



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

REPORT

The value of youth work training: a sustainable model for Wales

Our response to Estyn's report and recommendations on Youth and Community training.

First published: 21 October 2020

Last updated: 21 October 2020

Contents

Report details

Summary of main findings

Recommendations 1-5

Recommendations for Providers, Local Authorities and Regional Consortia

Publication details

Report details

This report responds to the Minister for Education's remit letter to Estyn for 2019/20 asking them, to undertake a review of the quality of professional training available in Wales in order to meet the challenges of a changed national youth work environment and policy developments.

This report evaluates the quality and appropriateness of youth work training provision in Wales in providing youth workers with the skills they need to fulfil their role and meet the demands of modern youth work in all its forms. It follows the thematic report 'Youth Support Services in Wales: The Value of Youth Work' which was published in July 2018, and which Welsh Government responded to in August 2019. It also refers to progress made against recommendations in Estyn's 2010 report 'A survey of professional qualification training for youth workers in Wales'.

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/value-youth-work-training-sustainable-model-wales-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

Summary of main findings

There are 16 main findings contained within the report which are summarised below:

1. Youth work qualifications equip students with a sound background in youth work practice and provide them with the skills they need to carry out their profession. The youth work sector has made valuable progress against nearly all of the recommendations in 'A survey of professional qualification training for youth workers in Wales (Estyn, 2010).
2. Youth work students generally achieve well even though many have entered higher education from non-traditional education and social backgrounds. Their own experiences often mean that they can understand and empathise with the issues affecting young people. Many progress from Level 3 to degree level and a few move onto achieving higher degrees.
3. Youth work training programmes align well with the five key aims outlined in the Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2019. Course content at all levels has a suitable balance between academic and practical training and gives students the skills they need to carry out jobs in a wide variety of youth and community work settings.
4. Addysg Oedolion Cymru| Adult Learning Wales and higher education institutions (HEIs) work well together to offer appropriate qualifications and worthwhile opportunities for students to progress to courses at a higher level. A few employers offer apprenticeship routes for youth work training.
5. Many learners complete their courses successfully and attain their qualifications. Nearly all students provide sound explanations about why they are following their programmes of study and are highly motivated, including the transformative effect that youth work had on their own lives and display a passionate and genuine desire to influence young peoples' lives for the better.
6. The standard of teaching and instruction is effective across the various providers. Students value the experience and confidence of staff, as well as the educational and pastoral support provided across all course providers. Youth and community work tutors are experienced and qualified youth workers, who use their practical experiences in the field to enhance their teaching and academic input, bringing commitment, passion and experience

to the role including their international experience.

7. Work placements provide a practical setting in which students can use the theoretical aspects of their course and reflect on their own practice under the supervision of others. A lack of placements remains a challenge despite steps taken by HEIs. Most students feel that work placements are relevant and beneficial to their professional and academic development.
8. Leadership and management in institutions offering youth work courses are effective. All providers have robust quality management processes in place and faculty and course managers use a variety of information and scrutinise data to manage the quality and effectiveness of courses. They have quality systems and plans in place to document the management processes. Student outcomes are subject to robust external moderation. Most providers have effective measures in place to assure the quality of work placements and student progression during the placement.
9. Institutions providing youth work training have increased their use of Welsh, although inconsistencies and common issues remain throughout Wales. Institutions have more Welsh documentation than previously and enable students to submit assignments in Welsh. Welsh-speaking students have appropriate opportunities to use their Welsh in work placement settings, but opportunities to study in Welsh remain limited, and bilingual learning remains underdeveloped in the youth work sector.
10. All HEIs now integrate elements of teaching with other faculties within their institution. This sharing of theory and practice across specialisms develops understanding of the contexts in which other professionals work.
11. There are similarities between youth work skills and methodology and the new ways of working set out in the Curriculum for Wales 2022. HEIs are preparing youth work students for the contribution that they can make to formal and informal education by exploring relevant practice and policy documents in course modules at undergraduate and post-graduate levels.
12. The close involvement of ETS with the sector and adherence to UK Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) standards ensures that youth workers are qualified and trained to the highest professional levels. Youth work training gives practitioners a very wide range of skills for working with young people reflecting the five pillars of youth work: educative, expressive, participative, inclusive and empowering (Youth Work in Wales Review Group, 2018) and equip workers to carry out youth work in a wide variety of

statutory and non-statutory settings. Currently there is no regular audit of the skills youth workers have or are required by the wide variety of employers.

13. Many secondary schools are now beginning to see the value of having a youth worker on the staff, but in many cases they work only with challenging young people and are seen as aids to behaviour management, or support for young people with 'problems', and are often undervalued as educators in their own right.
14. The number of formally registered youth workers and youth support workers underestimates the number of these workers delivering youth work across the full variety of settings. Only 429 youth workers and 692 youth support workers are registered with the EWC at 1 March 2020 (EWC, 2020). The EWC is working with the Welsh Government, ETS, the Interim Youth Work Board and the Workforce Development Strategy Participation Group to resolve the issues causing this.
15. After training, youth workers are not required, as teachers are, to complete a probationary year, nor are they entitled to professional learning opportunities as a right. The lack of a qualified youth worker status (QYWS) equivalent to qualified teacher status (QTS) for teachers means that youth workers do not benefit in the same way as teachers from ongoing training for and recognition of their professional skills. There is also a lack of funding to support ongoing training opportunities. Senior youth workers are not included in national or regional educational leadership programmes and this hampers the development of leadership within the profession.
16. Local authorities play an important role in supporting and developing youth work training. However, they do not always have the resources to support the development of courses or to contribute to the training of youth workers (both statutory and voluntary) including those in non-education settings in the local authority.

Recommendations 1-5

Recommendation 1

Welsh Government should continue to work with all partners in the youth work sector to support the development of youth work and youth work training,

including leadership capacity.

Welsh Government Response

Accept: In developing the Youth Work Strategy for Wales, Welsh Government engaged directly with young people, youth workers and volunteers, and voluntary, local authority and independent youth networks and groups. This active engagement has continued through the work of the Interim Youth Work Board and the four Strategic Participation Groups (SPGs), which contain a range of stakeholders from across the sector. Specifically, as part of the Workforce Development SPG's workplan they will develop a Workforce Development Plan covering the sector from apprentices to service managers. The SPG's workplan also identifies the need to ensure that the training of professionally qualified youth workers continues to be fit for purpose, in line with the report finding that training currently equips students with a sound background giving students the skills they need in the profession. Further to this, the SPG has also started a project on the development of a leadership programme for senior leaders in the sector. Welsh Government will continue to engage with the sector through these groups and by other means with young people and other key stakeholders from across the sector.

Recommendation 2

Continue to work with the EWC and ETS to update and improve the registration arrangements for youth workers to ensure that youth work is treated in the same way as other education professions.

Welsh Government Response

Accept: The Welsh Government will continue to work with EWC and ETS to update the registration arrangements for youth workers including updating the qualification list required for registration. There will also be further consideration of additional categories of registration including for trainees and those in other sectors than Education. This work will be undertaken collaboratively with the

Workforce Development SPG, which EWC is a member of.

Recommendation 3

Commission a full skills audit for the sector, to include skills needed by employers and the existing skills of both youth workers and youth support workers registered with the EWC and those who carry out youth work and are not registered.

Welsh Government Response

Accept: Welsh Government committed within the Youth Work Strategy for Wales to 'ensure the training of professionally qualified youth workers addresses what young people need today and the contexts in which youth work takes place'. The Workforce Development SPG has set mapping and researching the workforce as one of its key tasks, which will provide a stronger understanding of the current skills in the sector. This work will involve working alongside key stakeholders across the sector to map registered youth workers and undertake a national survey of these youth workers. Furthermore, the SPG will be studying youth worker development, working towards a system for, and an annual programme of, professional learning & development appropriate for paid and volunteer youth workers' needs. The Workforce Development SPG will work to ensure all parts of the full skills audit recommended by Estyn are incorporated into this work. Additionally, Welsh Government has commissioned research to inform the implementation of the youth work strategy in Wales, that will collect evidence into the range, volume and quality of youth work.

Recommendation 4

Investigate the provision of formal apprenticeship routes for the training of youth workers and youth support workers

Welsh Government Response

Accept: The Youth Work Strategy for Wales states apprentices should be considered in the Workforce Development Plan. The Workforce Development Strategic Participation Group include within their work plan a commitment to review the coherence and suitability of the full suite of qualifications and progressions in youth and community work, including youth work apprenticeships. Through the work of the Board and the SPGs, Welsh Government will consider approaches to support apprenticeship providers in delivering apprenticeships that equip learners with the appropriate skills that they can apply in a practical setting or when progressing to a higher level qualification.

Recommendation 5

Work with the providers of youth work training and other relevant organisations to increase the use of the Welsh language in youth work training.

Welsh Government Response

Accept: Part of the vision outlined in the Youth Work Strategy for Wales is that young people have access to opportunities and experiences in both Welsh and English and participate in experiences that develop a strong sense of Welsh identity. As part of the Cymraeg 2050 strategy, 79 institutions received funding for informal opportunities to use Welsh via the Welsh-language Promotion Grant in order to ensure the provision of opportunities to socialise through the medium of Welsh exists for young people in Wales. Welsh Government is working closely with the Interim Youth Work Board which is committed to develop an increased level of Welsh language provision across the whole youth work sector. SPGs have clear actions in relation to this, for example the Accessible and Inclusive SPG has a commitment to develop a programme of work to increase opportunities for youth work in the medium of Welsh, whilst the workforce development SPG has a commitment to understand and respond to existing Welsh language training needs. A Welsh language task and finish group sits alongside the work of the SPGs to look specifically at the issues around, and

encouraging growth in, Welsh language services. Members of that group sit on all the SPGs to ensure a joined up approach and the chair of that group sits on the Interim Youth Work Board.

Recommendations for Providers, Local Authorities and Regional Consortia

Recommendation 6

Providers of Youth Work Training should make sure that youth workers and students from other professions working with young people have opportunities to train together.

Recommendation 7

Providers of Youth Work Training should improve the availability, variety and quality of work placements.

Recommendation 8

Local Authorities should encourage schools to recognise the specialist skills and professional knowledge youth workers bring to supporting the development of the new curriculum.

Recommendation 9

Local Authorities should support and contribute to the development of courses for the training of statutory and voluntary youth workers, including those in non-education settings.

Recommendation 10

Regional Consortia should explore ways to include youth workers alongside teachers in professional learning and educational leadership training opportunities.

Welsh Government Response

Welsh Government will work with providers, local authorities, regional consortia and the Interim Youth Work Board to support them in meeting these recommendations ensuring that youth workers in Wales have the best support and training to provide enriching and valuable learning experiences for young people in Wales. The Youth Work Strategy for Wales is clear that that the greatest asset to youth work in Wales is the youth workforce that provide experiences and opportunities to young people across the country. The strategy outlines that we want voluntary and paid professional staff to be highly skilled and have opportunities for ongoing development throughout their careers, have access to regional and national networking and information sharing opportunities and have opportunities to act as system learners, playing an active role in the development of youth work policy.

Our Workforce Development SPG contains representatives from across the sector, including youth work providers and local authority representatives. Welsh Government will continue to collaborate with this group to support them in achieving their commitments, which will contribute to the recommendations listed above being attained.

Publication details

The report will be published in October 2020 on the [Estyn website](#).

About this document

This document is a copy of the web page [The value of youth work training: a sustainable model for Wales](#) downloaded.

Go to <https://gov.wales/value-youth-work-training-sustainable-model-wales-html> for the latest version.

This document may not be fully accessible, for more information refer to our [accessibility statement](#).

Get [information on copyright](#).

