

Agenda for a Generation is the work of an unparalleled coalition of representatives of the youth service for each of the four home nations, Wales, England, Northern Ireland, and Scotland. The coalition, the United Kingdom Youth Work Alliance, is made up of 15 organisations, including the four national agencies, the four voluntary sector organisations, principal youth officers organisations, youth worker's and officer's unions and other professional groups. The Welsh organisations involved are the Council for Wales Voluntary Youth Service, the Further Education and Youth Service Association of Wales and the Wales Youth Agency.

Agenda for a Generation argues that to meet young people's needs properly, the country needs a fully developed and properly resourced youth policy and it needs it now! The document stresses that youth work is a highly cost-effective investment and a proven alternative to the cost of not addressing the concerns and needs of young people - i.e. the cost of vandalism and crime, of youth unemployment, drug misuse, of failure to engage all young people in education, training and economic activity. The Agenda is about taking youth work seriously.

In summary, the Agenda concludes that young people, and those working with them, will be helped by the following:

- An unequivocal statutory basis for youth work, placing a duty on local authorities to secure sufficient youth services within their areas in partnership with voluntary organisations;
- Consistent public funding for youth work, based on need and on development plans;

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"Young people matter today and are our future".
That is the central theme of Agenda for a Generation,
a new manifesto for the youth service.

- A recognised distinctive place for youth work in delivering national programmes, for example in community service, health and training for employment;
- New machinery to co-ordinate national Government's responsibilities for youth policy;
- Improved arrangements for quality assurance, including a strengthening of HM Inspectorate;
- A coherent framework of training and qualifications for youth workers, whether full or part-time or volunteers; and
- A vibrant national infrastructure to support effective local youth work and to give a voice for young people.

The Agenda also suggests that the Government should play a more active part in European Youth Policy both within the EU and the Council of Europe. This would enable youth work organisations to contribute to the development of policy, and encourage more young people to influence and benefit from European Union Programmes.

The Wales Youth Agency's Executive Director, Brian Williams, stressed the importance of the document, particularly in the unfolding outcomes of the reorganisation of local government in Wales, for both the voluntary and statutory sectors. "The Agenda contributes to the political debate at national level, and attempts to bring the issue of services to young people into the mainstream", said Brian. He is also encouraged by the significant contribution from Wales, much of which underpins elements of the Agenda, saying, "It builds on the foundations laid

in Building the Future. It recognises the need for a coherent training policy and the value of quality and achievement, areas in which Wales can proudly claim to be leading the way."

The Wales Youth Agency is now consulting on how best the document can be used locally and nationally. On November 4, the start of Youth Work Week, the document will be launched to Welsh M.P.'s at a special event in the House of Commons immediately after Welsh Questions.

- For further information and copies of the Agenda, contact the Wales Youth Agency (address on p.2).

The UK Alliance comprises:

British Youth Council
Community and Youth Workers' Union
Council for Wales Voluntary Youth Services
Further Education and Youth Service Association of Wales
National Council for Voluntary Youth Services
National Youth Agency
Principal Community Education Officers' Group Scotland
Scottish Association of Community Education Staff
Scottish Community Education Council
Scottish Youth Work Forum
Standing Conference of Principal Youth and Community Officers
Voluntary Youth Network for Northern Ireland (YouthNet)
Wales Youth Agency
Youth Council for Northern Ireland
YouthLink (Scotland)