

Children, Young People and Education Committee: Inquiry into Youth Work

The Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language, Alun Davies AM

YOUTH WORK SERVICES IN WALES

Youth work has great potential to enrich the lives of young people in Wales – whether it's through the experiences it opens up for them or the support it offers. Youth workers are educators, whether this takes place in a community youth club, on the streets or supporting formal education. Youth work provides and facilitates an environment within which young people can relax, have fun, feel secure, supported and valued. It is intended that through non-formal and informal educational opportunities and experiences youth workers challenge young people to enhance their life chances. Young people participating in youth work can increase their emotional competence; learn team building and communication skills; and learn how to have their voice heard.

Youth work in Wales is offered through local authority youth services and the voluntary sector. In Wales the youth service is a universal entitlement, open to all young people. Through the Learning and Skills Act 2000, section 123(1), Welsh Ministers have directed local authorities to provide, secure the provision of, or participate in, the provision of youth support services.

Our national audit for Youth work in Wales 2014-15 key results show:

- Around 106,450 young people were registered members of the statutory sector Youth Work provision in Wales. This figure represented 18 per cent of the population of 11 to 25 year olds in Wales. Around 100,600 of these members were aged 11-19 years, representing 31 per cent of the 11-19 population. The proportions reported ranged from 54 per cent in Wrexham to 15 per cent in Bridgend.
- At March 2015, there was 803 full-time equivalent (FTE) Youth Work management and delivery staff working across local authorities in Wales. 9 per cent (71) of these FTE posts were management staff and 91 per cent (732) were youth work front-line staff (both core and externally funded).
- The ratio of registered members aged 11-25 to FTE youth work delivery staff (excluding management staff) was 145 young people per worker in 2014-15. For the 11-19 population, the ratio was 137:1. (Note that these ratios reflect the total registered membership and not attendance at sessions).
- Around 12,400 young people received a nationally recognised accreditation during the year, representing 12 per cent of the registered membership. Around 18,000 young people (17 per cent of all

registered members) were reported as having gained a local accreditation.

- The type of individual projects is also recorded as part of the audit. The most numerous in terms of projects were After School Clubs with 1,565 in Wales and Sports and Physical Activity with 1,464. 19 per cent of all projects were delivered entirely or mainly through the medium of Welsh. The audit also showed that there was 538 black and ethnic minorities projects, 54 other minority group projects, 118 gender specific projects and 111 young offender projects.

All local authorities support the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework, have youth centres, youth clubs and the majority have street based teams.

Youth Services sit in a range of directorates across local authorities including education and communities. A small number of youth services have merged with Youth Offending Teams, to provide a more integrated model of support for young people. Local authorities Youth Service set ups vary as they aim to meet local needs.

THE NATIONAL YOUTH WORK STRATEGY FOR WALES (2014-2018)

The National Youth Work Strategy for Wales was launched in February 2014, setting the direction for youth work organisations for the next 4 years. It seeks to maximise the role and contribution of youth work provision to young people's engagement and success in their mainstream education. The strategy integrates with and supports the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework.

Our strategy seeks to ensure that we are making the best possible use of our Youth Work organisations and drawing on the expertise, enthusiasm and dedication of Wales' Youth Workers to improve the lives of our young people.

Substantive progress has been made in delivering on the commitments within the strategy.

- Our national **Quality Mark** was launched last autumn, this will support and ensure quality youth work provision is available to young people. The Quality Mark can be used by organisations for self-assessment, to plan for improvement and to gain the nationally recognised Quality Mark. 3 organisations have been successful in achieving the Bronze Quality Mark, the wider roll out across Wales has now begun.
- We are developing a **National Outcomes Framework** for Youth Work in Wales. This aims to strengthen the sector's ability to demonstrate the outcomes and impact of youth work. A 12 week consultation closed in June; Children in Wales also facilitated a consultation with young people. My officials are currently reviewing responses.

- We have **undertaken research into youth work in schools**, from a youth work and schools perspective. This work has helped us understand the value youth work is adding alongside formal education and the different approaches which are being taken to delivering youth work in school settings. It is also aiding our thinking as the new school curriculum evolves.
- We have **established a Youth Work Reference Group** to bring together expertise and provide advice to Welsh Ministers on key challenges and issues.
- A key feature of many professions is a requirement to register with a professional regulatory body that sets and maintains professional standards, retaining public confidence and demonstrating a shared commitment to professionalism. In recognition of this we will bring forward legislation on **workforce registration** that will see Youth Workers being required to register with the Education Workforce Council from 1st April 2017.
- We have undertaken research into the support received and needed by national and local **voluntary youth work organisations**. This work has helped us to understand the true value of networking for the voluntary sector.
- We have undertaken research into the contribution of youth work to the **Welsh Language Strategy**. Recommendations from this research included the consideration of Welsh language training within youth worker training packages, youth work organisations to utilise digital media, sharing of good practice and partnership working are currently being considered by my officials.

The Wales Charter for Youth Work

September 2015, the previous Government accepted a recommendation from the Youth Work Reference Group to establish an independently chaired sub-group to develop a core youth work offer and advise on how this might be delivered.

Tom Wylie was appointed to chair and lead on this piece of work. Wylie has extensive experience of developing youth policy in the United Kingdom and Europe. This has included chairing groups on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education in England, for the Northern Ireland Government and for the Council of Europe.

Wylie worked closely with a wide range of stakeholders across the youth work sector to develop The Wales Charter for Youth Work. The Charter sets out the minimum expectation for youth work to young people in Wales and was published in March.

Looking to the future we want to see youth work continuing to play its part in;

- supporting young people to remain in education, training and employment;
- continuing to promote young people's health and wellbeing;
- continuing to promote participation in community and civic life; and
- continuing to reduce anti-social activity.

Youth Work in schools

When it comes to supporting a young person to stay on in education, a Youth Worker can make all the difference. Research has shown that youth work can help improve pupil attendance, attainment and behaviour.

Summer 2015 we accepted all 68 recommendations contained within Professor Graham Donaldson's report - Successful Futures. Since then we have begun the exciting and transformative journey to develop a new curriculum for Wales. We recognise the important role that the youth work sector can play to support the delivery of the new curriculum, particularly in relation to the Four Purposes where young people become:

- Ambitious, capable learners
- Healthy, confident individuals
- Enterprising, creative contributors
- Ethical informed citizens.

In line with actions set-out in the National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2014-18, we commissioned research on the impact of youth work provision in schools from a schools perspective. The research identified a number of key curriculum areas youth workers are contributing towards and found that school-based youth work provides a vital link between young people, families, communities and school, which improves educational and life chances for pupils.

We recognise the important role **Third Sector organisations** play in supporting young people and their communities. Welsh Government is committed to providing £5.593 million in 2016/17 to support the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) and the 19 County Voluntary Councils (CVCs) covering all Local Authority areas in Wales. This funding enables WCVA and CVCs to help local community and voluntary organisations to thrive.

In January 2016 the WCVA stated that there was 33,000+ third sector organisations in Wales, 7.74% (2,554) of these are Youth Groups supporting young people across Wales.

In order to raise the profile of the voluntary sector organisations working in the field we commissioned Cordis Bright to undertake a national mapping exercise to gather information about voluntary sector provision that can support young people aged 14-18 to engage or remain engaged with education, training and employment (ETE). The aims of the mapping exercise have been to; enhance the local authority provision maps used by lead workers who support young people; encourage closer partnership working between the voluntary and public sectors and; support delivery of the Youth

Engagement and Progression Framework. This work is due to be completed later in the Autumn.

FUNDING FOR YOUTH WORK

We have provided an annual £2.756 million **Youth Work Strategy Support Grant** to the statutory youth work sector, to support the implementation of the youth work strategy.

In 2015 we rolled out our 3 year **National Voluntary Youth Organisation Grant** committing an annual amount of £679,000 to 7 national voluntary organisations providing youth work provision across Wales.

Local authorities receive core funding from the Welsh Government to support their delivery of youth support services through their **Revenue Settlement Grant**. The RSG is an un-hypothecated funding stream and it is therefore a decision of local authorities as to how this funding is utilised in order to best meet their local needs and priorities, including their youth work provision.

Our national youth work audit 2014-15 showed that the total income for Youth Work in 2014-15 was £36.6 million and the total of core Youth Work budgets was £22.9 million. In addition to the core Youth Work budget, the total budget for Youth Work in Wales for 2014-15 included income of £13.8 million from other sources, accounting for 38 per cent of the total income. 'National Sources' contributed the majority (£9.9 million or 72 per cent) of these funds, £3.8 million of which was provided by Cymorth. Other sources of additional income in 2014-15 were: Communities First (£0.9 million), European funding (£0.3 million) and 14-19 Pathways (£0.2 million).

VOICE OF YOUNG PEOPLE

We know that youth work encourages active participation and supports young people to have a voice. We are clear that the participation of young people will continue to be key in the development and delivery of our legislation, policies and programmes. We will continue to fund a national model, Young Wales, to enable the voices of children and young people to be heard. 'Young Wales' is facilitated by 6 children/youth organisations; the main partner being an umbrella body for children's organisations within the voluntary sector and a centre of excellence for children's rights.