

Keith Towler

19th November 2025

Buffy Williams MS
Chair, Children, Young People, and Education Committee

Dear Buffy,

Youth Work in Wales

This is an important time for Youth Work in Wales. Following the snapshot inquiry your predecessor undertook in 2016 there has been a lot of work put into establishing a sustainable model for the delivery of youth work services in Wales. The Interim Youth Work Board, which I chaired, published a clear set of recommendations in *Time to Deliver (September 2021)* and since then the Youth Work Implementation Board has taken that work further.

You'll be aware that the Cabinet Secretary for Education consulted on a set of proposals. The sector engaged with the consultation and several of us raised some concern about the direction that work has now taken. Alun Michael, Howard Williamson, and I have written to the Cabinet Secretary to express our concerns. There are three main issues, amongst others, that I wanted to raise with you.

Firstly, the so called 'definition' of youth work is neither a definition or a statement that reflects the aspirations of a sustainable model of youth work delivery as set out in *Time to Deliver*.

Secondly, the proposal to establish a national body for youth work in Wales is welcomed by the sector but the rather top-down bureaucratic controlling body that seems to be envisaged is at odds with the offer of CWYVS and the WLGA to work with Welsh Government officials to develop a partnership model.

And, if there is to be a new framework for youth work with "Draft Directions' and 'Draft Statutory Guidance' as outlined in last year's consultation paper, with little or no amendment, I fear that would be a mistake as the proposals are unrealistic and unworkable.

To my knowledge a full set of responses to the consultation have not been published although I'm aware that others have also raised considerable concerns. Given it will be 10 years, at the end of this Senedd term, since your Committee's inquiry I wonder whether you would consider raising with the Cabinet Secretary the issues I've outlined by asking for an update on progress and seeking assurance that Welsh Governments next steps fully takes these into account.

We all know that youth work has faced challenges in recent years. We also know how valuable youth work is for children and young people in Wales. The Committee has set in train an opportunity to improve youth work delivery in Wales and so I hope you will take an active interest so we can get this right for children and young people.

I would be grateful if you would also share my letter with the membership of the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Keith Towler