



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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# Youth work strategy implementation board meeting: 27 November 2024

Agenda and summary of Youth Work Strategy Implementation Board meeting on 27 November 2024.

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# Contents

**Attendees** (<https://www.gov.wales#161574>)

**Potential national body for youth work: summary of key issues and next steps** (<https://www.gov.wales#161576>)

**Barriers to accessing youth work: discussion** (<https://www.gov.wales#161578>)

**Workforce development, including skills and training audit: key findings and next steps** (<https://www.gov.wales#161580>)

**Any other business and arrangements and focus for next meeting**  
(<https://www.gov.wales#161582>)

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## Attendees

- Sharon Lovell (SL) (Chair)
- Joanne Sims (JS)
- Marco Gil-Cervantes (MG)
- Shahinoor Alom (SA)
- Deb Austin (DA)
- David Williams (DW)
- Sian Elen Tomos (ST)
- Lowri Jones (LJ)
- Dyfan Evans, Head of Youth Engagement Branch, Welsh Government (DE)
- Dareth Edwards, Senior Youth Strategy Work Manager, Welsh Government (DaE)
- Kirsty Harrington, Youth Work Policy Manager, Welsh Government (KH)
- Tom Kitschker, Youth Engagement Branch Team Support Officer, Welsh Government (TK)

## Apologies

- Simon Stewart (SS)

## Conflicts of interest

None declared.

## Previous Board meeting minutes and action points

The Board reviewed the minutes and action points from the last meeting held on 3 October 2024.

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# Potential national body for youth work: summary of key issues and next steps

Officials provided an update on the work undertaken to date to explore the potential establishment of a national body for youth work, including its role and remit, high-level modelling of the funding required and other key considerations. Board members were invited to provide any additional advice ahead of collation of this evidence for consideration by the Cabinet Secretary for Education in early 2025.

Key points noted by Board members included:

- The importance of ensuring continuity between the end of the Board's tenure in September 2025 and the likely timeline for establishing a national body.
- Considering the relationship between a national body's role in advocating on behalf of youth work and its role in lobbying on behalf of youth work.
- The potential for a national body to support the realisation of the proposed statutory framework for youth work.
- The void in terms of a single point of leadership that currently exists in the sector.
- Should a decision be made to proceed with the establishment of a national body, the importance of drawing on expertise from those who have been involved in similar exercise to help inform the work of translating ambition into reality.

## Barriers to accessing youth work: discussion

Officials gave an overview of work undertaken to gather evidence in relation to barriers to accessing youth work services as part of a wider focus on promoting equality, inclusion and diversity, as well as details of wider strategic links. Board

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members were invited to consider future priorities in this area.

Key points raised included the following:

- There was a consensus that many of the barriers identified through recent evidence gathering reflected other exercises, and that many of the issues, for example lack of transport would require a cross-government approach to address these barriers.
- Transportation and the cost of accessing provision were both highlighted as key issues that can prevent young people from accessing youth work provision, and Board members were interested in exploring opportunities to pilot approaches to address these issues in future.
- Board members considered that further work to ensure widespread awareness of the diversity of provision available to young people within youth work would be beneficial and that schools could play a valuable role in this respect, building a greater understanding that youth work provision extends beyond just 'traditional' youth clubs.
- Collaboration between youth work and other sectors was vital. An example was cited of how community connectors can bring partners together for the benefit of young people, helping to open physical spaces within communities for the joint use of local partners.
- It was agreed that case studies should be developed to share innovative practice of how action has been taken to eliminate barriers to accessing youth work.

## **Workforce development, including skills and training audit: key findings and next steps**

The Board thanked Darryl White (Workforce Development Officer) and the wider Workforce Development IPG for their work in producing the recent skills and training audit of the youth work workforce: [ETS Wales: Skills and Training](#)

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**Audit** ([https://etswales.org.uk/home.php?page\\_id=8976](https://etswales.org.uk/home.php?page_id=8976)). The Board recognised the value of the Workforce Development role and how this has driven work forward.

The audit highlighted a particular challenge around the recruitment and retention of staff. Board members also felt that further work was needed to promote youth work as a career and look at models in place elsewhere in the education sector and beyond to develop the workforce. Board members also highlighted the potential role that a national body could play in promoting youth work as a career path, should that work proceed.

The Board discussed the key findings of the audit and concluded that it would be beneficial to repeat the audit in future to build ongoing intelligence of the changing needs of the workforce.

## **Any other business and arrangements and focus for next meeting**

The final report on the young person's residential which took place in August 2024 has now been received and will be circulated to Board members shortly.

Following a pause in 2024, future models for the Youth Work Excellence Awards are currently being developed for the consideration of the Board at their January meeting.

Officials asked members to continue to encourage their networks to respond to the **consultation** (<https://www.gov.wales/youth-work-wales-delivering-young-people>) on the proposed new statutory framework for youth work, which closes on 10 January 2025.

It was proposed that the next Board meeting on the 23 January 2025 would focus on the initial findings from the consultation on the proposed new statutory

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framework for youth work and future arrangements for the Youth Work Excellence Awards.

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