CYPE(5)-14-18 – Papur 1
Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee
Gwaith Ieuenctid – gwaith dilynol | Youth Work - Follow up
YW(2) 02
Ymateb gan: Cyngor Cymreig y Gwasanaethau Ieuenctid Gwirfoddol
Response from: Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services

Committee Recommendation 1:

The Minister should review the National Strategy and refresh the statutory guidance in consultation with stakeholders and young people. A detailed action plan for implementation, including timescales, must be developed alongside a new strategy.

Accepted by Welsh Government

Welsh Government Response

We have:

- Commissioned Wrexham Glyndwr University, Cardiff Metropolitan University, and Susanne Rauprich OBE, to review the impact of the National Youth Work Strategy. A final report has been received and is being prepared for publication. This work was informed by stakeholders and young people.
- Commissioned Margaret Jervis, MBE DL, to review Extending Entitlement. A final report has been submitted and is being prepared for publication. This work was informed by stakeholders and young people.
- Commissioned the Youth Work Reference Group (YWRG), who represent the youth work sector, providing advice to Welsh Government, to review Margaret's recommendations and propose a way forward.

We will:

- Immediately begin development of a new, aspirational Youth Work Strategy.
- Ensure a long term vision is built into the strategy, with detailed annual planning, self-evaluation, and review.
- Co-construct the strategy with young people and stakeholders at all levels in the system.
- Publish Margaret's Review, the 'Review of the Impact of the Youth Work Strategy', and associated reviews of grant funding Embed lessons learned, including from the Committee's Inquiry, alongside wider evidence in Wales, the UK and beyond.
- Firmly ground our approaches in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Wellbeing for Future Generations Act.
- Re-establish a Youth Work Offer/Charter at the centre of the new strategy.
- Include consideration of 'sufficiency of provision', and the role of other bodies such as service providers, regulators, local authorities, and Welsh Government in ensuring rigorous accountability.
- Develop our approaches in the context and ethos of Extending Entitlement, with a view toward considering the status of existing statutory guidance, once the strategic approach for securing youth work has been developed in partnership with stakeholders.
- Establish an Interim Youth Work Board to support the development of the strategy,

evaluate approaches for deploying resources, represent the voice of the sector, and provide advice to Welsh Government.
- Publish a timeline setting out how/when this will be delivered.

Stakeholder Response to Recommendation 1:

This response, and all others that follow, are presented on behalf of CWVYS.

We note that the WG officials have set out a fairly detailed work plan, which includes timescales, towards the development of a new National Youth Work Strategy for Wales. We welcome that attempt at clarifying the steps which need to be taken as well as the inclusion of the youth work sector in those developments and delivery points.

The review of the National Strategy was well-received and its acknowledgement of the roles played by the voluntary youth work sector is welcomed.

We would take issue with the notion of a Strategy being 'aspirational' and might argue that previous versions of policy and strategic documents have too frequently fallen victim to such language and subsequent activity. If a new Strategy is to achieve better outcomes for young people and support of those who seek to provide those better outcomes, then it needs to be meaningful, based upon implementation and therefore accountable.

Discussions at the Youth Work Reference Group (which is co-Chaired by Keith Towler (Chair of CWVYS) and also attended by Paul Glaze) have resulted in a view that a 10-year Strategy is not only a positive ambition but a necessity if it is to meet the needs of young people and the sector. We should like this 10-year term to be clarified as the 'long-term vision'.

We strongly believe that any 'Youth Work Charter' written into the new Strategy should not merely be an assumption of the 'Wales Charter for Youth Work': a document that is now out of date but one which was also never presented to young people as an 'offer'. We would suggest that the Minister might like to present an opportunity for young people to directly help shape a 'Charter'.

The WG says it will 'include consideration of 'sufficiency of provision'…' but omits the voluntary youth work sector from the list of 'other bodies'. CWVYS requests that this omission be rectified as a matter of course.

We also welcome Margaret Jervis's review of 'Extending Entitlement' and support its findings and recommendations.

CWVYS supports the forming of an Interim Youth Work Board and recognises that the impending appointment of a Chair and its members will be of critical importance in support of the development of a new Strategy but also in support of youth work more generally.

Any other relevant issues arising since the publication of the Committee's report:

Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales

- **Has been re-commissioned by the Welsh Government for 2018/19 via Atkins**

Associates.

- **Given that undertaking the QM is not a compulsory activity and that other QMs with wider reach and more widely known beyond Wales i.e. Investors in People; PQASSO are available , some CWVYS member organisations have questioned the need to spend another significant sum on the delivery of the QM.**
- **CWVYS supports the overall development of this Quality Mark (QM) but is keen to learn more about the plans for sustainability of this programme, its relevance to the youth work sector in general and whether those plans are likely to include a procurement process in order to establish the QM as part of the National Strategy for Youth Work considerations.**

Youth Information services

- **The Youth Work Reference Group has recently discussed youth information services within the context of a future National Youth Work Strategy. This is a positive move and serves to show just how critically important that information services for young people are in the development of the Strategy but also how integral they are to the delivery of good, positive youth work and to the engagement of young people.**

Workforce Development

- **It is acknowledged that this topic covers a wide area but there is little being discussed about the need to invest in an appropriate, timely and future-proofed workforce development plan for the youth work sector. Without that investment, planning and long-term support on behalf of the workforce (paid and unpaid), any future Strategy will not achieve its ambitions.**
- **An example from Scotland: The Scottish Government entrusts YouthLink Scotland (representative body for both the voluntary and maintained sectors) with £500k per annum with which to directly address sector-led workforce development needs.**
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Committee Recommendation 2:

The Minister should hold urgent discussions with the Ministerial Youth Work Reference Group to address the concerns from within the sector about a lack of engagement from Welsh Government.

Accepted by the Welsh Government

Welsh Government Response

We have:

- Held urgent discussions at Ministerial level with the Youth Work Reference Group.
- Refreshed the remit of the group and begun extending their membership.
- Recognised the key role they play in supporting both the sector and Welsh Government in delivering and implementing policy.
- Tasked them with considering the draft report produced by Margaret Jervis, MBE DL.

- Drawn on their expertise and knowledge to inform the development of the new curriculum for Wales.
- Received positive feedback from the Youth Work Reference Group on this new approach.

We will:

- Continue to use the Youth Work Reference Group strategically, with regular engagement from Welsh Government to inform developing approaches.
- Commission them to begin work in supporting Welsh Government to develop a new Youth Work Strategy for Wales.
- Ensure alignment with the proposed Interim Youth Work Board, both in its development and when operational.

Stakeholder Response to Recommendation 2:

Other than a brief appearance by the former Minister, the YWRG has not had 'urgent discussions' at that level. As members of the YWRG, CWVYS would welcome the opportunity to take part in dialogue with the Minister within that forum and as part of the agenda that she set at the 2018 National Youth Work Conference.

We would ask for clarity as to whether the Minister's vision includes a role for the YWRG beyond the date of the establishment of the Interim Youth Work Board. Should those plans include the work of the YWRG being absorbed by the Interim Youth Work Board (as a sub-group with a specific remit perhaps?), it would be helpful to be made aware of any relevant, proposed timescales.

Any other relevant issues arising since the publication of the Committee's report:

Committee Recommendation 3:

There should be a clear and meaningful route for young people to be equal partners in developing youth services in Wales. This should be developed by the Minister, stakeholders and young people.

Accepted by Welsh Government

Welsh Government Response

We have:

- Ensured young people were engaged with and consulted as part of the 'Review of the Impact of the Youth Work Strategy'.
- Ensured young people were engaged with and consulted as part of Margaret Jervis' review of Extending Entitlement.
- Commissioned Children in Wales to undertake a focused piece of work with young people to inform Margaret's work.
- Undertaken discussions with the Youth Work Reference Group to explore how young people can inform the development of a new, aspirational Youth Work Strategy for Wales.

We will:

- Involve young people in the co-construction of the new Youth Work Strategy for Wales.
- Consider and articulate the role they will play in the design, delivery and monitoring of youth services within the new Strategy.
- Develop an engagement plan, in partnership with young people and stakeholders, to ensure this recommendation continues to be fully met going forward.

Stakeholder Response to Recommendation 3:

In order for 'clear and meaningful' routes to be established for young people as equal partners in the development of youth services, we would suggest that a better response might be one of co-ownership as well as co-construction. A commitment to a rights-based approach for young people and engagement based on a clear set of entitlements is crucial to the success of a genuinely participative model of working.

Attempts at engaging young people via the Youth Work Reference Group in previous years were not successful. However, we sense that officials are willing to consider how best to implement improved ways of working; the sector is well-placed to offer suggestions and solutions.

Such a commitment should be aligned to the UNCRC in relation to the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011.

We would also make a plea to recognise the needs of 18-25 year olds in the agreed participative approach; an age group that can sometimes be under-represented in terms of invitations to engage.

As highlighted in our reply to recommendation no.1, once agreed, we see great value in the Minister taking an opportunity (or opportunities) to present the 'Youth Work Offer' jointly with, and directly to, young people whilst also announcing how and when the youth work sector will play its part in supporting and delivering the 'Offer'.

Any other relevant issues arising since the publication of the Committee's report:

As we are seeing with the development of the Welsh Youth Parliament and other long-established youth work-based models of participation, there is significant interest being shown by young people in democratic engagement projects. It would be another positive step, therefore, to complement the general tone of participation by ensuring a genuine, 'meaningful' approach to the development of youth services.

Committee Recommendation 4:

The Minister should introduce a national model for Youth Work, encompassing statutory and voluntary provision. The Minister should report to this Committee on progress within 6 months of the publication of this report.

Accepted by Welsh Government

Welsh Government Response

We have:

- Commissioned Margaret Jervis to undertake a review of Extending Entitlement, which included giving consideration to a 'national model' encompassing statutory and voluntary provision.
- Commissioned a Review of the Impact of the National Youth Work Strategy which makes recommendations on a way forward.
- Reflected on these findings, which propose potential 'models' for delivery in the future.

We will:

- Immediately begin development of a new, aspirational Youth Work Strategy, including consideration of an appropriate delivery model.
- Appoint an Interim Youth Work Board, whose remit will include supporting the development and implementation of a new strategy, and providing advice on appropriate delivery mechanisms.
- Expand the remit and membership of the Youth Work Reference Group, extending an invitation to strategic, local authority representatives, ensuring the new strategy balances aspirations and ability to deliver in the current context.
- Ensure the views of both statutory and voluntary provision are heard as part of its development.

Stakeholder Response to Recommendation 4:

The WG response is more focused on the Interim Youth Work Board rather than the recommendation itself, which proposes a national model for youth work. This is disappointing, as the need for a national approach to the delivery of youth services is as relevant, if not more so, than when the Inquiry first considered the merits of such an approach. There has not been a great deal of discussion around this issue.

For those reasons, CWVYS makes no apology for re-iterating its commitment to and belief in the opportunity to create a National Youth Service which provides for a more efficient and cost-effective range of modern services - developed for and with young people. Such a National model could 'commission nationally, manage regionally and deliver locally', overseen by a National Youth Service Council for Wales.

This has been our consistent view since the publication of the CWVYS paper *'The Future of Youth Services in Wales'* in 2012 and the subsequent joint position paper authored by CWVYS and the Wales Principal Youth Officers' Group, as presented to the Youth Work Reference Group in December 2014. These papers resulted in the WG-commissioned *'Feasibility Study'* on a national model by RezolvPS Ltd, most recently considered by the Youth Work Reference Group in September 2015.

We would suggest that the new Interim Youth Work Board consider the model adopted in Scotland, where both the voluntary and maintained sectors are represented by YouthLink Scotland. A similar model for Wales is achievable and can be made 'Wales-distinct' by reflecting the needs of young people and the overall sector e.g. parity whilst providing as single point of communication for officials and partners in other sectors and being accountable for the delivery of youth work in

Wales.

Any other relevant issues arising since the publication of the Committee's report:

Committee Recommendation 5:

The Minister should report back to the Committee within 6 months of the publication of this report on how he intends to assess the extent to which his commitment to universal, open access provision, in English and Welsh, is being delivered.

Accepted in Principle by Welsh Government

Welsh Government Response

We have:

- Reported back to the Committee and acknowledged that the youth work landscape is changing in the context of a challenging financial climate.
- Accepted the role that 'Sufficiency Assessments' could play in assessing the extent to which universal, open access provision, in English and Welsh, is being delivered.
- Begun exploring the role that 'Sufficiency Assessments' will play going forward.

We will:

- Incorporate the notion of 'sufficiency of provision' and its assessment into the new Youth Work Strategy for Wales.
- Restate our commitment to the role youth work can play in supporting young people to use and develop their Welsh language skills.
- Engage with young people in the development of the new strategy to develop a current understanding of their needs in relation to the type of youth services they wish to access, in the language of their choice.

Stakeholder Response to Recommendation 5:

The bedrock of youth work in Wales is its ability to provide a universal, open access offer for all young people: a voluntary relationship that provides the foundation for the delivery of targeted services, information and support.

Of course, it is recognised that youth work and its ability to deliver according to the needs of young people are ever-evolving but was ever thus; it is not fair to use a difficult 'financial climate' to justify the moves that have been made to push youth work provision into more targeted areas, thereby creating an imbalance in (not) meeting the needs of all young people, confusion amongst youth workers and a weakening of the position and sheer importance of open access provision.

Balance of provision is key. CWVYS represents many organisations which deliver both open access and targeted provision under one roof. We have alluded to this in previous consultations but those youth work providers do not have 'separate doors' for 'different types of young people' but rather work in environments which allow them to be nimble, adaptable and resourceful when working with young people: whether that be on specific activities relating to health-related issues, for example; or on supporting young people with access to learning or employment

opportunities.

However, without the initial 'open door' policy and the essential requirement to provide services on a voluntary engagement principle, then youth work becomes something else - something that is not youth work. And if the basis of the proposed new National Strategy and the Interim Board is 'Youth Work' then the balance clearly has to be addressed and the sector has to be fully resourced and equipped to deliver accordingly.

Any other relevant issues arising since the publication of the Committee's report:

Committee Recommendation 6:

Within 6 months of the publication of this report, the Minister should commission an exercise to map voluntary Youth Work provision across Wales. The exercise should be refreshed periodically.

Accepted in Principle by Welsh Government

Welsh Government Response

We have:

- Reflected on the mapping of voluntary youth work provision undertaken by CWVYS (2015) in relation to the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework, and Cordis Bright (2016).
- Reported back to Committee that a national mapping exercise may not be appropriate given the rapidly changing context on the ground as services change and adapt.
- Stated our commitment to the concept of 'sufficiency of provision' and its assessment, in planning, delivering, and monitoring youth services.

We will:

- Incorporate the notion of 'sufficiency of provision' and its assessment into the new Youth Work Strategy for Wales. To ensure agility in an evolving landscape, any assessment should give consideration to both statutory and voluntary provision at a local, rather than national level.

Stakeholder Response to Recommendation 6:

We would welcome the opportunity to collaborate on work which mapped the voluntary youth work sector. The reports highlighted in the WG response refer to exercises based on the needs of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework; this not being a mapping of youth work, but rather a specific programme of targeted intervention, means that the sector has yet to provide a true reflection of all youth services being delivered within the voluntary sector. This is much-needed and would enhanced collaboration between not just voluntary and maintained youth work sectors but with other sectors and public bodies.

There is a concern that there is too much of an emphasis on 'sufficiency' here: unless and until the map of delivery is established, how might the notion of

'sufficiency' be adequately addressed?

Any other relevant issues arising since the publication of the Committee's report:

Committee Recommendation 7:

The Minister should ensure that Youth Work Sufficiency Assessments are undertaken by local authorities as part of their population needs assessments and report back to the Committee on progress within 6 months of the publication of this report.

Accepted in Principle by Welsh Government

Welsh Government Response

We have:

- Accepted the potential role of 'Sufficiency Assessments' in the planning, delivery and monitoring of youth service provision.
- Set up a working group in November 2017 to ascertain how these might work in Wales, learning from approaches taken forward in the Play sector.
- Determined that there is a requirement for an assessment to ensure services being provided within a local authority area are needed, of the required quality, and delivered by the most relevant organisation.
- Explored what an assessment might look like and concluded that, in the absence of a new, long term Youth Work Strategy and vision, that takes us beyond 2018, it is not possible to finalise an approach for immediate implementation.

We will:

- Incorporate the notion of 'sufficiency of provision' and its assessment into the new Youth Work Strategy for Wales.
- Co-construct its design in partnership with young people and stakeholders.
- Secure agreement across the sector to the use of Sufficiency Assessments in the planning, delivery, and monitoring of youth service provision as part of the new strategy.

Stakeholder Response to Recommendation 7:

We would agree that there is a need for a new National Youth Work Strategy to be in place before any potential implementation of 'sufficient' provision and also that more needs to be done in relation to what constitutes 'sufficiency', how it might be assessed and 'co-constructed' (and beyond that, how it is 'co-managed, co-delivered and co-evaluated).

The YWRG has started to consider' sufficiency' post-publication of a report by an external consultant. We understand that the deployment of resources is an important consideration during a period when services for young people are changing but also when youth work can play to its considerable strengths. We hope that the new Interim Youth Work Board will consider the ramifications of what is 'sufficient' but also how accountable (and to whom) any proposed 'framework' might be or look like, within a business-case approach.

Are there lessons to be learned from the implementation of 'sufficiency' in the play

work sector?

In addition, is there an argument that raises the possibility of looking at the interface between play work and youth work and an alignment of what 'sufficiency' means across both sectors?

Any other relevant issues arising since the publication of the Committee's report:

Committee Recommendation 8:

The Minister should develop an accountability framework for local authorities' use of funds for Youth Work via the revenue support grant. The framework should include sanctions if outcomes are not delivered.

Accepted in Principle by Welsh Government

Welsh Government Response

We have:

- Confirmed that the Revenue Support Grant is an un-hypothecated funding stream and can be spent at local authorities' discretion according to their locally identified needs and priorities.
- Confirmed that it is not currently possible to identify how much is spent on youth work, due to the pooling of budgets across services at a local level, nor to prescribe an amount.
- Reviewed our existing grant funding streams to consider how they might better support the desired outcomes of youth work and youth support services.
- Begun implementing changes to grant funding mechanisms, ensuring a greater focus on impact, rather than output.
- Explored an outcomes framework for youth work in the context of the current strategy.

We will:

- Publish the reviews of the Youth Work Grants.
- Continue to learn from them by keeping them under regular review.
- Establish an Interim Youth Work Board to support the development of a new Youth Work Strategy, and advise on approaches for deploying resources appropriately, including any unintended consequences.
- Secure agreement across the sector to the use of 'Sufficiency Assessments' in the planning, delivery, and monitoring of youth service provision as part of a new strategy. This will include consideration of their role in a new accountability framework for youth services across local authority and voluntary provision.

Stakeholder Response to Recommendation 8:

Why is it not possible to 'identify how much is spent on youth work, due to the pooling of budgets across services at a local level'? We might seek to ask questions here about accountability and the auditing of such resources.

In addition, if there is no clarity on the 'starting position' i.e. just how much resource is being made available and how much is being spent on youth services, then how can a position be taken as to what constitutes a 'sufficient' response to that situation?

The non-hypothecation of allocated funding under the Revenue Support Grant continues to only support variations in spend across local authority areas. Again, we would ask, as we did during the Inquiry: how feasible is an equitable 'Youth Work Offer' for young people living in all areas of Wales if and when available resource is utilised in such a non-uniform manner.

The YWRG has started to consider' sufficiency' post-publication of a report by an external consultant. We understand that the deployment of resources is an important consideration during a period when services for young people are changing but also when youth work can play to its considerable strengths. We hope that the new Interim Youth Work Board will consider the ramifications of what is 'sufficient' but also how accountable (and to whom) any proposed 'framework' might be or look like, within a business-case approach.

Any other relevant issues arising since the publication of the Committee's report:

Committee Recommendation 9:

The Minister should explore the potential continuation of Erasmus+ funding, should the UK Government decide not to do so.

Accepted in Principle by Welsh Government

Welsh Government Response

We have:

- Confirmed our commitment towards a credible, evidenced based approach towards withdrawal from the EU.

We will:

- Continue to advocate for an approach that places Wales' priorities centre stage, while responding to the UK's priorities as a whole.
- Continue dialogue with UK Government counterparts, addressing the role of Erasmus+ funding in the UK context.

Stakeholder Response to Recommendation 9:

European funding and access to European programmes for training and co-operation has enhanced Wales' reputation as an outward-looking welcoming and positive nation, with young people very much at the heart of that approach. Those programmes assist in the delivery of hugely significant youth work projects, international volunteering exchanges and learning opportunities for young people and youth workers from within Wales and across other European nations.

Until 2020, the Erasmus+ budget of 14.7 billion Euro will be utilised for the development of knowledge and skills. Two-thirds of that amount is to be used to

provide support for more than 4 million people to study, train, gain work experience or volunteer. 1 billion Euro has been allocated to the UK between 2014-2020. Wales-based projects are expected to be in receipt of 6-7 million Euro during that time.

The limited response from the WG is indicative of an approach that has not maximised the opportunities afforded by Erasmus+ and other European opportunities. CWVYS has established very good links with the National (UK) Agencies – British Council and Ecorys UK – on behalf of the voluntary youth work sector and we are still the sole partner in Wales of Eurodesk UK – an important resource-and-information-rich source for the development of Europe-wide support, funding, engagement and learning opportunities. A number of our member organisations and young people (and CWVYS) have benefited directly and indirectly from that introduction to European programmes via CWVYS. An example here would be the European Voluntary Service (EVS) model and its soon-to-come successor scheme the European Solidarity Corps.

CWVYS (and before us, ProMo Cymru) held the Wales membership for the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA), which has now reverted back to the WG. It was a very positive step by officials to invite ERYICA to deliver a workshop session at the recent National Youth Work Conference and to also discuss future links as a result of that appearance. We sincerely hope that this membership link can be exploited to its fullest potential on behalf of and with the youth work sector in Wales.

It was also good to see that Ecorys UK were invited to, and did, deliver a workshop session on Erasmus+ funding opportunities at the National Conference. Such links are vitally important if Wales is to obtain its share of resource in, and enjoy positive participation of, Erasmus+.

Any other relevant issues arising since the publication of the Committee's report:

CWVYS has been active in supporting work on Brexit and the impact on young people in Wales and the UK: this has manifested itself in work completed via Demos, MyLifeMySay , the #KeepErasmusPlus campaign and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Brexit, amongst several other forums.

Committee Recommendation 10:

The Minister should ensure that the statutory and voluntary Youth Work sector play a central role in the process of curriculum reform.

Accepted by Welsh Government

Welsh Government Response

We have:

- Confirmed statutory and voluntary representation on the Education Reform Strategic Stakeholder Group.
- Engaged the Youth Work Reference Group (with representatives from both statutory and voluntary sectors) with the process of Curriculum Reform.

We will:

- Continue to ensure appropriate mechanisms for ensuring the statutory and voluntary youth work sector play a central role in the process of curriculum reform.
- Consider and articulate the links and alignment between formal education and youth work in the new Youth Work Strategy for Wales.

Stakeholder Response to Recommendation 10:

CWVYS is a member of the Strategic Stakeholder Group. Whilst this provides an opportunity to highlight the benefits of informal and non-formal education within curriculum reform developments, the main focus remains the development of the formal education sector's approach and responses to the curriculum within schools. The challenge, therefore, continues to be that of supporting a co-ordinated, consistent and collaborative effort to ensure that youth work is represented at that strategic level.

It is to be hoped that there will be opportunities to strengthen the case for youth work and its benefits within the new curriculum as a result of the forming of the Interim Youth Work Board and also the presumed, outward-facing consultation exercises ahead of the development of the new National Youth Work Strategy. The opportunity to invite formal educators to those discussions needs to be seized upon in order to again 'present the case' for youth work in both strategic and operational fora.

Any other relevant issues arising since the publication of the Committee's report:

In its capacity as a member of the Third Sector Partnership Council (chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Bodies) and the Third Sector/Education Group (chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and attended by the Minister for the Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning), CWVYS also has the opportunity to highlight the benefits of, and alignments with, youth work and formal education.

A sub-group of the Third Sector/Education Group carries out liaison work between the Education Workforce Council and the wider third sector; CWVYS attends the sub-group for the voluntary youth work sector.