# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Developing the Interim Youth Work Board’s Recommendations: Next steps** |
| **DATE** | **13 December 2023** |
| **BY** | **Jeremy Miles MS, Minister for Education and Welsh Language** |

Youth work is a vital part of our education system, providing support and opportunities for young people, enabling and enriching their development and helping them to fulfil their potential. The Interim Youth Work Board’s final report set out a series of recommendations aimed at achieving a sustainable delivery model for youth work in Wales.

I tasked the Youth Work Strategy Implementation Board with advising on the development of these ambitious range of recommendations, and I am grateful for their expertise and dedication to this work over the past year. I would also like to convey my thanks to all those across the youth work sector and beyond who have fed into this work to date.

Today I am setting out a summary of progress to date and an overview of key actions for the year ahead.

**Update on progress to date**

Significant progress has already been made on developing the Interim Board’s recommendations. My priorities remain to be strengthening the legislative basis for youth work and exploring how a national body for youth work in Wales could help develop provision, raise the profile of the sector and its positive impact, and foster stronger links with other sectors and partners.

The first phase of an independent review of funding for youth work in Wales has been completed, helping us to better understand the sufficiency, transparency, accountability and effectiveness of funding and expenditure on youth work services. This work, which is now expanding to draw evidence from across Wales, is due to be completed in 2024, and will aim to quantify the benefits of youth work in terms of its impact on young people and wider society.

As part of action to support best practice and innovation across the sector, Estyn are developing a supportive and bespoke framework for standalone youth work inspections.

Strengthened workforce development structures are in place, with the aim of piloting a range of approaches to support recruitment, retention and training and provide additional opportunities to support the current and future workforce.

We have also strengthened legislation relating to workforce registration to address inconsistencies in the previous requirements and to continue to professionalise the youth work workforce. The revised arrangements came into force in May 2023, and now require all paid, qualified youth workers and youth support workers, regardless of setting, to register with the Education Workforce Council.

**Key actions for the year ahead**

Youth work is a recognised methodology for working with young people, with a defined ethical and legislative framework. However, the Interim Youth Work Board concluded that the current legislative basis is weak and open to interpretation. In response to our Programme for Government commitment to legislate for a new framework for youth services in Wales, we will utilise our delegated legislative functions to introduce revised statutory directions and guidance for local authorities and other relevant organisations that secure or provide youth services. Engagement with the sector and other partners will begin shortly on this work.

We will work with stakeholders to develop an initial remit for a potential national body for youth work in Wales, looking at the role of such a body, and what functions, funding and powers it may need to have to inform the scoping phase of this work.

We will work with young people who currently access youth work services, as well as those who do not, to identify barriers that may exist in accessing youth work services and better understand their views on how services should be designed, developed and delivered.

We will build upon our evidence base regarding existing youth participation and governance structures and the level of youth work provision currently offered through the medium of Welsh. We will also gather evidence on funding available to organisations across the sector to support training and development for those delivering youth work services.

We will develop an outline of how a young person’s entitlement scheme and youth information exchange could work in Wales. These would be long-term developments but will need careful consideration within the current challenges that we face.

As noted in my statement following the publication of the Interim Board’s final report, youth work is an important strategic service, cutting across many areas. I am eager to ensure the partnership approach adopted to date remains a key component of delivering on these actions, and look forward to continuing to work with the Youth Work Strategy Implementation Board. We will continue to ensure close collaboration between young people, the youth work sector, and other partners as we move forward to deliver for the young people of Wales.