club
YW 31	Torfaen County Borough Council
YW 32	Risca Youth Club
YW 33	Powys Youth Service
YW 34	Crosskeys Youth Club
YW 35	YMCA Swansea

## **Annex C – Inquiry into Youth Work: Stakeholder Event – Wednesday 28 September – Attendees**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Reference</b>
Marco Gil-Cervantes	ProMo Cymru
Joff Carroll OBE	Boys & Girls Clubs of Wales (BGCWales)
Helen Mary Jones	Youth Cymru
Gareth Williams	YMCA Cardiff
Carlie Scott	YMCA Swansea
Andrew Templeton	YMCA Cardiff
Sioned Hughes	Urdd Gobaith Cymru
Lt-Col Stephen Hughes	Reserve Forces & Cadets Association for Wales
Richard Flowerdew	ScoutsCymru
Malcolm Latham	ScoutsCymru
MaryAnn Hale	UNA Exchange
Sharon Lovell	NYAS Cymru
Cathie Robins-Talbot	Talking Hands
Sy Joshua	St John Cymru Wales
Leigh Rowland	Cwmbran Centre for Young People
Dr Howard Williamson	Professor of European Youth Policy University of South Wales
Claire Cunliffe	CWVYS (Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services)
Gayle Harris	Dr M'z, Carmarthen
Zoe Davies	Fishguard and Goodwick Young Persons' Trust
Dave Brunton	Senghenydd Youth Drop-in Centre (SYDIC)
Dan Wilson	Grassroots
Matthew Parry	Grassroots

Catrin James	CWVYS (Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services)
Paul Glaze	CWVYS (Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services)
Chris Richards	Children in Wales
Sian Rendell	Milford Youth Matters
Vixie Williams	Discovery
Eleanor Norton	Discovery
Helen Jones	CWVYS (Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services)
Grant Poiner	Boys & Girls Clubs of Wales (BGCWales)
Helen Robins-Talbot	Talking Hands
Keith Towler	CWVYS (Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services)
Marianne Mannello	Play Wales
Judy Harris	CYTUN (Churches Together in Wales)
Tina Simmons	Connect Cymru

## Annex D – Policy background

### National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2014-2018

The Welsh Government launched the **National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2014-2018** in 2014, with the intention to set out the direction for youth work organisations. It aims to give direction to those planning and delivering youth work provision and replaced the previous 2007 strategy. It states:

---

“Through the implementation of this strategy the expectation is that delivery partners across Wales develop a more consistent offer of high-quality youth work for young people, enabling youth work organisations to operate as strategic and valued partners.”

---

It goes on to say:

---

“Youth work provision is offered through youth services. Youth work is an intrinsic element of youth support services which seek to ensure that all 11 to 25-year-olds have the services, support and experiences they need to achieve their potential. In Wales the youth service is a universal entitlement, open to all young people. Through the Learning and Skills Act 2000, section 123(1), Welsh Ministers have directed local authorities to provide, secure the provision of, or participate in, the provision of youth support services.”

---

It refers to the WLGA’s 2013 **Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes document** saying:

---

*“Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes* sets out the key principles which underpin youth work in Wales. It provides an overview of the nature, purposes and delivery methods used in youth work practice. Youth work is provided through both the voluntary and local authority sectors and through a variety of youth work settings and methods. Youth work provision is open to all young people within the specified age range 11 to 25.”

---

Referring to outcomes for young people it says:

---

“There are many outcomes that young people can achieve when participating in youth work. The expected outcomes for young people can be identified under three broad themes.

#### **Active participation:**

---

- young people enjoy and achieve
  - young people make a positive contribution
-

- 
- young people have a voice
  - young people have the right to have their voice heard and opinion taken account of
  - young people have improved well-being
  - young people enhance/develop their practical skills
  - young people learn to manage risk.
- 

#### **Wider skills development:**

---

- Team building
  - communication
  - problem solving
  - decision making
  - influencing others.
- 

#### **Enhanced emotional competence:**

---

- increased levels of confidence and self-motivation
  - improved self-awareness, motivation and self-worth
  - ability to develop and sustain relationships”
- 

More recently, between March and June 2016, the Welsh Government consulted on a **National Outcomes Framework for Youth Work**. The outcome of this consultation has yet to be published.

### **Wales Charter for Youth Work**

The Welsh Government launched a **Wales Charter for Youth Work** in 2016, setting out its “minimum expectation” for youth work to young people across Wales. Then Minister, Julie James AM, **said** “The Charter is written from the perspective of a young person rather than that of service providers”. The Welsh Government’s “**Developing Youth Work in Wales**” document sets out the Charter:

---

“All young people will be entitled to easy access through the medium of English or Welsh to:

---

- Safe, warm, well-equipped meeting places providing opportunities for sustained relationships, exciting leisure-time



activities in arts and sport, and new experiences which widen their horizons.

- Opportunities to take part in outdoor adventure and in residential and international experiences.
  - Opportunities to participate in decision-making via informal and formal structures for youth engagement locally and nationally (e.g. young mayors, youth councils and Senedd). Such arrangements to have clear references to participation standards; to be based on UNCRC principles; and seek to engage young people in shaping and scrutinising the services which affect them.
  - Information, guidance and support on matters which concern them including employment, housing and mental well-being. The service can be accessed both through digital media and via trusted and trained adults.
  - Encouragement to learn more about their own culture and the cultures of other people.
  - Co-ordinated provision by youth workers in all secondary schools and colleges, extending the ‘pupil offer’ and thus enriching the formal curriculum and supporting personal and social development.
  - Opportunities to be civic activists e.g. by volunteering.
  - Recognition and / or accreditation for their achievements in personal and social development both in schools and colleges and in the community.”
- 

In her written statement launching the Charter, Julie James **said**:

---

“To ensure implementation of the Charter there will need to be changes in how the system is governed and funded. I have asked my officials to begin to explore the setting up of a Wales Youth Development and Support Framework, a Framework that will look to develop a representative, strategic body across youth-facing services. The support framework will build on existing arrangement and bring together, initially at the national level, the strategic direction, planning, resources and data gathering.”

---

## Quality Mark for youth work in Wales

The **Quality Mark for youth work in Wales**, launched in 2015, is the Welsh Government's recognised quality award. Organisations can apply for it through a self-assessment process, which is then subject to external assessment. The Welsh Government says that "The Quality Mark provides a robust, independent, external assessment of the quality and performance of organisations that deliver youth work". The Quality Mark consists of three levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold. There are four Quality Standards within each level, each comprising of three associated indicators. In June 2016 the contract to deliver the Quality Mark until March 2018 was awarded to **Atkin Associates**.