

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchu Tlodi
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-597
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/00573/15

William Powell AM
Assembly Member for Mid & West Wales
Chair - Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

2 June 2015

Dear Bill

Thank you for your letter of 30 April, regarding the petition "Protect the future of Funky Dragon, the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales".

My previous response to your Committee sets out the commitment of the Welsh Government to involve children and young people in proposing and implementing policy and laws which aim to improve the lives of everyone in Wales. We are providing a total of £1.8 million over three years to Children in Wales to create structures to enable children and young people to have their opinions heard and influence our work. Their participation model, called 'Young Wales', aims to reach hundreds of children and young people, including those who may be marginalised, shy, living in poverty, excluded or in challenging circumstances. It is a very different model to Funky Dragon.

I am pleased to say 'Young Wales' launched on the 27 March 2015. YoungWales.Wales is the new website for children and young people and those who work with them, to find out what is happening and how they can get involved.

'Young Wales' works with existing youth groups, forums and councils to gather their collective voice to influence legislation, policies and programmes. It also has a focus on social media as a way to contact those children and young people who do not always feel comfortable to speak up. This supports the Welsh Government's Commitment to the UNCRC and complies with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in their recommendation each Government should have a forum for children's participation.

At the launch event, 18 of the 22 Local Authorities Youth Forums were represented. Young people discussed and decided on the priorities for the coming year. As a result, Children in Wales will be working with children and young people, the Welsh Government and other stakeholders on the following areas:

- Bullying;
- Healthy relationships including domestic abuse;
- Sexual health;
- Mental health;
- Online safety;
- Substance misuse; and
- UNCRC.

Those who attended also felt very strongly that Personal and Social Education (PSE) in school should be considered further.

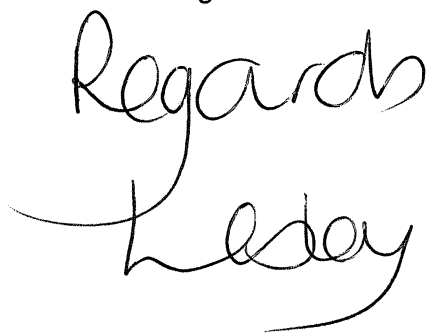
Young Wales asked for information on what we as a government are currently doing to address these issues. We now look forward to working with the young people on further addressing these issues.

In addition, Young Wales will be:

- leading on children and young people's involvement in the United Kingdom Youth Parliament (UKYP). Children in Wales have a good relationship with the UKYP and took 22 young people from across Wales to the UKYP Annual House of Commons Sitting in November 2014,
- leading on children and young people reporting directly to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child,
- promoting and driving the National Participation Standards,
- ensuring the Children and Young People's Workforce are informed of children's rights, including their right to participate.

Young Wales is careful to take into account the developments around youth engagement launched by the National Assembly for Wales and ensure the approaches compliment each other with no duplication.

It will, however, take time to embed a new way of working and a new model which carries a new name, but I am confident this model will allow more children and young people from more backgrounds and facing different circumstances to have their voices heard.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Regards" on the top line and "Lesley" on the bottom line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

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