

# Youth work in Wales: delivering for young people

A summary for young people



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



# Hello

The Welsh Government has some **new legal instructions** about youth work that all councils must follow.

**The new instructions start in April 2026.** This guide explains what youth work is and what these new instructions mean.

## Our vision

The Welsh Government wants young people to do well and feel good about their lives. We want Wales to be a place where:

- ➔ Youth work is open to everyone and easy to take part in.
- ➔ Youth workers get help and support to do their jobs well.
- ➔ People understand why youth work matters.
- ➔ Youth work can help young people now and in the future.

# What is youth work?

Some of you may already go to a local youth club. You may also have met a youth worker in your school and understand what they do.

The new instructions from the Welsh Government explain that youth work:

- is for young people aged 11 to 25 years
- supports young people's social, emotional and educational growth
- is voluntary – young people choose to take part or not
- helps young people learn life skills and get training
- helps people make friends and build confidence
- helps young people have a say in decisions that affect their lives
- is led by trained youth workers or youth support workers.

Youth work happens in many places:  
youth clubs, schools, community  
spaces, outdoors and online.

**This is  
Lois** ➔

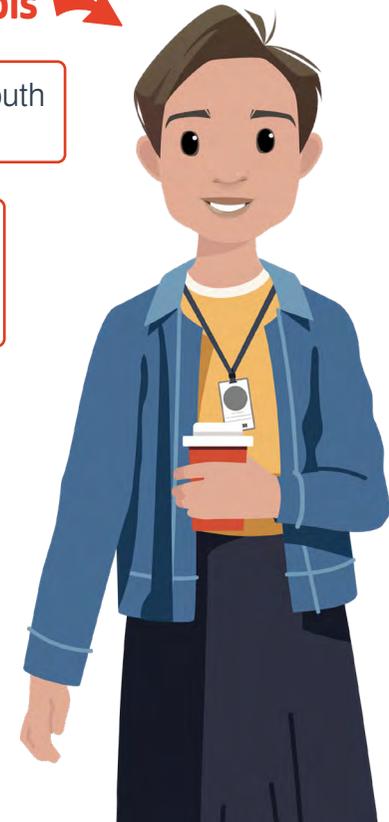
Lois is a youth  
worker.

Her role is to help  
young people feel safe,  
respected, and included.

She listens.

She plans activities with young  
people, not just for them.

Most of all — Lois helps  
make things fun, safe,  
and welcoming.



# How youth work works in Wales

Many organisations offer youth work – councils, charities, hospitals and housing associations. Have a look at the [Youth Work Excellence Awards](#) website to see some of the youth work on offer in Wales.

**Youth work in one part of Wales may not be the same as another.**

But the core idea is the same. Youth work offers a safe space.

- A place to meet people.
- A place to try things.
- A place to get support from trusted adults.

## So, what do the new instructions say? ➡



# New... National Standards for youth work

**There are youth work standards that councils must follow.**

This means wherever you live in Wales, you can expect the same quality of youth work.

The national standards say youth work must:

- ➡ be shaped by young people and their views
- ➡ be available in Welsh and English
- ➡ happen in different places — near to where you live and online
- ➡ be open and easy to use
- ➡ offer different activities and chances to learn
- ➡ support your physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing
- ➡ be joined-up — opportunities should be easy to use so young people can get involved and know what's available in their area.

We will use these standards to check youth work is working well across Wales.

# New... Youth work plans

Every council must create a 5-year plan for youth work. The first plans will run from April 2027 to March 2032.

The plan must include:

- ➔ what youth work is available in the local area
- ➔ what young people need
- ➔ how councils and their partners will deal with any gaps in support
- ➔ how youth work may need to grow or change over time.

The plan must be based on real information and evidence – not guesses.

Councils must work with young people, organisations and charities when making the plan.

We will check each plan. Once it's approved, it will be put on the council's website.

## Making changes to the plan

Plans cover 5 years. They can be updated if things change or something unexpected happens. But councils must let us know so we can approve any new version.

## Listening to young people

**Your voice matters.** You have the right to be heard. It's in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Article 12 says you have the right to share your views, be listened to, and have a say in decisions that affect you.

Councils should create safe and fair ways for you to take part in shaping what goes in the youth work plan.

They should have clear ways for you to get involved:

- youth clubs
- youth forums or groups
- surveys (online or in school)
- workshops (in person or online).



## New... A lead person for youth work

Every council must have one lead person to work with other organisations, charities, community groups, and neighbouring councils.

The lead person should:

- set up a local partnership for youth work
- spot gaps in support and activities
- notice concerns and new needs early
- help the partnership set up clear ways for young people to share their views and be heard.

Working together makes it clearer what's available in the area. It helps young people find support and activities.

## New... Checking and reporting

Councils must check how well their plan is working. They must ask young people for their views at least once a year.

Councils must publish a report each year on:

- ➔ how well their plan is working
- ➔ what has improved
- ➔ what still needs work.

The report should be easy to find and easy for young people to understand.

## What next?

### Get involved!

If you already go to a youth club or activity, speak to your youth worker about how you can get involved in the first 5-year plan.

Or contact your local youth work service - contact details will be on your council's website.

➔ **Share your ideas. Help shape what happens next in your area.**

