



YouthLink Scotland response to the Education reform consultation on behalf of Professor Ken Muir, University of the West of Scotland and Independent Advisor to the Scottish Government

Introduction

YouthLink Scotland is the national agency for youth work. We are a membership organisation, representing over 100 regional and national youth organisations from the voluntary and statutory sectors. We champion the role and value of youth work and represent the interests and aspirations of our sector. We are an organisation with a sharp focus on the needs of young people. Our approach is founded upon being ethical, equitable and non-discriminatory. We are an organisation that promotes learning, innovation and progressive thinking and we are committed to the highest standards of protection and safety for young people.

Our vision is for a nation that values its young people and their contribution to society, supported through key relationships with youth workers to achieve their potential. As the collective voice of the youth work sector, we represent their interests, policy and practice needs to local and national government. We achieve this by supporting the sector to demonstrate the impact and value of their work and by promoting a positive image of young people and youth work.

We campaign for equality of access to high quality youth work for all young people, supported by a workforce that is confident, skilled, well led and effective, while playing an essential role in delivering Scotland's national outcomes. As part of this process, we have been calling for significant reform of the Curriculum for Excellent (CfE), including stronger recognition of youth work's integral role and a more equitable qualifications and assessment system. It is within this context we are responding to the Education reform consultation on behalf of Professor Ken Muir, University of the West of Scotland and Independent Advisor to the Scottish Government.

Section 1 – the vision

1.1. The vision for Curriculum for Excellence reflects what matters for the education of children and young people in Scotland

Please select from dropdown

AGREE

1.2. What do you think should be retained/and or changed?

Please complete text box

Retain – the vision,

YouthLink Scotland agrees that the vision for CfE remains relevant to children and young people. However, despite the flexibility afforded by CfE, the vision is not consistently implemented.

Education reform is an opportunity to fully implement the vision of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), making the structural and cultural changes required to deliver excellence and equity. During the coronavirus pandemic we have seen the importance of greater recognition that getting it right for every child and young person is a whole system responsibility. It has demonstrated that the system must work together, with clear purpose, understanding and clarity.

As Scotland moves to incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots Law and with a Scottish Human Rights Bill on the horizon, we have an opportunity to realise children and young people's right to different forms of education. A system of education that supports *"the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential"*¹. A rights-based approach is the only way to achieve excellence and equity through Scottish education and to get it right for every child and young person.

As such, we call for the education reform to ensure that:

- Every child and young person can experience their right to different forms of education
- The curriculum offers genuine personalisation and choice
- There is a more equitable balance, delivering and measuring success across all four capacities and contexts
- Learner's voices are consistently heard and valued.

An equitable and rights-based offer for all learners around education must acknowledge the place of youth work.

The structural and cultural changes required are:

Create the structures to fully implement the narrative and clarify roles within the system

The national rhetoric for Curriculum for Excellence clearly states that the curriculum is *"the totality of all that is planned for children and young people from early learning and childcare, through school and beyond"*². Yet, Scottish education is too often understood to mean only formal learning, planned and delivered by teachers, in a

¹ [The Right to Education - UNICEF UK](#)

² <https://scotlandscurriculum.scot/4/>

formal setting. We will only achieve implementation of the vision for CfE, and provide a genuinely rights-based approach to education, if the system supports a greater shared understanding of responsibilities for CfE design and delivery. The reform brings an opportunity to explicitly clarify that CfE is a shared responsibility across schools, youth work and other partners. And, define more clearly what these roles are and how practitioners should be working together. Much clearer direction is required to achieve the cultural changes that currently inhibit learner's experience of education and their ability to realise their curriculum entitlements.

Genuine personalisation and choice

The OECD recommended that Scotland considers how the curriculum provides opportunities to develop a broader range of skills and capacities, alongside knowledge, as captured in the four capacities for CfE. A renewed approach to curriculum and assessment should therefore acknowledge that many young people are already developing a broad range of skills and the CfE capacities out-with the formal classroom. For example, through youth work and youth awards, creating an approach to curriculum design which recognises and values the totality of a young person's learning.

In addition, we believe the reform provides opportunity to consider the balance of learner experiences across the four contexts for curriculum. Personal learning helps young people to develop knowledge, attitudes and skills for learning, life and work. As such, greater emphasis should be placed on this within curriculum design, working in collaboration with youth work and youth awards, who play a key role in planning and delivering opportunities for personal learning (in formal and community learning settings) and achievement.

Youth work has particular strengths in designing and delivering interdisciplinary learning and ethos and life of school as a community.

To achieve our vision for excellence and equity, all learners should be given a broader offer, based on their needs, including non-formal learning, such as youth work and youth awards.

This can be achieved through:

- Clearer guidance for all leaders regarding collaboration in curriculum design, including greater alignment between community and school planning
- A rights-based curriculum offer for all learners, including access to learning through youth work, both in a formal setting and in the community
- A curriculum and assessment agency which demonstrates the value of learning out with the formal setting and recognises youth awards as valid evidence of achievement
- Increasing access to opportunities to develop skills and achieve, through the context of personal learning - clarify the role of youth work and youth awards

in providing opportunities for personal learning and achievement, in addition to enhancing other aspects of the curriculum

- Ensuring every learner can access outdoor learning as part of their CfE experience.
- Greater balance across the four capacities in senior phase.

Redefine success and how we measure it

We support the Scottish Government commitment to develop approaches to qualification and assessment which are better aligned with the four capacities. However, this goes hand-in-hand with a renewed approach to curriculum design. We can't assess across the four capacities without increasing opportunity for young people to learn across the capacities. To make it work, we need to recognise and value young people's learning, skills development and achievements across contexts and settings. Moreover, we need bold, courageous policy that connects education to Scotland's future skills needs³.

The process must include consideration of how we work across the system to capture skills and attitudes, alongside knowledge, to help young people understand their progress. Learning and progress through youth work needs to be included to measure across all 4 capacities and to collect a broader range of measures such as health and wellbeing, which is a priority theme in the upcoming National Youth Work Strategy (2021-2026)⁴ for Scotland, alongside skills and achievement.

Further, using the National Youth Work Outcomes⁵ and Youth Work Skills Framework⁶, youth workers are able to support young people to track their progress and skills development across all four capacities. This includes facilitating self-assessment and/or self-reflection. This of itself is an important discipline, empowering young people to be active in their own learning. The Youth Work Skills Framework is mapped to CfE and could be developed further as a common language to measure progress across stages and sectors. Youth awards should also be re-stated as a valuable pathway to develop and demonstrate skills and achievements.

We know that young people's employment has been negatively impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, and that young people remain concerned about their future prospects⁷. As such, a structural and cultural change across the education, skills and employability system is required to ensure we prepare young people to work towards and into sustained employment. This includes supporting young people to recognise and value the totality of their knowledge, skills and attitudes. An assessment system which only captures formal attainment and achievements does not represent a

³ [We need bold, courageous policy that connects education to Scotland's future skills needs - Sandy Begbie | The Scotsman](#)

⁴ [National Youth Work Strategy | YouthLink Scotland](#)

⁵ [Youth Work Outcomes | YouthLink Scotland](#)

⁶ [YouthLink Scotland | Youth Work Skills Framework](#)

⁷ [Facing the future: employment prospects for young people after coronavirus \(princes-trust.org.uk\)](#)

rights-based approach. The system should work together to further build capacity across youth work and schools, to develop a shared language and understanding - supporting young people across different contexts and settings.

Young people's voices are consistently heard and valued

We support the steps being taken to ensure that learner voice is central to the reform process with greater focus placed on learner participation beyond the reform, to deliver a rights-based approach to education. Crucially, youth participation is embedded within youth work in Scotland. It is one of the National Youth Work Outcomes and youth workers have particular skills and expertise in supporting children and young people to participate in their own learning and in the life and work of their school and wider community.

The review is an opportunity to strengthen recognition of youth work's role in supporting engagement of young people in the reform process and helping the wider system understand the needs and views of young people into the future. This includes engaging with those experiencing poverty and inequality, where relationships and long-term support are key to a more equitable education system. This in turn will help ensure Scottish Government's commitments on reducing the poverty related attainment gap are achieved⁸. We must ensure young people are genuinely involved in their learning and encouraging them to become critical thinkers must be more tightly embedded as part of the curriculum experience for all learners. Youth work can lead in this area of work by sharing practice and encouraging improvement. However, this requires significant and consistent investment in youth work infrastructure, which is another of six key themes identified by young people and youth workers as part of the co-production of the upcoming National Youth Work Strategy (2021-2026). For the strategy to be successful it needs to be aligned across public policy areas where youth work does so much to support policy aims, including most significantly as an integral partner within any renewed education system.

Section 2 – Curriculum and Assessment

2.1. Curriculum for Excellence provides a coherent progression in the journey of learners (3-18 and beyond) that gives them the best possible educational experience and enables them to realise their ambitions.

AGREE

2.2. Please share what you believe currently contributes to a coherent progression.

⁸ [Closing the attainment gap - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

Coherent progression, providing learners with the *"best educational experience and enables them to realise their ambitions"* is supported by young people having every opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes across the four CfE capacities. This includes where learning is equally available across the four contexts for learning and setting. Our experience shows that where youth work is part of the learner journey, there is greater personalisation and choice, providing coherence across stages and settings.

Factors contributing to coherent progression:

- Coherent curriculum offer across community and school
- Access to learning through youth work in a formal setting and in the community
- Opportunities through youth work to develop skills and achieve, through the context of personal learning and other aspects of the curriculum
- Promotion and access to outdoor learning as part of the CfE experience.

2.3. Please share ideas you may have to improve learner progression across stages and sectors.

- Greater alignment between CLD and school planning
- Better recognition of non-academic/non-formal learning e.g. youth work/youth awards in providing progression routes across BGE and senior phase
- Broader curriculum offer in secondary to provide a coherent experience with primary (where there is greater scope to explore CfE)
- A shared approach to measuring progress will support greater coherence across stages, contexts and settings
- Resourcing and capacity to support sectors to work together to ensure coherence, including with community, post-18 education, learning and employability.

3.1. In practice, learning communities are empowered and use the autonomy provided by Curriculum for Excellence to design a curriculum that meets the needs of their learners.

NEITHER AGREE/DISAGREE

3.2. Please share ideas you may have on what is needed to enhance this in future.

We neither agree or disagree with this statement. There will be variable interpretations on what is meant by learning communities, particularly between youth work and schools. As outlined earlier, there is insufficient clarity across the system regarding youth work's role in designing a CfE and that youth work is an

essential part of the learning community. There also needs to be more joint planning of curriculum across schools and community/youth work.

Despite an empowered system, school leaders do not currently have full autonomy. For example, the current assessment/accountability framework puts pressure on schools to deliver an exams/academic focused curriculum. From a youth work perspective, the youth work curriculum is designed to meet the needs of learners. In a school setting, the sector's ability to meet learner's needs remains too dependent on limited resources and the value placed on youth work by an individual head teacher.

To enhance flexibility in curriculum design to meet the needs of all learners, we need:

- A clearer and more inclusive understanding of what the community around the school means
- A greater understanding among formal education that youth work designs and delivers CfE
- Better joint planning across youth work and schools
- A system that creates a more equal power balance across the learning community.

4.1. The creation of a Curriculum and Assessment Agency will help to address the misalignment of curriculum and assessment

AGREE

4.2. Please share your views of the potential advantages of establishing such an Agency.

The creation of one agency to support curriculum and assessment, provides an opportunity to recognise and value the totality of young people's learning, skills development and achievements across CfE (i.e. across contexts and settings, both formal and informal learning). It would help ensure that each learner has the opportunity to develop and have their progress measured across the four capacities – measuring progress across 'Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens and Effective Contributors in addition to successful learners. It would be advantageous to ensure that youth work practitioners are included in the development and review of curriculum and assessment, supporting and increasing collaboration in design and assessment. There will also be benefit to having a greater range of success measures and recognition of achievement in the one place.

The process must include consideration of how we work across the system to capture skills and attitudes and knowledge, to help young people understand their progress. Learning and progress through youth work and youth awards needs to be included

to measure across all 4 capacities and to collect a broader range of measures such as health and wellbeing. As mentioned, using the National Youth Work Outcomes and Youth Work Skills Framework, youth workers are able to support young people to track their progress and skills development across all four capacities. This includes facilitating self-assessment and/or self-reflection which in itself is an important discipline to have and further empowers young people to be active in their own learning. The Youth Work Skills Framework is mapped to CfE and could be developed further as a common language to collaborate across the system. This could help create a person-centred approach to understanding learner progression across stages and sector. Youth awards should also be further acknowledged as a valuable pathway to develop and demonstrate skills and achievements.

We know that young people's employment has been negatively impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and that young people remain concerned about their future prospects⁹. As such, a structural and cultural change across the education, skills and employability system is required to ensure we prepare young people to work towards and into sustained employment. This includes supporting young people to recognise and value the totality of their knowledge, skills and attitudes. An assessment system which only captures formal attainment and achievements does not represent a rights-based approach. The system should work together to build capacity across youth work and schools, developing a shared language and understanding, supporting young people across different contexts and settings.

4.3. Please share your views of the potential disadvantages of establishing such an Agency.

Our concern would be that this agency could only be effective if it includes youth work practitioners in both curriculum design and assessment. A new agency needs to support the implementation of CfE as broader than schools.

YouthLink Scotland are seeking clarification on how this agency would embed youth awards and other recognised assessment approaches that are not 'SQA' qualifications, or currently benchmarked to the SCQF. Our concern is this proposed reform (as reflected by the following question) remains focused on formal learning and assessment.

5.1. The full breadth of existing SQA qualifications play an important part of the curriculum offered by secondary schools.

National qualifications only make up a small percentage of the SQA qualifications being delivered in schools. While SQA qualifications play an important role, many of our youth work networks, particularly the awards network¹⁰, remain concerned that

⁹ [Latest #LockdownLowdown survey of young people as restrictions begin to ease \(youthlinkscotland.org\)](#)

¹⁰ [Welcome || Awards Network](#)

the breadth of qualification opportunities available to young people are not clearly reflected in the direction of travel of the consultation.

5.2. Please identify the main factors, if any, that support a broader range of SQA qualifications being included in the curriculum in secondary schools.

We would ask that the question is framed differently going forward as by only focusing on SQA qualifications and not the benefits of/need to support a broader range of other qualifications, such as youth awards, that help young people develop and assess progress across all four capacities, the scope of the reform is limited in its framing. A broader range of qualifications and awards (not just SQA) should therefore be included in the curriculum in secondary schools as a right and accessible to all young people.

5.3. Please share any ideas you may have on what is needed to enhance the role of a broader variety of qualifications in the curriculum in secondary schools.

- Refocus curriculum to ensure deliver equally across all four capacities, particularly in senior phase and work with the partners who are best placed to support this aim
- Redefine assessment to measure and value progress across all four capacities
- Raise awareness of the role and value of youth awards – among teachers, young people, employers, universities/colleges and the skills they help recognise
- Challenge cultural norms
- Revise the tariff point/weighting system where schools are encouraged towards higher rated qualifications
- Resources/capacity needed to deliver
- A system-wide approach to supporting learner profiling will support use of a broader range of qualifications
- What review will be considered of Insight? Tariff weighting is a big factor influencing the choices of pupils.

6.1. Technologies are fully and appropriately utilised as a support for curriculum and assessments.

AGREE

6.2. Please share any comments you may have on the use of technologies to support curriculum and assessments, and what could be done to deliver improvements.

Any developments need to continue to address accessibility issues for young people and other education practitioners. Consideration should be given to the infrastructure needed to effectively use technology across sectors delivering CfE, ensuring equal value and opportunity to use technology across settings. All

educational practitioners should have equal access to the use of technologies with young people. As an example, previous experience of Glow is not favourable for youth work and CLD practitioners.

7. Please share any additional comments you have on curriculum and assessment.

We remain concerned that this reform looks like a reform of schools, rather than CfE/education. We have already shared with the reform team, including the evidence of youth work's contribution to CfE at raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap during the coronavirus pandemic¹¹. We strongly believe that this reform can deliver the vision, within a strong rights-based approach to education. However, this can only be done, if the role of youth work in curriculum and assessment is given due weight.

Section 3: Roles and Responsibilities

8.1. There is clarity on where the responsibilities for the strategic direction, review and updates for Curriculum for Excellence lie.

SPLIT AGREE and NEITHER AGREE/DISAGREE

8.2. Please indicate where you think the responsibilities for the strategic direction, review and updates for Curriculum for Excellence should lie.

Responsibility for strategic direction, review and update should not lie with delivery agencies (i.e. Education Scotland should support learning and teaching, however not also be responsible for strategic direction and review). We would like to see an overarching body responsible for education/learning, reflecting and supporting the shared responsibility for CfE.

An agency responsible for overseeing CfE must be inclusive and representative of the non-formal practitioners and settings involved in CfE. This includes incorporating evidence and insight from youth work within the accountability framework, also informing review and updates.

9.1. There is clarity on the roles played by national agencies and other providers for responding to needs for support with curriculum and assessment issues.

DISAGREE

9.2. Please share which aspects of the support currently provided by national agencies and other providers is working well.

- Education Scotland – responds well to support with curriculum/learning/teaching.

¹¹ [youth-work-during-the-pandemic-final.pdf \(youthlinkscotland.org\)](#)

- SQA.- have worked in partnership with the sector to produce new frameworks and qualifications for youth work such as the PDA in Youth Work; HNC Working with Communities, Modern Apprenticeships, although there is much scope to expand these
- SCQF - supports a collaborative approach to curriculum design and assessment, encouraging schools and youth work providers to collaborate, expand opportunities for personal achievement and value youth people's achievements through youth awards.
- YouthLink Scotland – As the national agency for youth work we support the youth work sector to design and deliver learning opportunities within CfE and champion the role of youth work as an integral part of the education system. This includes developing resources to support delivery and collaboration with formal education.

9.3. Please indicate where you think greater clarity is needed in relation to the roles played by national agencies and other providers for responding to needs / requests for support with curriculum and assessment issues.

It is worth reiterating that youth work does not always feel included in the support provided by national education agencies. This includes career pathways, opportunities for continued professional development and workforce wellbeing support. The youth work industry could be better represented in curriculum development and review. The terms of the CLD regulations and its implications for resource allocation, exacerbate this challenge. The regulations therefore need reviewed as a matter of urgency. However, this should not be done as separate to the other recommendations on education reform contained within. The review should consider how and where responsibility to support youth work sits and how this can further strengthen understanding and investment to enable youth work to fulfil its potential role within CfE.

There remains a discussion to be had on who is best to support the youth work sector. Education Scotland currently plays a valuable role. However, it is primarily focused on formal education. Support for CLD/youth work sometimes feels an 'add on' that sits to the side and not truly embedded within the education system.

10.1. There is clarity on where high quality support for leadership and professional learning can be accessed to support practitioners.

Yes

10.2. Please share any comments you may have on support for leadership and professional learning.

Support for leadership and professional learning should be equally available across education practitioners. This includes resourcing career pathways and opportunities for professional learning for the CLD and the broader youth work sector.

11.1. There is sufficient trust with all stakeholders, including children, young people, parents & carers, so they are genuinely involved in decision making.

DISAGREE

11.2. Please share any ideas you may have on how trust and decision making can be further improved.

- Recognition of youth work's role within the system – with equitable investment and inclusion in discussions to consider curriculum development, review and approaches to assessment/measuring progress
- Support from national bodies to further embed youth work within the accountability framework for CfE. This would include exploring and resourcing the development of common impact measurement framework and how youth work can enhance the measurement of progress under health and wellbeing
- Investment in youth work's role around learner participation, as an integral and ongoing element of curriculum review. And as part of the curriculum experience for all learners
- Ensuring youth work is recognised and resourced as a critical component in building a confident, skilled and compassionate young workforce, as outlined as part of the co-production of the upcoming National Youth Work Strategy 2021-2026.

12.1. Independent inspection has an important role to play in scrutiny and evaluation, enhancing improvement and building capacity.

AGREE/STRONGLY AGREE

12.2. Please give examples of how you would like to see scrutiny and evaluation being carried out in future.

- Consideration of the role of youth work in supporting the scrutiny process and evidence gathering within inspections focused on 'education' rather than institution
- Embed youth work within the scrutiny and evaluation framework for CfE. This would include exploring and resourcing the development of common impact measurement framework and how youth work can enhance the measurement of progress under health and wellbeing
- Greater focus on inspection of/across learning communities, rather than by institution which reinforces the separation within the system.

13. Please share any additional comments on roles and responsibilities in Scotland's education system.

Youth workers tell Youthlink Scotland that they do not always feel included in the support provided by national education agencies, for other parts of the system. This includes career pathways, opportunities for continued professional development and workforce wellbeing support. The sector needs to be better represented in curriculum development and review. The terms of the CLD regulations, and its implications for resource allocation, exacerbate this challenge and so the regulations need reviewed as a matter of urgency.

Specifically, we seek:

- Recognition of youth work's role within the education system with resource commensurate with this approach
- Consideration of the role of youth work in supporting the scrutiny process and evidence gathering within inspections focused on 'education' rather than institution
- Youth work to be included in a curriculum and assessment agency. This includes being involved in discussions to consider curriculum development, review and approaches to assessment/measuring progress
- Support from national bodies to further embed youth work within the accountability framework for CfE. This would include exploring and resourcing the development of common impact measurement framework and how youth work can enhance the measurement of progress under health and wellbeing
- Investment in youth work's role around learner participation, as an integral and ongoing element of curriculum review. And as part of the curriculum experience for all learners.
- Further ensuring youth work is recognised and resourced as a critical component in building a confident, skilled and compassionate young workforce, as outlined in the National Youth Work Strategy 2021-2026.

Section 4 - Replacing the Scottish Qualifications Authority and reforming Education Scotland

14. Please share any comments or suggestions you have on this proposed reform below.

We are particularly interested in hearing your views on:

a) the approach this reform should take (for example what form should this agency take)

A national learning body reflecting and supporting the shared responsibility for CfE across settings/sector, including the youth work sector as a distinct and strategic partner.

Removing the scrutiny function and ensuring independence is key. It will be important to consider how the role of other inspection & scrutiny bodies such as the Care Inspectorate and Audit Scotland overlap. Important also that CLD inspections and the role of CLD in school inspections is maintained.

b) the opportunities these reforms could present (for example the development of a new national approach to inspection including alignment with other scrutiny functions)

Greater focus on inspection of/across learning communities, encouraging and supporting collaboration across the system.

c) the risks associated with any reform (for example whether the independence of the inspectorate could be jeopardised by change)

That the reform will continue to reinforce a narrow/formal view of CfE as described within our response.

d) how any risks might be mitigated

Strong strategic direction which supports implementation of the vision for CfE.

e) the timescales over which these reforms should take place.

As soon as is practicable, however the focus should be on getting it right, as we might not be presented with this opportunity for some time to come.

15. Please share any comments or suggestions you have on how the functions currently housed in Education Scotland could be reformed.

We are particularly interested in hearing your views on:

a) the approach this reform should take (for example which functions should continue to sit within a reformed Education Scotland and are there any functions which could be carried out elsewhere)

Clarity over the extent of Education Scotland's role and remit in supporting the CLD workforce, with clearer recognition of the role and remits of agencies such as CLD Standards Council; CLDMS, YouthLink Scotland and others.

b) the opportunities reform could present (for example should more prominence be given to aspects of Education Scotland's role)

Defer to Education Scotland and other relevant colleagues.

c) the risks associated with any reform (for example disruption of service to education establishments and settings)

There is a risk of perceived rupture within the system. However, arguably, young people are already not getting the best from their education just now. Therefore, the transition period and storming periods required will be worth it to rectify inequity among young learners already found within the system and exacerbated by COVID19.

d) how any risks might be mitigated

Clear and consistent communication from the review team that includes re-stating the positive aims of the consultation process and including key partners within the review and messaging process.

e) the timescales over which these reforms should take place.

As soon as practicably possible.

16. Please share any comments or suggestions you have on this proposed reform below.

We are particularly interested in hearing your views on:

a) the approach this reform should take (for example could a function be carried out elsewhere)

n/a

b) the opportunities these reforms could present (for example should more prominence be given to an aspect of SQA's role)

n/a

c) the risks associated with any reform (for example loss of income, confusion as to system of awards in Scotland)

Short term focus on change/righting wrongs within the system should result in the system young people are entitled to in the first place.

Risks

That a similarly narrow view of curriculum and assessment will be replicated, without recognition of youth work's role, or the use of a broader range of qualifications – particularly those not owned by the national agency

- Resources/capacity/investment is not streamlined to ensure a broader range of qualifications are available and accessible to young people
- That there will be no equitable investment and inclusion for youth work in discussions to consider curriculum development, review and approaches to assessment/measuring progress.

d) how any risks might be mitigated

Focus should remain on the positive outcomes resulting from the changes. It is a bigger risk to remain on the current trajectory where the coronavirus pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated inequality within the education system.

e) the timescales over which these reforms should take place

As soon as is practicable, but not at the expense of ensuring parity of esteem for youth work as an integral partner within the education system.

17. Please share any comments or suggestions you have on this proposed reform below.

We are particularly interested in hearing your views on:

a) the approach this reform should take (for example are there alternative models for this reform?)

n/a

b) the opportunities these reforms could present (for example what should the role of the new agency be?)

There is an opportunity for a national learning body to reflect and support the shared responsibility for CfE across settings/sector, including the youth work sector, as a distinct and strategic partner. This would reflect a renewed inspection service with greater focus on learning communities, encouraging and supporting collaboration

across the system. Additionally, it presents an opportunity for greater involvement of young people in decision making around their education, working alongside practitioners as part of the process. The system should be subject to periodic review so there is flexibility to react and improve on any issues arising. This in turn will mitigate some of the risks inherent in any change at a system wide level.

c) the risks associated with any reform

There is a greater risk continuing with business as usual. The focus should therefore remain on the potential of the renewed system at benefitting more of Scotland's young people and the key role of youth work in this aim.

d) how any risks might be mitigated

Risk assessments included as a standing item with accountability assigned to key review leads for its monitoring.

e) the timescales over which these reforms should take place

As soon as practicably possible.

ENDS

EDITOR'S NOTES

YouthLink Scotland is the national agency for youth work in Scotland. Our response represents the views and interests of our membership – gathered through our local authority and national voluntary organisation networks and national youth work Covid19 recovery and draws from existing evidence gathered from young people and youth work practitioners.

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Link to consultation: <https://consult.gov.scot/learning-directorate/independent-education-reform-review/>