



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



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MEETING, DOCUMENT

Youth Work Strategy Implementation Board meeting: 31 January 2024

Agenda and summary of Youth Work Strategy Implementation Board meeting on 31 January 2024.

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Attendees

- Sharon Lovell (SL) (Chair)
- Simon Stewart (SSt)
- David Williams (DW)
- Joanne Sims (JS)
- Lowri Jones (LJ)
- Sian Elen Tomos (ST)
- Marco Gil-Cervantes (MG)
- Shahinoor Alom (SA)
- Jeremy Miles MS, Minister for Education and Welsh Language (item 3)
- Rocio Cifuentes, The Children's Commissioner for Wales (item 5)
- Freya Reynolds-Feeney, Policy Advisor, The Children's Commissioner for Wales (item 5)
- Hannah Wharf, Deputy Director, Support for Learners Division (WG) (HW)
- Dyfan Evans, Head of Youth Engagement Branch, Welsh Government (WG) (DE)
- Dareth Edwards, Senior Youth Strategy Work Manager, Welsh Government (DaE)
- Gethin Jones, Senior Youth Work Strategy Manager, Welsh Government (GJ)
- Victoria Allen, Youth Work Strategy Manager, Welsh Government (VA)
- Donna Robins, Senior Youth Work Strategy Manager, Welsh Government (DR)
- Sarah Jarrold, Youth Engagement & Progression Manager (SJ)
- Kirsty Harrington, Youth Work Policy Manager, Welsh Government (KHa)

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- Tom Kitschker, Support for Learners Team Support Officer (TK)
- Umaira Chaudhary, Youth Work Information Officer, Welsh Government (UC)

Conflicts of interest

None declared.

30 November 2023 meeting: minutes and action points

The Board approved the minutes and action points from the last meeting held on 30 November 2023. Progress on actions was reviewed, including an update on work underway by Estyn and EWC to provide further details on the alignment between the Quality Mark for Youth Work and the Estyn Inspection Framework for youth work.

Guest: Minister for Education and Welsh Language

The Minister joined the meeting for this item. SL provided a summary of the Board's progress to date, including the work of the five Implementation

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Participation Groups (IPGs) and thanked the Minister for his continued support and recent statement setting clear priorities for the year ahead.

The Minister thanked the Board for their commitment to raising the profile of youth work in Wales and welcomed the progress made against the Interim Youth Work Board's recommendations.

Opportunities to build closer links between youth work and other parts of the education sector were discussed, including workforce development programmes such as the National Master's in Education programme.

Action 1: The Minister asked Officials to explore opportunities to strengthen links between youth work and programmes to support the wider education workforce, including the National Master's in Education programme.

Summary of priorities for the year ahead and identifying links

Officials and Board members outlined the key actions for the year ahead across the three areas prioritised by the Minister in his recent statement – strengthening the legislative basis for youth work, undertaking work to explore a potential national body for youth work, and the independent review of funding for youth work in Wales – as well as the five IPG areas. The objective of this discussion was to explore alignment between individual workstreams and to identify opportunities for engaging young people in the development of these actions.

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Strengthening the legislative basis for youth work

The key actions for 2024 within this workstream will be:

- to undertake structured engagement with the youth work sector, young people and wider stakeholders to inform the development of draft statutory guidance and directions.
- to coordinate the formal consultation process required for new secondary legislation.
- to revise the content of directions and guidance using the key learning from the consultation responses and other evidence gathered from stakeholders

As part of the engagement work already underway, officials shared the findings from the 'Empower Hour' sessions held with practitioners during 2023.

Action 2: That discussions at the March Board meeting will focus primarily on steps to strengthen the legislative basis for youth work.

National body for youth work

The key actions for 2024 within this workstream will be:

- to develop an initial remit for a potential national body for youth work in Wales
- to consider the role of such a body, and what functions, funding and powers it may need to have.

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- to identify links/dependencies with other workstreams

Independent review of funding for youth work

The key actions for 2024 within this workstream will be:

- to complete Phase 2 of the review to draw evidence of available funding, how that funding is spent, and the accountability behind those decisions (by March 2024).
- to complete Phase 3 of the review, which will aim to provide a cost benefit analysis to quantify the benefits of youth work in terms of its impact on young people and wider society (by July 2024).
- to consider evidence gathered through the review and how it impacts on other work in relation to the Interim Youth Work Board's recommendations

Young people are thriving

The key actions for 2024 within this workstream will be:

- to ensure that the Young People are Thriving IPG acts as a conduit for engaging with young people across all workstreams.
- to build evidence regarding existing youth participation and governance structures
- to engage with the sector in the design of a youth-led governance structure for Wales through a webinar and follow-up event

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The Board agreed that the Young People are Thriving IPG would lead on ensuring a variety of opportunities are created for young people to participate in the Board's work.

Board members spoke about the potential existence of a 'glass ceiling' when engaging with young people, the importance of ensuring young people are engaged at all levels of policy development and that mechanisms to support and empower young people to represent themselves are in place.

Workforce development

The key actions for 2024 within this workstream will be:

- to better understand the training and development needs of the sector, including a skills survey of practitioners and organisations to be undertaken in early 2024
- to better understand the funding available to support workforce training and development.
- to prepare a draft workforce development plan to help inform and support recruitment, retention, training and development of the youth work workforce

JS highlighted the importance of raising the profile of youth work as a professional career pathway. DR gave an update on the skills survey currently in development.

The survey will be piloted by a local authority and voluntary organisation before being issued to the wider youth work sector. The survey seeks to establish a

baseline of the skills and qualifications currently held by the sector and to establish where there may be gaps to help practitioners support the increasingly complex needs of young people. The results of the survey will help inform prioritisation of any future support.

Strategic engagement and communications

The key actions for 2024 within this workstream will be:

- to foster stronger links between youth work and other sectors
- to highlight collaboration between youth work and formal education and strengthen partnership working in this area.
- to map organisational governance models and how this intelligence can inform work to strengthen the legislative basis for youth work and the scoping of a potential national body for youth work

As part of this work, ST referenced the work underway to build closer links between the youth work sector and Regional Partnerships Boards.

Youth information and digital

The key actions for 2024 within this workstream will be:

- to consider how a young person's entitlement scheme could work in Wales.
- to consider how a youth information exchange for young people could work in Wales.

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- to share good practice in use of digital technology as part of youth work delivery

Welsh language

The key actions for 2024 within this workstream will be:

- to map and analyse existing data on Welsh-medium provision and audiences.
- to build the evidence base regarding current Welsh-medium provision
- to collaborate with other workstreams to support and develop Welsh-medium provision

Guest: Children's Commissioner for Wales

The Children's Commissioner for Wales and a member of her team joined the meeting for this item. SL welcomed them to the meeting and introduced the Board members. The Commissioner shared her current priorities as well as work planned for the year ahead and noted that she would welcome opportunities to collaborate with the Board.

The Commissioner expressed a concern about the pace of the work but welcomed the Minister's statement on the key priorities for 2024.

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Any other business (AOB)

The Board approved the updated draft of the Terms of Reference to reflect the end of the Young Person's Committee structure in summer 2023.

Date of next meeting: 13 March 2024

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