



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-542  
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/00524/14

William Powell AM  
Chair Petitions committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

12 June 2014

Dear William,

### **Petition – P-04-542 Practical Opportunities for Young People**

Thank you for your letter of 30 May regarding the above petition from George Colville, and seeking our views.

The Welsh Government is already delivering much of what Mr Colville has stated in his petition via our national employability programmes. I would suggest you use the information I have outlined below as a basis to provide a response to Mr Colville.

A key priority for the Welsh Government is to progress young people and adults into employment at the earliest opportunity - and key to achieving this is to ensure unemployed young people gain the requisite skills and work experience to enable them to enter and remain in sustained employment. Our national employability programmes provide high quality vocational training which will entail work experience and the development of skills that are practical in nature. As part of the Programme of Government, the Welsh Government has established:

- **Traineeships** (for 16-18 year olds), which commenced in August 2011;
- the **Jobs Growth Wales Programme**, which commenced in April 2012; and
- **Apprenticeship** opportunities for young people.

In relation to the specific request to allow for more voluntary work to help in the development of new skills, in particular practical skills, both our Traineeship and Apprenticeship programmes have provision of this nature.

## **Traineeships**

The Traineeship programme for 16-18 year olds, supports young people to gain sustained employment by helping them with their confidence and motivation, and looks to address barriers to learning – all of which may prevent a young person moving into employment or learning at a higher level. The programme seeks to improve skills levels through the delivery of entry level qualifications up to NVQs Level 1 in their chosen occupational area.

Young people on Traineeships also receive valuable work experience and the support and help they need to learn at a pace suitable to them. This can sometimes be with a dedicated employer or through a simulated work environment depending on the level of support the young person requires. The programme includes the use of employer work placements, community projects, centre based learning opportunities as well as voluntary work opportunities to deliver the NVQ learning and to enhance each learner's development prior to entering employment or further learning. By nature the Traineeship programme offers skills training in practical occupations in areas such as construction, mechanical vocations, and hairdressing.

## **Apprenticeships**

Apprenticeships offer individuals the opportunity to earn money while they learn, obtain vocational training and build a sustainable career. Apprenticeships are available at all levels in a wide range of occupations at Foundation (level 2), Apprenticeships (level 3) and Higher Apprenticeships in certain occupations at levels 4 to 6. Some Higher Apprenticeships may include options to study Higher Education qualifications such as HNC, HND or Foundation degrees.

## **Young Recruits**

The Wales Young Recruits Programme (which is a part of the Apprenticeship scheme) is an all Wales programme that provides funding to employers offering high quality apprenticeship programmes to recruit and train additional young apprentices (16-24 years old). Small to medium sized employers could also be eligible for a one off payment of £500 to help cover the cost of recruiting an apprentice.

## **European Social Funding (ESF)**

Volunteering and participation on work trials and work experience is an eligible activity for young people within the current 2007-2013 European Social Fund (ESF) programmes. As noted, Welsh Government ESF projects such as Traineeships and Apprenticeships already offer such opportunities. Volunteering will continue to be an eligible activity for young people within the new 2014-2020 ESF programmes, enabling the Welsh Government and sponsors throughout Wales to use this as a means of providing unemployed young people with new, practical skills

## **Welsh Baccalaureate**

In addition to the above, we have the Welsh Baccalaureate which provides opportunities for learners to be actively engaged in the Community. The revised model that is being developed following the Review of Qualifications will enable learners to develop and demonstrate skills through a series of 'challenges', including a 'Community Challenge'. We are currently engaged with a range of stakeholders to develop appropriate Challenges, which will be robust, real-life challenges that demonstrate the acquisition of World-Class skills that prepare learners properly for employment and Higher Education.

There has been an excellent response from charitable organisations who are keen to be involved in providing worthwhile challenges. An event was held in April for organisations in both the Private and Voluntary Sector to enable them to be involved in the development of challenges. Some of these will be trialled in 10 schools and colleges from September 2014 and others will be used when the qualification is rolled out in September 2015.

### **National Youth Work Strategy (2014-2018)**

We also have the Welsh Government's new National Youth Work Strategy, which I launched on the 20 February. The Welsh Government, voluntary youth organisations, and local authorities will work together to successfully implement the identified actions within the strategy to drive youth work forward. I have included a link to this strategy. <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/skillsandtraining/national-youth-work-strategy-for-wales/?lang=en>

Youth work in Wales provides and facilitates an environment within which young people aged 11-25 can relax, have fun, feel secure, supported and valued. Through non-formal and informal educational opportunities, youth work approaches challenge young people to enhance their personal, social and political development. By engaging in youth work young people can learn to take greater control of their lives and be supported to recognise and resist the damaging influences which may affect them.

The National Youth Service audit provides information on youth services including the range of projects offered to young people, this can be found at <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/youth-services/?lang=en>.

### **GwirVol**

There is also GwirVol – a youth led volunteering initiative and a partnership of organisations in Wales who represent and promote youth volunteering in Wales through all of its projects. GwirVol is led by GwirForce who are all young people and are referred to as the youth led partner. GwirVol aims to provide a specific focus for the further development of volunteering in the wider community and in non-formal education through working with young people, organisations and structures. The Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) is the administrative partner for GwirVol.

WCVA support and represent Wales' Third Sector and represent and campaign for voluntary organisations, volunteers and communities. They have a strong volunteering ethos and promote volunteering opportunities. I have included links to both organisations for Mr Colville.

<http://www.gwirvol.org/>  
<http://www.wcva.org.uk/about-us>

### **Careers Wales Advice and Guidance**

Young people have access to careers information and guidance via our Careers Wales services. Careers Wales is the impartial all age careers information, advice and guidance service for Wales, which became a wholly owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government on 01 April 2013. Its remit now has a much stronger focus on services to young people aged up to 24 years and offers a differentiated service with more intensive guidance and support provided to identify priority client groups, one of which is unemployed 16 – 17 year olds. Careers Wales is also a key stakeholder and delivery partner for the new Youth Engagement and Progression Framework which is seeking to reduce the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training.

Services can be accessed in a number of different ways to suit the individual, ranging from its website careerswales.com, telephone information helpline, social media such as web chat, text messaging, and face to face interview, if appropriate, at one of its high street careers centres. Different options will be explored with the client. This may include opportunities for volunteering in order to pursue career options or progress towards employment. Careers Wales also works with Job Centre Plus unemployed clients, who are not on the Work Programme, providing information, advice and guidance.

### **Jobs Growth Wales**

Finally, we have our Jobs Growth Wales (JGW) programme. Jobs Growth Wales gives unemployed young people aged 16-24 a job opportunity, providing valuable and practical work experience highly valued by employers, for a 6-month period, with the intention that the job is sustainable after the 6 month. This is paid at or above the National Minimum Wage for a minimum of 25 hours per week. The programme aims to create 16,000 jobs over four years.

Within JGW a specific strand targets the creation of job opportunities with Third sector organisations. As at 10 May 2014, 1,965 job opportunities have been created and 1,490 jobs have been filled in the Third Sector strand alone. In addition, this strand also creates job opportunities for those young people requiring a more supported employment environment.

I trust that the above information will provide clarity to Mr Colville that the Welsh Government are providing quality training programmes to equip young people for the world of work or to go on to learning at a higher level.

Yours ever



### **Ken Skates AC / AM**

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Sgiliau a Thechnoleg  
Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology