

WRITTEN STATEMENT

Title: Youth Parliament

Date: 2 March 2017

By: Elin Jones AM, Llywydd, as Chair of the Assembly Commission

The Assembly Commission is eager for the young people of Wales to have their say and participate as full citizens in Welsh democracy, helping to shape their future. The Assembly is already a world leader in youth engagement and on 19 October 2016, the Assembly voted unanimously to establish a youth parliament. Planning for this exciting new development is now underway.

The initiative will build on the good work carried out by the Assembly's Education and Youth Engagement team, which has a longstanding relationship with the young people of Wales. More than 20,000 young people visit Siambr Hywel – the Assembly's dedicated resource for young people – or meet Assembly Members and our officers on an annual basis.

Since then, our youth work programme that has engaged more than 200 youth groups and a wide range of views in the Assembly's work, including those who are often without a voice (looked after children, disabled children and young carers).

The Commission and I want to ensure that the development of a new youth parliament builds on this work, is informed primarily by the children and young people of Wales and is also supported by professionals who work in the sector.

I was, therefore, pleased to receive a copy of the Campaign for Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales (CYPAW) consultation report *Assemble for Wales: Report on the Public Consultation for a Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales* on 8 February. CYPAW have worked tirelessly to ensure that this issue has remained firmly on the Assembly's radar.



The report's recommendations were considered by the Commission's newly established Youth Parliament Steering Group which met for the first time on 13 February. The steering group, which I chaired, includes representatives from the following national organisations:

Children's Commissioner for Wales, Youth Cymru, Urdd, Children in Wales, NUS Wales, Wales Observatory for Human and Children's Rights, CWVYS, Scouts Cymru, GirlGuiding Cymru, Young Farmers Wales, Principal Youth Officer's Group Chair, CYPAW and Laura Elliott – the Assembly's chosen representative at the 8th Commonwealth Youth Parliament in Canada.

I am delighted that such a wide range of organisations with so much experience have agreed to work with us on this project.

We will continue to develop our model for a youth parliament over the coming weeks as we plan to launch a full public consultation with children and young people in Wales following the easter recess.

The next meeting of the Steering Group will take place on 13 March and include youth representatives from the aforementioned partner organisations. The steering group will advise on the consultation themes, format and methods.

