



Youth Work in Wales
"BUILDING THE FUTURE"

North Wales Regional Youth Work Conference
23 September 1994

REPORT FOR THE STEERING COMMITTEE

ATTENDANCE

The Conference was attended by 76 people:

County Councillors	3
District Councillors	12
District Council Officers	6
County Council Officers	8
Voluntary Organisation Officers	4
Statutory Service Youth Workers	11
Voluntary Organisation Workers	19
Young People	5
Wales Youth Agency	4
Other	4

The Councillors represented 19.7% of the audience, Officers 23.6% including the voluntary sector, whilst workers from the Statutory and Voluntary sector comprised 39.5% of the audience. Thus 43.3% of the audience were policy makers and who therefore, may be able to influence Transitional Committees and shadow authorities.

CONTENT OF THE DAY

Welsh Office Minister Gwilym Jones MP outlined a view of the value and location of youth work in the new unitary authorities.

The main thrusts of his speech were:

- Youth Work is concerned with the **social and informal education** of young people aged 11- 25, with priority given to 13-19 year olds.
- Youth Work is provided through a partnership of voluntary and local government organisations and this should be encouraged and fostered by Transition Committees and unitary authorities.
- The Youth Work Curriculum Statement for Wales provides a foundation on which to build.
- Local Government Reorganisation provides an opportunity for the new unitary authorities to build upon, develop and enhance existing practices.
- Transition Committees should provide comprehensive information about services for young people for shadow authorities to assist them in determining policies. The Building the Future document will be a valuable tool in planning the future pattern of youth services in Wales.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SECTION

Gwilym Jones MP was followed by five young women who spoke passionately about the positive contribution that youth organisations have made to their education and development. The young women from LEA Youth Clubs in Clwyd and Gwynedd, Guides Cymru, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, and Young Farmers' Clubs had experienced a vast range of opportunities which served to enhance and develop:

- Their self confidence
- Decision making skills
- Leadership skills
- A range of interests and hobbies
- Their intellectual and physical abilities

The young women served as examples of the value of youth work to society in preparing the next generation to play an active role in their communities.

BUILDING THE FUTURE

Brian Williams, Director of the Wales Youth Agency then introduced the Building the Future Document and reinforced the Ministers messages concerning the educational role of youth work and the diverse contribution youth work has to make to the lives of young people.

The document emphasises the need for Unitary Authorities to build upon the partnership between voluntary organisations and local government and for youth work to be located in a department with a responsibility for education. The youth service should enjoy an equitable status with other services in the same department.

WORKSHOP GROUPS

In the final session conference participants were asked to work in groups which represented the unitary authority areas. Discussion was focused on the main issues of the day and may be summarised thus:

Location

The conference considered that the youth service should be located within a department which had responsibilities for education and/or other services to the community.

Structure

Future youth services should reflect the current partnership between the statutory and voluntary sectors. Opportunities for innovation and flexibility should be a feature of new structures.

Youth forums should be established in each of the new unitary authority areas, in order that the voice of young people may be heard.

Delivery

- Youth work should be delivered via the partnership between the statutory and voluntary sectors.
- Budgets should be devolved to areas
- Youth work should be delivered through a variety of settings e.g.
 - Centres
 - Intervention
 - Outreach
 - Community based
 - Partnership
 - Detached
- Youth forums should be established.

Funding

- Present levels of funding should be maintained
- Organisations should prepare service delivery plans

Collaborative Operations

Joint working arrangements need further exploration but it was generally agreed that Training would be an area people would need to collaborate on in order to be cost effective. However, training would need to meet national standards.

Evaluation of the Conference

Twenty two evaluation forms were returned. Thus we had a response of 28.9%. Responses to each of the questions are as shown on the form:

Youth Work in Wales: "Itui'lding the Future"

EVALUATION FORM							
(Figures are expressed as percentages)							
	<i>High</i>	5	4	3	2	<i>Low</i>	
The event was well prepared	6 27	59	13	0	0	1 0	The event was badly prepared
Methods used were appropriate	6 36	5 45	4 18	3 0	2 0	1 0	Methods used were appropriate
It was relevant to my work/office	6 13	5 54	4 18	3 9	2 0	1 4.5	It was irrelevant to my work/office
My own needs were met	6 4.5	5 36	4 32	3 13.6	2 9	1 4.5	My own needs were not met
I learned a lot	6 4.5	5 32	4 36	3 9	2 13.6	1 4.5	I learned very little
Stated aims of the conference were met	6 13.6	5 36	4 27	3 13.6	2 9	1 0	The aims of the conferences were not met
How successful was the event?	6 13.6	5 27	4 27	3 13.6	2 9	1 0	

Thus, people's attitude towards the conference varied across the scale although we tended to score higher towards the top end of the scale.

We received few comments or questions. The agency has responded to three concerning a voluntary sector request about annual development plans; the role of the Air Training Corps and finally contacts for information about youth service in Aberconwy and Colwyn.

Other comments received concerned the poor environment for workshop groups; the need for young peoples concerns to be heard; information about training for the voluntary sector; the success of the exhibition and the small turn out: the Minister leaving early.

Finally

Having started the debate how do we move on from here and what role can the Wales Youth Agency play in supporting local youth services in the move to unitary authorities.