**Background information on the recommendation to establish a national body for youth work in Wales.**

The purpose of this brief paper is to provide some background information ahead of the discussion at the CWVYS regional meeting on 25th July 2024.

**Background**

The Interim Youth Work Board’s final report [Time to deliver for young people in Wales](https://www.gov.wales/interim-youth-work-board-report-time-deliver-young-people-wales-final-report) contained 14 recommendations including the establishment of a national body for youth work services in Wales. Following that report the new [Youth Work Strategy Implementation Board](https://www.gov.wales/youth-work-strategy-implementation-board-implementation-participation-groups-html) have been asked to consider the remit of a potential new body, and what functions, funding and powers it may need to have.

Responding to the Interim Boards report, the former Minister for Education and Welsh Language Jeremy Miles, issued a [written statement](https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-developing-interim-youth-work-boards-recommendations-next-steps) in December 2023. This stated that exploring the potential for a national body and the way in which it could help provision, raise the profile of the sector and its positive impact, as well as fostering stronger links with other sectors and partners, was one of the top three priorities in considering these recommendations. He also outlined that we would continue to work with stakeholders to consider the initial remit, as well as functions, funding and powers that may be needed to establish such a body.

Since that statement the current Board have had more detailed discussions about what the potential role and remit of any national body would be. This work has built on the Interim Board’s recommendation that a national body would have responsibility for:

* setting out a vision and action plan for youth work services in Wales;
* leading on coordinating maintained and voluntary youth work services in Wales;
* undertaking and commissioning research relating to the delivery and development of youth work services;
* supporting innovation and improvement across the sector;
* co-ordinating a training and accreditation framework for youth work services, driven by evidence-based research ;
* acting as an advocate to the sector and contributing to policy development;
* coordinating specific projects such as the proposed youth information exchange and young person’s entitlement scheme;
* acting as a champion for youth support services within Wales and internationally;
* raising awareness – within the sector and beyond - of youth work services and any changes which may impact on their design and delivery;
* promotion of increased services delivered through the medium of Welsh.

**Other important factors**

This recommendation is closely linked with many of the other 14 recommendations, in particular the funding review, and strengthening the legislative basis for youth work.

Youth Work Funding Review

The [Youth Work Funding review](https://www.gov.wales/youth-work-funding-review?_gl=1%2Afqk2l2%2A_ga%2AMTc5MzcxNjI4Ny4xNzE3NDA0ODY0%2A_ga_L1471V4N02%2AMTcyMTY2MDc0OC40Mi4xLjE3MjE2NjE0NTUuMC4wLjA.) is currently ongoing. The review seeks to identify how much funding is available for the youth work sector in Wales, how that funding is spent, and what the accountability structures are. The results of the initial two phases of this work have now been published, and the final phase is due to complete in the Summer. Welsh Government has not yet responded to the recommendations, this will follow completion of the work as a whole. The funding review will help to inform the considerations around the establishment of a national body.

Strengthening the legislative basis for youth work

Additionally, links are being made to the work currently ongoing to consider strengthening the legislative basis for youth work in Wales through revised directions and guidance. It is intended that the new directions and guidance will replace those introduced through Extending Entitlement in 2002. Many of you will have already been involved in some of the `Empower Hour’ sessions run by the Youth Engagement Branch to help shape this work. We have ensured as this work has developed that the possible establishment of a national body is considered.

**Next steps**

No decision has yet been taken the establishment of a national body. The final decision will be taken by Welsh Government Ministers, and this will be informed by advice based on the evidence and information we are able to provide.

To help move this work forward, we are currently having high level discussions with some initial stakeholders such as yourselves, gathering their initial views. The main questions at this point are:

1. What are the benefits a national body will bring?
2. What could the challenges be?
3. What are the concerns about a new body?
4. What would a national body do over and above what is already being done elsewhere now?
5. What should and should not be within their role and remit?
6. Who needs to be involved with these discussions?

We will build on these initial discussion to better shape the role and remit, and to ensure we are able to provide clear and balanced advice to the Ministers in due course.

If following that advice, the Cabinet Secretary is supportive of moving towards the establishment of a national body, a formal consultation is likely to take place. We will ensure that a clear plan is in place for you to be able to engage with any future discussions as part of this work.