

YW 24

Ymateb gan : ProMo-Cymru

Response from : ProMo-Cymru

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.

1. Levels of provision

LA youth service cuts /variations in budgetary allocations - youth work provision spreading very thinly and often not existing - services have been widely condensed to central or densely populated areas.

- Most rural areas have issues with unreliable, irregular or infrequent transport with young people geographically isolated, particularly those with protected characteristics.
- Recent work undertaken engaging low income families, from deprived communities and those considered harder to reach highlighted the correlation between lack of youth work services, anti-social behaviour, geographical or digital isolation of those with protected characteristics.
- In some rural and isolated communities there is no youth work or after school provision with the expectation that young people will be willing and able to travel to another area.
- Refugee and asylum seeker young people have been placed in communities without adequate youth services provision, language barriers, support issues, access to information, rights etc.

With reduced open access provision, would expect increasing focus on formal/informal engagement through youth information to support implementation of strategies and quality standards.

2. Specific Groups

- Greater strain on remaining youth work services impacting upon workforce training and development across sectors, addressing increasing issues of mental health and wellbeing, homelessness, young people with disabilities / spectrum disorders, challenging behaviour etc.

- Focus on young people with protected characteristics – lack of youth work activities that CYP with disabilities can access and enjoy, gain skills and enhance their personal development.
- Many young people with spectrum disorders do not want to be labelled as 'disabled' and increase access to mainstream activities rather than separate groups for CYP with additional needs.
- Young men 19 – 25 at greatest risk of mental health issues, suicide, unemployment – extension of NEET Engagement and Progression framework to enable, social and economic outcomes and benefits.

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

We are focused on the area of **Youth Information Strategy** and delivery across Wales as an area we have an in depth understanding of and input into policy and practice at a European level via ERYICA – European Youth Information and Counselling Agency. Especially the development of Integrated Information and Communications Models to allow for systematic pathways of information for young people to access, allowing access through a variety of linked communication channels providing coherent access to information and advocacy.

There is an urgent need to develop a coherent and joined up information strategy for Children and Young people with leadership and links between the National and Local levels which is currently non-existent. A position paper will be soon available from the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (which Wales is a member and ProMo-Cymru has inputted). Once available will be forwarded to this committee.

ProMo-Cymru are long time active member of **CWYVS** and have participated with others in the development of their response and fully endorse a National Youth Service Council for Wales with a consistent and unified youth service focussing on substantive areas of work rather than sectors.

We are concerned that their funding and in turn their existence is under pressure. CWYVS has been the route for ProMo-Cymru to have a voice and understanding of Government Policy direction both for the young people ProMo-Cymru works with and the organisation.

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.

1. Strategic vision / Operational reality

- Increasing demand on existing workforce to be degree qualified, with skills and experience to enable the potential of young people NEET, those with protected characteristics and additional needs.
- Link between prevention / intervention through Families First and Engagement and Progression framework focussed upon NEETS – early identification of families / individuals requiring targeted support.
- UNCRC – questions as to how young people's right to share and receive information is being facilitated.
- Outcomes outlined in the National Youth Work Strategy for Wales of participation, wider skills development, enhanced emotional competence – need for universal recognised national measurement framework in Wales. Previous developments with Demonstrating Success, a three year project to introduce a standard measurement for the outcomes of interventions, particularly in relation to social and emotional development was launched with senior professionals but not allocated any further promotion or development.
- Youth information no longer exists as a coordinated approach without a national network of youth information working in collaboration with all 22 LA in Wales with dedicated local online presence to engage young people.

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

- Concerns for the coordinated future of youth work in Wales between statutory and voluntary services with the impending loss of CWYVS. A national joint framework or council is key to ensuring resources are maximised, standards, work force, quality provision etc
- Recognise contribution of voluntary workforce
- Ensure voice of young people is representative of those

experiencing challenges and barriers.

- Participation standards with organisations alongside outcomes for young people in how decision making has been influenced through their participation.

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

1. Local Authority

Statutory services are lead strategic role for implementation of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework and expected to have more innovative and inclusive approaches with less resources. LA funding discretion results in disparate services for young people, with regional and local agenda's dictating the focus and level of provision.

2. Third Sector

Partnership and coproduction are becoming key to the survival of youth service. Both statutory and voluntary services need to be aligned but there is reluctance from some LA's to engage with Third Sector organisations in equal stakeholder partnerships, favouring a position of control that can stifle collaborative approach.

3. Welsh Government

Wales previously achieved the recognised standard in European Youth Information and considered advanced in the European field of Youth Information and recognised within ERYICA as providers of formal/informal local and national information enabling voice and creating opportunities for intervention and prevention through effective information strategies. Funding has not been allocated to the provision of youth information.

4. European Union

Concerns after Brexit about the future and ability for Third Sector to draw in funding from EU sources, without core funding many specialist and innovative youth services will not survive.

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

Reduced face-to-face services would benefit from the support of a robust, national youth information service supporting the implementation of 'The Youth Work offer'; The Wales Charter for Youth Work; The National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2014 to 2018; UNCRC.

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).

A general need for a coherent strategy to better use and linked digital communication and information.

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?

To work with and listen to the Youth Work sectors, both Voluntary and Statutory.