

Huw Lewis AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-498
Ein cyf/Our ref HL/01475/13

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

17 October 2013

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

Dear William

Thank you for your letter of 3 October concerning Petition No P-04-498.

As you are already aware, the educational attainment, training and employability of all our children and young people remain key priorities for the Welsh Government. We are committed to focusing on the most effective interventions to increase the numbers of young people who are positively engaged with education and who can progress successfully to further education or training and subsequently sustained employment.

That is why on 1 October, the Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology launched the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Implementation Plan setting out clearly our expectations for youth engagement and progression on the delivery chain in Wales at a local, regional and national level. The implementation plan gives local authorities a key strategic leadership role, in their local area, working closely with Careers Wales, wider Youth Services, schools, providers and other partners to develop plans for implementation of the Youth Engagement & Progression Framework.

At the heart of the Framework there are two new actions. The first is the offer of a lead worker within a relevant organisation who can provide continuity of support and contact for the most at risk young people. This will help ensure that their support is delivered in a co-ordinated way as they move through school, further education or training, and on to employment.

The second is the development of a proactive and positive Youth Guarantee to ensure that every young person has access to a suitable place in learning post 16. The Youth Guarantee will be offered across a number of local authority areas in Wales for the first time in September 2014, to be rolled out fully by September 2015 and will be classed as the offer, acceptance and commencement of:

- A place on a full or part-time course in school, college, with an independent provider, or traineeship or apprenticeship place;
- Training to at least Level 2 during employment.

In Wales, we have made a decision not to raise the participation age by default, as we appreciate that further or higher education may not suit every young person. If a young person wishes to work rather than study at age 16, then they are able to do so. However, if they choose to continue on to further or higher education, then the most equitable student finance system we've ever had for our Welsh students will ensure that they are able to study anywhere in the UK without worrying about higher levels of debt.

I hope you find this useful in responding to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely



Huw Lewis AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills