

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR THE MAINTAINED YOUTH SERVICE IN WALES

**DRAFT
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INTRODUCTION

This is a document produced by the Principal Youth Officers of Wales with the support of the Wales Youth Agency (WYA). It is intended to encourage Local Authority Youth Services to introduce these standards in the context of their total resource allocation.

The document identifies an agreed set of standards for Youth Service provision, which are designed to promote young people's social development and personal achievement within the economic and social policy agenda of the Welsh Assembly Government. It should complement other standards to secure effective policy for young people across various services. In particular they underpin those of ESTYN in respect of the quality and outcomes of the work of the Youth Service. Locally agreed standards may improve on these minimum national standards.

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THE YOUTH SERVICE

The standards identified in this document are for use by the maintained Youth Service in Wales, whose purpose is concerned with the promotion of equality of opportunity, the understanding of rights and responsibilities and the development of knowledge and skills (WYA 2001). This purpose is crucially linked to the concept of providing support to young people as they move from the temporary and transitional status of adolescence to adulthood.

Supporting these statements of Youth Service purpose are its guiding principles and values which are described as being:

- i. critically built on the voluntary relationship between worker and young person;
- ii. recognised by its distinctive educational purpose;
- iii. young people centred in a way that encourages individual development by raising awareness of being both critical and creative in response to personal experiences;
- iv. young people focused in a universal way and concerned about how young people feel, not just on what they know and can do.

From these principles a way of working is developed with young people that respect basic human rights, the uniqueness of individuals, the right to self-determination and the educational and social importance of choice, freedom, responsibility and justice. It is suggested that the interpretation,

understanding and amalgam of these concepts leads to a greater clarity of Youth Service purpose by revealing a general consensus of its commitment to young people's:

- personal development – well-being of mind, body and spirit
- informed decision making
- active participation
- critical involvement in their community and society

The uniqueness of the Youth Service and its resultant importance as a provider of services to young people is related to the way it employs a combination of these interrelated characteristics, principles and values to create appropriate community-based, non-formal and in-formal learning opportunities for young people. It achieves this through an approach critically underpinned by the voluntary contact between young person and youth worker developed in a way that challenges the stereotypical balance of power between adult and young person. This ensures a young people first approach which differentiates the Youth Service from other social welfare organisations who regard young people who make use of them *“through the prism of its own specialism”* Drakeford (1998). As a result teachers first see young people as pupils, the medical service first see them as patients, youth justice workers first see them as offenders, but the Youth Service, because of the combination of characteristics described previously, first sees the young person as a young person. Drakeford suggests that it is only from this position that the Youth Service can be seen by others as distinctive, different, worthwhile and occupying a position that is defensible.

YOUTH SERVICE VALUES

The Youth Service in Wales is underpinned by a number of organisational values each of which contributes to a way of working with young people which recognises:

- Young people choose to be involved, not least because they want to relax, meet friends and have fun;
- The work starts where young people are - with their view of the world and their interests;
- The work seeks to go beyond where young people start, in particular by encouraging them to be critical and creative in their responses to their experience and the world around them and supporting their exploration of new ideas, interests and creative ability;
- The work takes place because young people are young people, not because they have been labelled or categorised;
- The work respects and is actively responsive to the wider networks of peers, communities and cultures which are important to young people and:
 - through these networks it seeks to help young people achieve stronger relationships and collective identities - for example, as black people, women, men, disabled people, gay men or lesbians - and through the promotion of inclusivity, particularly for minority ethnic communities;
- It is concerned with how young people feel and not just with what they know and can do;
- It is concerned with facilitating and empowering the voice of young people;
- It is concerned with ensuring young people can influence the environment within which they live;

- **It respects and values individual differences by supporting and strengthening young people's belief in themselves and their capacity to grow and change;**
- **It works with other agencies which contribute to young people's social and personal development; and**
- **It complements and supports school and college-based education by encouraging and providing other opportunities for young people to achieve and fulfil their potential.**

Broad Policy and Strategic Context

With the new Assembly term underway, Wales: A Better Country sets out the Welsh Assembly's new vision for 2003 - 2007 which states:

- **our guiding vision of a fairer, more prosperous, healthier and better educated country rooted in our commitment to social justice and to putting health and wealth creation that is sustainable at the heart of policy-making;**
- **the radical agenda we have for public services in Wales, with our programme for delivering the manifesto commitments;**
- **the priority issues are broader than any one section of government and where smarter working and working together can make a bigger and longer-lasting impact; and**
- **the way we want to deliver jointly with our partners in local government, business, the trade unions and the voluntary sector.**

The strategy of the Welsh Assembly Government is to build on its strengths and on Wales' unique identity in order to establish a distinct sustainable future for Wales. The priorities driving this strategy is to reverse the negative impacts of economic and social change of the twentieth century by creating a new learning environment which recognises the need to help more people into work; create better jobs and skills; improve health, and build strong safe communities.

The vision of the Welsh Assembly Government is, therefore, for a sustainable future where action for social, economic and environmental improvement, work together to create positive change through:

- **promoting a diverse, competitive, high-added value economy, with high quality skills and education, that minimises demands on the environment;**
- **taking action on social justice that tackles poverty and poor health, and provides people and their communities with the means to help themselves and break out of the poverty trap;**
- **taking action in our built and natural environment that enhances pride in the community, supports bio-diversity, promotes local employment and helps to minimise waste generation, energy and transport demands;**
- **strengthening Wales' cultural identity and helping to create a bilingual country;**
- **ensuring all our children and future generations enjoy better prospects in life, and are not landed with a legacy of problems bequeathed by us;**
- **supporting people to live healthy and independent lives;**
- **promoting openness, partnership and participation.**

The challenge now for the Youth Service, is to show how it plans to contribute to the strategies that will enable that vision to be converted into practical effective and sustainable action.

The four priorities in Wales: A Better Country, fall within the range of the Youth Service's potential contribution:

- helping more people into jobs;
- improving skills (especially young people's);
- improving health;
- developing strong and safer communities.

In education and training, *'The Learning Country'* sets out our strategy for promoting lifelong learning in Wales. The aim of the Welsh Assembly Government is to ensure education and training contributes to personal fulfilment, wealth creation, social cohesion and cultural enrichment. It will achieve this by ensuring that everyone achieves their potential in developing appropriate skills and qualifications to become active citizens, to recognise the value of lifelong learning and to find work in the modern job market.

The approach of the Welsh Assembly Government will overhaul all aspects of learning by the end of this term establishing new structures and frameworks for 3 - 7 year olds; better transition from primary to secondary schools; a new approach to 14 - 19 years. This will allow for greater variation in what is taught (including the related Welsh Baccalaureate qualification). The Welsh Assembly Government will also maintain a genuine continuum of lifelong learning - including Higher Education through the radical Reaching Higher strategy, which seeks to widen participation.

In addition, the Welsh Assembly Government policy for young people, Extending Entitlement, looks at the broader needs of young people between 11 and 25, to ensure all young people have access to a network of support services and opportunities to help them access their entitlements.

The Assembly's commitments focus especially on the challenge of ensuring that everyone can benefit from learning throughout life and no-one lacks basic employment and life skills.

Learning is clearly stated as being at the top of the Assembly's agenda. Active citizenship and the notion of lifelong learning are seen as central to the make-up of a modern Wales. *"Everyone must have the skills and the knowledge to fulfil their potential at all stages of their lives"*. This, along with the priorities of a better, stronger economy, better health and better quality of life, must be reflected in the Youth Service's strategy for the future.

Future developments must, therefore align the Youth Service to the concepts outlined in:

- Wales: A Better Country and the Assembly's policy generally;
- Supporting the strategy promulgated in Extending Entitlement and Children and Young People: A Framework for Partnership;
- Children and Young People: Rights to Action;
- supporting the needs of young people and the community;
- creating modernised services in partnership with others.

WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT AIMS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Assembly Government believes that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child should guide its work with children and young people. Based on the rights in the Convention, the

Assembly Government has drawn up a new set of aims for all of its activities for children and young people in Wales who should:

- have a flying start in life and the best possible basis for their future growth and development;
- have access to a comprehensive range of education, training and learning opportunities, including acquisition of essential personal and social skills;
- enjoy the best possible physical and mental, social and emotional health, including freedom from abuse, victimisation and exploitation;
- have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities;
- are listened to, treated with respect, and are able to have their race and cultural identity recognised;
- have a safe home and a community that supports physical and emotional wellbeing; and
- are not disadvantaged by child poverty.

These aims provide a basis for the Assembly programmes that have an effect on children and young people and we intend that in future the relevant programmes should indicate how they meet them.

KEY STRATEGIES FOR THE YOUTH SERVICE IN WALES

Three key strategic areas of work for the Youth Service emerge from the vision, priorities, targets, and the requirements of supporting the aspirations of Extending Entitlement and Children and Young People: A Framework for Partnership.

1. Improving educational achievement and quality of life of young people in Wales by supporting:

- youth action and volunteering;
- citizenship, personal, social education and youth empowerment initiatives;
- tackling health and wellbeing issues;
- integrating youth work with schools and colleges broadening and modernising contact with young people;
- provision of activity, challenge and experience;
- accreditation of achievement;
- targeting provision;
- information systems and services for young people;
- international opportunity and mobility.

2. Contributing to human resource development and economic regeneration by:

- securing and supporting bids for European funds for appropriate programmes;
- connecting the Youth Service with the pre- and post-16 learning structure;
- securing the links between non-formal, informal education and positive community development;
- advising local and national government on appropriate social and economic policy;
- gaining increased recognition of the importance of soft skills development in meeting education, training, and employment needs.

- 3. Modernising services and supporting organisational development and improvement by providing:**
- appropriate training and development for staff;
 - endorsement and training standards;
 - support for high quality assurance development;
 - national occupational standards for youth work;
 - high quality information and communication services;
 - advocacy, promotion and recognition of the contribution of the Youth Service;
 - agreed work with local authorities and voluntary organisations.

STANDARDS FOR THE MAINTAINED YOUTH SERVICE IN WALES

In the context of this document the maintained Youth Service is defined as direct Local Authority provision and other youth service provision funded directly by the Local Authority.

Standard 1

The Youth Service should have appropriate three year Strategic Plans and one year Operational Plans, which contain for example:

- Youth Service Statement of Purpose, underpinned by its philosophical and legislative base
- Needs Assessment procedures
- Performance Targets and Indicators
- Organisational/Institutional performance criteria
- Staffing Structure
- Systems for monitoring performance
- Systems for evaluating performance

Standard 2

The Youth Service must have and use, when appropriate, systems to both accredit the learning of young people and recognise their achievement through their involvement in Youth Service activities.

Standard 3

The Youth Service in Wales must have an appropriate national Code of Ethics which underpins its work.

Standard 4

The Youth Service must develop strategies to enable it to work with 25% of the total youth population aged 11-25, 80% of whom must be within the priority age range of 13-19.

Standard 5

The Youth Service must have clear and appropriate arrangements for involving young people in democratic processes.

Standard 6

Authorities must provide to the Youth Service sufficient financial and human resources for the delivery of effective provision. Youth Service spending per head of population for 11- 25 years old must be a minimum £100 from its core budget.

Standard 7

Authorities must ensure the Continuing Professional Development of its Youth Service staff through the allocation of 5% of its Youth Service core budget.

Standard 8

90% of those employed as 'Youth Worker', however defined, must be qualified at an appropriate level as identified by the JNC qualification matrix.

Standard 9

Local authorities must ensure sufficient numbers of nationally qualified staff. One full-time equivalent per 800 of 11-25 youth population, which reflects the social diversity of specific areas.

Standard 10

The Youth Service must provide and/or secure, convenient high quality youth work in safe warm, well-equipped facilities, available at appropriate times within 30 minutes journey for 100% of young people in inner city areas, 80% of young people in urban areas and 70% of young people in rural areas.

Standard 11

The Youth Service must ensure that youth information services are available for a minimum of two hours a week per 1000 youth population aged 11-25. 80% of youth provision will be suitably equipped to support young people to access relevant information.

Standard 12

The Youth Service must ensure that:

- All youth provision per 1000 youth population is accessible for a minimum of four hours per week.
- Youth provision is made available for a minimum of 4 hours per week during school holidays and for 20 weekends per year.

Standard 13

The Youth Service must have a Charter of Entitlements for its service users against which it will be monitored and evaluated.

Standard 14

The Youth Service must ensure that 85% of its service users report satisfaction with its services as defined in its Charter of Entitlements.

THE YOUTH WORK CURRICULUM STATEMENT FOR WALES

The Youth Work Curriculum Statement for Wales was initially written and approved in 1992. The following statement was reviewed and rewritten in 2001. In future it will be reviewed every three years.

The review working group consisted of the following members:

- The Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS)
- Representatives of the Principal Officers Group
- Advisory Council - Wales Youth Agency
- Education and Training Standards Group (ETS)
- The Youth and Community Work Training Agencies
- Young Voice/Llais Ifanc
- Curriculum Policy Manager – Wales Youth Agency (acted as the secretariat to the review process).

The Wales Youth Agency, The Principal Officers Group and CWVYS as the main groups responsible for the delivery of Youth Work in Wales have endorsed the Youth Work Curriculum Statement for Wales (YWCSW).

Other groups were invited to endorse the statement and a record of their commitment and intent is kept at the Wales Youth Agency.

Consultations were widely sought, and comments from individuals, groups and organisations were submitted to the review working group for consideration. This was done not only to those bodies listed above but also through Pigion (Youth Information literature sent out to 1300 youth workers across Wales).

The Wales Youth Agency's Web page also invited comment from those not contacted by direct mailings or local consultations.

Estyn and the National Assembly for Wales Youth Policy unit were also asked for comment.

This Statement IS intended to:

- establish the main purposes of youth work in Wales
- inform those outside the service of these purposes
- provide common understanding of these purposes
- provide a framework for the development of practice and determining of priorities
- create a means by which progress towards the achievement of these purposes is measured

The Statement IS NOT intended to:

- lead to a single, prescriptive and inflexible curriculum, which would restrain diversity or restrict initiative.

THE PURPOSES OF YOUTH WORK IN WALES

The purposes of youth work in Wales are:

- to promote and actively encourage equality of opportunity for all young people in order that they may fulfil their potential as empowered individuals and as members of groups and communities.
- to actively support young people through significant changes in their lives and assist them to understand their rights and responsibilities during their transition to adulthood.
- to encourage young people to develop knowledge, understanding, attitudes and values which enable them to make purposeful use of their skills, resources and time.

Youth work, through its voluntary relationships with young people offers inclusive opportunities to learning that are:

- **EDUCATIVE** - enabling young people to gain skills, knowledge, understanding, attitudes and values needed to identify, advocate and pursue their rights and responsibilities as individuals and as members of groups and communities, locally, nationally, and internationally.
- **EXPRESSIVE** - encouraging and enabling young people to express their emotions and aspirations, through creative, sporting and challenging opportunities which raises an awareness of:
 - cultural identity
 - bilingualism and the value of ones own language
 - heritage
 - respect for diversity
 - citizenship and respect for others
- **PARTICIPATIVE** - where young people are encouraged to share responsibility and to become equal partners, fundamental to the learning processes and decision making structures which affect their own and other people's lives and environments.
- **EMPOWERING** - encouraging and enabling young people to understand their rights and responsibilities so that they are able to act on the personal, social and political issues which affect their lives and the lives of others; as responsible citizens of the communities of which they are a part.

PROMOTE EQUALITY FOR ALL

They should:

- challenge oppression and inequality
- promote acceptance of the differences that spring from race, sexual identity, gender, disability, age, religion and class
- recognise the importance of the Welsh language and its heritage, other languages, and the diversity of cultures in Wales.

THE DELIVERY OF YOUTH WORK IN WALES

Youth Work in Wales is delivered through a voluntary relationship between young people and youth workers working within their own organisation and in partnership with others to provide

and/or facilitate:

- non-formal, informal and structured educational programmes which challenge both the institutions and young people themselves to enhance their personal, social and political development.
- places and relationships within which young people can enjoy themselves, feel secure, supported and valued, learn to take greater control of their lives, and to recognise and resist the damaging influences which may affect them.
- access to relevant information, advice, guidance and counselling which includes the understanding of their rights and responsibilities.

The delivery of youth work in Wales will be assisted by appropriate research into issues and trends, which particularly affect young people's lives. Collaboration with appropriate agencies and services is important so that their expertise can be used to advance the identification of needs, interests, rights and responsibilities of young people.

PRIORITIES

- the Youth Service is open to all young people within the specified age range 11-25, but gives priority to transition to adulthood in the 13-19 age group.
- priority groups and issues may be determined on a national, local or organisation basis and should be founded on the principles of ensuring equality of access and opportunity.

PROVISION

- the type, method and mix of youth work provision is determined on a unit, local, national, and organisational level.
- the establishment of appropriate provision should be considered on the basis of need.

The needs of individuals are vital in this process not only to achieve social policy outcomes but also to target their own aspirations and desires.

The delivery methods used might include:

- centre-based work
- centres for curriculum specialities
- detached work
- information, advice, guidance and counselling services
- mobile provision
- outreach work
- project work
- residential work
- targeted provision for specific groups
- one to one work
- partnership working
- mechanisms for consulting with young people
- providing opportunities for volunteering

MEASURING PROGRESS AND ASSESSING OUTCOMES

- the Youth Work Curriculum Statement for Wales should provide the basis for establishing

agreed criteria by which the Youth Service can be scrutinised, internally and/or externally, in order to identify the specific outcomes of Youth Work delivery.

- such criteria should be determined at every level within the context of the provision.
- it is incumbent upon each youth work provider to establish methods of monitoring and evaluating progression. Youth Service Providers/Organisations should identify and share good practice, whilst at the same time challenging areas of concern and offering appropriate support and training where needed.
- in assessing outcomes providers should have established systems for the planning, evaluation and monitoring of each piece of youth work delivered and that the positive benefits for young people are clearly identified.
- providers should (also) take account of National Assembly for Wales guidelines and the Estyn framework for the inspection of services for young people.
- the ongoing process of evaluation and action planning will promote improvements, enable good youth work practice to be identified, and will contribute to the development of future youth work strategies.

THE WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO YOUNG PEOPLE

All young people in Wales have entitlement to:

- education, training and work experience – tailored to their needs
- basic skills which open doors to a full life and promote social inclusion
- a wide and varied range of opportunities to participate in volunteering and active citizenship
- high quality, responsive, and accessible services and facilities
- independent, specialist careers advice and guidance and student support and counselling services
- personal support and advice – where and when needed and in appropriate formats – with clear ground rules on confidentiality
- advice on health, housing benefits and other issues provided in accessible and welcoming settings
- recreational and social opportunities in a safe and accessible environment
- sporting, artistic, musical and outdoor experiences to develop talents, broaden horizons and promote rounded perspectives including both national and international contexts
- the right to be consulted, to participate in decision-making and to be heard, on all matters which concern them or have an impact on their lives.