

**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales**  
**Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and**  
**Education Committee**  
**Ymchwiliad i Waith Ieuenctid | Inquiry into Youth Work**

**YW 11**

**Ymateb gan : Cyngor y Gweithlu Addysg (CGA)**

**Response from : Education Workforce Council (EWC)**

**Opening comments**

Following consultation by the Welsh Government, the Education (Wales) Act 2014 (as amended) and related regulations will require youth workers and certain youth support workers to register with the Education Workforce Council (EWC) from April 2017. This will mean that the EWC's statutory responsibilities (set out in Annex A) will extend to the youth work service for the first time.

The decision by the Welsh Government for practitioners within the youth work service in Wales to register with the same professional body as other education professionals in Wales is a landmark decision and a "world first". The Council believes that this offers opportunities for the youth work sector and the Welsh Government. For example:

- the sector may demonstrate its commitment to high standards and professionalism through registration with and regulation by a professional body;
- the EWC can assist the sector and Welsh Government to further raise the status and standing of youth work with the public and increase public understanding of the valuable contribution that it makes to teaching and learning;
- the EWC can work with the sector and government to further build public trust and confidence in youth work;
- the EWC can provide new and unique data from the Register of education practitioners and evidence based advice and research about the sector in order to better inform policy and decision making;

- the EWC has a statutory ability (through the Education (Wales) Act 2014) to promote recruitment to the sector and aid retention if the Welsh Government wishes the Council to undertake such work.

However, having made a decision to extend registration to other groups in the workforce beyond school teachers and require them to pay an annual EWC registration fee, it is necessary that government treats all registrant groups equitably in its future workforce planning and policy development. Historically, school teachers have benefitted from professional development opportunities, professional standards and other arrangements that have not been available to youth workers, FE teachers, work based learning practitioners or support staff.

The Council has engaged actively with the sector in preparation for April 2017. In doing so, the Council is developing its understanding of the sector and the issues that affect it.

**The EWC would invite the Committee to read the statutory responsibilities of the EWC at Annex A and would encourage it to take the opportunity to further discuss the matters highlighted above with it during its evidence sessions.** As a “new player” in the youth work sector and the wider education workforce in Wales, the Council feels this could be very beneficial for the Committee.

**Question 1** – What are your views on young people’s access to youth work services, including, for example:

- levels of provision across Wales and any regional variation;
- issues relating to access for specific groups of young people e.g. language, disability, rurality, ethnicity.

The Council understands that the youth work sector in Wales has concerns about sustainability, given pressures on budgets. The sector has sought to be innovative by considering alternative delivery models and by streamlining / merging services, but funding concerns prevail.

This in turn has affected the level and the breadth of provision across Wales, both at local authority level and indirectly in the voluntary

sector. These concerns are exacerbated in respect of youth work provision through the medium of Welsh.

The EWC is aware that in some areas in England, little or no youth work is available and the Council would not want to see a similar situation in Wales.

If you believe that there are particular problems, how do you think they could be resolved?

The Council is aware that the youth work sector is looking for greater strategic leadership in Wales and there have been discussions about a national organisation. Although the EWC does not consider itself to be the solution to this position, it believes that it can add value in the future and would invite the Committee to refer to its opening comments to this consultation response.

**Question 2** – How effective do you think the Welsh Government strategy and policy on youth work is?

In considering this question you may wish to think about:

- the Welsh Government’s specific youth work policy and strategy such as ‘The Youth Work offer’; The Wales Charter for Youth Work; The National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2014 to 2018;
- Welsh Government departmental responsibilities and whether there is a cross-departmental and co-ordinated approach to support youth work provision.

The Council is aware that a number of historic aspects of Welsh Government strategy and policy on youth work were welcomed by the sector and stakeholders valued the opportunity to be involved in the development of documents such as the 2007 Youth Work Strategy.

However, the Council has received feedback that some within the sector feel that the level of engagement by the Welsh Government in developing more recent policy such as the Charter, the Quality Mark and current Strategy 2014–18 has been weaker. The Council also notes that the Welsh Government team responsible for youth work has decreased in size in recent years.

The Council understands that many with the sector in Wales feel that the profile of the youth work in Wales has lost ground in recent years compared to other sectors such as school teaching and social care.

How do you think the Welsh Government could approach its youth work strategy and policy differently / to better effect?

The Council has received feedback from the sector that it would welcome greater involvement and discussion with the Welsh Government in developing strategy and policy and it believes that it has structures and bodies such as the Principal Youth Officers Group and CWVYS that are well established and ready to assist.

The EWC would also urge the Welsh Government to work collaboratively with the EWC and take advantage of the opportunities referred to in its opening remarks such as using the EWC to raise the profile of youth work amongst the public and to play a role in recruitment, retention and policy development as provided for in Welsh Government primary legislation.

**Question 3** – What are your views on the funding available for youth work, including through Local Authority, Welsh Government, European Union, and Third Sector.

The Council notes that the level of public funding for youth work, like a number of other services has fallen. It is therefore important that the youth work service seeks to be innovative and continues to challenge how it delivers services. Published figures indicate that the spend per head on youth work is low compared to the spend per head in schools.

The decision of the UK to exit Europe may in time have an impact on some funding streams such as Erasmus+.

While many third sector organisations are self-sustaining, local authorities support many such organisations either directly or indirectly. Third sector organisations have therefore, also been affected by local authority cuts.

If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?

More broadly, public sector funding would seem to be beyond the scope of this consultation. However, the Council makes the following points:

- it is important that all public sector and third sector organisations accept the “squeeze” on public funds and seek to be as cost effective, efficient, innovative and creative in delivering services as possible. The youth service in Wales is aware of this;
- as stated above, the Council invites the Committee and Welsh Government to actively discuss how the EWC can work with government and the sector. The youth work sector has called for a body that plays a role in promoting the sector and representing its interests for some time.

**Question 4** – Are there any other issues you consider relevant to the Inquiry that you think the Committee should be made aware of? (for example: workforce related issues; the Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales; buildings and infrastructure; youth work in schools; transport issues; access to digital technology; Welsh Government’s consultation on proposals to register and inspect some out of school education settings).

The Council reiterates its points in relation to registration with the EWC and the opportunities that it can offer the sector and Welsh Government in the future.

The Council has submitted responses to previous Welsh Government consultations on “out of school settings” and “alternative delivery models” in the past twelve months and can provide these to the Committee if required.

**Question 5** – If you had to make one recommendation to the Welsh Government from all the points you have made, what would that recommendation be?

For the Welsh Government to take **full advantage** of its decision for practitioners within the youth work sector to be registered with the EWC from April 2017 (like schools teachers, FE teachers, learning support staff and work based learning practitioners).

As outlined in this response, there are a number of potential benefits for the sector of registration, however it is important that the Welsh Government works with the sector and EWC in order that youth work registrants see value for money from registration fees, which the Welsh Government is likely to set at the same level as for other education practitioners in Wales

## **Aims and functions of the EWC as set out in the Education (Wales) Act 2014 and related regulations**

### **Aims of EWC**

The principle aims of the EWC are:

- (a) To contribute to improving standards of teaching and the quality of learning in Wales
- (b) To maintain and improve standards of professional conduct amongst teachers and persons who support teaching and learning in Wales
- (c) To maintain public trust and confidence and to safeguard the interests of learners, parents and the general public

### **Functions of the EWC**

1. To maintain a Register of persons deemed suitable to practice within the education workforce
2. To investigate and hear cases against registered persons involving professional conduct, incompetence or criminal offences
3. To establish and maintain a Code of Professional Conduct and Practice for registrants
4. To provide advice to the Welsh Government on a range of professional matters set out in the Act
5. To undertake activities to promote careers in registrant professions (when requested by the Welsh Government)
6. To hold and provide data about the education workforce to a range of bodies, including the Welsh Government
7. To record information about registrants' Induction and to hear appeals where a registrant fails their Induction and is aggrieved by the decision
8. To undertake additional work on behalf of the Welsh Government as required