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**The National Youth Work Strategy for Wales**  
**UNCRC Children's Rights Impact Assessment**

**Further information**

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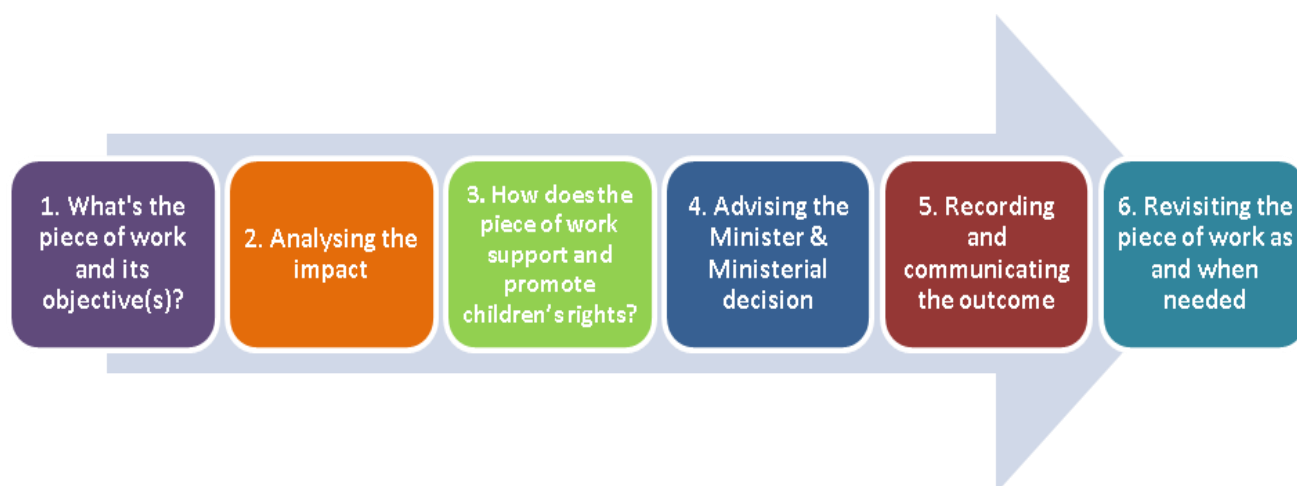
**Related documents**

The National Youth Work Strategy document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/skillsandtraining/national-youth-work-strategy-for-wales/?lang=en>

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## Six steps to due regard



### Step 1. What's the piece of work and its objective(s)?

Within the Programme for Government there is a commitment to refresh the Youth Service Strategy (commitment 5/034).

Youth work has an important role to play in supporting the Welsh Government's commitment to help everyone reach their potential, to tackle poverty, reduce inequality, increase levels of educational attainment and employment, improve economic and social well-being, address health and other inequalities and increase young people's participation in society.

Youth work provision is offered through youth services. Youth work is an intrinsic element of youth support services which seek to ensure that all 11 to 25-year-olds have the services, support and experiences they need to achieve their potential. In Wales the youth service is a universal entitlement, open to all young people aged 11 to 25. Through the Learning and Skills Act 2000, section 123(1), Welsh Ministers have directed local authorities to provide, secure the provision of, or participate in, the provision of youth support services.

The strategy will aim to give direction to those planning and delivering youth work provision. It will replace the *National Youth Service Strategy for Wales; young people, youth work, youth service (2007)*. It will fit within a wider context set by the Welsh Government document *Extending Entitlement* published in 2002. *Extending Entitlement* set out a statutory basis and directions for the Youth Service in Wales for the first time. It stated that in the context of youth work provision, 'informal education refers to a process of learning which involves the voluntary engagement of young people with services that enable them to participate in a wide range of experiences and activities that promote their personal and social development. *Extending*

*Entitlement* set out to raise the bar on our expectations and aspirations for all young people, and close the gap between the most and least advantaged. It will also support the *Youth engagement and progression framework – Implementation plan*.

It will support the EU Youth Strategy (2010–2018) – which aims to provide more and equal opportunities for young people in education and in the labour market. It will also aim to support the Council for Europe’s Agenda 2020 aim for the successful integration of all young people into society, ensuring young people have access to quality education and enabling them to contribute to the development of society.

In August 2012 the Minister for Education and Skills deferred the consultation on a new National Youth Service Strategy for Wales until spring 2013. This was to allow for the development of the *Youth engagement and progression framework* and further engagement with external stakeholders.

The Welsh Government carried out a consultation on a vision for a new national youth work strategy for Wales from 18 June 2013 to 16 September 2013. The finalised National Youth Work Strategy for Wales was published on 20 February 2014.

The intended beneficiaries are organisations offering youth work provision including the statutory and voluntary youth services and young people aged 11 to 25.

Through the strategy the Welsh Government wishes to strengthen the value and status of youth work as a service and a profession. We want to see youth work provision being delivered to maximise the contribution it can make to strategic Welsh Government priorities. This includes narrowing the gap in educational achievement between those of different socio-economic backgrounds and reducing the numbers of young people not engaged in education, training and employment.

Through the implementation of the strategy the expectation is that delivery partners across Wales will develop a more consistent offer of high-quality youth work for young people.

## Step 2. Analysing the impact

Youth work provides and facilitates an environment within which young people can relax, have fun, feel secure, supported and valued. Through non-formal and informal educational opportunities and experiences 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.

Youth work practice is committed to a participative way of working which encourages and enables young people to share responsibility and become equal partners in their learning processes and decision making. In this way youth work seeks to encourage young people to be active citizens and participate in society, an approach which supports the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Children's Commissioner for Wales 2011/12 annual report recognised that youth work supports young people to realise and understand their rights. The report highlighted concerns that the youth strategy for Wales has been due for an update since 2010. The Children's Commissioner called on the Welsh Government to address the delay and build on the excellent foundations of *Extending Entitlement* in providing a rights based strategy in line with the UNCRC and to provide the youth work sector in Wales with the direction and support it needs.

The intended impacts of the strategy are all of a positive nature. There are no foreseen negative impacts to children and young people from this strategy.

The Welsh Government wants young people across Wales to continue to have access to diverse informal and non-formal learning opportunities that stretch horizons, challenge their thinking, and develop their skills. The Welsh Government recognises that open-access provision offers a safe environment where young people can engage with youth workers whom are able to help and support them in their transition toward adulthood. Our consultations demonstrated that open-access youth work provision is highly valued by many young people for the continuity of support they offer within communities. Open-access provision should be used to effectively connect young people with more targeted or specialised support where this is appropriate. To support this statutory and voluntary youth work providers will need to work collaborative to maximise the impact of limited resources and present a better coordinated and more consistent, high-quality and coherent offer to young people.

The Welsh Government wants to strengthen the strategic relationship between youth work organisations and formal education to support positive outcomes for young people in mainstream education and training and to narrow the educational achievement gap. Research has demonstrated that youth work practice can improve young people's school attendance, behaviour, motivation, and relationships, it also identified that learning experiences outside the classroom can promote engagement and

achievement in school settings<sup>1</sup>. The Welsh Government recognises that the professionalism and credibility of youth workers is critical to underpin a stronger relationship with providers of formal education.

The Wales Employment and Skills Board report, *Moving Forward: Foundations for Growth* (May 2010), recommended that the Youth Service should be given a significantly enhanced role in combating disengagement. The Welsh Government will expect the strategy to support a sustained reduction in young people who are not in education, training or employment, as a result of education, health or other related interventions and support. The strategy will support the Welsh Government's *Youth engagement and progression framework – Implementation plan*. The framework aims to support a more consistent and integrated offer to young people. One of the key aspirations for the implementation of the framework is the emergence of a network of 'lead workers' providing continuity of support and contact to vulnerable young people and supporting them to engage with and access wider support services. The Welsh Government believes that youth workers are both skilled and well positioned to provide the lead worker role for many of the young people identified as being in need of support to prevent their disengagement from education and training, or to support them to re-engage. A strengthened and robust evidence base on the impact of youth work is vital to inform and drive the development of a more consistent and high-quality national youth work offer across Wales. Youth work organisations need to be able to demonstrate their impact nationally to evidence that they are contributing to key Welsh Government priorities, including the reduction in the number of young people not in education, training and employment.

A National Outcomes Framework should be developed to assess the value of the contribution of youth work organisations. The Welsh Government believes this is necessary both to underpin the strategic positioning of the sector and to inform future long-term and medium-term investment decisions for youth work in Wales.

Youth Services receive core funding from the Welsh Government for youth work activities through the Revenue Settlement Grant (RSG). The Welsh Government needs to ensure that the Revenue Settlement Grant (RSG) is being appropriately spent on young people. However, the RSG Grant is an un-hypothecated funding stream. It is therefore the decision of local authorities to determine how this funding is utilised in order to best meet their local needs and priorities. As a consequence this has led to large variations in amounts actually allocated by local authorities to youth provision. The Welsh Government 2011/12 National Youth Service Audit showed that the RSG allocation to Youth Services varied between local authorities, ranging from 36 per cent in Carmarthenshire to 106 per cent in Powys. It is not possible to set outcomes for the Youth Service in terms of spending through the RSG. Developing statutory guidance for youth service delivery would strengthen the definition of requirements with respect to delivery at local authority level. However, without clear sanctions in place to address lack of compliance, it is

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<sup>1</sup> *The Contribution of Non-formal Learning to Young People's Life Chances: Learning from the Evidence* (NYA and Fabian Society, 2008).

unclear whether the introduction of statutory guidance would indeed result in positive action on the ground.

The articles of the UNCRC have been used in developing the Strategy and its associated outcomes. For example, an expected outcome of the new Strategy is that 'young people will have a voice' which directly links to article 12 of the Convention.

In developing the strategy officials have and will continue to engage and meet with stakeholders, including the Chief Executive and Chair of the Council for Wales Voluntary Youth Service (CWVYS), principle youth officers, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and Estyn to shape thinking around a new vision for a National Youth Work Strategy. We will share a final draft with stakeholders for final comments prior to a submission to the Minister.

The Welsh Government carried out a consultation on a vision for a new national youth work strategy for Wales from 18 June 2013 to 16 September 2013. A total of 71 online responses were received. Four consultation events took place across Wales throughout July. A total of 131 people attended and participated in the events.

The Welsh Government awarded a contract to Youth Friendly to run consultation events with young people on the new vision. 127 young people took part in one of five consultation events. Youth Friendly produced a summary of the responses received from young people.

The views received from all the consultations have influenced thinking and the development of the new National Youth Work Strategy for Wales.

The consultation paper was centred on three themes; delivering education; building capacity and accountability and results. While broadly supported in detail, responses and feedback centred on concerns that the emphasis in the consultation document was too strongly focused on targeted provision aligned directly with mainstream education and that this risked future resourcing of open-access provision which both helps provide a route into support for young people and also provides continuity of support over time where young people are moving in and out of other programmes or support packages.

Key messages within the final strategy include:

- a. the need to further develop the role of youth work provision in relation to formal education provision – with youth work services being a strategic partner in supporting delivery of the *Youth engagement and progression framework*
- b. recognition of the value of open access youth work provision and the role this plays as a route into more targeted support
- c. the desire to move towards a more consistent youth work offer across Wales



- d. the importance of developing and improving collaborative working between statutory and voluntary youth organisations
- e. the need to better evidence the impact of youth work.

The new strategy will also support the *Youth engagement and progression framework*. The national implementation plan recommended that local authorities position their Youth Service as a key player supporting the delivery of the framework.

The consultation set out proposals to establish a Youth Work Reference Group. These proposals were widely supported with stakeholders seeing such a reference group as well positioned to take forward a number of strategic debates and actions within the strategy. This group will help us to measure if the strategy has been a success.

The question of the introduction of statutory guidance was broadly supported in the consultation. However, against a context of significant pressures on local authority budgets, the need to strengthen the evidence base on the impact of youth work provision (and hence what delivers best outcomes); and time to embed the *Youth engagement and progression framework*, the issue of whether to progress statutory guidance (and what form it should take) will be taken forward for further debate and discussion by the new Youth Work Reference Group.

Welsh Government officials will also develop and implement a National Outcomes Framework with stakeholders by September 2015. This will demonstrate success long term and will be utilised to shape future thinking and investment.

Welsh Government will work with partners to develop a Quality Mark for youth work, to challenge youth work organisations and to drive quality practice.

To measure the success of this strategy and explore the range, value and impact of youth work, including its contribution to employability an Independent evaluation will be completed by April 2017.

### **Step 3. How does your piece of work support and promote children's rights?**

Youth work practice is committed to a participative way of working which encourages and enables young people to share responsibility and become equal partners in the learning processes and decision making. Youth work recognises that young people have rights and work in a rights-based way but also recognises that young people have responsibilities and requirements placed upon them. Youth work practice helps young people to understand their responsibilities. This approach supports young people to engage with the personal, social and political issues which affect their lives. It involves and empowers young people, thus supporting them to develop and build their capacity and resilience to become more independent during their transition into adulthood. Youth work is recognised as a key provider for young people in accessing many of their rights. In the strategy we will be proposing to promote the following outcomes.

#### **Active participation**

- Young people enjoy and achieve.
- Young people make a positive contribution.
- Young people have a voice.
- Young people have the right to have their voice heard and opinion taken account of.
- Improved well-being.
- Developed/enhancing practical skills.
- Young people learn to manage risk.

#### **Wider skills development**

- Team building.
- Communication.
- Problem solving.
- Decision making.
- Influencing others.

#### **Enhanced emotional competence**

- Increased levels of confidence and self-motivation.
- Improved self-awareness, motivation and self-worth.
- Ability to develop and sustain relationships.
- Empathy and consideration for others.

All the above outcomes can be recognised in the following UNCRC articles.

- Article 1** Everyone under 18 years of age has all the rights in this convention.  
**Article 2** The Convention applied to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say and whatever type of family they come from.  
**Article 3** All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.  
**Article 4** Governments should make these rights available to children.  
**Article 5** Government should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to

direct and guide their children so that, as they grow, they learn to use their rights properly.

**Article 12** Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decision that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.

**Article 13** Children have the right to get and to share information as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others.

**Article 15** Children have a right to meet together and to join groups and organisations as long as this does not stop others people from enjoying their rights.

**Article 16** Children have a right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life.

**Article 17** Children have a right to reliable information from the mass media. Television, radio and newspapers should provide information that children can understand and should not promote materials that could harm children.

**Article 28** Children have a right to an education.

**Article 29** Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, and their own and other cultures.

**Article 30** Children have a right to learn and use the language and customs of their families.

**Article 31** All Children have a right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of activities.

High-quality youth work has a crucial role to place supporting many young people to achieve their full potential. Through the direction that we will be setting within the new National Youth Work Strategy and the actions supporting implementation, we want to strengthen the value and status of youth work as a service and a profession which will prioritise narrowing the gap in education achievement between those difference socio-economic backgrounds and reducing the number of young people not in engaged in education, employment and training.

## **Step 4. Advising the Minister and Ministerial decision**

No conflict between the direction set in this strategy and the Articles with the UNCRC has been identified.

The strategy will have clear links with the *Youth engagement and progression framework*, one of the key aspirations for the implementation of the framework is the emergence of a network of 'lead workers' providing continuity of support and contact to vulnerable young people and supporting them to engage with and access wider support services. Youth workers are both skilled and well positioned to provide the lead worker role for many of the young people identified as being in need of support to prevent their disengagement from education and training, or to support them to re-engage.

It will also have clear links with the Welsh Language Strategy, Open-access youth work provision can provide opportunities for young people to use and build confidence in using their Welsh language skills in an informal setting. The need to support Welsh language development and provision for Welsh learners should therefore be considered in the planning and delivery of youth work provision, be that the open access or targeted.

We carried out a full consultation on a new vision for the Youth Service with young people and stakeholders, including stakeholders representing other equality groups and people with protected characteristics.

Within the tender specification for the young people consultation we have asked: Specific vulnerable groups of young people such as young people from under-represented groups:

- young people from black and ethnic minority groups
- young people who have Welsh as their first language
- young people with special educational need and/or physical disabilities
- young people from migrant families, workers and asylum seeking refugees
- young people from low income families or from socio-economically excluded areas/groups
- young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- young people known to the criminal justice system
- young people who are not engaging with formal education.

When developing thinking and writing of the strategy we have engaged with a wide range of stakeholders including principle youth officers, the WLGA, CWVYS, ETS Wales and Estyn. We have shared The National Youth Work Strategy for Wales with a Third Sector Reference Group (this group was set up to support the development of our consultation document and is made up of various national voluntary youth work organisation representatives) and the Youth Work Alliance Group (this group is made up of key stakeholders' representative of the youth work field). They have responded positively, comments received have been incorporated into the final paper. All felt that views from the consultation had been listened to and taken into account.

The key developments between the consultation document and the new strategy can be found at paragraph 20 of SF/HL/0311/14.

## **Step 5. Recording and communicating the outcome**

The Minister for Education approved the National Youth Work Strategy on the 12 February 2014 under SF/HL/0311/14. In the SF the Minister was asked to note the summary of responses from the young people's consultation.

Officials have engaged with stakeholders including Principle Youth Officers, the WLGA, CWYVS and Estyn in developing the strategy.

Welsh Government carried out full 12 week consultation on a new vision for the Youth Service with young people and stakeholders. The consultation with young people was contracted to Youth Friendly who ran young peoples consultations. The consultation with stakeholders was carried out by officials with online and at four workshop events across Wales.

Welsh Government shared drafts of the National Youth Work Strategy for Wales with the Third Sector Reference Group and the Youth Work Alliance Group which is made up of key stakeholders' representatives of the youth work field. They responded positively and the comments received were considered in the drafting of the final document.

The strategy will be launched by the Deputy Minister on the 20 February at the National Youth Work Conference.

## **Step 6. Revisiting the piece of work as and when needed**

Welsh Government Officials will develop and implement a National Outcomes Framework by September 2015.

Youth Work Strategy for Wales will be valid from April 2014 to March 2018.

An independent evaluation of the range, value and impact of youth work provision including its contribution to employability will be completed by April 2017.

The Youth Work Reference Group will provide Ministers and officials with updates on the implementation of the strategy, along with providing valuable feedback on key debates.

**These records may be requested at any time for Freedom of Information access requests, monitoring purposes or to inform reporting to the NAFW.**

## Budgets

<p><b>As a result of completing the CRIA, has there been any impact on budgets?</b></p> <p>It is important that where any changes are made to spending plans, including where additional allocations have been made, that the CRIA has been assessed and evidenced.</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>
<p><b>Please give any details:</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government awarded a contract to Youth Friendly to run consultation events with young people on the new vision. 127 young people took part in one of five consultation events. Youth Friendly produced a summary of the responses received from young people.</p> <p>Producing an easy-read version of the document for young people          Running and organising five consultation events          Providing a summary of responses</p> <p>Total – £15,540.00</p>	

## Monitoring and review

<p><b>Do we need to monitor/review the proposal?</b></p>	<p><b>No</b></p>
<p><b>If applicable: set the review date</b></p>	<p><b>April 2017</b></p>