

Youth Work: Young people, Wellbeing and Resilience

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Wales Principal Youth Officers' Group (PYOG)

- Local Authority Youth Service Managers/Leads
- Remit is to advise on the strategic development and delivery of youth services and other associated initiatives and is a sub-group of the Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW).
- Since April 2017, Youth Work has become a registered profession with the Education Workforce Council (EWC)
- Many Youth Services have widened to include 11-18 Counselling Services, Youth Offending Services, collaborative projects with Health

Youth Work Core principles:

- **Voluntary and non-judgemental relationship with young people aged 11-25 – based on mutual respect and tipping the balance of power in young people's favour**
- **Providing young people with opportunities to meet, access to provision and support in a safe environment and routes into more specialised services**
- **Underpinned by the 'Five Pillars of Youth Work' in Wales (Youth Work in Wales: Principles & Purposes) which are Educative, Expressive, Participative, Inclusive and Empowering.**

National Context around Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing:

- Lots of activity...
- Together for Children and Young People (T4CYP)
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Curriculum Reform based on Successful Futures – a focus on Health and Wellbeing
- NAFW Inquiry into the Emotional and Mental Health of Children and Young People – 'Mind Over Matter'

Findings from the report 'Mind Over Matter'

- Despite all the activity, numbers of young people needing support are increasing.
- Estimated that 3 children in every average size classroom will have a mental health issue. By the age of 14, half of all mental health problems will have begun...
- We need to equip young people with the skills, confidence and tools to be emotionally resilient and to provide support much earlier

One key recommendations from the report 'Mind Over Matter'

'That the Welsh Government make the emotional and mental well-being and resilience of our children and young people a stated national priority.'

Commit to:

- **Ring fence resources for schools to become community hubs**
- **Embed emotional and mental health fully in the new curriculum**
- **Ensure anyone who works with young people has training on emotional and mental health to be able to promote good mental health, building this into the qualifying route**

What the report says about Youth Work...

- Universal entitlement but refers to an alarming decline in provision in recent years
- Recognises that Youth Workers are ideally placed to support young people with low-level mental health issues by listening to them;
- Voluntary nature of the relationship means young people often present issues and concerns to a youth worker first;
- Could promote good mental health through regular contact;
- With more training the youth service could be better used to help manage children and young people's mental health needs; and
- Often acts as the “wrap around” support ‘as the provision complements clinical input’

What does this mean for the Youth Work sector?

- We need to understand where we fit... we have a role to play
- Need to adapt our training so that youth workers are equipped with the skills to identify and provide appropriate support around low level emotional and mental health needs
- Equally – need to know when to refer on for more specialist support – but can support young people throughout that process
- Opportunity to learn and share good practise

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Thank you!

Any questions?

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