# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE**  | **Youth Work in Wales – Moving Forward Together** |
| **DATE**  | **21 March 2018** |
| **BY** | **Eluned Morgan, Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning** |

Through ‘Prosperity for All: the national strategy’ and ‘Education in Wales: our national mission’, the Welsh Government has restated its commitment to ensuring every young person is supported to overcome barriers to reaching their full potential.

High-quality youth work, delivered through the medium of Welsh or English according to the needs of the individual, has a crucial role to play in delivering these ambitions. Through informal and non-formal educational approaches, effective youth work practice builds the skills, aspirations, and resilience of young people, and can change their lives for the better. That said, our young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world set against a rapidly evolving social and economic context. Now more than ever, therefore, requires a refreshed approach to how we plan and deliver these essential services.

Today marks a decisive moment for youth work in Wales as we begin the development of a new strategic direction. These efforts, taken forward in partnership with young people and the voluntary and statutory youth work sectors, will culminate in the development of a new Youth Work Strategy for Wales. While I am clear that it will be based on a long-term vision, it will also remain sufficiently agile as to allow it to respond to changing social and economic landscapes. It will therefore be subjected to detailed annual planning and review.

Representatives from the sector are today beginning this development work at our annual Youth Work Conference in Cardiff. In doing so I have asked them to learn from the past, develop an ambitious vision for the future, and begin identifying how we can create the conditions necessary for our shared success.

As part of efforts to learn from the past the Welsh Government commissioned independent research to identify what did and didn’t work; research that was grounded in the voice of both young people and the sector. I am committed to sharing this learning and, today, I am publishing the findings. They include reviews of our youth work grant funding streams and, importantly, a fundamental review of the impact of the current Youth Work Strategy. These reports provide vital messages about our past approaches. I am committed to reflecting on them and learning from them. They are crucial to our development.

At the same time I am publishing a report prepared by Margaret Jervis, MBE DL, who was asked to review our approaches in the context of Extending Entitlement[[1]](#footnote-1) and, in so doing, make recommendations on a way forward for youth work in Wales. I would like to thank Margaret for working with young people and the youth work sector to produce ‘Our Future: A review of Extending Entitlement’ and for the carefully considered recommendations it proposes. Margaret’s report, and the reports concerning the current youth work strategy and youth work grant funding streams, are available below:

[Our Future - A review of extending entitlement](http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/skillsandtraining/youth-work/youth-work-reports/?lang=en)

Delegates at today’s annual Youth Work Conference will be building on the learning from these reports as they work to develop an ambitious vision for the future of youth work in Wales. I am speaking at their conference and will be restating this government’s commitment to this agenda. I will also set out principles and actions that will help create the necessary conditions for ensuring our success.

First, we will place young people at the centre of everything we do. From planning and designing the services they want, through delivery, and even as part of how we monitor and review our efforts.

Second, and as part of the new strategy, we develop and publish clear, measurable actions that will take us towards our vision for youth work in Wales.

Third, we will be clear about the contribution that youth work will play, not just to our young people, but to our wider social, economic, and political ambitions in Wales. In doing so we will seek to elevate the profession, so that youth work is seen as a strategic service that will help deliver prosperity for all.

This includes the role of youth work in supporting us to achieve our ambitious aim of 1million Welsh speakers by 2050. Our Welsh in Education Plan emphasises the need for everyone to work more closely and to improve long term planning. I want the same principles adopted in youth work, ensuring wide ranging provision that is accessible to all Welsh speakers and learners along the language continuum.

Fourth, we will work with both voluntary and statutory services, to ensure parity of esteem and recognition in the planning and delivery of youth work provision in Wales. We will acknowledge and celebrate the differences, and commonalities, between these two parts of the sector. In doing so we will make the best use of all the resources we have locally and nationally.

Finally, we will bring together expert representatives from the field of youth work that will help us stay true to our vision as we develop and deliver our strategy. This Youth Work Board will represent young people and the sector and provide advice and guidance to the Welsh Government. Initially acting in an interim capacity, they will also advise on what, if any, formal steps may be required to deliver this role in the future. Today I have published an advertisement for the Chair of this Board who, in turn, will support us in identifying and appointing its wider members. Please see the link below:

[Public Appointments - Welsh Government](https://cymru-wales.tal.net/vx/lang-en-GB/mobile-0/appcentre-3/brand-2/xf-ea3d50dc4821/candidate/jobboard/vacancy/7/adv/)

The Board will support the development and delivery of our new Youth Work Strategy, accounting for a range of evidence, including the report from the Children, Young People and Education Committee `What type of youth service does Wales want?’.

In summary, I believe these steps set out an ambitious and challenging programme of work. I will be personally overseeing these efforts which will be carried out in partnership with young people and our stakeholders. Together, we will work to secure the strategic direction of youth work in Wales, so that our young people are able to benefit from vital services that continue to support their personal, social and emotional development.

1. http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/skillsandtraining/youth-work/extending-entitlement-support-for-11-to-25-year-olds-in-wales/?lang=en [↑](#footnote-ref-1)