

2025 No. (W. 25-xx)

EDUCATION, WALES

**DIRECTIONS MADE UNDER SECTION 123 OF THE LEARNING AND
SKILLS ACT 2000**

**The Youth Support Services (Provision of Youth Work) (Wales)
Directions 2025**

Made - - - - *******

Coming into force *******

The Welsh Ministers make the following Directions in exercise of the powers conferred on them by section 123(1), (2), (4)(b) and (c), and (5)(c) of the Learning and Skills Act 2000(a) and now vested in them(b).

Application, title and coming into force

1. These Directions, which apply to local authorities in Wales, are titled the Youth Support Services (Provision of Youth Work) (Wales) Directions 2025 and come into force on 1 April 2025.

Interpretation

2. In these Directions—

“local authority” (“*awdurdod lleol*”) means a county council or county borough council in Wales;

“publish” (“*cyhoeddi*”) means to display on the local authority’s website and in such other spaces including digital spaces and in formats that are easily accessible and understood by young persons;

“reporting period” (“*cyfnod adrodd*”) means—

(a) the period starting with 1 April 2026 and ending with 31 March 2031, and

(b) each successive period of five years;

“voluntary organisation” (“*sefydliad gwirfoddol*”) means a body (other than a body that exercises functions of a public nature) whose activities are carried out otherwise for profit and directly or indirectly benefit the whole or any part of the local authority area.

“young person” (“*person ifanc*”) means a person who has attained the age of 11 years but not the age of 26 years;

(a) 2000 c. 21.

(b) The powers conferred on the National Assembly for Wales by section 123 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 (c. 21) are now vested in the Welsh Ministers by virtue of section 162 of, and paragraph 30 of Schedule 11 to, the Government of Wales Act 2006 (c. 32).

“youth support services” (“*gwasanaethau cymorth ieuenctid*”) means services which encourage, enable or assist young persons directly or indirectly to participate effectively in education or training, to take advantage of opportunities for employment and to participate effectively and responsibly in the life of their communities;

“youth support worker” (“*gweithiwr cymorth ieuenctid*”) means a person falling within the category of youth support worker in Table 1 in paragraph 1 of Schedule 2 to the Education (Wales) Act 2014(a);

“youth support worker qualification” (“*cymhwyster gweithiwr cymorth ieuenctid*”) means a youth support worker qualification set out in Schedule 2 to the Education Workforce Council (Registration of Youth Workers, Youth Support Workers and Work Based Learning Practitioners) Order 2016(b);

“youth work” (“*gwaith ieuenctid*”) means services provided within the youth support service using a distinct educational approach based on voluntary engagement of young persons delivered by persons holding a youth worker or youth support worker qualification;

“youth worker” (“*gweithiwr ieuenctid*”) means a person falling within the category of youth worker in Table 1 in paragraph 1 of Schedule 2 to the Education (Wales) Act 2014;

“youth worker qualification” (“*cymhwyster gweithiwr ieuenctid*”) means a youth worker qualification set out in Schedule 1 to the Education Workforce Council (Registration of Youth Workers, Youth Support Workers and Work Based Learning Practitioners) Order 2016;

Provision of Youth Support Services and Youth Work

3. A local authority must—

- (a) provide or secure the provision of youth support services in its area, and
- (b) participate in the provision of those services.

4. For the purposes of paragraph 3, the provision of youth support services must include the operation and strategic management of youth work which—

- (a) assesses the needs of young persons in the local authority’s area,
- (b) establishes the extent and nature of the resources required to meet the needs of young persons assessed in sub-paragraph (a), and
- (c) secures, provides and co-ordinates the delivery of resources required to respond to the needs of young persons.

Youth work entitlement and offer

5.—(1) The provision of youth work must be based upon the youth work entitlement of young persons in that local authority area.

(2) Youth work entitlement means youth work which—

- (a) is formed through engagement with young persons;
- (b) aims to introduce, protect and strengthen activities delivered in Welsh and English and is based on what young persons say they need or want in their area;
- (c) provides opportunities for young persons to learn and develop in different educational and community settings, including digital settings;
- (d) facilitates both universal and targeted opportunities for young persons to participate in a range of activities for the improvement of their physical, emotional and mental well-being;
- (e) is easily accessible by young persons individually and with their peers.

(a) 2014 anaw 5. Schedule 2 amended by S.I. 2016/1183.

(b) S.I. 2016/1183 (W. 288), amended by S.I. 2023/551 (W. 86); there are other amending instruments, but none is relevant to these Directions.

(3) Local authorities must ensure that their youth work offer provides the youth work set out in sub-paragraph (2).

(4) A local authority must have regard to the rights of young persons when planning and providing the services set out in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5(1), (2) and (3).

(5) Youth work offer for the purposes of this paragraph means the provision determined by a local authority, which may be delivered in partnership with other local authorities, statutory partners or voluntary organisations, to meet the youth work entitlement of young persons in its area.

Providing services with other local authorities, statutory partners or voluntary organisations

6. The services set out in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 may be provided—

- (a) in conjunction with statutory partners or voluntary organisations or otherwise according to the needs of young persons in that area;
- (b) in partnership with other local authorities, statutory partners or voluntary organisations to provide those services across local authority borders.

7. A local authority must appoint a designated lead officer with suitable seniority and experience to co-ordinate engagement with young persons in its area, other local authorities, statutory partners and voluntary organisations in the provision of youth support services.

Youth work strategic plans

8.—(1) A local authority must produce a youth work strategic plan (“the strategic plan”) for each reporting period which has been developed in consultation with young persons in its area, other local authorities, statutory partners and voluntary organisations.

(2) The strategic plan must include the objectives for youth work over the period of that plan which include but are not limited to—

- (a) setting how the youth work offer will meet the needs of the young persons in the local authority’s area;
- (b) identifying how inequalities in youth work will be addressed;
- (c) assessing what provision will be made for future demands upon youth work during the period of the plan.

(3) The strategic plan must set out—

- (a) the evidence base for the assessment of the objectives;
- (b) how the local authority will work jointly with local, regional and national partners including voluntary organisations, to plan and deliver provision within its area;
- (c) how the local authority will work with local, regional, and national partners, including voluntary organisations, to plan and deliver cross border provision for young persons.

(4) The strategic plan must contain—

- (a) a summary of the consultation carried out for the purposes of sub-paragraph (1), and
- (b) a summary of the responses (if any) received to that consultation.

9.—(1) A local authority must submit the strategic plan to the Welsh Ministers for their approval.

(2) The Welsh Ministers may—

- (a) approve the strategic plan as submitted,
- (b) require the strategic plan to be modified,
- (c) approve the strategic plan with modifications, or
- (d) reject the strategic plan.

(3) If the Welsh Ministers reject or require modifications to the strategic plan, the local authority must revise and resubmit its strategic plan as soon as is reasonably practicable for approval by the Welsh Ministers under sub-paragraph (1).

(4) A local authority must send a copy of its approved strategic plan to—

- (a) that local authority's overview and scrutiny committee;
- (b) any other body as directed by Welsh Ministers.

(5) A local authority must publish its strategic plan as soon as practicable after it has been approved by Welsh Ministers under this paragraph.

10.—(1) A local authority may revise its strategic plan during the reporting period in response to an identified need.

(2) The Welsh Ministers may direct a local authority to revise its strategic plan at any time during the reporting period.

(3) A local authority must submit a revised strategic plan produced under sub-paragraph (1) or (2) to the Welsh Ministers for their approval as soon as reasonably practicable.

(4) The Welsh Ministers may—

- (a) approve the revised strategic plan as submitted,
- (b) require the revised strategic plan to be modified,
- (c) approved the revised strategic plan with modifications, or
- (d) reject the revised strategic plan.

(5) If the Welsh Ministers reject or require modifications to a revised strategic plan, the local authority must revise that strategic plan and resubmit it as soon as practicable for approval by the Welsh Ministers under sub-paragraph (3).

(6) A local authority must send a copy of its approved revised strategic plan to—

- (a) that local authority's overview and scrutiny committee;
- (b) any other body as directed by Welsh Ministers.

(7) A revised strategic plan must be published as soon as practicable after the approval of the revised plan by the Welsh Ministers.

11.—(1) A local authority must keep under review the extent to which it is meeting the objectives set out in its strategic plan.

(2) A local authority must from time to time and at least once within every financial year of the reporting period, consult with the young persons in its area about the extent to which that local authority is meeting the objectives set out in its strategic plan and meeting the identified needs of those young persons.

(3) A local authority, having carried out the reviews set out in sub-paragraphs (1) and (2), must publish, as soon as is reasonably practicable, in each financial year following the publication of a strategic plan, a report of the progress it has made in meeting its objectives set out in that strategic plan.

Guidance

12. Local authorities and those persons set out in paragraph 6 working with local authorities to deliver the services set out in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 must have regard to any guidance issued by Welsh Ministers on the provision of those services.

Revocation

13. The Youth Support Services Directions (Wales) 2002 are revoked.

Name

Cabinet Secretary for Education, one of the Welsh Ministers

At time on date

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Directions)

These Directions revoke and replace the Youth Support Services Directions (Wales) 2002.

They direct local authorities in Wales to provide or secure the provision of youth support services in their area and participate in the provision of those services by virtue of section 123 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. In particular, they set out the services which will, in the view of the Welsh Ministers, encourage, enable, or assist young persons who have attained the age of 11 years but not the age of 26 years, directly or indirectly, to participate effectively in education or training, take advantage of opportunities for employment and to participate effectively and responsibly in the life of their communities.

The engagement with and involvement of young persons is central to the design and provision of services set out in these Directions, including youth work delivery.

Provision is also made for each local authority to develop a strategic plan for youth work which responds to the needs of young persons in its area and outlines the offer of activities and support available. Such a strategic plan must be approved by the Welsh Ministers before its publication.

The Welsh Ministers' Code of Practice on the carrying out of Regulatory Impact Assessments was considered in relation to these Directions. As a result, a regulatory impact assessment has been prepared as to the likely costs and benefits of complying with these Directions. A copy can be obtained from the Education – Support for Learners Division, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ.