



# Youth Cymru Strategy

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# Chair Foreword

We are thrilled to unveil our latest strategy document, a testament to our unwavering dedication to positively impact the lives of young people across Wales. At the heart of our mission is the firm belief that every young person deserves the best possible opportunities to thrive, and we are steadfast in ensuring that our efforts translate into tangible differences in their lives.

What sets our strategy apart is our commitment to innovation in creating systems and processes that will enable us to measure and track our impact effectively. We recognise the importance of refining and improving our work over time, and this document is a product of careful listening to the voices of young people, our members, and our stakeholders.

Extensive research and consultation have guided us in crafting a plan that we are confident will lead us toward realising our aspirations for the future. We are eager to collaborate with our partners, volunteers, and staff to create a brighter future for young people. Our strategic priorities revolve around cultivating positive relationships, instilling resilience, and working collaboratively with young people to maximise their full potential. We firmly believe that every young person deserves a chance to succeed, to be happy, have fun and develop a range of skills and abilities to support their learning, and development.

All of us at Youth Cymru, are passionately committed to turning this belief into a reality. Our focus is not only on setting goals but on making a meaningful and lasting impact. We are fully committed to bringing about positive change for young people, through Youth Work, throughout Wales. It is an exciting time for Youth Work in Wales, with the Youth Work Strategy Implementation Board implementing recommendations to achieve a sustainable delivery model for Youth Work in Wales. Together, let us embark on this journey to shape a future where the potential of every young person is realised and celebrated. Thank you for your continued support and commitment to our shared mission.

# About Us

Youth Cymru is a national youth work charity with a proud history spanning over 90 years. Originally established as the Welsh Association of Youth Clubs, we continue to evolve while remaining rooted in our mission to support young people and those who work with them across Wales.

With a growing and developing membership of over 450, made up of both voluntary and statutory youth-facing and youth work organisations, Youth Cymru is uniquely placed at the heart of the sector. Our members range from large national statutory Youth Services to small, community-based voluntary groups, and we work in partnership with them to ensure our collective efforts meet the needs of young people.

As we enter a new chapter with our five-year strategy, we are building on our rich history, sector expertise, and commitment to collaboration. Youth Cymru continues to deliver innovative programmes, projects, training, events, and opportunities both directly with young people and in support of our members. We remain driven by the values of participation, equality, and meaningful impact, always aiming to meet the current and emerging needs of young people across Wales.

Recognising that strong partnerships and collaboration have always been key to our work, we will continue to lead and support youth work in ways that are responsive, inclusive, and rooted in the lived experiences of young people and practitioners alike.



# Youth Cymru Mission

As we launch our Strategy 2025-29, we place young people at the heart of everything we do and have refreshed our mission for: Young people to thrive through unique, innovative and life-changing opportunities And as a member organisation for all of Wales, we know we are uniquely placed to bring together organisations that work with young people from all sectors and for: Youth Cymru to be the leading member-led organisation for youth work in Wales.

# Priority 1

**Priority One – We will trailblaze collaborative, unique, innovative and life-changing opportunities, projects and programmes, for young people in Wales to thrive.**

We know that young people develop and thrive when they can participate in good quality projects and programmes that will build their social and emotional skills. Many young people experience this locally, but these opportunities are not available equally to all young people in Wales. Through our collaborative approach we bring together partners to offer new and dynamic opportunities for more young people, by leading and supporting delivery of local and national programmes where young people can thrive. Our model of youth work practice is rooted in the values of youth work and rights and participation is the bedrock of our work. We are committed to ensuring that our work is accessible to all young people, particularly young people who are more isolated or experience disadvantage or discrimination and we will strengthen our approach to ensuring their voices shape and lead our work.

As a national organisation we create appropriate platforms for young people to influence policy makers to ensure their voices are heard and they can grow as leaders. Through our rights and participation work we ensure that young people are supported to further develop the skills they need to take an active part in their communities, in projects, through volunteering, taking social action and creative leadership opportunities for young people. We know that many young people in Wales have few opportunities to meet others outside of their immediate community, particularly those who experience disadvantage. Through our collaborative UK, Ireland and European partnerships, we create opportunities for young people to travel, meet young people from different countries and broaden their horizons, developing their sense of their place in the world as global citizens.

# Impact

## Priority 1



Diverse young people develop socially and emotionally and gain new skills in Youth Cymru programmes and projects.

Young people create and participate in international programmes and see themselves as global citizens.



Young people co-create and lead in all Youth Cymru projects, programmes, and strategy.

Youth Cymru is an influential advocate for young people's needs and rights in Wales and influences policy.

# Priority 2

## **Priority Two - Leading workforce development in safe and effective youth work that evidences its impact on young people.**

Having the right staff and volunteers with the correct values, experience, and knowledge is critical to good youth work. Across Wales, there are difficulties in recruiting and retaining the workforce. We will work to change this by offering a wide range of training, resources, and toolkits to support youth workers at every career stage alongside national networks, forums and events to share and promote best practice. We will work with partners to address the challenges of creating entry routes into the workforce and leadership development in the sector. We will continue to provide accredited and bespoke commissioned training. We have refreshed our successful Youth Achievement Award (YAA) programme as a national progressive qualification in Wales, and we will expand our training to deliver YAA.

We provide quality assurance of the awards across Wales, leading the way in best practice. We provide Agroed Cymru Safeguarding Training to ensure safeguarding is understood and embedded in youth work settings and we will develop and deliver new accredited training modules to meet the needs of our members. Youth workers see the many changes in young people when they engage in youth work, particularly in their development of social and emotional skills. Yet despite this there is still a limited evidence base to demonstrate this impact and often there is too little recognition of the value of youth work in the wider sector. We will lead and promote research and evidence-based practice, to support workers and volunteers to confidently plan, deliver and evaluate their work through a refreshed training programme and network events. We will lead the sector in routinely evaluating and quality assuring youth work practice, promoting evidence-based toolkits and resources, so that youth workers know and can demonstrate the value of their work and contribute to the growth of this evidence base.



# Impact

## Priority 2



There is an evidence base to demonstrate the value and impact of youth work.

Youth workers know the impact of their work, routinely evaluate, and quality assure their own practice.



Youth Cymru has an established Training Portfolio and is the 'go to organisation' for training in youth work skills and safeguarding young people.

Leadership development is embedded in the sector.

# Priority 3

**Priority Three- to provide our members access to high quality resources, training, npartnerships and funding to enhance their work with young people**

We are a large member led organisation with members from community and voluntary groups, local authorities and other statutory organisations that work with young people in Wales. We are an influential advocate for young people's rights in Wales and benefit from our strong collaborative working with our UK and Ireland Nation partnerships. As we all emerge from the Covid pandemic, and a continuing cost of living crisis much has changed in terms of the needs of our members and the types of support and resources they need to work effectively with young people. To make sure we are meeting these needs we will routinely consult with our adult and young members and create a new membership offer. We will continue to provide all our members with access to training, resources and explore ways to enhance this offer and to engage more members in the development of best practice and developing an evidence base of youth work in Wales.

We want to make best use of the many different communication channels that are now used by young people and by our members, to ensure that we promote the views of young people and the impact of our projects. We will work with young people and our members to explore new ways to make best use of a wide range of communication channels to ensure that we maintain a strong national profile as an influential advocate for young people.

We have a strong track record of building strategic partnerships to build new relationships and to seek and secure funding for youth work projects that benefit our members. We will use our national and UK reach to bring more partners together, to develop innovative and creative projects for young people to develop and grow.

# Impact

## Priority 3



Membership of Youth Cymru is diverse and inclusive.

Our members are supported well and articulate the impact of Youth Cymru on their work with young people.



The work of Youth Cymru is visible, valued and understood by young people, partners, and policy makers in Wales.

Our members collaborate to offer UK and international opportunities to young people.

# Priority 4

**Priority 4 - To grow Youth Cymru as a sustainable organisation with sufficient expertise, funding, and resources to achieve our mission.**

We know that to achieve our mission, we need the right resources, so we are committed to reviewing how we work to ensure we have the best systems and processes in place to help us manage and deliver our work. It is our goal to be a reflective and evidence-led organisation, and we know that we need good data and information to help us to do this, as well as a commitment to creating the right environment to act on feedback and the changing needs of young people, our team, and our members.

We will review the way in which we raise income to fund our activities and will look to engage our members, trustees, and young people in helping us develop creative approaches to fundraising, knowing that we are doing this at a time when all children's charities are facing a loss of charitable funding and a reduction in the number of people volunteering. People are at the heart of Youth Cymru, and it is important to us that our staff and volunteers are supported well to carry out their work. We will support staff to develop their skills and to model best practice to the sector and recruit new team members when needed.

# Impact

## Priority 4



Is a sustainable Bi-lingual organisation with expert staff team to deliver its mission.

Has sustainable, diverse funding and a culture of fundraising that involves board, staff, young people, members and volunteers.



Has robust systems and processes to provide good quality data of our impact to inform our planning.

Is a reflective and evidence-led organisation that demonstrates its impact well.

# Conclusion

We are delighted to share our new 5-year Strategy with you. In this strategy we set out our mission and priorities for the coming years, reflecting the areas that Youth Cymru is best placed to lead. We know that young people develop socially and emotionally and thrive through participation in youth work; and that youth organisations in both the voluntary and statutory sector in Wales work best when supported to work together forming strong partnerships to create these opportunities. In setting out our priorities we are clear about the difference we want to make for young people and know that we will achieve this by working collaboratively and supporting our members in Wales.

