

# **Extending Entitlement Revisited: The Maintained Youth Service 2002-2007**

## **Paper Number 7 – What was Happening in the Maintained Youth Service at the time of Extending Entitlement?**

This paper sets out to provide an overview of how the maintained Youth Service in Wales was organised during early years of the 2000's as this was identified by:

1. the time full and part-time workers spent in direct contact with young people;
2. the age, gender and academic attainment of those young people using the maintained Youth Service;
3. the methods used by workers to identify the needs of the young people with whom they come into contact; and
4. the identified needs of those young people using the maintained Youth Service.

This information will provide the foundation on which can be judged the effectiveness of the programme and outcomes the maintained Youth Service offers to young people at the time the research was carried out

### **Time spent by those working in the maintained Youth Service in direct contact with young people**

Those who work in the Youth Service make the claim that theirs is an occupation based on the quality of the relationship between the adults working within it and the young people who voluntarily use it. This section of the paper examines the amount of time spent by both full-time and part-time workers in direct contact with young people, during which time the quality of the relationship can be both developed and enhanced.

**Full-time workers’ levels of contact with young people**

Full-time workers were asked in a questionnaire survey to estimate the percentage of their time spent in contact with young people on a weekly basis. By using the baseline figure of 37 hours per week worked, it was also possible to calculate the amount of time - both in hours and as a percentage - full-time workers spent ‘away’ from direct contact with young people. The findings obtained about the total time full-time workers are in contact and away from contact with young people can be found in Table 1.

**Table 1 Time spent by full-time workers in contact with young people**

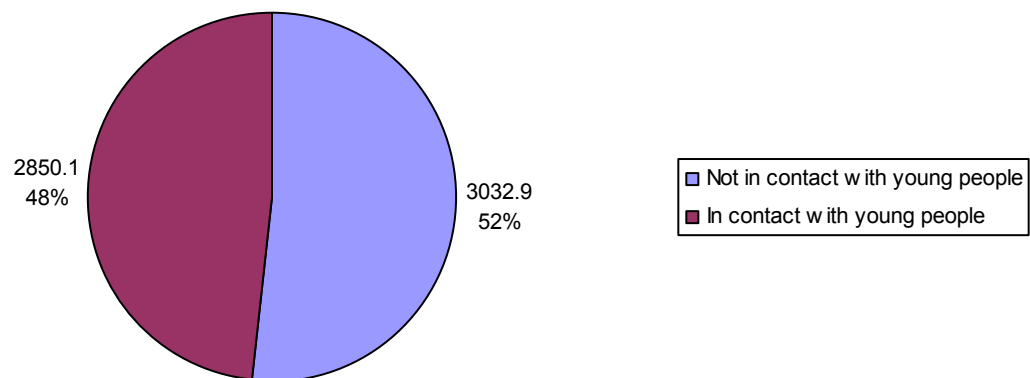
Number of workers	% Time in contact with young people	Time in contact with young people (hrs & total hrs)	% Time not in contact with young people	Time not in contact with young people (Total hrs)	Full-time equivalents (FTE) not in contact with young people
11	nil	nil	100%	(407)	11
11	5%	1.9 hrs (20.9)	95%	(386.1)	10.5
12	10%	3.7 hrs (44.4)	90%	(399.6)	10.8
2	15%	5.6 hrs (11.2)	85%	(62.8)	1.7
12	20%	7.4 hrs (88.8)	80%	(355.2)	9.6
5	25%	9.3 hrs (46.5)	75%	(138.5)	3.8
10	30%	11.1 hrs (111.0)	70%	(259)	7.0
3	35%	13.0 hrs (39.0)	65%	(72)	1.95
3	40%	14.8 hrs (44.4)	60%	(66.6)	1.8
4	45%	16.7 hrs (66.8)	55%	(81.2)	2.2
18	50%	18.5 hrs (333.0)	50%	(333)	9.0
10	60%	22.2 hrs (222.0)	40%	(148)	4.0
1	65%	24.1 hrs (24.1)	35%	(12.9)	.35
6	70%	26.0 hrs (156)	30%	(66)	1.8
10	75%	27.8 hrs (278.0)	25%	(92)	2.5
12	80%	29.6 hrs (355.2)	20%	(88.8)	2.4
4	85%	31.5 hrs (126.0)	15%	(22)	.6
8	90%	33.3 hrs (266.4)	10%	(29.6)	.8
7	95%	35.2 hrs (246.4)	5%	(12.6)	.34
10	100%	37.0 hrs (370.0)	0%		0
<b>159</b>	<b>% Time</b>	<b>2850.1 hrs</b>		<b>3,032.9 hrs</b>	<b>82</b>

From this information, it is possible to conclude that young people only have limited contact with full-time workers during their working week because a significant part of the

full-time respondents’ working time is spent ‘away’ from direct contact with young people. 6.9% of respondents (11) within this occupational strand indicated that they had no contact with young people: another 6.9% (11) claimed only to spend 5% (1.9 hours) of their time in direct contact. A further 19.4% (31) of those who responded to the questionnaire survey spend 25% or less of their working time with young people. 42.7% (68) of respondents indicated that they were in direct contact with young people for more than 60% of their working time. The analysis of the figures provided indicates that the respondents spend the equivalent of 82 full-time workers’ posts (3,032.9 hours) away from direct work with young people, leaving 77 full-time equivalents in contact with young people, which is 48.4% of the total time of the 159 full-time worker respondents (Fig.1). This is not a contemporary phenomenon; in 1990, the Wales Youth Work Partnership Survey (WYWP 1991:3) concluded that “*approximately half of full-timers’ working time may be spent on management, training and administration*”.

**Fig 1 Full-time workers’ contact with young people**

**Full-time workers’ contact with young people (hours & percentage)**



**Part-time workers’ levels of contact with young people**

The same level of accuracy in calculating the total working time of the full-time workers group could not be achieved for the total time worked by those employed part time because part-time workers had been asked in the questionnaire survey to indicate the

number of hours they worked within 6 specific time bands (Table 2). Having considered the evidence available, the decision was taken to use the mid-point of each time band as an average figure, which would be multiplied by the number of respondents to give a total time against each time band (Table 2). An example of this calculation is the 115 workers identified in column 1 of Table 2 who work less than five hours per week. The mid-point of that time band is 2.5 hours' x 115 workers = 287.5 hours, which is equal to 7.7 full-time equivalent posts. By using this calculation for each time band, it was possible to estimate that the total number of hours available to the 443 part-time worker respondents is 4697.5 (126.7 full-time equivalents).

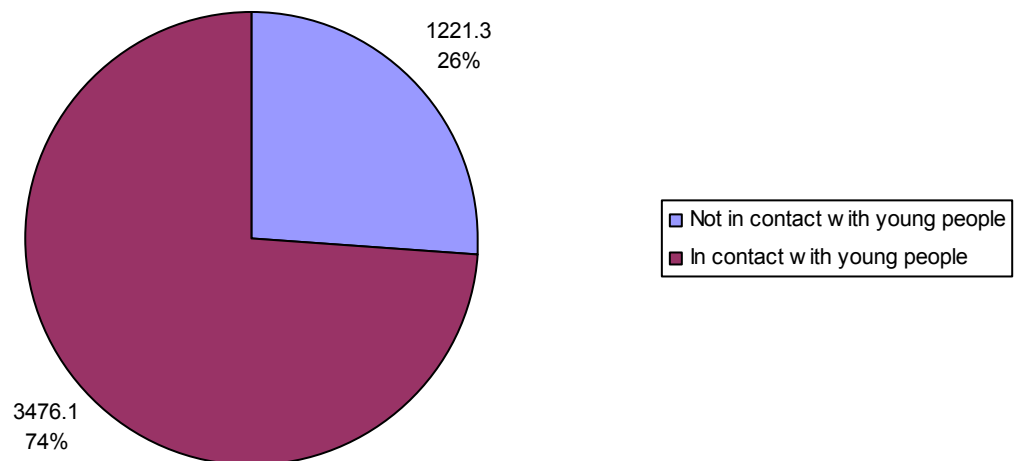
By using this 'average time' of each time band and the figure supplied by respondents about the estimated percentage time they spent on face-to-face work with young people, it was also possible to calculate that the part-time workforce spent 74% of their total time in direct contact with young people (Fig.2), which is 3476.2 hours (94 full-time equivalents).

**Table 2 Time spent by part-time workers in contact with young people**

No. of part-time workers	Hours employed per week	Total number of hours	Full-time equivalents (FTE)	Total number of hours spent in direct contact with young people	Full-time equivalents
115	Less than 5 hrs per week	287.5	7.7		
143	Between 5-9 hrs per week	1001.0	27.0		
66	Between 10-14 hours per week	792.0	21.4		
58	Between 15-19 hours per week	986.0	26.6		
27	Between 20-24 hours per week	594.0	16.0		
34	Between 25-36 hours per week	1037.0	28.0		
<b>443</b>		<b>4697.5</b>	<b>126.7</b>	<b>3476.2</b>	<b>94</b>

**Fig.2 Part-time workers' contact with young people**

**Part-time workers' contact with young people (hours & percentage)**



**Profile of young people in contact with the maintained Youth Service**

Using the baseline information described previously in Tables 1 and 2, it is the intention in this section of the paper to develop a profile of the young people who were in contact with the maintained Youth Service by age, gender and academic attainment. Obtaining this information is considered important because it allows a more informed judgement to be made about the specific characteristics of the young people in contact with the Youth Service. This information will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the Youth Service interventions in meeting the needs of the specific groups of young people using it.

**Youth Workers' contact with young people by age**

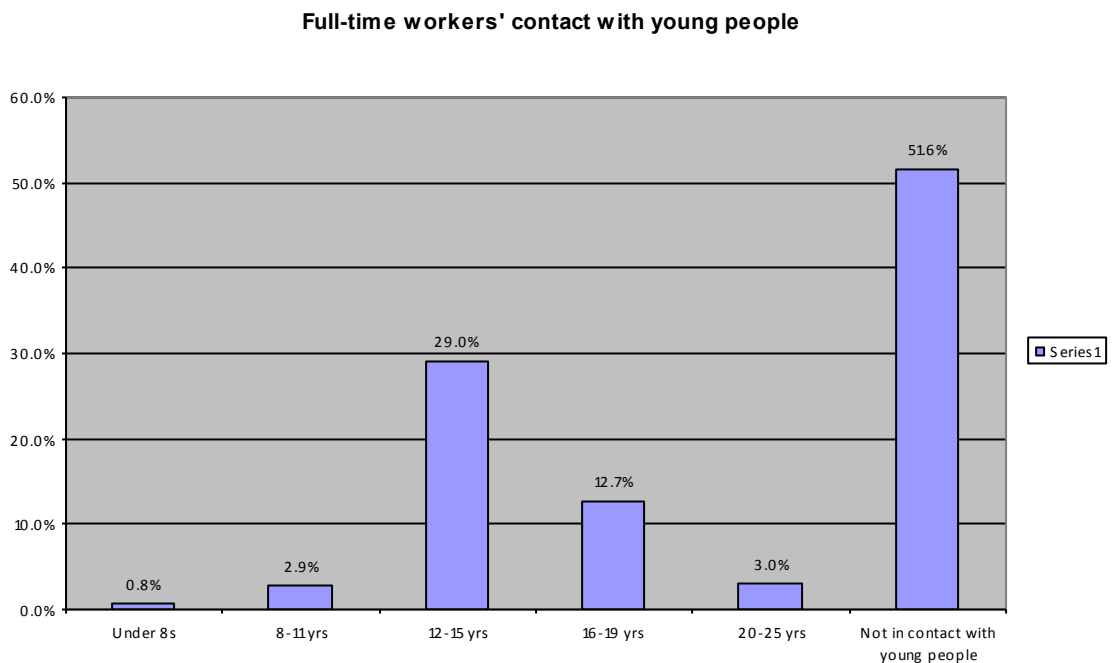
Both full-time and part-time Youth Workers employed in the maintained Youth Service in Wales were asked in the questionnaire survey to identify, by percentage, the young people they were in contact with within specified age bands, which included:

- those less than 8 years old;
- 8 to 11 year olds;
- 12 to 15 year olds;
- 16 to 19 year olds; and
- 20 to 25 year olds.

The responses to this question can be found in Fig 3 and Fig 4 which indicate the percentage of the total numbers of hours available to the full-time and part-time respondents to the questionnaire survey (Tables 1 and 2).

### Full-time workers' contact time with young people

Fig 3 Full-time workers' contact with young people by age group



### Full-time workers in contact with under 8 year olds

The significant majority of respondents, who worked full time, 96.8% (154), indicated they were not in contact at any time with children less than 8 years of age. A small minority, 3.1% (5), of respondents indicated that they were in contact with children under the age of 8 during their work within the maintained Youth Service. Three of the five

spent relatively small amounts of time in contact with this specific age group, which in total accounted for 11.2 hours of their time per week. The remaining two, however, spent more significant amounts of time, which in total accounted for 35 hours of their combined time per week. These two workers, who indicated they spent 30% (11 hours) and 64.8% (24 hours) of their time per week in contact with those under the age of 8, described their jobs as ‘New Opportunities Fund Co-ordinator’ and ‘Extending Entitlement Partnership Development Officer’. Both of these workers were unqualified. The total time spent by full-time workers in contact with those less than 8 years old was 46.2 hours (0.8% of the total time available), which is equivalent to 1.3 full-time posts (Fig.3 Fig.5).

### **Full-time workers in contact with 8 to 11 year olds**

Of the full-time respondents who completed this section of the questionnaire survey, 79.1% (117) stated they were not in contact with children between the ages of 8 to 11 during their work within the maintained Youth Service. However, 20.9% (31) of full-time workers recorded that they were in contact with young people within this age range during their working time (Table 3, Fig 5). The total time spent by these workers in contact with 8 to 11 year olds can be calculated as 170.8 hrs (2.9% of the total time available), the equivalent of 4.6 full-time workers (Fig.3). This is a significant improvement on the position identified by the Youth Service survey (WYWP 1991), which claimed 50% of full-time workers were involved with this age group for 18% of the time they were employed.

**Table 3 Full-time workers in contact with 8 to 11 year olds**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>Full-time equivalents (FTE)</b>
9	1.9	17.1	.46
8	3.7	29.6	0.8
1	5.6	5.6	0.2
8	7.4	59.2	1.6
2	9.3	18.6	0.5
2	11.1	22.2	0.6
1	18.5	18.5	0.5
<b>31</b>		<b>170.8</b>	<b>4.6</b>

**Full-time workers in contact with 12 to 15 year olds**

Of the 159 full-time workers who completed the questionnaire survey, 84.2% (134) claimed to be in contact with 12 to 15 year olds at some time during their working week (Table 4, Fig.5). This figure includes 6.9% (11) of full-time workers who were in contact with 12 to 15 year olds for 75% or more of their time and 19.5% (31) of full-time workers who were in contact with young people of this age range for 50% or more of their time. In total, the full-time workers claimed to be in contact with this age group for a total of 1708.5 hours (46.2 full-time equivalents), 29% of the total time available to the 159 full-time respondents (Fig.3, Fig.5). The information contained within Table 4 identifies the levels of time full-time workers spent in contact with the 12 to 15-year-old age group.

**Table 4 Full-time workers in contact with 12 to 15 year olds**

Number	Hours	Total hours	Full-time equivalents (FTE)
22	3.7	81.4	2.2
17	5.6	95.2	2.6
11	7.4	81.4	2.2
8	9.3	74.4	2.0
17	11.1	188.7	5.1
9	13.0	117.0	3.2
9	14.8	133.2	3.6
10	16.7	167.0	4.5
6	18.5	111.0	3.0
9	22.2	199.8	5.4
2	24.0	48.0	1.3
3	26.0	78.0	2.1
4	27.8	111.2	3.0
2	29.6	59.2	1.6
3	31.5	94.5	2.6
1	33.3	33.3	0.9
1	35.2	35.2	0.95
<b>134</b>		<b>1708.5</b>	<b>46.8</b>



### **Full-time workers in contact with 16 to 19 year olds**

From the evidence provided, it is possible to conclude that 41.5% (66) of full-time workers spent a total of 747.9 hours in contact with young people between the ages of 16 and 19 (Table 5, Fig.5), which is 30.2% of the total available time of the 66 workers who responded. It is, however, only 12.7% of the total available time for the 159 full-time workers who answered the questionnaire survey (Fig. 3, Fig.5). These figures compare unfavourably with those identified by the Wales Youth Work Partnership survey (WYWP 1991:3), which claimed that more than 90% of full-time workers were in contact with the 16 to 19-year-old age group for more than 20% of their time.

**Table 5 Full-time workers in contact with 16 to 19 year olds**

<b>No. workers</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>FTE</b>
19	3.7	70.3	1.9
21	7.4	155.4	4.2
10	12.6	126.0	3.4
5	16.7	83.5	2.3
2	22.2	44.4	1.2
3	25.9	77.7	2.1
2	29.6	59.2	1.6
1	31.5	31.5	.85
3	33.3	99.9	2.7
<b>66</b>		<b>747.9</b>	<b>20.2</b>

### **Full-time workers in contact with 20 to 25 year olds**

The analysis of the data available through the questionnaire survey identified that 14.5% (23) of full-time workers were in contact with young people between 20 and 25 years of age (Table 6, Fig.5). These respondents claimed they were in contact with this age range for a total of 177.8 hours (4.8 full-time equivalent (FTE)), which is 3% of the total time spent by the 159 full-time worker respondents to the questionnaire survey (Fig 5). This figure is significantly lower than the figures identified by the maintained Youth Service survey carried out by the Wales Youth Work Partnership (WYWP 1991:3), which concluded that almost 70% of those employed full time in the maintained Youth Service worked with the 20 to 25-year-old age group for 16% of their time. A comparison between these two sets of figures describes a downward trend in the age range of the

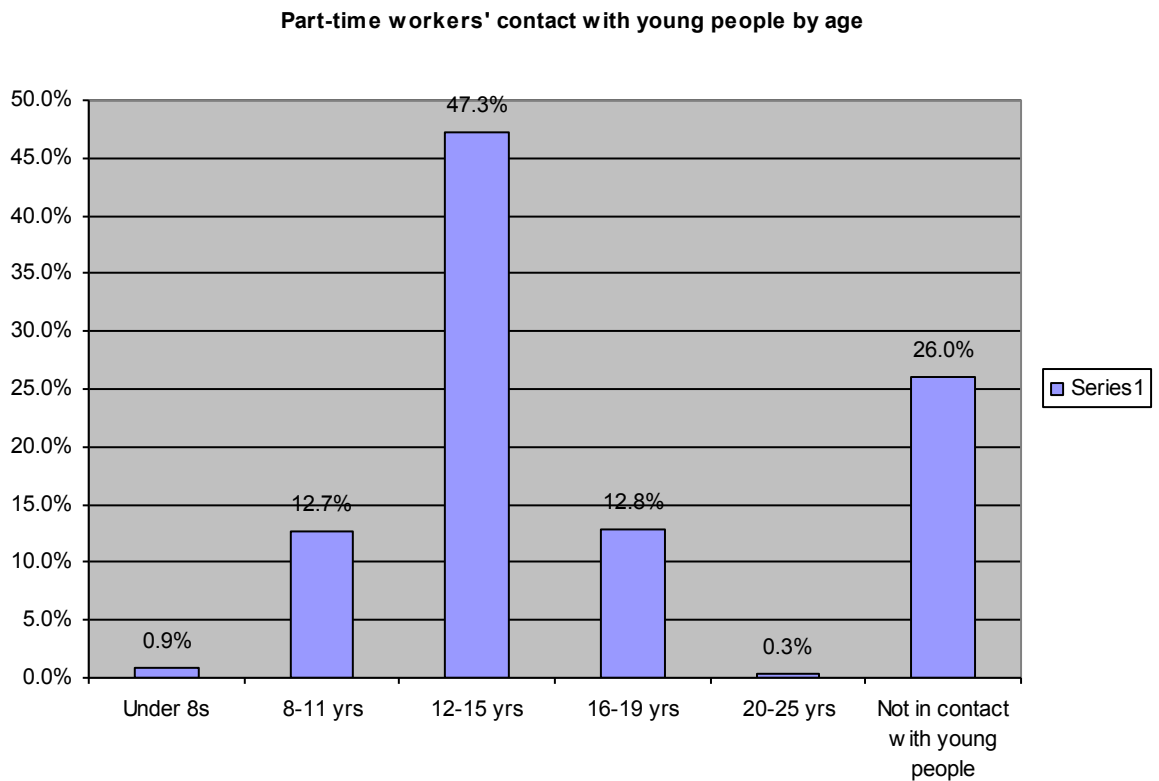
young people using the maintained Youth Service, with significantly fewer full-time workers in contact with this age group.

**Table 6 Full-time workers in contact with 20 to 25 year olds**

Number	Hours	Total hours
5	1.9	9.5
4	3.7	14.8
3	5.5	16.5
4	7.4	29.6
3	11.1	33.3
1	14.8	14.8
1	18.5	18.5
2	20.4	40.8
<b>23</b>		<b>177.8</b>

**Part-time workers' contact with young people**

**Fig.4 Part-time workers' contact with young people by age group**



**Part-time workers in contact with under 8 year olds**

The significant majority of respondents who worked part time, 94.3% (418), stated they were not in contact at any time with children under 8 years of age as part of their Youth Work responsibilities; 5.7% (25) indicated that they were (Fig.11). Using the mid-point of each time band as an average figure for each of the bands of hours worked per week, it can be calculated that 42.2 hours (0.9% of the total number of hours available Fig. 11), which is the equivalent of 1.14 full-time posts, are spent by the part-time workforce in contact with those less than 8 years old (Fig. 9).

**Part-time workers in contact with 8 to 11 year olds**

The majority of respondents to the questionnaire survey employed as part-time workers, 62.3% (276), indicated that they were not in contact with children and young people aged 8 to 11 years. 37.7% (167) of part-time workers indicated they were in contact with young people between the ages of 8-11 (Fig.6) for a total of 598.5 hours (12.7% of the total time available), which is the equivalent of 16.2 full-time posts (Fig. 4. Fig. 6).

These results can be considered a slight improvement on the figures produced by the survey of the maintained Youth Service carried out by the Wales Youth Work Partnership in 1990. That survey indicated that at that time, almost 33% of part-time worker respondents spent 28% of their time working with 7 to 11 year olds.

**Part-time workers in contact with 12 to 15 year olds**

100% (443) of those working part time in the maintained Youth Service claimed to work with those aged 12 to 15 (Fig. 6). From the calculation of the total time available to this group (Table 15), it is possible to determine that this occupational strand spent 47.2% (2221.2 hrs) of the total time available (Fig. 6), which is the equivalent of 60 full-time posts in contact with this age group. This has a similarity to the figures identified by the Wales Youth Work Partnership survey (WYWP 1991), which concluded that the 98% of the part-time workforce spent almost 50% of its available time working with this particular age group.

**Part-time workers in contact with 16 to 19 year olds**

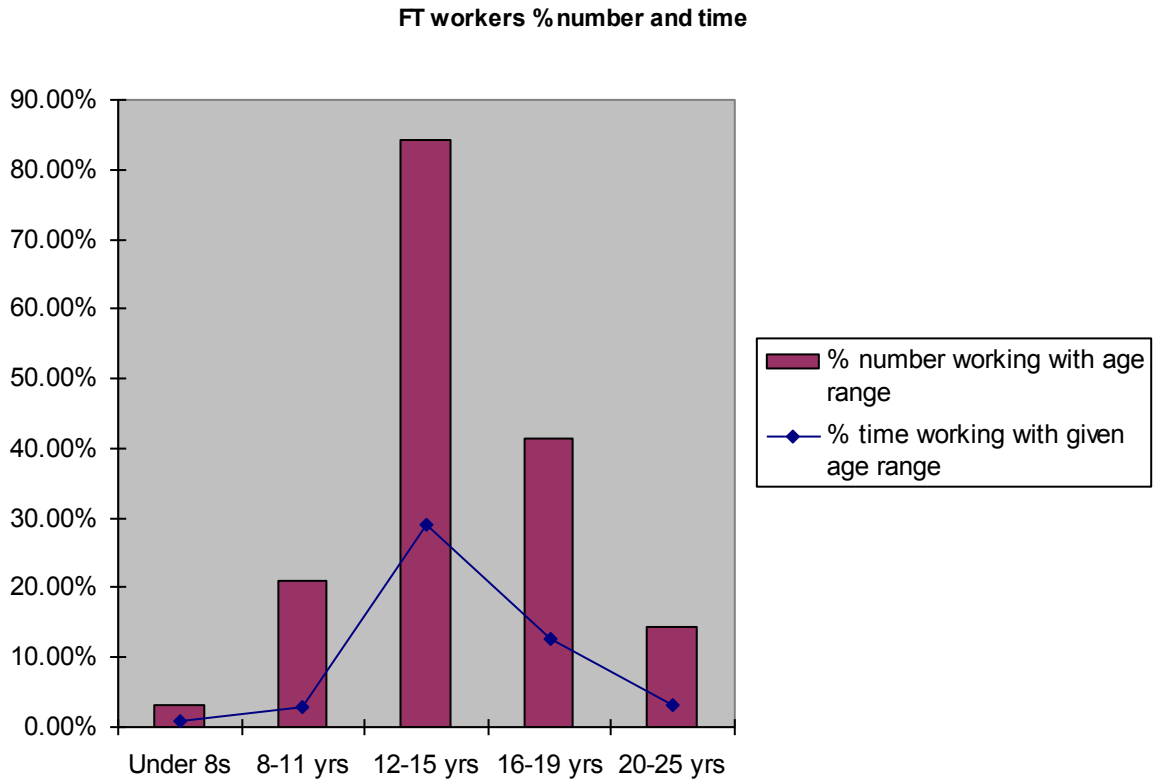
A significant number of part-time respondents, 89% (394), indicated they were in contact with 16-19 year olds (Fig.6) through their employment with the maintained Youth Service and that they spent 12.8% (601.7 hours) of the total time available, which is the equivalent of 16.3 full-time workers (Fig.4, Fig. 6). 11% (49) of respondents claimed that they were not in contact with this age range for any of the time during their work within the maintained Youth Service.

**Part-time workers in contact with 20 to 25 year olds**

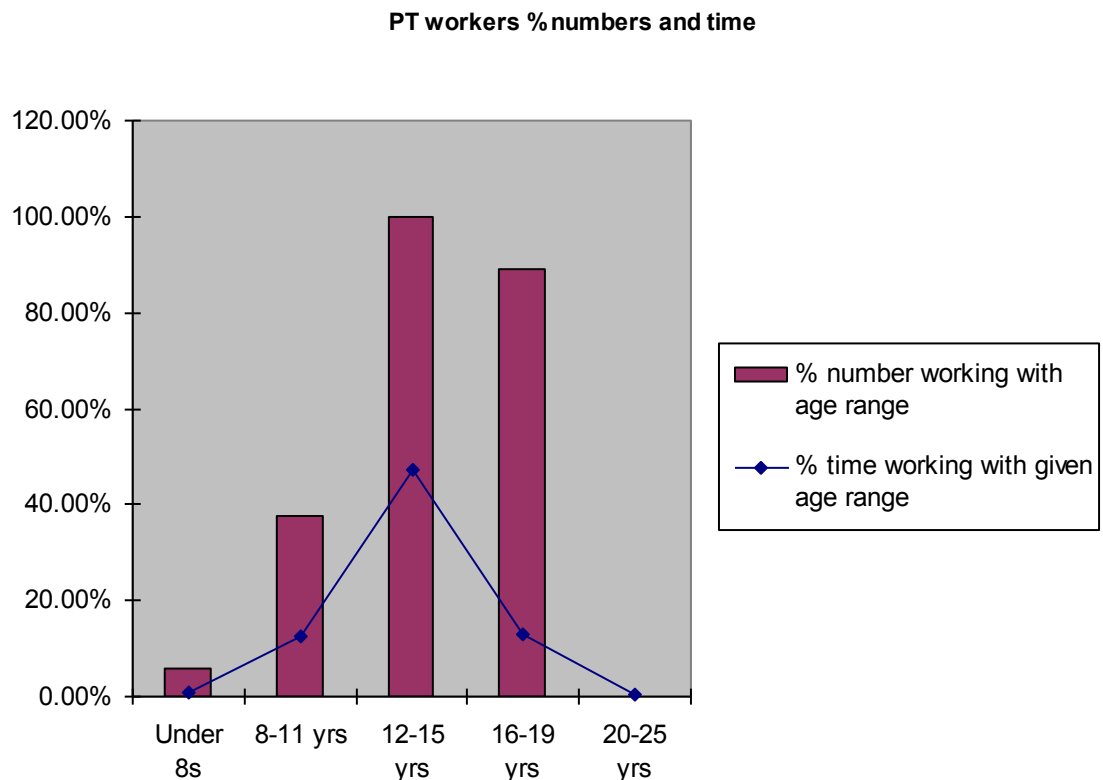
Part-time worker respondents indicated that they had negligible contact with the 19 to 25-year-old age group. 2.7% (12) of workers (Fig.6) from the 443 respondents to the questionnaire survey indicated that they were in contact for a total of 0.3% (12.5) hours with this particular age group (Fig.4, Fig.6). This figure is significantly lower than the results identified by the 1990 survey of young people (WYWP 1991:2), which claimed that 28% of part-time workers were in contact with young people between the ages of 20 to 25 for 18% of the available working time.

### Summary of workers' contact with young people

**Fig 5 Full-time workers' number and percentage time with young people by age group**



**Fig 6 Part-time workers' number and percentage time with young people by age group**



The results identify the 12 to 15-year-old age group as the group which is in contact with the maintained Youth Service most often. The focus on this age range was mirrored in the evidence obtained through the analysis of the Youth Work in Wales Excellence Awards which identified those between the ages of 11-14 as those most involved in the submitted projects.

The consequence of the involvement of both full-time and part-time workers with children aged under 8 and between 8 and 11 (which has been calculated from the information collected as being equivalent to 30 full-time workers) is the reduction in the amount of time available for work with the target age range specified for the Youth Service (11 to 25 years). It also means that Youth Service resources are being used inappropriately outside of the maintained Youth Service framework, which is of particular relevance to the Extending Entitlement agenda, with its focus on providing services for 11 to 25 year olds.

It should perhaps be of some concern to the maintained Youth Service that there has been a steep decline in the contact of both full-time and part-time workers with young people after the age of 15. At a time when many young people are facing a number of significant transitions, including those from school to work or school to Further and Higher Education, they are doing so without the support of the maintained Youth Service. The contribution the maintained Youth Services capable of making to the citizenship agenda could also be seen to be diminished because of its loss of contact with young people as they move towards obtaining the vote at the age of 18. As a consequence, the maintained Youth Service could be identified as an organisation that is failing to meet the needs of young people and the requirements of government at a time when it could be making its most important contribution.

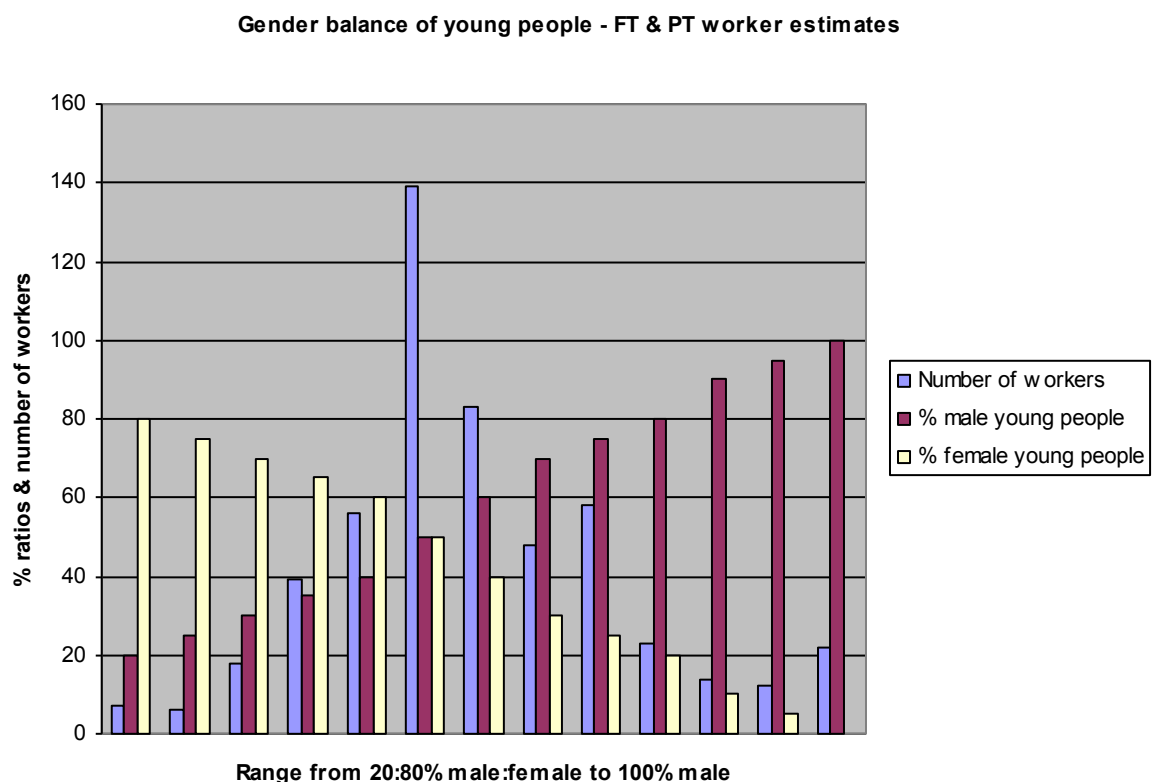
The results also indicate a significant decline in the time both full-time and part-time workers are in contact with the 20 to 25-year-old age group. It can be concluded from the analysis of the evidence available during the investigation that the 20 to 25-year-old age group is not being adequately catered for by the maintained Youth Service, despite being identified within both the Curriculum Statement for Youth Work in Wales (WJEC 1992)

and by the Extending Entitlement agenda (WAG 2002a). It can be further concluded that the maintained Youth service is failing to provide opportunities that meet the needs of a significant cohort of young people which it has identified as being within the framework of its responsibility. In doing so, it has become less effective in meeting its own and government-required priorities.

### The gender balance of those in contact with the maintained Youth Service

A substantial number of respondents, 86.3% (525), at both full-time and part-time worker levels completed this section of the questionnaire survey, which asked respondents to indicate the female and male balance of their Youth Centre or Youth Project. They were not asked to give an actual number of male or female workers they were in contact with because at the pilot stage, comments had been received which suggested that many organisations did not have a sophisticated enough registration system to identify specific numbers of young men and young women. As a consequence, the decision was taken to ask respondents to give an opinion about the gender balance as a percentage figure. The results of this question are detailed in Fig 7.

**Fig 7 Gender balance of young people in contact with the maintained Youth Service**



The largest group of respondents, 26.4% (139), claimed that they were in contact with an equal gender balance. Above the 50% gender balance, 49.5% (260) of workers claimed that the gender balance was male dominated. Below the 50% gender balance, 24% (126) of workers indicated that the gender balance was female dominated. 76.0% (399) of respondents who completed this section indicated that young men made up 50% or more of the gender balance of the young people with whom they were in contact. 50.4% (265) of respondents indicated that young women made up 50% or more of the gender balance of the young people with whom they were in contact. 4.2% (22) of workers claimed that they worked exclusively with young men. No respondents claimed to work for 100% of their time with young women. The results indicate that those who work in the maintained Youth Service in Wales are most often in contact with young males.

### **Levels of academic achievement of the young people using the maintained Youth Service in Wales**

It was the intention of this part of the questionnaire survey to obtain evidence about the formal education backgrounds of the young people with whom workers were in contact. This information was seen to be useful for two reasons. First, it would form part of the profile of the general characteristics of those young people who were in contact with the maintained Youth Service. Second, it would provide evidence on which judgements could be made about how effectively those working in the maintained Youth Service respond to the particular characteristics of those with whom they are in contact. To obtain this evidence, those working in the maintained Youth Service were asked in the questionnaire survey to answer three questions. The first was to indicate how many young people they worked with had attained, or were capable of attaining, 5 or more GCSEs (academic achievers). The second asked respondents to indicate how many young people they worked with had, or were likely to have, less than five GCSEs (academic underachievers). The third asked how many young people they worked with had, or were likely to have, no GCSEs (academic non-achievers). During the pilot stage, it was identified that this information was not generally kept in a formal way. Workers were therefore asked in the questionnaire to identify the number of young people with whom they were in contact as an estimated percentage within each of the three categories.

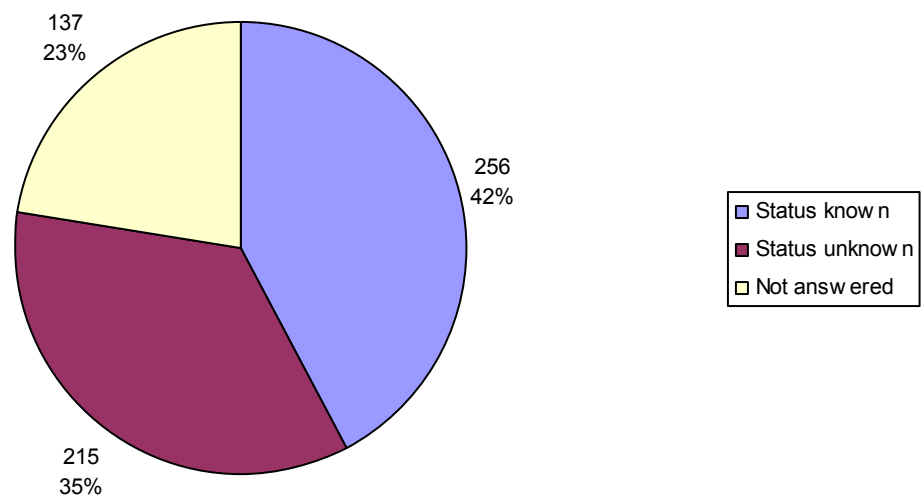


Of the 608 respondents, 256 (42.1%) completed this section of the questionnaire survey in a way that could be analysed. A further 215 (35.4%) respondents indicated that they did not know the academic status of those young people with whom they came into contact. The remaining 137 (22.5%) either left this section blank or completed it in a way that did not allow for its inclusion in the results. It is possible to suggest from these figures that more than 50% of those working within the maintained Youth Service did not give value to obtaining information on the formal academic achievement of the young people with whom they were in contact.

All 256 respondents who completed this section in a way that could be analysed indicated that they worked with young people in each of the three categories.

**Fig 8 Workers' knowledge of the academic status of young people in contact with the maintained Youth Service**

**Workers' knowledge of the academic status of young people**



### Academic achievers

Of the 256 respondents who indicated that they were aware of the academic achievements of the young people they were in contact with, 80 (31.3%) indicated that, in their opinion, up to 5% of young people they worked with had attained, or were capable of attaining, 5 GCSEs. A further 54 (18.5%) claimed that more than 5% to 15% of young people they worked with had attained, or were capable of attaining, the relevant standard to be classed as an academic achiever. 43 (16.8%) respondents claimed that more than 15% to 25% of young people they worked with could be classed as academic achievers and 50 (19.5%) workers indicated that they worked with young people who fitted the criteria for being academically successful. Only 29 (11.3%) respondents indicated that more than 35% to 50% of the young people they worked with had attained, or were capable of attaining, 5 or more GCSEs. No workers indicated that they worked with a higher percentage than 50% of young people who could be classed as academic achievers.

**Table 7 Academic achievers**

No. of respondents	% (256)	Estimated % of academic achievers
80	31.3%	Up to 5%
54	21.1%	> 5% to 15%
43	16.8%	> 15% to 25%
50	19.5%	> 25% to 35%
29	11.3%	> 35% to 50%
nil	nil	> 50% to 70%
nil	nil	> 70 to 85%
nil	nil	> 85% to 100%
<b>256</b>	<b>100%</b>	

### Academic underachievers

Of the 256 respondents, 83 (32.4%) indicated that up to 25% of the young people they worked with could be classified as academic underachievers, with a further 87 (34%) claiming that more than 25% to 50% of the young people they worked with could be included in this category. 86 (33.6%) indicated that more than 50% of the young people

they worked with were underachieving in the school setting in that they did not have or were seen to be unlikely to obtain 5 GCSEs.

**Table 8 Academic underachievers**

No. of respondents	% (256)	Estimated % of academic underachievers
11	4.3	Up to 5%
28	10.9	> 5% to 15%
44	17.2	> 15% to 25%
42	16.4	> 25% to 35%
45	17.6	> 35% to 50%
30	11.7	> 50% to 70%
33	12.9	> 70% to 85%
23	9.0	> 85% to 100%
<b>256</b>	<b>100</b>	

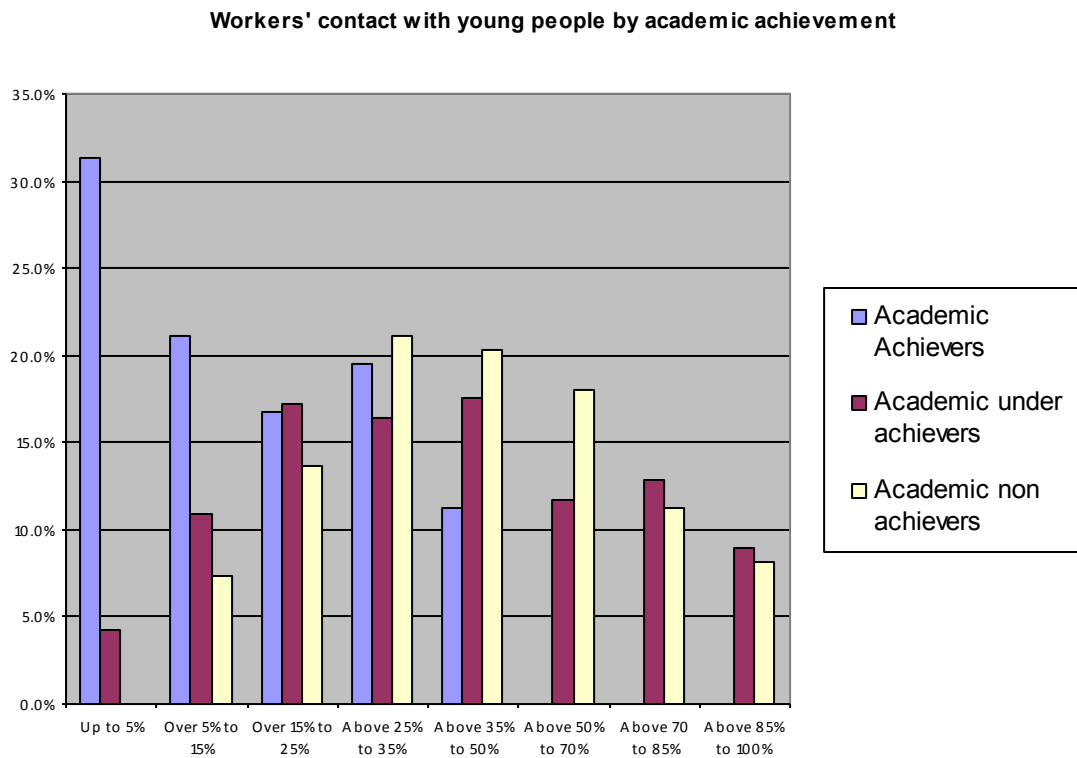
### **Academic non-achievers**

Of the 256 respondents, 54 (21%) indicated that up to 25% of the young people they came into contact with did not have or were unlikely to obtain any GCSEs. A further 106 (41.4%) claimed that more than 25% to 50% were in the same category, with a further 96 (37.5%) indicating that more than 50% to 100% of the young people they worked with could be described as academic non-achievers.

**Table 9 Academic non-achievers**

No. of Respondents	%	Estimated % of academic non-achievers
nil	nil	Up to 5%
19	7.4%	> 5% to 15%
35	13.7%	> 15% to 25%
54	21.1%	> 25% to 35%
52	20.3%	> 35% to 50%
46	18.0%	> 50% to 70%
29	11.3%	> 70% to 85%
21	8.2%	> 85% to 100%
256	100%	

**Fig.9 Workers’ contact with young people by academic achievement**



**Targeting particular groups of young people: full-time and part-time Youth Workers’ responses**

To further develop the profile of the young people, respondents to the questionnaire survey were asked to identify any specific characteristics of those with whom they were in contact. In response to this question, 324 (53.2%) respondents claimed they targeted specific groups of young people (Table 10), with the remaining 284 (46.7%) claiming they did not. The majority of respondents to this question, 13.8% (84), targeted the priority age group of the government (14-18 year olds), while 2% (12) of Youth Workers targeted 13-17 year olds. 7.4% (45) targeted disaffected young people, which perhaps reflect an influence of debates relating to disaffection, status zero and social inclusion. Within the other responses were a wide range of priorities, many of them reflecting a local or even a personal approach to Youth Work practice. These priorities are included in the ‘others’ column; examples included Youth Workers who targeted young people described as *“bored and unhappy teenagers”*, *“those sitting down”*, *“smokers”*,

*“referred young people”, “academic young people”, “those who show anti-social behaviour” and “sports people”.*

**Table 10 Groups of young people targeted**

Target Group	Number	%
14-18 year olds	84	13.8%
Disaffected young people	45	7.4%
All young people	24	3.9%
13-17 year olds	12	2.0%
Those disadvantaged by age	11	1.8%
Young women	10	1.6%
Disabled young people	10	1.6%
Others	128	21.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>53.2%</b>

### **What methods are used by the maintained Youth Service to identify the specific and wider needs of young people with whom it comes into contact?**

Those employed across the occupational strands within the maintained Youth Service described (in a number of different ways) *“conversation”* as the most used method of identifying the needs of the young people with whom they were in contact. This process of conversation was described as a dialogue between the Youth Worker and an individual young person or in a group situation involving one or more Youth Workers and a number of young people. A focus group of full-time workers described *“talking and listening”* to young people as:

*“our bread and butter. It’s what we do and what we need to do if we want to keep on side with young people. It’s a method of identifying need that has been used by Youth Workers for a long time but has now got some kudos because politicians and civil servants think they discovered it. The Youth Service doesn’t need the UN Convention to know that if you want an opinion the best way to get it is to ask, particularly if those you are asking have a positive relationship with you.”*

Conversation as a method of determining the needs of young people was also recognised as important by Estyn, who claimed that Youth Workers *“consult extensively with young*

*people and ask them what they want the Youth Service to provide”* (Estyn 2002b:9). The outcome of this process was also recognised in an earlier Estyn Report that commented on the quality of the relationship between young people and Youth Workers, which resulted in a detailed knowledge of individual young people, enabling staff to meet their articulated *“needs and aspirations”* (Estyn 2001c:7). Conversation was also a key method by which the needs of young people were identified and decisions made about curriculum content in the projects submitted for the Youth Work in Wales Excellence Awards. Comment was made in all of the 193 applications about the participation of young people in determining the Youth Service curriculum. A typical comment was made by a full-time respondent from a rural Youth Service, who claimed:

*“young people are involved in deciding what we do, and how we do it. It is a process that young people own.”*

Respondent Number 78

The comments contained in the Estyn Reports and in the Youth Work in Wales Excellence Award applications are supported by the overall findings of the questionnaire survey, which asked respondents to identify and prioritise – in a list of up to five – the methods they used to identify the needs of those young people they came into contact with during their work within the maintained Youth Service.

Conversation, as a method to identify what young people needed from their involvement in the maintained Youth Service, was identified by 41.3% (251) of respondents as their first priority, by 27.1% (165) as their second priority, by 13.7% (83) as their third priority and by 3.3% (20) as their fourth priority. In total, it was identified across the four priorities by 85.4% (519) of respondents. A small number of those who completed this section of the survey, 7.6% (46), claimed to use questionnaires as a method of determining what young people needed from their involvement with the maintained Youth Services their first priority, with 3.6% (22) listing it as their second priority. Assessment forms were used by 4.9% (30) of respondents as their first priority and 4.4% cited forums. Priority 1 was completed by 62% (377) of respondents, priority 2 by 47.8% (291), priority 3 by 23.6% (144) of respondents and priority 4 by 6.5% (40) of

respondents. None of the respondents identified a fifth priority, despite being given the opportunity to do so.

As can be seen from these results, the ability of respondents to list a range of methods to determine needs was limited, as 38% (231) of respondents did not identify a first priority, 52.3% of respondents (317) did not identify a second priority, 76.4% of respondents (464) did not identify a third priority and 93.5% of respondents (568) did not identify a fourth priority. Those who completed the questionnaire were not asked to give a reason why they did not choose more than one priority. As a consequence, it is not possible to determine if they only used one method or if they were unable to identify more than one method. Given the evidence contained within other sections of this paper (when options to list up to five priorities were not completed), it may be possible to conclude that many respondents were unable to identify more than one or two methods for determining the needs of young people from their involvement in the maintained Youth Service.

**Table 11 Method of determining what young people need from their involvement in the maintained Youth Service**

Response	Priority 1		Priority 2		Priority 3		Priority 4		Total
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	%
Conversation	251	41.3%	165	27.1%	83	13.7%	20	3.3%	85.4%
Questionnaire	46	7.6%	22	3.6%					11.2%
Assessment forms	30	4.9%							4.9%
Forums	27	4.4%	24	3.9%	16	2.6%			10.9%
Quiz	12	2.0%							2.0%
Information from other agencies	11	1.8%	32	5.2%					7.0%
Observation			21	3.4%	15	2.5%	10	1.6%	7.5%
Evaluation forms			15	2.5%	15	2.5%	10	1.6%	6.6%
Community Knowledge			12	2.0%	15	2.5%			4.5%
Total number of respondents	377	62.0%	291	47.8%	144	23.6%	40	6.5%	
No response	231	38%	317	52.1%	464	76.2%	568	93.5%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Conversation as a method for determining the needs of young people was also widely identified during the interview process, as was the style of conversation, which was described by a focus group of full-time workers as “*democratic*” and concerned to be “*participative and empowering to reflect the principles contained within the Curriculum Statement for Youth Work in Wales*”. It was also a method that relied in a significant way on what was described as the quality of relationship between worker and young people. Those employed within all the occupational strands talked about this method as the foundation on which the needs of young people could be determined and a range of activities identified and delivered.

Some concerns about the use of conversation could be identified from the evidence obtained during the interview element of the investigation. Several Principal Youth Officers made comments about the need to prepare young people for the “*democratic process*” that many would have access to through their involvement in the Youth Service because it was believed that significant numbers of young people would have had little experience of such a process in other parts of their lives. This was a theme also identified by a number of those working full time, who claimed in a focus group session that:

*“asking young people a question is easy, as might be getting an answer. But getting an answer that reflects the real opinion of a young person is not clear cut. It is something that needs practice both by those young people responding and those adults listening and a non-judgemental and sympathetic worker who is able to provide the right sort of support that encourages, rather than ridicules and which recognises that young people are rapidly changing individuals who are likely to change their minds on a regular basis.”*

It was suggested during the interviews that the process of conversation between adult and young person within the Youth Service context was the important method of determining needs. It was, however, a process that was most effective, in the opinion of a number of respondents, when it was carried out between those who had developed a positive relationship with each other within which there was a level of trust, confidence and a feeling of self-worth. A full-time worker summed up this view by claiming:



*“when we speak with young people there is always the intention for it to be as equals. It is only from that starting point that we can go forward. I hope that young people value me and I always want to value young people.”*

It is possible to conclude from the evidence obtained during the investigation that the process of talking and listening between adult worker and young person was both the means (whereby a positive relationship was the outcome) and the process (which led to the identification of the needs of those young people coming into contact with the maintained Youth Service). The identified method of determining need was, however, a process focused on the young people already in contact with the maintained Youth Service. There was no evidence to suggest that the maintained Youth Service had a strategic approach to identifying the needs of those young people it was not in contact with. The evidence did identify the lack of both a wider ‘market research’ and a wider ‘marketing strategy’ capable of identifying and responding to the needs of young people.

### **The identified needs of those young people using the maintained Youth Service**

The questionnaire survey results provided a range of information to identify what respondents considered to be the needs of those young people they were in contact with (Table 12). The most important need (50.5% across four priorities) was described in a variety of ways as being associated with young people having access to a range of leisure time activities, including their involvement in a range of sporting activities, trips, visits, outdoor activities and indoor activities such as art, craft, and dance. This was followed by a range of answers within a theme that identified the need for young people to feel good about themselves, having fun and positive experiences, which was identified by 33.9% of respondents across the four priority areas. Having somewhere to go was a need identified by 21.6% of respondents across the four priority areas. Activities planned to lead to a qualification was a need of young people identified by 13.3% of respondents across the four priority areas. Needing somewhere to meet friends was only identified by 0.8% (5) of respondents. The same number identified young people as needing somewhere ‘to get out of the house’. It should be recognised, however, that the information was only

relevant to those young people using the maintained Youth Service who have been identified in this paper as being from a narrow band of potential users.

**Table 12 Identified needs of young people using the maintained Youth Service**

Response	Priority 1		Priority 2		Priority 3		Priority 4		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	%
Leisure Activities	167	27.5%	92	15.1%	48	7.9%	nil	nil	50.5%
Feeling good	98	16.1%	68	11.2%	40	6.6%	nil	nil	33.9%
Somewhere to go	64	10.5%	41	6.7%	27	4.4%	nil	nil	21.6%
Activities leading to qualifications	36	6.0%	24	3.9%	19	3.1%	nil	nil	13.3%
Others	36	5.9%	18	3.0%	16	2.6%	10	1.6%	13.1%
Total number of respondents	401	66.0%	243	39.9%	150	24.6%	10	1.6%	
No response	207	34%	365	60.1%	458	75.4%	598	98.4%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>100%</b>	

During the interview process, information was obtained to suggest a more complex interpretation by those working within the Youth Service regarding the issue of the needs of young people. For example, the need ‘having somewhere to meet’ was supplemented by comments that young people needed that ‘somewhere’ to be within their own community, open at times when they had free time and which involved their choice of when they attended and when they left. As a full-time workers focus group concluded:

*“What we try to create is a feeling of ownership by young people of where they meet and, as far as we can, when they meet. We cannot in enough instances be open at all the times they would want, simply because of budget constraints but we do our best”*

In another example of added complexity, workers across all the occupational strands involved in the interview process made comment about the importance of the need for young people to develop a positive relationship with adults working in the Youth Service. This relationship building, it was claimed, provided in many instances the first steps in developing an adult relationship based on equality and on the voluntary nature of the relationship between adult worker and young person. It provided an opportunity it was claimed for young people to enter into a dialogue concerned to examine the rules of the

new adult environment into which many young people using the maintained Youth Service felt they were entering. As a focus group of regional/specialist workers concluded:

*“It was a chance for young people to sound out and listen to what was acceptable and what was not, language, attitudes to the opposite or same sex, issues of racism, opinions on relationships and politics.”*

It was further agreed by workers across all of the occupational strands that dialogue between young people and workers met an important need in supporting young people make the transition from dependence to interdependence but it was difficult to plan and manage and even more difficult to measure and justify within an era of enhanced accountability.

No mention was made in either the questionnaire survey returns or during the interviews of the responsibility of the maintained Youth Service to work in partnership with young people to develop a range of ‘practical attributes’ that would be of use to them in both their working and non-working lives.

## **Summary**

At the time of the investigation the maintained Youth Service in Wales can be identified by a number of characteristics. First, it is an organisation that predominantly devolves the delivery of its work to its part-time workforce who are in direct contact with young people for 72% of their time as opposed to the full-time workforce who spend 48% of their time with young people. This situation, given the levels of qualifications, length of time employed and levels of qualifications could bring into question the ability of the maintained Youth Service to meet the needs of young people and the requirements of relevant government policy while maintaining its discrete identity. Second, it is an organisation mainly in contact with the 12 to 15-year-old age group, most of who are male and can be identified as either academic underachievers or academic non-achievers. No evidence was obtained during the investigation to suggest that there was a deliberate strategy to attract young people with this profile; neither was there any significant

evidence to suggest that contact with this group was as a result of developing Welsh Assembly Government policy. It would be useful to the maintained Youth Service for further research to be carried out to determine why the maintained Youth Service does not have appeal to a broader group of young people. Third, the maintained Youth Service can be identified as an organisation dependent, in a significant way, on its ability to determine the needs of young people through conversation. Evidence also suggested that there was not a proactive approach to determining the wider needs of young people in the community. Rather, there was a focus on those young people who had found their way into the maintained Youth Service to the disadvantage of young people in the wider community. Fourth, the results of this method of determining the needs of young people lead to the provision of a range of leisure-type programmes as a means of contributing to their well-being. It would be useful for the maintained Youth Service to determine from the perspective of a wider range young people – not only those using the organisation – if what it offers is also appropriate in meeting their needs.

**John Rose 2017, taken from PhD research**

**ROSE, J., 2007. *Researching the Maintained Youth Service in Wales: Is it Drawn in Different Directions?* (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis). University of Wales Cardiff.**

## **Bibliography**

ESTYN, 2001c. *Inspection of Local Authority Youth Work in Conwy*. Cardiff: Estyn.

ESTYN, 2002b. *Inspection of Local Authority Youth Work in Neath Port Talbot*. Cardiff: Estyn.

WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT, 2002a. *Extending Entitlement: Support for 11 to 25 year olds in Wales Directions and Guidance*. Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government.

WELSH JOINT EDUCATION COMMITTEE, 1992. *Curriculum Statement for Wales*. Cardiff: Welsh Joint Education Committee.

WALES YOUTH WORK PARTNERSHIP, 1991. *Survey of Youth Workers in Wales*. Penarth: Wales Youth Work Partnership.