

Extending Entitlement Revisited: The Maintained Youth Service 2002-2007

Paper Number 6 - Did the Maintained Youth Service have the Tools to Meet the Priorities of Extending Entitlement?

Introduction

This paper sets out, to establish the levels of human, financial and material resources available to the maintained Youth Service to deliver a programme of activities which reflects its purpose, principles and values and enables it to meet the needs of young people and the requirements of relevant government policy. In order to accomplish this objective in a way that ensures reliability and validity, benchmarks will be identified that set standards against which a decision can be reached. This task is made possible because during the early optimism created by the Extending Entitlement (NAW 2000a) debate, the maintained Youth Service was asked, through the Principal Youth Officers' group, to 'dream the dream' and estimate the cost of delivering a model Youth Service capable of meeting the role defined for it. To develop this model, a group representing the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), the Wales Youth Agency (WYA) and local authority Principal Youth Officers was brought together supported by Welsh Assembly Government officials to form a New Burdens group, who were asked by the new government in Wales to:

“attempt to quantify additional levels of financial provision for local government which would improve the present services available to young people in line with the Extending Entitlement report”

(NAW 2000d: 1)

The New Burdens group made the decision to base their conclusions and recommendations on an analysis of four local authority Youth Services in Wales. These were selected to represent both rural and urban areas and a geographical range that

covered north Wales, west Wales and south Wales and included Caerphilly, Conwy, Pembrokeshire and Swansea. The results from these authorities were extrapolated to a national total by means of an indicative distribution formula used for the Children and Youth Partnership fund and concluded that *“the costs of a complete and comprehensive Youth Service which would cover both universal services to young people and targeted youth work would require in the region of £100 million per year”* (NAW 2000d: 3).

The planned expenditure for the maintained Youth Service in the financial year 1999-2000 was £14.2 million, which left a shortfall of £85.8 million. Local authority expenditure on the Youth Service had peaked, in 1999-2000 terms, at £19.8 million in 1992-93 under the Conservative administration (Table 1), which suggested that a significant political commitment would have to be made by the new National Assembly for Wales to enable it reach the funding levels identified by the modelling exercise.

Table 1 Local Authority expenditure on the Youth Service (£ million) funded from LEA budgets

	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Net Revenue	12.0	13.3	13.7	12.8	11.9	8.8	8.8	11.3	12.1	
Capital	0.9	1.2	2.9	1.8	0.5	0.6	0.2	0.3	1.5	
Total	12.9	14.5	16.5	14.7	12.4	9.4	9.0	11.6	13.6	14.2
Real Terms 1999-2000 prices										
Net Revenue	15.8	16.5	16.4	15.0	13.7	9.8	9.6	11.9	12.4	
Capital	1.2	1.5	3.4	2.1	0.6	0.7	0.2	0.3	1.5	
Total	17.0	18.0	19.8	17.2	14.3	10.5	9.8	12.2	13.9	14.2

Figures produced by the NAW (2000e)

It was recognised by the New Burdens group that this significant level of financial support would not be made available and that more realistic recommendations would have to be made. Priorities would therefore need to be determined. The first priority would be to increase the numbers of full-time workers by 250, at a cost of £0.98 million in the first year 2001-02, £3.75 million in the second year 2002-03 and £5.625 million in the third year 2003-04. This increase would be in recognition of both the low numbers of

qualified workers in Wales, which was estimated as about 150, and the increasing ratio between them and their part-time colleagues. This priority was supported by the findings of Estyn which claimed:

“There remains an over dependence on part-time staff in the Youth Service. Many authorities continue to lack staff ...who can engage in the development of a strategy, establish partnerships, manage quality and develop curriculum and other areas of work”

(Estyn 1999b:18)

The second priority was the refurbishment and maintenance of buildings. There was unanimous recognition by the New Burdens group of the dire condition of a large number of buildings used by the Youth Service throughout Wales. Forty-four buildings had been identified as being used within the four local authorities involved in the modelling. From this figure, it was estimated that throughout Wales there were more than 200 buildings used by the maintained Youth Service. These buildings, it was claimed, were in a:

“poor condition and getting progressively worse. The vast majority were also identified as lacking access for the disabled and raise serious health and safety concerns.”

(HMSO 2000a:49)

It was calculated by the New Burdens Group that the cost of refurbishing all maintained Youth Service building in Wales would be approximately £20 million. No financial allocation was made to develop new facilities in areas where none existed. The third priority was the provision of minibuses, mobile units, IT facilities and information materials for young people. Supporting these allocations would be a corporate budget designed to develop, support and maintain a strategy embracing all services for young people. This priority would cost £1.3 million in 2001-02, £1.76 million in 2002-03 and £1.76 million in 2003-04, an annual expenditure for a full financial year of £80,000 per local authority. Driven by these priorities, the total requirement for new money by the maintained Youth Service was identified as £5.238 million for 2001-02, £10.510 million for 2002-03 and £14.385 million for 2003-04.

Table 2 Summary of proposed levels of additional funding for the maintained Youth Service (£ million)

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Corporate role	1.3	1.76	1.76
Youth Service:			
Qualified full-time workers	0.938	3.75	5.625
Refurbishment of buildings	2.0	4.0	6.0
Other	1.0	1.0	1.0
Total Youth Service Expenditure	3.98	8.75	12.625
Overall total	5.238	10.510	14.385

NAW (2000d)

Despite this significant reduction from the original estimates, the proposals of the New Burdens Group did not meet with the approval of the National Assembly for Wales, which made further cuts to its proposals and a final decision was taken to reduce the allocation of new money even further to £2 million for 2001-02, £3.7 million for 2002-03 and £4.75 million for 2003-04. Despite the optimism for a new, more positive era for the work of the maintained Youth Service – created by the rhetoric of recently appointed politicians – sufficient levels of resources to support a regeneration process were not made available. The allocation of the new money is identified by local authority in Table 3.

Table 3 New Burdens allocation for the maintained Youth Service

a) Local Authority	b) Grant £ 2001-2	c) Young People 11-25	d) Additional Spend per head per year 2001-02	e) Grant £ 2002-3	f) Grant £ 2003-4
Anglesey	42,326	11,600	£3.64	79,362	100,525
Gwynedd	76,991	21,900	£3.51	144,359	182,854
Conwy	66,201	17,800	£3.72	124,127	157,227
Denbighshire	55,964	16,200	£3.45	104,933	132,915
Flintshire	91,791	27,100	£3.39	172,108	218,003
Wrexham	83,659	24,400	£3.43	156,861	198,690
Powys	72,881	20,200	£3.61	136,651	173,091
Ceredigion	54,575	17,500	£3.12	102,329	129,616
Pembrokeshire	76,129	19,300	£3.94	142,742	180,806
Carmarthenshire	106,551	30,500	£3.49	199,784	253,059
Swansea	162,447	44,500	£3.65	304,588	385,811
Neath/Port Talbot	95,109	24,100	£3.95	178,330	225,884
Bridgend	85,196	23,000	£3.70	159,742	202,339
Vale	80,744	21,800	£3.70	151,395	191,766
Rhondda Cynon Taff	174,208	45,400	£3.84	326,640	413,743
Merthyr Tydfil	43,067	10,700	£4.02	80,749	102,282
Caerphilly	125,713	32,300	£3.89	235,712	298,568
Blaenau Gwent	51,640	13,000	£3.97	96,825	122,644
Torfaen	63,258	16,800	£3.77	118,608	150,236
Monmouthshire	48,203	13,900	£3.47	90,380	114,481
Newport	97,885	26,400	£3.70	183,535	232,477
Cardiff	245,461	73,200	£3.35	460,239	582,969
Total £	2,000,000			3,750,000	4,750,00

Figures contained in columns a, b, e and f were calculated using information provided by the Youth Policy Team of the National Assembly for Wales. NAW (2001d)

The following sections of this paper will analyse a range of information to reach a conclusion about the three priorities agreed during the New Burdens working party discussions. First, it will identify the characteristics of the staff who work across the occupational strands of the maintained Youth Service. Second, it will establish the availability and suitability of the buildings within which the maintained Youth Service makes its main contact with young people. Third, it will determine the levels of resources available to Youth Service staff to deliver an appropriate curriculum.

The characteristics of the staff of the maintained Youth Service in Wales

The Youth Service in Wales was, at least for part of the time of this investigation, considered an “*information-free zone*” with little accurate data available about its expenditure or those working within it (WYA 1999b:2). An attempt had been made by the Wales Youth Agency to determine – for the period 1999-2000 – a range of information related to the maintained Youth Service, including the staffing levels of those employed within it. The data obtained was, however, incomplete, with two local authorities, Ceredigion and Ynys Mon, failing to provide any information. Concern was also expressed by both the Wales Youth Agency and the respondents about the reliability and validity of the information being provided. In particular, questions were raised about whether respondents were measuring specific elements of their organisation in similar ways. This applied, for example, to the use of the term qualified when related to managers, full-time workers and part-time workers. Powys, for example, claimed to have 9.6 management-qualified workers but there was no analysis possible of what this actually meant: were they, for example, workers with a management qualification or were they qualified youth workers with a management responsibility? If they were the latter, what level of qualification did they have? In an attempt to provide evidence to support that obtained by the Wales Youth Agency and, as a consequence, provide a more stable foundation on which to base this investigation, the decision was taken to carry out a questionnaire survey. Information obtained from the 608 responses to the questionnaire survey provided the main source for developing the following profile of the staff of the maintained Youth Service in Wales.

Gender, age and experience

Respondents to the questionnaire survey were unequally divided by gender, with males making up 41% (249) and females 59% (359) of the respondents. Further analysis of the results indicate that of the 159 workers who identified themselves as working full time, 58. % (92) were male and 42% (67) were female. Of the 443 part-time workers, 37% (162) were male and 63% (281) were female. The results reveal that the part-time workforce is predominantly female while the full-time workforce is predominantly male.

These results reflect an historical position within which males have outnumbered females within the full-time occupational strand, including management, while females have outnumbered males within the part-time occupational strand. However, the results show a marked change since Survey 13 (Welsh Office 1984a) was published. Of the 165 full-time workers identified at that time, 89% (147) were male and only 11% (18) were female. Statistics were not available for the gender balance of part-time workers but comments were made about the difficulties in finding appropriate numbers of male part-time workers.

Table 4 Ages of respondents

Males	Number	%	Females	Number	%
18-25 years old	53	9%	18-25 years old	87	14%
26-35 years old	79	13%	26-35 years old	102	17%
35-45 years old	68	11%	35-45 years old	104	17%
46-60 years old	45	7%	46-60 years old	64	11%
Over 60 years old	4	.65%	Over 60 years old	2	.3%
Total	249	41%	Total	359	59%

During the period of the survey, the majority of those working in the maintained Youth Service 53% (321) were under the age of 35. Of these, 22% (132) were male and 31% (189) were female. The largest single group, 17% (104), were female workers between the ages of 35-45 years. The largest single group of male workers, 13% (79), was aged between 26-35 years. Only .95% (6) of respondents were over the age of 60. Of these, 0.65% (4) were male and 0.3% (2) were female. When the age profile is measured against the number of years employed in the maintained Youth Service, the results describe an organisation that is young in terms of age and inexperienced in the number of years individuals have been employed. Of the 65% (398) workers employed for between 1-4 years, 31% (123) were between the ages of 18-25 and 37% (149) were aged between 26-35. Eight respondents indicated they had been employed for less than one year. It is interesting to note that 23% (140) of the respondents were themselves of Youth Service age which indicates a major shift away from previous recent practice, when those employed within the Youth Service were expected to be at least 23 years of age at the

time they completed their full-time training programme (WYA 1996). The reason for this minimum age requirement was to ensure that those working with young people had some degree of life experience that could be brought to their work with young people.

Table 5 Years employed in the Youth Service

Years employed	Number	%	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-60	Over 60
1-4 years	398	65%	123	149	93	33	nil
5-10 years	87	14%	9	26	15	37	nil
11-15 years	45	7%	nil	6	22	14	3
over 15 years	70	11%	nil	nil	42	25	3
Total	600	98%	132	181	172	109	6

The significant majority (65%, 398) of those who responded to the questionnaire survey had been employed in the maintained Youth Service for between one and four years. Further analysis of these figures show that of the 159 full-time workers involved in the questionnaire survey, 68.6% (109) had been employed for between 1-4 years, 10.5% (17) for between 5-10 years, 5.7% (9) for between 11-15 years and 15.2% (24) for over 15 years. This was not an unexpected result given the increase in paid employment opportunities within the maintained Youth Service following the political changes in the UK and Wales following the election of New Labour in 1997 which led to increased budgets for work with young people and thus to enhanced employment opportunities.

The results describe an inexperienced workforce, which has become part of an organisation moving through a period of great change driven by a political agenda emanating from the Welsh Assembly Government. Evidence will be sought elsewhere to determine if these new workers have been appropriately prepared, through approved training programmes and appropriate induction programmes, to deliver the new vision of youth work promoted by government. Of particular interest will be the results related to the qualified status of respondents measured against both local¹ and national² qualifying levels.

¹ Foundation Level within the Coherent Route of Training for Youth and Community Workers, Professionally Endorsed by the Education and Training Standards Committee

² Diploma of Higher Education, Professionally Endorsed by the Education and Training Standards Committee, or Qualified Teacher before 1988

Hours worked

The maintained Youth Service in Wales is overwhelmingly a part-time organisation, with 74.8% of its staff working less than 37 hours per week. The majority of workers, 53.6% (324), work less than 14 hours per week, with 42.4% (258) working less than 10 hours per week. The relationship of this information with the levels of qualifications described in Fig.1 and the length of time employed described in Table 5 provides evidence to suggest that the maintained Youth Service may not have an appropriate infrastructure to deliver an effective service in the sense of its ability to maintain its organisational identity, as this is determined by a collective understanding of purpose and values.

The identification of this position places a significant responsibility on those responsible for managing the maintained Youth Service to ensure:

- that appropriate systems for the induction of new youth workers are available which contribute to the embedding of a collective understanding of maintained Youth Service purpose, principles, values and outcomes shared across the occupational strands of the organisation;
- the availability of a qualifications pathway and in-service training programmes designed to offer further support both to workers already employed and to those entering the service; and
- that support mechanisms are available to give guidance, particularly to the part-time workforce, on the development of practice which meets the possibly competing requirements of government policy and the needs of young people.

Table 6 Number of hours worked by individual respondents per week

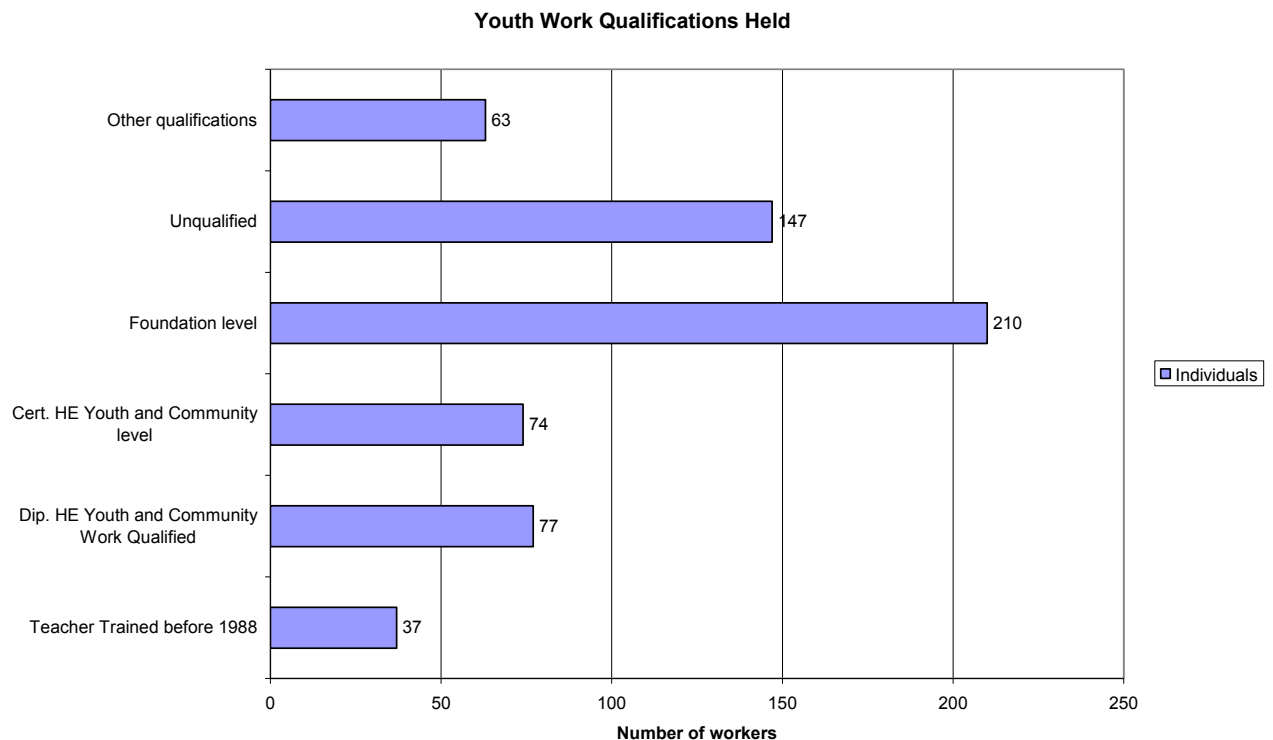
No. Hours per Week	Number	%
Less than 5 hours	115	18.9%
5-9 hours	143	23.5%
10-14 hours	66	10.9%
15-19 hours	58	9.5%
20-24 hours	27	4.4%
25-36 hours	34	5.6%
Full time (37 hours)	159	26.1%
Total	602	99%

However, the figures contained in Fig.4 provide evidence to suggest that support to youth workers through their involvement in relevant in-service training programmes is of a minimal nature and often unrelated to inducting the significant numbers of new workers into the non-formal community-based learning process advocated in much Youth Service documentation.

Youth work qualifications and training

The results of this section are measured against both the national and local qualifying standard for employment in the Youth Service in Wales. National recognition is a Diploma in Youth and Community Work, professionally endorsed by the Education and Training Standards Committee (ETS), an appropriate degree programme professionally endorsed by the ETS, or an approved teaching qualification obtained before 1988. Obtaining one or more of these qualifications results in recognition by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC), which is the body responsible for the pay and conditions of those working in the Youth Service in Wales, England and Northern Ireland. Local recognition is a Foundation Qualification, which in Wales is two agreed modules of the first year of the Diploma in Youth and Community Work programme, professionally endorsed by the ETS. Other qualifications are offered by some local authorities, including an Open College Network (OCN) qualification designed to meet 'local need'. These latter qualifications are not normally professionally endorsed by the ETS or recognised by the JNC.

Fig.1 Youth work training and qualifications – all respondents



Seventy-seven (12.7%) of the respondents were recognised as nationally qualified Youth and Community Workers having successfully attained the Diploma in Youth and Community Work. This figure rises to 18.9% (111) when the pre-1988 teacher qualification is included. The qualification designated as Foundation level identifies the holder as a locally qualified youth and community worker, and was held by 34.6% (210) respondents. Of the full-time and part-time respondents, 24.2% (147) were unqualified and 10.4% (63) of workers indicated that they held other qualifications.

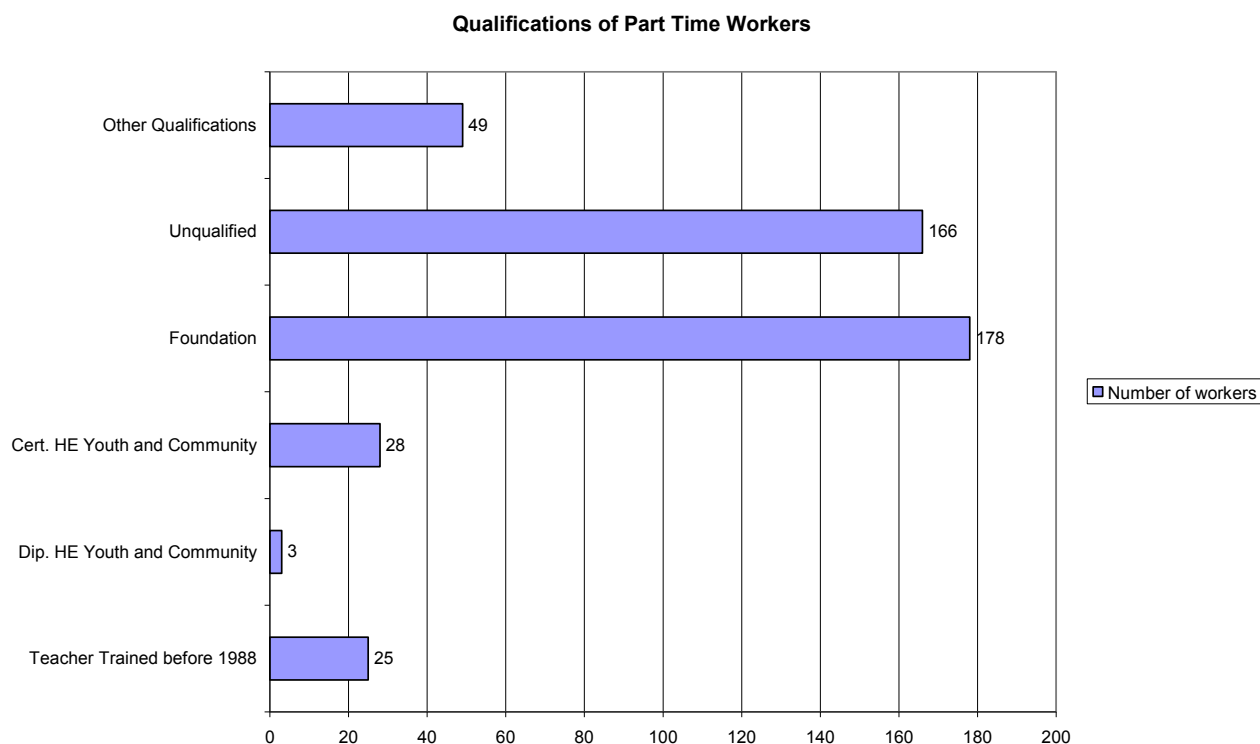
Fig.2 Qualifications of the full-time respondents to the questionnaire

A significant number of the unqualified full-time workforce delivers the maintained Youth Service in Wales with only 54.1% (86) of respondents holding a nationally recognised qualification. Twelve (7.6%) of these were trained as teachers before 1988. The numbers holding this level of qualification show a significant decrease from the results obtained during Survey 13 (Welsh Office 1984a), which revealed that 68% (112) of full-time workers at that time were trained teachers.

Some respondents who could be perceived to be inadequately qualified when measured against the recognised benchmark for full-time youth workers support this cohort of qualified workers in their work. Thirty-one (19.5%) were trained to Cert HE level, which equates to the first year of the Diploma programme. The investigation identified that this level of qualification combined with a first degree in a wide range of different disciplines was being inappropriately accepted as the equivalent of nationally qualified status by a number of local authorities. It can be claimed that this action further weakens the status of the maintained Youth Service, undermines the qualification structure and creates a

situation within which the quality of work with young people could be diminished. Also of significant concern is the identification of 11.9% (19) of workers who were qualified at Foundation level but were employed as full-time youth workers. Another possible contributor to the delivery of a low-quality service can be identified by the results of the survey, which indicate that 5.7% (9) of respondents hold no recognised youth work qualification at all to support their full-time practice, with 8.8% (14) claiming to hold other qualifications. In total, the results identify a position where 45.9% (73) of respondents employed as full-time youth workers in the maintained Youth Service do not hold a relevant youth-work qualification. This situation compares unfavourably to the position in England, where 90% of all full-time staff are qualified, with 68 authorities reporting that all their full-time staff hold the nationally recognised qualification and a further 26 authorities reporting more than 90% were qualified National Youth Agency (NYA) (2000b). The current qualification level of 54.1% for full-time workers in Wales also compares unfavourably with the position in 1984a, when it was recorded that 88% of full-time workers were qualified, 20% as youth workers and 68% as teachers (Welsh Office 1984a).

Fig. 3 Qualifications of the part-time youth workers who responded to the questionnaire



Respondents employed part time included 5.6% (25) who were trained as teachers prior to 1988 and, as such, hold nationally recognised status. Three (0.67%) workers held the Diploma in Youth and Community Work, 6.2% (28) held the Cert. HE and 39.6% (178) of respondents held the Foundation qualification, which is recognised as the minimum qualification for part-time youth workers. What should be of some concern to the maintained Youth Service are the high numbers of workers, 47.9% (215), who were either unqualified or who held a wide variety of 'other qualifications' (Fig.3). The consequence is a high probability that the direction of the work of this occupational strand is determined more through personal choice than a commitment to stated organisational purpose.

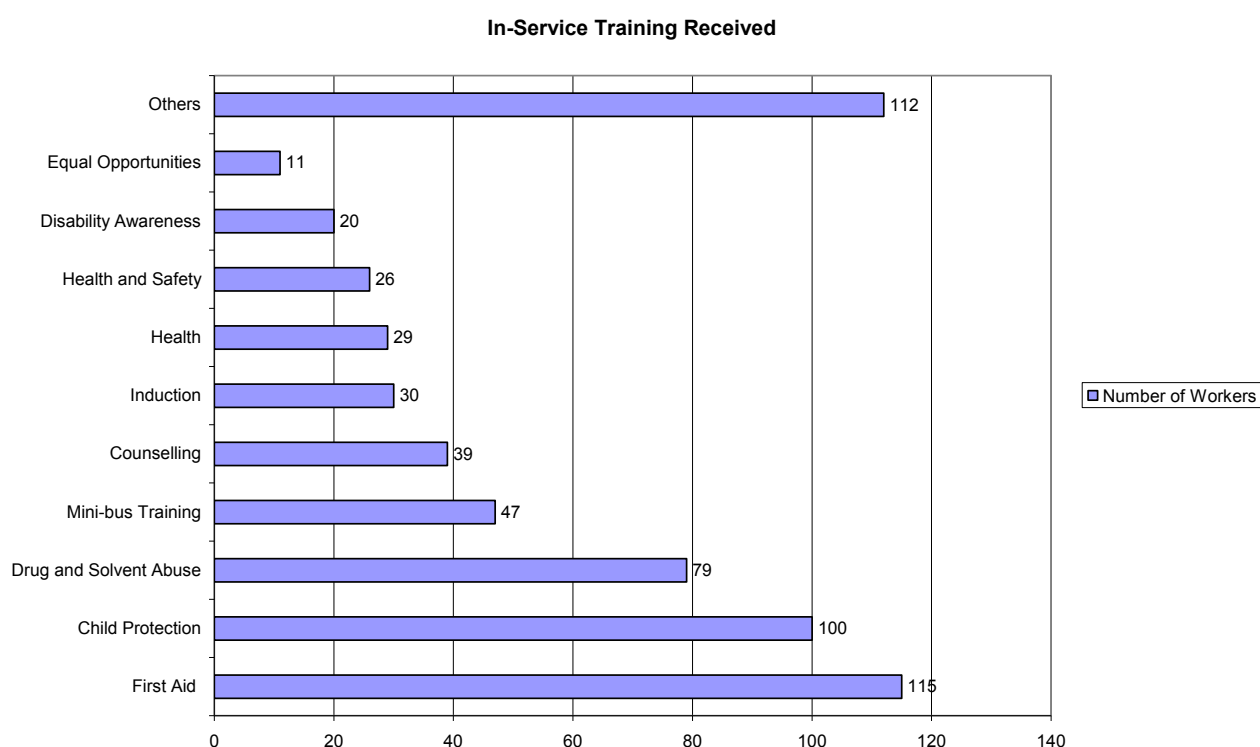
Sixty-six youth workers, 17 full time and 49-part time, recorded 49 different qualifications within the section concerned to detail qualifications other than those recognised by the JNC, which included Bachelor of Education (BEd), Bachelor of Arts (BA Divinity), Bachelor of Science (BSc), Master of Science (MSc Environment), Higher National Diploma (HND) Business/Finance, Sports Leadership, Play Management, BTec Social Care, and National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Play Work. Also listed were a wide range of qualifications that might be considered appropriate as supplements to recognised Youth and Community Work qualifications, including Sports Leadership, Pacific Institute Training, Mountain Leadership, Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) Coach, Basic Skills Tutor, Senior Winter Sports Leader, Diploma in Counselling, A-level Art, Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Health and Safety, and Diploma in Welfare and Play Management. Other, perhaps less obvious, qualifications for Youth and Community Work practice included WRU referee, Senior Member Training qualification, Hair and Beauty, National Nursery Examination Board (NNEB) and Food Hygiene. It should be of significant concern to the managers of the maintained Youth Service that large numbers of adults, many of whom are unsupervised during their normal working times with young people, were ill prepared – through not undertaking a recognised qualifying training programme – to carry out their responsibilities in an informed way (Figs. 1/2/3/4). This unsatisfactory and potentially dangerous position is exacerbated by the limited opportunities many youth workers have to undertake appropriate in-service training (Fig. 4). The analysis of the information obtained from the questionnaire survey

provides evidence which identifies the maintained Youth Service as an organisation developing at a rate that appears to be out of control. The consequences have the potential to cause significant harm to the maintained Youth Service, as it requires the complexities of effective youth work practice to be delivered by growing numbers of unqualified and inexperienced workers (see also Table 5 and Figs. 2/3). If it takes a short-term approach and employs workers without fully preparing them through appropriate training and support, the maintained Youth Service takes the risk of failing to promote a collective understanding of its organisational purpose, principles and values. It also faces the further consequence of failing to interpret the requirements of government and to understand and respond to the needs of young people.

Access to in-service training

This question was asked within the survey to determine the support offered to staff during their employment as either full or part-time workers. This in-service training element was considered to be in addition to the qualifying training undertaken by individual workers, and would be designed to improve their knowledge, skills and attitudes as a means of ensuring the more effective delivery of their roles within the maintained Youth Service.

Fig. 4 Youth work training in-service



The in-service training programme for the maintained Youth Service identified through the responses of the questionnaire survey does not describe an organisation committed to providing support to its workforce to enable it meet the new agenda described in Extending Entitlement. Neither does it appear to recognise the changes taking place within the maintained Youth Service as a result of increased government funding. These changes include the rapid increase in the workforce, the widening of the full-time to part-time staff ratios, the employment of unqualified workers to key full-time and part-time posts and the increase in specialist focused provision.

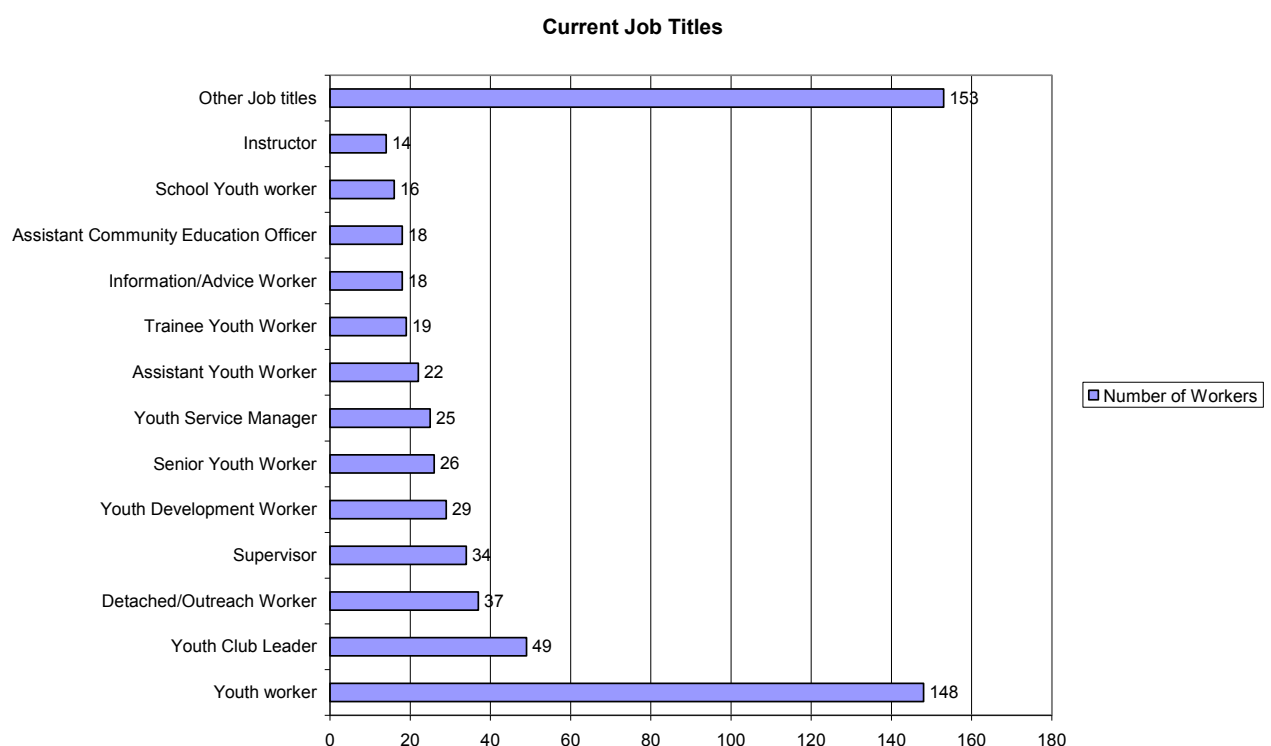
Contained in the responses is a conservative approach to what could be interpreted as a 'safe working practice' agenda, concerned with health and safety and child protection, either as specific subjects or linked to training related to first aid and minibus use. Apart from this safety agenda, there is little evidence of a systematic approach to the in-service training of workers to prepare them for or further support them in their work with young people in a way that reflects the purposes and values of the maintained Youth Service. There is no intent, in this conclusion, to devalue the importance of providing a safe environment for young people; there is a need, however, to consider other issues relevant to the delivery of a contemporary, maintained Youth Service curriculum which reflects government policy and the needs of young people. Given the high numbers of unqualified and inexperienced workers within the maintained Youth Service (Fig. 3) there was a pre-study expectation by the researcher that an appropriate introduction for new workers into the Youth Service would have been a priority. However, there was little evidence available from the analysis of the questionnaire results to suggest that significant numbers of new workers – either full or part-time – were being appropriately inducted into the Youth Service and as a result it appeared that they were often abandoned to work with young people without the benefit of exploring, challenging and understanding the purpose or the value base of youth work or the political, economic and social context within which it operates.

The maintained Youth Service has been identified through the evidence provided by the questionnaire survey as having an inexperienced workforce (Tables 4/5) with a significant number of part-time (48%, 215) and full-time worker respondents (46%, 73) being

unqualified to the agreed national or local standard. The evidence from the questionnaire survey also indicates that this deficiency is not redressed by robust induction or relevant in-service training programmes. This evidence does not support the view that the work of the Youth Service is “*skilled educational work*” with those involved in it needing to be “*appropriately trained*” (UK Youth work Alliance 1996:10).

Job titles

Fig. 5 Current job title



The results arising from the analysis of this section of the questionnaire highlight the difficulty the Youth Service has in developing a clearly recognised identity through the construction of clear boundaries assisted by well-defined and unambiguous job titles. If job titles are a prime means by which organisations are able to demonstrate their purpose, the use of 45 separate job titles by the respondents of the questionnaire causes uncertainty and confusion about the nature of youth work. Thirteen job titles identified were shared between 71.85% (437) of workers. However, 25.16% (153) workers shared 32 different

job titles. Many of these job titles were easily recognised as having a link to the maintained Youth Service, including, for example, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme Worker, Warden, Youth Action Worker, and Youth Project Tutor. Other job titles had links with the Youth Service that were less easy to recognise, such as Summit Co-ordinator, Professional Development and Network Co-ordinator, Mentoring Project Worker, Extending Entitlement Partnership Development Officer, Youth Access Initiative Worker, Quality Assurance Worker, Young Persons Substance Misuse Worker, Support Worker, and Activity Tutor. The results describe a reflection of the current funding streams. There was a core of youth workers who were generally described as ‘youth workers’: they were, however, surrounded by a growing number of workers with jobs funded through non-traditional sources who were working with young people in ways that do not reflect the purpose and values of the maintained Youth Service. The effect of this position appears to be a diminution of the qualified professional youth worker within wider generic services for young people. The potential consequence of this situation is a growing number of workers who readily accept roles and functions that do not reflect the purpose, principles and values of the maintained Youth Service. It may also be possible to suggest that the introduction and political support of these wider generic services has the potential to change the culture of youth work as alternative agendas and ideologies influence it.

Adding to this potential confusion is a lack of consistent understanding about the differences between a nationally qualified youth worker, requiring a two-year full-time training programme resulting in a Diploma in Higher Education professionally endorsed by the ETS, and a locally qualified youth worker, needing to complete two identified modules from the first year programme of the Diploma (this equates to 200 hours training out of the first year total of 1,200 hours). Both full-time and part-time workers currently use the job title ‘Youth Worker’ to identify their occupation. This has become a position with the ability to cause further confusion in other professionals working with young people, from disciplines such as teaching, social work, police or careers, who often fail to recognise or acknowledge the part-time nature of the maintained Youth Service.

The other job titles identified through the questionnaire included Basic Skills Tutor, Fundraiser, Young Mums’ Project Co-ordinator, Youth Forum Co-ordinator, Volunteer

Co-ordinator and Instructor, which appear to describe specific activities contained within the framework of the Youth Service rather than being ends in themselves. These types of job titles add further weight to the argument that the Youth Service is having focused activities bolted on to it, resourced from non-traditional sources such as social services, police or Youth Offending Teams, with the potential to further distort Youth Service practice. This position is exacerbated by the use of a significant number of maintained Youth Service job titles with little connection to the general concept of youth work.

The analysis of the responses to the questionnaire survey would indicate that those working or claiming to work within the maintained Youth Service as youth workers, in the sense that their work is driven by a collectively understood purpose, cannot in all instances be easily identified.

Location

Information on the location of respondents was obtained to ensure that an appropriate balance was achieved between urban, rural and old industrial environments, the latter definition applying to those youth workers located in the old coal and steel producing areas. There is no suggestion that the results were a representative sample of youth workers employed within the three defined areas. Rather it was an attempt to ensure that issues of practice related to geographical location and associated demographic factors, such as rural isolation or economic disadvantage, were included within the questionnaire survey.

Table 7 Location of respondents

Location	Number	%
Urban	305	50.2%
Rural	200	32.8%
Old Industrial	103	16.9%
Total	608	100.0%

Part-time Youth Workers – their ‘proper’ jobs

This section was concerned to identify the types of employment and qualifications held by part-time workers outside of their employment with the maintained Youth Service.

This information would be used to make judgements on:

1. the possibility of conflicts between a dominant maintained Youth Service culture and the dominant cultures of other organisations within which part-time youth workers are possibly employed full time. The consequence of any such conflict could be the diminution of a ‘Youth Service’ approach underpinned by a commitment to its agreed purpose, principles and values, and a potential reduction in the effectiveness of the Youth Service to maintain its organisational integrity and to meet the requirements of government and the needs of young people; and
2. the priority given to effectively induct the wide range of workers from a wide range of occupational backgrounds into a dominant maintained Youth Service culture. This will be correlated against the stated levels of Induction Training identified in Fig. 4.

Of the 608 youth workers who completed the questionnaire, 159 were full-time workers within the maintained Youth Service and were not required to complete this section of the questionnaire.

443 respondents had the opportunity to complete this section of the questionnaire and 34.7% (154) gave details of their employment outside of the maintained Youth Service. Of these, 33.7% (52) were female and 66.3% (102) were male. Of the respondents who were supposed to complete this section of the questionnaire survey, 65.7% (295) did not do so; 84.4% (249) of these were female respondents, and the remaining 13.6% (40) incomplete forms were from male respondents. An opportunity was missed to determine if those who did not complete this section of the questionnaire were unemployed. A small number of female respondents, 5 (.82%), did indicate that they were full-time mothers. No other mention was made of unpaid employment; neither was there any comment that would allow for a calculation relating to the numbers of full-time students involved in the survey.

Table 8 Main employment if not youth work

Main Occupation	Number	%
Teachers	30	19.5%
Administration Workers	27	17.5%
Education Welfare Officers	20	13.0%
Classroom Assistants	11	7.1%
Adult Education Workers	7	4.5%
Carers	7	4.5%
Roofers	6	3.9%
Learning Support Assistants	6	3.9%
Nurses	6	3.9%
Housing Workers	6	3.9%
Civil Servants	5	3.2%
Full-Time Mothers	5	3.2%
Tesco Workers	4	2.6%
Printers	4	2.6%
Caretakers	4	2.6%
Mechanics	3	1.9%
Assistant Town Clerks	3	1.9%
Total	154	100%

An analysis of the results identified that the main occupation of the largest group of part-time workers (87) was linked to formal school-based education, 30 (20.1%) as teachers, 20 (14%) as Education Welfare Officers, 11 (7.7%) as Classroom Assistants and 6 (4.2%) as Learning Support Assistants. There were also 20 (14.0%) Education Welfare Officers and 7 (4.9%) Adult Education Workers. This group equates to 64.9% of those who responded to this section of the questionnaire, which raises a question about the level of influence the formal education culture might have on the non-formal education focus of the maintained Youth Service. This investigation did not set out to provide an answer to this question, although its importance was recognised as a means of discovering if the maintained Youth Service had a dominant organisational culture or if it was driven by a number of sub-cultures as a consequence of both its predominance of part-time employed workers and its failure appropriately to induct its staff. It may be useful in the future to carry out research into this phenomenon.

Table 9 Other employment qualifications (first and second choices)

Other Employment Qualifications	Number	% of respondents	Number	% of respondents
	First choice		Second choice	
O levels/GCSE	32	20.7%	10	10%
Bed	13	8.4%	5	5%
Teachers Certificate	12	7.8%		
City & Guilds	12	7.8%		
Health & Safety	10	6.5%	7	7%
BSc	10	6.5%	2	2%
BA	6	3.9%	6	6%
A level	5	3.2%	16	16%
Dip. S.W.	5	3.2%		
NNEB	4	2.6%		
Catering	3	1.9%		
BTEC Childcare	3	1.9%	6	6%
PGCE			6	6%
Typing			6	6%
Diploma in Welfare Studies			3	3%
Post-Grad Cert. in Management			3	3%
RSA/IBT2			2	2%
Others	25	16.2%	28	28%
Total	154	100%	100	100%

The results of this section of the questionnaire survey did not provide any conclusive evidence to suggest that workers employed part-time in the maintained Youth Service were bringing from their full-time employment a range of qualifications relevant to their work with young people. This finding would suggest that they were, in general, reliant on the in-service training and support from their local authority employer for their work within the maintained Youth Service. What was of interest, however, was the decision by 65.7% (295) of the part-time workers not to identify either their employment or their qualifications. This information is likely to exist within the employing local authority but given the historical difficulty the Youth Service has had in producing reliable and valid information related to a wide range of organisational criteria (including finance, and numbers and levels of qualified workers), it is possible to hypothesise that an accurate

profile, within individual local authorities, of employment and qualification types and levels does not exist. If this is the position, no accurate profile can be constructed of the part-time workers across Wales. Without this information, it will not be possible to develop and implement an effective strategic plan that ensures those working within the maintained Youth Service understand what its purpose and values are and how, through the use of these, an appropriate curriculum can be developed that meets the requirements of government and the needs of young people. Developing a more accurate picture of the characteristics of the part-time workforce could be an area of investigation in its own right.

Table 10 Number of years employed outside of the Youth Service

No Respondents	Number of Years Employed
21	Under 1 year
34	1-3 Years
64	4-10 years
9	10-15 years
15	Over 15 years

The results of the questionnaire survey describe the maintained Youth Service as an organisation with structural deficiencies that preclude it from making a fully effective contribution to either the requirements of government policy or the needs of young people. Primarily, this position is as a result of the recent expansion of the numbers of new youth workers recruited following new government initiatives, and the apparent failure to support these to an agreed level through appropriate initial and in-service training.

Too high a percentage of maintained Youth Service youth workers employed both full time and part time have been identified as unqualified or trained at too low a level for the post that they occupy. As a consequence, the opportunity to discover the philosophical position of the Youth Service and its links to the requirements of government policy and the needs of young people is not available to significant numbers of youth workers, either before or during their employment. The result is an organisation that does not have a collective understanding of its organisational purpose and its equally relevant principles

and values. This position not only has the potential to affect the quality of work with young people, it also has the propensity to affect the way the maintained Youth Service is perceived by other organisations and individuals working with young people.

The combination of a young, inexperienced, unqualified and predominantly part-time workforce removes in a significant way the ability of the maintained Youth Service to be an effective partner to other organisations working with young people. Partnership working, a prerequisite of government as a method of ensuring the elimination of territoriality, duplication and uncertainty about role boundaries, as well as providing more joined-up services for young people, is faced with a number of significant difficulties in the environment described by this section of the questionnaire results. Firstly, as a predominantly part-time service, many workers do not have the opportunity to make contact with other organisations working with young people in a way that encourages partnership at a local delivery level. This position is exacerbated, when they do make contact, by a weak or non-existent understanding of the role of the Youth Service shared across occupational strands and between different local authority Youth Services.

The financial position

The figures contained in Table 11 are supplied by the finance departments of Local Authorities to the Welsh Assembly Government, who publish them as RO1 (Revenue Outturn) Youth Service line of spending.

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Table 11: Youth service as a percentage of total education, by unitary authority, 2000-01 & 2001-02 and spend per head of population

Unitary Authority	Outturn							
	2000-01				2001-02			
	Youth service £ thousands	YS as % of education	Population 11-25	£ per head 11-25	Youth service £ thousands	YS as % of education	Population 11-25	£ per head 11-25
Isle of Anglesey	348	1.0%	11,600	30.00	489	1.3%	11,600	42.16
Gwynedd	1,125	1.9%	21,900	51.37	1,300	2.0%	21,900	59.36
Conwy	975	1.9%	17,800	54.78	886	1.5%	17,800	49.78
Denbighshire	402	0.9%	16,200	24.81	886	1.8%	16,200	54.69
Flintshire	1,252	1.8%	27,100	46.20	1,457	1.9%	27,100	53.76
Wrexham	1,751	3.0%	24,400	71.76	1,707	2.7%	24,400	69.96
Powys	1,057	1.5%	20,200	52.33	1,127	1.4%	20,200	55.80
Ceredigion	220	0.6%	17,500	12.57	380	0.9%	17,500	21.71
Pembrokeshire	568	0.9%	19,300	29.43	916	1.4%	19,300	47.46
Carmarthenshire	827	0.9%	30,500	27.11	1,201	1.2%	30,500	39.38
Swansea	2,000	1.8%	44,500	44.94	2,223	1.8%	44,500	49.96
Neath Port Talbot	417	0.6%	24,100	17.30	981	1.2%	24,100	40.71
Bridgend	1,089	1.6%	23,000	47.35	1,201	1.7%	23,000	52.22
The Vale of Glamorgan	699	1.2%	21,800	32.06	1,002	1.6%	21,800	45.96
Rhondda Cynon Taff	1,597	1.2%	45,400	35.18	2,657	1.8%	45,400	58.52
Merthyr Tydfil	617	1.8%	10,700	57.66	802	2.2%	10,700	74.95
Caerphilly	1,639	1.8%	32,300	50.74	1,774	1.8%	32,300	54.92
Blaenau Gwent	281	0.7%	13,000	21.62	487	1.2%	13,000	37.46
Torfaen	428	0.8%	16,800	25.48	953	1.7%	16,800	56.73
Monmouthshire	973	2.5%	13,900	70.00	974	2.3%	13,900	70.07
Newport	921	1.3%	26,400	34.89	1,609	2.0%	26,400	60.95
Cardiff	3,466	2.3%	73,200	47.35	4,627	2.7%	73,200	63.20
Total Wales	22,652	1.5%	551600	41.07	29,639	1.8%	551,600	53.73

Source: Revenue Outturn (RO1) and Revenue Account (RA) returns

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Government-provided figures (Table 11) indicate that during the time this investigation was taking place, the maintained Youth Service expenditure in Wales was £22.652 million for 2000-01 and £29.639 million for 2001-02. These figures were 1.5% of the total education budget for 2000-2001 and 1.8% of the total education budget for 2001-02, giving the maintained Youth Service across Wales an average expenditure per head of 11-25-year-old population of £41.07 per year in 2000-01 and £53.73 in 2001-02. These figures include the salaries of paid workers, the running costs of premises including repair and decoration, and the purchase of equipment. Additional financial information was made available as a result of Estyn Inspection visits to five Local Education Authorities during the period 2001-2002. These LEAs were: Caerphilly (February 2001), Pembrokeshire (October 2001), Conwy (December 2001), Gwynedd (February 2002), and Neath and Port Talbot (November 2002). Included within the reports was a range of information of use to this investigation and which is detailed in Table 12.

Table 12 Maintained Youth Service indicators

Service Indicators	Caerphilly	Pembrokeshire	Conwy	Gwynedd	N&PT
Unit Cost of Provision (11-25)	£115.56	£253	£222.03	£275.65	£121.86
Spend (11-25) per head	£27.75	£34.88	£30	£38	£27.44
Participation Rates (11-25)	24.1%	10.65%	13.2%	13.7%	28%
No. Youth Officers	3	1	2	2	3
No. full-time workers	9	5	6	10	5
No. part-time workers	127	68	97	138	126
No. part-time unpaid workers	0	64	0	0	16
No. young people in contact with Youth Service	5419	3203	2351	3,000	6870
Contact Ratio	33.4%	37.5		15.95	46.8
% of budget spent on vol. sector	4.85%	2.78%	4.5%	7.5%	5.4%
% of budget spent on in-service training	2.78%	4.483%	1.96%	1.7%	2.64%
Youth Service budget as % of education budget			1.42%	1.45%	

From the information contained in Table 12, it can be identified that the annual expenditure per head of population within the 11-25-age range during 2001 and 2002 was between £33.00 and £27.75, which is significantly lower than the figures given in the RO1 (Table 11). An additional source of information - an internal report for the Youth Service of Merthyr Tydfil (Kealy 2001) - identified the annual Youth Service expenditure per head of population within the 11-25 age range as £25.91, a figure more closely aligned with those identified by Estyn (Table 12). The information published by Estyn and the Merthyr Tydfil Youth Service does, however, cause some confusion because it contradicts the figures contained within the RO1 (Table 11). The extent of the differences between the RO1 and Estyn are identified in Table 13, which also identifies the total shortfall for each of the local authorities inspected by Estyn.

Table 13 Spending comparison between the RO1 and Estyn

Local Authority	a) RO1 figures, spend per head 11-25 population	b) Difference of funding figures between RO1 and Estyn 11-25 population	c) Shortfall to bring Estyn identified spend per head 11-25 population up to RO1 figures
Caerphilly	£54.92	£27.17	£877,591
Pembrokeshire	£47.46	£12.58	£242,794
Conwy	£49.76	£19.78	£352,084
Gwynedd	£59.36	£21.36	£467,784
Neath and Port Talbot	£40.71	£13.27	£319,807

Column a) contains spend per head of 11-25-year-old population identified by the RO1 figures contained in Table 11, Column b) describes the difference in funding per head 11-25-year-old population between the RO1 figures (Table 11) and those identified by Estyn (Table 12). Column c) identifies the total shortfall between the RO1 figures and the Estyn figures multiplied by the number of young people of Youth Service age in each authority (Table 11). The disparity appears to be as a result of the RO1 figures including financial elements over which the Principal Youth Officers have no control and which they discount when making their own calculations. These elements include, for example, Play, Youth Access and Adult Education budgets. They may also contain amounts allocated as the Youth Service contribution to central local authority services, such as Human Resources and Financial and Legal services. The Estyn and Merthyr Tydfil Youth Service figures are, however, the actual sums of money identified by the Principal Youth Officers

as the amount they have available to them to work with young people within the framework of the maintained Youth Service. This ambiguous position is not unique to Wales; the National Youth Agency (NYA) for England claimed they based their audit of the Youth Service in England on figures provided by the local authorities rather than from central government sources because they believed this decision would give a more accurate position of actual income (NYA 2000b).

This apparent confusion about the actual budget of the maintained Youth Service is exacerbated by the vagueness surrounding how the Youth Service budget identified within the RO1 is calculated. The RO1 figure for 1999-2000 was given as £14.2 million (NAW 2000e). The calculation of the Youth Service budget within the RO1 figures described in Table 11 indicate the budget for the maintained Youth Service in the financial year 2000-2001 increased to £22.7 million and increased further in the financial year 2001-2002 to £29.6 million. There is some uncertainty about what was delivered from the £8.5 million increase in budget between the financial years 1990-2000 and 2000-2001, and similarly the £6.9 million increase in the financial year 2001-2002. An additional £2.0 million was included in the financial year 2001-02 as a result of the New Burdens money, leaving a figure of £4.9 million. It is possible to conclude, using the 1999-2000 budget of £14.2 million as a baseline, that the increase in funding for 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 was derived from other sources³ including the Children and Youth Partnership Fund (Welsh Office 1999a) and the Youth Access Initiative (Estyn 1999a).

If this conclusion is accurate, additional funding was included in the maintained Youth Service budget for elements of specific practice with young people which may or may not be linked to the core purposes of the maintained Youth Service. Cymorth funding, for example, is to *“provide a network of targeted support for children and young people within a framework of universal provision, in order to improve the life chances of children and young people from disadvantaged families”* (NAW 1999:3). The role of the Youth Access initiative is to *“help young people above the school leaving age who are*

³ The Audit of the Local Authority Youth Service in Wales for 2003/04 claimed that 69% of its budget came from the local authority with the rest, 31%, coming from alternative sources, including 18% of its total budget from various strands of Cymorth funding (WYA 2005).

not in education, training or jobs to progress to effective forms of education, training or into jobs” (Estyn 1999a:1). It is suggested that a more in-depth analysis of the expenditure of the maintained Youth Service in Wales is needed to answer three fundamental questions:

1. How much money is actually being spent by the maintained Youth Service in Wales?
2. Does the difference between the RO1 figures and the Estyn/Merthyr Tydfil maintained Youth Service figures exist, or is it an accounting anomaly?
3. Does the spending of the maintained Youth Service reflect its agreed purposes and values or is the money spent on other ways of working with young people that reflect the priorities of the Welsh Assembly Government?

The importance of attempting to arrive at an accurate position about the finances of the maintained Youth Service is related to identifying the level of actual growth caused by the introduction of new money in the delivery of a Youth Service curriculum in accordance with its purposes and values. Despite the difficulties in identifying growth it is possible to hypothesise from the information made available during the study that a significant amount of expansion is related to providing new activities contained within developing political priorities. New sources of funding to expand the Youth Service as a predominantly non-formal community-based education activity are limited, as the Youth Service has been encouraged both by financial reward and the comments contained within Estyn Inspection Reports to direct its work into new arenas, such as encouraging young people to return to formal education, training or the world of work. These purposes would have been more appropriate for the Youth Service if it had been encouraged, through additional funding, to achieve these aims through maximising its potential in a non-formal community-based education role, rather than to be branded as inadequate because of its inability or reluctance to enter the world of formally accredited learning. This was, however, a difficult position to avoid because of the significant amounts of money coming to the maintained Youth Service from sources linked to developing political agendas within a new managerialist era.

As well as attempting to define the overall level of expenditure of the maintained Youth Service, an attempt was made to discover how the total expenditure was sub-divided. From the evidence considered, it was possible to identify a small number of core elements⁴ of expenditure, the most significant of which was the payment of staff, accounting for about 69% of the total maintained Youth Service budget. The importance of this cost was recognised by the managers of the maintained Youth Service, who claimed:

“staff costs are our biggest area of expenditure by a long way. It is our responsibility to make sure this is spent in a way that makes sure we have value for the money spent. This means making sure staff clearly understand what we are trying to do and how we should measure our success”

Principal Youth Officer

The figures identified previously (Figs. 1/2/3/4) could suggest that this significant element of the maintained Youth Service budget was not being well used in preparing workers to carry out their roles and responsibilities in an effective way.

From the evidence examined, it is possible to conclude that the maintained Youth Service has not benefited from the aspirations of the Extending Entitlement agenda. When existing budgets are measured against the £100 million benchmark identified by the New Burdens group, the government-determined budgets (Table 11) indicate a shortfall – if a model Youth Service is to be provided – of £77.348 million in 2000-01 and £70.361 million in 2001-02. This shortfall would be even higher if the figures provided by the Principal Youth Officers were used in the calculation because their figures were consistently lower than those used by the government. By using the actual figures of the New Burdens group (Table 3), the benefit to the maintained Youth Service per head of 11-25 year olds as a result of the Extending Entitlement strategy can be calculated as an average of £3.65. This figure was, however, dependent on individual local authorities receiving the full grant to support the Extending Entitlement agenda. For a significant number of local authority Youth Services, this did not happen because the

⁴ The Audit of the Local Authority Youth Service in Wales for 2003/04 (WYA 2005) identified 7 key areas of expenditure, which were staffing (68.7%), renting accommodation (10.0%), resources (7.2%), grants to

unhypothesized New Burdens funding (Table 3) was not in all cases spent on the maintained Youth Service but was diverted within the local authority to benefit other locally determined priorities. A Principal Youth Officer commented during the interview process:

“If we get a third chance of Extending Entitlement money and if it actually gets passed to us, which it hasn’t in the past two years we would be in a much better position...I think we will come so much closer in the ideal world. You know I want another £1 million or £500,000 anyway”

The implication of this lack of resources was described as a pressure on workers across all the occupational strands to make decisions about what can and what cannot be achieved. Such decisions included the need to stagger opening times in an attempt to provide some level of service during school holidays and some weekends. Other resource pressures identified included being unable on a regular basis to hire what were described as essential facilities, such as swimming pools, gymnasiums and sports halls, theatres and drama centres. There are, however, even more significant conclusions to be drawn from these figures. First, the maintained Youth Service was operating with a budget almost 80% less than the amount it had calculated during its modelling process. Second, the significant element of this reduced income was being spent on human resources, almost 50% of whom were unqualified. For an organisation committed to delivering a service to young people based on the quality of the relationship between them and the youth worker, this should be a position of some concern.

From the evidence taken from a range of sources, including financial figures supplied by the National Assembly for Wales, it is possible to conclude that the maintained Youth Service in Wales has been given little opportunity to make a serious contribution to the Extending Entitlement agenda. Though promised much initially, there is little evidence to suggest that political rhetoric has been translated into practical support through the allocation of appropriate levels of new funding. This conclusion should not be perceived as a criticism of individual youth workers, who, without exception, demonstrated during

the voluntary sector (3.3%), training (2.1%), capital expenditure (1.5%), and other (7.2%).

the interview process high levels of enthusiasm and commitment to working with young people in a positive way.

Buildings and facilities

During the period of time this investigation was being carried out, it was calculated that the maintained Youth Service in Wales had responsibility for managing approximately 200 buildings, within which a curriculum of activities were being delivered to young people (NAW 2000e). Many of these centres were in a generally poor condition, as was recognised by the Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales, who commented:

“Youth centres are generally in a very poor state of repair. Poor facilities in some centres limit the services that the workers can provide for the young people. Centres based in shared buildings, such as schools, often have very limited space, and many of the facilities in the buildings may not be available to the young people”

(HMSO 2002:52)

This statement is reflective of a range of information provided by a number of different sources. The Wales Youth Agency review of the Blaenau Gwent Youth Service (WYA 1999e:12) concluded that a number of clearly defined problems had been identified, including *“the poor state of a number of buildings both in the sense of structure and the state of repair and décor”*. This theme was continued in the inspection of Caerphilly (Estyn 2001a:11), which also recognised:

“Youth Centres are generally in a very poor state of repair. Most are too small for the number of young people using them. Many have leaking roofs and broken and boarded up windows”.

There was a clear correlation in the Inspection Reports of this time between the poor condition of the buildings and the quality of work with young people being delivered. The inspection of the Pembrokeshire Youth Service (Estyn 2001b) claimed that when there was sufficient good quality accommodation available, under the management control of a Community Education Officer, the aims and objectives of the service could be more readily achieved. There was also a clear recognition by Estyn of the scale of the problem

facing Youth Service managers across Wales when they attempted to address obvious problems associated with inadequate buildings. This issue was clearly identified during the Inspection of the local authority Youth Service in Conwy, who had prioritised funding to carry out essential improvement work, but the cost of this was described as being “*far greater than the budget will allow*” (Estyn 2001c). The Inspection Reports also highlighted what were described as the inadequate facilities in some centres and the link between these and the quality of work being delivered. The inspection of the maintained Youth Service in Caerphilly (Estyn 2001a:11) concluded:

“The lack of a kitchen, running water or a quiet area for discussion, limits the opportunities for young people to develop a range of social and creative skills or to discuss important issues, either as a group or in confidence with a youth worker”

This theme was continued in the Inspection Report of Neath and Port Talbot (Estyn 2002b:4), where the conclusion was made that “*the standards of accommodation and equipment is unsatisfactory*”.

Within this environment, those involved in the interview process identified a number of common strands of concern arising from the general condition of the buildings within which they had to operate. The most consistent of these concerns was the effect of the physical environment as the greatest determiner of the Youth Service curriculum, with a greater effect on practice than any deep philosophical position or a strict adherence to the purpose and values of youth work. This view was articulated by a focus group of full-time workers, who claimed “*In a limited environment, limited activities will be carried out*”. Curriculum development capable of delivering a contemporary agenda that met the needs of young people and the requirements of government was affected fundamentally, in the opinion of those involved in the interviews, by the characteristics and location of the premises being used. Buildings of the poor quality described within Estyn Inspection reports written during the period of time this investigation was being carried out were described by a focus group of full-time workers as:

“the single most important reason why the Youth Service does not attract more young people or maintain contact with them as they grow into their teenage years”

The work of the Youth Service, too often delivered in poor quality buildings with a minimum of useful equipment, was thought to be unappealing to many young people, particularly those who had access (because of age or financial resources) to commercial leisure-time activities, including such outlets as pubs, clubs and leisure centres. Respondents claimed that young people with a television, DVD player, PlayStation and music system at home were unlikely to want to spend a part of their leisure time in a poorly presented environment which could be cold, damp and uncomfortable with little opportunity for enjoyable activities. As a consequence, young people attracted to Youth Clubs were seen to be those at the lower end of the economic social structure, or those who had a specific interest fulfilled, such as playing sport or taking part in out-of-centre activities. The location of Youth Service premises was also seen to be an obstruction to making contact with young people.

A number of respondents described how the Youth Service had become in many instances the dubious beneficiary of unwanted local authority buildings regardless of their location or state of repair. This issue was recognised by a Principal Youth Officer, who commented:

“Far too many buildings have been taken over by the Youth Service without adequate resources including staff. We have just been offered a building in xx, but this is another instance where a building is available so it will be useful for the Youth Service. What that means is that it’s at the end of its useful life. No thought has been given about what we want or what young people want. We have to have the courage to say no, it’s not what we want, we want it where it’s needed by young people, we want it here, this is what we want”

The issue about being a second-hand service not only applied to what was described as “handed-on buildings” but also related to the resources available within those buildings. This point was recognised during the Inspection of Caerphilly (Estyn 2001a:12), when a comment was made that:

“Equipment in centres is usually adequate and serviceable, but this is sometimes only due to centre staff being proactive in recycling equipment discarded by other organisations”

The issue of the availability of appropriate buildings and sufficient resources was viewed with some despondency by those interviewed, who were extremely negative about the possibility of improvements from the present position. A Principal Youth Officer from a predominantly rural local authority claimed:

“in the years I have been in the Service I have seen a reduction in the amount of money available to the Youth Service year on year...there has not been a new centre in xx in my lifetime, not that I am aware of. You are talking about, on the whole, the Youth Service happening in old, refurbished somebody else’s buildings and there are one or two purpose-built centres but most of these are of a considerable age. ...the total repair and maintenance budge for xx is something like £32,000. Now that is for 16 of our own Youth and Community Centres, some of them large like xx, which is an old school.... but it is also for the 102 community centres and village halls for which we have a landlord responsibility plus some of the community school facilities which are linked to joint working arrangements... . I mean, it is a farcical situation that’s not getting better”

Another common strand identified by those involved in the interviews was the link between poor quality premises, the lack of equipment and the response to these by those young people with whom the Youth Service was in contact. The opinion of significant numbers of respondents across the occupational strands was of a direct correlation between poor quality buildings, inadequate resources and the behaviour of young people.

Summary

The evidence found during the investigation identified the maintained Youth Service in Wales as continuing to be embedded in a culture of financial poverty within which aspiration, by workers who remain in it, to achieve the highest standards of provision appears to be diminishing. Staffing levels have been increased, but at a cost. Many local authorities in their haste to fill both full and part-time posts have failed to ensure staff members are appropriately qualified to minimum standards. There is evidence available

to conclude that only a small number of workers benefit from either formal induction training or ongoing in-service training. The maintained Youth Service in Wales is grossly underfunded. A consequence of this situation is an organisation that is often prepared to enter into areas of work that could be identified as being diametrically opposed to its organisational purposes and values. There is too often a resignation to badly maintained, poorly decorated and ill-equipped premises that are often poorly located within the community to meet either the needs of young people or the requirements of government policy.

John Rose 2017, taken from PhD research

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