

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 08

Ymateb gan : Cyngor Cymreig y Gwasanaethau Ieuenctid
Gwirfoddol (CWVYS)

Response from : Council for Wales of Voluntary Services (CWVYS)

CYPE(05)–06–16 – Paper 2

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.

Access is directly and adversely affected by the huge variations in spend by local authorities (LAs) via the Revenue Settlement Grant (RSG) because of non-hypothecation. This is evidenced by Welsh Government Statistics Unit report for 2014–15:

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/youth-services/?lang=en>
and

<http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2015/151020-youth-work-2014-15-en.pdf>

These figures are LA-only (no similar audit exists for the voluntary youth work sector; an issue for us in terms of evidence-base).

The key issues here being:

- a) non-hypothecation of funds to LAs;
- b) lack of leadership from Welsh Government to ensure that all funds are spent as intended;
- c) where does the non-spend on youth services go?
- d) the impact on life choices/life chances for young people as a result of the huge underspend
- e) the lack of an effective and efficient Wales-wide service

There are knock-on effects of limited RSG spend on youth services to the voluntary sector i.e. if a LA spends 100% of its budget as allocated then the voluntary sector might expect to receive some support but

where it is below, say, 75% ,that knock-on effect is hugely negative. The voluntary youth work sector works with 250,000 young people aged 11–25 years, with roughly 30,000 volunteers and 3,000 paid staff involved. CWVYS currently has 90 member organisations – located across Wales and with a 50/50 split between national organisations e.g. the Urdd; Boys’ and Girls’ Clubs of Wales; Youth Cymru; Prince’s Trust Cymru; ScoutsCymru; Girlguiding Cymru etc; and local/community organisations such as Cwmbran Centre for Young People; Dr Mz; GISDA; West Rhyl Young People’s Project; The Tanyard Youth Project; Ethnic Youth Support Team; YMCA Swansea etc.

CWVYS members include those working exclusively with deaf young people and also young people with physical disabilities – both report a lack of investment in basic needs.

Additionally, emotional wellbeing and mental health issues for young people are being regularly outlined as areas of concern within the sector. The Together 4 Children and Young People programme is a good initiative and youth work has a hugely important role to play – but not enough is known about it.

Several CWVYS members deliver programmes on ethnicity e.g. Ethnic Youth Support Team (EYST) based in Swansea, which provide a wide range of excellent provisions (see www.eyst.org.uk) Of particular concern is the rise of attacks (personal/physical/psychological) on young people and their families in certain communities as a result of the EU referendum process and result. 25% of population of Cardiff is from a BME background (with city population in total to rise by 30% in next 10 years) and 12% in Swansea.

Issues of transport availability and access to digital connections (cost/location) are real for young people living in rural areas, as is the closure of youth centres due to certain LAs deciding to deliver in future from ‘hubs’ within main pockets of population.

The support needs of 18–25 year olds and how they can be met is an area of growing concern, particularly with regards to funding such vital work.

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

CWVYS believes that an opportunity exists to create a National Youth Service that provides an improved, more efficient and cost-effective range of modern services for and with young people. This would be funded by the 'reclaiming and hypothecation' of RSG monies.

This has been our consistent perspective for the past 4 years – as outlined in *'The Future of Youth Services in Wales'* which was published in 2012.

Essentially, this paper presented four options to the then Minister for Education in response to his question to the sector at the National Youth Work Conference in March 2012, namely: 'Do you want a national or a regional youth service?'

Copies of *'The Future of Youth Services in Wales'* are freely available upon request. However, in brief, the paper outlined the following two main, preferred options:

A National Youth Service Council for Wales

We propose a National Youth Service Council for Wales (NYSCW) with an expanded remit like that for YouthLink Scotland. This leaves direct responsibility for the funding of the youth service, and the distribution and monitoring of those funds, with the Welsh Government.

CWVYS believes that NYSCW structures should be consistent with the concept of a unified youth service and focus on substantive areas of work rather than sectors.

An outline of how the NYSCW might look is shown at Question 5 on **pages 18–19** of this response.

Strengths:

A single, integrated body would be responsible to the Welsh Government for supporting the delivery of the youth service strategy, for advice to Ministers and Welsh Government officials, for the maintenance of quality and standards, and for the registration of

youth workers.

Membership of NYSCW would give organisations a stake in the governance of the Council and would demonstrate eligibility for government funding.

The NYSCW Board would comprise an independent Chair and full representation from the current voluntary and maintained youth services.

Expertise and experience from the whole of the youth service would be brought together in one organisation.

Administrative costs would be very small compared with Revenue Support Grant levels of funding for administration through the 22 local authorities. This is based on an assumption that the delivery of the youth service would be through a small number of regional bodies funded directly by the Welsh Government but supported by the NYSCW Programmes Division.

The NYSCW would lead on the development of opportunities for commissioned services via its National Programme Directorate. It would follow a 'commissioned nationally, managed regionally, delivered locally' plan.

A new, constructive and challenging partnership between the Welsh Government and the Council would be established as an essential element for ensuring the maintenance and development of opportunities for young people and for capitalising on the contribution of young people to the economic and social development of Wales.

The new Council would have a formal remit for developing constructive partnerships between the youth service and business, schools, further education and higher education.

The NYSCW would have responsibility for professional standards and youth worker registration and would be ideally placed to work with Education and Training Standards (Wales) in relation to youth work

qualifications, pay, conditions of service and agreements with JNC as well as with Estyn in relation to reporting on and monitoring standards of delivery.

Potential challenges:

It is expected that local authorities would be required to give up responsibility for the delivery of the youth service and the funding associated with it. Funding would be transferred directly to organisations and/or regional bodies and responsibility for the delivery of the National Youth Work Strategy and monitoring its effectiveness vested in the new Council.

Arrangements would need to be made for the appointment of regional youth service managers to replace the existing staffing structures of the local authorities.

The current distinction between voluntary and statutory local authority organisations would disappear. All engaged in the governance, management and operation of organisations would need to recognise this and the consequent implications for funding, management and quality assurance.

The Welsh Government and the NYSCW would need to agree (a) revised structures (national and/or regional) for the delivery of the youth service (b) a funding model for the youth service as a whole and (c) a funding allocation for the operation of the Council and its Directorates.

A position paper jointly presented with the Chair of the Wales Principal Youth Officers' Group (PYOG) at the Ministerial Youth Work Reference Group (YWRG) in December 2014 paved the way for a comprehensive, externally commissioned report to the YWRG in 2015.

However, in spite of these discussions there has been no further mention or consideration of such proposals.

It would be useful to know whether the Minister is minded to re-address these issues.

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.

We would like to know whether the Youth Work Reference Group is to continue to meet and to discuss high-level strategic issues.

If not, will the ‘Charter’ result in a new/re-shaped ‘Reference Group’ to take this work forward? There is a need for the WG to act quickly and assert the roles of either the existing Group or another.

Currently, there is a view that the Charter ‘exists’ on a piece of paper only and also as a previous Ministerial ‘concept’ but with no further thinking on how it might be enacted upon within the sector. A basic offer for all young people is welcomed (although the Charter says nothing ‘new’ about the delivery of youth work in Wales) but there is currently no guidance on how this can or might be implemented.

Communication generally needs to be improved across the sector. A relatively quick and short piece of work by the WG (and/or by the sector?) as a summary on where ‘we are at’ on each item of the National Strategy e.g. youth work in schools; the Quality Mark; National Outcomes Framework; funding for the voluntary sector post 2016/17; Youth Engagement and Progression Framework etc; would be useful. However, a summary of where ‘that’ takes us is of equally critical importance.

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

The Charter has the laudable aim of ensuring a minimum offer for all young people in Wales.

However, the issue of youth voice is perhaps not as clearly defined as it might be – which is unfortunate given the National Assembly’s recent drive to encourage young people to participate in democratic engagement processes.

Wales used to lead the way in young people's participation. Wales currently has no recognised Youth Assembly, resulting in no seats being taken up at the UK Youth Parliament. Serious questions are being asked in other UK nations about Wales's absence.

Voices of young people need to be expressed, listened to and acted upon in a new Wales Youth Assembly.

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

Youth Service Grant Funding (Welsh Government/LA/Voluntary Sector)

- £40.5M annually is made available by the Welsh Government for youth services via the Revenue Settlement Grant (RSG), Youth Work Strategy Support Grant (YSSG), National Voluntary Youth Work Organisation grants (NVYO) and CWVYS core funding.
- The Revenue Settlement Grant (RSG) is non-hypothecated funding of approximately £37M for local authorities, who are able/permitted to spend the allocations how they wish. This results in an inconsistent spend on youth services with the attendant 'knock-on' effect on voluntary youth organisations.
- Total Welsh Government grant made directly to local authority youth services i.e. to PYOs (YSSG) is £2.756m. The *YSSG* supports implementation of the National Youth Work Strategy.

Criteria for the YSSG:

- To support implementation of the YEPF Implementation Plan, including supporting/facilitating the contribution of the voluntary sector.
- To support open access provision to meet local need and fill gaps identified within the *Local Authority Single Integrated Plan*.
- Up to 25% can be spent on supporting training needs for staffing (including the voluntary sector), this grant may not be used to fund generic training which should be delivered through local

authorities such as safeguarding, health and safety and food hygiene.

Voluntary Youth Work Sector Funding

- NVYO grants account for £679,000 per year for 2015–2018 i.e. 1.6% of overall youth service budget.
- CWVYS core funding is £105,000 for 2016/17 i.e. 0.25% of overall youth service budget.

CWVYS is working on future sustainability plans. If Welsh Government support is not forthcoming in 2017/18, CWVYS will close in August 2017.

Third Sector

The voluntary youth work sector in Wales involves more than 250,000 young people, at least 30,000 volunteers and 3,000 paid staff. WCVA estimates that there are at least 2,554 voluntary groups specifically involved with young people or 7.7% of all voluntary groups in Wales (WCVA Third Sector Statistical Resource, 2016).

The voluntary youth sector is playing an exceptionally important role in supporting the development, well-being, self-esteem, employment skills and life skills of young people. Direct funding from the Welsh Government to the voluntary sector is exceptionally small, especially compared to the funding available for local authority provision. Because of this historical imbalance and low level of financial support, the voluntary youth sector is facing severe difficulty in trying to absorb the planned reductions whilst maintaining services to young people in accordance with the National Youth Work Strategy for Wales.

The voluntary sector needs core funding to ensure that it can develop opportunities for young people and support its volunteers. Investing in the voluntary sector is extremely cost effective. WCVA estimates for the whole of the voluntary sector in Wales that 145 million hours of effort are provided by volunteers (equivalent to £1.7 billion or 3.2% of Wales GDP). When added to the estimated £2 billion of third sector income, this totals some £3.7 billion or 6.8% of Wales GDP (WCVA Third Sector Statistical

Resource, 2016). Voluntary sector youth groups in Wales benefit from 11 million hours of volunteer effort per year.

European

FUNDING: ERASMUS+

Over its lifetime, Erasmus+ will see a significant increase in EU funding (+40%): **a budget of €14.7 billion** for development of knowledge and skills.

Two-thirds of its funding will provide grants for more than **four million people** to study, train, gain work experience or volunteer abroad in 2014–2020.

Almost **one billion Euros** will be allocated to the UK alone over seven years. In the UK, it is expected that nearly **250,000 people** will undertake activities abroad with the programme.

Erasmus+ goals

The European Union links Erasmus+ to policy objectives such as Europe 2020.

- Through Erasmus+ the EU aims to achieve the following by 2020:
- **over 500,000 young people will have the chance to volunteer abroad or take part in youth exchanges**
- mobility of 2 million HE students within Erasmus+ programme countries
- mobility of 135,000 students to/from Erasmus+ partner countries
- mobility of around 300,000 staff from higher education
- 200,000 master's student loans
- 25,000 scholarships for Joint Master degrees
- 25,000 Strategic Partnerships between 125,000 institutions, to implement joint initiatives; promote exchange of know-how and links with world of work
- 150 Knowledge Alliances between 1,500 HE institutions and enterprises
- 1,000 Capacity-Building projects between HE institutions
- 800,000 youth workers, lecturers, teachers, trainers and

education staff to teach or train abroad

- 650,000 vocational students to engage in education AND training abroad
- more than 200,000 teachers collaborating online and involving more than 100,000 schools through eTwinning
- 800,000 lecturers, teachers, trainers, education staff and youth workers to teach or train abroad
- The sector also has the opportunity (currently) to engage in bidding for European Social Funds and European Regional Development Funds.

However, many members report that their access to LA-designed bidding processes for ESF is very limited and anecdotally amounts to a 'zero-hour contract' basis. However, where members have been lead bodies there have been successes e.g. YMCA Swansea has received £2.6M in European support since 2012.

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

- The inward investment into Wales of charitable trust funding to the voluntary youth work sector is something we highlight on a regular basis but is not fully recognised.
- Without project monies from large funders such as Comic Relief, Tudor Trust, BBC Children in Need (via the Wales office), Big Lottery Fund (Wales office), Erasmus+ etc; plus several small to mid-sized trusts across the UK, Europe and occasionally beyond, many of our Member organisations would either not exist or would not be able to deliver such high quality services.
- This 'plays well' for Wales but is largely ignored within Wales.
- Quantifying the volume and type of funding would be a relatively large piece of work – but would be a valuable indicator of such inward investment.
- Our 5 Nations colleagues at YouthLink Scotland and the National Youth Council for Ireland have delivered two excellent pieces of work in which the Committee might well find of real interest.

Both items relate to the economic and social value of youth work in those nations.

- Wales desperately needs the same level of analysis and evidence-based reporting. Scotland and Ireland engaged independent economists to provide the following:

http://www.hallaitken.co.uk/component/option,com_docman/Itemid,10/gid,437/task,doc_download/

http://www.youth.ie/investing_in_youth_work_pays_off

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 Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales (QM) has generated a level of interest amongst voluntary youth work sector organisations. However, the sustainability of the QM beyond March 2018 is open to question. In addition, the current rounds suggest that only 12 organisations will be eligible to carry out the QM process with support via the private sector consultancy firm commissioned by the Welsh Government to deliver this contract. Whilst the development of the QM is broadly welcomed, it is open to question as to which organisations might benefit and how much of an advantage they might find themselves at as a result of obtaining a QM at any of the three levels (bronze, silver and gold).
- The registration of youth workers (via the Education Workforce Council); and youth work in schools. CWVYS understand that there is a desire to register degree-level youth workers at £45.00 each from April 2017. However, there is an apparent aim to rename currently qualified youth workers at Level 2 and Level 3 as ‘Youth Support Workers’, who are unlikely to be required to register. The inference here is that schools will only

accept registered youth workers, who constitute a very small number of people.

Questions here are:

- a) Given the very small numbers of degree-level qualified youth workers, will the much-vaunted concept of 'youth work in schools' therefore be a much-reduced (less effective?) policy?
 - b) is this a potential restriction of trade for the vast majority of youth workers and organisations?
 - c) does this potentially undermine the aspirations of the Wales Charter for Youth Work in reducing the choices and life chances for young people in Wales?
- The commissioning or outsourcing of youth services by local authorities (LA) and other agencies. As in the case of day-to-day working, with each LA 'doing things differently', there can be 22 variations on a theme: that's difficult at the best of times for our national member organisations in particular, who need to be aware of and operate within that way of working when they all have only a fairly limited 'HQ' capacity.
 - The lack of available monies to invest in infrastructure and buildings creates significant problems for the voluntary youth work sector. Whereas funding for projects and developmental programmes are available for those who have the time and ability to source them, cuts are seeing our members closing down parts of buildings that need urgent refurbishing and LAs divesting themselves of youth centre buildings. An example of the latter: Cardiff Council sought to close 13 of its 19 neighbourhood youth centres under its latest cost-saving initiative (total youth service budget reduced from £3M to £1M). Working closely with the voluntary youth work sector, it has established an Innovation Fund which has seen universal youth work being commissioned-out via a grants programme: a good opportunity for some of our members. However, the

issue of Community Asset Transfers (CAT) has reared its head of late: one of our members took on a CAT building from a LA last year and has been delivering youth work from it – but the LA now wishes it to be returned for a property development scheme!

- Finally, we would suggest that there are questions to be asked about the procurement process operated by Welsh Government. CWVYS Trustees have asked us to raise this at the highest possible levels. Most of the recently commissioned pieces of research and significant contracts regarding youth work in Wales have been awarded to individuals and companies based outside of Wales – and nearly all with a link to the National Youth Agency in England i.e. former employees now set up as consultants. We are surprised that some of these opportunities do not appear to have been commissioned via the sell2wales website.

This is not intended to spotlight or criticise those individuals.

However, the process and the ‘England-only’ supply chain is an identified problem within the sector. We conclude that the Committee could be interested in finding out why this is the case, perhaps? Examples to the contrary: a CWVYS-led consortium bid for the Quality Mark failed in open competition. We have no problem with a ‘fair fight’ and completely accept the decision taken. However, other important pieces of work affecting the future direction of youth work in Wales have been placed outside Wales – the rationale for which is hard to determine.

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?

The creation of a sustainable and developmental National Youth Service that meets the needs of young people aged 11–25 years and of the sector in Wales.

The policy and legislative basis of the National Youth Service includes National Youth Work Strategy for Wales (2014–18) and attendant developments such as the Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales and National Outcomes Framework for Youth Work in Wales plus design and development of future National Youth Work Strategies; Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (2013–); The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015); The Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011; Extending Entitlement (2000); Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act (2014); A Curriculum for Life (2015); *Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes* (2014);

Such a body might look like this:

NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE COUNCIL FOR WALES
(NYSCW)

NYSCW Board

- Independent Chair (by Public Appointment)
- 4 representatives from voluntary youth services,
- 4 representatives from local authority youth services
- 3 co-options for specialist skill and experience outside the youth service

NYSCW Directorates

Registration & Ethics

- Reports directly to Sub-Committee of the Board on matters of ethics and registration

National Finance & Audit

- Advice/guidance on finance (reports to Welsh Government)
- Audit function (reportable to Welsh Government)
- Grants and procurement policy and practice (Revenue Support Grant and other grant/tender opportunity programmes)
- Internal audit function

Communications

- Marketing (including Youth Work Excellence Awards; ‘Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes’; Youth Work Conferences)
- Information & Advice
- Welsh Language
- Volunteering

Workforce Development

- Credits & Qualifications Framework for Wales
- Continuous Professional Development
- Training Consortium
- Youth Work Training Grant

Policy Advice & Research

- Responding to Welsh Government, National Assembly for Wales and other consultations
- Policy development
- Advice to frontline service providers
- Evidence-based research to inform policy positions (identifying and securing research projects; link role to Higher Education/Further Education/Welsh Government/the sector)

National Programmes

- Youth work delivery (national; regional; local)
- Good practice development e.g. collaborative partnerships; consortia working; community engagement
- Brokerage between youth services and other sectors e.g. education; health; employment; training
- Commissions nationally, delivers locally/regionally
- Line management of Regional Development Officers who provide support for both voluntary and local authority national/regional/local members and for non-members

Additional notes

- All youth work organisations would be encouraged to be a member or an associate member of the Council.

- All members would sign up to a Code of Practice/Ethics
- Eligibility for Welsh Government funding would be dependent on membership of the Council.