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Written Statement: Response to Interim Youth Work Board report: Time to deliver for the young people of Wales

CABINET STATEMENT

Written Statement: Response to Interim Youth Work Board report: Time to deliver for the young people of Wales

Kirsty Williams MS, Minister for Education

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I would like to welcome the Interim Youth Work Board's report 'Time to Deliver for Young People in Wales'. I am very grateful to the Chair, Keith Towler, the members of the Board, its Strategy Participation Groups and our valued youth work organisations across Wales and I am delighted to hear about the positive momentum being built across the sector.

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The report demonstrates the progress that has already been made and shows that there is more work to be done in 2021 to achieve a sustainable and universal youth work model for all young people across Wales. Whilst the pandemic understandably slowed progress on the strategic work of the Board, as priorities shifted towards essential support for the youth work workforce, the strength of the sector continued to shine through as demonstrated through the increased provision of joint working across sectors.

It is fantastic to see this sector-led approach taken both in responding to the needs of the workforce at the start of the pandemic and in helping to prepare the Covid-19 Youth Work Guidance. There have been some impressive examples of innovative digital youth work that have supported both young people and the workforce throughout the pandemic and this has highlighted the importance of digital youth work. The pandemic, and the strong work that has taken place during this difficult time has also demonstrated the importance of youth work to other sectors such as housing and health. However, I recognise in many cases the incredible hardship the pandemic has had on young people and the youth work workforce. I would like to thank youth workers across both the statutory and voluntary sectors for their hard work throughout the pandemic, and pay tribute to how they've adapted and evolved to support young people throughout this difficult time.

We have already taken significant steps to act on the findings of the 2018 Children, Young People and Education Committee inquiry into youth work. The publication of the [Youth Work Strategy for Wales](#) in 2019, supported by the Board and stakeholders across the sector, highlights our vision for a universal, rights-based youth work offer where all young people are thriving with access to a diverse range of opportunities, supported by a diverse and skilled workforce. The Board and its Strategy Participation Groups have begun the vital work to implement the aims of the Strategy in line with our commitment to the recommendations of the inquiry. It has been clear in this short period that the Board have made significant progress bringing the sector together and this is testament to the driven, hard working individuals involved.

It is very positive to see young people engaging in the work of the Board and Welsh Government, ranging from providing evidence towards the Theory of Change for Youth Work report to judging one of the Youth Work Excellence Awards. The Board's progress with the establishment of a young-persons committee is central to ensuring that young people continue to be placed at the heart of strategic work.

It was pleasing to see Estyn's [Value of Youth Work Training Report](#) and the finding that 'youth work qualifications equip students with a sound background in youth work practice and provide them with the skills they need to carry out their profession'. I look forward to seeing how the work of the Strategy Participation Groups will reflect this in their work. We must also look carefully at how we can increase the services being delivered through the medium of Welsh and how we can support the delivery of Cymraeg 2050.

I look forward to seeing how the Board can build on the significant progress already made towards the long term vision for a sustainable delivery model for youth work with the publishing of its final report in 2021. I would like to reiterate my commitment to delivering the vision set out in the Youth Work Strategy and look forward to continuing to collaborate with the Board in driving forward progress across the sector, so we can truly deliver effective services for young people across Wales.

En – <https://gov.wales/interim-youth-work-board-report-time-deliver-young-people-wales>

Cy – <https://llyw.cymru/adroddiad-bwrdd-gwaith-ieuenctid-maen-bryd-cyflawni-dros-bobl-ifanc-yng-nghymru>

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