

FURTHER EDUCATION AND YOUTH SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF WALES

STATEMENT ON YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Any statement, about participation should start with a definition of what the term is intended to convey in the Youth Service context. The following is suggested for inclusion:-

"The Youth Service, through its own example, should provide the young people and adults in the community with the means and opportunities for sharing in the decisions which affect their daily lives both at present and in the future; and at all levels."

For the purposes of discussion three main strands can be identified:

the way in which democracy and democratic processes are exemplified in the practices and procedures in the club and related situations.

the way in which young people learn through personal participation in activities which enhance the quality of life.

the way in which young people learn to cope with making their own decisions and the problems and difficulties of daily and family life.

ACTION PLAN

Ministerial Statement

It is suggested that there is a need for a nationally agreed interpretation of participation.

This should be expressed in a ministerial view, after consultation with those responsible for the delivery of the Youth Service.

Staff Development

The necessary shift in attitude of youth workers must be accelerated by an intensive programme of staff development and training. Central Government should recognise that this will be costly, and should reflect this in the priorities of allocation under INSET funding. One aspect of the training could be an emphasis on the management of change.

3. Management

Youth Service management at all levels will need to adopt administrative structures (e.g. allocation of funding, appointment of staff, composition of LEA and Voluntary Organisation Committees) which make the participation of young people inescapable.

Community Involvement

These management structures should be firmly rooted in the communities and should reflect the responsibility of these communities as partners in the provision for young people.

Training for Young People

Additional funding will be needed for the training of young people in the necessary skills and their development of self-esteem and confidence. Central government should recognise this need by making funds available through specific grant.

Special Projects

Another way of acquiring skills is through experiment and funding should be made available for young people to engage in small scale projects which will provide them with participative experience.