

## **Lifelong Learning: A Youth Service Response**

### **The Green Paper: Areas of concern**

1. The Youth Service in Wales has been marginalised as evidenced by the budget available, £300,000 for the WYA and £5.6M for FE. If the Youth Service is to play a part in the Government's Lifelong Learning programme then the budget available to the Youth Service needs to recognise the diverse provision undertaken by the Youth Service
2. The Youth Service should be wary of being forced to take the role of a rehabilitation service within the Lifelong Learning programme. Doing so does no justice to the wide range of provision that youth work and the Youth Service already deliver.
3. Work done by the Youth Service within the Lifelong Learning programme should have at its heart the core values of the Youth Service
4. What will happen to funding if the Youth Service becomes two-tier?
5. Youth work currently does not fit Lifelong Learning, youth work currently targets two age ranges: centre based work with 12-14 year olds; and work with 16+ age group. Predominately youth work is done with the 12-14 year old age group yet Lifelong Learning is targeted at 16-18 year olds, this has implications for how the Youth Service should structure itself in order to attract this older age group.
6. What role will the Wales Youth Agency be forced to adopt? In whose interest will the Wales Youth Agency act - poacher or gamekeeper?
7. The delivery of accredited training programmes is difficult with the facilities available

### **Proposed changes within the Youth Service in response to the Green Paper**

1. The structure of the Youth Service is inappropriate - the balance between full-time professionally qualified youth workers and part-time workers does not promote effective practice
2. Staff development policies, and accreditation need to be created in order to promote a more professional profile
3. The Youth Service needs to re-establish its identity, at present it does not have the structure to deliver a Lifelong Learning programme
4. There needs to be a consensus within the Youth Service as to what the Youth Service does. The Youth Service needs to determine more clearly the expected outcomes/targets of youth work particularly in relation to the Government's agenda

5. The outcomes of effective youth work practice related to the Government's agenda can be achieved through normative youth work. This can be best achieved by promoting and developing recognised "best practice", and not by becoming specialist workers with young people *i.e.*, crime reducers, health promoters, recruitment officers for H.E. and F.E.
6. The Youth Service needs to promote itself, and encourage its partners to do so also. The Youth Service unique selling point is that it works with young people first and foremost, unlike other agencies who only work with young people that impinge upon their sphere of influence.
7. The Youth Service has to address the Governments concerns about the Youth Service *i.e.*, no direction and no pathways. The Youth Service can best achieve this through the gathering of data regarding provision and presentation of measures of effectiveness via interfacing with bodies such as the OHMCI.
8. The Youth Service should consider the development of strategies within each local authority in order to respond to Lifelong Learning
9. Youth work should reflect the concept of Lifelong Learning

### **Critique of the Green Paper**

1. The government presents a narrow view of young people in the Green Paper, a more holistic view of young people is required.
2. The Green Paper does not adequately reflect the full scope of youth work and the Youth Service. Youth work covers a range of provisions including:
  - rehabilitation programmes for disadvantaged and excluded young people;
  - structured educational programmes leading to recognition/accreditation;
  - interventions for social education and citizenship;
  - interest and leisure activities.
 Youth work is the major provision for all young people and their communities without which there becomes a greater need for rehabilitation type programmes.
3. The ability to measure outcomes is accepted as being important, but measurability should not be a matter of numbers attending, or numbers achieving qualifications *etc.* The measuring process needs to take account of qualitative outcomes as well as quantitative outcomes.
4. The Green Paper needs to acknowledge the diversity of Wales. Language issues aside, geographical and demographic considerations should be reflected more in the Green Paper.
5. Is the current age range appropriate, is there a need to lower the age?
6. What structures will be created to support the interdisciplinary and interagency approaches within youth, community and adult services proposed by the Green Paper<sup>1</sup>?

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